

CALIFORNIA
WaterfrontAge
FALL 1985 VOL. 1 NO. 4



The San Francisco Bay

MAP OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY



CALIFORNIA WaterfrontAge

Fall 1985

VOL. 1 NO. 4

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Photographs on cover and on pages
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Sakamoto

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STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY PETER GRENELL, EXECUTIVE OFFICER. Donald B. Neuwirth, *Editor-in-Chief*. Kirk Savage, *Senior Editor*. Anna Kondolf, *Art Director*. Elizabeth Thomas, *Associate Editor*. Dewey Schwartzburg, *Managing Editor*. Joyce Hesse, *Editorial Assistant*.

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JOE'S CORNER

Joseph E. Petrillo

Twelve Years on the Coast

THIS FINAL Joe's Corner marks my departure from the State Coastal Conservancy after eight years as its executive officer. It seems an appropriate occasion to reflect on my twelve years in coastal management—a period which stretches from the early, controversial days of the Coastal Commission to a calmer era which has seen the Conservancy establish itself and mature to address new and important issues.

I entered the field in 1973 as chief counsel to the newly created Coastal Commission. With the mandate of Proposition 20, we faced the urgent task of stopping development that threatened to destroy the coast. Our regulatory authority enabled us, at least temporarily, to accomplish this task, but regulation also led to frustration. Our power was essentially a negative one; often we could only deny projects that someday might reapply for permits. We could not build accessways, restore degraded marshes, eliminate small lots on previously subdivided property, or achieve any of the other important goals that required positive action.

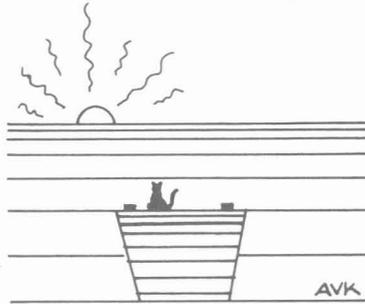
When we began work on the Coastal Plan, we attempted to correct the problems inherent in temporary regulation. Eventually we decided on a three-part approach: 1) deal with the immediate and cumulative impacts of proposed development through local coastal plans prepared and administered by local governments; 2) acquire property with important ecological or recreational value through the mechanism of a bond act; 3) create an entirely new agency equipped to take the positive actions missing in the

regulatory program. Assigned to write the Governmental Powers and Funding element of the plan, I based the new agency on the lessons of redevelopment programs and innovative land trust programs like the one in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Ultimately the three prongs of the plan became three coastal bills, all of which passed in the 1976 session. The coastal bills touched every interest group in Sacramento, and the lobbying was intense. I took a legislative staff job in 1975 and was able to help draft and guide the bills through their rough but exciting passage.

The first prong of the solution, local regulation, has been a slow and sometimes frustrating process, but years of interim state regulation have fundamentally changed developers' attitudes and have improved the quality of projects they propose on the coast. The second prong, public acquisition, has been extremely successful: 27,000 acres of coastal lands have been bought, providing twenty-two new miles of public coastline. In Sonoma County, for example, most of the coast is now in public ownership where almost none existed before 1972. The third prong, the State Coastal Conservancy, is the subject of the remainder of this column.

The Conservancy has a dual mission: to resolve conflicts that surface in the regulatory process and to take innovative steps to solve problems regulation cannot address. In the early years of the agency these two missions often dovetailed; we were called upon to solve crises which had stymied the planners and



continued on page 46

New Revenue Bond Projects

The Conservancy and the California Urban Waterfront Restoration Authority approved "initial resolutions" to make two new projects eligible for bond financing: the Las Casitas Renovation on Catalina Island and the restoration of the historic riverboat *Delta King* in Sacramento. The resolutions are the first step in the process of securing tax-exempt bond financing through the authority.

—*Rolfe Thompson*

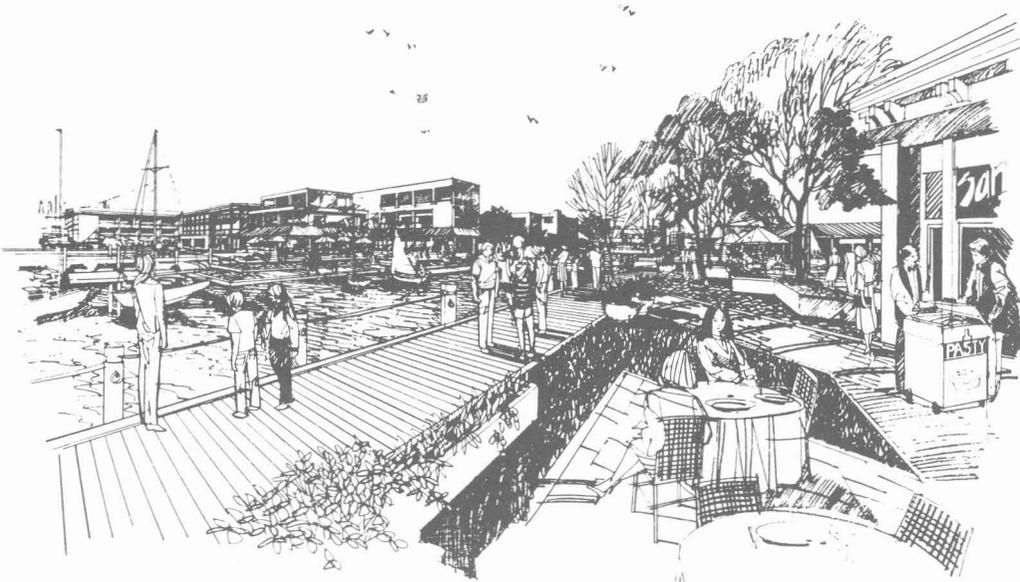
Port of Oakland Waterfront Restoration Progress

The redevelopment of Jack London Square as a commercial center in the Port of Oakland is speeding up. Recently, the Port Commission approved

design criteria and selected Portside Properties and Jack London Square International as developers for phase one of their revised Master Development Plan. The developers will construct 120,000 square feet of retail space, 190,000 square feet of office buildings, and a 260-room waterfront hotel. The port will construct a 1,000-car parking structure and other amenities for this pedestrian-oriented project. A "crystal palace" food pavilion over an underground parking area will give the Square a new focus. The private investment is estimated at \$60,000,000. Developers are now securing financial and regulatory approvals with late 1987 or early 1988 as their target completion date.

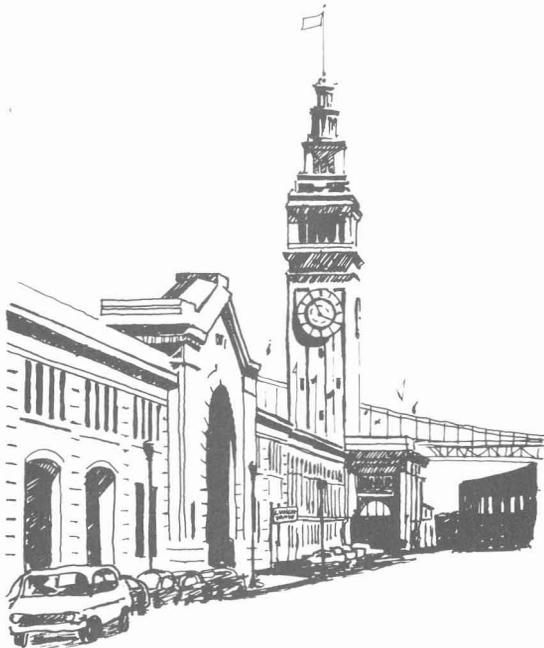
—*Steven E. Hanson*

Proposal for Jack London Square



Conservancy Publications Available

Three Conservancy publications of interest to those covering the waterfront are available on order. *The Affordable Coast*, a manual for volunteer organizations and other groups interested in improving access, can be obtained from the Coastal Commission or the Conservancy. *The Nonprofit Primer: A Guidebook for Land Trusts*, a guidebook for land trusts, is also available from the Conservancy. The Conservancy's latest publication, *The Urban Edge: Where the City Meets the Sea*, edited by Joseph E. Petrillo and Peter Grenell, can be purchased for \$14.95 from the publisher, William Kaufmann, Inc., 95 First Street, Los Altos, CA 94022, (415) 948-5810.



Beach Erosion Conference Set

A conference called "Beach Erosion—A Regional Alternative" will be held from October 24 to 26 at the Miramar Resort Hotel in Santa Barbara. It is sponsored by the California Shore and Beach Preservation Association and the Santa Barbara-Ventura County Erosion Control Group. The focus of the conference will be on developing regional solutions for shoreline erosion. Organizational, business, and technical sessions are scheduled for the first two days while a public mini-conference is set for Saturday, October 25. Cost for the whole conference is \$65 while admission to the public mini-conference is only \$15. For more information, call or write: Ms. Katherine E. Stone; Bunk, Williams and Sorensen; One Wilshire Building, 11th Floor; 624 South Grand Avenue; Los Angeles, CA 90017; (213) 623-1900.

—Katherine E. Stone

Conservancy's Recent Waterfront Projects

In June and July, the Conservancy approved projects in San Francisco Bay which touch almost every aspect of the agency's work. The largest project is a \$1.3 million grant to the East Bay Regional Park District to acquire land in the vicinity of Port Costa, once a busy port on the Carquinez Straits. The acquisition will form part of a two-and-a-half-mile shoreline park, with 336 acres of open space.

Another major access project is a grant of \$131,000 to the city of Pinole for the second phase of its Pinole Creek trail project. Ultimately the city hopes to create a ribbon of parkland along Pinole Creek that will connect the bayshore to central Contra Costa County. The current grant will make improvements to the trail and will provide landscaping and facilities where the trail meets the shoreline.

Two other projects on the bay include an urban waterfront planning grant to the city of Benicia and a grant to stem erosion on habitat islands on Lake Merritt in Oakland. The purpose of the

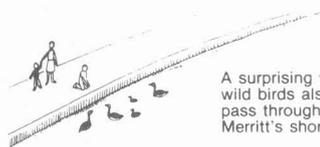
Benicia grant is to produce a comprehensive program for shoreline access, recreational improvements, and historic preservation at the city's commercial waterfront, one of the oldest in the Bay Area. The Lake Merritt project will repair the eroding borders of islands that serve as nesting habitat for egrets, herons, and other waterfowl. The Conservancy's grant will help maintain what is actually the nation's first wildlife refuge, established in 1870 and now a rare source of urban habitat.

The Conservancy also approved a variety of projects along the California coast. Three access projects deserve mention. The largest is a \$500,000 grant to the city of Capitola for a comprehensive program of access improvements. The projects include acquisition of Hooper's Beach—(about one-third of the city's sandy shoreline)—construction of a stairway to the beach, improvements to the existing esplanade, and new pedestrian crossings. In Encinitas, the Conservancy made a grant of \$188,000 to San Diego County for the renovation of two stairways which serve well-used public beaches. At Humboldt

Bay, a \$44,000 grant will clean up fish waste which poses a public health hazard on the popular Shelter Cove Beach.

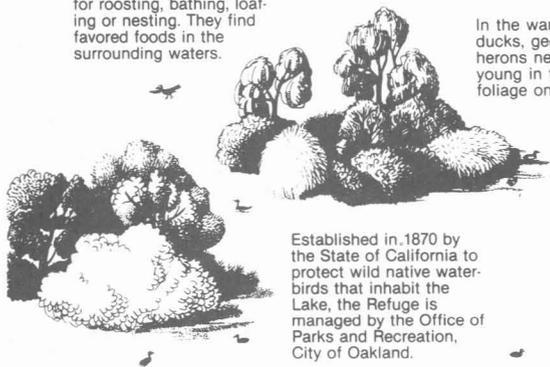
At its June meeting, the Conservancy approved a major grant and loan package to begin implementing the Seacoast District Restoration Plan for Imperial Beach. The funds will go toward acquisition of land for the new Dunes Park, design and construction work for a pier plaza, and parking and street improvements. This work constitutes the first phase of a waterfront restoration program, also developed with Conservancy funds, that will increase public access and recreation and at the same time increase city revenues.

In addition, the Conservancy approved a \$285,000 grant to Ventura County to build a commercial fishing wharf in Channel Islands Harbor, one of the most important fishing harbors on the south-central coast. The wharf and its hoist will give fishermen much needed access to support facilities such as a fish market, cold storage, and an ice machine. The project should attract additional investment to the harbor and indirectly generate up to 100 new jobs. □



A surprising variety of wild birds also live on or pass through Lake Merritt's shoreline.

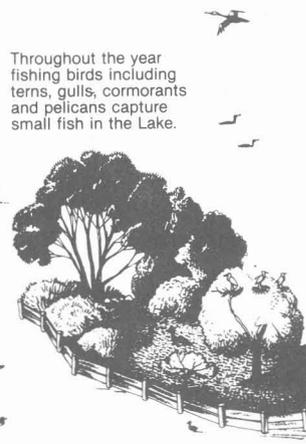
The birds use the islands for roosting, bathing, loafing or nesting. They find favored foods in the surrounding waters.



Established in 1870 by the State of California to protect wild native waterbirds that inhabit the Lake, the Refuge is managed by the Office of Parks and Recreation, City of Oakland.



In the warm months ducks, geese, egrets and herons nest and raise young in the dense foliage on the islands.

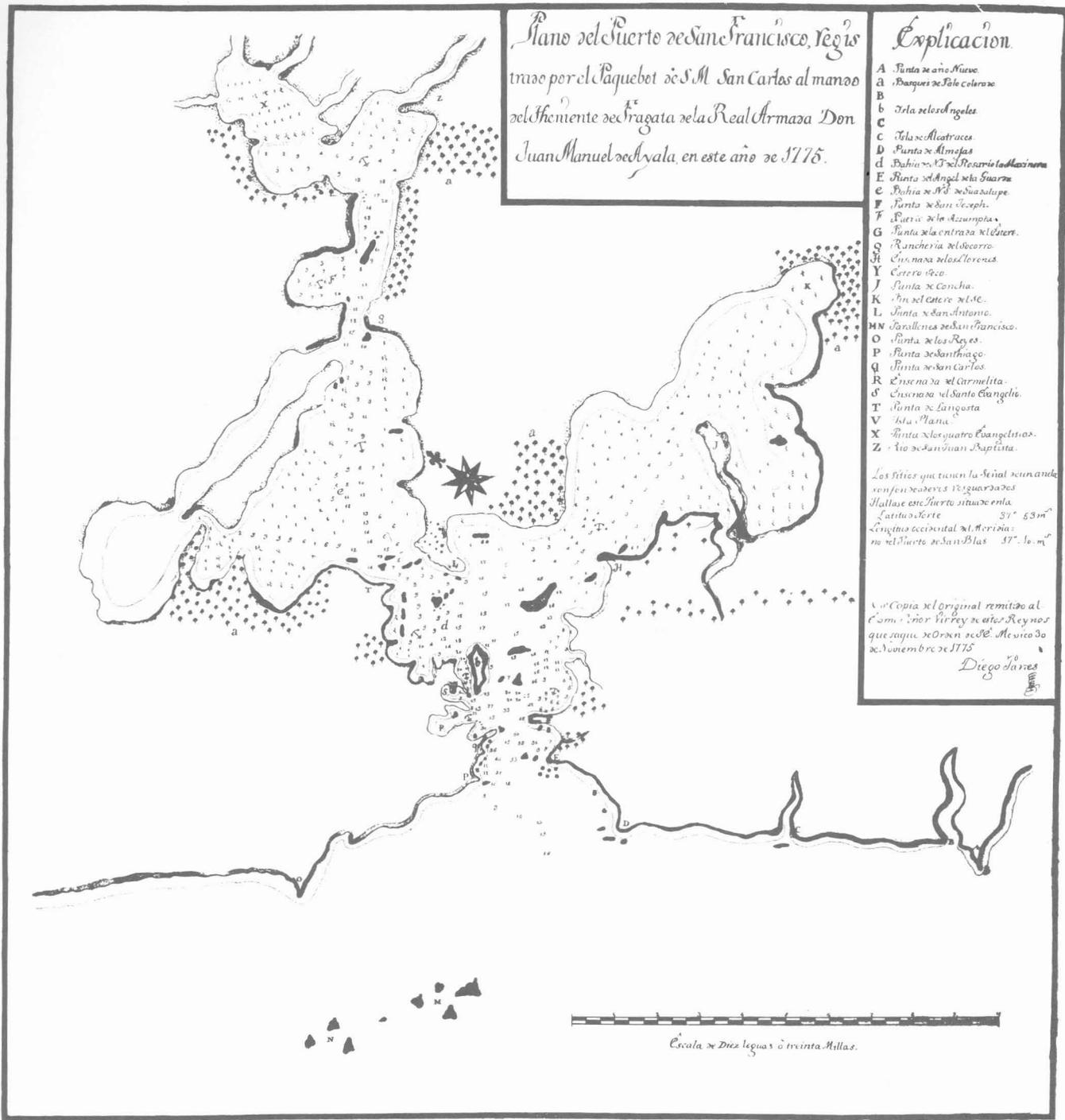


Throughout the year fishing birds including terns, gulls, cormorants and pelicans capture small fish in the Lake.

