Home(less) Place and Home-Making at the Albany Bulb

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ABSTRACT

Archaeological research of dismantled homes at the Albany Bulb in the San Francisco Bay, California, prompted me to rethink the category of "homelessness" and the temporal boundaries of archaeological research. This paper treats the history of people who called this landfill-turned-park home as part of broad processes of redevelopment and displacement in the Bay Area and beyond. Archaeological and artistic research provide a critical methodology through which I reflect on contemporary struggles for homeless rights and conflicts over who needs to be "cleaned up." [homeless encampments, activist archaeology, archeology of the contemporary, bricks, gardens]

I had never been there before. After driving for twenty minutes along the east shore of the San Francisco Bay, I exited the freeway. On surface streets, I looped around and headed towards the water, passing tents packed between the giant concrete columns of the highway overpass. At the end of the street, I met Amber and Susan by a sculpture of an oversized pelican. After pleasantries, they led me onto the Albany Bulb. Surrounded on three sides by the bay, the peninsula of undulating hills and hollows, tall eucalyptus and stumpy palm trees, held stories that Amber told with an exuberant intensity. She had lived here for years. Each mound of jutting concrete painted like a giant Rubik's Cube or covered in broken tile mosaic was a prompt for Amber to reflect on what had, until very recently, been her neighborhood. A few weeks ago, many of the people living in tents under the underpass had instead been living here, on a former construction dump, in homes made of wood and concrete, salvaged windows, tarps and rugs. The Albany Bulb is a landscape that contains stories of building and destruction, exploitation and resilience. It is a landscape that challenges us to imagine the many possible futures that urbanization and industrial development might produce and the many pasts and presents that get erased in the process.

In the fall of 2014, after first meeting Amber, I led an archaeological survey of the dismantled homes of peo-

ple living outside at the Albany Bulb, a public park in the San Francisco Bay Area. Undertaking this survey as both a historical and contemporary archaeology prompted me to rethink the definition of "homelessness" and the temporality of contemporary materiality. Conversations with residents—and the documentaries and public statements they produced—prompted my treatment of the Albany Bulb as a landscape of "homes." Never having been homeless myself, this research needed to be built from former residents' conceptions of place rather than my own. People like Amber assert the importance of the place and its materials. Amber called herself an urban archaeologist long before we met, and many residents collected historical objects and architectural remnants from the dump and bay shore. The place and its things are a vital component of the alternative way of life people lived here, despite hardships with income, mental health, and drug abuse. By attending to the materiality of these homes my research has demonstrated how the community at the Albany Bulb was a challenge to the normative ideas of what "homelessness" is. This is a crucial intervention in both historical narratives of homelessness and contemporary scholarship that drives policy and activism. The homogenizing aspects of the category homeless erase the agency and creativity residents of the Albany Bulb practiced.

Engaging with the long material histories of homes and homelessness prompted me to further rethink the temporality of research. Archaeology at the Albany Bulb has shown that the land itself is a human artifact, contrary to claims by the Sierra Club that it should be "restored" as natural habitat. (Restoration, in its truest sense, would be returning the area to the bay waters.) The recognition that the landform on which people lived at the Bulb is an artifact undoes some of my disciplinary inclinations to bound archaeological attention to particular forms and temporalities. What began as an "archaeology of contemporary homelessness," like other such projects, became an archaeology of home-making and care that stretches across the turns of both the twenty-first and twentieth centuries (i.e., Kiddey 2017a).

Archaeology has trained me to notice how material culture makes itself present. I call this "to presence," a verb that requires that one does the presencing; a continual expression and process. The presence-er here is the material itself, presence-ing often without a viewer, an audience, or an interpreter. Archaeologies of the contemporary, the historic, or the ancient share a predilection to take material culture and create narratives that further make present aspects of life that are often overlooked or normalized out of consciousness. And so I *re-presence* material histories in many ways through this research. To re-presence is not exactly to represent, a process that ties understanding to representationalism, the belief in the independence of subject and representation. Rather, re-presencing adds additional active processes that I myself create and maintain (see also Oliver and Cox [2022] this volume, Chapter 3). This presencing and re-presencing is also what critical Indigenous, Black and ethnic studies call on practitioners of all disciplines to do, focusing on those subjectivities that have been overlooked or erased. Here I join material cultures' presencing with an archaeologists' represencing of time and a critical presencing of erased subjectivities.

In this case study, I blend anthropological archaeology with what I have elsewhere termed "engaged research practice" and with social practice art (Danis 2020). Research that addresses the extractive history of anthropology has over the years been labeled: public, participatory, collaborative, postcolonial, indigenous, community-based, or community-initiated (Atalay 2012; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Lydon and Rizvi 2010; Thomas and Lea 2014). While various, the productive connection between these approaches is a willingness to *engage*; both with the history and shortcomings of scholarly practice, *and* with people who have a stake in research. Similarly, social practice art is research-based, often takes place outside gallery and museum settings, and can include long community engagements. I share an understanding with Nato Thompson who highlights how social practice art "emphasizes participation, challenges power, and spans disciplines" (2012, 19). This expanded form of research practice informs my analysis of how residents of the Albany Bulb made homes that challenge assumptions about homelessness and the temporality of archaeologies of the contemporary.

To begin, I will introduce the story of the Albany Bulb from its creation as a landfill in the 1960s to the present-day politics of "cleaning up" a park where people live. I will outline the essential tensions of public and private space and natural and cultural resources that structured my research. Then I will explore how archaeological research in 2014 and creative research practice has prompted me to re-think the experience of living at the Albany Bulb. What was characterized as "homelessness" by outsiders is better understood as "living outside" or a non-normative home-making as expressed by the residents themselves. Finally, I will explore how research there could not be contained within the temporalities of "contemporary" or "historical" archaeology.

