

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 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 37 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 sixth 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, congestion, 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 challenge of growth and diversity generated by the California dream.

First published 40 years ago, *California: An Interpretive History* has become the standard in the field. The ninth 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. Each chapter opens with a brief introductory section, previewing the material to be covered.

The most visible change in the ninth edition is the division of the book's 36 chapters into 6 parts, each of which begins with an overview of the chapters ahead. This division provides a greater sense of interpretive cohesion, giving readers a broader perspective on the various eras of state history. 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 greater attention has been paid to the diversity of California's population. Likewise, a considerable number of new illustrations have been added, and the selected bibliographies at the end of each chapter have been updated. The last several chapters—now comprising Part Six, *The Challenge of California*—have been substantially revised to reflect the most recent developments in the state's dynamic political, economic, cultural, and social history. New and expanded sections, for instance, have been added on *The Perils of Moderation and The Politics of Personality* in Chapter 33, *Recent California Politics*; and on *Housing* in Chapter 36, *Contemporary California Society*.

Also now available for students and instructors is an expanded and updated Website, www.mhhe.com/rawls9. The site includes student quizzes, map activities, interactive exercises, and a set of useful links for each chapter of the textbook. 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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