In the cold months coots and diving ducks from the far north use the Lake for their winter homes.



LAKE MERRITT BIRD REFUGE



Plano del Puerto de San Francisco, segun traxo por el Paquebot de S.M. San Carlos al mando del Oficiente de Fragata de la Real Armada Don Juan Manuel de Ayala, en este año de 1775.

Explicacion.

- A Punta de año Nuevo
- a Bañeros de Palo Colorado
- B
- b Isla de los Angeles
- C
- c Isla de los Trojes
- D Punta de Alifanfanes
- d Bahio de N. del Rosario (La Misericordia)
- E Punta del Angel de la Guarda
- e Bahio de N. de Guadalupe
- F Punta de San Joseph
- f Punta de la Asuncion
- G Punta de la entrada del Estero
- g Rancheria de los Corcos
- H Caserío de los Lorens
- Y Caserío de Co
- J Punta de Concha
- K Bahio del Estero del Se
- L Punta de San Antonio
- MN Bahios de San Francisco
- O Punta de los Reyes
- P Punta de San Thoma
- Q Punta de San Carlos
- R Encarnada del Carmelita
- r Caserío de San Evangelio
- T Punta de Langosta
- V Isla de Manila
- X Punta de los quatro Evangelios
- Z Bahio de San Juan Baptista

Los sitios que tienen la señal de un ancla son fondeaderos resguardados
 Hallase este Puerto situado en la
 Latitud Norte 37° 53m
 Longitud Occidental de Meridia
 no el Puerto de San Blas 117° 16m

Una copia del original remitido al
 Com. Mayor Virrey de estos Reynos
 que sigue de Orden de S. M. de Vico de
 de Noviembre de 1775
 Diego Alvarez

Escala de Diez leguas o treinta Millas.

The Unfulfilled Bay

by Stuart Cook

“I think that if it could be well settled like Europe, there would not be anything more beautiful . . . for it has all the conveniences desired, by land as well as by sea, with that harbor so remarkable and so spacious that in it may be established shipyards, docks and anything that may be wished.”

THUS WROTE Padre Pedro Font, a member of the first Spanish colony to settle on the shores of San Francisco Bay in 1776. In the 209 years since that first settlement the bay has had many things wished upon it. Over thirty percent of its original surface area has been diked or filled, seven bridges raised above it, harbors dredged from its wetlands, and cities built on and around it to house the 5.5 million people that now inhabit its shores. Yet not every wish has come true; San Francisco Bay as we know it today would be a very different place if all of the grand plans proposed for it over the years had come to fruition. While many of these schemes strike us today as completely hare-brained, they were, one and all, serious proposals to “improve” the bay and region around it. The following, then, is a brief history of San Francisco Bay as it might have been—the unfulfilled bay.

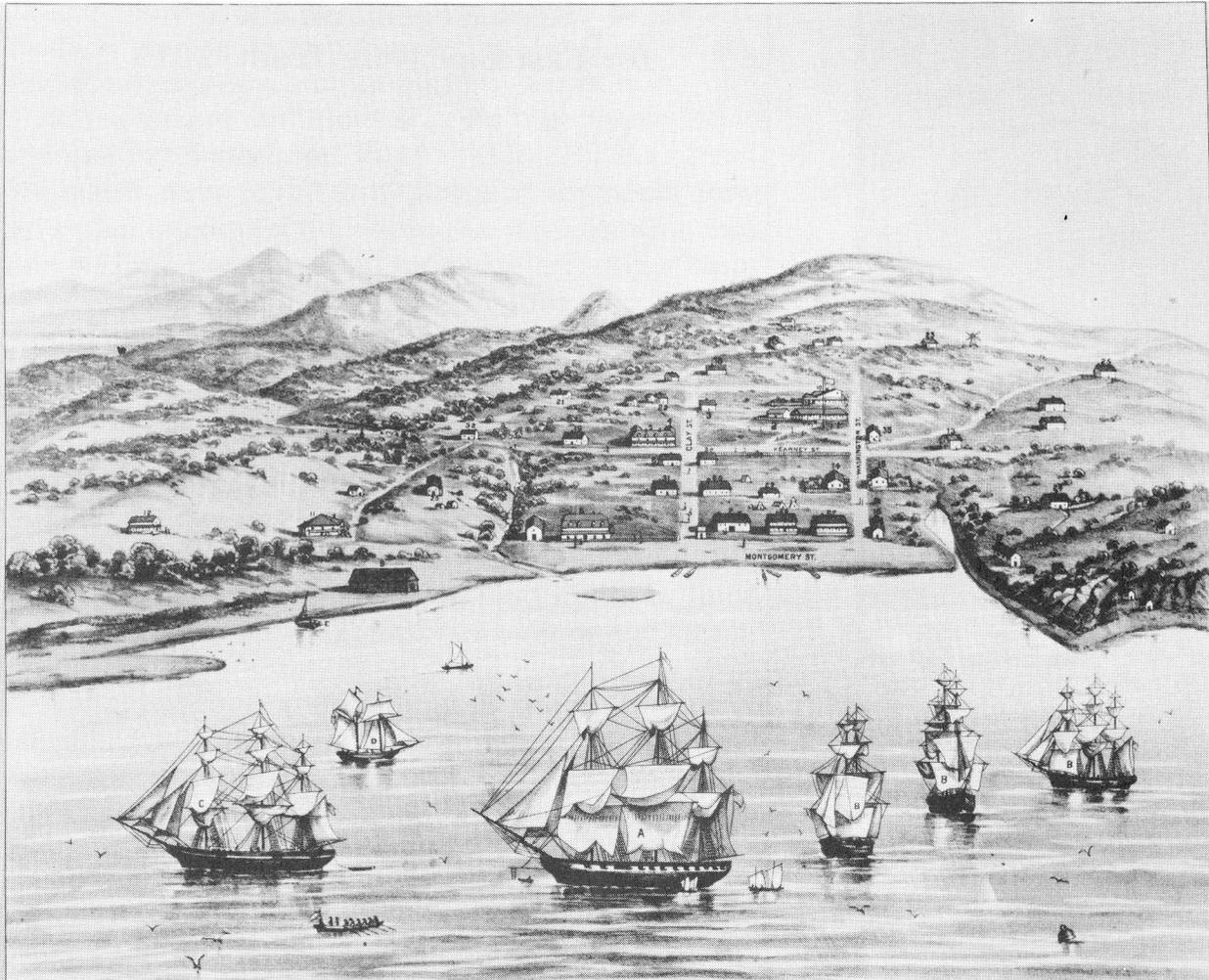
While the Spanish colonists prophesied the bay’s future, they did little to improve it as a port. Seventy years passed before the American seizure of California brought men to the bay determined to see their dreams of Manifest Destiny built. Perhaps the earliest dream to go sour was Robert Semply’s plan to build the commercial and financial center of the Bay Area on the northern shores of the Carquinez Straits. In 1847, the former Kentucky dentist platted out a 400-block town with a deep-water port and named it Francisca after the former landowner’s wife, Dona Francisca Vallejo. So sure was Semply of Francisca’s potential that he gave away land he owned in Yerba Buena, the sandy, windblown, and treeless hamlet of 300 inhabitants on the south side of the Golden Gate. Seeing the strategic location of Francisca on the trade route between the port of Monterey and the newly opened lands in the Central Valley, investors began buying up lots in the new city.

Semper's real estate venture so worried the residents of Yerba Buena that they switched the name of the village to San Francisco, in the hope that newcomers would then associate the town with the famous bay. Semper's town then changed its name to Benicia, and never managed to become the metropolis of its founder's dreams.

The discovery of gold and the tremendous influx of immigrants in search of it helped make some of the early dreams a reality—and helped spin off a whole new set of visions. San Francisco changed overnight from a sleepy town to a thriving city, pushing out its waterfront to deep water by filling the shallows with the hulks of abandoned Forty-Niner ships. A dozen more towns were platted on the shore of the bay, some to grow beyond their founder's wildest dreams. Others sputtered. One Colonel Jonathan D. Stevenson laid out the new town of "New York of the Pacific" on Suisun Bay near the mouth of the San Joaquin River. Despite its grandiose name, the town languished for decades, only recently growing as the renamed town of Pittsburg. Another vision that got blurred was the town of Alviso, in the southernmost part of the bay. Alviso was to be the port of the Santa Clara Valley. While the town prospered for a few years as agricultural goods were loaded off its docks, and while plans were made to dig a canal to San Jose, the first railroad in the late 1860s bypassed the town and put an end to its hopes.

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 led to a new round of unbuilt fantasies. Where the transcontinental line would terminate in the Bay Area became a bone of contention among the competing cities. San Francisco obviously wanted to have the terminus there, along with all of the new commerce and growth that it would bring. However, the city's location at the end of a peninsula, separated from the east by the bay, led to some complications. In 1870 a bill was before Congress to make Yerba Buena Island, between Oakland and San Francisco, the bay's transcontinental terminus and its major port. The plan called for the island to be leveled, fitted with wharves and piers for shipping, and connected by a railroad bridge to Oakland.

This proposal, of course, aggravated San Franciscans no end. Citizen meetings passed resolutions denouncing the grant, while a group was dispatched to Washington to lobby the president to veto the bill if it passed Congress.



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VIEW OF SAN FRANCISCO, FORMERLY YERBA BUENA, IN 1846-7
 BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD

WE THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PICTURE IS A FAITHFUL AND ACCURATE REPRESENTATION OF SAN FRANCISCO AS IT REALLY APPEARED IN MARCH, 1847

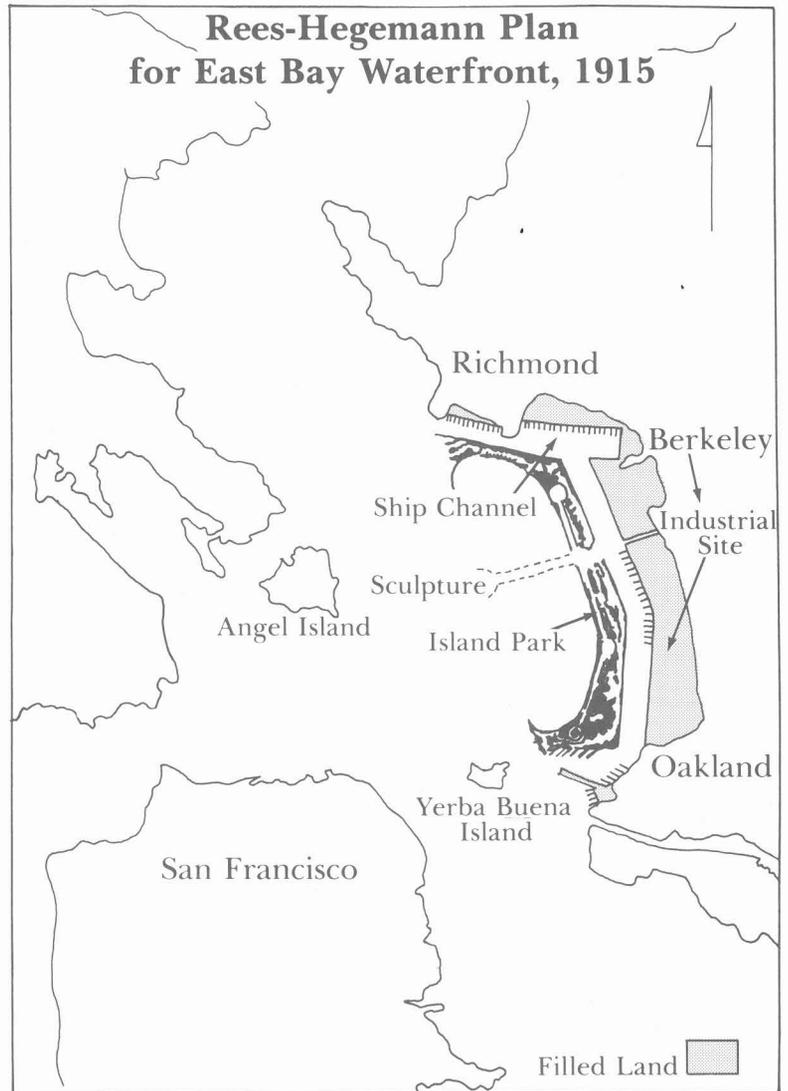
John S. Wilson
Genl. G. Vallejo
George Hyde

1370 NICKLE DIST. OF SAN FRANCISCO 1846-7

A—U. S. S. "Portsmouth."
 B—U. S. Transport Ships, "Loa Choe," "Simon Drew," and "Thomas H. Furken." They brought the 1st Regiment of New York Volunteers, Col. J. D. Stevenson commanding.
 C—Ship "Vandalia"—merchandise consigned to Howard & Melus.
 D—Coasting Schooner, "Lanath "Lane", belonging to James Lack.
 E—Custom House.
 F—Fishery.
 1—School House.
 2—Alcalde's Office.
 3—City Hotel owned by Wm. A. Leidesdorff.
 4—Portsmouth Hotel.
 5—Wm. H. Davis Store.
 6—Howard & Melus Store, The old Hudson Bay Co's building.
 7—W. A. Leidesdorff's Ware-house.
 8—Samuel Brannan's Residence.
 9—W. A. Leidesdorff's Cottage.
 10—First Residence of the Rice family.
 11—John Sullivan's Residence.
 12—Peter F. Shorback's do.
 13—John C. Davis do.
 14—Reynolds do.
 15—A. J. Ellis Boarding House.
 16—Fitch & McKinstry's building.
 17—Capt. Vinger's Residence.
 18—John Foster's Residence.
 19—Israel Nee's do.
 20—Jann N. Peltola's do.
 21—A. A. Andrew's do.
 22—Capt. Antonio Estrada's Residence.
 23—Francisco Carrer's Residence.
 24—Capt. Wm. Hinckley's do.
 25—Genl. G. Vallejo's building.
 26—C. L. Rice's building.
 27—Mill.
 28—Cape John Paly's Adobe building.
 29—Innocent E. P. Jones' Residence.
 30—Robert Ridley's Residence.
 31—Los Padres de la Chona.
 32—Lone Mountain.
 33—Sally Blacksmith's shop.
 34—Trail to Presidio.
 35—Trail to Mission Dolores.