Dump to Development: The Albany Bulb

On the east shore of the San Francisco Bay, a group of people lived for decades on public land. They called themselves "Landfillians" because the place they called home began as a landfill. The Albany Bulb (Figure 7.1) was formed by construction debris dumped into the San Francisco Bay from 1963 to 1983. When the dump was decommissioned, it became a site of creative resistance to growing displacement in California. People discovered the joy of the Albany Bulb's views and the richness of its bedrock, itself a diverse substrate of past homes and buildings: rebar, brick, concrete, and stone. Hundreds of people lived there in permanent, semi-permanent, and temporary homes. But in 2014, the City of Albany evicted its residents to make way for park improvements that would minimize the history of the landfill and erase the history of its long-term residents. This series of events articulates the tensions between natural/cultural and public/private places in the rapid "re-urbanization" of contemporary industrial areas in the United States and ensuing displacement and economic inequality.

Natural–Cultural

The Albany Bulb is so called because of the dramatic "neck" and "bulb" topography created by the practice of infill along the bay shore as early as 1939 (see Figure 7.1). Construction of the right of way for the Santa Fe railroad less than a mile to the east in the 1930s and land clearance
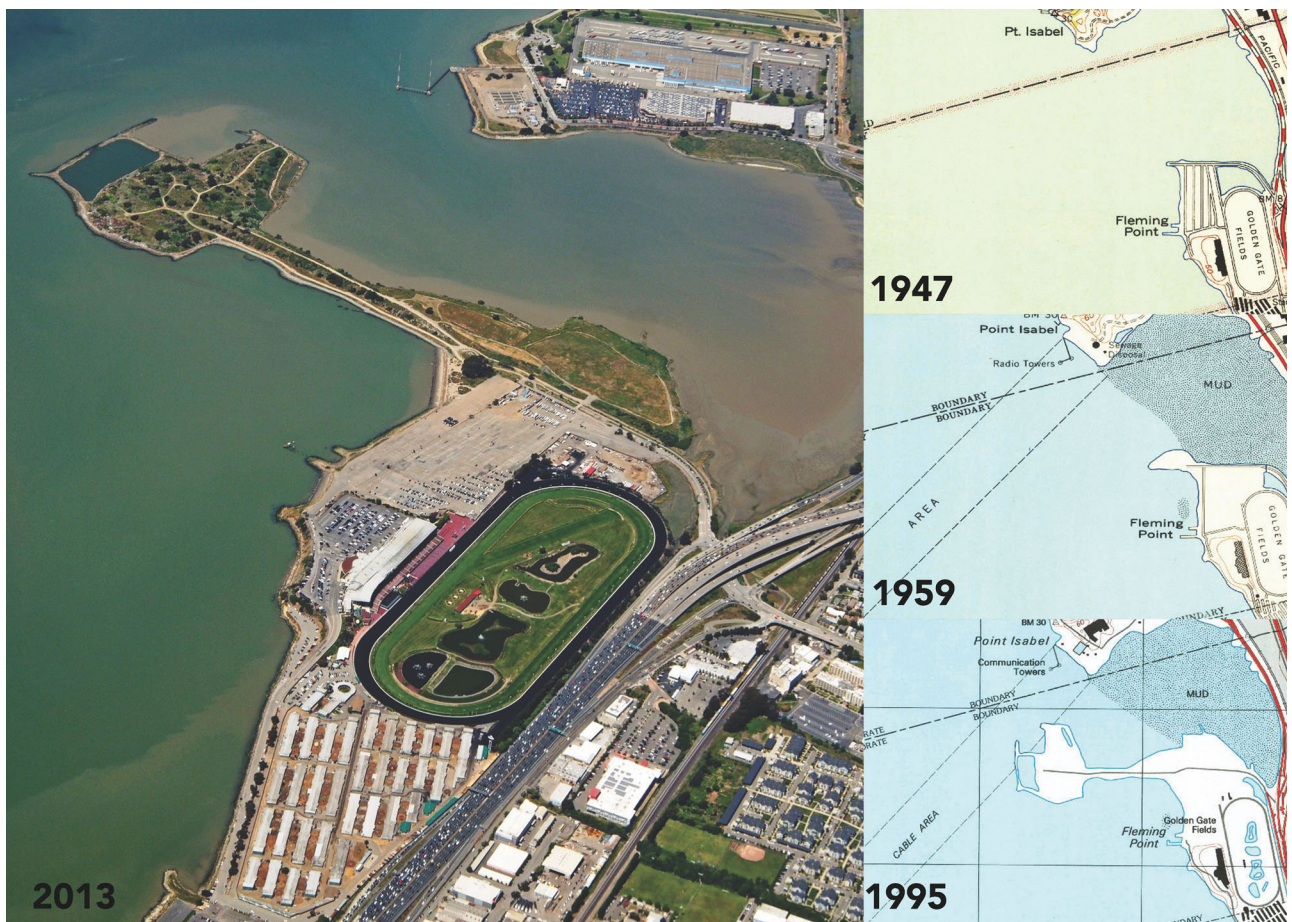
Figure 7.1. The lobster claw-shaped peninsula called the Albany Bulb (aerial, left) was created by dumping construction debris into the San Francisco Bay. This change over time is seen in topographic maps of the shoreline over time (right) (image credits: [left] Robin Lasser, Landfill Portraits 2014; [right] United States Geological Survey). [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

for the Golden Gate race track to the south until the 1950s created piles of rubble that overtook the natural bay shore. In 1963, the city of Albany awarded a contract to the Albany Landfill Company to oversee the disposal of more construction debris as fill into the salt marshes beyond the race track (California Regional Water Quality Control Board San Francisco Bay Region 1998, 1999; Questa Engineering Corporation 2012).

