

Marta Gutman

*A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850–1950*

The University of Chicago Press, 2014

In *A City for Children: Women, Architecture, and the Charitable Landscapes of Oakland, 1850–1950*, Marta Gutman traces the history of Oakland, California as it was shaped by the contributions of women who created institutions and transformed architectural spaces to provide children with new educational opportunities, social services, and recreational environments. Drawing on exhaustive research, Gutman is equally adept at mining the archive and mobilizing oral histories to construct an engaging narrative organized around remarkable episodes of urban transformation. *A City for Children* excavates the considerable achievements of reformers invested in changing the everyday lives of working-class children and improving the city for its youngest residents. At the same time, the book grapples seriously with tensions and conflicts that emerged, often across differences of gender, race, and class, as well as the systemic failures on the part of the state to redress entrenched inequalities. Ambitiously tracing the long arc of Oakland's transformation over the course of a century, Gutman introduces us to the efforts of extraordinary individuals and organizations in a city whose history has for too long been overshadowed by its neighbor across the San Francisco Bay. In the process, she reminds us that cities are often less the sum of master plans and monumental new constructions than the aggregation of innumerable small-scale reinventions and imaginative re-uses.

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