

# Preface

California is more than just another state. It is also a dream, a fantasy, a state of mind. This California of our collective imagination draws its power from universal human needs. Founded on expectation and hope, it promises to fulfill our deepest longings for opportunity and success, sunshine and beauty, health and long life, freedom, and even a foretaste of the future.

Two of the logical consequences of this dreamlike image of California have been growth and diversity. Throughout its history, the Golden State has attracted from across the country and around the world millions of newcomers pursuing the California dream. Today California is by far the most populous state in the union, home to about one out of every eight persons living in the United States. California is also the nation's most ethnically diverse state. Ethnic minorities make up over half of the state's burgeoning population of more than 38 million; in other words, every Californian now is a member of one minority group or another.

For many Californians, the dream of a better life has been realized. California is the nation's wealthiest state, ranking first in industrial and agricultural production. It leads in high technology and is home to the nation's entertainment industry. If California were a separate country, it would rank eighth among the nations of the world in gross domestic product.

Other Californians have found the dream denied. Running through the state's history is a bitter strain of conflict. On its way to greatness, California has been burdened by a legacy of racism and nativism, episodes of discrimination and exclusion, a sometimes violent struggle between labor and capital, and an intense contest over the state's land and water resources. In recent years, problems such as pollution, income inequality, and a deteriorating infrastructure have caused deep concern among many Californians. This concern has been compounded by a widespread distrust of government. As frustration deepened in the early twenty-first century, thoughtful observers questioned whether the state would be able to meet the ongoing challenges of growth and diversity generated by the California dream.

First published 45 years ago, *California: An Interpretive History* has become the standard in the field. The tenth edition retains all the strengths of the earlier editions. It provides a comprehensive survey of the state's cultural and social affairs, along with an account of its political and economic history; it appraises the state's virtues and accomplishments, as well as its faults and failures. Original interpretations are offered of California's most controversial and persistent problems.

To guide the reader through the interpretive narrative, the text is divided into six sections, each of which begins with an overview of the chapters ahead. This division provides a sense of interpretive cohesion, giving the reader a broad perspective on the various eras of state history. Likewise, each chapter opens with a brief introductory section, previewing the material to be covered.

The preparation of the tenth edition has been guided by the assumption that the main body of the text remains sound. Thus, as in previous editions, the earlier chapters have not been changed significantly in either content or sequence. New scholarship in the field has been included wherever relevant; and minor changes have been made to smooth the narrative and define unfamiliar terms. Throughout the text, greater attention has been paid to the diversity of California's population—in matters of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. Most particularly, new "voices" from the historical record have been added to enliven the prose and allow the reader to identify more readily with the events being described. New illustrations have been added, and the selected bibliographies at the end of each chapter have been updated.

The last of the six units, "The Challenge of California," has been substantially revised to reflect the most recent developments in the state's dynamic political, economic, cultural and social history. The political narrative encompasses the second term of the Schwarzenegger administration and the advent of new leadership. Additional interpretive material focuses on a wide range of topics—the collapse of the housing bubble and subsequent mortgage meltdown, the ongoing structural deficit in state finances, the debate over health-care reform, racial disparities in public education, protests against increased fees in higher education, the reform of state water policy, the renewed search for alternative fuels, and the passage of landmark global-warming legislation.

Also now available for students and instructors is an expanded and updated Website, [www.mhhe.com/rawls10e](http://www.mhhe.com/rawls10e). The site includes student quizzes, exercises. Instructors may download from the site dozens of historic photos, paintings, broadsides, and other documents from the collections of the California Historical Society. These images are password protected; instructors may use the downloaded images to create PowerPoint classroom presentations. The site also includes an Instructor's Manual with objective and essay questions for each chapter as well as suggested lecture topics and audiovisual resources.

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