This contract ushered in two decades of dumping from routine construction and large development projects. The most active dumping occurred in the 1970s. Before 1975, some non-hazardous solid waste was accepted, reportedly mainly consisting of wood and vegetable solid wastes from landscape maintenance and street sweepings (which provided the basis for the Bulb's non-native plants). Dumping ceased in December 1983, and the landfill was officially closed in 1984 as part of work with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to improve the quality of the bay and its shore. A total of approximately 2,000,000 cubic yards of

waste have been placed in the landfill, with an average depth of 40 feet (Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC 2015). This place is the kind of post-industrial "crack" that Stewart ([2022] this volume, Chapter 6), drawing inspiration from Shannon Dawdy (2010), characterizes as an opportunity for emergent social *and* ecological relations (although here I focus on the former).

Ironically the city itself had been incorporated in 1908 to prevent the City of Berkeley from dumping garbage into a slough south of what is now the Albany Bulb (Moffat 2006; Webb 1983). After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, an influx of residents shifted the orientation of development from an industrial town linked to the shoreline into an urbanizing city with a declining waterfront. The city was further separated from the shore by the creation of the Eastshore highway which became the Eastshore Freeway/Interstate 80 in the 1950s (Moffat 2006, 35–36). The place now called the Albany Bulb is an artifact; its topography is a result of patterned human activity, primarily

Figure 7.2. *Amber poses inside her bedroom and Boxer Bob shows off his "mansion" with million-dollar views of the Golden Gate Bridge (photo by Robin Lasser,* Landfill Portraits *2014). [This figure appears in color in the online issue]*

dumping, but also by associated building and demolition, urban planning and urban renewal, industry, and infrastructure. These remains come together in the very ground one walks on as a visitor to the Albany Bulb, and perhaps even more intimately, as a resident there.

Public–Private

In the early 1990s, people started building homes on the overgrown landfill. The jutting concrete mounds and rocky shores became the backdrop for constantly evolving paintings, graffiti, and found object sculpture; humor, politics, and mysticism. An amphitheater and library served the growing resident population and regular park visitors who walked dogs, hosted raves, or kite-surfed off the beach. By 2014, more than seventy people lived more or less full-time on the Albany Bulb. Over nearly thirty years of occupation hundreds of people camped and lived for days, weeks, months, and years.

Documentaries, newspaper articles, and oral history projects describe Landfillians' range of backgrounds and circumstances (Burlison 2015; Jones 2014; Makovkin 2014; McCabe and Rozen 2003; Smith 2014). Some people considered their life at the Albany Bulb a choice. Others narrated traumas and tragedies that led them to seek its unconventional housing.

Homes at the Albany Bulb ranged from simple tent or tarp campsites to elaborate ever-changing constructions: a multi-story, wood-framed bay-view mansion belonging to "Boxer Bob" (Figure 7.2; see Teicher [2014] for an extended photo essay); a complex "hobbit hole" built amongst the roots of a tree; Amber's place with a series of different living spaces adorned with historic architectural ornaments

scavenged from the Albany Bulb itself; Stephanie's tranquil, neat overlook with a carefully tended garden; Mama-bear's place just above the amphitheater, where a salon-like atmosphere could take over at any moment; any number of tents in the wide-open field at the center of the peninsula.

Many living spaces were tucked away among the dense brush and landfill debris. Thickets of wild fennel and coyote brush, hollows and hills from uneven dumping, made it possible for these homes to exist simultaneously with recreational uses, especially dog walking. In a documentary about the Albany Bulb, Osha Numan, the Landfillians' pro-bono lawyer and an artist who created some of the most iconic artworks in the park, says that you could walk through most of the peninsula and not see a single home (Haque et al. 2011). In another documentary, resident Phyl talks about "Bulb time" made possible by the privacy provided by the setting and relative stability of the community: "Go to sleep peaceful and wake up peaceful," he said (Potdar 2015). The spaces these people created produced a community of private lives in nominally public space.

Residents differentiated between living spaces and shared, public spaces like the amphitheater and library. Many joined a creative community at the Albany Bulb, spending time building their homes and artwork among the rubble of Albany's urbanization. Jimbow, the steward of two libraries, had lived there for six years when he was interviewed in a 2013 documentary. He created the library and other sculptures and art as part of his public life at the Albany Bulb. "I have to create something every day … like a hunger," he said (Kramer 2013). He also maintained his own private living space. K.C., another long-term resident, ran a community kitchen at her home. She cooked for those who contributed money, hauled water, sourced food,

Figure 7.3. City workers remove Pat's easy chair from the Albany Bulb in 2014 (left), despite Amber's clear assertion of her right to reside there in a sign stating "Attention Police et. al. Do not enter or tamper with personal property without a warrant" (right). (image credits: [left] Mark Boyer, used with permission; [right] Amber Whitson, used with permission). [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

or cleaned up. This created a nested private space within graded spheres of community.

The Albany Bulb was created as a pseudo-public utility: part of the waste infrastructure of Albany, operated by a private company, but ostensibly for the public good. After the landfill closed, the Albany Bulb became a different kind of public space, oriented toward the recreation and quality of life of citizens of Albany. However, its publicness opened the Albany Bulb up to the contested use of the place as homes—private areas within a public park. Neuman said the self-organization of the Landfillian community posed a threat to the public/private status quo (Haque et al. 2011). This tension, between public and private, is at the heart of the conflict between city and regional park goals, the needs and desires of the community living there, and a park-using "public" that eventually are considered "stakeholders" (City of Albany 2016).

