

Machines in the Valley:
Community, Urban Change, and Environmental Politics
in Silicon Valley, 1945–1990

by
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Machines in the Valley:
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University of Nebraska, 2016

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Using Silicon Valley as a case study, this dissertation examines how activists influenced by the environmental movement reconfigured urban culture in the American West. *Machines in the Valley* argues that the spatial influences of the region's urban development gave rise to modern environmentalism that arose to criticize growth, but along the way failed to ultimately shape growth policies. While high technology sought to introduce a new urban form predicated on "clean and green" industries and an environmental urbanism, the premise of "clean" industry proved elusive.

High technology industrialization emerged as a key component of economic and urban development in postwar era, particularly in western states seeking to diversify their economic activities. Industrialization produced thousands of new jobs, but development proved problematic when faced with competing views about land use. The natural allure that accompanied the thousands coming West gave rise to a modern environmental movement calling for strict limitations on urban growth, the preservation of open spaces, and pollution reduction. These views on land use lay at the center of these conflicts. Conflict over the Santa Clara Valley's land use tells the story not only of Silicon Valley's development, but Americans' changing understanding of nature and the environmental costs of urban and industrial development during the postwar era.

The dissertation makes three contributions. First, it challenges the "Rise of the Right" narrative that argues for the collapse of growth liberalism in the

1970s. Instead, Silicon Valley demonstrates that a suburban liberalism was forged in high-tech regions. Furthermore, the suburban liberal character of Silicon Valley challenges the view of suburbs as bastions of conservatism. The suburbanites of the Valley maintained a belief in the role of government, quality-of-life, civil rights, and environmental quality in their communities. Second, it brings “nature” into the story of Silicon Valley, arguing for the concept’s role in the shaping of the region. Third, the study expands the story of Silicon Valley beyond the usual narratives of key figures of the technology industry. By focusing on the development of Silicon Valley in the postwar era, this study uncovers the ways the political economy of Silicon Valley was laid after World War II.

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For Margo and Lena

Imagine your own future:

You can see a web of parks throughout the cities replacing the freeways and streets that once dominated. You can see agriculture become diversified again, with a great variety of crops grown together, replacing the old reliance on mass produced single crop operations that are highly dependent on pesticides, machines, and cheap farm labor....

More fruits and vegetables have insects on them instead of poisons. They can be brushed off or swallowed accidentally without harm...

Economists rethink growth and know that "growth for the sake of growth is the ideology of the cancer cell" as Edward Abbey pointed out...

There is less spectator sport and more participating...

People are healthier. Fewer coronaries strike the people because walking and bicycling and swimming keep them fitter...

Many of the people who were producing automobiles have been shifted into the housing or building industry. Their main job is restructuring the urban wastes to planned cities, restoring land to good agricultural use, building high-quality clustered dwellings at the edges of the good agricultural land, using recycled materials from the old buildings. People ride the short distance to their work and have a chance to farm a little in the sun. There are legs and arms and abdomens where the flab was, and the air is once again transparent...

The job of the garbage man and junk man is elevated to the stature of recycling engineer, looping systems in such a way that materials cause no environmental deterioration...

Advertising serves to inform, not to over stimulate, and is believable again...

So much for one view of the future—more Utopian than likely, unless people want it that way...

The thing people must realize above all is that the solution to our environmental crisis involves simple, small measures by many people in accelerating sequence.

—Friends of the Earth, "Projections for a Tenable Future," 1970

We found that the things that needed the most attention were those close to people—physically as well as emotionally. In seeking to translate people's yearning for natural beauty into practical programs, the primary challenge is the environment where most people live and work—our cities and the suburbs and countryside around them.

—Laurence Rockefeller, *Beauty for America*, 1965

More than ever before, scholars, scientists and planners are concentrating on the natural and the human environment. The most hopeful sign of all, however, is that this is not a revolution imposed from above but one rising from the bottom. In every city and in thousands of towns and obscure neighborhoods, there are housewives and homeowners banding together to fight, block by block, sometimes tree by tree, to save a small hill, a tiny brook, a stand of maples. The fight to preserve the spectacles of nature—the majestic rivers, the remote mountains, the wild canyons—is 100 years old. The struggle to save the modest beauty of men's own backyards is new and promising.