Meanwhile, prominent San Franciscans clamored for a direct rail connection across the bay. Several proposals were drawn up, including a serpentine bridge curving from Hunter's Point to Alameda. It became obvious, however, that any railroad bridge would require a huge public subsidy, which proved unacceptable to the town's voters.

As it turned out, they needn't have worried. In January 1873, the Board of United States Engineers decided that a harbor could be developed in the Oakland Estuary for half the cost of building a bridge to Yerba Buena Island. Congress appropriated the funds and by the end of the century Oakland Harbor was complete, the dredged material being used to move the city's waterfront out into the bay another 1,000 feet.



The East Bay shoreline conceived as one continuous port, 1913.

THE NEXT big impetus for planning and development in the Bay Area was the construction of the Panama Canal at the turn of the century. In expectation of a boom in shipping, cities around the shoreline planned ambitious schemes of improvement for their waterfronts. A port at Alviso was once again proposed, this time under the name of "New Chicago." The future port, according to its promoters, would live up to its new name by "becoming the principal town in the Santa Clara valley, and one of the most important in the State." All of its streets and avenues were named after those in the Windy City. The city of San Jose had so much confidence in the scheme that it annexed a strip of land two hundred feet wide and eleven miles long to the future metropolis; a municipal boulevard was to

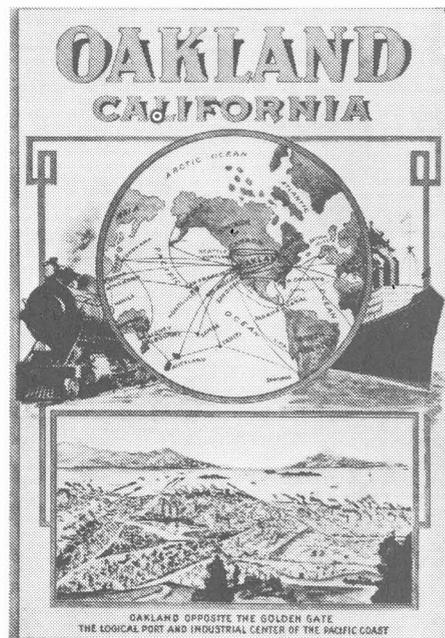
extend the full length of this strip, with an electric roadway in the center connecting San Jose to the docks, warehouses, and terminals at the port.

An even more ambitious scheme was proposed for the East Bay waterfront. In 1913, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas R. Rees of the Army Corps of Engineers drew up a plan to convert the entire East Bay shoreline into one gigantic port. Rees envisioned a large inner basin at Richmond; from there a ten-mile-long ship channel would be dredged through the shoals all the way to Oakland, encompassing the waterfronts of Albany, Berkeley, and Emeryville. The dredged material from the 1200-foot-wide channel would be dumped on the East Bay mudflats to create 3000 acres of new industrial land for the cities. The west side of the channel would be one continuous breakwater built out of fill; the east side from Berkeley to Oakland would be lined with wharves to serve the factories built on the former mudflats.

Walter Hegemann, the famous German city planner whose advice was being sought by both Oakland and Berkeley at the time, enthusiastically endorsed the Rees Plan. In his report for the two cities he explained

This inspiring stretch of landfill would be “a fine park with high eucalyptus stretches along the waterfront, screening the intestines of the huge industrial organism.”

why such a grandiose scheme was necessary: “Only a harbor that is large and that is growing larger each day can in the long run attract trade and wealth, and be the powerful instrument of civilization that attracts natural activities”. He elaborated on Rees’s plan, however, by proposing that the breakwater-fill on the west side of the ship channel be shaped into a huge island park. Hegemann thought the park could include “endless romantic waterways for canoeing, a long straight and absolutely quiet regatta course for the University, any amount of play ground desired, a beautiful yacht harbor,” as well as be “a great symbolic location for an ornamental piece of gigantic sculpture,” a sort of Statue of Liberty West. Opening its arms towards the Golden Gate, this inspiring stretch of landfill would be “a



Promotional booklet, 1910

fine park with high eucalyptus stretches along the waterfront, screening the intestines of the huge industrial organism. A garden as gateway to garden cities”.

Feuds between the East Bay cities prevented the adoption of anything as comprehensive as Rees's Unified Harbor. According to Hegemann, the plan was “opposed by eminent citizens of Berkeley because it didn't seem big enough to them, while influential people in Oakland thought it too big”. Only Richmond followed the Unified Harbor Plan to any extent, developing the entrance channel, inner harbor, and turning basin envisioned by Rees.

The opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 increased prospects for trade with the Far East and continued the rapid population growth in the Bay Area. In 1920 it was forecast that the population would triple to over two million in fifty years. This prediction helped spur on grand plans to supply the burgeoning population with an adequate supply of water. While many planners and engineers turned their eyes toward the rivers of the Sierra, others saw a potentially unlimited source of fresh water in the bay itself.

After the two dry years of 1918 and 1920, when low flows and overdrafts for irrigation caused salt water from the bay to be sucked far into the normally freshwater delta, Captain C.S. Jarvis of the Corps of Engineers proposed building a dam between Richmond and San Quentin that would not only stop the saltwater intrusions into the delta but would also turn San Pablo and Suisun Bays into one gigantic freshwater lake. C.E. Grunsky, the former city engineer of San Francisco and one of Jarvis's supporters, reasoned that such a dam would also solve transportation problems between Marin County and the East Bay by accommodating a highway and railroad on top of it. The Jarvis proposal attracted considerable interest, especially from industries that were located along the Carquinez Straits in Contra Costa County.

While the Bay Area cities decided against the construction of a saltwater barrier as a means of supplying freshwater, instead opting for a series of dams and aqueducts from the Sierra Nevada, the idea didn't die. Following the drought of 1924, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation again studied the saltwater barrier idea as a means of protecting the delta and its freshwater supplies. Pointing out that salt water from San Francisco Bay was jeopardizing even Sacramento's water supply,

elevated highway. Drawings of this raised highway bear a marked resemblance to the Embarcadero Freeway built along the same route several decades later. The platform, however, died on the drawing board and San Francisco elected to build its airport on the bay-front south of the city.

The 1930s saw the completion of age-old dreams as the bay was spanned first by the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge and then by the Golden Gate Bridge. Perhaps the success of these visions satiated the pipe-dreamers for a while, for the decade produced a relative dearth of unfulfilled fantasies. The 1940s, however, were a totally different matter, as the Bay Area became a giant "arsenal for democracy;" the decade brought a phenomenal sixty percent increase in the Bay Area's population as towns such as Richmond and Vallejo first bulged with war workers and then with postwar home buyers. This massive influx of newcomers caused considerable consternation among planners as the regional infrastructure struggled to keep up. Less than ten years after its completion, the Bay Bridge's top deck strained under more cars than it had been designed for, as commuters abandoned the bottom deck's interurban trains for their private automobiles. By 1946, the toll authority that owned the Bay Bridge was calling for the construction of at least two more bridges across the bay to handle the expected future traffic.

In response to the toll authority's call, and in recognition of the strategic importance of the bay, Congress ordered a joint Army-Navy board to consider all bay crossing proposals "from the standpoint of the National Defense and the development of the peace-time economy". After hearing various proposals for solving the traffic problems, ranging from building a tunnel under the bay to adding cantilevered wings to the existing bridge, the board examined the proposal of a retired actor and amateur theatrical director named John Reber.

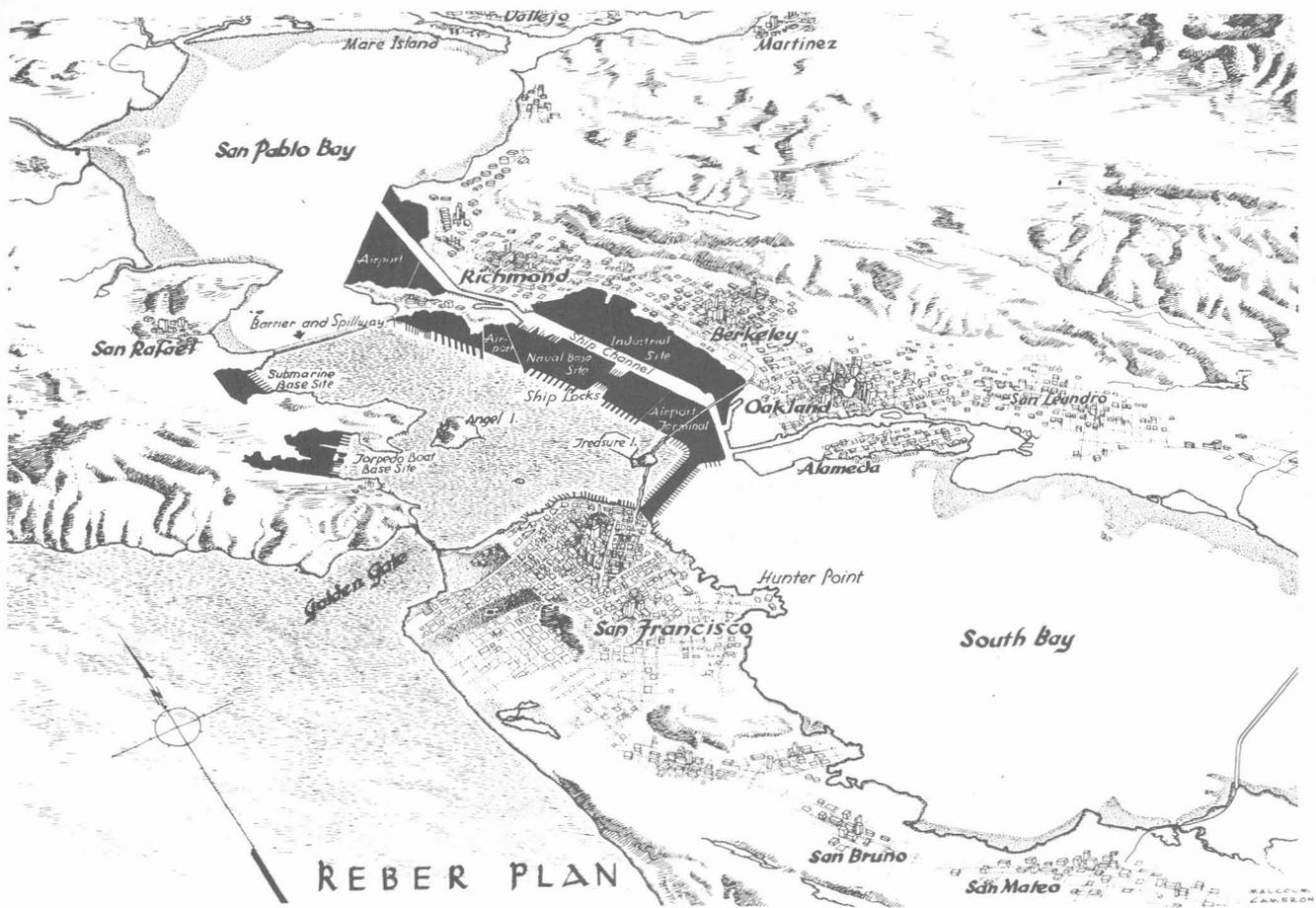
In a two-hour presentation that, according to one eyewitness, "received rapt attention and generous applause," Reber unfurled a gigantic scheme that he claimed would solve not only the Bay Bridge traffic problem but every other regional problem as well. The Reber Plan, as it became popularly known, called for no less than a complete change in the shape, size, and even climate of San Francisco Bay.



The Richmond shipyard booms, building one Liberty ship a day for the war effort.

COMBINING FEATURES of many previous unbuilt plans, Reber presented a harbor program, a water supply system, and a transportation plan—all rolled into one final solution. The plan called for the construction of two saltwater dams, one across the neck of San Pablo Bay between Richmond and San Quentin, and the other between San Francisco and Oakland. The resulting freshwater lakes would then be connected by a channel running the length of the East Bay, formed by building a gigantic breakwater between the two dams, which would result in an eighty-five percent reduction in size of the existing bay. A huge shiplock through the breakwater opposite Berkeley would provide access for shipping to the lakes, while highways and railroads would provide cross-bay transportation. The thirty-six square miles of “reclaimed” East Bay mudflats would be divided between three new airports, industrial areas, and residential areas.

Besides providing “unlimited fresh water” for Bay Area cities, as well as freeing up additional mountain water for use in the Central Valley or southern California, the Reber Plan specified that the four-mile-long



southern dam between Oakland and San Francisco be 2000 feet wide and support four separate six- to eight-lane freeways, as well as four railroad lines across the bay; this would solve the transbay traffic problem for all time. A "Grand Central Terminal," also located on the southern dam, would link ocean-going passenger ships with all railroad lines, all overland bus lines, and a central commercial airport with facilities for handling both land and sea planes. The northern dam would also support a highway and railroad, connecting Marin County with the East Bay.

Appealing to cold-war military insecurities, the Reber Plan also proposed turning the Bay Area into an atomic-bomb-proof fortress. The 20,000,000 cubic yards of rock needed to build the fifty mile rock wall perimeter of the project would be tunneled out of the surrounding hills, creating over 400 acres of underground caverns. Reber suggested that these be

used as a bomb-proof submarine base, fighter-plane hangers, and fuel and munitions depots. In addition, a torpedo boat base would be built by filling in Richardson Bay in Marin County. Pointing out that the present water and transportation links to San Francisco were so tenuous that saboteurs could easily destroy them, Reber claimed that the main defense benefit of his plan were the dams, which would provide reliable land transportation between all military bases in the area. If a 2,000-foot-wide southern dam were shown to be vulnerable to atomic attack, Reber suggested that it be widened to a mile.

The joint Army-Navy board didn't buy Reber's plan however, and in its report to Congress the board categorically stated that a system of barriers isolating San Pablo Bay and the southern portion of San Francisco Bay would be untenable from the standpoint of navigation and national defense. Instead, they gave their support to a high bridge to cross the bay between Hunter's Point in San Francisco and Bay Farm Island to the south of Oakland.

This, however, didn't spell the end of the Reber Plan. John Reber had picked up popular support for his ideas, especially from farmers in the delta and Central Valley, but also from civic groups in the Bay Area. The *San Francisco Chronicle* favored it, and so did the Real Estate Association of San Francisco. Although he hadn't had a day's training in engineering in his life, Reber also managed to attract nationally prominent engineers to his cause, giving him further credibility. A pamphlet printed by a nonprofit corporation set up to promote the plan had the signatures of twelve Bay Area engineers and several military officers under the statement, "We believe the fundamental features of the Reber Plan offer the soundest, most economical, and best method of solving vital problems of the Bay Area, the State and the Nation." Political support for the plan was great enough that the U.S. Senate's Subcommittee on Public Works held a public meeting in San Francisco in December 1947 to further assess Reber's ideas.

