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California's Railway Era

Economic Development and Social Unrest

"The Terrible Seventies"

In 1914 Gertrude Atherton coined the phrase "The Terrible Seventies" for a chapter in her book, *California, An Intimate History*. Certainly, it was a difficult decade for some Californians, but not for all. Many thousands of urban laborers, white-collar workers, and business, land, and farm owners benefited from the opportunities the railroads brought. Yet Henry George's gloomy prophecy at the dawn of the railway age came true for many people. Railroads aggravated some old problems and introduced new ones. In general, they offered the greatest benefits to those who already had property and influence. Railroads were a boon to industries and communities served by the new transit system, but undermined some not so fortunately placed. By improving access to California, railways also made the state more vulnerable to nationwide economic disturbances. Despite remarkable development after 1869, the next decade was also one of the most turbulent in the state's history. The '70s were more paradoxical than terrible.

Urban Growth

Railroads encouraged economic growth in California by reducing transportation costs, making remote lands and resources accessible, widening markets for producers, raising land values, and increasing many people's incomes. One of the first results was rapid urbanization. A prime example was Oakland, a steamboat port settled in the 1850s across the bay from San Francisco. In 1868, the ultimate coastal terminus of the transcontinental railway was still in doubt. Oakland's scheming founder and most powerful citizen, Horace Carpentier, assured his own fortunes by deeding large tracts of prime shoreline to the Oakland Waterfront Company, of which he and Leland Stanford were principal owners. In return, the Big Four agreed to locate the railway's western terminus at Oakland, rather than continue the line around the bay to San Francisco. At first Carpentier was hailed as a local hero, and Oakland's future seemed bright, although the city had to fight a protracted legal battle with the railroad after the 1890s to recapture its waterfront.

The arrival of Central Pacific trains had an immediate, spectacular effect on Oakland. Passengers jammed downtown shops, hotels, and restaurants. Commerce quickened and land values rose, sparking downtown building booms and new subdivisions filled with ornate Victorian homes. Industries rushed into the city, as firms vied for sites near the rail terminal. Wharves and warehouses proliferated. As employment soared, so did population. In 1868 Oakland was a bucolic village, its 2,000 residents easily outnumbered by the sprawling oaks after which the town was named. In 1870, the population exploded to 10,500 and, by 1880, with 35,000 residents, Oakland had grown into the second largest city in California and the Far West.

Oakland's rapid modernization after 1869 was typical of rail-era cities. The railroad boom increased the community's size and diversity, expanded its wealth and tax base, and brought new ideas and technologies. Schools, churches, and municipal agencies multiplied, as did social, cultural, and professional organizations. Almost all the oaks were uprooted; the streets were straightened and extended. Water, sewer, and gas utilities were expanded. In 1878, only two years after Alexander Graham Bell had invented it, the telephone arrived in Oakland, easing communication within the city and to San Francisco. Electricity followed in the early '80s. Oakland's efficient transit system of horse car lines, Central Pacific steam commuter trains, and cable cars extended into the countryside, connecting the city to Berkeley to the north and San Leandro and Hayward to the south, and igniting more suburban booms along the way. By the early '80s, Oakland was the hub of a growing East Bay metropolitan region, a thriving, attractive, comfortable city, equal or superior in modern facilities to much older eastern centers.

Railroads likewise transformed other towns, though not as spectacularly. Already the dominant southern California town, Los Angeles came alive in 1872, as soon as its citizens voted to subsidize the Southern Pacific Railroad. Even as the city awaited its outside rail link, trade expanded, downtown buildings rose, outlying property was subdivided for residences, additional farms sprouted in the countryside, and local rail lines gravitated toward the future terminus of the southern transcontinental route. Although the city had grown little in the 1860s, by completion of the Southern Pacific's southbound line in September 1876, the city had tripled its 1870 population of 5,700. Although the boom collapsed in the nationwide depression of the late 1870s, the city could still boast 33,381 residents in 1880, a 500 percent increase over the previous decade. By comparison, rival San Diego, having lost the all-important rail connection, languished with a population of about 3,000 throughout the 1870s. The railroad's arrival pushed Los Angeles along in its evolution from a colonial pueblo into a thoroughly Americanized city, a process that was completed in the '80s by another railroad-related boom.

New towns took root as tracks were laid through unpopulated areas like the Central Valley and southern San Joaquin Valley. Outside parties sometimes started settlements adjacent to the lines, but through the 1870s, the Central Pacific's construction and real estate development arm, the Contract and Finance Company (after 1879, the Pacific Improvement Company), founded numerous market towns. The company laid out streets in the familiar gridiron pattern and built shops, stations, yards, warehouses, loading docks, stock pens, and housing for its workers. A hotel and restaurant were often added to lure travelers and provide a social center. Trees were planted to shade and beautify the new community; the Associates also donated lots and cash toward the building of parks, schools, churches, and major businesses. The railroad often built and operated the first water systems necessary to lure people to arid regions. The company advertised the town sites, pairing lot auctions with festive picnics and bringing in prospective buyers on low-fare excursion trains. Instant rail towns materialized within weeks of the first sounding of a locomotive's whistle. Although

Depot at Truckee

On the east slopes of Donner Pass, the High Sierra town of Truckee resembled many communities springing up along rail lines throughout the state. Hitherto a tiny turnpike way station, Truckee became the gateway to California when the Central Pacific located yards and maintenance facilities there in 1868. Within a few years, the town's population had soared and it had become a major rail operations center as well as one of the leading manufacturers and shippers of ice and lumber in the American West. After the turn of the century, Truckee became California's first winter sports capital and the location for many early outdoor motion pictures. This photograph was taken by Alfred Hart in the late 1860s. *The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.*

some never progressed beyond way stations, others—such as Modesto, Merced, Fresno, Tulare, Hanford, Bakersfield, Niles, Livermore, and Colton—developed into prosperous trade centers.

San Francisco: From Instant City to Pacific Metropolis

Before completion of the transcontinental railway, San Francisco was "the City" for California and the Far West. San Francisco's meteoric rise as a gold rush center had resulted primarily from its early command of an incomparable deep-water harbor. In the 1860s its residents expected railroads to converge there, and real estate speculators swarmed around the few potential sites for railway operations along the city's southern waterfront. But San Francisco's grand ambitions were soon dashed. The city was on the tip of a peninsula nearly 100 travel-miles farther from mining and farming districts than were its East Bay rivals. One of the first California cities blessed with nominal rail service, San Francisco lost the contest for important terminal facilities to cities with better rail locations: Oakland, Sacramento and, after the 1880s, Los Angeles. No wonder San Francisco soured on railroads in the 1870s. Frustrated journalists and business leaders bemoaned the rail isolation of their city, belittled and tried to undercut urban competitors, and blamed their business woes on the perfidious railroad. For the rest of the nineteenth century, San Franciscans furnished much of the energy behind anti-Southern Pacific politics.

Although disappointed that the Central Pacific invested in end-of-the-line improvements in other cities, San Francisco generally prospered during the railway era. Its head start on rivals was too long, its prestige too great, its facilities too convenient, and its banks and investors too flushed. The Central Pacific itself moved its corporate headquarters from Sacramento to San Francisco in 1873, and other major businesses opened offices there as well. Much of California's commerce with the outside world, particularly bulky goods, continued to arrive by sea. Oakland's harbor was at first too shallow, so San Francisco remained the major Pacific Coast port and city, with steam ferries chugging cargo and passengers back and forth between the city, Oakland, and other bay points. To a significant degree, San Francisco continued to dominate coastal trade, as well as riverboat traffic with interior valleys.

San Francisco was the commercial metropolis of the Pacific Coast by 1880, when the city stood ninth among the nation's cities in manufacturing and population. Its 234,000 residents came from nearly everywhere on earth. Half were foreign-born and three-fourths had at least one foreign-born parent. Within two decades of statehood, San Francisco was one of the nation's most cosmopolitan and ethnically diverse cities.

Industrialization

In 1860 San Francisco had ranked 15th in size among U.S. cities, but only 22nd in manufacturing output and 51st in industrial employment, because local conditions discouraged heavy industry in both the city and state. Coal and iron ore were scarce and expensive. Monthly interest rates as high as 15 percent meant that investment capital was expensive. Other development investments away from the city—land, transportation, and mining stocks—were thus more appealing. Because of the strong lure of inland mines, particularly the still-booming Comstock Lode, factory labor remained scarce in San Francisco and other California cities. As a result, ships departing California ports usually carried raw materials, such as logs, raw cattle hides, and unmilled grain, instead of lumber, finished leather goods, and flour.

Circumstances changed during the 1860s and early '70s. The transformation of western mining into a large-scale industry encouraged economic diversification. Hydraulic and hard-rock mining corporations replaced the prospector-owned placer companies of the early gold rush. Particularly in Nevada's Comstock silver region, shafts and tunnels plunged to unprecedented depths. Mining on such a grand scale required heavy equipment designed specifically for the Sierra and the Comstock.

San Francisco entrepreneurs responded quickly. The Irish-born Donahue brothers, for example, arrived in 1849 and began turning scrap metal into shovels for miners. Their Union Iron Works thrived, but in 1860 it remained basically a glorified blacksmith shop. The firm shifted to producing mining machinery and, a decade later, employed 600 workers molding imported iron into heavy equipment for mines and other industries. Other factories machined tools for manufacturers, and produced cable, pumps, stamp mills, steam engines, and other essentials of the new mining technology, as well as rails, cars, and locomotives for the West's growing transportation network.

