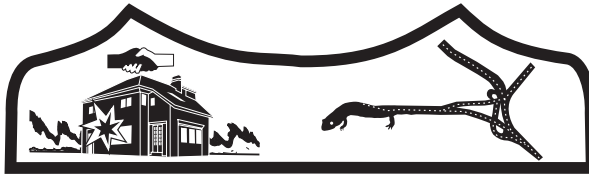

RIPARIAN CITY

DOAN BROOK WATERSHED

15,000 B.C.E.

Where do you live? It seems like a simple question.

David Beach, The Greater Cleveland Environment Book

There was, of course, no Cleveland before Cleaveland.

The Committee of 500 Years of Dignity and Resistance

affix portrait here
valid regardless of picture

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RIPARIAN CITY: DOAN BROOK WATERSHED

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THE DOAN BROOK WATERSHED IS A RIPARIAN CITY, A LIVING TERRITORY CREATED WHERE A FLOWING STREAM MEETS THE LAND.

It is formed by an urban waterway (The Doan Brook) over 8 miles in length that receives water from almost 12 square miles of densely populated urban land and carries it to Lake Erie. As a watershed, Doan Brook defines one type of ecosystem, a collection of geological forms populated by plants and animals that has been altered by urban and suburban development.

The Brook begins near a series of lakes constructed in the 19th Century by the North Union Shaker Community; at its end sits Dike 14, a man-made peninsula in Lake Erie formed by sediment removed from Cleveland's harbor and the Cuyahoga River in order to make the river accessible for shipping. In between, it makes its way across the land, periodically forced underground, carrying whatever flows into it.

THE DOAN BROOK WATERSHED IS NOT A SELF-DEFINED TERRITORY, HOWEVER.

The rattlesnakes, wolves, chestnut trees, salamanders and other once thriving human and non-human inhabitants surely knew it by other names long before Nathaniel Doan arrived here in the late 18th century. Since the earliest human settlements over 11,000 years ago, the watershed has been defined by interactions between humans and non-humans.

Just as humans respond to their surroundings and each other, non-human forces respond to each human intervention, often in unpredictable and unforeseen ways, perhaps most visible when the Brook's waters overflow its banks, unable to handle the volumes resulting from engineered containment and increases in paved surfaces.

This passport to, and guide through, the Riparian City of the Doan Brook Watershed is necessarily partial and incomplete in many ways. What we provide here is a suggested entryway, one that is incomplete and imprecise.

The Lake Plain
Geothermal Culture

• **Location**: Memorial Shoreway Pedestrian Bridge linking Gordon Park to the Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve

Several meters above the buried, final stretch of Doan Brook, the Gordon Park pedestrian bridge provides a panoramic view of the cultural, geologic and symbolic histories of the Riparian City. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, waterfront parks served as a popular site of urban leisure, and the 122 acre Gordon Park was no exception. It's hard to imagine now, but between its opening in 1893 and World War II, Gordon Park's beaches and other amenities served as a nearby getaway for east side Clevelanders. The post-war era brought industrial pollution and the Memorial Shoreway that cut the beach off from the rest of the Park and forced the Brook underground.

Looking west, you will see the Lake Shore Plant, a coal burning electric generator. At one time, coal from western lands (more than 550,000 tons/year) was burned to power 450,000 homes. In the process of generating steam and electricity, the plant took in 150,000 gallons of water per minute, which was heated up and sent back into the lake. While the original plant opened in 1911 under the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, it wasn't until the 1960s that the plant reached its peak output of 520 mega watts. It is likely that 300 high-voltage, underground cables, once carrying 11,000 volts each, still secretly radiate out from the plant.

The plant's current owner, FirstEnergy, decided to close the plant in late 2012 in response to heightened environmental regulations. Along with 1,422,269 tons of CO2, the plant released fine particle pollution and mercury into the bodies of the lake's walleye and steelhead trout, and the surrounding humans who might eat them. It has been estimated that 13,000 humans died in 2010 from illnesses related to coal plan emissions in the United States. Because of such statistics, some communities organized against the Lake Shore Plant's operations. Jocelyn Travis, a native to Cleveland's Glenville neighborhood was one

such critic:

This plant is right in the midst of the black community. You don't hear anything about it, and it's killing our community. This park that was once vibrant… there's noting going on here. We just have to figure this out. As a community, we've got to come together we've got to do the right thing.