Once again the former actor gave a masterful presentation of the plan. Proclaiming "this whole bay is too big, some day a hundred years from now it will be half that big," Reber explained to the senators how his proposed freshwater lakes would increase the value of the adjoining shoreline, encouraging further filling of



Map showing potential bay fill, c. 1960

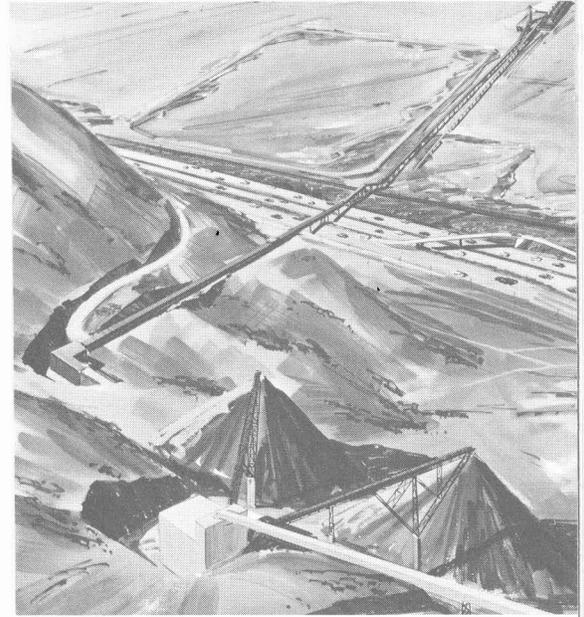
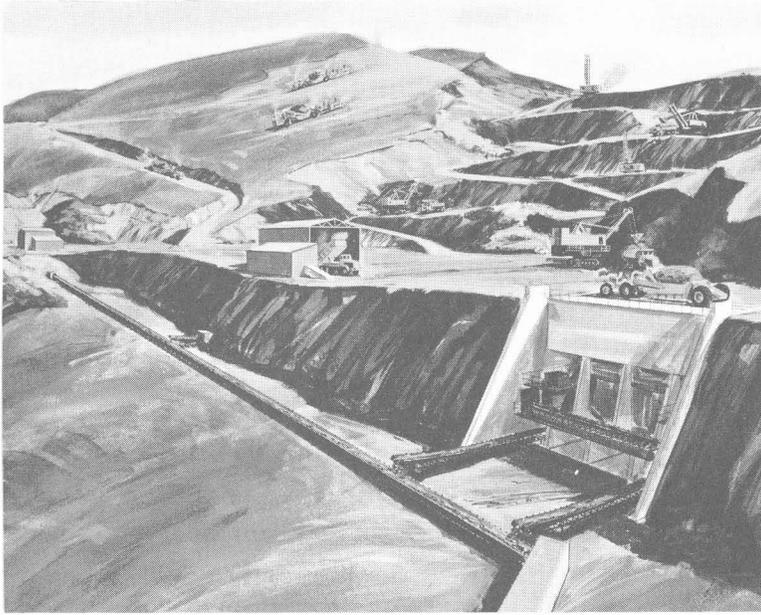
the bay. If that wasn't enough, he promised to get the garden clubs of the area together to turn the former tidal flats into fields of flowers. In response to criticism that the saltwater dams would block the migration of commercially important fish, Reber pointed to the proposed northern lake and replied, "You have here what will be without a doubt the greatest fishing hole in the world . . . You could plant these freshwater lakes with every variety of freshwater fish in the entire world." Not only would the lakes provide for endless hours of recreation, Reber claimed, they would also get rid of the summer fog by warming the water in the bay.

The Senate Sub-Committee was so impressed with the Reber Plan that it recommended that the Army Corps of Engineers study the plan in detail. Congress appropriated \$2.5 million for the study, among other things to pay for a large-scale hydraulic model of the

**“This whole bay is too big,
some day a hundred years from now
it will be half that big . . .”**

bay. Although the Korean War delayed its construction, the Bay Model, housed in a Sausalito warehouse, was finally completed in 1956. It has been used continuously ever since.

Meanwhile, Reber's detractors were busy doing other studies. A report released by the state of California in 1951 stated that although the plan was physically feasible to build, the freshwater lakes would lose so much water to evaporation that over one million acre-feet of water a year would be required just to keep them full. Another study showed that Reber's dams, if built, would so reduce the tidal flow through the Golden Gate that there was a good chance that a sand bar would emerge there, totally blocking the entrance to the bay. Later studies using the corps model showed that sewage discharge into the remaining saltwater section of the bay would quickly turn it into a stinking cesspool as currents changed. Perhaps the biggest blow to the Reber Plan came in 1956 when the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge opened, providing an easy link between Marin County and the East Bay without the use of a barrier.



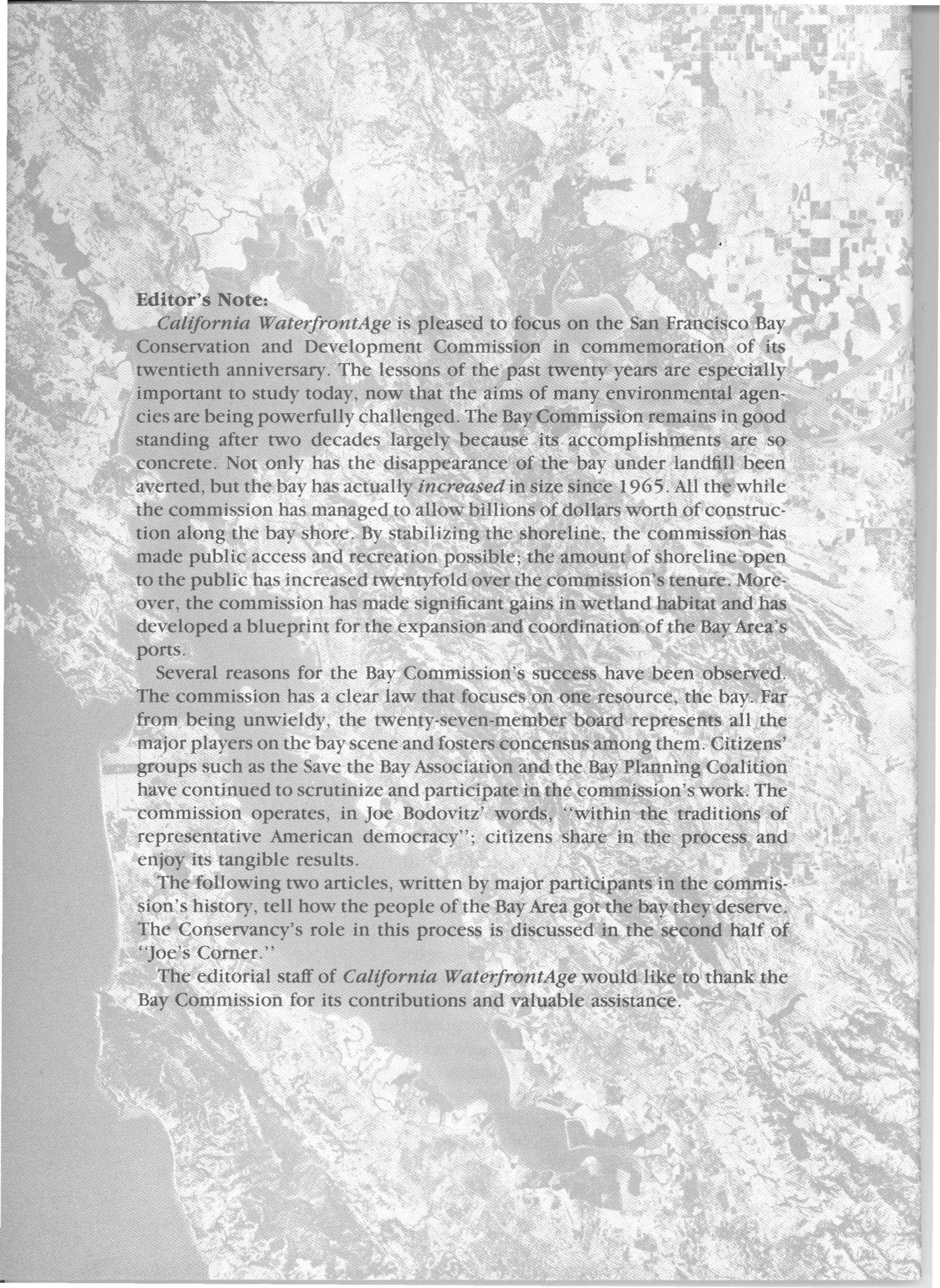
Artist rendering of a proposal to excavate 200 million cubic yards of San Bruno Mountain for bay fill

ALTHOUGH NONE of John Reber's life-long dream was ever built, it did leave an unsuspected legacy. The 1951 state report opposing his plan concluded: "The San Francisco Bay Region owes a debt of gratitude to Mr. John Reber, and to the sincere and earnest proponents of the plan which bears his name. We believe that they have brought home to many minds the idea that there must be a master plan, and that in so doing they have performed a great public service . . .

"It appears to us that some sort of a legal entity or organization must be formed, to develop a master plan, to keep it up to date, and to control future development in accordance with the plan, and we recommend the establishment of such an organization."

Reber died in 1960. Five years later the Bay Conservation and Development Commission was formed for the express purpose of developing such a plan. But by 1965 the view of the bay had changed. Proposals in the early 1960s to double the size of Berkeley on bay fill, bulldoze San Bruno Mountain into the South Bay, and build a new freeway system to connect them were greeted more with alarm than with enthusiasm. The public reaction against such proposals helped give the Bay Commission a mandate to stop any future John Rebers. Yet the regional outlook which Reber brought to the problems of the bay was instrumental in paving the way for its ultimate conservation. □

Stuart Cook is a graduate student in landscape architecture at U.C. Berkeley.



Editor's Note:

California WaterfrontAge is pleased to focus on the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission in commemoration of its twentieth anniversary. The lessons of the past twenty years are especially important to study today, now that the aims of many environmental agencies are being powerfully challenged. The Bay Commission remains in good standing after two decades largely because its accomplishments are so concrete. Not only has the disappearance of the bay under landfill been averted, but the bay has actually *increased* in size since 1965. All the while the commission has managed to allow billions of dollars worth of construction along the bay shore. By stabilizing the shoreline, the commission has made public access and recreation possible; the amount of shoreline open to the public has increased twentyfold over the commission's tenure. Moreover, the commission has made significant gains in wetland habitat and has developed a blueprint for the expansion and coordination of the Bay Area's ports.

Several reasons for the Bay Commission's success have been observed. The commission has a clear law that focuses on one resource, the bay. Far from being unwieldy, the twenty-seven-member board represents all the major players on the bay scene and fosters concensus among them. Citizens' groups such as the Save the Bay Association and the Bay Planning Coalition have continued to scrutinize and participate in the commission's work. The commission operates, in Joe Bodovitz' words, "within the traditions of representative American democracy"; citizens share in the process and enjoy its tangible results.

The following two articles, written by major participants in the commission's history, tell how the people of the Bay Area got the bay they deserve. The Conservancy's role in this process is discussed in the second half of "Joe's Corner."

The editorial staff of *California WaterfrontAge* would like to thank the Bay Commission for its contributions and valuable assistance.

The Shrinking of San Francisco Bay And How It Was Stopped

by Joseph E. Bodovitz

"San Francisco Bay is an irreplaceable gift of nature that man can either abuse and ultimately destroy—or improve and protect for future generations."

THAT'S THE FIRST sentence of the San Francisco Bay Plan, written more than 16 years ago and still today what its authors intended it to be: a constitution to protect the bay and guide sensible development of its shoreline.

Today, this reasoned approach to the bay is taken for granted. But for more than a century, much of the bay had been regarded as little more than ordinary real estate that happened to be inconveniently and temporarily covered by water. The broad shallow expanses of the bay were considered—and even sold—as property that could be converted to dry land simply by diking off large areas and then filling them with dirt, debris, or, in some cases, just the Bay Area's garbage.

By the early 1960s, more than a third of the bay as it originally existed had been diked or filled—for housing, shopping centers, office buildings, harbors, runways, and all the many other developments that could be built on newly created flat land in the rapidly urbanizing area surrounding the bay.

Fully expecting the trend to continue, the Army Corps of Engineers did a public service by illustrating exactly what was likely to happen. The Army published a map showing that large areas of the bay were, in the words of the corps, "susceptible of reclamation," i.e., easy to fill. When the map appeared in Bay Area newspapers, it delighted all those who sensed magnificent opportunities for land development. But it frightened many Bay Area citizens who suddenly realized that the very existence of the bay was threatened—that

the bay could, in many areas, be turned into little more than a river.

Still, nothing much might have happened had it not been for the unlikely combination of three remarkable East Bay women, a powerful state senator from San Francisco, and the Bay Area's most popular disk jockey.

The three women were Catherine Kerr, whose husband, Clark, was president of the University of California; Sylvia McLaughlin, whose husband, Donald, was chairman of the U.C. Board of Regents; and Esther Gulick, wife of Charles Gulick, a prominent economics professor at the university.

ALL THREE of the women lived in the East Bay hills, from which they could watch the almost daily changes in the shoreline as many fill projects proceeded. They began to wonder what was happening in other places around the bay and what they found astounded them: almost everywhere there were plans by cities, counties, ports, airports, private developers, and freeway builders to dam, dike, or fill portions of San Francisco Bay. Planners were seriously considering a host of drastic bay development plans. There was a proposal to double the size of Berkeley on bay fill, a scheme to cut off the top of San Bruno Mountain and use it as fill off the shore of the Peninsula to create miles of new land for housing, and many less grandiose projects. Yet each project was independent of the others, with no agency or individual assessing their cumulative impact on the bay.

Mrs. Kerr frequently met distinguished visitors to the university when they arrived at San Francisco airport, and as she drove them across the bay to Berkeley, she began to wonder whether something could be done to protect the bay from this rapid onslaught of development.

She discussed her concerns with Mrs. McLaughlin and Mrs. Gulick, and finally they decided they themselves would try to bring attention to the plight of the bay. The result was the Save San Francisco Bay Association, which enlisted hundreds and later thousands of Bay Area citizens in support of its cause.

The three women decided that their first step had to be documenting the danger to the bay. They needed something they could show people who weren't aware of the problem. So they persuaded Mel Scott, a top researcher in the university's Institute of Governmental Studies, to investigate.

In late 1963 Scott published a concise, highly readable report on the bay. He showed beyond any doubt that the bay was indeed threatened—by multiple development plans, by divided ownership of the bay, and by the absence of any regional organization to plan for the bay as a whole. He recommended that a

new regional agency be created. The three women sent Scott's report to the press, to legislators, and to everyone they could think of who might be helpful.

They then convinced Assemblyman (now Senator) Nicholas Petris of Oakland to introduce the first bill to control unrestricted bay filling. Despite Petris' eloquence and determination, the bill was defeated, but it did help to increase awareness of an issue that had previously received little or no attention in the legislature.

After this defeat Mrs. Kerr and her colleagues began talking to the state senator from San Francisco, J. Eugene McAteer. Not only was McAteer part-owner of restaurants that fronted on the bay, he was also a lawyer and a member of the "club" of powerful senators who controlled the upper house of the legislature.

McAteer, himself, was interested in running for mayor of San Francisco and so was receptive to issues with large public appeal. But he was by no means what is known today as a conservationist or an environmentalist. For this reason, his strong opposition to bay filling was perceived as an important political development.



McAteer realized that no significant legislation was likely to pass because there was no consensus in the legislature that immediate action was needed—and also because those whose fill plans would be thwarted by new laws had a great deal of political clout. Instead, McAteer reasoned that the legislature might be persuaded to act only after it had studied the problem. So in 1964 he gained passage of a bill to create the San Francisco Bay Conservation Study Commission.