Eviction/Development

As early as 1995, the City of Albany had hoped to transfer ownership of the Albany Bulb to California State Parks. But the state agency was reluctant to take on the liabilities of a park filled with construction debris and residents who were "hazardous" as suggested by the city documents I cite below. Twenty years later, that dream was still alive, and in 2014 the Albany city council directed police to enforce a

pre-existing "no camping" ordinance and to remove the Albany Bulb's encampments (Figure 7.3).

State, regional, and city planning reports, alongside journalistic and documentary accounts demonstrate the value propositions of city development projects in which my archaeological description attempts to intervene. City planning documents set up an adversarial relationship between residents and the meaning of their homes and the development of the Albany Bulb as a private park. By investigating materials of home-making alongside these narratives of the place that erase them, archaeological work can intervene in narratives of homelessness in California.

City documents call the evictions of Albany Bulb residents in 2014 "clean ups" (City of Albany 2014). Language referring to the residents in city documents is notably directed at the physical materials of the encampment, rather than the bodies of people who inhabit them. However, the connection between the two is strongly implied. The city's strategic focus on the clutter of material rather than the humanity of the people suggests that people themselves are only significant relative to the "problem" of their belongings.

This strongly parallels how the material belongings of migrants crossing the United States–Mexico border are characterized as trash. Referring to this case, Jason De León (2015) points out that "reducing these things to "garbage" is not only a value-judgment; it also compresses a diverse range of materials into a problematic category that hides

what these artifacts can tell us about the crossing process" (De León 2015, 171). Alongside Wilkinson's ([2022] this volume, Chapter 5) discussion of the eviction of Black and Latinx residents from Russell City just 20 miles to the south in the 1960s, it is also clearly part of a longer and larger pattern of marginalizing "undesirable" people along class and racial lines in California and the United States at large. My research considers Landfillians' belonging as a valuable archive of residents' experiences rather than trash that, in the context of parks development, is a "problem."

After multiple protests and a lawsuit to stop evictions, the city conceded to a 3,000 dollar per resident settlement, with specific terms: residents would dismantle and evacuate their homes and sign a one-year stay-away order. Some residents took this deal. Others, like Amber Whitson, fought eviction. The sign she hung at the entrance to her home suggests her particular feelings about her right to inhabit the place (see Figure 7.3). By the summer of 2014 all former residents had moved on. The Albany Bulb is currently being developed in the model of a conventional city park driven by the changing demographics of Albany, once primarily working-class, now the site of homes that cost well over one million dollars.

"Live. Not merely survive."

The 2014 evictions scattered Landfillians throughout the Bay Area, inside and outside, under freeway overpasses and in newly acquired RVs. This dispersal posed a challenge to collaboration as I now envision it: close partnership, accountability, and co-construction of knowledge (see Danis 2020). I ultimately came to form conclusions about the relationship between historical material and home-making at the Albany Bulb through limited engagement with former residents and extensive engagement with their home-sites.

Amber Whitson chose not to sign a stay-away order, so she was able to give me a few tours like the one I mentioned at the start of this article. We were often accompanied by Susan Moffat, an urban planning scholar who organized the unpublished *Atlas of the Albany Bulb* after evictions in 2014 and now runs a group advocating for the continued use of the Albany Bulb as an "art park." While we walked, Amber would quiz me with her collections of historic marble and steel, and uniquely stamped bricks and ceramics. She also told me about Pat and his home, which I discuss more below. Both were core figures in the community at the Albany Bulb and both were avid observers of material found at the edges of city life, urban archaeologists by their own accounting. My research was prompted by Amber and Pat's interests in material, coupled with my training as a histori-

cal archaeologist. Our shared attention has revealed the interwovenness of time at the Albany Bulb: how the forces of urbanization and relocation have been a constant in the East Bay for more than one hundred years.

My approach began with this emic understanding of the Albany Bulb. It proceeded with a close attention to the material patterns of home-making at an intimate scale. This included archaeological survey and documentation of forty-two home sites, which produced 2,900 different points of data, and a database of 1,200 images. In this section, I highlight Gardens and Brick to reframe homelessness and the temporality of research; I then discuss the creative practices that were crucial methods that produced this reframing.

"through the concrete, the grasses make their way"

Attending to the Albany Bulb as an engaged researcher revealed a cultural landscape usually denied to people experiencing homelessness. For example, Stephanie's place is tucked off a spur from the main road, on a point under a tree, and is edged by a low broken concrete wall that frames magnificent views of the San Francisco Bay and Golden Gate Bridge. The area was neatly tended when she lived there, and her gardens were extensive. She lined the whole southern end of her home with brick-ringed garden beds and cultivated plants and succulents that still held the shape of the pot they had been sold in. Today, an average visitor would only see a small bump in the trails identified in interpretive signage and a clearing under a tree (Figure 7.4). The low wall could pass unnoticed among the bushes.

At other home sites there are similar gardens ringed in bricks, and decorated with trinkets, toys, jewelry, and shells. These gardens include many of the same resources as those in "housed" Albany. Clippings from yards around Albany made their way into the landfill and flourished. Exotic succulents and flowering plants rise out of the background of native grasses and wild fennel. Today, a walk around the Albany Bulb is a walk around the gardens just on the other side of the highway. The commonality of plants is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they signal a connection between the Landfillians and their nearest neighbors, a shared botanical landscape. But on the other hand, they give a false impression of belonging—they might suggest that the Albany Bulb and the neighborhoods to the east are one, that there has not been a long history of othering between the two.

