

# INTRODUCTION

## WOMEN IN PUBLIC

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IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY, San Francisco boasted a thoroughly modern downtown, a specialized district of tall, densely packed commercial buildings. After the earthquake and fire of 1906, Market Street, San Francisco's spine and the center of its downtown, was quickly and substantially rebuilt with stylish buildings that made up an increasingly dedicated landscape of shopping and offices, displacing other prequake institutions, including museums and religious buildings. At the intersection of Market Street and Powell Street (Figure I.1), substantial stone-clad buildings created a relatively uniform street frontage along Market, lining the sidewalk with plate-glass show windows that created a landscape tailor-made for window shopping. Above this tall first story, regular rows of windows hinted at the warren of cellular offices necessary in the heart of any modern city. This landscape was punctuated by signature early skyscrapers, including the Flood Building (at center in Figure I.1) and the Call Building, visible down Market Street.

This image also suggests the lively mixture of uses and people that made up San Francisco's downtown. Businessmen in suits and coats; middle-class women shoppers in long dresses and large hats; suited women who might have worked in offices; children (including some boys who might have been hawking newspapers);

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Figure I.1. View north on Powell (on the left) and east on Market Street, c. 1910, showing the men, women, and children who made up the crowds on the sidewalks of Market Street. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

and policemen, whose presence helped to maintain order—all share this intersection. Early-twentieth-century descriptions of Market Street emphasize this sort of bustling modernity and the cosmopolitan mixture of its crowds:

Before noon Market Street is a bustle of business men. At noon the bright-eyed blooming youth of the office forces debouche for luncheon and a “how d’ye do.” Then come the down-town cars to discharge shopping matrons, and forth come the butterflies of leisure and of pleasure. Towards the half light the bees buzz out again and turn drones for the hour before dinner (the five-o’clock promenade). Playtime has commenced. Actor, soubrette and ingenue, both professional and amateur, soldier and sailor, clerk and boulevardier, workingman and workingwoman, a dozen tongues, a dozen grades of color, a dozen national costumes—miner from the desert, cowboy from the range, chekako or sourdough from Alaska; upper, lower and half world; full of the joy of being, of forming one of the lively throng, exchange greetings more or less conventional, gaze in the brilliant store windows, buy—or hope to—and go to dinner, clubward, homeward, to restaurant and boarding-place.<sup>1</sup>

Writers at the turn of the nineteenth century presented Market Street as a space for all classes, ethnicities, and races—and for both sexes. This was “the thoroughfare alike of the strolling shopper and the hurrying businessman.”<sup>2</sup>

While women were one component of this heterogeneous crowd, their presence in public was still problematic in the public imagination. As late-nineteenth-century etiquette books made clear, the heterogeneity of urban space offered serious challenges to female respectability. To retain their propriety, women were advised to avoid interaction with strangers, a job accomplished by making themselves



inconspicuous, dressing modestly, never walking rapidly or talking loudly, and quickly entering the more sanitized space of department stores.<sup>3</sup>

In this book I explore how women in varying class positions experienced this urban environment, negotiating the gaps between the urban landscape as it was built and as it was imagined to be, concentrating on the case of San Francisco. Focusing on women's use of modern public spaces and how those spaces were built and managed in relation to women's presence within them, I explore the complicated relationship between gender structures and the built environment.<sup>4</sup> I concentrate on the everyday use of ordinary public spaces—streets, streetcars, shops, restaurants, and theaters—examining how women used them, which women used them, and how they were changed and expanded in response to women's presence within them, while also considering the larger social and political consequences of women's everyday occupation of these spaces. In doing so, I build on the work of a number of historians, including Christine Stansell, Mary Ryan, and Sarah Deutsch, who have explored the history of women in urban public spaces, illuminating the relationship between gendered ideology and experience and noting how women's relationship to public spaces has been inflected by class. Stansell explores the Bowery as a setting for working-class women's construction of a new culture of sociability not possible within the confines of their tenement homes, Ryan focuses on the gendered perils attached to the street and other public spaces and how middle-class women negotiated them, and Deutsch looks at both female reformers' and working-class women's struggles over the meanings and uses of public space.<sup>5</sup> These authors have looked carefully at the built environment of public urban space as a setting for women's experience and actions, but they do not, for the most part, use the built environment as historical evidence in its own right. In this book my focus on the built environment expands on their insights, but I move in new directions by considering the built environment as an active force in the construction of gender.

By looking at space and movement through it, we get a much fuller picture of women's everyday lives. This picture goes beyond what texts tell us about the ideal separation of spheres—a cultural ideal in which women were associated with the private space of the home and men with the public realm and the city—to understand how the public and private realms actually interacted. Similarly, a focus on space tells us a great deal about the experiences of women of different social positions. It shows how and where these experiences converge and differ and how women's spatial experiences help to construct varied women's relationships to the city. Even more important, looking at space and gender together reveals the ways that gender systems and the built environment are mutually constitutive. It demonstrates that changes in women's everyday lives shape the built environment of the city, and that built environment in turn shapes women's everyday experiences and the possible paths social transformations in gender can take.



## Imagined, Experienced, and Built Landscapes

The relationship between the built environment and social structures is complex. For example, the contradiction between the ideology of separate spheres and the reality of women in public is not a simple contradiction between the ideological and the real, but instead is a multifaceted interaction among ideology, experience, and the built environment. In order to think explicitly about the spatial dimension of each of these elements, I refer to them as the imagined, experienced, and built landscapes.<sup>6</sup> Separating out the built landscape, how it is experienced and how it is thought about, allows us to see the contradictions among the three landscapes more clearly. It is these contradictions that become the ground for women's everyday actions, as they negotiate the differences between the experiences made possible by a built landscape and the social norms for classed and gendered behavior. Imagined, experienced, and built landscapes not only provide a useful model for understanding women in space but also revise our understanding of the relationships among individual actors, ideology, and the built environment. We can better understand the nature of these three landscapes and how they interact by examining them in the specific case of downtown San Francisco.