—Ben Bagdikian, "The Rape of the Land," *Saturday Evening Post*, June 18, 1966.

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No dissertation is completed under the common misconception of the “lone scholar” working in the archives. Every scholarly project is a project of collaboration, and I have many to thank for helping finish this one. I had the good fortune of working on and completing this dissertation under two communities. First, I started this dissertation at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln under the watchful and prodding eyes of Douglas Seefeldt. The roots of my project stem from an early historiographical paper I wrote on urban history and new economies in the American West, which jump-started my interest in western cities. When Doug left to join Ball State University, Patrick Jones graciously agreed to supervise my dissertation. Patrick has been the advisor we all hope for, pushing me to think more clearly and sharply. His ever-persistent guiding has helped craft this work into something much better than it otherwise would have been.

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Introduction: The Nature of Landscape

A geographer speaks as though his knowledge of space and place were derived exclusively from books, maps, aerial photographs, and structured field surveys. He writes as though people were endowed with mind and vision and no other sense with which to apprehend the world and find meaning in it. He and the architect-planner tend to assume familiarity—the fact that we are oriented in space and at home in place—rather than describe and try to understand what “being-in-the-world” is truly like.¹

—Yi-Fu Tuan

The subtle, intangible, but soul-deep mix of landscape, smells, sounds, history . . . that constitute a place, a homeland.²

—Charles Wilkinson

Wallace Stegner felt developers betrayed his homeland. From his house in the Santa Cruz foothills, the Stanford creative writing professor lamented the changes occurring to the Santa Clara Valley in 1965, condemning the urban sprawl that had overtaken the former farmland. “The orchards that used to be a spring garden of bloom down the long trough of the Santa Clara Valley,” he wrote, “have gone under so fast that a person absent for five years could return and think himself in another country. . . . The once-lovely coast hills reaching down the Peninsula below San Francisco have been crusted with houses in half a lifetime, the hilltops flattened, whole hills carried off to fill the bay, the creeks turned into concrete storm drains.”³ In Stegner’s lifetime, the valley had transformed

¹Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997): 200–201.

²Charles Wilkinson, *The Eagle Bird: Mapping a New West* (New York: Pantheon, 1992), 137–138.

³Wallace Stegner, “The Clouded Skies of Lotus Land,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, September 26, 1965, quoted in Michael Friedly, “‘This Brief Eden’: A History of Landscape Change in California’s Santa Clara Valley” (PhD Thesis, Duke University, 2000), 5. Stegner’s novel *All the Little Live Things*, was written based on the Santa Clara Valley. The novel’s character, Joe Allston, lamented the bulldozers, subdivisions, and scars that cut into the Earth. Remarking on the work of the fiction’s land developer, Allston said that the hills were “mutilated and ruined” and “only a land butcher

from prime agricultural land to a place known for urban sprawl, traffic jams, and manufacturing facilities. Stegner felt so betrayed by the changes to the land that he wished to be buried not in California—the place that had so deeply shaped his writing and identity—but in his summer home of Vermont.⁴

Like many living in the Santa Clara Valley, Stegner was a newcomer to this place. Born in 1909 in north-central Iowa, he came to California to teach in the creative writing program at Stanford University. In Stegner's imagination the Santa Clara Valley had fallen far from its once pristine grace. He wrote of "a park-like oak forest reaching southward from a clean bay" when the Ohlone people occupied the region. "The climate was mild and benevolent," Stegner wrote of this place, "the bay full of shellfish. The creeksides tangles grew wild berries and the oaks provided the wherewithal for unlimited acorn flour." He not only celebrated this imagined pre-European landscape, but the post-European one as well. As fields of wheat and fruit groves planted by Spanish missionaries began to transform the Bay Area into an agricultural landscape, Stegner celebrated these as "a glory" in which pears, prunes, apricots, cherry blossoms, and apples were an improvement to the land. Looking from the window of his home, the land he witnessed was now more asphalt than plowed field. New economies defined new landscapes in the Santa Clara Valley. "This brief Eden," as Stegner referred to the Valley, fell to the original sin of industrialization.⁵

Frederick E. Terman interpreted the landscape differently. The Stanford University provost and dean of engineering—often referred to as the "Father of Silicon Valley"—saw suburbanization and expansion of industry in the Santa

could have proposed and carried it out. . . . There would be no restoring what he had ruined. It reminded me too painfully; it made me sick to look." Stegner, *The Little Live Things*, (New York: Viking, 1967), 14–15.

