

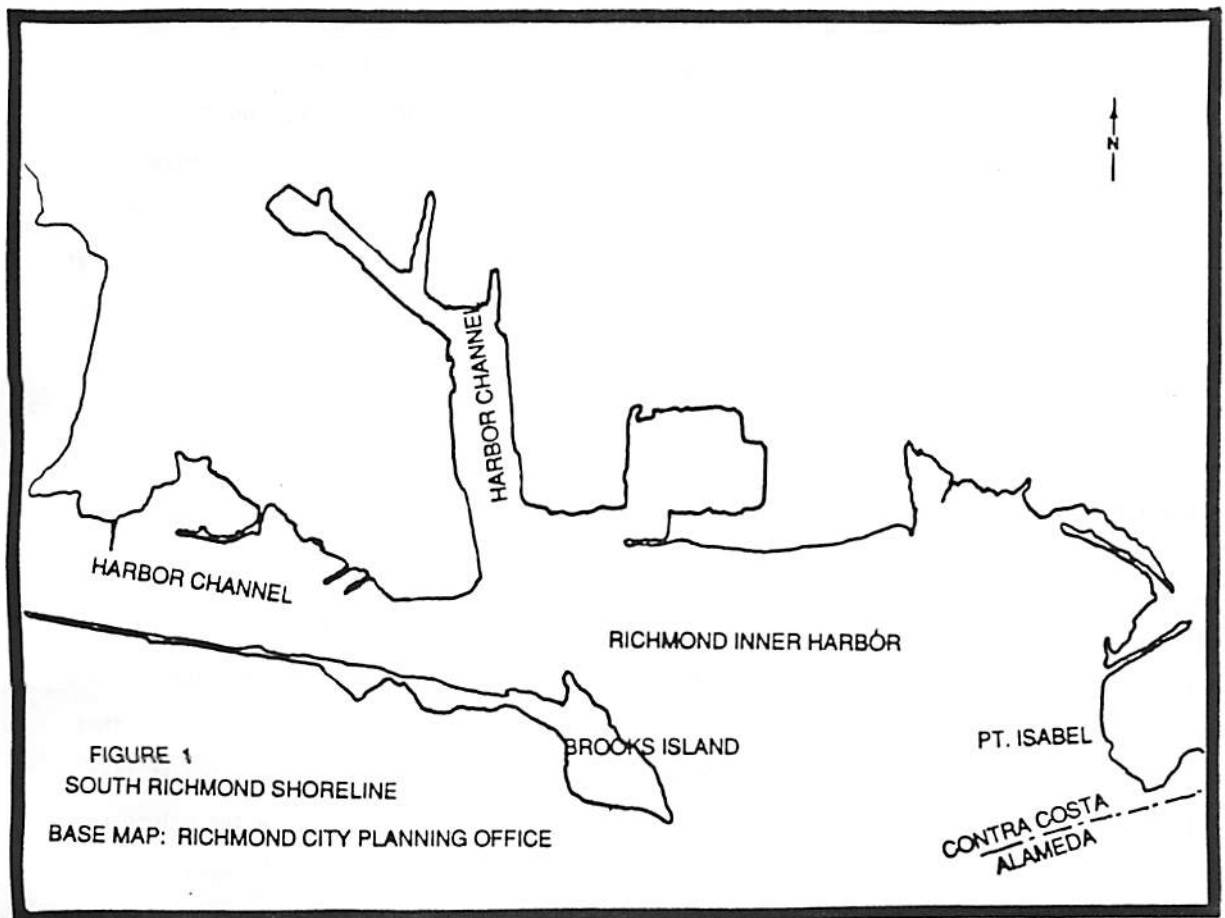
Chapter 1

CHANGING LAND-USE PATTERNS OF RICHMOND'S SOUTH SHORELINE (1850-1986)

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Introduction

The rapid economic development of California during the latter half of the nineteenth century and global events in the early twentieth century played important roles in the development of Richmond's south shoreline (Banks, 1981) (Figure 1). The drastic changes in the post-war economy during the 1960's caused the subsequent decline in activity of the south shoreline until the present day, when its facilities are still much under-utilized. Richmond's historic development can be separated into six distinct periods. The Indian Period was the time before European colonization when the Huchiun Indians inhabited the area. The Mexican Period began when Governor Alvarado



conveyed the provisional San Pablo land grant in the territory across from San Francisco, then known as Contra Costa (or "opposite coast"--opposite from San Francisco's shoreline). The Early American Period signaled the loss of these land grants by the original owners to American settlers, mainly through deception by unsupported treaties. The City Building Period began with the advent of the railroad (Santa Fe) and the Standard Oil Refinery in the late 1800's. Following this period was the Incorporation Period, which began in 1905, when Richmond became a city and experienced slow but steady growth. The last major period, the Wartime Expansion Period, occurred in the 1940's and briefly catapulted the city into the United States' leading industrial war production site. Once the war ended, industrial production dropped sharply.