### The Imagined Landscape

The imagined landscape is the landscape as conceived of and understood by individuals within a group. While each individual may have a slightly different understanding of the landscape, I focus here on the shared aspects of these imaginings, particularly on the culturally dominant imaginings, those that have the most currency and the most influence on shaping built space. As described in turn-of-the-century travel books, the imagined landscape of downtown San Francisco contained two distinctly gendered and classed realms: a business district peopled by "bustling businessmen" and characterized by masculine efficiency, power, and modernity, and a shopping district frequented by "shopping matrons" and "the butterflies of leisure and of pleasure," a realm of feminine upper-class consumption, irrationality, and display. Both of these landscapes were served by a specialized and centralized network of public transportation converging on Market Street. Not only were these landscapes imagined as separate, specialized spaces, but also the built landscape largely reflected the imagined ones: shops along major streets, fronted with show windows; cellular offices on upstairs floors, served by a sober but magnificent entrance quite separate from the shops; and streetcars on specialized tracks in the center of the street.

Although women worked in offices and men in stores, these landscapes were imagined as gender-segregated spaces, with the gender served in each space predominating: the businessman in the office landscape and the female shopper in



the stores. San Francisco guidebooks reinforced these gender assignments in a culturally co-ed language based on the ideology of separate spheres. Descriptions emphasized display, leisure, and whim for the feminized shopping landscape and production, hurry, and purposefulness for the masculine office landscape; the female “strolling shopper” was contrasted to the “hurrying businessman.”<sup>7</sup> San Francisco’s office landscape was usually described in primarily architectural and numerical terms, with enumerations of such facts as the number of offices and floors in each building and dollars in annual trade. The 1917 *Trips around San Francisco*, for example, extolled the modernity of San Francisco’s “neat and clean” skyscrapers and listed prominent office buildings, including the height in feet for each, but said nothing of the people and activity within these impressive structures.<sup>8</sup> In contrast, accounts of San Francisco’s shopping landscape, with detailed descriptions of “kaleidoscopic changes from one show window to the next,” emphasized people and atmosphere over buildings and facts.<sup>9</sup> The feminine shopping downtown was imagined as a space of pure consumption, driven by sensual experience and emotion, the opposite of the productive, logical space of the masculine business downtown.

### The Experienced Landscape

The experienced landscape is the built landscape as actual people used it in daily practice. Thus, the nature of this landscape is highly dependent on the social position of the person experiencing it. For example, Market Street, as described in the quotation above, provided divergent experiences for businessmen, for whom it was a space to move through; for “shopping matrons,” for whom it was a space of consumption, leisure, and pleasure; and for the mixed, mostly working-class throng, for whom it was a space of vicarious consumption through window shopping. For middle-class shoppers, the experienced landscape of San Francisco’s shopping district did not fit its imagined gender segregation. Women walked or took streetcars, which they shared with men, to get to the downtown shopping district. Once downtown, they walked from store to store along the sidewalks of that district, window-lined worlds of vicarious consumption that were frequented not only by women shoppers but also by men and women for whom the sidewalk was part of a landscape of office work. This experience of mixture on the street is a consequence of the built landscape of downtown San Francisco.

### The Built Landscape

The built landscape is the built environment and its spaces; in the example of Market Street, it includes the pavement, sidewalks, streetcars, buildings, and store windows as well as the interior and exterior spaces they define. The built landscape



is shaped by the imagined landscape and reflects the beliefs, practices, and social structure of the culture that produced it. In the case of downtown San Francisco, the standard building type maximized the landlord's profits by combining shops, which required street frontage, on the ground floor with several stories of offices above. Nonetheless, the female-gendered shopping space and the male-gendered office space were well segregated within these buildings, which generally had separate entrances for shops and offices and no communication between these two sections of the building. One of many examples of this separation is the Flood Building (Figure I.2), on the corner of Market and Powell Streets downtown. Each shop had its own entrance directly on the street, while the offices were accessed through a separate entrance on Market Street. This same separation between shop entrances and a single office entrance, often marked by an arch, can be seen in all the buildings along Market Street in the area of greatest overlap between the downtown shopping and business landscapes (Figure I.3). Even the Emporium department store had offices lining its facade, with selling spaces behind the offices. Thus, the built landscape of the downtown reflected the ideology of separation, at least at the level of spaces within a building.

While space was strictly gender-segregated within each building, the effect of this building type was to encourage an active mix of sexes. The sidewalk in front of these buildings, traveled both by men en route to offices and by women walking from store to store, functioned simultaneously as part of the primarily male-gendered imagined landscape of white-collar work and the primarily female-gendered imagined landscape of shopping and was experienced as a mixed-gender space. When the downtown shopping district and the downtown office district in 1911 are mapped (Figure I.4), we can see clearly that although they were concentrated in different areas—a triangular area roughly defined by Powell, Sutter, and Market Streets for the shopping district and by Sacramento, Battery, and Market Streets for the office district—a large area of overlap occurred, especially along Market Street. As Martyn Bowden's work on the historical geography of San Francisco's Central Business District shows, this mixing of shops and offices was also common earlier in the city's history.<sup>10</sup> Because downtown shops and offices share many of the same requirements, such as high accessibility by public transportation, a dense concentration of people and businesses, and proximity to banks, this overlapping of business and retail functions is in fact common in cities throughout the United States.<sup>11</sup> Photographs of the streets of San Francisco's downtown shopping district reveal a mixed crowd, with business-suited men and groups of women sharing the sidewalks (Figure I.5). Throughout the city, women and men negotiated the same public spaces of streets and public transportation, shopping districts, and places of amusement, although this sharing often conflicted with the imagined ideal gendering of these spaces.