Other railroad-era economic changes had similar consequences for San Francisco industry. The expansion of lumbering and new town construction required heavy milling equipment and stimulated furniture making. In the early gold rush, entire buildings had been shipped around the Horn from the East. By the 1870s, California's own mills and shops were fashioning boards, shingles, posts, windows, grilles, and a phantasmagoria of Victorian gingerbread to adorn the state's growing cities. San Francisco, like Oakland, San José, and other cities, also specialized in processing California's multiplying farm crops. Bonanza wheat farms that developed in the 1870s needed plows and harvesters designed for California's unique soil conditions and unusually large farming operations. By the 1870s, San Francisco's grain mills were beginning a flourishing trade in flour to China and Europe. Surplus cattle hides inspired a thriving tanning industry, followed by boot-making and other leather-goods enterprises. The growth of sheep ranching prompted the 1878 merger of the Pioneer and Mission mills, creating one of the nation's largest producers of high-quality woolen goods. Across the state, breweries, wineries, distilleries, grain and cloth mills, and vegetable and fruit canneries sprang up around rail sidings, yards, and waterfronts.

Financing such operations required capital, which was soon available in San Francisco and other cities. Capital accumulated from land and mining-stock speculation and grain production, while the decline of profits from the Comstock Lode forced entrepreneurs into alternative investments. San Francisco's John W. Mackay, for example, the Comstock magnate whose income of $25 a minute at one time made him the wealthiest man in the world, turned to manufacturing. Others followed suit. By the time the Bank of California temporarily closed its doors and touched off a panic in 1875, William C. Ralston had invested his own and the bank's funds—not always wisely—in lock and clock factories, food and textile plants, machine-tool shops, mining mills, and smelters. Adolph Sutro, Claus Spreckels, James Phelan, and scores of others with more modest fortunes also diversified through investment in manufacturing.

The 1870s also brought San Francisco the final ingredient essential to industrial development: a labor force. After 1869, the Central Pacific released some of its Chinese workers, most of whom migrated to San Francisco. By 1880 Chinese comprised 15 percent of the city's total work force of 100,000, and nearly 90 percent in cigar making, textile and clothing manufacture, shoe production, and other light industries. Other groups also gravitated to the city, including former railroad workers, men idled by depletion of the Comstock and Sierra mines, and thousands riding the rails to escape economic depressions and labor troubles in the East. The growing labor pool transformed the city's social character. No single enterprise dominated, but by 1880 San Francisco had become an industrial city with half its workers employed in manufacturing. Smaller cities experienced similar shifts.

Railroads and the Bonanza Wheat Era

California's climates and soils held rich agricultural potential, but progress was uneven during the 1850s and '60s. While some success was achieved in producing livestock, cereals, vegetables, and fruit, farmers suffered a lack of information about growing conditions, inexperience with agriculture in arid lands, poor transportation, and, particularly, limited markets.

Surprisingly, the start of transcontinental rail service in 1869 offered little immediate assistance to many California farmers. Shipping time along the Central Pacific route was too long, and extreme winter and summer weather delayed and spoiled cargoes. Freight charges were high—in part because traffic was low and train operation through rugged territory was expensive, but also because the Big Four hoped to make the most of its monopoly. Many California farm products could not hold their own against better and cheaper competitors grown closer to eastern markets. But the development of local rail service within the state did transform agricultural practices. As illustrated in Mussel Slough country, the shorter lines unlocked the virgin soils of fertile areas, which connected farmers with local market towns and coastal ports, encouraged settlement of new regions, and spurred the development of new crops, machinery, and techniques.

A prime example is wheat growing in the late 1860s and '70s, which evolved from a decentralized business producing food for local consumption to a large-scale, highly structured export industry. The boom in wheat cultivation followed the railroad tracks through the San Francisco Bay region, up the Sacramento Valley, and down the San Joaquin and Salinas valleys. The crop offered an apparently ideal solution to California's agricultural challenges. Wheat required little or no irrigation and actually benefited from long dry summers. Its culture was well-known and inexpensive. Although too bulky and low in value to ship east by rail, it was a nonperishable crop that could be transported profitably to distant markets in sailing ships. Growers followed the railroads onto flat valley lands and wheat acreage soared.

Essential in a poor marketing zone such as California, an elaborate structure emerged overnight to link wheat growers with consumers around the world. Relying on telegraphic communication, British and American companies bought wheat in California and sold it on exchanges in England and elsewhere. Isaac Friedlander, a German Jewish immigrant, assembled an international network of banks, warehouses, shipping companies, and grain-sack factories. From San Francisco, Friedlander could forecast wheat output, control finance and supply, and reserve ships to carry the harvest. Although they stabilized the wheat trade, brokers like Friedlander and a few others reaped bonanza profits and exercised monopolistic powers that angered some growers.

In favored regions, such as Mussel Slough, small farmers raised wheat profitably. But most grain was produced on vast tracts of leased or cheaply purchased land. These ranches employed industrial work forces and huge plows, harvesters, and steam tractors, much of the machinery developed and manufactured nearby. The largest grower, Colusa County's Hugh J. Glenn, amassed an empire of 66,000 acres and employed nearly 1,000 laborers. Investing more than $300,000 in machinery and draft animals, by 1880 Glenn produced a million bushels of wheat a year. Glenn and other bonanza growers hauled sacks of grain in wagons to railside platforms, where they were snatched up by Southern and Central Pacific wheat specials. These long trains converged on San Francisco Bay and the Carquinez Strait, particularly at Port Costa. Endless strings of boxcars crept across specially built wharves, their wheat loaded directly into the holds of sailing ships for the voyage to China, Australia, or the British Isles.

During the 1870s and '80s, California wheat growing developed into the most mechanized and structured form of agriculture in the world, becoming the state's major export industry. Production reached a peak of 41 million bushels in 1890. During the boom years, the fortunes of Friedlander, Glenn, and other "wheat kings" rivaled those of the Big Four and mining-stock speculators.

The bonanza wheat era ended abruptly in the 1880s. Other wheat farmers broke new ground on the Great Plains and in Europe, Asia, and Australia, many using techniques and machines imported from California. Overproduction of wheat glutted world markets and sent prices plummeting. At the same time, yields declined sharply on California's eroded and exhausted soils. Improved irrigation facilities and rail connections to the East encouraged growers to subdivide their fields for more profitable uses. Wheat-growing dwindled into a minor crop in California after 1890.

Fruit and Specialty-Crop Farming

Cultivation of specialty crops—citrus fruit, deciduous fruit, winter vegetables, melons, rice, and cotton—emerged slowly after 1870. California would later become famous for these crops, although many had been grown as early as the mission era. Still, major economic, technological, institutional, and environmental changes were necessary before fruit and specialty-crop agriculture could become a reliable industry. Fragile, perishable, and unfamiliar to American farmers, the new crops needed specific climates, soils, and handling, requirements that were poorly understood at first. In particular, such crops required more water than nature provided. Because individual farmers had difficulty solving these complex problems, California agriculture became highly organized late in the nineteenth century.

From the beginning of American settlement, growers formed crop commodity groups to raise standards, sponsor innovation, combat disease and pests, disseminate information, and lobby the government for aid. Farmers first met locally and then, in 1854, launched the California State Agricultural Society. Dominated by the wealthiest growers, the society won a modest subsidy from the miner-controlled legislature. It managed the state fair and several local expositions, published useful technical papers, and persuaded the state to reward experimental growers. Growers of livestock, wine grapes, deciduous fruit, oranges, raisins, and nuts created pressure groups of their own. Small-scale farmers gravitated to the Patrons of Husbandry (The Grange), organized at local, county, and state-wide levels, and often favoring more militant policies at odds with wealthier growers.

After the 1880s, when limited markets were still causing overproduction and low prices and profits, many farmers turned to more powerful marketing cooperatives. The first successful cooperative was the California Fruit Growers' Exchange ("Sunkist"), founded in 1893. To eliminate middlemen, the Exchange and similar groups raising walnuts, almonds, deciduous fruit, raisins, dairy products, poultry, and other crops, limited production, regulated prices, adopted grading standards, and took charge of packing and marketing. Between 1900 and the '20s, the cooperatives acquired more control of production and convinced the state to erect elaborate governmental machinery to manage supplies, prices, and marketing conditions in the interests of growers and producers. By the early twentieth century, California agriculture had become dominated by complex, interlocking organizations with strong influence on their members, as well as public policy.

At the behest of farm pressure groups, all levels of government provided services to modernize agriculture. After the 1860s, federal agencies such as the Army Signal Corps (later the U.S. Weather Bureau) gathered, tabulated, and distributed statistics on climate, information that helped farmers choose crops and design operations more wisely. U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists developed, tested, and introduced crops. Most notable was the Washington navel orange, a superior seedless, winter-ripening fruit that the Department imported from Brazil in 1873 to save the struggling Riverside colony. The national and international resources of the Department also aided in discovering cures for new crop diseases brought to California as parasites on imported plants and now thriving in the genial climate.

Even more important were state agricultural agencies. Farm organizations promoted formation of the State Board of Agriculture (1863), Board of Viticulture (1880), Horticultural Commission (1883), Board of Silk Culture (1883), Dairy Bureau (1895), and State Veterinarian (1899). Although troubled by poor administration and funding, as well as opposition from rival groups, state agencies sponsored research, published reports, organized growers' conventions, advertised new farm products, and secured regulatory and quarantine legislation. By the turn of the twentieth century, growing state bureaucracies were important forces for agricultural change. In 1919 the legislature consolidated them under the State Department of Agriculture.