Past Studies

Several books to date have been valuable resources in my research. Some materials have focused upon the history of Richmond, particular landmarks, and established businesses with a detailed account of their activities in the area. Others have concentrated upon the day-to-day activities of the Richmond inhabitants during particular time periods (i.e., famous people during the 1920's through the 1950's, nightlife, development of the city of Richmond, etc.).

The best resource, Investigation of Cultural Resources with the Richmond Harbor Redevelopment Project 11-A (Banks, 1981), is a highly detailed account of the area that is now known as the Richmond Inner Harbor. This work includes a detailed history of the Redevelopment area from the time the Indians inhabited the area (pre-1770) through the rapid industrialization of the south shore during the 1940's (war years). Emphasis is not upon land-use per se, but rather on the history and development of the firms that settled in this area. Such major firms as Standard Oil, Santa Fe, Kaiser, and Ford receive much attention in this study, in which their development and day-to-day activities are highlighted.

Other works, such as Whitah (1944) and Cole (1980), provide a more "human" approach to the development of Richmond. They focus attention upon the prominent people that shaped the city of Richmond, and discuss the histories behind particular landmarks in the area.

Indian Period

Previous to the Mexican and Spanish occupation, the first inhabitants of the shoreline were the Huchiun Indians (Milliken, in Banks, 1981). Spanish priests named the Indians Huchiun, although their descendants today prefer to call themselves Ohlone. The Ohlone were one of many tribal groups that lived in the Contra Costa. The ecology of Contra Costa was typical of the entire Bay Area at that time in that a great diversity of wildlife abounded. Very little is known about how the Ohlone had used the land in this early period. Following Spain's invasion and settlement of the area, the Indian population began to decline rapidly as they had no natural immunity to European diseases. Historical accounts record epidemics in the spring of 1795 that decimated the populations.

The information that Milliken gathered concerning the Ohlone lifestyle and land-use was derived from secondary sources: diaries of Spanish explorers, historical documents, Franciscan priests, and Spanish military personnel (Milliken, in Banks, 1981). As with many of the Indian tribes, Ohlone hunted and gathered plant roots and herbs. The sea otter, beaver and deer pelts that they wore as complex head decorations suggested the vast abundance of these animals.

Land and water use among the tribes was strictly territorial. However, trading and other cultural activities did occur among the tribes. Ohlone Indians traded their fishing and shoreline rights to the inland Huchuin for various products. The coastline may have also been a winter home for inland tribal groups, and the Ohlone may have traded the winter residence for other goods.

Mexican Period

In 1821, Mexico declared its independence from Spain and soon after began rewarding its heroes with huge land grants (Ramsey, in Banks, 1981). In 1823, Governor Alvarado conveyed the 7,000-acre San Pablo land grant, which included present day Richmond and its shoreline, to Francesco Maria Castro. Castro used the land for cattle grazing and grain agriculture.

Cattle and grain were sold to gold-miners en route to the Mother Lode via a ferry-shuttle freight along Castro's waterfront ranch (Ramsey, in Banks, 1981). When Francesco Castro died in 1831, he left half his massive ranch to his children and the other half to his wife, Dona Gabriela Berreyesa de Castro. Because property lines were never established, Castro's eleven children could not settle among themselves. When Castro's wife died, she left her half of the ranch to the eldest daughter (Cole, 1980). This created more strife as the other ten children were attempting to claim title to this land as well. During the interim period, some of the children had sold their land.