Figure I.2. Flood Building, 1909. The ground-floor shops opened directly onto the street. The entrance to the upstairs offices is through the archway at the far right end of the facade. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.





Figure I.3. South side of Market Street west from Phelan Building, 1909. From the left, the Pacific Building, the Commercial Building, and the Emporium. The pre-1906 mixture of smaller buildings between the Emporium and Fifth Street is being replaced by a single building. The Emporium department store had an imposing entrance at the middle of its facade, while the more modest office entries were at either side of the facade. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



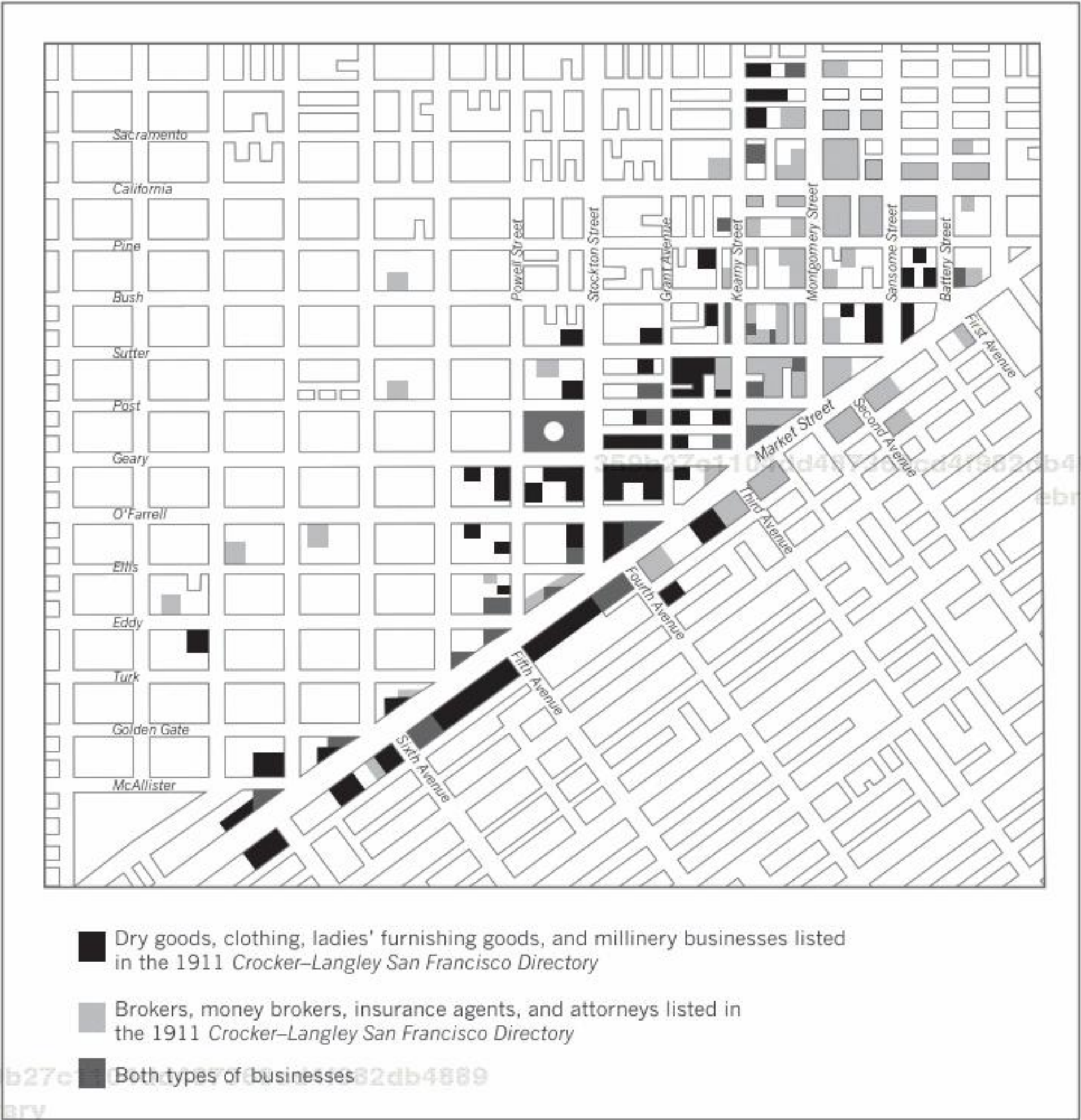


Figure I.4. San Francisco's downtown shopping district and downtown office district, 1911. Union Square is designated with a white circle between Powell and Stockton Streets. The downtown shopping district centered around Union Square, Grant Avenue, and Market Street, while the office district was most concentrated along Montgomery and California Streets. Note the areas of overlap along Market, Grant, and Kearny Streets.

Buildings such as the hybrid shop–office buildings of San Francisco’s downtown were created to try to bridge the conflict between the sorting of people by gender, race, and class and the practical requirements of modern commerce. In the built landscape, they are a trace of a clash between the imagined landscape of separation and the experienced landscape of mixture as well as an attempt to reconcile the imagined and the experienced. They both reflect imagined gender separation and shape an experience of mixture.