⁴Jackson J. Benson, *Wallace Stegner: His Life and Work* (New York: Viking, 1996), xii. See also Friedly, "'This Brief Eden'," 4–5.

⁵Benson, *Wallace Stegner*, xi. On the area's historical ecology, see William S. Cooper, "Vegetational Development upon Alluvial Fans in the Vicinity of Palo Alto, CA," *Ecology* 7 (January 1927): 11.

Clara Valley not as signs of degradation, but rather signposts towards a new prosperous future for Stanford, for Santa Clara County, for California, and for the nation. Rather than representing encroaching sprawl, the nascent Stanford Industrial Park and the lands around the university, were, in the words of one booster, a “pleasant place” of “broad lawns, employee patios, trees, flowers and shrubs, walls of glass, recreational clubs” that stood in contrast to the “smoke-stacks, noise, coal cars, soot and other things” found in the industrial East and Midwest.⁶ The landscape appeared campus-like and suburban, amenities that reflected the values of Stanford and surrounding suburban communities. Although complaints of traffic and air pollution had become common by the mid-1960s, Terman dismissed these criticisms. The Industrial Park had done much for the Bay Area’s economy, and Terman felt congestion and air pollution were “really a pretty small price to pay.”⁷

These competing visions of the Santa Clara Valley landscape reflected widely-held and conflicting ideas about the future of a political project called Silicon Valley. The Valley represented a new feature of the American West, an economic and political project marrying a pastoral idealism with the building a new high tech urbanism. In the face of postwar residential growth and industrial development, the Santa Clara Valley’s landscape changed remarkably. The arrival of machines in the Valley—bulldozers and computers—transformed the landscape once again, and in the process sparked important discussions with national implications about creating an idealized high-tech metropolitan region that balanced a vision of the California Dream with the high tech suburbs.

Silicon Valley also represented an important national project in post-World War II America as the urban industrial model of the Northeast and Midwest that

⁶Quoted in John M. Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture After 1940* (University of California Press, 1993), 130.

⁷Terman, quoted in Findlay, *Magic Lands*, 141.

had dominated the organizing principle of American society from the late 19th century began to decline. As the old industrial cores of the Rust Belt decayed, discourse about what to do with this flagging industrial economy emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. How would America rebuild its economy, communities, and spirit of innovation? A moment of possibility emerged for Silicon Valley, pointing to the significance of the local becoming nationally significant.

The engineers, scientists, academics, and other knowledge professionals who congregated into the suburbs led to a convergence of ideals and attitudes about natural beauty, open space, livable and sustainable cities, and access to leisure. These political causes animated both liberals and conservatives, who found common ground—if not common goals—for their region. The San Jose city council Republican Virginia Shaffer, for instance, based her anti-growth politics on homeowner interests—levying criticism against inadequate city services, rising tax burdens for suburbanites, as well as the rapid pace of growth for growth's sake. Less than ten years after Shaffer's election, Democrat Janet Gray Hayes' ascent to the San Jose mayor's office reflected a continued criticism of the city's growth orientation. These suburbanites catalyzed grassroots environmental political activity for a range of causes, rooted in a belief that their region was unique among the nation's high-tech suburbs. Santa Clara Valley activists who got their start in the fair housing movement of the 1950s found themselves becoming open space advocates by the 1960s, arguing that these places mattered for creating livable and equitable cities. Open space and environmental movements organized throughout the Peninsula, reacting to changes in the land by working through traditional channels of political power. Their activity was felt through many policies and laws later adopted by the federal, state, and regional governments, including stricter regulations on high-tech pollutants and open space and growth control