Private businesses engaged in agricultural development also encouraged innovation with capital and organization. While they were profiting from land speculation, developers like William S. Chapman, who built up the Fresno area in the 1870s, reorganized land for higher use, promoted compact settlement, financed farm purchases, and encouraged higher-value crops and more efficient farming methods. Before the 1880s private water companies, such as the joint-stock ventures begun by Mussel Slough settlers, built most small irrigation facilities that farmers needed to cultivate thirsty new crops. Organized colonies—among the most important of which were the Mormons at San Bernardino and the Germans at Anaheim (both founded in the 1850s), Riverside, Pasadena, and the Fresno raisin colonies (1870s), and irrigation genius George Chaffey's Ontario and Etiwanda colonies east of Los Angeles (1880s)—pooled capital, water rights, labor, expertise, and machinery. Cooperatively, they bought and improved land, developed irrigation, introduced new crops, and provided social and cultural amenities to reduce the isolation of the farm frontier.

The major business promoting agriculture was the Central/Southern Pacific. The railroad became convinced by the 1870s that the future of the state, as well as the company, depended on farm progress. Through its low-interest land-purchase loans and crop-share arrangements, the railroad advanced capital to finance many new small farms in emerging regions such as Mussel Slough. A powerful friend of scientific agriculture, the railroad compiled most of the climate, crop production, and water statistics used by early experimenters, agricultural agencies, and until the early 1900s, the U.S. Army Signal Corps and U.S. Weather Bureau. The company supported the University of California's agricultural teaching and experiments in various ways, from lobbying to protect the beleaguered institution's funds and independence, to providing monetary grants and free transportation for university staff and supplies. In cooperation with the university in 1908, the railroad began annual instructional trains through rural districts to teach farmers scientific cultivation. The company also promoted public irrigation and the preservation of forest watersheds.

The Southern Pacific's marketing services supplemented those of farm organizations and state agencies. The company's all-weather southern route to the Midwest (completed in 1883), along with the Santa Fe's line to Chicago (open in 1885), linked California farmers to the national market, and made possible the expansion of high-value specialty crops. After 1883 the Southern Pacific also instituted faster direct service to the East, ran special fruit-marketing trains, and pioneered in the development of ice manufacturing, fruit cooling plants,

The University of California and the Beginning of Higher Education

Religious denominations, concerned with educating clergy and lay people to strengthen their new churches, dominated higher education in nineteenth-century California. University of the Pacific (Methodist), Santa Clara University (Catholic), and University of San Francisco (Catholic) originated as private, sectarian schools in the early 1850s. With sporadic expansion of a public-school system also demanding more teachers, the state established a few normal schools, beginning with San Francisco in 1862.

Resistance to financing public schools, particularly colleges, ran high among most transient pioneers, however, and the legislature refused to establish a state university. To overcome this opposition in California and other states, Congress in 1862 passed the Morrill Land-Grant Act, which allocated federal lands to states to establish colleges fostering agricultural, mechanical, and military education. To qualify for the land grants, the legislature in 1868 assumed control of the College of California, a struggling Oakland institution started by Congregationalists and Presbyterians in 1855, and converted it into the state's first public university.

The new university floundered at first. When it opened at the old Oakland campus in the autumn of 1869, only 38 students showed up, despite tuition of only $20 per term. Mismanagement of the land grant also caused delays in realizing the federal subsidy and the legislature skimped on funding the university. Students also faced a bleak social life in the early years, particularly after 1873, when the university moved to an isolated rural campus on a Berkeley hillside. With little housing or other services, students were forced to commute miles from their rooms in Oakland; a few endured the two-plus hour trip by ferry and horse car from San Francisco.

But the university gradually won public approval, gaining the financial support needed to expand curriculum and services. With its improved prestige and facilities, the university attracted more students, as well as distinguished faculty. Over the next few decades, the university added graduate programs and professional schools of medicine (1873), pharmacy (1873), law (1878), dentistry (1881), and veterinary science (1894). In 1870 California's new university opened its programs to female students "on equal terms, in all respects, to young men."

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The University of California, 1874

Carleton E. Watkins photographed the isolated, rural Berkeley campus of the University of California the year after it opened. The mansard roof and dormers of South (*left*) and North (*right*) halls illustrate the influence of the French Second Empire style, a popular Victorian style of the 1870s. *Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.*

The university helped make the late nineteenth and early twentieth century a time of great occupational gains for women. Within a few years, its female graduates were embarking on careers as physicians, lawyers, journalists, educators, and engineers. By the early twentieth century, the University of California had developed into one of the finest public institutions of higher learning in the world. It was an important cultural center for the state and a training ground for leaders in the arts, science, business, government, and the professions.

The University of California also worked to modernize farming. Like other early university programs, the College of Agriculture initially had few students and a meager curriculum. Farmers, led by the Grange, and laborers denounced the college as elitist and agitated to abolish it. Reorganized after 1874 under Dean Eugene W. Hilgard, a German-born soil chemist hired from the University of Mississippi, the College of Agriculture became more scientific, assembled a faculty of fine teachers and researchers and experimented in soil chemistry, fertilizers, climate, crop testing, irrigation methods, and pest control. Particularly significant were the program's efforts to develop grape vines resistant to *phylloxera*, a tiny root louse that devastated vineyards in the 1870s and 1880s. With federal aid starting in 1887, the university established a string of experiment stations to adapt crops and techniques to the state's diverse environments, an ambitious program that brought working farmers much practical information. By the turn of the century, the University of California was a major stimulus to state agriculture.

As railroads spread and cities grew, Californians founded other colleges, including the University of Southern California (Los Angeles, 1879), Stanford University (Palo Alto, 1891), California Institute of Technology (Pasadena, 1891), as well as distinguished smaller liberal arts colleges such as Loyola University (Los Angeles, 1869), Mills College (Oakland, 1885), Occidental College (Los Angeles, 1887), Pomona College (1887), Whittier College (1901), and Redlands College (1909). By the early twentieth century, California boasted a surprisingly elaborate framework of higher education, given its small population and remote location. (RJO) and refrigerated cars and shipping systems. Because of competition from the Santa Fe, the company reduced freight rates on a broad range of farm products, though not enough to satisfy some shippers. The Southern Pacific also helped farmers organize marketing cooperatives and assisted them in mass advertising campaigns to urge reluctant Americans to consume California's new crops, such as oranges, prunes, apricots, raisins, and out-of-season and out-of-region produce in general. Some conflicts remained over freight rates but, ironically, most of California's highly organized growers were reconciled to "the Octopus" by the time Frank Norris published his famous novel.

Conversion to modern, higher-profit agriculture was facilitated by innovations in crops and cultivation methods introduced by immigrants with experience in regions with growing conditions similar to California's. The production of fine wines was a specialty of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, like Hungarian-born Agoston Haraszthy, but also many from Italy, France, and Germany. European immigrant orchardists were often the first to introduce fruit culture, as they did in the 1850s and '60s, converting the Santa Clara Valley into the state's first important fruit district.

The Chinese migrated from different types of agricultural regions in the old country with experience in both arid and semitropical wetlands agricultural environments. As a result, they were especially valuable as farm innovators. Beginning with early mining districts and then spreading across the state, it was the Chinese who initiated truck gardening, raising vegetables on small rented plots and marketing them directly to town dwellers. Although most of the rural Chinese worked as laborers, clearing land and building levees and irrigation works, forward-thinking Caucasian land owners often contracted with entrepreneurial Chinese immigrants, who leased land as tenants and independently broke the soil, reclaimed wetlands, and began orchards and vineyards. In this manner, the Chinese pioneered in the production of strawberries, potatoes, wine grapes, raisins, and deciduous fruit. Although their reclamation and settlement of the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta left a major mark, Chinese farmers were also in the forefront of agricultural change in the larger Central Valley, the Santa Clara Valley, and other San Francisco districts. After 1890, growing numbers of Japanese, Korean, and Filipino immigrants played innovative roles, as had their Chinese and European predecessors.

Between 1870 and the early 1900s, fruit and specialty-crop agriculture became the state's major industry. Problems were gradually overcome, new crops spread, and some livestock and grain ranches gave way to smaller farms. Orange groves spread through the upland valleys of Southern California, lemons along the coast. Most viticulture shifted northward to San Francisco Bay valleys, where fine dry-wine grapes flourished in the vineyards of European immigrants. Deciduous fruit and nut orchards invaded the Bay Area, the Sacramento Valley, and the northern San Joaquin Valley. Millions of raisin-grape vines and acres of drying racks basked in the hot Fresno sun. After 1900, prompted by progress in refrigeration, irrigation, and marketing, lettuce, melons, tomatoes, dates, and other new crops spread into the Salinas Valley and the fierce, below-sea-level deserts of the Imperial and Coachella valleys.

By 1900 the number of California farms had grown to 72,500, then collectively valued at $708 million. In 1925, the state's 136,400 farms were worth more than $3 billion. By the early twentieth century, California had become the nation's most diverse agricultural region and its leading producer of wine and table grapes, raisins, winter vegetables, lemons, almonds, walnuts, tomatoes, sugar beets, plums, prunes, apricots, and lesser crops. Bountiful farm harvests also sustained urban and industrial growth from 1870 to 1930.

Water Resources

Mines, farms, cities, and factories could not have expanded had pioneers not reorganized California's natural resources, particularly water. The speculative gold rush mentality prevailed even among later settlers, and most pursued short-term private gain with scant regard for the interests of others, including future generations. To support population and economic growth, California settlers transformed most waterways and inhabited low-elevation lands into artificial environments. This carefree assault on nature had drastic results that are still felt today.

In semi-arid California, water manipulation was fundamental. San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, and other boom towns developed hearty thirsts. Water companies satisfied these by drilling wells, tapping local rivers, and building reservoirs to catch the runoff from surrounding highlands. By the 1870s expanding city water systems were dominated by large corporations, such as San Francisco's Spring Valley Water Company, which often intervened in local politics, encroached into the countryside, and aroused the opposition of farmers and small-town dwellers who also needed water.