Gardens represent an investment of time, labor, and creativity related to an aesthetic practice of home. The domestic, decorative gardens at the Albany Bulb assert a

Figure 7.4. What remained of Stephanie's garden two months after evictions (photo by Annie Danis). [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

particular practice of care. At the same time they consolidate a Landfillian aesthetic and symbolically tie its residents together with each other. More than symbolizing for outsiders a desire for beauty in landscaping, these gardens materially support the needs of Landfillians for homes that reflect their personality and creativity, a stark contrast to generic shelters and supportive housing. Gardens are features that, combined with other traces, make present practices of place- and home-making. Worn spots under trees that bear the imprint of carpet, stuffed animals tied to trees, hooks, ropes, and rat traps all assert that people made themselves at home at the Albany Bulb.

The power of these traces to have an impact beyond the former residents was illustrated when I returned to the Albany Bulb a year after initial fieldwork with an interdisciplinary graduate methods class of landscape architecture, sociology, art, and geography students. I was tasked with teaching them the methods of "archaeology of the contemporary" in two days. I used the opportunity to re-document three of the originally surveyed homes. One home site was, by this time, completely overgrown, had no more clear path-

ways leading to it, and I was having a hard time trying to impress upon two skeptical landscape architecture students that, "really, this was a *home*." I described the features of an altered and marked tree with a worn-down space underneath and distributions of artifacts as clear markers. It wasn't until one of the skeptics bent over to pick up a piece of plastic and realized, "Wait, this is a contact lens case!" that the transformation had been made. "Someone lived *here!*" she proclaimed. Through engagement with the material traces of intimate and everyday life, at once so familiar to this contact-wearing landscape architect, a re-orientation had been made. It is exactly this process of re-presencing that has been most powerful in the work at the Albany Bulb.

What residents left behind at their home sites, alongside residents' own narratives, asserts that the experience of homelessness is not always one without "home." Instead, the life situation called homelessness is a heterogeneous experience that includes different, non-normative ways of attaching oneself to place and to home.

The history of the term "homelessness" in the United States reaches back into the nineteenth century with the

phenomenon of "vagrancy" or "wandering" and the mid-1800s, when the word "home" emerged as a term for the (extremely gendered) normative domestic realm (Bloom 2005, 909; Hareven 1991; Wilkie 2010). During this time the concept of homelessness gradually became attached to a range of non-normative lifestyles that varied widely in terms of lack of permanent shelter, employment, and/or a family unit. These ways of being underwent various transformations over time and in reaction to major world and economic events (Kusmer 2002). The term has remained in flux through the contemporary period. People continue to work out the relative importance of permanent shelter and connection to the domestic unit as the main characteristics of being housed versus being homeless (Bloom 2005, 908). The result of this history is a close but shifting relationship between the idea of homelessness as a moral failing (when defined by lack of a domestic family unit) and an economic one (when defined by the lack of employment or ability to pay rent). This also makes the definition of homelessness both representative of a state of being in relationships (part of a "family" or not) as well as a physical location in the material world (inside or outside).

Early "down and out" homelessness is sometimes called "old homelessness." This term encompasses lifestyles of shelter without domestic homes, like "tramp and hobo" travelers of the 1870s through 1930s and jobless men renting rooms in single room occupancy buildings on "skid rows" through the 1970s (Cresswell 2001; Groth 1994). This contrasts with "new homelessness" where, post-1970s, people experiencing homelessness are actually without shelter and live on the streets or in and out of temporary sleeping areas like homeless shelters and churches (Lee, Tyler, and Wright 2010). However, historian Alan Bloom (2005) warns against the lumping of all non-contemporary experience into a catchall term like "old" and points out the variety of experience and similarities between old and new. While quite a few scholars have engaged with the phenomenon of the "tramp" and "hobo" (Cresswell 2001; Higbie 2003), fewer have addressed the broader range of historical homelessness, especially the experience of women and children throughout time (see Border [2002] for an exception). This paucity and the debate over "old" and "new" suggest an important element in the historical experience of homelessness—its dynamism. Much like the places this volume collects, homelessness challenges easy temporal categories and exhibits variety that demands contextual attention.

In the last two decades, archaeologists have taken on the challenge of narrating both histories and contemporary experiences of homelessness, but this has not been driven by a concern to redefine the category. Focus within this area has grown from preliminary accounts that recognized the existence of materiality related to the experience of homelessness, to an engaged, interdisciplinary endeavor that sees archaeology as a potentially powerful force in both therapeutic and policy venues associated with homeless issues (see especially Kiddey 2017b).

I began my engagement at the Albany Bulb alongside a small, evolving collection of projects calling themselves "the archaeology of homelessness." I share their goal of developing socially meaningful archaeologies that challenge normative assumptions about the experience of people identified as homeless (Kiddey 2018; Singleton 2017; Zimmerman 2016; see Danis [2020] for full literature review). These projects, the people who lived at the Albany Bulb, and the material patterns we documented make it impossible for me to carry forward the generally received understanding of homelessness as a state of lack of attachment, lack of placemaking, and lack of belonging.

I define home anthropologically—as a connection to place and a pattern of dwelling—and recognize it archaeologically as a material practice to avoid a morally loaded understanding of home, and homeless (Douglas 1991). I resist a politics of respectability concerning what is and isn't a "proper" home. I do not want to impose the experience I read through material traces and patterns onto all people who lived, stayed, slept, or spent time at the Albany Bulb. My research and experience with Landfillians give me confidence when I say that at least some people at the Albany Bulb had homes. Since that is the case, the act of forcing people to leave and dismantle their homes by the City becomes an act of eviction and demolition, not "cleaning-up."

This has a significant impact on how I, and others who have not experienced homelessness, might think more broadly when interacting with and policing people living outside. This is a humanizing conclusion. People with homes are harder to erase, harder to remove from history (see also Sesma [2022] this volume, Chapter 2). Continued erasure is still possible, however, as time and again, in the United States, we isolate, erase, and try to forget the humanity of people with homes.