laws.⁸

Suburban activists pursued environmental causes for open space, leisure, and protection from pollution, which largely reflected the class identity and priorities of affluent suburban liberals. These suburban environmentalists enjoyed what they did—working jobs at research and development labs, earning a better-than-average paycheck, living in affluent homes and exclusive communities, and enjoying leisure time and access to open space—because of federal policies emerging from pro-growth New Deal liberalism and the Cold War military-industrial-academic complex. Environmental activists achieved many victories, including widespread protection of wilderness areas, shifting the growth priorities of city councils and planning commissions, and forming an environmental politic that influenced the outcomes of local and national elections. Yet their failings underline the political forces that constrained their activities. Furthermore, their neglect, willful or otherwise, of issues surrounding race and gender highlights the limits of their vision for a high tech urbanism predicated on freedom from the problems decaying postwar American cities.⁹ Environmental campaigns to offer quality-of-life benefits largely served the affluent suburbs rather than the inner cities or barrios. Silicon Valley's small yet influential populations of Latinos, African Americans, and Asian Americans dealt with a different side of Silicon Valley—one far more segregated, discriminatory, polluted, and hazardous to human health.

The story told here is about a particular place and an expression of envi-

⁸On the emergence of environmentalism from within American suburbs, see Christopher C. Sellers, *Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature and the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Adam Rome, *Bulldozer in the Countryside: Suburban Sprawl and the Rise of American Environmentalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Joseph L. Arnold, *The New Deal in the Suburbs: A History of the Greenbelt Town Program, 1935–1954* (Cleveland: Ohio State University Press, 1971);, Andrew R. Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

⁹On the decline of American cities, see Robert M. Fogelson, *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880–1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Thomas Sugrue, *The Origins of the Suburban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

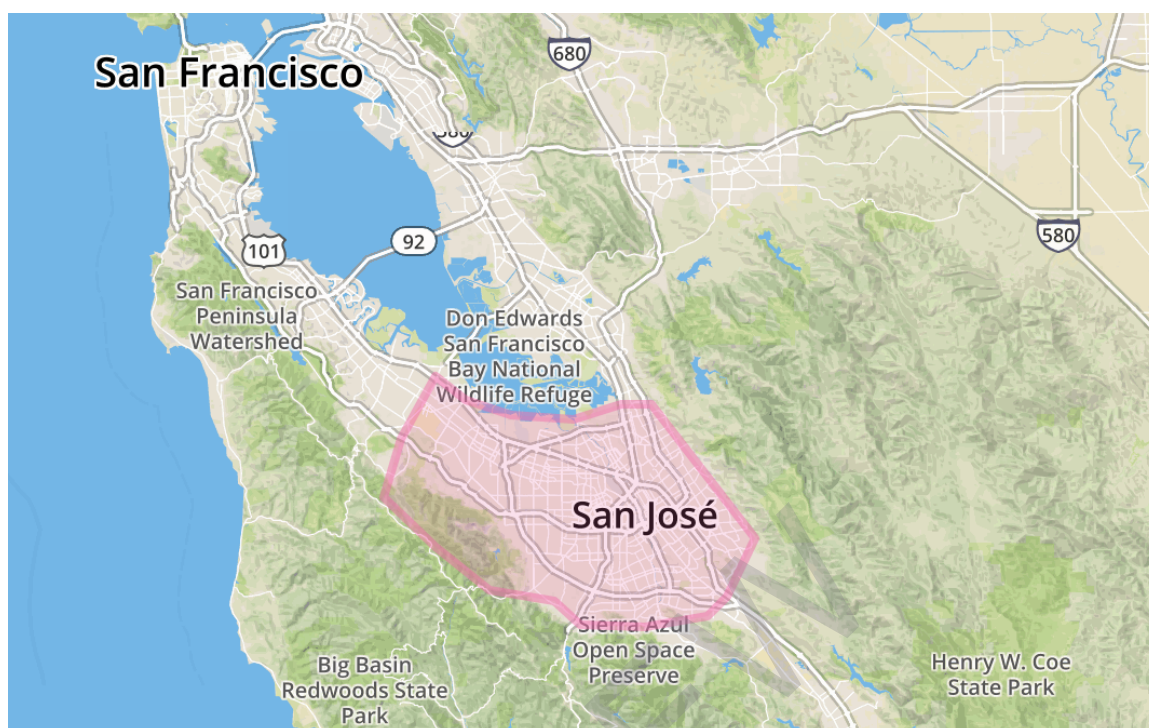


Figure 1: The boundaries of Silicon Valley.