Contradictory water laws at first inhibited development of agricultural as well as urban water. During early statehood, the legislature, in the traditionalism typical of frontier governments, adopted the "riparian" doctrine—an old principle in Anglo-American common law that gave landowners along watercourses the sole right to divert water, and only for use on their own land. Growing from experience in the well-watered East, the riparian doctrine restricted large-scale irrigation and discouraged agricultural and urban growth in drier lands such as California. Later in the 1850s, the legislature, mostly responding to mining pressure, confused the water issue further by also legalizing the Hispanic "prior appropriation" doctrine, which allowed miners and others to preempt water rights on public lands on a first-come, first-served basis and to transport water to areas removed from the water source for "beneficial use." Bitter disputes between riparian and appropriation claimants resulted in endless litigation that was usually, though not always, won by riparians. In 1870 only 60,000 acres—a tiny fraction of the state's cultivated lands—were being irrigated.

During the next 20 years, expanded irrigation fostered modest plantings of fruit and specialty crops. By 1889, one million acres, or 26 percent of the state's crop acreage, was being irrigated—most by small private water companies, and the rest by cooperative colonies and individual farms using wells or water from flowing streams. Throughout this time, however, water rights remained uncertain, larger irrigation projects were hampered, and water deliveries were erratic. Decades of legal confusion finally climaxed in *Lux v. Haggin* (1886). In this case, pitting rival giant land interests fighting for control of the Kern River's flow, the state supreme court determined that the riparian rights of downstream landowners (the Miller-Lux Land and Cattle Company) superseded the appropriation rights of upstream water diverters (James B. A. Haggin and Lloyd Tevis). Irrigation and agriculture suffered a serious setback.

Under pressure from agricultural interests, in 1887 the legislature passed the Wright Irrigation Act. This path-breaking law authorized the formation of local irrigation districts, bestowed on the districts the power of eminent domain—authority to condemn private water rights and irrigation facilities for public use—and empowered districts to levy taxes and sell bonds to build reservoirs and canals. Although several dozen districts immediately sprouted up, few survived. Hamstrung by insufficient funds, poor management, and lawsuits by riparian owners and some small farmers who objected to higher land taxes, most districts lapsed without delivering a drop of water. As late as 1910, the nine still-functioning districts covered only 600,000 acres and had raised only $23 million through bond issues.

Reforms passed in 1911, 1913, and 1917 strengthened the planning and state supervision of the districts and greatly expanded the scope of California irrigation. Between 1909 and 1920, 60 new districts were founded. Irrigated acreage grew from 2.6 million to 4.2 million, and capital invested in irrigation from $19 million to $195 million. Public water accounted for most of the increase. The golden age of California irrigation had dawned. After 1900, acreage, production, and the profitability of fruit and specialty crops increased sharply. Once established by the Wright Act, public management of irrigation water spread to other western states, and ultimately the federal government. The National Reclamation Act (1902) inspired the construction of still larger federal irrigation systems in twentieth-century California.

The Assault on Nature and the Beginning of Environmental Concern

Environmental alteration after the gold rush was especially rapid because of dramatic population growth, the settlers' intense profit motives, the powerful new industrial organization and technology, widespread water development, and a near absence of public planning and control. With the abandon described by Dame Shirley, miners ripped open hillsides, cut down watershed forests, disrupted streambeds, polluted water supplies, and stripped away top soils. Much of the Sierra foothills became, in Mark Twain's words, a "torn and guttered and disfigured" wasteland. Meanwhile, farmers and livestock raisers protecting their fields and herds, as well as market hunters capitalizing on early food shortages preyed ruthlessly on shore birds, waterfowl, eagles, condor, deer, elk, pronghorn, mountain lion, wolf, and other native species, seriously depleting their numbers by the 1870s. By the early 1900s some species, such as the California grizzly, which had awed Indians and Hispanic colonists, had vanished from the state. Many others, including the elk, bighorn, and condor, were driven into tiny, remote enclaves.

Overpopulated herds of cattle, sheep, and horses reduced large stretches of fragile grasslands to man-made deserts. Lumbermen using fire and other destructive methods denuded the accessible redwood slopes that had flanked San Francisco Bay and the coast from Big Sur north to Crescent City. With an eye toward maximum quick profits in a highly speculative industry, bonanza wheat ranchers farmed the soil without crop rotation or fertilizers and, within ten years of first planting, rendered the land barren. By the 1870s, erosion from hydraulic mining, disturbed riverbeds, and watershed decline unleashed devastating floods on the Central Valley and elsewhere.

In towns and some areas of dense farms, environmental alteration was nearly total. In the San Joaquin/Sacramento River Delta, for example, 1,000 miles of levees created 60 large, drained agricultural islands, supporting farm and river port towns such as Isleton, Walnut Grove, Rio Vista, and the Chinese community of Locke, some situated below water level. By the early twentieth century, virtually the entire natural structure of the Delta had been replaced by a man-made world of fields, fences, canals, boat channels, irrigation works, and flood-control projects. By the mid-twentieth century, Delta farms annually produced hundreds of millions of dollars in crops from deep soils and inexpensive water, all shielded behind an intricate earthen levee system. But even as settlers conquered the currents and tides, they were upsetting the Delta's delicate environmental balance. The natural banks and levies eroded rapidly after their trees were cut. Composed of spongy peat, the settlers' dikes soon began to cave in as well. Flood waters repeatedly poured over the hard-won islands, destroying farms, threatening towns and homes.

The same transformation was true of farm regions, such as the booming Mussel Slough country, where wild open lands were quickly subdivided, settled, fenced, and plowed in rectangular patterns. Wagon tracks and county roads marched out along the section lines, accentuating the geometric order being imposed on the land. In keeping with "efficient" land-management practices, natural watercourses and marshes were drained, filled, plowed over, or diverted to irrigation. Farmers with large plows and graders leveled the undulating land into the flat planes suitable for straight furrows, irrigation, and large farm machines. Wells were bored, and groundwater bubbled to the surface in artesian springs or was pumped by windmills and steam engines. By 1880, as in other settled areas, human culture had replaced nature as the principal determinant of landscape and life. Unable to survive, many of the remaining native species quickly vanished, their places taken by alien crops, weeds, ornamental plants, animals, and later even insects and birds. Like much of settled California in the last half of the nineteenth century, the Mussel Slough country had been transformed into a largely man-made world.

Bewitched by "progress," few Californians noticed these changes at first. Even fewer opposed them. Typically, local boosters celebrated them as the natural and inevitable by-products of civilizing the wilderness, the value of which virtually no one questioned. Only a few prophets, such as the great naturalist John Muir, raised lonely voices against the assault on nature. Only occasionally, when environmental destruction impinged on other economic interests, was wider dissent aroused. Out of the few nineteenth-century environmental clashes, however, emerged important principles of scientific resource conservation and management in California.

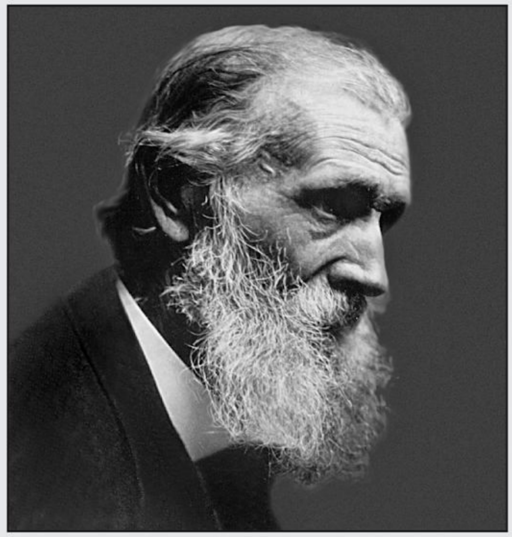
John Muir and Early Wilderness Preservation

In the late-nineteenth-century scramble for development and profit, most Californians were indifferent or hostile toward wilderness preservation. But a few dedicated writers, artists, and scientists attuned to the spiritual and long-range economic value of the wilderness became early defenders of the environment. The growth after 1870 of irrigated agriculture and tourism—industries with a stake in protecting mountains and forest watersheds—brought powerful allies from farm and business groups. To promote irrigation, agriculture, tourism, and hence its freight and passenger business, the Southern Pacific Company often furnished political leverage, financing, and leadership for resource-conservation and wilderness-preservation movements.

Particularly inspiring was John Muir, a Scottish-born, Wisconsin-bred naturalist. A promising young inventor, in 1867, Muir was almost blinded in an industrial accident, and the trauma convinced him to explore God's handiwork in nature. In 1868, after walking thousands of miles and making several sea voyages, Muir arrived in Yosemite Valley. Enthralled with Yosemite's beauty and scientific and spiritual significance, Muir began there to build a worldwide reputation for his discovery of the valley's glacial origins and, later, for his writings as a champion of wilderness preservation. Until his death in 1914 Muir dedicated himself to studying and protecting wilderness regions around the world. In terms of influence on human thought and action, John Muir was perhaps the greatest of all Californians.

(*continued . . .*)

One of the foremost early ecologists, Muir was a pioneer of modern environmentalism. He believed that humans erred in assuming that all nature was created solely for their benefit. With machines that tore up the earth and disordered nature, "Lord Man," Muir felt, had usurped the power of God to determine which species died or lived. Instead, Muir maintained, nature existed for its own mysterious purposes; all beings were interrelated, and the long-term welfare of humanity depended on the preservation of nature's fullness down "to the smallest transmicroscopic creature that dwells upon our conceited eyes and knowledge." Nature also provided insights into the rest of creation and divinity itself. "The clearest way into the Universe," he wrote, "is through a forest wilderness." Like Emerson and Thoreau before him, Muir maintained that contact with nature refreshed souls wearied by the conflict and superficiality of modern civilization. "Climb the mountains," he recommended. "Nature's peace will flow into you as the sunshine into trees." For Muir, preserving wilderness was as essential to human welfare as it was to maintaining natural ecological balances.