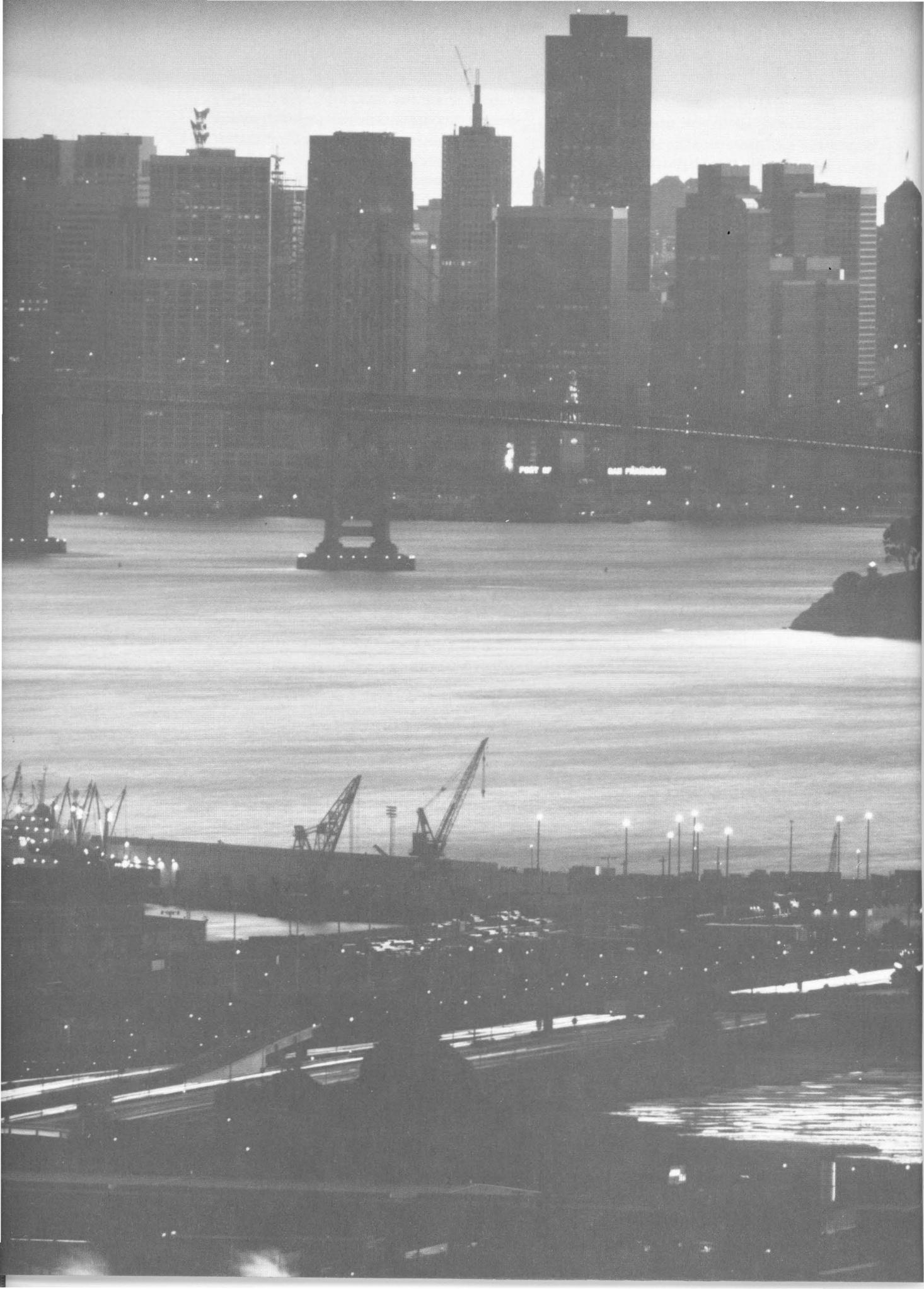
THE NEW COMMISSION was given a budget of \$75,000 and four months to analyze bay fill issues—from September 1964 until the end of the year, when it was to report its findings and recommendations to the governor and the legislature. The commission had nine members, three appointed by the governor, three by the president pro tem of the state senate, and three by the speaker of the assembly. This arrangement proved so attractive to all three of the parties needed to enact the bill that it served as a model for appointments to the future Bay and Coastal Commissions.

Governor Pat Brown signed the bill, and in accordance with custom, asked its author, Senator McAteer, to recommend a chairman. No candidates emerged immediately, and the governor suggested that McAteer himself be chairman. The legislature was to be in recess during the next four months, and McAteer would have the necessary time for the new commission.

The senator agreed. Petris was appointed to the commission, and among its other seven members were Joseph Houghteling, who later became chairman of the Bay Commission for many years.

McAteer devoted enormous energy to his role as commission chairman. Under his leadership, the commission compiled a remarkable record for a group having only four months to carry out a large responsibility. The commission held twelve public hearings, in all parts of the Bay Area, to hear views on bay protection and development from a wide range of people. Not only were there conservationists and developers but also park planners concerned about the very limited public access to the bay shoreline, scientists concerned about deteriorating water quality in the bay, engineers explaining the intricate









system of bay tides and currents, and port and airport officials describing plans for expansion by dredging and filling substantial areas of the bay.

The press and the public began to pay attention. And nobody paid more attention than Don Sherwood, who was the Bay Area's most popular disk jockey. His 6:00-9:00 A.M. program on KSFO had the largest audience around the bay during those hours, when people were getting up and driving to work or school.

Sherwood lived in Sausalito and owned a boat, so he had a personal interest in what was happening to the bay, and he knew McAteer. So when he interviewed McAteer on the air, thousands of Bay Area listeners became interested in bay protection. When Sherwood urged them to write to their legislators urging bay conservation, listeners wrote. Suddenly legislators who had never heard of bay fill issues were deluged with mail. In part due to Sherwood, these issues generated more constituent mail for legislators than any other issue in the 1965 legislative session.

The study commission completed its findings and recommendations on schedule, and sent them to the legislature in a handsome, readable report.

These recommendations, and the resulting bill that was sponsored by McAteer in the senate and Petris in the assembly, led to a major conservation battle in the California legislature. The study commission recommended, and the bill proposed, that the legislature create a San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (a name originally proposed by Mel Scott in his 1963 report). The proposed commission would be large—twenty-seven members—but the size was necessary, the study commission believed, so that all the major forces concerned with the bay could be represented—federal agencies, state agencies, cities and counties that bordered the bay, and, of course, the general public. The new Bay Commission would have two major assignments: it would have four years to prepare a plan for the bay and its shoreline, and during this planning period it

would have authority to grant or deny permits for all bay filling. In other words, while the plan was being prepared, the new Bay Commission would be able to insure that the bay would not be further shrunk or changed in ways that would negate the plan before it could even be completed.

After a considerable struggle in the legislature, the bill passed and was designated the McAteer-Petris Act.

THE BAY COMMISSION held its first meeting on September 17, 1965, twenty years ago. The work of the commission, and its pioneering planning and permit programs, have been analyzed in many places and will not be repeated here. But the commission completed its assignment on time—thanks in large part to the leadership of its chairman, Melvin B. Lane, and the creative work of its chief planner, E. Jack Schoop.

As required by the McAteer-Petris Act, the commission submitted its report to the 1969 legislature. The recommendations called for continuing the Bay Commission as a permanent regional agency, with authority to carry out the conservation and development proposals in the Bay Plan. This meant the authority to regulate bay filling, to allow a limited amount of shoreline development which would increase public access to the bay, and to use shoreline property wisely to minimize pressures for further bay filling.

In his January 1969 state of the state message, Governor Reagan called for continued bay protection. Even with this support, there was a vigorous debate in the legislature that year, but once again the citizen supporters of sound bay planning prevailed. Some aspects of the initial recommendations were modified, particularly those relating to controls over shoreline development, but the Bay Commission was then directed to carry out the essential provisions of the Bay Plan.

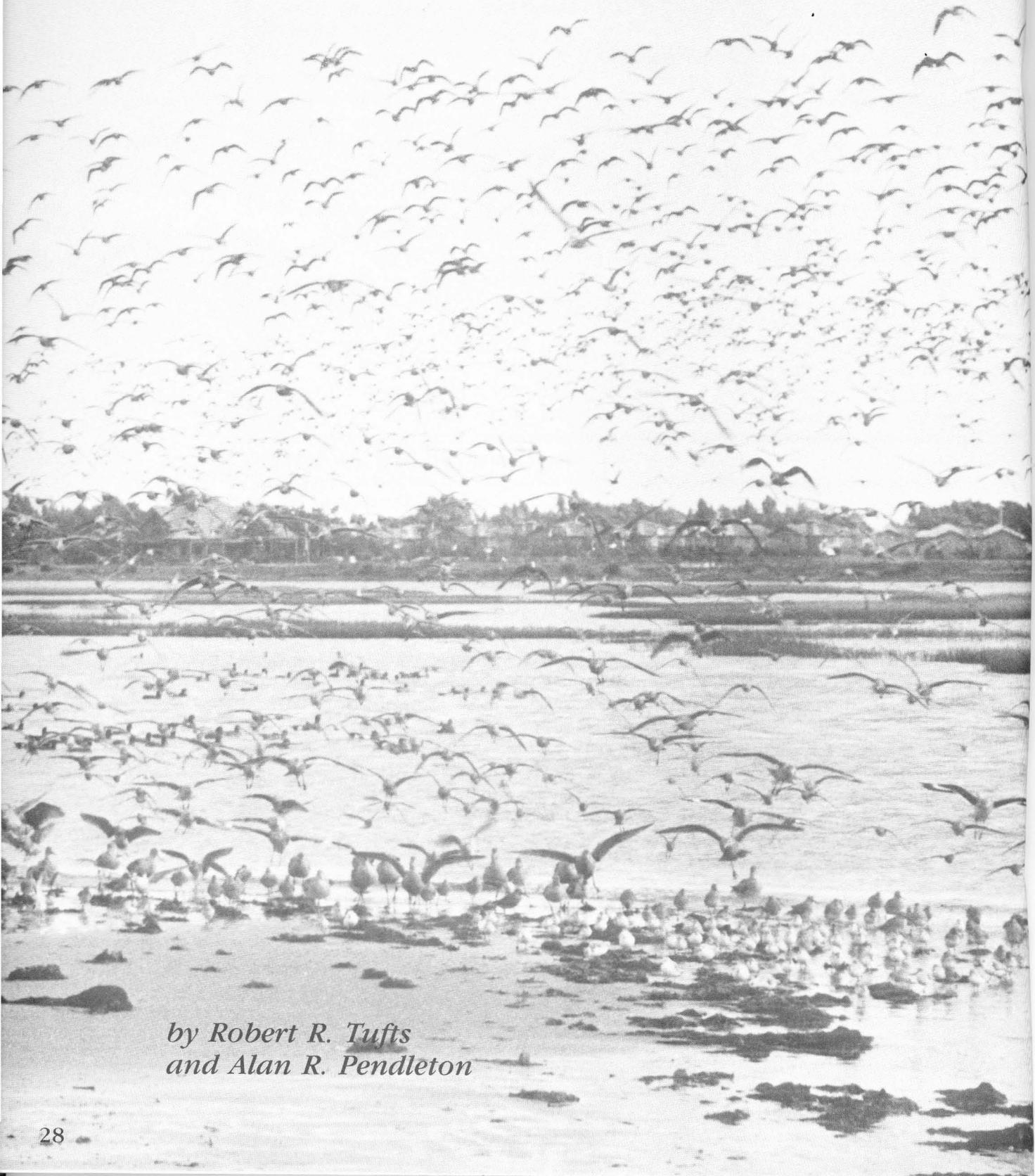
That's what the Commission has been doing ever since, with general success. Through these twenty years, the Save San Francisco Bay Association and its three founders—Mrs. Kerr, Mrs. McLaughlin, and Mrs. Gulick—have been steadfastly monitoring the work of the commission and participating vigorously in its hearings and debates. Of the other major participants in the 1960s campaigns, Senator Petris continues to be a vigorous spokesman for conservation concerns in Sacramento. Senator McAteer died in 1967 and many people believe that had he lived, he would have been elected mayor of San Francisco in 1968 and would have been a strong leader in other Bay Area conservation/development issues. Sherwood's health failed, he left radio, and he died in 1983. Mel Scott has retired after many years of distinguished research and writing on Bay Area issues.

For those of us involved in the 1960s struggle for the bay, it was an exciting, challenging time. We were not only trying to protect the bay and encourage sound development of its shoreline. We were also trying to demonstrate that this could be done within the traditions of representative American government—that there did not have to be a dictatorial agency or individual to protect the bay.

We recognized that eternal vigilance is the price of conservation as well as of liberty, and that the Bay Conservation and Development Commission had to be structured so it could earn and keep strong public support. Only in this way, we believed, could the commission really achieve what the Bay Plan sought—improving the shoreline and protecting San Francisco Bay for future generations. □

Joseph E. Bodovitz was executive director of the San Francisco Bay study commission and was BCDC's first executive director. In 1973 he became executive director of the newly formed California Coastal Commission. He is currently executive director of the California Public Utilities Commission.

Has The Bay Been Saved?



*by Robert R. Tufts
and Alan R. Pendleton*

PUBLIC CONCERN about San Francisco Bay has dropped sharply in the last two decades. Twenty years ago it was not unusual to find headlines on proposals to fill the bay or on the controversy over bay protection legislation. Such headlines are now rare, and fewer people express interest in applications for Bay Commission permits. But this does not necessarily mean that the public has lost interest in protecting the bay; it may mean instead that the public believes the commission is doing its job. In fact, a recent survey found that the commission still enjoys broad support.

Unfortunately, however, the struggle to save the bay is not over. While the Bay Commission has stopped the shrinking of the bay, and in so doing has created new opportunities to promote wildlife and recreation, the bay still faces pressing problems that demand greater public attention.

GREATER SAN FRANCISCO Bay is a large, shallow bowl filled with salt water and some fresh water. It is the largest and arguably the most important estuarine system in California, if not the entire Pacific coast. Even though eighty percent of its historic intertidal area has been either dredged, filled, or diked, the bay remains the state's most important coastal wetland. It is also a highly urbanized area supporting five and a half million people, a population destined to grow ever larger.

In 1965 the legislature charged the commission with protecting the size of the bowl while assuring that suitable development occurs along its edge. This has been done. While the bowl is a third smaller than it was in 1850, it is bigger now than when the commission was established in 1965. At the same time, the commission has allowed a great deal of new development along the shores of the bay, over a billion and a half dollars worth in the last ten years.

Nevertheless, there is not much sense in maintaining the size of the bowl if its contents are polluted. The 400 square miles of water that cover the bay may

appear clean and indestructible, especially when compared to years past. Older residents know the fetid odor of the fifties does not arise from the mudflats today. The professional diver can now see his hand underwater, something that was not possible a few years ago. The populations of marine borers and organisms have greatly increased, sometimes to the dismay of marinas and ports with wooden pilings and docks. Untreated sewage that used to rot just offshore is now treated and then released at locations that are better for mixing and easier to monitor. But despite these gains, the problem of toxic pollution has reached grave levels. Toxics enter the bay from many sources:

Chevron refinery in Richmond





storm drains, industrial plants, and agricultural runoff from the Central Valley. Also, there are still segments of the sewage system that need attention. Wet weather overflows still afflict San Francisco. San Jose's plant malfunctioned not too long ago, releasing untreated sewage that harmed the South Bay. Sewer lines in Oakland and Berkeley need to be replaced. Just last year there was a proposal to reduce the level of sewage treatment in the East Bay to save money.

Some believe we have merely removed or relocated the kinds of pollution that most offended our senses—a sort of out-of-sight, out-of-mind approach. Diminishing federal funding for

sewage plants and lines will only make the problem more difficult to solve in the future. While the Bay Commission is not responsible for protecting water quality, the commission must lend its support to the cleanup and monitoring efforts of other agencies.