ronmental politics limited by the cultural orientation of its proponents. I do not venture into efforts of the San Francisco Bay's conservation, fights over the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) transportation system, or open space battles beyond Santa Clara County. My focus is on a specific valley, the Santa Clara Valley, where the core of Silicon Valley emerged among growth and corporate interests. Silicon Valley is an amorphous, ever-changing place that has undergone continuous reshaping since its beginnings in the 1940s as high technology firms expanded throughout Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco counties on the Peninsula. I define Silicon Valley by its economic and industrial activity in semiconductor plants, microcomputer manufacturing, and software development. The borders of Silicon Valley today could easily extend northward into San Francisco, whose high-tech industry is rapidly growing, and as far south as Morgan Hill and as far to east as Fremont or Oakland. But for the majority of the history examined ahead, the bulk of high tech industrial activity largely occurred in Santa Clara

County. For the purposes of this study, Palo Alto borders Silicon Valley at the northern end of the county and San Jose bounds it to the south (see Figure 1). Between and including these two cities, the greatest concentrations of high tech manufacturing took place. Here is where the landscape changed so dramatically, and the visions espoused by Stegner and Terman initiated the greatest conflict.¹⁰

This study is largely focused on local history. Yet it also attempts to examine these changes at various scales: neighborhood, city, region, and nation. Heeding Andrew Needham's call that the history of suburbanization must look beyond cities to understand how suburban growth affected places beyond their borders, I suggest we can best understand the history of Silicon Valley not only from its unique local contexts but also by seeing how the valley shaped both regional and national political trends. Although any one of the cities of Santa Clara County—which numbered 14 municipal corporations by the 1990s—would work well for analyzing the trends in environmental politics, by thinking about these changes as a regional level reveals how metropolitan places shaped one another across space. In Silicon Valley, several centers of high tech activity emerged to serve new businesses and their affluent employees—Palo Alto, San Jose, Santa Clara, Mountain View, Sunnyvale.

Silicon Valley became a gold standard for its suburban form of high-tech urbanism, cited by journalists, scholars, critics, and pundits throughout the country as an example of a friendly business climate, suburban retreat, and economic powerhouse. Places as varied as Atlanta, Georgia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Cleveland, Ohio, Omaha, Nebraska, Bangalore, India, Mission Hills in the Guangdong Province of China, and Shenzhen, China, have all looked to Silicon Valley

¹⁰I am comprising a database of Silicon Valley tech companies between 1940 and 1990, which currently numbers close to 2,000 companies culled from archival sources, city directories, and industrial pamphlets and guidebooks. The bulk of these companies are located in the northern end of Santa Clara County. See Chapter 2 for more discussion about the spread and location of these companies. The full database is online at https://github.com/hepplerj/machinesvalley/blob/gh-pages/data-files/sv-companies/sv_companies.csv.

as a vision for their futures—sometimes even going so far as to model their architectural designs after the Spanish villa and ranch aesthetic of Stanford University. Across the United States, places borrow the “Silicon” moniker to describe the “Silicon Forest” of Oregon, the “Silicon Desert” of Arizona and the Southwest, and “Silicon Prairie” to variously describe similar suburbs in the Midwestern states, Texas, or Wyoming—markers of place meant to represent regions grounded in high tech.¹¹ Silicon Valley represents not only an example of a modern city, but also an alluring model for promoting economic and urban revitalization through technological industrial growth.