The recently established Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve (to the north), opened by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Port Authority on February 6, 2012, is located on a human-made peninsula known as Dike 14. It is also where waters from Doan Brook become one with Lake Erie. Before being recognized as a land worth preserving, this was land being made from unwanted material. From 1930-1970s, it was a solid waste landfill—the Cleveland Lakefront Dump—that reportedly caught fire spontaneously at its center in the early 1970s. In 1962, two coal-powered ships from the US Steel Fleet were sunk here to help create a reef. The bulk of the land mass, however, is the result of sediment dredged from the Cuyahoga River and Cleveland Harbor, dumped here from 1979 until 1999. Known as a "confined disposal facility," its name (Dike 14) identified its relationship to the 29 other dikes throughout the Great Lakes. Being closed to the human public between 1999-2012, the site was populated by non-humans, including red foxes, minks, more than 280 species of birds, and numerous insects, grasses, wildflowers and invertebrates. Now that it has been officially recognized as a "preserve," it remains to be seen how the non-human inhabitants will welcome new visitors.

• **Location**: 11105 Superior Ave, Fred (Ahmed) Evans' (one-time) Home

On July 23, 1968, a series of events unfolded that would become known as the "Glenville Shootout," followed by five days of property destruction and the militarization of the Glenville neighborhood. These events had their own specific causes and effects, but are unavoidably linked to the other "disturbances" occurring in cities across the United States where struggles for racial and economic justice met opposition and indifference.

Seven people were killed, several others seriously wounded in the shootout, and in its aftermath, dozens of citizens suffered beatings, many at the hands of the police. Estimates of the damages and

losses were in excess of $2.6 million, including 63 business establishments.

Fred Evans, also known as Ahmed, has become a central figure in the story of the Glenville Shootout and subsequent violence. Retrospective media accounts of Ahmed's injuries suffered in the "Korean War," his turn to astrology and black nationalism, and his general erratic behavior painted a picture of a man heading towards violence. The Wall Street Journal once quoted him as predicting that May 9, 1967 would be a day of mass violence—something that would not come true. White America seemed fearful of a militant black uprising. A Jet magazine article published after the shootout noted that "some critics were prone to blame the showing of the film, The Battle of Algiers… at the Continental Art Theater, six blocks from the riot scene." During Ahmed's trial, much was also made of funding he received from the "Cleveland: Now!" program for his Afro Culture Shop and Bookstore that served youth in the community. Convicted of first-degree murder by an all white jury, following racially inflammatory lines of questioning by the prosecution, Ahmed was sentenced to death by electric chair. Granted an indefinite stay of execution, he would die in prison of cancer in 1978.

• **Location**: 1387 East Blvd, Salon des Refuses

A place for practicing the art of living. Operated by artist, performer & poet Julie Patten.

This is how Julie describes the Salon des Refuses:

One artist from East Boulevard, from Cleveland, from India or any other place is invited to live, work and exhibit in this building. Needing little to subsist in such a supportive environment, the artist is able to liberate their practice from commerce, performing instead a valued service through their own work and their administration of the gallery. This project was developed in partnership with an existing youth program and community garden, with which the artist works closely to integrate gallery functions and programming.

The City of Cleveland has lost nearly 50% of its population since 1950. In 2009, 1387 East Boulevard is at 50% capacity. A woman on this street will die without telling anyone how she used to prepare a Sunday meal. We are rapidly losing our sense of place.

Art that is based on place does more than just recall the physical place to its inhabitants and the world, it also redefines what materials are needed to create meaning. Printing presses, recording

studios and proscenium stages are not to be found anywhere in this building; here we have dried oak leaves, eaten away like lace, tuneless pianos, flapping iron coal chutes, rooms that are holding their breath...

The art that happens here is one of re-purposing, re-collecting. The discipline derives from living, and being lived-in. All materials are native, inexpensive or free, belonging to this place already—an artist simply borrows them for their stay. Place is built-upon, built-up and rebuilt. Nothing is knocked down or demolished but that notion of placelessness that effaces our bashful city.

And in a brilliant moment, the artist finds that there is truly nothing special about 1387 East Boulevard. It is a place, just like any other.

Escarpment

Flows of Information

• **Location:** The middle of the quad on the campus of Case Western Reserve University, south of Euclid Ave, between MLK Dr. and Adelbert Rd.

At a historic marker here, you are informed that in July of 1887 "one of the outstanding scientific achievements of the 19th century" was made by Dr. Albert A. Michelson of Case and Dr. Edward W. Morley of Western Reserve University at some nearby location. What the plaque doesn't tell us is what that achievement was. In essence, what was gained was through a failure. Michelson and Morely set out to prove that lightwaves moved through a substance called "aether" in the same way sound waves move through particles of matter. Their experiment concluded that there was no ubiquitous aether through which light moved, that light always moved at the same speed. This, and other findings, would lead to Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity.