Figure I.5. Market Street, early 1900s. Men, women, and children shared the downtown sidewalks. Courtesy of San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



## Imagined, Experienced, and Built Gendered Landscapes

As the example of downtown San Francisco shows, the imagined and the experienced landscapes are particularly important to understanding gendered landscapes. How a built landscape is gendered is difficult to tell merely from looking at it. Gendered landscapes are often imagined landscapes, socially understood to be the space of one gender without necessarily being physically marked as such. This imagining can even supersede experience. For example, at the turn of the century department stores were imagined as entirely female-gendered spaces, to the extent that one department store owner referred to his store as an “Adamless Eden.”<sup>12</sup> However, photographs of department store interiors show a number of male employees, including clerks and managers (Figure 1.6). The strength of the imagination of this landscape as female makes the male workers culturally invisible.



Figure 1.6. Interior of the City of Paris department store, 1910s. Department stores were imagined as female, but this photograph shows a male shopper and several male clerks. Courtesy of San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.



Gendered landscapes are also experienced landscapes. The presence or absence of women or of men can instantly gender a space. Thus, the same public hall when used for the Women's Congress is a radically different gendered landscape when used for a meeting of the Native Sons of the Golden West, although the built landscape stays largely unchanged. Similarly, the landscape of Market Street shifted gender through the course of the day. The quotation near the start of the Introduction suggests that Market Street was male before noon, female from noon to five, and mixed-gender from five on.

In the interactions among imagined, experienced, and built landscapes, there is space for understanding not only dominant practices but also practices that resist or subvert the dominant practices. This subversion resides not within just one of these three categories but rather within all three; change often takes place in the interactions among them. Because of the close ties among the three aspects of landscape, the imaginings, experiences, and spaces that do not fit in with hegemonic practices and conceptualizations resonate with one another. When any one of these aspects changes sufficiently that the contradictions between it and the others become severe, the others often are changed in response. As this book details, women negotiated the contradictions among imagined, built, and experienced landscapes in their everyday lives, making choices about what spaces to frequent and what to do there in reaction to imagined gendered landscapes. In addition, shopkeepers and others reacted to changes in imagined and experienced gendered landscapes, creating new business and architectural types to respond to women's desires and changes in the imagined landscape. The interaction of imagined, experienced, and built landscapes and the ways that each shapes the others are important to understanding how landscape genderings change and how gendered landscapes participate in social change.

## Women in Public

In this book I use the lenses of imagined, experienced, and built landscapes to focus on the contradictions between a set of ideologies that privileged gender and class separation and the modern consumerist city, whose spaces and uses promoted gender, class, and ethnic mixture. The fissures between these imagined and experienced genderings of public space in the city played out in the everyday use of space by men and women. I concentrate primarily on the years between 1890 and 1915, because they constitute an eventful period in the transition from gender-segregated to mixed-gender public spaces in the downtown, as well as a period in which women's public roles expanded significantly. In addition, only beginning in about 1890 did downtown shopping become dominant in American cities,



around the same time that downtown office, retail, and wholesale activities became specialized and separated.<sup>13</sup>

In 1890, at the beginning of this period, women were commonly in public, particularly in shopping landscapes, such as the “ladies’ mile” in New York and lower Kearny Street in San Francisco. At this time the contradiction between women’s presence in public and the ideology of separation was accommodated, although not entirely smoothly, by a wide range of women-only public spaces, including separate women’s lounges and restaurants in hotels and department stores and women’s windows at post offices and banks. In 1890, department stores of some variety were common in all American cities, women often attended matinees, and ladies’ tearooms were a feature of both department stores and better hotels. All of these spaces served middle-class and elite women, shielding them from interactions with the lower classes as well as unknown men. By 1915, women also frequented cafeterias and movie theaters that served people of all classes, both women and men, and they walked the streets alone with greater freedom. Their experience of the city was much more mixed-gender and mixed-class, as well as much more extensive in its scope, than that of women a generation older. The expansion of commercial amusements in the turn-of-the-century city and their increasingly heterosocial nature corresponded with shifts in gender ideology, accommodating women in public.<sup>14</sup> There is, however, no unidirectional causation between women’s changing everyday habits and the creation of new feminine and gender-neutral urban institutions such as the nickelodeon and the cafeteria; instead, women’s public presence as workers and shoppers helped to shape these new spaces, and these new spaces in turn created new possibilities for women’s everyday use of public space.

An important aspect of public space is that within it, in the words of Hannah Arendt, “everything that appears . . . can be seen and heard by everybody.”<sup>15</sup> This made women’s appearance within public space problematic, as men’s gaze was felt to be both controlling and sexualized, threatening to women’s self-possession and reputation.<sup>16</sup> For nineteenth-century middle-class women, to be seen in public carried the danger of being understood as conspicuous and therefore a “public woman,” a term that tellingly denoted a prostitute. Women in public were a source of cultural anxiety because of their discordance with the dominant linkage of women and domesticity. This was particularly the case in the late nineteenth century, but women in public are, to an extent, still a source of collective anxiety today.<sup>17</sup>

This anxiety is a symptom of the tensions between the imagined landscape of gender and class separation and people’s experiences of the built landscape, in which this separation was necessarily incomplete. Everyday experiences unearth these contradictions. Everyday life is where abstract cultural and ideological principles are enacted but also where they have to be reconciled with each other and



with the requirements of ordinary life, often through built spaces and objects. But more important, everyday experiences can also contradict the imagined landscape. Henri Lefebvre writes of everyday life that it functions as “feedback” between “understanding and ideologies” and that it is “the battlefield where wars are waged between the sexes, generations, communities, ideologies . . . where antagonisms are bred that break out in the ‘higher’ spheres (institutions, superstructures).”<sup>18</sup> In short, the relationship between the practices of everyday life and the spaces in which they take place make visible the antagonisms inherent in any complex society and thus is crucial to understanding the engine of social change.