That promise has been consistently applied to cities in the American West. Electronics became a key component of the West’s new economy as it shifted away from its historical extractive industries of mining, lumbering, and agriculture towards service, tourism, and knowledge work.¹² Throughout the West electronics manufacturers established headquarters, manufacturing facilities, and research offices, often courted by pro-growth advocates in city governments. These new industries pointed to the West as the leader of the nation’s economic future predicated on a Cold War defense industry.¹³ Western cities were not replicating the steel age industries of the Midwest and East, with their smokestacks and

¹¹See, for example, Margaret O’Mara, “Silicon Valleys,” *Boom: A Journal of California* 1 (Summer 2011) <http://www.boomcalifornia.com/2011/06/silicon-valleys/>; Gordon B. Dodds and Craig E. Wollner, *Silicon Forest: High Tech in the Portland Area, 1945–1986* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 2000); Heike Mayer, “Planting High-Technology Seeds: Tektronix’s Role in the Creation of Portland’s Silicon Forest,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 106, no. 4 (December 2005): 568–593; George Ernest Webb, *Science in the American Southwest: A Topical History* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2002); Stuart W. Leslie, “Regional Disadvantage: Replicating Silicon Valley in New York’s Capital Region,” *Technology and Culture* 42, no. 2 (April 2001): 236–264; Gordon B. Dodds, Craig E. Wollner, and Marshall M. Dodds Lee, *The Silicon Forest: High Tech in the Portland Area, 1945–1986* (Portland: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1990).

¹²Joseph E. Taylor III, “The Many Lives of the New West,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 141–165; Carl Abbott, *Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995); Carl Abbott, *How Cities Won the West: Four Centuries of Urban Change in Western North America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008); Carl Abbott, *The New Urban America: Growth and Politics in Sunbelt Cities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 15–56.

¹³Kevin J. Fernlund, ed., *The Cold War American West, 1945–1989* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

large industrial structures that aided the earlier urban industrial age. Fueled by government policies promoting research and development, home ownership, and new jobs, these cities embraced pro-growth policies that attempted to balance pastoralism with industrial expansion. The courting of white-collar, middle-class Americans led to explosive growth in new urban centers in the West.

High-tech industrial development was widely welcomed and considered a preferred alternative to the dirty industry of the Northeast and Midwest. The so-considered “clean” industries held the appearance of suburban areas with broad lawns, trees, low-rise buildings, and hidden parking lots. Thanks to strict building guidelines laid out by Stanford University as well as city regulations on new construction, new high technology industries appeared more like a college campus than an industrial manufacturer or research center. But the promise of clean industry proved elusive as smog, radiation, water contamination, intense energy and water usage, traffic congestion, and rising housing and utility costs became common features of living in the Valley.

The reliance on high-tech industrialization masked environmental hazards. Throughout the Rust Belt, the environmental effects of industrialization left very visible signs of potential threats to air and water quality. High tech industrialization promoted itself as a clean and modern alternative to the older, smog-producing form of industrialization, yet came with its own costs. Electronics manufacturing relied particularly upon liquid and gas chemicals, which were often stored on-site, shipped in on freight, lightly regulated by federal or state rules, and were potentially invisible hazards to human health. By removing the green hue with which high-tech industries colored their activities, quality-of-life and social justice environmentalists targeted high tech industry and debated with boosters and industrialists about the industry’s impact on communities.

This work focuses on the grassroots politics produced by environmental

degradation, suburbanization, and the interplay between local and national interests in the emergence of “environment” in American politics. California thinks of itself as a trendsetter constantly reflecting and recreating the California Dream. Ideas about pastoralism and the promise of high tech industrialization represented an attempt to create this “good life,” which played out on the landscape through competing conceptions of community and a broader conversation over the future of American economy, society, and innovation. By bringing the environment, broadly construed, into the story of Silicon Valley and connecting it to the politics of growth, development, and community, I examine the ways in which people interacted and reacted to changes in their communities.

Although this study is tightly focused on a specific region, it has greater bearing on our understanding of the inherent tension within land use regimes and Americans’ growing awareness of environmental issues during the postwar era. The study of Silicon Valley offers us a chance to examine the emergence of a mid-twentieth-century economy in the American West whose effects dominate in the twenty-first. Technological innovation, market forces, waves of migration, government investment and regulation, and fragmentary politics defined the American political economy in the postwar era. Few of the industrialists, suburbanites, politicians, and activists in the pages ahead may have identified themselves as environmentalists, but Silicon Valley’s political history demonstrates the ways in which “the environment” became an ever-present issue in American postwar politics.