"expected and intended to last"

The temporal divisions enforced by disciplinary habit do not serve a nuanced understanding of this kind of placemaking and materiality. The division of "historical" from "contemporary" artificially divides what is a continuous engagement with the past, present, and future of the Albany Bulb. In U.S. heritage law, something is historical when it is seventy years old or older. The subdiscipline of historical

Figure 7.5. Pat's brick floor and other bricks found at the Albany Bulb with Richmond and Stockton maker's marks (inset) (photo by Annie Danis). [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

archaeology generally contains the last 300 to 400 years, defined by colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism depending on where and who you are. In archaeological discourse "the contemporary" or "contemporary past" might be particular to post-industrial "nows" where historicization happens at the speed of light. But it might also be now until the "current memory fades" (Buchli and Lucas 2001; Harrison and Schofield 2010). It is a constantly moving target as the present swiftly becomes the past moment by moment. These divisions serve to focus research, to keep like with like, but they are troubled by the readily accepted reality that we always experience the past in the present (Graves-Brown, Harrison, and Piccini 2013; Hamilakis 2013). The people living at the Albany Bulb built their lives around a place whose materiality continually ruptured a linear notion of history. The rubble bedrock of the place intruded into the everyday with hints of the early 1900s, old brick and metal, clay and trinkets from decades and centuries past.

By the time I arrived at the Albany Bulb in the fall of 2014, long-term residents Pat and Carrie were gone. Pat had been on the Albany Bulb for over a decade when, in 2011, he was diagnosed with heart failure and was told he had six months to live. Despite stints in the hospital, he lived two more years at his home on the Albany Bulb, resting in his lazy-boy recliner. He even invited hospice there to care for him. After he passed in October 2013 a group of friends wrote Pat a message in brick just above his and Carrie's home. It read, "We <3 you Pat." The brick memorial to Pat was a fitting one because one of the striking features of his and Carrie's home was a meticulously laid brick floor made of yellow and red bricks that Pat had completed shortly before passing (Figure 7.5).

Pat's floor draws the twentieth century, when bricks were the building material *par excellence* of the booming west coast of California, into the twenty-first century, when Pat and his partner re-used them in their home. The bricks of his floor were made by the Stockton and Richmond brick

companies. Stockton Fire and Enamel Brick Company was founded in 1907, and supplied the Bay Area with bricks from a prolific clay source east of San Francisco in Tesla. That very same year, the Los Angeles Pressed Brick Company opened a northern California satellite. Both capitalized on the high demand for red paving bricks following the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. This company would eventually be known as the Richmond Pressed Brick Company (Mosier 2001). Along with other smaller producers, these companies each supplied rapidly rebuilding San Francisco and the ever-expanding communities in the East Bay with hundreds of thousands of bricks a year (Aubury 1906). The companies, located on shore-adjacent industrial land, used their patented machines and kilns to churn out the raw material of homes, fireplaces, pathways, storefronts, and civic buildings for decades. The Stockton Brick Company closed in 1943 and the Richmond Brick Company closed in 1966 (Mosier 2001).

The bricks of Pat's floor were made by those companies, sometime between 1906 and 1966. And, just by being bricks, they are part of the story of the transformation of the Bay Area, of the dramatically changing material realities of the first half of the 1900s. But these are "bricks out of place," as anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) would say. They are no longer part of the fireplace for which they were made. They have lived out their first lives as part of the structural landscape of Albany, then came to rest on the Albany Bulb amongst the discards of the East Bay's industrious growth.

While the intricacies and specificities of particular historical moments matter, they do so in the context of their constant blending and re-narrativizing in the present. Archaeological documentation of homes revealed this disruption. People's belongings have complex biographies. Their historicity was increased by the likelihood that they were scavenged, salvaged, or donated. The brick in Pat and Carrie's floor exists then as it does now, and it is neither singly a historic trace of 1900s industrialization, nor a purely contemporary ruin of a home. It carries on into the present moment, as both a historical artifact, a recent ruin, and a speculative material—something with a future.

"our tents are hidden away"

My analyses of gardens, bricks, and other traces of Landfillian home-making are made possible by maps and images created, categorized, and shared in several different ways. Archaeology and art-making are practices of presencing and re-presencing. They make sensible and articulate histories and landscapes. They use observation, interaction, and interpretation to create new forms that help us reflect on time and place. Presencing makes new connections possible, reveals new knowledge, and makes sensible the histories and continued existence of people despite and because of the forces of inequality. In this project, I presenced and re-presenced experiences of home and historical materiality by making maps and images through research that became art objects that became research again (Figure 7.6).

A few weeks after completing the archaeological survey, I brought three plan maps of home sites to the Albany Community Center. The goal of this event was to share research products and determine if residents wanted us to continue work. While recording Amber's corrections to a map of Pat and Carrie's place, I asked her if any of this documentation mattered. Her reply: "It really does. I just wish the people of Albany could see this." I took this as a suggestion to use the maps to demonstrate Landfillian practices of creative home-making and care to an audience whose stereotypes led them to believe these places needed to be "cleaned-up."