## Diaries and Everyday Life in San Francisco

The everyday life of the past is surprisingly difficult to access, and the lives of the most ordinary people can sometimes be the most difficult to study. Upper-class women tended to write extensively, often kept copies of their letters and other papers, and sometimes made them available in archives. At the turn of the century, working-class women were carefully watched, and their actions were noted by journalists, sociologists, settlement workers, and other reformers. In comparison, middle-class lives were less readily recorded. Therefore, ordinary middle-class lives can be more difficult to access and have been less attended to by historians exploring the history of women in the city. In order to get at the everyday lives of middle-class women, I use a variety of sources, notably diaries, and especially the remarkable diary of Annie Haskell. Unlike memoirs, novels, and many other sources, diaries are not inherently narrative. Rather than telling a story that unfolds, diaries record the events of each day singly. For the conscientious diarist, every day requires an entry, no matter how dull, so daily rhythms of life are made evident in diaries as they are in no other source. Ordinary tasks are noted each day, creating a record of the repetition of quotidian activities such as shopping, ironing, and catching streetcars. Because diaries are not narrative, using them requires techniques that go beyond those we use for memoirs and other more narrative sources. To interpret diaries chronicling everyday San Francisco at the turn of the century, I not only read the diaries sequentially but also coded each entry for what it told of various everyday activities that engaged the public realm. The occasional descriptions of activities supply richness, providing a glimpse at emotions and the nature of experiences. The more typical lists of activities speak to us instead in the aggregate, for example, in what they can tell of the geography and frequency of encounters with particular public landscapes. Diaries are unique in what they can tell us about the real movement of people through the city. They tell us what places and experiences are linked within a day or a week; how women moved



from one place to another; whether they traveled by foot, carriage, auto, or street-car; and even sometimes the routes they took. They are only one source and are joined in this study by a number of others, including newspapers, maps, photographs, existing buildings, trade journals, and guidebooks. Existing buildings from the period add significant insight into the nature of the built environment these women experienced.<sup>19</sup> Yet diaries alone can tell us about the repetitions of everyday life.

For this study, I have made use of three diaries of white, middle-class San Franciscans who wrote of their everyday experiences.<sup>20</sup> Two of the women whose diaries are important to this work were upper-middle-class, middle-aged, white women. The first of these, who detailed her social and business activities for 1905 and 1906 in her diary, is Ella Lees Leigh, the only surviving child of the former San Francisco chief of police Isaac Lees. Leigh was in her midforties at the time of her diary.<sup>21</sup> She was married to Ernest Leigh, a real estate and insurance agent, and had no children. Leigh was a wealthy woman and wrote in her diary both of her own large house in Alamo Square, which she owned, and of an apartment building she was having constructed next door.<sup>22</sup> She was active in society and was a founding member of the exclusive organization Daughters of California Pioneers.

The other upper-middle-class diarist, Mary Eugenia Pierce, was also in her midforties when she kept her 1915–17 diary, which described regular outings to San Francisco, particularly to the theater.<sup>23</sup> Pierce was single and lived with her parents in Berkeley, where they ran a residential hotel, Cloyne Court, described in a local paper as “the permanent home of many outstanding faculty members and retired professional men and women, and the local residence of world famous savants here on their sabbatical leaves or on lecture tours.”<sup>24</sup> She assisted her parents in running the hotel and managed it from their deaths until it was turned into a dormitory in 1946. Pierce’s mother was a well-known singer and the one-time musical director of Berkeley’s Unitarian Church, and her sister Virginia was an opera singer. Concerts were held regularly at Cloyne Court, and all the family members attended concerts and other performances in San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland several times a week. Pierce’s sister Lucy, who also never married, was an artist, and her brother, Elliott, was an industrialist. Like Ella Leigh, Mary Pierce was comfortably well off and had the leisure to spend time shopping and going to shows without being concerned about spending money.

In contrast, Annie Fader Haskell (Figure I.7) was often short of money and had little free time. Haskell, born in 1858 in Trinity Center, California, was a socialist, a suffragist, and the wife of a utopian socialist lawyer, Burnette Haskell, whom she married in 1882 and left in 1897 (although she remained married to him until his death in 1907). She was the mother of one son, Astaroth, known as Roth, born in 1886. Haskell kept a diary from 1876 until 1942, although for this study I have





Figure I.7. Annie Fader Haskell, 1880s. Astaroth Haskell Scrapbook, Haskell Family Papers. Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.



concentrated on the years from 1890 to 1915 and on the periods in her life when she resided in San Francisco.<sup>25</sup> Haskell was thirty-two in 1890, a mother of a young child, living in a rented house in which she kept boarders. She left her husband after the failure of the socialist utopian settlement Kaweah, of which he was a founder. At that time Burnette Haskell was broke, drank heavily, and was openly carrying on an affair with another woman, who was at times a boarder in their house. After leaving her husband, Haskell never had a home of her own, living instead in the Mission District of San Francisco with her sister Helen or later with her son, Roth, after he grew up and married. She was unable to find employment in San Francisco as a teacher or librarian because of her age and marital status and thus worked on and off as a teacher in small remote towns in far Northern California to support herself. Although she was well educated and her husband was a lawyer, Haskell was never well-to-do and at times complained because she could not afford to take a streetcar and had to walk instead.