The grassroots approach of this work reveals that environmentalists often cared less about the standard political affiliations of Republican and Democrat and more about their identities as homeowners and taxpayers. Environmental historians have often considered environmental history to be the domain of Democratic politics, and environmental issues often laid at the feet of the liberal political

agenda. However, environmental politics between the 1950s and the 1970s often belied political affiliations. Suburban residents concerned with environmental issues were often unified in their vision of aesthetics, health, protection of children, pollution, and toxics. The history of Silicon Valley also is at odds with the conventional narratives of the 1970s “Rise of the Right” accounts and that suburbs primarily fostered a conservative political culture. Suburban liberalism continued to persist alongside the New Right in northern California. Rather than a rejection of the liberalism evident in southern California’s Orange County, Santa Clara County liberals fostered government intervention to serve their political interests.¹⁴ These suburban liberals, in some ways, anticipated the “New Democrats” under Bill Clinton in the early 1990s.¹⁵ Yet the variety of suburban liberalism of Silicon Valley underscores the limits of its adherents’ vision. Their priorities for quality-of-life improvements largely revolved around middle-class homeowners and high tech industry. The goals of environmental, feminist, labor, and racial justice activists went largely ignored.

By underscoring the local grassroots movements in environmentalism, the study reveals the variety of distinct and overlapping, evolving and organic local politics that intersected at regional, state, and national environmental discussions. Environmentalism, then, is a local experience, and those local struggles became a primary driver for national change. Yet, much of the environmental activism in Silicon Valley was reactionary rather than pace setting. The origins of an ecolog-

¹⁴On the rise of the New Right and suburban politics, see: Kevin M. Kruse and Thomas Sugrue, eds., *The New Suburban History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Kevin M. Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Robert O. Self, *American Babylon: Race and the Struggle for Postwar Oakland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

¹⁵Bill Clinton and other “New Democrats” also adopted Silicon Valley as a poster for the “New Economy.” See Sara Miles, *How to Hack a Party Line: The Democrats and Silicon Valley* (University of California Press, 2002). On the role of suburban liberals shaping American politics, see Lily Geismer, *Don’t Blame Us: Suburban Liberals and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

ical consciousness and energy for political action in Santa Clara Valley suggests ideologies that predated much of the nation's eventual environmental sentiments in the 1970s.¹⁶ These politics emerged out of a combination of interests, animated by the rapid growth of the technological economy, raising questions for people living in the community.¹⁷

Writing about environmental politics in the Bay Area also offers us ways to think about local politics. It might, as Richard Hofstadter once said, have "something to say that might help us."¹⁸ The story here is, ultimately, about the practice of politics in postwar America. Around kitchen tables, within ad hoc coalitions, in letter campaigns and newspaper editorials, people talked about the changing environment around them. Amenities and cultural ideals about the Bay Area—climate, atmosphere, suburban, middle-class—had attracted newcomers and delighted old-timers. But the rise of industry, the influx of new residents, the explosion of suburban development, and the devastation of orchards led both groups to question what sort of changes they were welcoming to the Valley. Some of these organizations were short-lived, such as the Citizens Committee on Regional Planning or United Palo Altans, while others existed much longer to continue influencing California politics, such as California Tomorrow and the Committee for Green Foothills. These environmental organizations emerged directly from environmental changes occurring in Santa Clara Valley.

Simultaneously, entrepreneurs, urban planners, university administrators, and city leaders offered an alternative vision to the landscape: one that was in-

¹⁶I am not alone in suggesting the Bay Area anticipated the broader environmental movement. Historian Margaret O'Mara has noted that the Bay Area became "home to some of the environmental movement's most important early battles and precedent-setting land-use planning measures." Margaret Pugh O'Mara, *Cities of Knowledge: Cold War Science and the Search for the Next Silicon Valley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 139.

¹⁷The importance of suburbs in fostering environmentalism has been argued by other historians, in particular Sellers, *Crabgrass Crucible*, and Rome, *Bulldozer in the Countryside*.

¹⁸Hofstadter quoted in Christopher Lasch, "Consensus: An Academic Question," *Journal of American History* 76 (September 1989): 458.