Early American Period

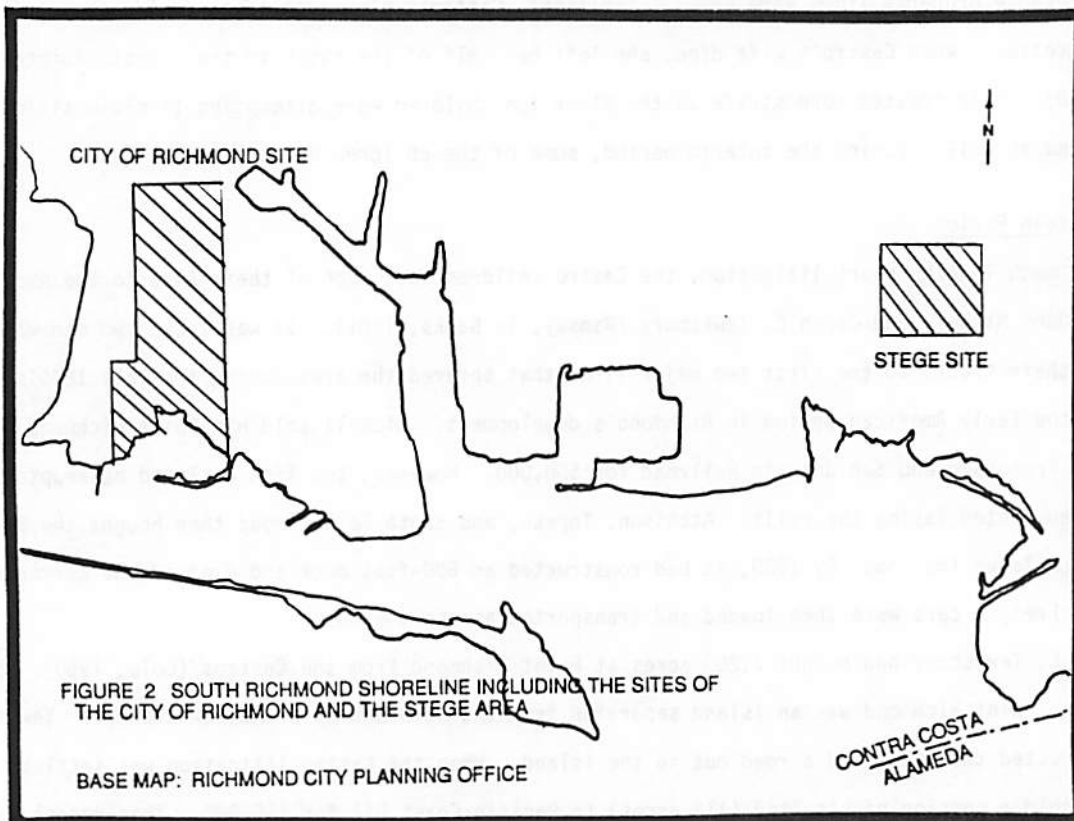
After much lengthy court litigation, the Castro children lost much of their land to two American settlers, John Nicholl and Jacob C. Tewksbury (Ramsey, in Banks, 1981). It was these two men who later sold their tracts to the first two major firms that entered the area during the late 1800's and began the Early American period in Richmond's development. Nicholl sold his Point Richmond site to The San Francisco and San Joaquin Railroad for \$50,000. However, the firm declared bankruptcy before it completed laying the rails. Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad then bought the 57-acre site and completed the job. By 1900, it had constructed an 800-foot dock and dredged the surrounding area. Freight cars were then loaded and transported across the Bay.

Jacob C. Tewksbury had bought 2,200 acres at Point Richmond from the Castros (Cole, 1980). At the time, Point Richmond was an island separated from the mainland by a shallow channel. Tewksbury constructed two dikes and a road out to the island. When the Castro litigation was settled, Tewksbury sold a portion of his land (118 acres) to Pacific Coast Oil for \$68,000. This parcel later became the Standard Oil Refinery in 1905 (Cole, 1980, p. 9).

The Early American Period also saw the development of the Ellis Landing Company. Captain George Ellis, who owned and operated this Landing, shuttled wheat from the back areas of San Pablo to a bustling San Francisco. Prior to the 1860's, these grain farmers couldn't transport their grain easily until Ellis had established his Landing Company (Ramsey, in Banks, 1981).

One other parcel of land was the Stege Complex (Figure 2). Controlled by Richard Stege in 1870, this land was a showplace of gardens, trees and four beautiful ponds, where Stege raised frogs for San Francisco's finest restaurants. When Stege died in 1882, his adopted daughter, Edith, sold the estate to East Shore and Suburban Railway. The company turned the property into a park with a dance pavilion. The garden that Stege constructed still remains today in the municipal park established in his name. In this same 600-acre parcel, the town of Stege grew as others bought land and settled. By 1897, the town had several businesses, including an explosives factory, the California Cap works, and the present-day Stauffer Chemical Company (Cole, 1980).

In the 50 years from 1850 to 1902 this former rural area was becoming more industrialized as towns grew and housing tracts developed to accommodate the growing labor force (Ramsey, in Banks, 1981). San Francisco, already a bustling city, created a new market for the surrounding agriculture around Richmond. Inland Contra Costa was still agricultural and the ranchers grew wheat, hay, and oats. By 1860, the ranchers had an accessible market through the Ellis Landing.