Annie Haskell's diary is an unusually rich source. She wrote a page every day of her adult life, from 1876 until her death in 1942, and filled each page no matter how little of importance had happened that day. The extraordinary volume and detail of her entries provide an extensive picture of the activities and rhythms of everyday life, spanning the changes that occurred during her long lifetime. Haskell was also a good writer who carefully, if sardonically, described her life and experiences in detail. Her diary is also of particular interest because, although she was unusual in many ways, her economic position was relatively typical of ordinary middle-class women, and thus she provides important insight into nonelite experiences. Because most diaries that make it into archives are those of the elite or those chronicling unusual experiences, Annie Haskell's diary of ordinary life is comparatively rare, and its length and detail make it extraordinary.

These women had different access to financial, social, and cultural resources, but they all fit broadly within the category of the middle class and were all native-born white women.<sup>26</sup> Neither Ella Leigh nor Mary Pierce had discernible concerns about money; also, both enjoyed significant access to resources other than strictly monetary ones. Leigh had considerable social capital as a founding member of the Daughters of California Pioneers, and Pierce had social and cultural capital through her connections to the worlds of music and academia.<sup>27</sup> Leigh's and Pierce's access to financial resources put them in the upper middle class. In contrast, Annie Haskell, although highly educated, with a mother who was a published poet, a lawyer husband, and a sister who owned two houses, experienced significant financial constraints throughout her life and had only minimal social connections, largely in the world of socialist and suffragist politics. Her comparative lack of access to resources put her functionally in the lower middle class, although her education and interests did not solidly fit into that class culture. The contrasting



positions of these women were also reflected in their access to spatial resources, as will be described in detail throughout the book. For example, although Pierce lived in Berkeley, she visited downtown San Francisco more often than Haskell did. Pierce moved easily throughout the Bay Area, with a sense of comfort wherever she went. In contrast, Haskell's life was lived primarily in her own neighborhood, and trips beyond it were often marked with discomfort and difficulty.

## San Francisco and Its Downtown

This book looks at San Francisco not only because of its particularities but also because in many ways San Francisco was a typical large American city of the turn of the century. Like many cities, particularly in the West, it was largely created after 1850, used grid planning, and was significantly shaped by public transportation. San Francisco began as a small Mexican settlement and grew quickly after the discovery of gold in 1848. While early on San Francisco was disproportionately male and had a reputation as a lawless town, by the 1890s its white population was nearly 50 percent female, and it had a big city's sophistication, with museums, private clubs, and high-end theatrical entertainments.<sup>28</sup> In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries San Francisco was a thriving and expanding mercantile and manufacturing metropolis.<sup>29</sup> By the early 1890s, with a population of 298,997, it was the eighth largest city in the United States and the only city west of St. Louis to rank among the fifty largest U.S. cities.<sup>30</sup> In 1910, in the wake of the massive destruction of the 1906 earthquake and fire, San Francisco was still the eleventh largest city in the United States.<sup>31</sup> Until the 1920s, it was the most important city in the American West.

The city of San Francisco grew outward from a settlement clustered near San Francisco Bay in an area that became, by the turn of the century, its downtown (Figure I.8). This originally settled area is bisected by Market Street, leading from the Ferry Building (which connected San Francisco to the East Bay and the rest of the United States) southwest into the rest of city (Figure I.9). Two different grids extend from Market north and south. North of Market lie the financial and shopping districts, Chinatown, and, farther from Market, Nob Hill and North Beach. The area south of Market was mixed at the turn of the century, including warehouses and manufacturing, as well as a densely packed, largely working-class residential population.<sup>32</sup> As in other cities, neighborhoods had local main streets, typically transportation spines, which served their neighborhoods with a range of goods and services, including shops, banks, dentists, barbers, and meeting halls for local organizations (Figure I.10). In addition, in San Francisco two of these local main streets, Mission and Fillmore, grew to become district main streets,





City of San Francisco and its vicinity, 1852.