Freshwater diversions are also an issue of serious concern for the bay. Historically most of the state's fresh water flowed through the delta and fed the northern and central bay. Now much is dammed and pumped to the Central Valley and the south. It is probably the fresh water that makes San Francisco Bay uniquely important to spawning fish, migrating waterfowl, and indigenous

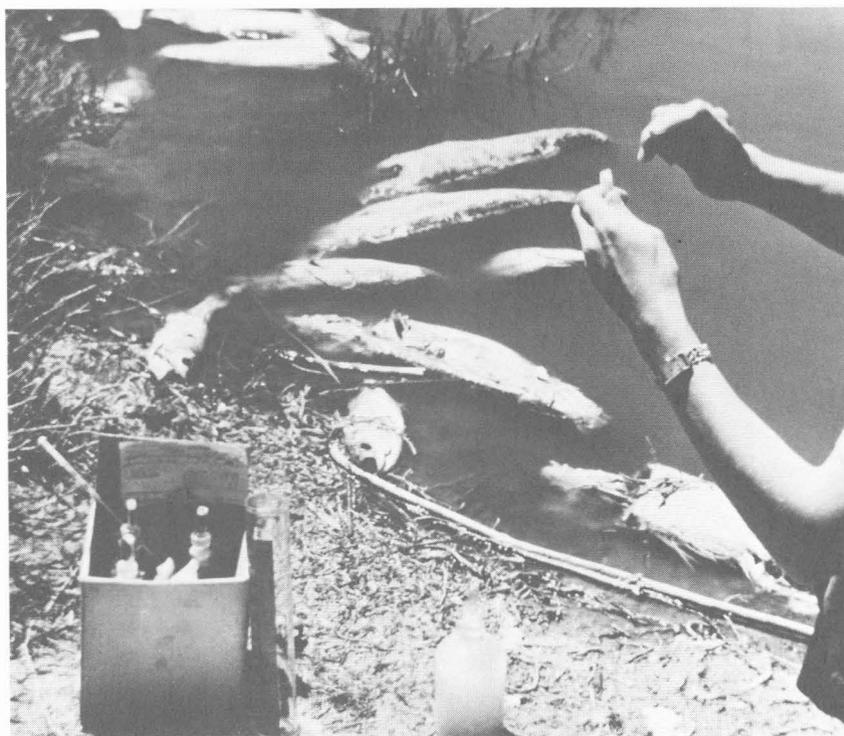
fish and wildlife of all kinds. We can only say "probably" because we do not really have a sufficient understanding of the role of fresh water in the estuary. Shelves of studies deal with water needs in the Central Valley and the south, and many reports investigate how to balance man's uses for the limited fresh water. But legally the needs of the bay itself are not often represented when these other demands for fresh water are made. Some recent academic studies suggest that we may irretrievably harm the bay as the rich wildlife estuary it has historically been if we do not guarantee that sufficient quantities of fresh water are available.

While some scientists have suspicions, no one really knows why the dun- geness crab population remains so small after the dramatic declines of the 1950s or why the stripped bass have lesions and other indications of poor health. And, while some bay clams and oysters can be taken from the right beds at the right time by the casual fisherman, shellfish cannot be farmed, harvested, and sold at the local fish market as the bacteria counts are often too high. Yet the bay once had a thriving shellfishery that provided jobs and food. We see changes, some fairly dramatic, but we have no coordinated and complete study to help policy makers decide whether greater efforts should be made to control urban runoff, or to treat sewage differently or more intensely, or to assure a certain amount of freshwater for the bay system. Such studies can be made and have been for Chesapeake Bay. Nothing on the scale of the EPA work on Chesapeake Bay has been attempted and completed for greater San Francisco Bay.

WITH THE ISSUE of water quality outside its direct jurisdiction, the Bay Commission also has only a limited influence on the upland areas just above the bay's shoreline. The commission's regulatory authority is limited to the first one hundred feet of the shorefront;

above that line are important areas designated for "priority uses" by the commission. These designations are intended to reserve those areas for ports, airports, water-related industry, and other uses that need a location near the water. In this way the commission hopes there will be enough area in the future to avoid filling the bay for such uses. Since the commission has no regulatory control over these upland areas, local government is primarily responsible for assuring that these areas will remain available for the high-priority uses. But local government also has other pressing needs to meet: sites for refuse disposal, places for new housing, and land for light industry and commercial purposes. Often local zoning or plan designations for the priority designated sites are not sufficiently specific to assure that the sites will be kept for the reserved purposes. If local government does not maintain these areas for the water-related needs of the future, either the economy of the Bay Area will suffer or there will be increasing pressure to fill the bay to accommodate those

Lesioned striped bass found at water testing site



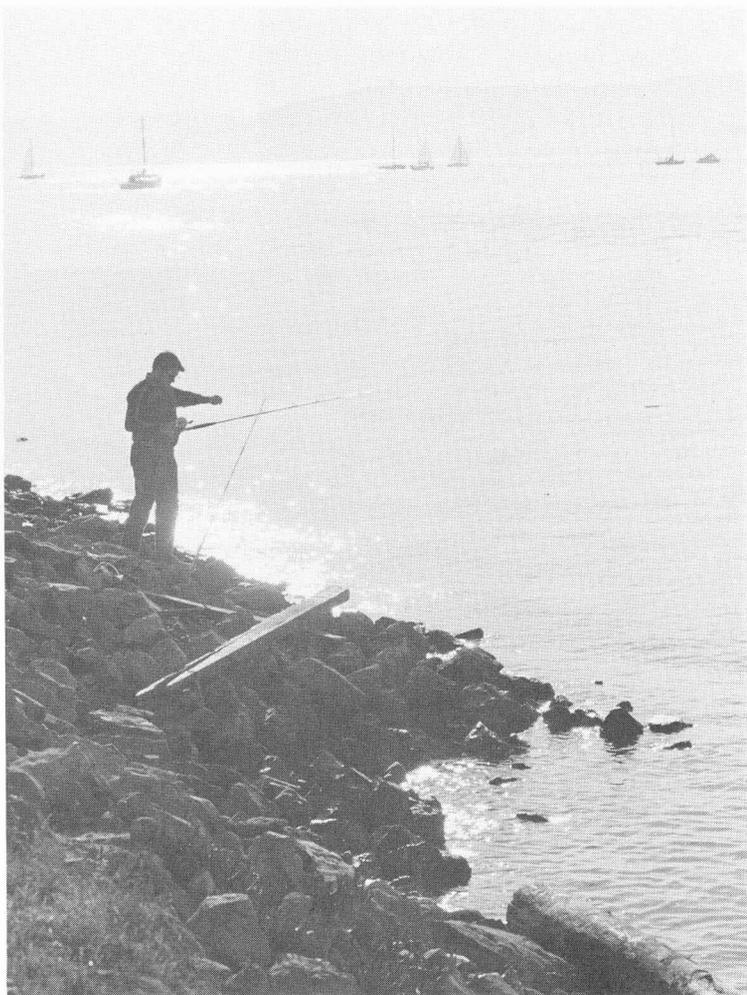
needs. Assuring sufficient space for expanding trade and industry without creating new bay fill is one of the most pressing problems facing the commission, but it is a problem that only local governments, the legislature, and the citizenry can solve.

The best areas available to enhance the natural values of the bay also lie outside the commission's jurisdiction. These are the diked historic baylands, areas that were historically part of the bay but which were diked off for a variety of purposes before the commission was established. Many diked baylands are well suited to agriculture and also highly attractive to wildlife. Wildlife does not distinguish political boundaries, and many species need the bay waters, marshes, and mudflats, as well as uplands to thrive. Some diked baylands

could be reopened to tidal action or enhanced for freshwater marshes in order to provide a rich diversity of species in the bay. Diked baylands may also function as flood plain, often an inexpensive way of preventing costly damage to already developed areas. But there is now tremendous pressure to convert many of the diked historic baylands to urban uses, particularly near San Pablo Bay and the South Bay. These diked lands represent the last real chance for man to undo some of the damage done to the original bay. We must decide whether to take advantage of this great but fleeting opportunity.

Reduction of water pollution, assurance of sufficient fresh water, and protection of land for priority uses must parallel efforts to resolve other vital problems that the Bay Commission faces. The commission's current planning program includes: work on houseboats and liveaboard use on the bay; a guidebook to help developers offset unavoidable adverse impacts of fill by creating enhanced natural values; a study of commercial fishing activity and needs; a review of the need to set aside areas for future water-related industry; a report on sea level rise as it affects the bay; and a review of transportation policies with a particular emphasis on Highway 101 on the Peninsula.

Finally, it is unlikely that there will ever be enough attractive and usable access to and along the bay to meet the needs of the Bay Area's growing population. As the competition for the shoreline intensifies, there will probably be increased use of the bay by swimmers, boaters, wind surfers, and other active sport enthusiasts. Already, in the last five years, about 7,000 new small boat berths have been authorized, and increasing demands have been made for additional docks, launching ramps, and other recreational facilities. But the commission only has a reactive role, and many areas which are highly desirable for access or park purposes will open up only through the efforts of local governments, park districts, or the Coastal Conservancy.





THE BAY COMMISSION has succeeded in keeping the size of the bay relatively constant while accommodating a great deal of shoreline development. Yet the bay should be more than a thing of great beauty. There should be increased opportunity for all to reach and enjoy the bay's myriad recreational possibilities. The water should not only appear to be clean; it should be safe and healthy for everyone who uses it. It should support a varied and healthy fishery. The bay should remain the Pacific coast's most important estuarine system, and the opportunity to enlarge that system by restoring diked lands should not be missed. Perhaps most fundamental of all, the bay must remain protected from new pressures to fill for the growing needs of an expanding population.

The bay will never finally be saved. The task of protecting it will continue to demand the patience and commitment of the thousands of volunteers, legislators, commissioners, and others who have helped achieve the remarkable gains of the past two decades. □

Robert R. Tufts is the chairman of the Bay Commission. Alan R. Pendleton is the commission's Executive Director. These remarks are their personal views and do not necessarily represent the views of the commission.

Access Success

by Margot Patterson Doss



Beginning of Golden Gate Promenade

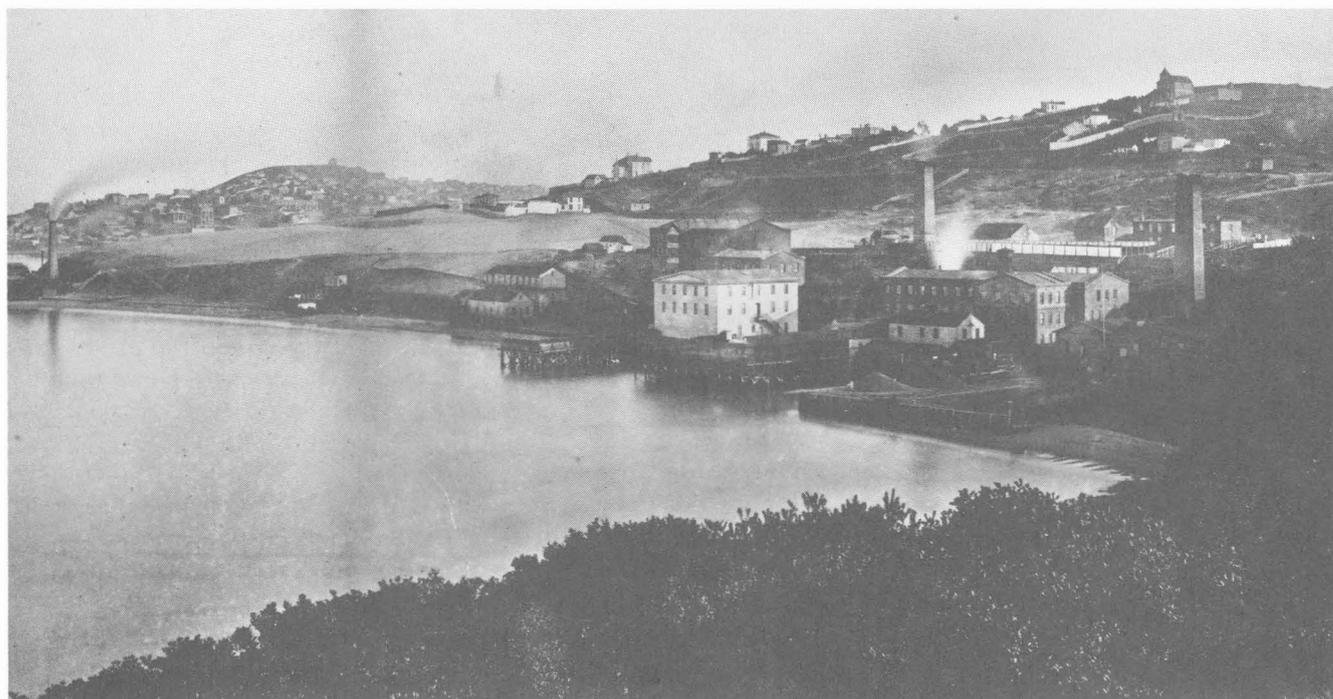
SAN FRANCISCO BAY lies within one of the most beautiful natural harbors of the world. It is surprising how many beguiling facets this shoreline can show. There is lonely duneland, where a walker may surprise a trotting gray fox. Solitary egrets or great blue herons punctuate marshes where the ghost shrimp hide. Tideflats are decorated with flotsam reincarnated as found art. There are also crumbling unsafe cliffs, hidden gun emplacements, the underpinnings of seven great bridges, a prison, an old winery, broad multi-hued salt flats, the rusting remains of old ocean liners, ghost towns, and long sandy beaches.

Industry surrounded San Francisco's Aquatic Park in 1961 when I first started writing *Bay Area at Your Feet* and the "walking" column I started for the *Sunday San Francisco Chronicle*. The little park had been reclaimed from industrial use in 1937 as the city's

contribution to the Golden Gate Exposition. The quarter mile of waterfront at Aquatic Park and another half mile at Marina Green were San Francisco's share of the skimpy five miles of bay shoreline then accessible to the public. Both were among the first few walks I wrote for the Sunday column. In those days one could stand in Aquatic Park and see the historic pattern of shoreline uses illustrated by the work of three generations of architects, all in the same family. William Mooser III designed the Casino, the shiplike building which now houses the National Maritime Museum. Mooser's father designed the Fontana Warehouse, now replaced by the Fontana Apartments. His grandfather built the oldest building, the Columbia Woollen Mill.

The industrial usage pattern started on the northern waterfront when the city was still called *El Paraje de la Yerba Buena*, the *Place of the Good Herb*. Larkin street was then the western border of what has since become San Francisco. A dusty road connected the pueblo and the Presidio. Early pioneers drove cattle down an even dustier spur that has since become the north end of Van Ness Avenue to slaughter them in the lee of Black Point. They saw the shallow cove that is now Aquatic Park as a great place to wash the blood away before the hides were laid out on the slope to dry.

Aquatic Park, circa 1870



The manufacturer who commissioned the first William Mooser to design his mill looked for the same feature—a waterfront place to set his dyes in the yards of yarn and fabric. It's odd today to think of the water of Aquatic Park running red with either blood or dye. But the Woollen Mill building still stands beside another factory that came early on to the shore, the Ghirardelli Chocolate Company. Thousands of visitors now pass through both buildings within Ghirardelli Square, a creative reuse of factory buildings that has been copied worldwide. For that innovation, we can thank William Matson Roth who took hold of a great idea presented to him by Maritime Museum Curator, Karl Kortum.

