Rescuing Maps

Using open software and techniques to publish historical maps to the geographic web
Oakland

http://teczno.com/old-oakland/
1877 Real Estate Map
This is just a few years after the founding of Oakland, and you can see how unformed the city is: regularly-spaced, freshly-surveyed blocks, extending into the bay in some places where it seemed possible to simply fill in your own coastline.
Borax Smith’s Realty Union was involved in both residential real estate and electric streetcars – the latter made the former possible, so it was important for this map to show the wealth of public transportation available to prospective commuters looking to move in.
1936 Shell Oil Map
Two interesting things here: the coastline has been extended with no new corresponding residential streets, and rail service is completely omitted, even though the Key Route System was still thriving at this point.
The Cypress Structure is visible here as a cut through West Oakland; it was reviled by the local residents who felt that it cut their neighborhood in two.
Present day Microsoft Virtual Earth
Union Pacific rail right of ways were repurposed to create a new 880 freeway that circumvents downtown.
Now
Tools, Process

Scanner, Photoshop, http://getlatlon.com, GDAL
1. I’ve been buying occasional road maps hoping to fill in a developing picture of the East Bay throughout the 20th century. This is a 1936 road map a lot like one that I have.
2. GDAL lets you define ground control points: places on a given map that you know to be in a certain geographic location. This is a view of a web application I made to speed this process up, but it’s possible to use Photoshop and Google Maps to laboriously complete this process.

“rubber sheet”
GDAL + EPSG:900913

http://www.klokan.cz/projects/gdal2tiles/

“Then a miracle occurs…”
3. GDAL can “rubber sheet” the map to fit the real world’s geography: here I’ve scanned the two sides of the 1936 map and assembled them into their geographically correct positions, and you can see how they’re slightly warped.
More Cities

Other historical mapping projects
Los Angeles

http://maps.cartifact.com
Cartifact, Los Angeles
The lens
New York

http://oldmapapp.com
Martin Ceperley, NYU
Hey look, it's in your pocket!
Hey look, it's in your pocket!
Berlin

http://dev.cdh.ucla.edu/Hypermedia
UCLA Hypercities
In this map we start to see Berlin spill out from inside its fortified boundaries
As city walls lose importance, the south west side opens up
There’s barely any wall left in these next few views
Oops! after the division of Germany, this map simply doesn’t acknowledge East Berlin
Here we start to see it sketched-in, though not confidently
Just prior to reunification
Today, the center of balance has shifted back to the historical center
Questions For Maps

What is this? Whose is this? Why is it here now? What was here before?
Gray Brechin at UC Berkeley is currently collecting documentation on New Deal projects, which in many cases were not properly documented at the time.
San Francisco

http://www.sfgenealogy.com/sf/sanborn/sanborn.htm
Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps
Sanborn produced these highly detailed maps of entire cities for insurance purposes – if a fire broke out, it was important to know precise details of building construction, layout, materials, and what potentially fire-causing tenants occupied each space.
Maps at the previous level of detail were available for San Francisco and many other cities at the turn of the century.
London

http://london2012.com/map
Stamen’s work for LOCOG - the future!
This is the official brand identity of the 2012 Olympic Games in London – their style guide was very strict about these purples and yellows.
We’ve created a nation-scale interactive map for communicating the development of the Games for 2012.
A major issue in designing the base map was that there is this huge area in east London which is under heavy, active construction – we’ve applied many of these ideas about preserving pictures of places through georectification.
Rescue Maps!

Find old maps, scan them, tile them, and put them online
Thank You.

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