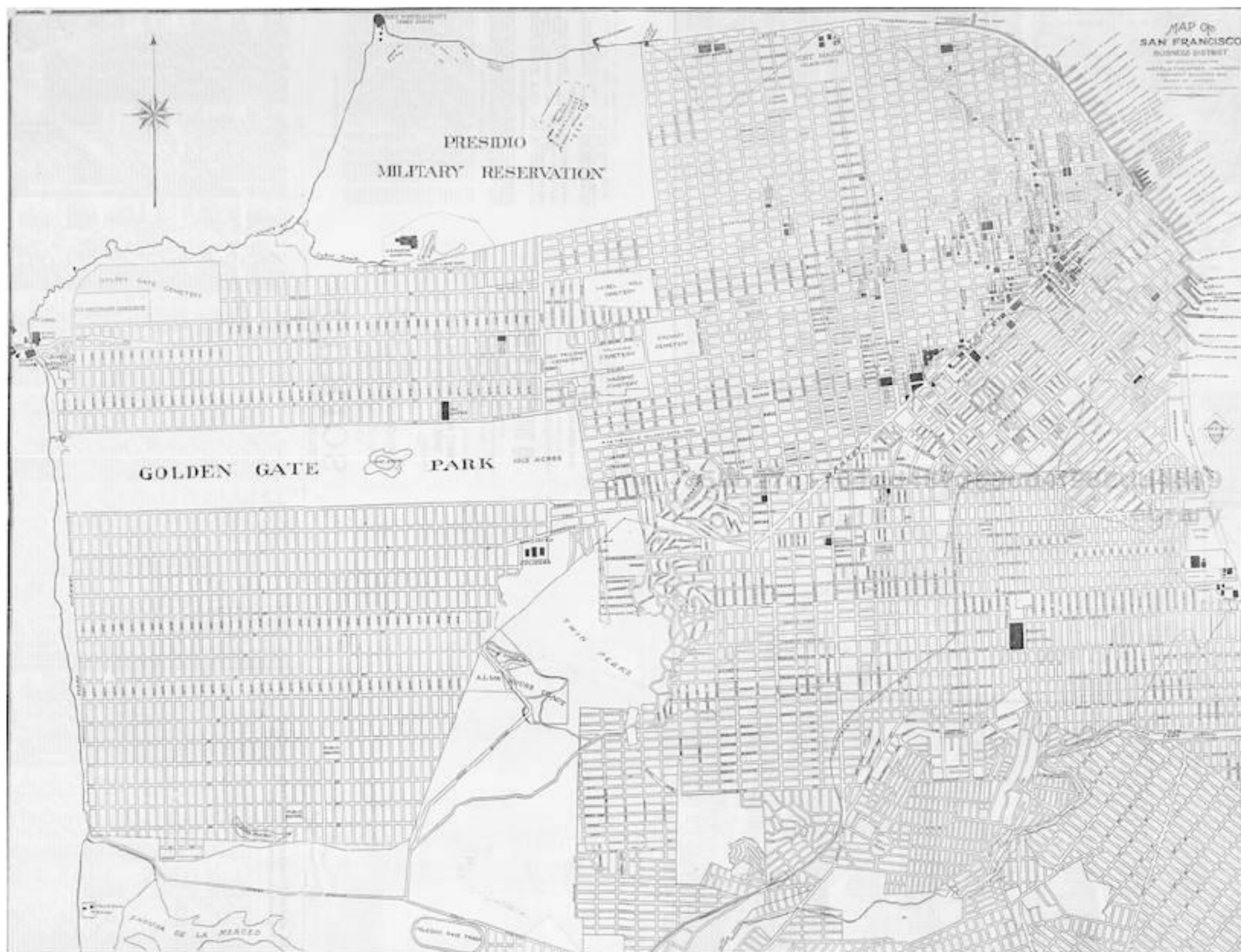


Figure I.9. San Francisco, 1904. By the early twentieth century, San Francisco had expanded significantly to the west and south of the original settlement near the port. J. B. Chadwick, *Map of San Francisco Business District*, 1904. Courtesy of the Earth Sciences and Map Library, University of California, Berkeley.

providing a wider range of goods and services in a more specialized space and serving as substitutes for Market Street immediately after the 1906 earthquake and fire.

Turn-of-the-century downtown San Francisco, like other modern downtowns, was a specialized space of shopping and commerce, with only hotel residences along Market Street. This is in marked contrast to American cities a century earlier, when both offices and shops were typically combined with the living quarters of those who worked in them. In San Francisco, the fire following the 1906 earthquake made this specialization more acute, because institutions such as museums, churches, and synagogues, as well as the owners of destroyed buildings that had included living spaces, found it easy to sell off their now-empty lots at a profit and move to new locations, accelerating the changes already underway in the downtown. This new specialized space was supported by a network of streetcars, cable