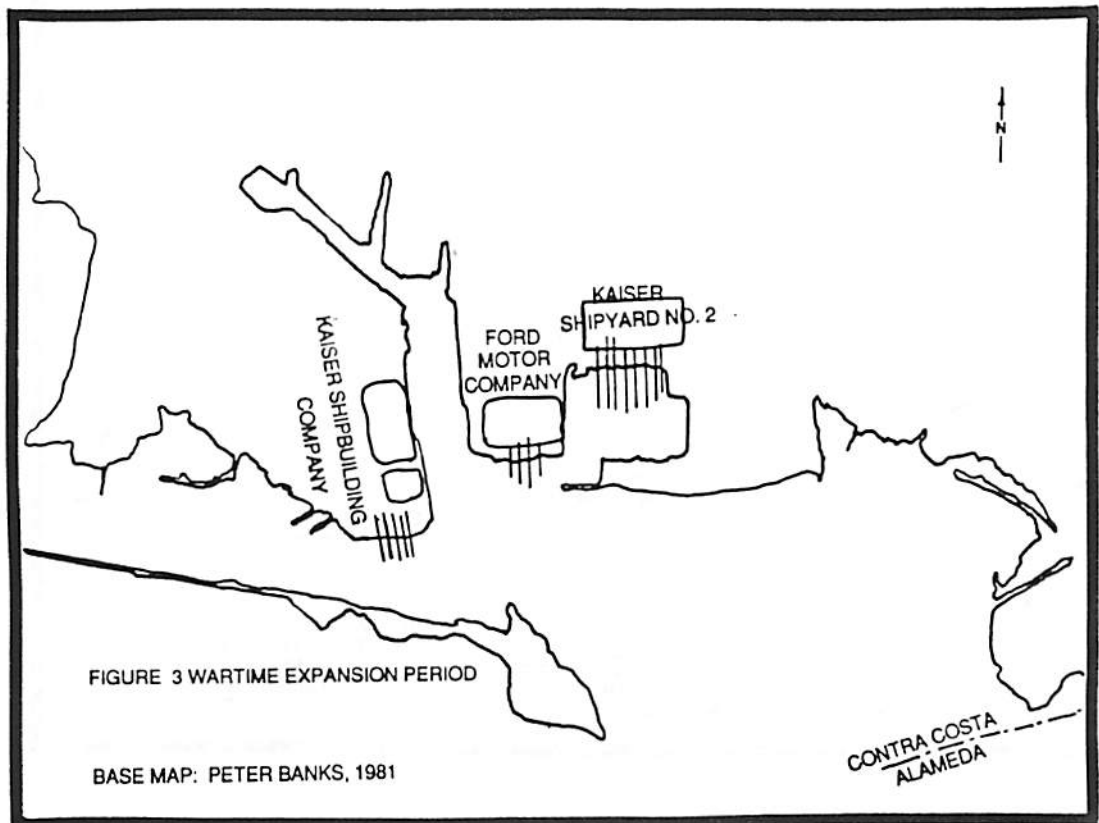


City Building and Incorporation

The arrival of Standard Oil and Santa Fe (now independent from Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad) opened new labor opportunities. Laborers immigrated into the area from many parts of the country. Early on, these two conglomerates housed their workers in camps adjacent to their property. By 1899, a map of the townsite of Richmond had been registered with the County Recorder's office (Figure 2) (Ramsey, in Banks, 1981). The city of Richmond grew as more management personnel flocked toward the new jobs and the large attractive lots that were available to those who could afford them. In 1909, Richmond formed the Industrial Commission to develop the economic growth of the city. In 1912, the Commission realized its shoreline, Ellis Landing, had commercial potential and began dredging operations for a deep-water harbor. Though they had completed the dredging operations soon after, they were unable to draw any prospective businesses, due to the development of the Oakland port facilities. Richmond, however, still experienced slow but steady growth.

