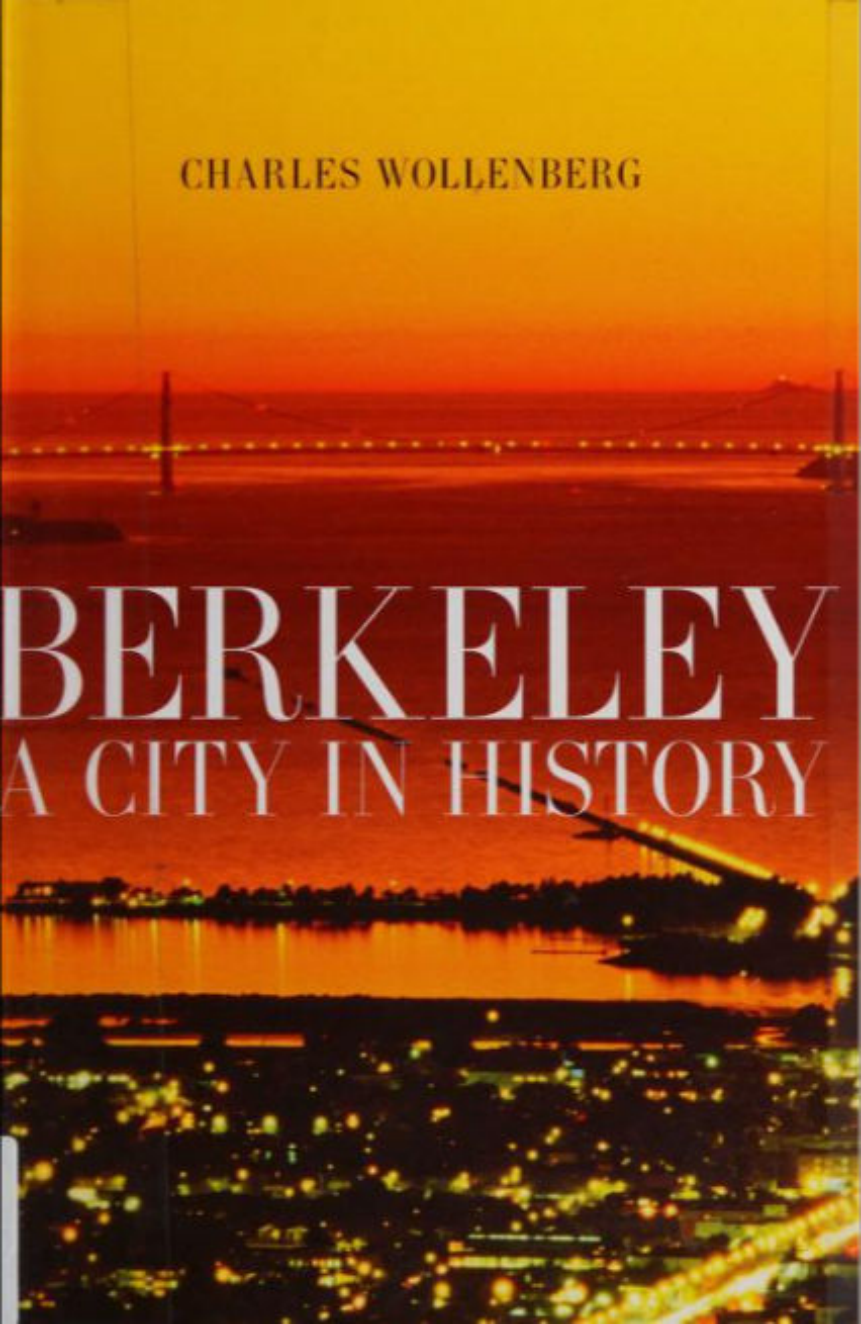


CHARLES WOLLENBERG

The background of the cover is a photograph of the San Francisco Bay Bridge at sunset. The bridge's towers and suspension cables are silhouetted against a bright orange and yellow sky. The water of the bay reflects the warm colors of the sky. In the foreground, the city of Berkeley is visible, with its lights glowing in the dark. The title 'BERKELEY' is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the middle of the image, and 'A CITY IN HISTORY' is written in smaller, white, serif capital letters below it.

BERKELEY

A CITY IN HISTORY

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FIGURE 10. Large Key System interurban train with smaller feeder streetcar, Shattuck Avenue, downtown Berkeley, 1907. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

The Key System was part of a larger Smith-Havens business empire that included the Realty Syndicate, a huge land company that bought and developed thousands of acres of East Bay residential properties. Much of the land was in the hills, including parts of Montclair and Piedmont. In Berkeley, syndicate holdings included significant pieces of the Claremont and Northbrae districts. The syndicate also planned development of the Thousand Oaks neighborhood, in spite of many residents' wish to preserve the area as parkland. The business plan was to extend the electric rails to the syndicate's undeveloped lands, allowing the property to be subdivided for urban and suburban purposes and thus substantially raising its value. Eventually the whole corporate structure was placed under the control of United Properties, a giant holding company whose major investors included the prominent Berkeley developer John Spring. Smith, Havens, and Spring were the instigators of the luxurious Claremont Hotel, on which con-

struction began in 1906. But by the time the Hotel opened in 1915, the Smith-Havens empire had crashed and become mired in complex bankruptcy proceedings. This setback didn't stop Smith from starting all over again and making another fortune. Meanwhile, the Key System survived under various ownership structures, lasting until the establishment of the publicly owned AC Transit agency in 1959.

The Key System's interurban mainline reached the downtown Berkeley station on Shattuck Avenue in 1903. Offering thirty-six-minute service to San Francisco via the Emeryville ferry, the trains initially ran once an hour. The route was so popular that service was soon increased to once every twenty minutes. The line eventually extended north to the Northbrae and Thousand Oaks neighborhoods and west to the Westbrae district. In southeast Berkeley, a Key System line up Claremont Avenue promoted the development of the Claremont district and the Claremont Hotel. Smaller, feeder streetcar lines also stimulated the growth of several additional neighborhoods, including the Northside hills and the north campus business district along Euclid Avenue. Similarly, the College Avenue line promoted the development of the Elmwood district and established what is today one of Berkeley's most beloved and protected shopping areas, along College Avenue.

Competition from the Key System forced the Southern Pacific to electrify its branch line in 1911. Now the SP red cars and the Key System orange trains ran virtually side by side on Shattuck Avenue. The Southern Pacific extended its electric line north through the Henry Street tunnel to Solano Avenue and along California Street to the old Peralta Park district. Like the Key System, the SP developed its own network of streetcar feeder lines that in turn promoted the development of additional subdivisions. Inevitably, the city annexed these new neighborhoods: the Clare-