

PragmaticStories

Charged Bodies

People, Power, and Paradoxes
That Launched Silicon Valley



THOMAS MAHON

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Foreword

Charged Bodies by Tom Mahon is part of a new line of books from The Pragmatic Programmers called Pragmatic Stories, which are narratives we think will inspire developers and general audiences alike. Some of these stories are rooted in technology, while others are simply about the human experience in a tech-centric world.

We're thrilled to be able to bring this updated classic story to a new generation of readers. *Charged Bodies* is the story of Silicon Valley itself: the unlikely saga of how a sleepy valley of pear orchards was transformed into a global hub of technological innovation.

But Tom cast a wide net in his search for the meaning of Silicon Valley, from Frederick Terman's leaky attic radio laboratory at Stanford, where Bill Hewlett and David Packard did research and dreamed about starting a company, to John Billingham's office at NASA Ames Research Center, where he headed up a project to search for extraterrestrial intelligent life. Tom interviewed an orchardist who grew up and grew fruit in the Valley, and a private detective, and an environmental activist, and a Jesuit priest— whoever could give him insight into the soul of Silicon Valley.

For this new edition of *Charged Bodies*, Tom has written a new Afterword, reflecting on the past 40 years and what the Internet and social media and artificial intelligence have wrought.

—Michael Swaine

Series Editor, Pragmatic Stories

The Pragmatic Bookshelf