John Muir, circa 1912

This photograph of Muir was taken by W. E. Dassonville. *Courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.*

The high, rugged, and still-pristine peaks, meadows, and forests of the Sierra Nevada were the first objects of the preservationists' concern. The monoliths, meadows, and waterfalls of Yosemite Valley, first "discovered" by militiamen chasing Indians in the early 1850s, were quickly recognized as valuable landmarks. In 1864, when the federal government closed it to further private settlement and entrusted it to the perpetual care of the state, Yosemite Valley, in effect, became the nation's first wilderness preserve. The development-fixated state, however, initially permitted poaching lumbermen, livestock herders, and farmers to swarm illegally into the valley. In the 1880s Muir and a few cohorts launched a crusade to save Yosemite. Aided by eastern conservationist friends and Southern Pacific Company leaders, Muir finally overcame powerful vested interests who wanted to keep all the Sierra open to exploitation. In 1890 he and his allies persuaded Congress to convert the territory surrounding the valley into a large national park for tougher protection.

To encourage appreciation of wilderness, Muir and San Francisco Bay Area intellectuals, scientists, and business leaders founded the Sierra Club in 1892. In 1905 and 1906 Muir and the Sierra Club, again in league with the Southern Pacific, pushed bills through the legislature and Congress returning Yosemite Valley itself to federal control for inclusion in the national park.

In the 1890s and early 1900s preservationists and irrigators in the San Joaquin Valley, aided by the railroad, also secured the establishment of Sequoia National Park, the giant Sierra Forest Reserve, and national forests around Lake Tahoe. Nearly 200 miles of the Sierra Nevada had come under federal protection. A similar coalition pressed the state in 1902 to buy one of the few remaining stands of virgin redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains and to found Big Basin Redwoods Park, the beginning of the modern state park system. Although much of the California natural landscape had already been despoiled or altered beyond recognition, at least a remnant would remain as a legacy for future generations. (RJO)

Especially significant was the uproar over hydraulic-mining debris. By the 1870s, miners armed with powerful water cannons had gouged out gigantic artificial canyons in the northern Sierra foothills. Billions of cubic yards of gravel and sand clogged valley riverbeds, reducing navigability and worsening the flood problems of Sacramento, Marysville, other river towns, and surrounding farmland. When they receded, the floods deposited an infertile layer of mining debris, often several feet thick, enough to ruin many farmers. Hydraulic mining debris particularly devastated the San Joaquin/Sacramento Delta, permanently narrowing and raising channel beds by as much as 15 feet. When settlers responded by piling their levees higher, their reclaimed land fell even farther below water levels, raising the likelihood of inundation in rainy seasons.

Hydraulic-mining devastation developed into one of the most explosive issues of the 1870s and '80s. Aided by the Southern Pacific, valley people organized anti-debris associations, but the large mining companies were powerfully entrenched, with allies in the legislature and the courts. Anti-debris forces pushed a bill through the legislature in 1880 requiring hydraulic miners to catch debris behind dams built under state supervision, one of the first California laws aimed at controlling environmental destruction. Most mining companies, however, refused to comply and ignored valley court injunctions. When the state supreme court declared even this mild law unconstitutional on a technicality, farmers, financed by the Southern Pacific, sued in U.S. Circuit Court in San Francisco. In January 1884,the court issued a permanent injunction against all discharge of mining debris into streams. "Hydraulicking" was dead. Mining companies closed down overnight, thriving towns emptied, and decay spread through the hydraulic regions. Valley people had established the important principle of governmental responsibility for prohibiting severe environmental damage, even if it meant an entire industry's destruction.

Nob Hill Mansions

In 1878 Eadweard Muybridge photographed Charles Crocker's elegant home (*foreground*) with Collis P. Huntington's darker one behind it. The wall looming at the rear of the Crocker mansion is the famous "spite fence," built by the railroad king to isolate a stubborn neighbor who refused to sell his property. *Courtesy of the Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.*

In the late nineteenth century, Californians also groped toward more enlightened policies to replenish depleted fisheries, control floods, and protect forests from fire, but most people, accustomed to exploiting resources at will, resented and ignored even the most innocuous conservation measures. Systematic, modern conservation awaited the Progressive era. Meanwhile, resource waste and environmental deterioration continued unabated.

Social and Political Conflict

Society in gold rush California, although not rigid, had always been structured. As in the eastern United States, wealth, ethnicity, and family background divided Californians into sharply different classes. While the social structure was not totally closed, upward mobility for the working- and lower-middle classes—a group that included miners, laborers, and small farmers—was slow and frustrating. At first, California's quick population turnover obscured social inequities. In a society composed mostly of transients, unsuccessful people returned home or moved on, shuttling from one temporary community to the next, remaining largely invisible. In the 1870s, however, turnover rates slowed and sojourners began to be replaced by families. As glaring inequities between groups became more obvious, the potential for explosive conflict grew apace.

During the 1870s San Francisco assumed the physical characteristics of an industrial city. Disparities in wealth and transportation innovations altered the city's social landscape, producing specialized residential, commercial, industrial, and entertainment districts. After 1873 and the introduction of Andrew Halladie's cable cars, wealthy citizens colonized the city's hills, erecting palaces fit for the kings of railroads, mining, and bonanza agriculture. Streetcars allowed middle-class families to migrate west into pleasant new residential subdivisions, escaping the bustle, noise, and pollution of industry and commerce. Unable to afford transportation, the working-class—who made up the majority of the city's population—stayed behind in densely-crowded neighborhoods, where small houses, cheap apartments, and boardinghouses intermingled with machine shops, breweries, canneries, foundries, and slaughterhouses. The once-exclusive South-of-Market Street neighborhood deteriorated, becoming, in the words of visiting writer Rudyard Kipling, "a hopeless mass of small wooden houses, dust, street refuse, and children who play with empty kerosene tins." The contrast between such wretched poverty in the hollows and the ornate mansions rising atop Nob Hill aggravated social strife in San Francisco. Oakland, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and other cities also developed into stratified communities.

Restricted by prejudice to the bottom rung of the social ladder, Chinese, Mexican, African American, and some European immigrant minorities were pushed into the least desirable urban neighborhoods. Barred from most business and employment opportunities, segregated or excluded altogether from schools, churches, and other majority-dominated institutions, politically neutralized by gerrymandered ward boundaries and stringent voting requirements, minorities were isolated from mainstream society.

Yet minority groups had strikingly different experiences. Many African Americans, for example, found unique opportunities in California. Manuscript census returns indicate that African Americans typically lived, not in homogeneous black neighborhoods, but dispersed throughout cities, while a few, including some farm owners and renters, resided in rural areas. A small black middle-class serving their small urban populations had already emerged by the 1860s, when the census counted only 4,086 blacks in the state, less than 1 percent of the population. Elite groups emerged in San Francisco, Oakland, and Los Angeles, led by railroad workers, skilled laborers, small business owners, teachers, newspaper editors, ministers, undertakers, and a few real estate developers. Beneficiaries of increasing railroad passenger travel in later decades of the century, some African American men found stable and relatively high-wage employment as Pullman car waiters and porters, headquartered in terminals such as Oakland and Los Angeles.

Although most urban blacks were relegated to low-paying service or industrial jobs, community members found a variety of social and political organizations to aid them. Black women's charities, like the Ladies Pacific Accumulating and Benevolent Society, provided not only welfare services but also served as foot soldiers in ongoing civil rights campaigns, raising funds for the Franchise League and the California Colored Conventions. Black newspapers appeared in larger cities, such as San Francisco's *Mirror of the Times*. In San Francisco and Sacramento, teachers like Priscilla Stewart, Lucinda Blue, and Annie E. Vincent used the black press to pressure the legislature to repeal the 1852 law barring black children from public schools. The legislature finally dropped the ban in 1880, guaranteeing black school children the right to a public education, though many, if not most, still attended separate schools. Despite these early successes, African Americans in California continued to face general exclusion, especially in housing, education, and occupation. After 1910, large-scale migration of African Americans from the East and South led to the emergence of large, dense black neighborhoods like Watts in Los Angeles.

The more numerous Chinese Californians experienced harsher residential and occupational discrimination, as well as intensifying white violence. The census of 1870 counted more than 60,000 Chinese in the United States, three-quarters of them in California, almost all of them male. With completion of the transcontinental railroad in May 1869, the Central Pacific transferred most of its Chinese labor force to constructing its Southern Pacific subsidiary and other extensions. However, some released workers chose to settle down and seek other employment. The sudden influx of Chinese competing in the labor market, at the same time as railroad building was unsettling economic conditions and worsening unemployment, combined to make Chinese immigration again an explosive political issue. Also, as hostility and violence toward the Chinese mounted in rural areas, many retreated to urban "Chinatowns," the largest of which developed in San Francisco. These densely populated communities arose in part from legal housing discrimination and in part by choice, as newcomers clustered together for mutual support and self-protection. Like other immigrant groups, however, the Chinese did establish community institutions, businesses, and recreations that gave them a degree of sustenance, autonomy, and defense, particularly from the powerful Six Chinese Companies, which controlled much of the commerce with China and within the Chinatowns and could marshal some support from powerful Caucasian leaders.

Because almost no Chinese had brought their wives during the gold rush era, Chinatowns had few women, other than prostitutes, and even fewer children. In 1872, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors counted 722 school-aged children in Chinatown, although only 59 lived in what supervisors considered legitimate families (households that fit the white middle-class norm). Most Chinese inhabited a variety of living arrangements, from all-male boardinghouses to all-female households, most of them probably brothels. Their distinctive living arrangements added fuel for growing anti-Chinese violence and politics.