Wartime Period

The Wartime period brought the greatest expansion of the south shoreline. Not only did major firms, such as Kaiser Shipbuilding Company (Liberty ships) and Ford Motor Company, enter the area, but also the population grew to fill the jobs (Felton, in Banks, 1981) (Figure 3). The wartime expansion

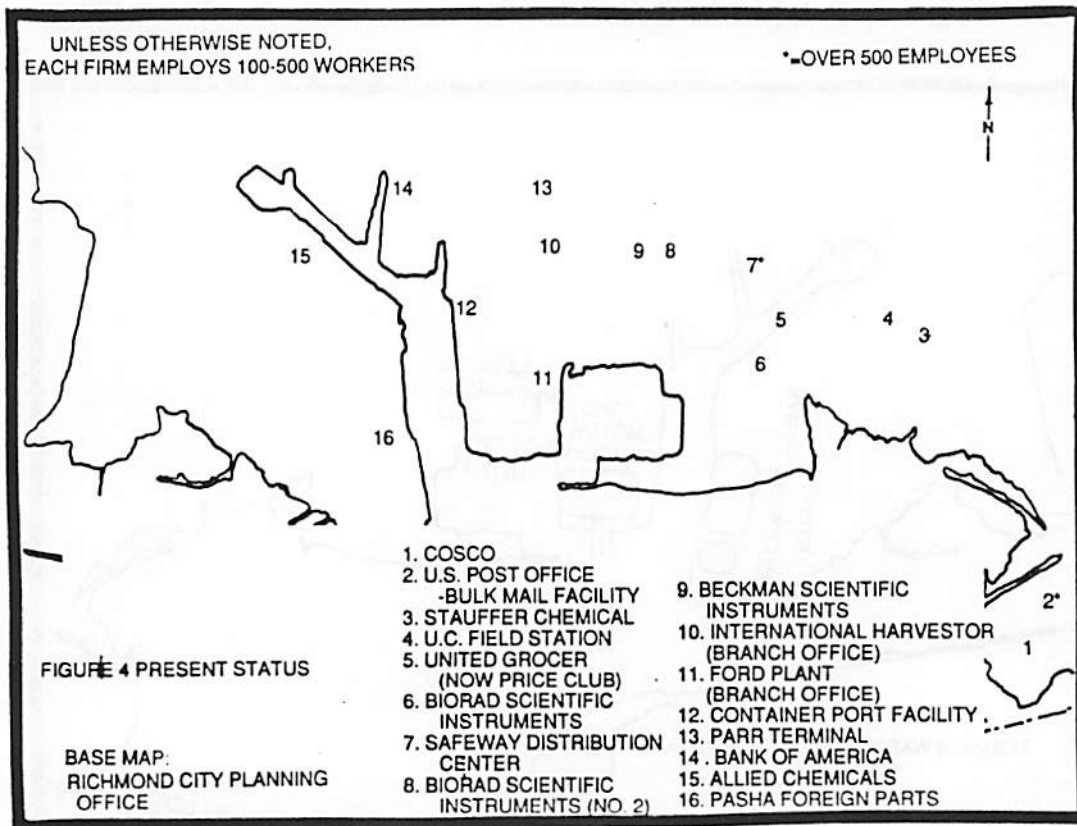


brought economic wealth to the City of Richmond as the city was able to expand all its governmental services. Shoreline development of concrete dock and harbor areas continued throughout the war. Landfilling the salt marsh area also continued. Richmond was bustling. It became the largest tonnage port in the U.S. during these years (Fox, 1940). Other industries, such as the wine and oyster industries, continued their operations.

However, by the 1960's, the ports and harbors had fallen upon hard times. The need for the war industries had subsided and the U.S. domestic economy took a new direction towards service and manufacture. The costs associated with changing heavy industrial machinery to a service-oriented economy were too high. Major firms began relocating, leaving their land use to smaller industrial firms. In 1959, Ford donated a portion of its old factory site to the University of California, Berkeley, where it is presently a storage and research facility. The container cargo facilities are being used at a fraction of their present capacity, and only recently has any increase in cargo occurred from overseas.

Present Status

The south Richmond shoreline area has yet to reach the productivity that it enjoyed in its earlier days. According to the Richmond City Planning Office, the major employers in the area are Stauffer



Chemical Company, U.S. Post Office Bulk Mail Center, and Safeway's distribution center (Rasmussen, 1987) (Figure 4). The greater majority of firms employ fewer than 500 people. Another significant difference between the present-day firms and the past firms is the nature of their products. The south shoreline once entertained firms from heavy industry, such as Ford and Kaiser shipbuilding. Today, the firms have changed their orientation to the service manufacturing industry. Allied Chemical, Bio-rad, Price Club, Beckman Scientific Instruments, United Grocer (which recently left this area), and Sears Service Appliance Center all represent this industry and employ a large percentage of the labor force in the south shoreline area. However, International Harvester and Pasha Foreign Parts Depot still represent the heavy industry, although in a much smaller degree.

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