An important means of doing this work was presenting it as part of the 2015 exhibition *Refuge in Refuse* curated by Robin Lasser, Danielle Siembieda, and Barbara Boissevain at the SOMArts Gallery in San Francisco.[1] It included an installation of maps and ephemera to highlight home-making at the Albany Bulb, viewed through the objects and features I had transformed into data through archaeological attention. I left the style of house maps from the Albany Bulb in sketch to demonstrate the multiple hands and skills of the volunteers who produced them with me. This reinforces their subjectivity, the ebb and flow of scale and detail. I then screen printed the maps on fabrics used by Landfillians for shelter and warmth: ripstop nylon, canvas, cotton batting, blue tarp (see Figure 7.6). This released them from the page or wall, made them tactile, and allowed viewers to handle them. As things, rather than images, they highlight embodied experience and connect the viewer to homes at the Albany Bulb as a lived reality. The maps reference the subjectivity of the documentation process by being presented in this form, which viewers could pick up to look at, sensorially experiencing the image. In the exhibition at SOMArts, these cloth maps lay on top of Amber's collection of anti-eviction ephemera protected under glass.

Following the *Refuge in Refuse* exhibit, I continued to work with the documentation of homes at the Albany Bulb. Photographs from archaeological survey were not the focus of the installation at SOMArts, and so, I began working on a second form of re-presencing: an interactive photo database. I had collected hundreds of site and artifact photos from the surveyed home sites. To turn them into a meaningful archive, I worked with three undergraduate
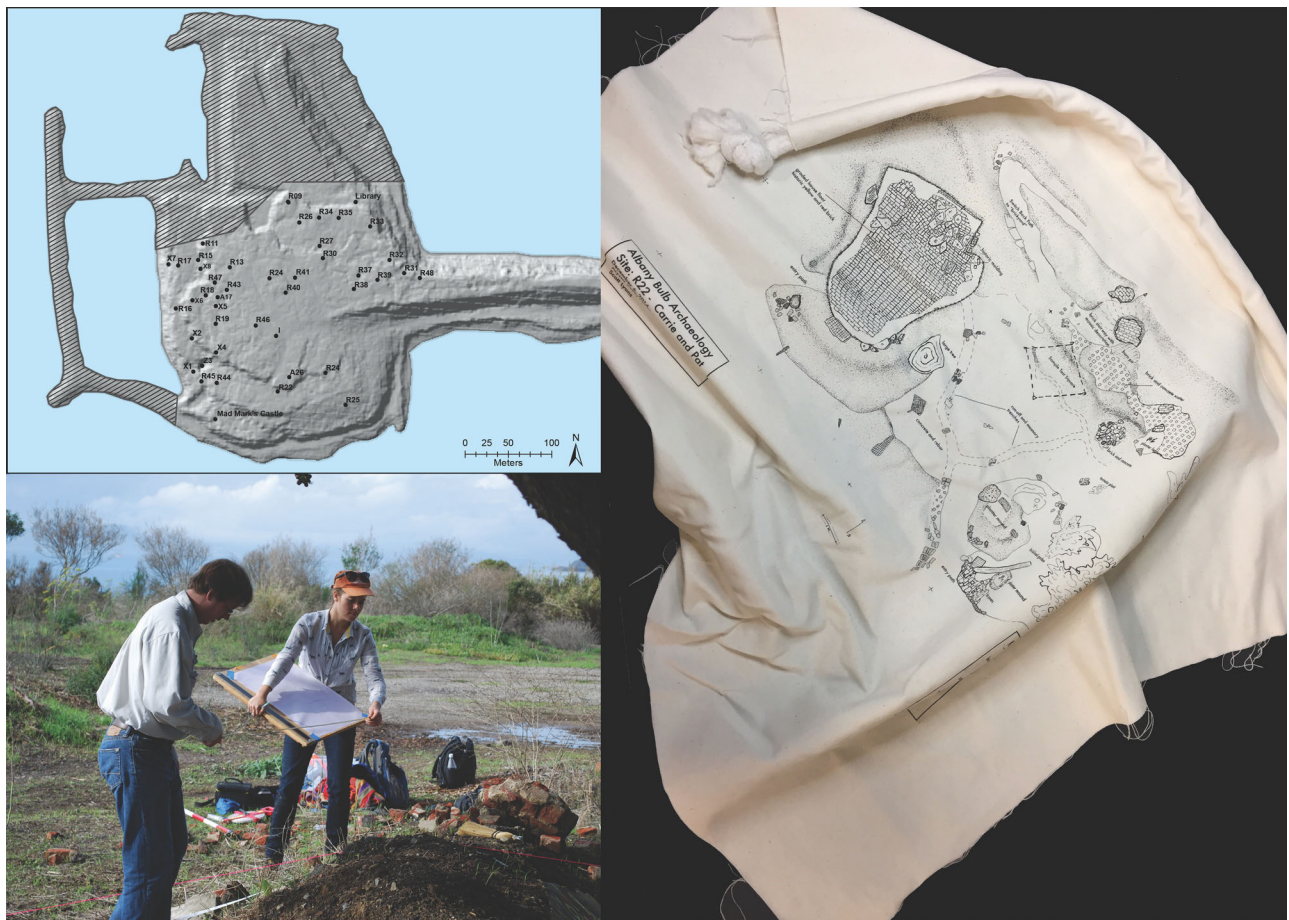
Figure 7.6.   A map showing the locations of all sites surveyed (top), Graduate Students Scott Lyons and Alyssa Scott begin mapping Pat's house (bottom), which was ultimately screen printed on canvas for the SOMArts Gallery exhibition Refuge in Refuse (photos by Annie Danis). [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

research apprentices to organize, caption, and tag all the photos in Adobe Lightroom. We developed three distinct tagging vocabularies. The first came from the residents themselves, where an image would show "Amber's place" and her "kitchen" and "living room." The second came from disciplinary conventions of archaeology, which reframes Amber's place as a "site" and her kitchen as a "fire pit feature." Finally, we described the images using the language of real estate development, where images exhibit the "bay views" and "eclectic décor" of these homes without property rights. This makes viewing the archive a dynamic experience and highlights our goal of honoring the individuality and complexity of the people whose traces we recorded.