A good idea alone, however, wouldn't have been enough to stop the highrise "China Wall" that loomed over Aquatic Park in the 1960s. Without the Russian Hill Improvement Association to fight the highrise developers and the would-be bridge and freeway constructors, our recreational waterfront, increasingly open to the public, would never have happened. Looking through a first edition of *San Francisco at Your*

Aquatic Park Today





Point Pinole

Feet, my first book of walks, I find the last paragraph sums it up: “How long Aquatic will continue to glisten in the sun is anybody’s guess. Three ominous shadows are already threatening to darken your sand and mine, for whoever saw towers, bridge, or freeway that cast no palls at all?”

The current edition has a different conclusion: “Aquatic’s future is now assured. It should glisten in the sun forever, as man marks eternity.”

FACTORIES STILL clutter the bay shore, though they’re not nearly the hindrance they used to be. Twenty-five years ago fewer than five of the 400-odd miles of bay shoreline were open to the public to enjoy. Where factories didn’t shut out the water, military installations and private developments (largely on fill) did.

Now, according to the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission's public access and recreation guides, there are almost 100 miles of shoreline accessible to the public.

No one person or agency merits complete credit for such a remarkable change, but certainly a good portion of it is due to four remarkable ladies, Kay Kerr, Sylvia McLaughlin, Ester Gulick, and Dorothy Erskine. Their Save San Francisco Bay Association brought about the creation of the Bay Commission more than twenty years ago. This was a major stroke in the citizen effort to give the bay shore back to the people.

Three other factors were at work to help this effort. One was growing citizen awareness of the dangers inherent in using the bay as a dumping ground for heavy metals, industrial poison, and untreated sewage of all kinds. Public dismay at the diminishing of the shoreline as load after load of fill destroyed the shallows, marshes, and beaches was another force. But the third, and by far the strongest, factor was an ever-increasing public demand for recreational space.

Alameda Beach



There has been, as a result of this public insistence, a great burst in the creation of new Bay Area parks. Many have been along the bay shore. Within the East Bay Regional Park District, for example, there are now about forty miles of shoreline, compared to the quarter-mile-long Keller's Beach of twenty-five years ago.

"East Bay Regional Park District's policy when I joined it seventeen years ago," retiring General Manager Dick Trudeau told me, "was strong on the creation of new mountain parks, but not on shoreline parks. This was soon put into a better balance, thanks to a visionary park board. In 1966 we arranged to lease Old Neptune Beach, putting a tentative toe in the water in Alameda. This gave us three and one half miles of shoreline, our first significant piece."

The list of shoreline parks created since then is impressive. Among the park district's accomplishments are Martinez shoreline, Point Pinole, little Keller Beach (now part of the much longer Miller-Knox Shoreline), Alameda Beach, San Leandro Bay, the Hayward shoreline, Coyote Hills, and a great deal of as yet unnamed marshland and seasonal wetlands. Now in the works within the park district are new bayside trails that will go from Point Isabel to Miller-Knox and from Point Pinole to Martinez. A state shoreline through Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, and West Oakland is also emerging.

In all of these, the Bay Commission was there with a supportive hand to aid in the process, although as staffer Steve McAdam modestly admitted, "The Commission did not require the recreational lands to be provided.

"If one would look only at BCDC-required public access areas, I think the most significant would be the Harbor Bay Isle shoreline park in Alameda, Rich Diodati's Oyster Point Development project in South San Francisco, Pier 39 in the city, the combined and partially completed access areas at the Anza Pacific project in Burlingame, and maybe the Richmond Inner Harbor and Marina projects, which are practically done."

Look to the extreme north end of the bay, and the Nature Conservancy has made its contribution to accessible shoreline with the preservation of Tubbs Island. The new wildlife refuge at Suisun Bay is counterbalanced by the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge in the south bay at Newark.

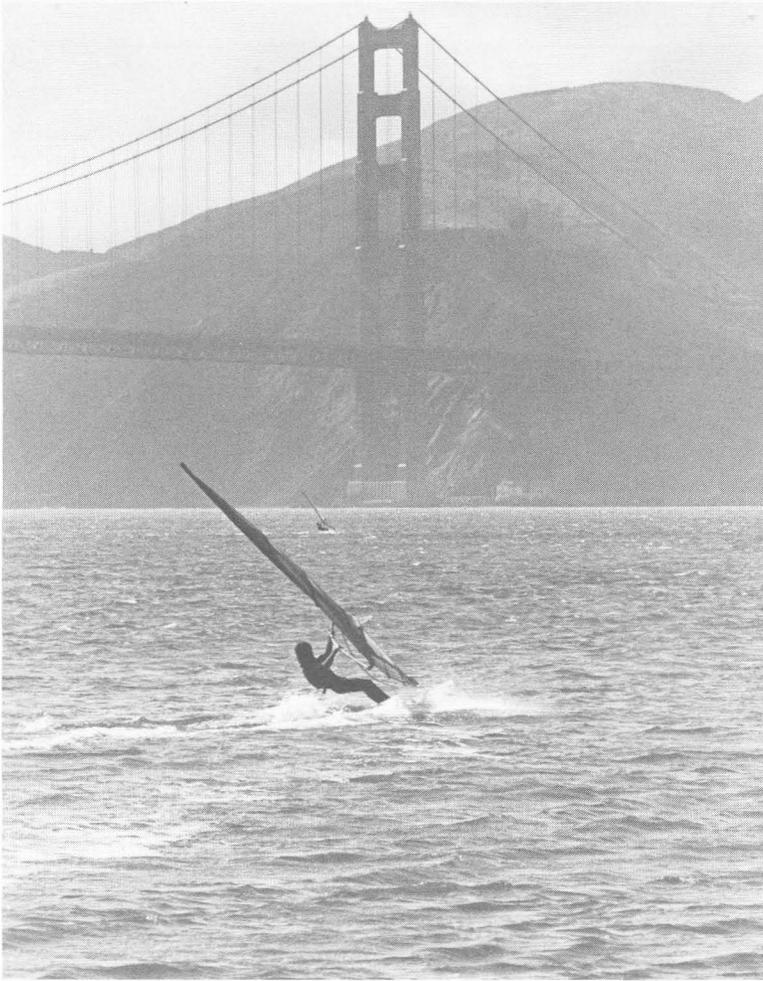


Pier 39

Coming up the west shore, Coyote Point Park trails and the links extending from them along the shore in either direction are outstanding, as is Baylands in Palo Alto. Burlingame is creating its bayside parks, complete with waterside trails as well. One day, hopefully, it will be possible to walk or bicycle the entire shoreline of the bay as easily as it was to do in 1849 when journalist Stephen Power tried it.

AQUATIC PARK, once ringed by factories and threatened by highrises, has become part of San Francisco's greatest success stories. Today Aquatic Park is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Golden Gate Promenade, which begins at the foot of Hyde Street and stretches within fifty feet of the water all the way to the Golden Gate Bridge. This vast new park, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, now the most popular in the national park system, wraps around San Francisco. It has given back to the public access along Golden Gate Strait on both sides of the Golden Gate Bridge, and access to the water's edge on the Marin shoreline of Forts Barry, Baker, and Cronkhite as well. Credit for it goes to the late Congressman Philip Burton, a Democrat, who quite possibly did more for national parks in his lifetime than any man since President Teddy Roosevelt. Some credit too goes to former Congressman William Mailliard, a Republican. The two men set aside petty party politics to create the park. Both men entered comparable bills within days of each other to create the GGNRA. The bills were quickly passed. This was read correctly by President Richard M. Nixon as a public mandate; he signed the bills making the park a reality in October of 1972.

On the one-year anniversary of the signing, the Golden Gate Promenade became a reality. It was fun to walk through the terrain with a party of enlisted men with wirecutters snipping away that chain link fence, and to know that walkers, joggers, bicyclists, fishermen, sun bathers, and others would be enjoying it ever after. The following Sunday, when upwards of 3,000 people walked the length of the Golden Gate Promenade from Fort Point to Aquatic Park, it was even more fun realizing how happy the people of San Francisco were to have this waterfront back again.



The story is not over, for parks produce a “ripple effect”. The old working port of San Francisco, that gap-toothed smile of piers we call the Embarcadero, is also changing. The place where the great ships came and went, bearing the intangible mystery of the unknown and the faraway, has fewer stevedores in white caps these days and more joggers in sateen shorts. The warehouses facing it have given way to parkland, plazas, swank housing, elegant offices, restaurants, and shops.

A new waterfront walk between the Ferry Building and the Bay Bridge has been opened, complete with waterstairs and viewing places, since Mayor Diane Feinstein has come into office. Next in line is South Beach. The time will come when that thumb of land that is the San Francisco Peninsula can be walked at its watery borders from Candlestick Park to Daly City.

That’s real access success. □

Margot Patterson Doss, author and television personality, has written seven books and is best known for her weekly column in the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Region Reconsidered

The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective. Mel Scott. University of California Press, 1985. \$57.50

Golden Gate Metropolis: Perspectives on Bay Area History. Charles Wollenberg, Institute of Government Studies, University of California, Berkeley; 1985. \$14.95. Copies may be purchased directly from the Institute.

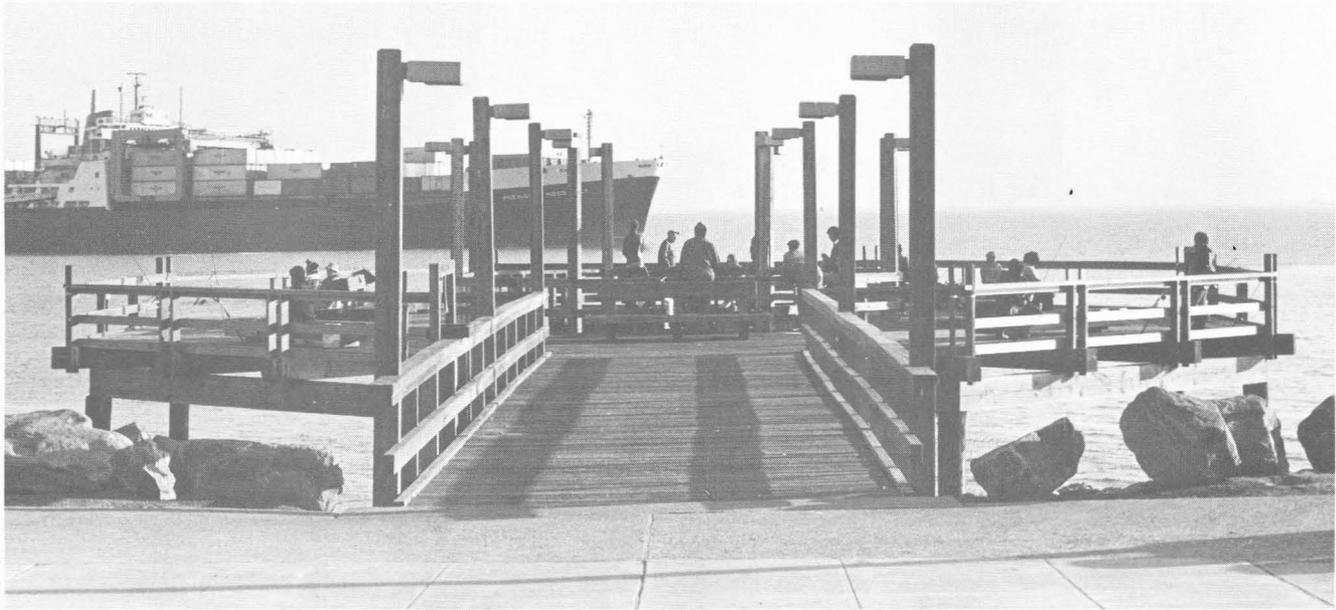
"The dominant popular version of the Bay Area's past," Charles Wollenberg writes, "is a romantic pageant led by kindly friars and colorful forty-niners." Now, by a fortunate coincidence, we have two excellent volumes that can correct the popular view. Mel Scott's book is a new edition of his classic text which first appeared in 1959 and for many years has been a collector's item. Wollenberg's book is an entirely new collection of essays, originally planned as the basis of a television series. Both books are indispensable because they examine the history of the region as an interconnected metropolis, rather than an assortment of isolated communities. Scott originally wrote his volume to demonstrate that the whole region was such a metropolis that some form of regional government was necessary; Wollenberg's volume investigates the region's history in a more comprehensive way, taking into account social forces and political issues ignored by Scott. The two books are therefore ideal when read together.

The new edition of *The San Francisco Bay Area* is a reprint of the 1959 edition with a new preface and an additional chapter. As the pioneering attempt at regional history, the 1959 edition is virtually faultless. It is a beautifully written and often absorbing account of the growth of a regional con-

sciousness, from the scattered settlements of the first colonists to the mushrooming suburbs of the pro-growth late 1950s. Drawing amply on original sources, Scott shows how the communities that ring the bay were gradually knit ever more tightly together. Throughout the narrative he concentrates on planning issues: town layouts, the growth of commerce and industry, the development of transportation and water-supply systems, the emergence of city planning, and ultimately the movement to foster region-wide planning. By the end of the 1959 book, the case for regional solutions is overwhelming: the population of the area seems to be exploding, tract homes are fast spreading over the rural areas that once separated communities, freeways are clogged, wetlands are disappearing, and air and water pollution threaten the whole metropolis.

Twenty-five years later, the new chapter tells a rather different story. Population growth has slowed dramatically, and political measures have been adopted to slow growth even further. Now no one needs to be persuaded that a regional perspective is essential; single-purpose regional agencies like the Bay Commission and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission are a fact of life. But the idea of a regional government to coordinate their activities died in the mid-1970s, and environmental problems continue to threaten the area despite the concerted efforts of the regional agencies. Scott still ends with an urgent plea: "Never did the times cry out so loudly for far-sighted men and women to take command."

While Scott looks at the Bay Area's past from a planner's point of view, Wollenberg examines it from the point of view of a social historian. His book is a series of short essays which do not attempt to survey all the major events of a



given period; instead the essays interpret specific historical themes. For example, a fascinating essay on the decline of the original Mexican ranchos explains the process by which Yankee settlers illegally displaced the Hispanic elite. For the owners of these vast estates, not even success in court could withstand the onslaught of the Anglo squatters and hucksters with their frontier mentality.

Other essays deal with such themes as labor relations, immigration patterns, the development of ports and rail systems, and the role of women in the growth of higher education. Throughout the essays Wollenberg shows a rare ability to make succinct historical explanations of complex social changes. In one paragraph, for instance, he traces the reasons why maritime workers were slow to unionize; one of the more interesting obstacles was San Francisco's underworld, which feared that its bars and brothels along the "Barbary Coast" would suffer if union halls replaced them as recruiting centers.