While the Internet today is increasingly regulated by entertainment and data-collection companies, The Cleveland Free-Net, a free public computer

network system (the first of its kind) once existed in the Doan Brook Watershed. Begun in July 1986, by Dr. Thomas M. Grundner of Case Western Reserve University the Free-Net evolved from the "St. Silicon's Hospital and Information Dispensary," started in 1984 as an electronic free medical advice service for Clevelanders. Eventually, the network was renamed the Cleveland Free-Net, and provided discussion forums, email and other professional services. By 1988, it had more than 1,000 registered users. Following transfer of the Free-Net to CWRU's Office of Information Services and capacity upgrades, the service gained tens of thousands of new users, reaching more than 160,000 by 1995.

One Cleveland user (au329@cleveland.edu) wrote of her experience:

"The Freenet made an email mailbox available to each user so they could use and participate in email. Shortly after I signed onto the Cleveland Freenet I had the thrill of receiving a New Year's greeting from a friend in Australia."

As commercial internet access became more available and affordable, the Free-Net was unable to sustain demand, closing on September 30, 1999.

Nearby, on Mayfield Rd, at East 115th, is a historic marker celebrating another network dedicated to freedom—the Underground Railroad, through which escaped slaves made their way north to Canada.

Just to the east of CWRU, the Doan Brook runs underground through a 5,160 ft. long culvert. Noted historian and naturalist of the Brook Laura Gooch has noted the that the Brook floods the University Circle area every three to five years, with severe floods occurring roughly every six years. As a result of the increased urbanization, the amount of water running into Doan Brook is likely four times what it was during Nathaniel Doan's time. During extreme rain events, like those in 1959 and 1975, the Brook resurfaces, pushing up manhole covers and temporarily reclaiming its territory above ground.

Plateau
Natural Divisions

• **Location**: 12800 Cedar Rd, Cleveland Heights, St. Ann School

Along with the violent events in Glenville, 1968 also saw the passage of the Fair Housing Act, prohibiting discriminatory housing and financing practices that were occurring across the nation in mostly white enclaves like the Heights communities south of Cleveland. When people of color did manage to secure a home in such neighborhoods, violent reactions by whites were not uncommon, including arson, bombings, and shootings. In response to this endemic racism, grassroots organizations such as the local Heights Citizens for Human Rights formed. In 1971, a group of women parishioners of the St. Ann Parish formed the St. Ann Social Action Housing Committee to address housing discrimination in Cleveland Heights. The following year, the St. Ann's Committee carried out an undercover audit of local real estate practices, resulting in a report that revealed unmistakable racial discrimination. The report was covered extensively in the Sun Press and the Plain Dealer creating noticeable controversy in the Cleveland Metropolitan area. In the aftermath of the study, the Heights Community Congress (HCC) was formed in 1972 by local Catholic, Jewish, and Protestant leaders to continue the anti-discrimination work. The HCC can be found today nearby, at 2475 Lee Road.

• **Location:** 2600 South Park Blvd, The Nature Center at the Shaker Lakes

The Federal-aid Highway Act of 1956, with its mandate to create a national interstate system, rolled out large paths of concrete through many of the nation's cities. While the Federal Highway system was purportedly designed to facilitate the rapid movement of military operations, their effect in cities was the mass migration of middle class whites out of urban centers and the violent division of neighborhoods. Had Cuyahoga County Engineer Albert Porter had his way, the I-290/ Clark and Lee Freeways would have cut through much of eastern Cleveland and the Heights communities here, destroying the Shaker Lakes and hundreds of homes in these cities. Aligned with other "freeway revolts" around the country, the well-heeled residents of Shaker Heights and their neighboring allies effectively stopped the

encroaching rivers of concrete and asphalt. Due to the work of activists like Kathleen Barber and Jean Eakin, the Nature Center at the Shaker Lakes was established in 1966. The Nature Center preserved the Shaker Lakes, man-made bodies of water created by the Shaker North Union Settlement when they dammed the Doan Brook to power mills. While social separations may still exist between the geologic territories of the Lake Plain and Plateau, they are, thanks to the actions of local freeway-fighters, not made of concrete.

Acknowledgments

The following individuals provided invaluable advice and resources:

Victoria Mills, of the Doan Brook Watershed Partnership

Julie Patton, of Salon des Refuses

As with any territory in the Americas, this passport depicts a contested land. The locations and stories contained here exist on top of, and alongside, many others.

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