Ironically, government policies made it even harder for Chinese Californians to form families. In 1875, Congress passed an act sponsored by California's first-term U.S. Senator, Horace Page. The Page Act classified as criminals all women "imported for purposes of prostitution" and made importation of "any subject of China, Japan, or any Oriental country" without their consent a felony. Assuming, in essence, that all Chinese women harbored illegal or immoral intentions, the Page Act nearly ended the immigration of unmarried Asian women into the United States.

Mexican lives in California followed yet another trajectory. The pre-gold rush Mexican majority in 1848 had meant a promising start, with eight Californios among the 48 delegates to the 1849 constitutional convention. But the rapid arrival of non-Mexican gold-seekers overwhelmed nascent Mexican political power, especially at the state level. Also, the California Land Act of 1851 stripped most of their lands, reducing many to low-waged workers, sometimes on land that had once been theirs. Other displaced Mexicans drifted towards urban centers like Los Angeles and Santa Barbara. *Barrios* (Spanish-speaking neighborhoods) emerged in communities with substantial Mexican populations. The modernization and economic development brought by the railways generally bypassed the *barrios*. In the 1880s, fast-growing Los Angeles, a city that had recently been mostly populated by Californios and recent Mexican immigrants, was inundated by new industries and thousands of new people from eastern states, excluding the previous residents from jobs and neighborhoods they had once controlled. Other Southern California towns and cities, such as San Diego and Santa Barbara, were similarly transformed.

Immigration from Mexico continued through the end of the century, though in very small numbers, and some returned to Mexico, while at the same time migration by non-Mexicans soared. As discrimination increased, the *barrios* grew in size, becoming more ethnically homogeneous and increasingly economically deprived. By the turn of the century, for example, a complex Mexican neighborhood emerged in East Los Angeles, and ethnic pride and self-defense movements began. By the early 1900s, increasingly marginalized Mexican Americans constituted a small and shrinking percentage of the city's population.

However, when immigration from Mexico increased sharply after 1910, newcomers arrived to find some ethnic businesses and community service organizations already in place in the *barrio*. *Mutualistas* (mutual-aid associations) thrived. They often had specific goals, but all met members' social needs with meetings, family gatherings, lectures, and commemoration of U.S. and Mexican holidays. In addition to building ethnic pride, associations also provided services, including emergency loans, legal aid, mediation of disputes, and medical, life, and burial insurance.

Rural Inequities

Social stratification also increased generally in California rural areas. Held for speculation or lease to wheat producers, fertile land, particularly that with water rights, was expensive in most desirable, easily cultivated areas. High costs for land, fencing, irrigation facilities, orchard planting, mortgage interest, and other requirements for the new delicate crops raised farm-building beyond the means of most. Praised as the salvation of the small farmer, irrigation turned out to be a mixed blessing. Expensive to install and operate, water improvements gave an edge to those with capital by allowing them to raise more valuable fruit crops. However, as they became more dependent on water systems with limited storage capacity, irrigating farmers opened themselves up to greater loss during water shortages. Severe droughts during the 1870s and early '80s pushed many farmers close to bankruptcy and forced others to abandon the land altogether, compounding tensions in areas such as Mussel Slough. As a final outrage, high railroad rates, limited markets, and falling crop prices often ate into the profits farmers managed to make in bountiful years.

To prepare land and irrigation facilities and to plant and harvest grain and fruit, growers continued the gang-labor practices inherited from missions and ranchos. When, by the 1860s, declining Indian population no longer met growing labor requirements, many farmers turned to the oppressed and easily controlled Chinese, recent European immigrants, unemployed city workers, and children. Farm laborers roamed the countryside in large groups performing seasonal tasks for subsistence wages, camping in ragtag tent villages, and rarely putting down local roots or starting farms. By exploiting the economic distress and racial prejudice of the era, farmers became accustomed to making up for high irrigation and marketing costs by paying rock-bottom wages and assuming no responsibility for stable employment. After the 1890s, farmers augmented their labor supply with Japanese and Mexican immigrants. By 1900 California's "peculiar farm labor system" was firmly entrenched.

Because of high farm costs, public land policies favoring monopoly by speculators, and the growers' power to exploit low-paid laborers, immense landholdings dominated California for the rest of the nineteenth century. In 1872, of 27,000 agricultural holdings, the 122 persons who each owned more than 20,000 acres had amassed a combined six million acres, much more than the total of all other farms. The rise of irrigation and fruit culture caused some land to be subdivided. But most new growers were fairly well-to-do persons, many migrating from other states, who were transferring capital from other farms or businesses, and some new large estates continued to be engrossed. Between 1870 and 1900 the average farm size decreased only from 500 to 400 acres. California farms remained about twice as large as the national average. Geography, climate, and economic and social conditions conspired to prevent California from developing into an agrarian democracy.

Unstable farm profits, along with glaring social, economic, and political inequality, produced bitter rural conflict after the 1860s. Protesting small-scale farmers banded into spontaneous "clubs" to elect more sympathetic officials and secure better tax, land, fence, and mortgage laws, as well as regulation of railroads, wheat-trade monopolists, and other middlemen. In the early 1870s, many local groups affiliated with the emerging national movement, the Patrons of Husbandry, or Grange; a state Grange followed in 1873. By 1874 more than 13,500 farmers had flocked into California's 231 Grange locals, rallying small-scale farmers to push for political solutions for entrenched social and economic inequities.

Early Labor Movements and the "Indispensable Enemy"

The gold rush, which attracted many skilled workers, coincided with increasing union activity among the nation's craftsmen. High labor demand in early pioneer years encouraged organizational efforts, but unions had only modest success. San Francisco typesetters, brewers, building tradesmen, musicians, and others combined to protect their interests and keep wages abreast of high living costs during the 1850s. Spontaneous strikes in the city and mining districts often succeeded temporarily, but an unstable economy and high turnover among workers constantly undermined union efforts.

Despite reversals, especially after 1855, when gold production and wages declined, craftsmen continued organizing. In the 1860s and '70s, union agitation spread from San Francisco to industrial mining districts and emerging cities such as Oakland and Los Angeles. Although laborers periodically struck for higher wages, the principal statewide goal during the 1860s was the eight-hour day. In 1868, under pressure from unions, the legislature enacted an eight-hour law over employer opposition. Although workingmen rejoiced, the victory was more apparent than real. The law could not be enforced, especially during hard times when workers would agree to almost any employment conditions.

The "Terrible Seventies" decimated the early union movement. The first westbound trains, the Comstock boom collapse, and the nationwide Panic of 1873 had devastating consequences. Cheap often better quality goods arrived from all over the nation on the new trains, driving down California prices, wages, and production. While unemployment soared, thousands of new people flooded labor markets: released railroad-construction laborers, unemployed workers from eastern states and fading Nevada mines, and more Chinese immigrants (20,000 in 1876 alone). Neither unions nor the few organized charities could relieve the situation nor meet increasing demands for aid. Some workers clung to their weakened craft unions, while a few affiliated with the national Knights of Labor, with little success. In short, the railroads' effects, which had once promised prosperity to the state, were undercutting the position of labor.

Mounting working-class frustration vented itself not only on employers but on California labor's "indispensable enemy"—the Chinese, who were, ironically, among the most exploited Californians. As in the mining era, white workers blamed the Chinese for unemployment and low wages and attacked them both politically and physically. Unions and "anti-coolie" clubs agitated for state and federal laws restricting the immigration and employment of Chinese. In 1871, a Los Angeles mob swarmed through the city's Chinatown and massacred a score of its residents.

Although violent outbursts occurred statewide, anti-Chinese sentiment climaxed in San Francisco in the summer of 1877, in what became a season of nationwide strikes and labor violence. A July 23 meeting of enraged San Francisco workers burst forth, crying "On to Chinatown!" Within hours, much of that district was in ruins. On subsequent days, mobs attacked firms that employed Chinese workers. Blaming the violence on malcontents, "communists," and youthful hoodlums, Governor William Irwin called out the militia, which, assisted by a businessmen's vigilante "Committee of Public Safety" armed with pick handles, restored "order" and preserved property. Periodically, eruptions of violence and Chinese expulsions swept the state, even small towns and rural areas, into the early 1900s.

The Workingmen's Party of California

Out of San Francisco's depression and turmoil, the rabidly anti-Chinese Workingmen's Party of California (WPC) was born in September 1877. Party leaders argued that capitalists monopolized wealth and property, used political influence to keep workers subordinate, and employed cheap Chinese labor to enrich themselves and keep other workers down. As a remedy, they recommended a workingmen's political movement to combat corporations and eject the Chinese. They preached their gospel so effectively that the WPC mustered 10,000 members to march in San Francisco's 1877 Thanksgiving Day parade.

At the head of the column strode the WPC's new president, Denis Kearney, the young, self-educated Irish immigrant owner of a small, troubled wagon company. Traditional labor leaders dismissed Kearney's demagoguery, but thousands thronged to his sandlot meetings. A natural orator, he appealed directly to working-class fears. Kearney proclaimed the dignity of labor, denounced railroad barons, landowners, bankers, and the "money power" in general, and called on workers to arm themselves against the Chinese and the corporations. Threats of violence and a concluding chant—"The Chinese must go!"—enlivened each speech.

Workingmen quickly made the WPC a force in San Francisco and California affairs. Although the state and cities passed laws limiting freedom of assembly and expression and periodically jailed Kearney and other leaders, the WPC made inroads among disenchanted laborers, lower-level white-collar workers, and small business owners in San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, and other towns. By 1878 the party had elected a state senator and local officials in Alameda County, members of the legislature, a mayor, a majority of San Francisco's board of supervisors, and scattered local officials around the state. It also captured one-third of the seats in the state Constitutional Convention of 1878–79. WPC-dominated governments in San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, and other centers strengthened ordinances discriminating against the Chinese in housing, employment, and public services.