Amber and other evicted Landfillians are not concerned with disciplinary boundaries. They are concerned with their right to exist, to have histories, and to have homes. These creative re-presencings, in the context of research-as-art and art-as-research, help me explore the Albany Bulb as an intensity of social and historical elements upon and through

which I have placed my archaeological attention. This includes (though, of course, exceeds) thinking of the history of the place called the Albany Bulb—as a landform, landfill, public and private space, and site of political engagement and controversy around the issue of homelessness.

"But we are not broken"

Landfillians are not merely casualties of present-day global capitalism, nor are they somehow outside it. The histories of global capital that produce plastic trinkets, Target brand plates, batteries, and compact discs found at homesites are part of a long chain of production, consumption, and resource extraction. Elizabeth Chin reminds us of the all-encompassing role of capitalism in the narration of personal and historical experience: "The textured and deeply felt ways our collectively held notions of personhood and

emotion are produced in and through the dynamics of capitalism" (Chin 2016, 21).

The late 1800s industrialization of the bay shore, which made first the landfill and then Landfillian homes possible, connects the place to other pasts, like the practice of shell mounding and life on the bay shore "since the beginning." Four and a half miles away, the Bay Street Mall sits atop the remains of the Emeryville Shellmound, a sacred place for the Ohlone people who live in the East Bay to this day. The shell mounds, built from shellfish shells, lived on, worshipped on, and used as places to bury the dead, dotted the bay shore for thousands of years as part of the Ohlone landscape. In the early 1900s some of the shell mounds (including the Emeryville mound) were excavated or razed. They had been actively erased by mid-century, remaining in street names and Ohlone memory (Broughton 1996; Schenck 1926; Shaw 1998; Wallace 1975). In the early 2000s the redevelopment of the industrial lots to build the Bay Street Mall on top of the Emeryville Shellmound uncovered Ohlone burials. This uncovering initiated a controversy over the use of the site that continues to this day (Cediel 2005). Closer still to the Albany Bulb, the West Berkeley Shellmound continues to be the object of activism oriented toward the fourth street shopping district ("Save the West Berkeley Shellmound and Village Site" n.d.).

Settler colonialism haunts current issues of displacement in the San Francisco Bay Area (Baumohl and Miller 1974; Herring 2014). The logic of settler colonialism that authorized the destruction of the shell mounds is also at the root of property and habitation laws that structured the eviction and subsequent development of the Albany Bulb as a park to benefit some people over others. Capitalist notions of the value of land and human life grow out of settler colonial beliefs and locate profit as the primary motivator of social organization (FICTILIS, Linke, and Bell 2017). Both Landfillians, now scattered by eviction, and contemporary Ohlone people in the communities on the east shore of the San Francisco Bay, occupy contested space and fight for rights to land and history.

The people who lived at the Albany Bulb, who may yet identify as Landfillian despite living elsewhere, did not cease to *be* after eviction. An archaeology of their homes cannot pretend that they exist only in the past. The eerie and risky parallel to the trope of "vanishing" mobilized in twentieth-century anthropologies of indigenous people, especially in regards to shell mounds, is not lost on me here. This is the real stake of pushing against temporal boundaries within the practice of archaeological research. Those that made the bricks that provided material for Pat and Carrie's floor do not cease to exist in the same way that Pat, despite having passed, or Carrie despite having moved away, do not

cease to exist. Within the flow of matter that produces our experience of the Albany Bulb, and time itself, they mingle and continue on as important beings. And so, narratives of life at the Albany Bulb and the contemporary struggles of homelessness in the United States are all the more meaningful when understood alongside the historical erasures of Ohlone shell mound builders and inhabitants. There is no wall built between the past and the present.

Today at the Albany Bulb, I can easily walk the newly graded paths and forget that what I walk on is a landfill, not a natural peninsula. I can read every page of planning documents produced by the city over the last thirty years and see barely a mention of the people who lived there longer than I myself have ever lived in a single home. Indeed, many discussions of homelessness leave no space for the possibility that people living outside might have homes, despite their lack of deeds or rental agreements. There is a general lack of understanding in discussions of "the problem of homelessness" that people experience connections to place, despite being under-resourced and disenfranchised. My research demonstrates that people at the Albany Bulb *were not homeless* although they were treated as such. "Living outside" is how I have come to understand what is called "homelessness" at the Albany Bulb. Outside not just in the sense of camping or living closer to the elements, but also outside the tenancy system. To make this kind of analysis I had to expand the temporal frame of both a historical archaeology and an archaeology of the contemporary past to address the experiences of people living there adequately.

I will end with the words of the residents themselves, from an anonymous "Open Letter" painted on three large slabs of concrete on the southern shore of the Albany Bulb just months before the evictions:

> This landfill is made from the shattered remnants of buildings and structures that not so long ago were whole and standing, framed in concrete and steel, expected and intended to last. Now, through the concrete, the grasses make their way. Eucalyptus, acacias, and palm trees drive their roots down through the cracks. Waves constantly erode the shoreline and wash out the edge of the road. And here and there, in sections leveled and cleared of rebar, our tents are hidden away. We live around, and with, and in the rubble. Live. Not merely survive. Can you see how hopeful this is?

> The Albany Bulb is not utopia. It is not free from strife, and chaos, and cruelty, but neither is anywhere else. It is flawed, but it isn't broken and it shouldn't be treated that way. We too are flawed. But we are not broken. So when the politicians start asking their questions and making their decisions, you can help ensure that we are not treated that way. ("Open Letter from a Bulb Resident to Visitors" 2013)

Note

1. To view images from "Finding Refuge in Refuse at the Albany Bulb Landfill," visit https://refugeinrefuse.weebly.com/.

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