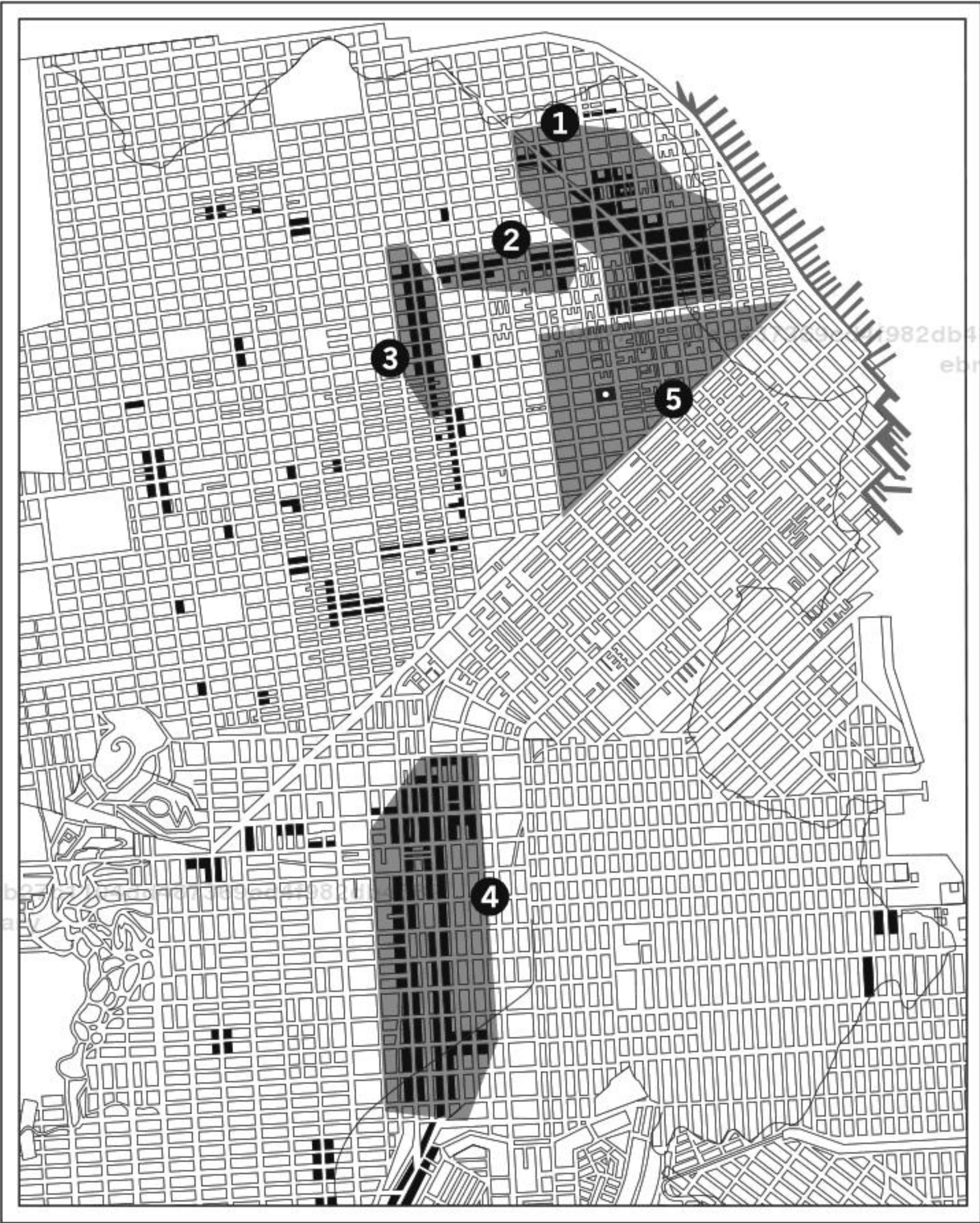


Figure I.10. Local and district main streets in retail districts, San Francisco, 1899. Small local main streets were spread throughout the city, while larger and more complex district main streets, particularly in the Mission District, served larger portions of the city. The retail districts are (1) Montgomery Avenue; (2) Broadway; (3) Polk Street; (4) Mission and Valencia Streets; and (5) the downtown.



cars, and ferries that made it possible for workers and shoppers who lived in primarily residential districts to move easily between their homes and downtown. This network was focused on Market Street, the spine of the streetcar network, with the ferry terminal at its base. The importance of Market Street and its focus on the ferry terminal also had consequences for the particular shape of San Francisco's downtown. While retail and commercial activity expanded southwest, from lower Kearny Street to Union Square, it has never migrated far from Market Street or the ferry terminal, unlike shopping districts in cities such as Chicago and New York, which have moved much farther from their original center because of changes in population and other forces.

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## Women in San Francisco's Urban Public Landscape

In this book I explore several overlapping urban landscapes and how they were imagined, experienced, and built. In each of the first four chapters I focus on the network of spaces that made up one type of gendered public landscape, noting where they were in the city, tracing how those spaces changed over time, exploring the ways material culture marked these sites as classed and gendered, and investigating how women negotiated them in their everyday lives. By looking both at the larger scale of the entire network of spaces that make up a landscape and at the smaller scale of individual buildings and their design details, I examine how gender was practiced and patterned in the city and how certain gendered practices were represented and reinforced through material culture. In the final chapter I revisit the gendered landscapes discussed in the previous chapters, showing how women's presence and power within public space had implications for their battle for political rights and for their place in the public sphere.

The most public space of all, and that most regularly encountered, is the street, which I discuss in chapter 1. In order to go out, whether to visit any other public place, to work, or to meet friends and relatives, women took to the streets. The streets and streetcars between their homes and their destinations were an important public landscape, the one in which women most frequently appeared. Streets and streetcars were a space of gender-based tension, as evidenced in the debates over appropriate street and streetcar behavior in turn-of-the-century etiquette books.

As the consumers for their households, women went out regularly on errands. The spaces of everyday shopping and appointments are explored in chapter 2. Analyzing shopping trips in diaries, I describe three main landscapes of shopping: local daily grocery shopping, short trips to neighborhood and district main streets, and expeditions to the department stores and specialty shops of downtown Market Street. Women's varied access to and use of these three shopping

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landscapes helped to construct their social positions and affected how they engaged with the city as a whole.

As women went out in public more often, they also ate in public more often. In chapter 3 I explore the expanding number and variety of institutions serving hungry women at the turn of the century. In the late nineteenth century most restaurants were male spaces, which women would visit only when escorted by men. Middle-class women could eat at all-female department store or hotel tea-rooms, and working-class women might have eaten at a lunchroom with ladies' tables or in the ladies' lounge of a saloon. In the early twentieth century, women increasingly ate out, patronizing a wider range of lunchrooms, tearooms, ice cream parlors, and cafeterias. I trace this change in the context of San Francisco, focusing on how the landscape of eating out connected with other gendered landscapes; which eating places women frequented when and with whom; and how the design of restaurants reflected their appropriateness as space for women.

The public spaces of the city also provided experiences of amusement and spectacle for women, the spaces explored in chapter 4. Unlike shopping, which was sometimes pursued with female companions but often pursued alone, going to amusements was usually done with others, typically with a man or as part of a mixed-sex group. However, over time women increasingly went to places of amusement without men, especially after the introduction of movie theaters. The spectacle of the theater was mirrored by the spectacle of the streets of the downtown, both on ordinary days, when men and women walked the streets at dusk to look at window displays, and on holidays, when the entire street became a space of spectacle for parades. I also explore how women participated in these parades, both as spectators and as actors, and how parades and celebrations recast the gendering of the spaces in which they took place.

The consequences of women's use of public space went beyond simply an increasing comfort and familiarity with that sphere, particularly the downtown. Women's everyday use of public space had consequences for their position in the public sphere and in politics. In chapter 5, in which I discuss the California woman suffrage campaigns of 1896 and 1911, I revisit the landscapes discussed in previous chapters in the context of the political use of public space. To demand a place in the public sphere, women reworked the uses and meanings of commercial public space, which they redefined as a site of political activity. In 1896, such public spaces were used cautiously by suffragists, but by 1911, suffragists aggressively redefined lunchrooms, stores, streets, streetcars, and theaters as political space. The political use of gendered public space shows the importance of gendered public landscapes to women's power to act, and the changes between the two campaigns highlight the enormous changes in the gendered public landscape—imagined, built, and experienced—from 1896 to 1911.