Despite some notoriety and political victories, the WPC was transitory, more an emotional outlet for distress than a permanent influence. By 1880, internal dissension, the absence of a consistent reform program, and a brief economic revival had reduced its appeal. Members deserted and returned to more traditional unions and parties.

Anti-Chinese Cartoon

This anti-Chinese cartoon by George Frederick Keller appeared in *The Wasp* on December 8, 1877. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.*

Anti-Railroad Politics

Along with the Chinese, large corporations were a target for discontented groups in the 1870s. Although Californians actually suffered from many economic, social, political, and environmental ills, most visible were the growing monopolies over land, the wheat trade, and transportation. As the state's largest business, landowner, and employer of Chinese workers, with an annual income that dwarfed the entire state budget, the Central/Southern Pacific Railroad provided a convenient scapegoat. The company was not without guilt. Its owners were using the wealth they had derived from public construction subsidies to buy out or destroy competitors and control transportation rates. To protect its privileges, the railroad fielded a force of lawyers, lobbyists, and political bosses, and was not above using bribery and power politics. Although contemporary opponents and most later historians exaggerated its power and malevolence, the Central/Southern Pacific was a formidable foe, as the Mussel Slough squatters discovered.

In particular, discontented farmers, workers, and urban shippers in the 1870s charged that monopolies controlled transportation rates, discriminated against some regions, towns, and shippers, deprived producers of just profits, and caused unemployment in many industries. Central/Southern Pacific officials countered that higher operating expenses over rugged and thinly populated terrain, not monopoly, raised tariffs higher than on eastern lines. Moreover, it was more efficient, and led to lower overall rates, for the company to charge lower rates on large shipments and long hauls and to award favorable terminal status only to some cities. In truth, the self-interested and contradictory rate demands of Californians would have been impossible for any railroad to reconcile. The furor was mostly raised by conflicting classes of shippers who sought advantage over competing business and communities, not equal or lower overall rates.

The rate issue was complex, however, and failed to align everyone against the railroad. Favored communities, farmers, and businesses, along with those who hoped to win rail service in the future, opposed railroad regulation and a general lowering of rates, while the Grange and others not favorably located agitated for state control of tariffs. In 1876, against strenuous lobbying by the railroad and its supporters, the legislature created an advisory railway commission. Ignored, the weak body was abolished within three years.

The Constitution of 1879

In 1878 continuing clamor by disaffected groups such as the WPC and the Grange pushed the legislature into calling a convention to revise the 1849 constitution to accommodate three decades of social change and to limit the power of corporations. The WPC shared the elected membership equally with Grangers and "nonpartisans" (primarily Democrats and Republicans). With such disparate groups present—including reformers and representatives of vested interests—conflict and confusion were inevitable. The delegates harangued each other for 157 days at Sacramento during late 1878 and early 1879 before finally hammering out a compromise constitution.

The question of regulating railroads and other corporations consumed the most energy. The new constitution declared railroads "subject to legislative control" and called for a railroad commission of three elected members with authority to fix maximum rates and prohibit railroads from discriminating among shippers. The document made intangible corporate assets (profits, franchises, and the like) subject to taxation, raised taxes on railroad and other corporate property, established a board of equalization to increase state revenues and stabilize tax rates among counties, transferred mortgage tax obligations from borrowers to lenders, and tightened banking regulations. The delegates also modernized the state's judicial system, reorganized and increased funding for the state's schools and university, and sanctioned the eight-hour-day principle on public works. Concerning the Chinese, the constitution authorized the legislature to act against "dangerous or detrimental" aliens, forbade Chinese employment by corporations or on public works, and legalized residential segregation of the Chinese. In other matters, the convention ran into problems. Although the delegates debated ways to redistribute land, little could be done without violating private property rights. Many representatives, particularly land-owning farmers, vigorously blocked any land reforms. Characteristically, the all-male convention squashed a proposal advanced by female and male reformers to enfranchise women.

In the end, the convention produced one of the world's longest, most complex constitutions, more closely resembling a legal code than an organic law. The overly detailed compromise document satisfied almost no one. Corporate interests condemned its regulatory and taxation provisions as confiscatory and communistic. Protesting that the constitution did not resolve their grievances, disillusioned workers also called for its defeat. Somewhat appeased by promises of railroad rate control and more equitable taxation, rural voters probably accounted for the document's narrow passage in May 1879, by only 11,000 out of 145,000 votes cast.

Whatever its shortcomings, the new constitution established important principles of state economic regulation, including supervision of public utilities such as railroads. The document also distributed the tax burden more widely, particularly by reducing the unfair share hitherto paid by farmers, and created the machinery for increasing state revenues. The state now possessed a stronger legal and fiscal framework for dealing more actively with the economic, scientific, and environmental problems of modernization.

But many of the constitution's most innovative measures had little immediate effect. Like its predecessor, the new railroad commission was usually ignored.

Legislators refused to finance it properly or enforce its edicts. When the commission frequently sympathized with railroads and approved their rate proposals, critics ridiculed the body as a tool of the Southern Pacific. Nevertheless, after 1880, because of more efficient operations, the opening of the Southern Pacific's own southern transcontinental route, and competition from the Santa Fe and other lines, overall rates on the Southern Pacific fell consistently for several decades. But many continued to denounce the railroad for charging excessive and discriminatory tariffs and exerting illegitimate political power. Lawsuits also delayed or overturned the constitution's provisions to tax corporate assets and equalize tax rates. The fundamental problem was that the principle of corporate regulation was not yet accepted in American law.

Chinese Exclusion

The new constitution did little to assuage the anti-Chinese movement. Broadly rooted in racism, suspicion of cultural differences, and economic rivalry, opposition toward the Chinese was not limited to a few radicals and labor leaders, but cut across socioeconomic, partisan, and even ethnic lines. Some other oppressed ethnics—most notably many African Americans and European immigrants—were hostile toward Chinese religion and culture and fearful of economic competition with the numerous Asian immigrants. These groups remained fervent supporters of anti-Chinese agitation. For decades, "the Chinese question" remained an explosive issue that could not be ignored in contests for local and national office. During the 1870s, the U.S. Supreme Court had repeatedly struck down discriminatory state and local laws as violations of the U.S. Constitution, the Burlingame Treaty with China, or the Civil Rights Act of 1870. Anti-Chinese provisions of the new state constitution met similar fates. Each federal action in defense of the Chinese aroused indignation in the state. Perhaps out of concern for future elections, President Rutherford B. Hayes negotiated a treaty with China in 1880 allowing the United States to regulate immigration. Under the terms of that agreement Congress, pressured by its California members, enacted a bill in 1882 suspending the immigration and naturalization of Chinese for ten years.

The Exclusion Act of 1882 did not deport Chinese immigrants already in the country and therefore failed to satisfy many Californians, especially labor leaders. They organized boycotts of Chinese-made goods and agitated for expulsion. Into the twentieth century, whites continued to discriminate against, ridicule, beat, and occasionally lynch the Chinese with virtual impunity. Into the early 1900s rioting mobs periodically terrorized and burned their neighborhoods. Numerous rural communities rounded up and expelled local Chinese altogether. Pressure from California again influenced Congress in 1888 to strengthen the Exclusion Act to prohibit reentry by workers after visits to China and, in 1892, to extend its provisions for another ten years. By 1904 treaties and legislation had made exclusion permanent. Only during World War II, as a gesture to an ally, did the United States reopen its shores to Chinese immigrants.

Culture in the Railroad Era

For several decades after 1865, California culture remained essentially derivative. Some progress was made in founding cultural institutions, best symbolized by the persistent, if fitful, expansion of colleges and public schools. Lagging behind, however, was the development of a regional culture, with aesthetic themes reflecting the state's distinctive landscape, peoples, and history. Second-generation Californians, following the lead of the gold rush pioneers, continued to mimic the cultural styles of the ancestral homelands they so much venerated, particularly the northeastern United States.

Developments in architecture were illustrative. While the houses and business buildings of ordinary people continued to be erected in the venerable New England frame tradition, the wealthy and middle classes, anxious to demonstrate their new respectability, copied the architectural fads of eastern trend-setters. Country estates and fashionable subdivisions in railroad towns were built in a succession of increasingly elaborate (some would say gaudy) Victorian styles—Gothic Revival, Italianate, French Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Richardson Romanesque, among others—each of which evoked distant places and bygone eras. At the same time, builders catering to their customers' conservative tastes shunned native stone and redwood, or disguised them with paint, stain, and other surfaces so that they could masquerade as standard eastern construction materials. For the most part, Californians lacked the maturity and sense of place and history that, beginning in the 1890s, would give rise to a creative regional architecture.

Reflecting the general population, some "carpetbagger" authors stayed for a few years, wrote briefly about their California experience, then wandered on. Such were Mark Twain and Bret Harte, who arrived in the twilight of the mining era and produced nostalgic short stories about the humor and heroism of pioneer prospectors of the 1840s and '50s or the fading miners and camps of the 1860s. Unable to support themselves by writing fiction, both turned to journalism, Harte as the first editor of *The Overland Monthly* (founded in 1868), Twain as an itinerant lecturer and newspaper reporter. The most significant event of Twain's three-year stay was the 1865 publication of his rollicking mining-camp story "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," which established Twain's reputation as a frontier humorist and launched his literary career. Anxious for the state to repress its disorderly gold rush origins, many California critics rejected the stories of Twain and Harte. Twain (in 1867) and Harte (in 1871) returned to the East, where they were more appreciated and where better opportunities existed for professional writers.