Like Scott, Wollenberg has more than just an academic reason for writing his book. He is interested in demonstrating that, even if the population of the Bay Area has been too transient to establish a common history, the place has a history

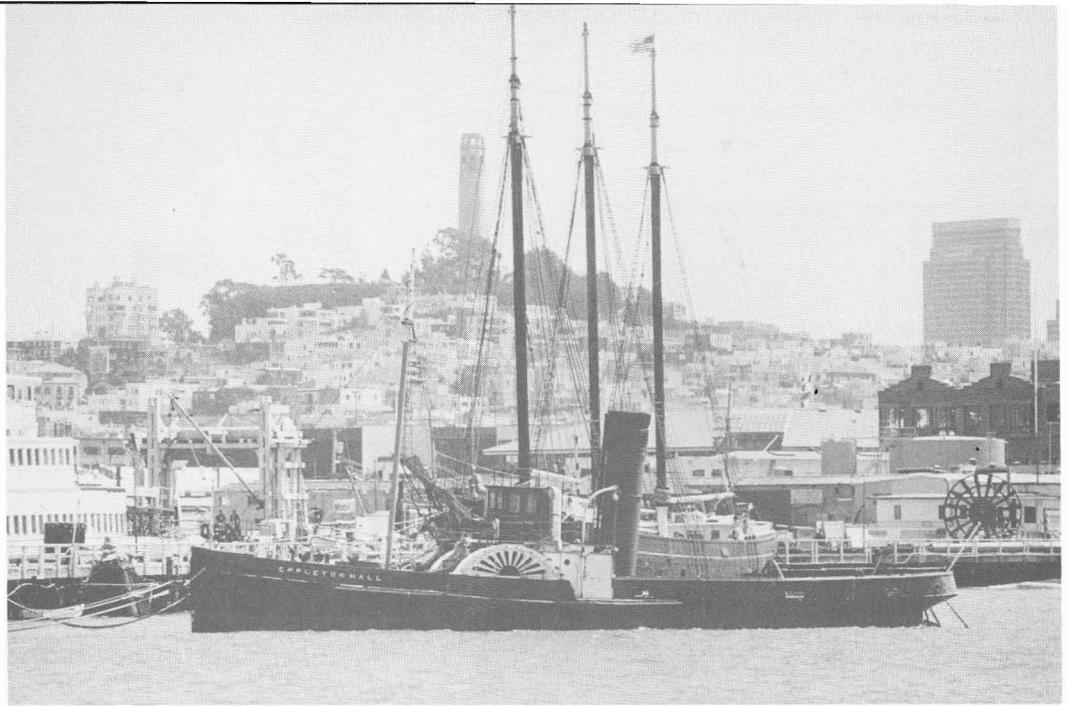
which all of us share. The settlement patterns and social conditions of today have historical roots stretching backward to World War II shipyards, transcontinental railroads, and Spanish land grants. By exploring the historical roots in the two fascinating volumes we now have, we can, in Wollenberg's words, "preserve the best of the old, while moving cautiously toward the new."

—Kirk Savage

A Good Catch

Pier Fishing on San Francisco Bay.
Mike Hayden. Chronicle Books, 1982.
\$5.95

One of the most noticeable benefits of the movement to save the bay has been the restoration and construction of numerous piers. For many people these piers offer a convenient way to enjoy the salt air and open space of the bay; they also provide, right inside urban areas, good spots for fishing where no permit is required. *Pier Fishing on San Francisco Bay* capitalizes on this special form of access. The book is a complete guide to the piers which have sprung up around the bay, as well as an excellent introduction to the sport of pier fishing.



For people who know little about fishing, Mike Hayden offers a great deal of useful advice on such things as what kind of tackle to use, what kind of bait to use when angling for a specific kind of fish, and how to clean and cook the fish once you've caught it.

For experienced anglers and for the general reader, the most engaging part of the book will undoubtedly be the thorough descriptions of the thirty-three Bay Area fishing piers (some located in such unlikely places as between the container cranes in Oakland's port or behind a steam plant in the Mission District). Each entry gives a history of the area around the pier and lots of entertaining historical facts. Along the way you can learn how Candlestick Park got its name and where the oldest wildlife sanctuary in the United States is. Each entry also tells what kind of fish frequent the pier at what time of year. Helpful pointers from "old regulars" at the piers are often included. Some of this advice gets very specific: for example, at the Muni Pier in San Francisco the reader is told to fish "from the midsection of the pier with light tackle, a half ounce sinker, and No. 6 or No. 8 hook baited with a pile worm, shrimp, or slice of anchovy." Hayden also gives a thorough list of facilities available at or near each pier, the hours the pier is open, and how to get there by car or public transportation.

This well-researched, clearly written, and chatty book is perfect for anyone interested in fishing—whether experienced fisherman or armchair angler.

—Elizabeth Thomas

Save the Ships

Historic Ships of San Francisco: A Collective History and Guide to the Restored Historic Vessels of the National Maritime Museum. Steven E. Levingston. Chronicle Books, 1984. \$8.95

"The color of San Francisco," Karl Kortum wrote in 1949, "is epitomized by cable cars and her position as the city by the sea. And yet I doubt whether there is a duller waterfront—more thoroughly cemented up—in the whole of the United States."

Kortum, till now one of the unsung heroes of the San Francisco waterfront, was trying to persuade a Chronicle editor that there was a solution: turn Aquatic Park into a showcase for historic ships and maritime artifacts. Kortum had a magnificent dream of reestablishing a fragment of the historic waterfront as it was in the days when San Francisco was a port bustling with Yankee Clipper ships, Cape Horners, whaling vessels, and modest scows. It would be both a living monument to the ships that built the city and a research institution for local maritime history.

Through the efforts of Kortum and many others, part of his dream has come true. While his "forest of masts" never materialized, a few trees are visible at the Hyde Street Pier along with a national maritime museum. But the several historic vessels which have been purchased and restored are in trouble, and this book is in part a plea for more help.

Historic Ships of San Francisco is a highly entertaining description of a half-dozen vessels now in the possession of the National Park Service and open to public view along the city's north waterfront. The book begins with an interesting account of the struggle to establish a maritime center. Levingston's narrative gives readers a glimpse into the political atmosphere of postwar San Francisco. These were the days when the editors of four newspapers could join together and decide to get something done; they knew a good idea when they saw one. While Kortum had a sense for "the stuff whereof a good newspaper campaign is made," the editors had the sense to pressure the mayor privately and give him credit publicly.

The rest of the book is devoted to the ships themselves, which are remarkably interesting even to those who haven't the foggiest idea what a jib is. Included are a submarine, a Liberty ship, and, most importantly, a representative sampling of the vessels which made San Francisco grow and prosper. The *Balclutha*, a large three-masted "square-rigger" first launched in 1886, took men and supplies from the city to the salmon canneries in Alaska; in 1934 it appeared in *Mutiny on the Bounty*, and later it toured the West Coast as a phony pirate ship. The schooner *C.A. Thayer* was built to haul lumber from the North Coast to San Francisco, but after steam-powered vessels took over the lumber trade it served on harrowing cod-fishing expeditions in the Bering Sea. Less glamorous but even more important to the local economy was the scow *Alma*, a squat sixty-foot sailboat designed to take hay and other essential goods through the narrow, shallow waterways of the greater bay and the delta.

Sandwiched into the story of each vessel is a good bit of social history, made vivid with the help of numerous old photographs. We learn about the caste system aboard salmon-packing ships like the *Balclutha*, in which unfavored ethnic groups were lumped together in a "China gang" and packed into squalid quarters in the ship's fore-castle. Conditions for white fishermen on the salmon and cod vessels were almost luxurious by comparison, but their work was shockingly arduous. Once the cod fishermen reached the Bering Sea, their daily routine was to take a tiny dory out in the freezing sea, one man per boat, and weather unexpected gales while keeping two fishing lines active. Their reward: one and a half cents per pound caught. Life on a scow in the calmer bay waters was no easy task either. When the waters were too calm, the crew had to pull the boat forward with ropes, or use paddles or poles; once the scow reached the loading wharf, a customary way to secure a good docking position from competing scows was not a government permit but a good fistfight.

These and other historical tidbits make it abundantly clear that the restored vessels docked in San Francisco are cultural treasures that resurrect a way of life now vanished. Unfortunately, their maintenance requires a constant and ample source of funding. Lack of money already threatens one previously restored vessel, the *Alma*, which is rotting in the Oakland estuary. The expense of maintaining the fleet puts pressure on an already tight National Park Service budget, and even more money is needed. We can only hope that old ships, like Italian operas, will find generous donors. Perhaps the National Park Service, under its new director, William Penn Mott, will be able to make creative partnerships with better-funded private organizations that can help preserve this essential component of San Francisco's waterfront heritage.

—Kirk Savage

□

Joe's Corner
continued from page 2

regulators. At Oceanside, for example, the city had proposed a wall of shoreline condominiums, unacceptable to the Coastal Commission because it would have blocked off the beach. Through a process of citizen-attended design workshops, the Conservancy was able to help negotiate a plan acceptable to all parties. In these conflict situations, the Conservancy has tried to break the impasse by bringing an economic viewpoint to bear on the issues. Keeping the hard numbers in mind, the Conservancy has proposed solutions that meet not only the regulatory goals of the state but the economic interests of the local government and the developer.

Our access program was also designed to solve a crisis of sorts—the inability of regulatory authority to open up the beach. We decided not to wait for local coastal planning to finish its tortuous course, but instead to push forward with urgently needed accessways, simple paths or stairways that would allow people to reach the water. In eight years we paid for over 110 accessways that opened up significant portions of beach, many in popular areas like Malibu and Big Sur.

As the agency has matured, our work has evolved from alleviating piecemeal crises to developing long-range and comprehensive solutions. With the access program, now that we have built the most immediately needed accessways, we are looking only at projects that fit into a comprehensive scheme for a given area. In particular, over the past few years a great deal of our work has been in helping develop integrated programs to revitalize the waterfronts of small cities. Much of the recreational potential of the coast lies in small cities like Oceanside or Morro Bay, and we are designing overall approaches to develop that potential in an economically feasible way. Accessways often form only one component in a strategy that might include pier restoration, park development, and commercial expansion.

Similarly, in our wetlands program, we are not only paying to restore degraded marshes but we are beginning to address the larger problem of managing the watersheds that the marshes depend upon. No matter how well a wetland is restored or how securely it is protected by regulation against filling or dredging, it will not survive if a disturbed watershed dumps silt on top of it. In Tomales Bay, Los Peñasquitos Lagoon, and other areas, we are using siltation devices and selected acquisitions to help control those human disturbances to the watershed which threaten the wetlands below.

I believe the Conservancy's success will continue to depend even more on how well it can do this kind of problem solving. Up and down the California coast, wetlands have been saved from encroaching development, access has been improved, and other pressing problems have been addressed. Now it becomes all the more important to preserve and consolidate those gains for future generations. Southern California's wetlands will not survive without management of their watersheds; existing beaches will be overtaxed if new recreational facilities are not developed. The Conservancy has begun the arduous task of tackling these broader and more complex issues of land management. Over the last decade the only new state environmental agencies created were the Santa Monica Mountains and Tahoe Conservancies, both modeled after the Coastal Conservancy. In an age of hostility toward bigger government, the success which the Conservancy has had and the support it continues to receive are welcome and promising signs for the future.

Five Years on the Bay

IN THIS ISSUE commemorating the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, I will offer a few words on how the Conservancy has applied its multiple techniques and programs to San Francisco Bay, which came under the agency's jurisdiction in 1981. The bayshore, like

the coast, has a regulatory agency—the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission—with the authority to limit harmful development but without the authority to build accessways or restore marshes. The Conservancy's efforts complement those of the Bay Commission; to make the most of this relationship, the Conservancy has tried to use the comprehensive approaches which evolved out of our coastal experience.

San Francisco Bay is essentially an urban body of water. The Conservancy has therefore aimed its bay programs at urban needs. The ultimate goal of the access program is to create a shoreline trail which connects all the major cities of the bay. Between Oakland and San Jose the trail is now almost complete. The Conservancy has funded walking trails or bicycle paths at Lake Merritt, Vallejo, Hayward, Benicia, and Palo Alto, and has funded nearly twenty other access projects. In all, the agency is responsible for a total of fifteen miles of new shoreline trails.

One of the more innovative components of the Conservancy's access program is its barrier-free work. Five projects from Coyote Point to Benicia will change facilities to make them accessible to handicapped persons; this "retrofitting" includes installing ramps, making curb cuts, and remodelling restrooms. Hopefully these projects will serve as models for new recreational facilities on the bay. Some of the Conservancy's other wide-ranging recreational projects include a fishing pier in Napa county and a shoreline park in Berkeley planted with indigenous species. Most recently the Conservancy has funded the purchase of an extensive area along the Carquinez shoreline surrounding Port Costa. This will thoroughly preserve one of the few remaining open space and recreational areas in the East Bay.

The challenge which our wetlands program faces in the bay is to create and maintain habitat in urban areas. Potentially one of the most important mechanisms for this is the Conservancy's new mitigation bank program, which works

in conjunction with regulatory agencies. Developers are sometimes allowed to fill or otherwise damage wetland habitat if they provide for replacement habitat somewhere off the project site. However, compliance with these "offsite" requirements has been disappointing, so the mitigation bank program was designed to make developers comply more effectively. The idea is that the Conservancy will restore certain historic wetlands on the bay and "deposit" their habitat value in a land bank; then developers with offsite requirements will have the option of simply reimbursing the agency for some portion of the habitat value. In this way habitat replacement is achieved *before* the developer destroys any wetland, and the Conservancy can reuse the developer's funds for additional wetland restoration. The Conservancy already has an agreement with the Bay Commission to carry out the program, and a pilot mitigation site on San Pablo Bay may be restored later this year.

Another way to help restore wetlands in urban areas is to use treated wastewater. On the bayfront in Hayward, the Conservancy is cooperating in a project that will use effluent to create 160 acres of freshwater and brackish marsh. The project is similar to the Arcata marsh restoration featured in the second issue of *California WaterfrontAge*.

Recently the Conservancy has focused on creeks which feed the bay but are threatened by encroaching urban development. On Rush Creek, in Marin County, the Conservancy is developing an integrated strategy to purchase and restore habitat *and* to address the upland areas which could threaten that habitat. Projects such as this rely on a whole arsenal of techniques employed in a comprehensive approach.

In the years ahead, the Conservancy will continue to help build on the regulatory and planning successes of the Bay Commission. The Conservancy is in an ideal position to play an important role in restoring diked baylands, expanding recreational opportunities, and meeting the other crucial challenges of the future. □

Donald B. Neuwirth

The Waterfront Community

THIS MAGAZINE is an expression of a community. *California WaterfrontAge* does not carry investment tips, self-improvement features or lifestyle profiles. It is read by people who share an interest in what is happening on the waterfront. The very existence of this magazine and the community it represents can be traced to a remarkable organization that first spurred interest in protecting San Francisco Bay, the Save San Francisco Bay Association. By changing the perception of San Francisco Bay from a purely natural resource or development opportunity to a community resource, this group fostered a revival of interest in the waterfront that has since spread far and wide.

In their recent critically acclaimed book, *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his associates define community as a group of people who are socially interdependent; who participate together in discussion and decision making; and who share certain activities that are not undertaken as a means to an end but are ethically good in themselves. These practices, usually involving strong commitment, both define the community and are nurtured by it.

Twenty years ago, the women of the Save San Francisco Bay Association united conservationists in a vision of the bay which transcended self-interests of property owners and parochial local agencies. They made the bay a community treasure—an ecologic system of economic, natural, and recreational importance whose integrity, if not its very existence, was threatened by current trends. Rather than create a mere special-interest group, they united widely diverse interests around the general aim of saving this precious resource. Yet, despite their idealism, they were adroit in the techniques of power politics. They



succeeded in mobilizing the community to lobby for the creation of a regulatory commission; since the advent of the commission, they have sustained their influence and have managed to participate in every commission meeting.

Central to this group's image of the bay has been public access. Contrary to some people's fears, increased access to the bay has resulted in environmental improvement, not degradation. The more people could fish, sail, or watch the bay, the more they have clamored to keep it clean and intact.

This notion of the bay as a community resource is reinforced at each commission session. For a regulatory agency, the commission's meetings are remarkably free of contention. This is evidence of the wide consensus that guides the agency, developers, and local government in the use of the waterfront. The controversies that do exist mainly concern issues outside the commission's jurisdiction. Regional transportation needs, diked wetlands, water quality, and watershed issues are often raised but not resolved. Nonetheless, the commission's function as a forum for discussing these issues shows just how wide its role in the community can be.

This community role in the twenty-year tradition of bay management owes much to the Save San Francisco Bay Association. Perhaps, the shoreline is best saved from the moral highland. □

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