Ina Coolbrith was the bright star of an otherwise lackluster poetry. Fleeing a troubled early life in Southern California, Coolbrith resettled in San Francisco in the mid-1860s. A poet since childhood, she was immediately accepted into the city's growing literary community. Several years later, she became Harte's assistant editor at *The Overland Monthly*. As editor and later as librarian for the Oakland Public Library, one of the state's first and finest free circulation libraries, Coolbrith was for decades friend and patroness to important California writers. Her own verse, which at first inclined toward eroticism and romantic love, turned later to celebrating California's hills, birds, and flowers. Coolbrith was honored by the legislature in 1915 as California's poet laureate.

The transformation of Coolbrith's poetry suggested that, while California culture remained mostly imitative, distinctive regional themes had begun to sound before century's end. Some authors and artists discovered the spiritual and aesthetic potential in the state's magnificent landscapes. Joining John Muir in seeking beauty and meaning in unique natural surroundings, pioneer photographers such as Carleton E. Watkins and Eadweard Muybridge and painters such as Thomas Hill and the visiting Albert Bierstadt attempted to capture on film and canvas the spectacular scale and delicacy of Yosemite's cliffs, meadows, and waterfalls. The major figure of California's "nature school" of painting was William Keith, Muir's long-time friend and cohort in the wilderness-preservation crusade. For five decades before his death in 1911, Keith painted Yosemite Valley, the Sierra, and other California landscapes in a style that combined realistic attention to fine detail with the traditional romanticism of the Hudson River school he had emulated in his early years. Late-nineteenth-century California writers and artists stressed nature's fertility, harmony, and beauty and the imperative of achieving peaceful coexistence between the people and the land. Often, the Eden-like California landscape provided a contrasting background to the conflict and corruption of human society, a theme that became a hallmark of the state's culture in the twentieth century.

At the same time, railroad-era economic inequities and political corruption gave birth to a strong social-protest theme in California arts and letters. The tradition's founder, Henry George, arrived in San Francisco as a young man in 1858. While struggling to overcome grinding poverty, George worked as printer and reporter on various San Francisco, Sacramento, and Oakland newspapers and magazines and was already a well-known journalist by the time he published his 1868 *Overland Monthly* article questioning the benefits of railroad construction. By the early 1870s, George was increasingly distressed by the inequality and poverty that appeared to be the price of industrial "progress." His first major work, *Our Land and Land Policy, National and State* (1871), condemned the monopoly in land fostered by railroad land grants, other federal and state laws, and rampant speculation. As a remedy for the land monopoly and the unemployment that were smothering opportunities for ordinary people, George recommended confiscatory taxes on large land holdings. George's California experience also inspired his classic *Progress and Poverty* (1879), which advocated the single-tax theory, a simplistic cure for industrial evils that attracted a wide following outside the state. Like many contemporary cultural figures that attained fame, George soon left for greener pastures in the East, where he became a leading reformer and one of the most widely read and influential of California authors.

Others, however, took up Henry George's crusade against privilege. Journalist and short-story writer Ambrose Bierce produced cutting satire, particularly of the Southern Pacific's power. Illustrators such as *The Wasp*'s George Frederick Keller and the San Francisco *Examiner*'s Homer Davenport and James Swinnerton honed the acid political cartoon to a fine art. At the turn of the century, Edwin Markham's poem, "The Man with the Hoe" (1899), and Frank Norris's classic of naturalism, *The Octopus* (1901), attacked monopolies and defended the oppressed farmers.

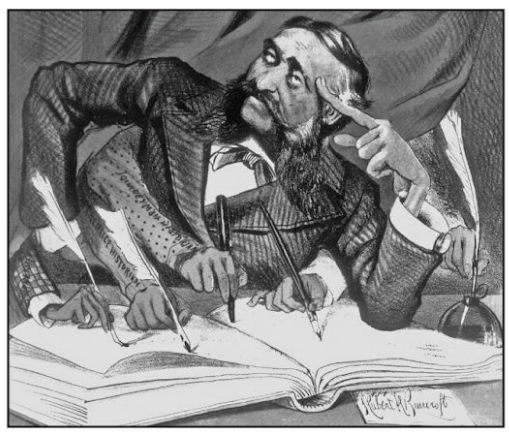
By the end of the nineteenth century, social protest had become an integral part of the California literary tradition. In the 1870s and '80s, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton wrote and produced a five-act comedy based on

Cervante's *Don Quixote*, becoming the first Mexican-American woman to publish in the English language. When she published her first work in 1876, Burton was living in San Diego with her husband, Captain Henry S. Burton. In her two novels, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), Burton voiced the bitter resentment Californios felt towards their American invaders. *Who Would Have Thought It?* shows northern abolitionists coming to the Far West as xenophobic racists, and offers the Mexican perspective through the eyes of a child, Lola, whom the newcomers rescue from Indian captors, and then relegate to the kitchen and force to sleep with the servants, because of her "black skin." *The Squatter and the Don* is an historical romance that details the repercussions of the California Land Act of 1851: the Californios' loss of land to litigation and American squatters. The novel reprised Burton's own struggles as an impoverished widow trying, in vain, to retain her Rancho Jamul in San Diego County.

The first local histories of counties and cities appeared in the 1860s, as Californians began to reflect on the meaning of their own experiences. By the early twentieth century, more than 150 county histories had appeared. Typically written by amateur boosters and journalists, local histories were usually little more than simple chronologies of major events and compilations of biographies of leading residents. In keeping with the intense ethnocentrism of the period, these works rejoiced in the displacement of "inferior" Indian and Hispanic cultures and uncritically celebrated the heroism, democracy, and progressivism of the American pioneers. Despite these many shortcomings, local histories preserved much information that might otherwise have been lost and provided guides to further research and a foundation for twentieth-century restoration movements.

Franklin Tuthill, a physician and journalist, wrote the first serious state study, *History of California* (1866). In the 1870s and 1880s, more substantive works followed. Economist and journalist John H. Hittell published *A History of San Francisco and Incidentally of the State of California* (1878). Other works included a four-volume state history published in stages by Hittell's brother, attorney Theodore Hittell; Charles H. Shinn's *Mining Camps: A Study in American Frontier Government* (1884); and Josiah Royce's *California, From the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco: A Study of American Character* (1886). Of the major nineteenth-century state historians, only Shinn and Royce had professional graduate historical training, both at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Both works offer modern readers valuable insights into the state's turbulent early history. With California's universities still immature, however, Shinn and Royce both turned to careers in fields other than history. Born and raised in California, Royce, after a brief tenure on the faculty at the University of California, moved to Harvard, where he became a leading American philosopher. Shinn became an administrator of agricultural-research agencies. The writing of early California history was left largely to boosters and talented amateurs.

By far the most important of these talented amateurs was Hubert Howe Bancroft. A San Francisco publisher and bookshop proprietor, Bancroft collected Californiana—newspapers, books, pamphlets, documents, and manuscripts. By the early 1870s, his library had more than 10,000 items and Bancroft had conceived a grandiose plan for using the information to produce a multivolume epic Pacific Coast history, which he would sell by subscription to the wealthy leaders whose exploits the books would feature. To assist in this gargantuan task, Bancroft established what amounted to an assembly line for group research. He hired scores of assistants, including talented researchers and writers such as Henry Oak and Frances Fuller Victor, who actually



H. H. Bancroft, "Boss Historian"

Hubert Howe Bancroft was widely criticized in the late nineteenth century, not only for his questionable sales techniques and the high price of his histories, but also for his use of ghost writers. George Frederick Keller elevated Bancroft to his "gallery of cranks" in this cartoon, published in *The Wasp* on April 18, 1885. *Courtesy of the California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.*

wrote some of the finest volumes, but to whom Bancroft gave little or no credit. During the 1870s and '80s, Bancroft's series multiplied to 39 volumes, eleven of which dealt specifically with California. Using deceptive methods that anticipated modern subscription marketing, Bancroft eventually sold 6,000 sets, worth more than $1 million.

Although some denounced him as a charlatan, Bancroft, more than any other individual, paved the way for the modern study of California history. Whatever their authorship, Bancroft's comprehensive volumes, rich in detail and footnote references, are still the starting point for serious examination of the state through the 1880s. Although he shared the booster ethos of the period's local histories, and thus dwelt on the theme of progress during the American period, Bancroft, like Tuthill, the Hittells, Shinn, and Royce, examined the state's history critically and attempted to create generalizations from confused and contradictory events. These major nineteenth-century California historians denounced the disorganization, violence, and racial oppression of the 1840s and '50s and praised the efforts of solid citizens to impose order and community.

Bancroft's most enduring legacy proved to be his library. The histories completed, Bancroft in the late 1880s sought to sell his collection to the state. His tainted reputation and the legislature's apathy toward cultural matters, however, repeatedly thwarted the sale. Finally, in 1905 the University of California was able to acquire the library for $250,000, nearly half of which Bancroft himself donated. By then the priceless collection numbered more than 65,000 volumes and 100,000 manuscripts—including many valuable recollections by displaced Californios. The collection then moved to Berkeley, just in time to save it from annihilation in the great San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. Surviving decades of expansion and some controversy—including Governor Ronald Reagan's attempt in the early 1970s to have its most valuable holdings sold to pay general university expenses—the Bancroft Library has become one of the nation's major archives and an invaluable treasure for preserving America's Far Western history.

Suffragettes Marching, circa 1910, in the northern mining town of Sawyer's Bar, with Heckler in Clown Suit

Progressive Era reforms were not the sole province of big-city professionals. Reform ideas and the controversy they provoked spread into California's most remote communities. *Photographer Irving Eldridge, 1910.*