

third edition

The Elusive Eden
a new history of california

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2005-006

Richard B. Rice
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McGraw-Hill Higher Education

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THE ELUSIVE EDEN: A NEW HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

6 7 8 9 0 QWF/QWF 0 9 8 7 6 5

ISBN 0-07-241810-9

Executive editor: *Lyn Uhl*
Developmental editor: *Kristen Mellitt*
Marketing manager: *Janise Fry*
Project manager: *Jean R. Starr*
Production supervisor: *Susanne Riedell*
Photo research coordinator: *Jeremy Cheshareck*
Cover design: *Mary E. Kazak*
Cover image: *Steve Turner Gallery, Beverly Hills*
Typeface: *10.5/12 New Baskerville*
Printer: *Quebecor World Fairfield Inc.*
Compositor: *Electronic Publishing Services, Inc., NY*

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rice, Richard B.

The elusive eden : a new history of California / Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough, Richard J. Orsi.—3rd ed.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-07-241810-9

1. California—History. I. Bullough, William A., 1933– II. Orsi, Richard J. III. Title.

F861 .R49 2002

979.4—dc21

2001044905

THE ELUSIVE EDEN

*We dedicate this book to our families, who shared
the burden:*

Eve, Lindy, Katie, and John

Pat and Greg

*Dolores, Peter, Jared, Becky, Renata, Raymonde,
and John*

PREFACE

Many of the changes in this edition of *The Elusive Eden* result from comments and suggestions by students and colleagues; the same principles, however, have guided our thinking about each version. Convictions resulting from our collective seventy-plus years of teaching the state's history—that Californians, natives and newcomers alike, study their state's past out of genuine (sometimes avid) interest and that they like a good story—persisted unabated. Consequently, the book's original organizational format remains, with only a few changes. After an introductory prologue of three chapters (Part I), the book is arranged in a series of generally chronological parts, each consisting of three chapters and dealing with a recognized era. The first chapter in each set is a detailed narrative about a specific person or event directly related to the history of the period under study. The two subsequent chapters are traditional, chronologically based accounts of the broader history of the period. For this edition the last chapter has been completely rewritten to reflect recent scholarship and to bring the history up to date.

The narrative chapters are designed to give the reader a feel for the “texture” of history by suggesting how individuals and groups grappled with and shaped historical change. In some cases these chapters include passages from primary sources to provide a distinct flavor of the time. We hope that each will capture the interest of readers, provoke thought and debate, and encourage them to seek further information about the topics introduced. The narrative chapters also illuminate the drama and excitement of history, investigate subjects of current interest, and strive to elaborate the cultural

diversity of California. They focus on all sections of the state: north and south, central valleys and coast, urban and rural settings. Two deal with women (Chapters 10 and 19), one with Indians (Chapter 4), one with the Mexican heritage (Chapter 7), two with the ethnic minority experience (Chapters 22 and 25), and one with recent environmental controversy (Chapter 28). An introductory paragraph to provide context and elaborate purpose precedes each narrative chapter.

Because of the organizational framework the authors have chosen, the narrative chapters also do not appear in strict chronological order. They may highlight events occurring in the beginning, middle, or even the end of the period of history in the unit. The authors believe, however, that they provide a commentary on the main themes of the chronological chapters that follow and that the advantages to be gained in reader interest and opportunity for discussion outweigh the disadvantages of historical discontinuity.

In our approach to issues such as ethnic minorities and gender, we have adhered to the conviction that respect for these topics and for history itself mandates that they be woven into the historical fabric rather than treated in a patchwork of detached chapters, as if they were somehow isolated from the warp and woof of human affairs. Accordingly, accounts of the changing status of women and the struggle of ethnic minorities to survive and progress in frequently hostile social environments—as well as the contributions of both to California history—are, with a few exceptions, integral parts of chapters, and therefore not highly visible in the table of contents. Cultural development is treated with a specific section at the end of each part, beginning with Part II, and in Feature Essays distributed throughout the book.

Dealing with the vast scope, incredible diversity, and fascinating nuances of California history continues to confront us with painful decisions in this edition. Finding space to deal with additional ethnic and gender issues and recent developments make judgments about abbreviating or deleting treatments of events or personalities more difficult than ever. With those who find their favorite episodes in the story of the state neglected, we can only empathize; some of our own individually cherished episodes fell victim to our collective editorial axe. We have expanded lists of suggested reading at the end of each part to compensate for the loss and to include important recent scholarship. Interested readers will find general bibliographies of the state's history listed in the suggested readings following the Prologue.

In this version of the book, like the first two, each of us undertook principal responsibility for specific chapters: Professor Rice for Chapters 7–9, 19–24, and 30; Professor Bullough for Chapters 10–12, 16–18, and 25–27; Professor Orsi for Chapters 1–6, 13–15,

and 28 and 29. Initials of specific authors appear at the end of each Feature Essay. Although collaboration continued to inform our collective effort, each of us assumes responsibility solely for the content of his parts of the book.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

So many people helped us to complete this book that it is impossible to mention every one of them. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all, particularly colleagues in the Department of History and the Library of California State University, Hayward. We are also indebted to the staffs at the Huntington Library; the Bancroft Library; the Newberry Library; the California State Library; Stanford University Library; the California Historical Society; the California State Railroad Museum; the Tulare County Library; the Kings County Library; Trinity County Historical Society; the California Department of Water Resources; the California Department of Transportation; the California Air Pollution Control Board; the United States Geological Survey; the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge; and Save San Francisco Bay Association.

Some individuals deserve special mention. Lowell John Bean, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at California State University, Hayward, graciously read drafts of several chapters dealing with Native Americans and offered insights and suggestions that greatly improved the finished product. We also thank these reviewers for their comments: Francisco E. Balderrama, California State University—Los Angeles, Kate Briegel, California State University—Long Beach, Mary Ann Irwin, Diablo Valley College, Ann De Jesús Riley, Hartnell College, Mark Stemen, California State University—Chico, Nancy J. Taniguchi, California State University—Stanislaus, Richard S. Unruh, Fresno Pacific University, and George L. Vásquez, San José State University. Kristen Mellitt, McGraw-Hill's Developmental Editor for History, has patiently managed the publication of this edition. Special thanks go to Patricia Bullough for her contribution to the essay on John Steinbeck and to Pauline Thompson for her essay on Anna Morrison Reed. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the very special contributions of the late Eve Rice to the book: her essay on Eric Hoffer, her suggestion of the title *The Elusive Eden*, and her constant and unstinting support.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

RICHARD B. RICE received the B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in history from the University of California, Berkeley. He was a staff assistant to the president and assistant to the vice president of the University of California before going to California State University, Hayward, where he also served as a department chairman, division head, and dean. He taught United States and California history at Hayward from 1960 to 1995, part of that time as an Emeritus Professor on a faculty early retirement program.

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List of Maps	xv	A Mosaic of Climates	12
Feature Essays	xvii	Distinctive Plant Life	13
		A Land of Many Worlds	15
Preface	xix	Water	18
		Environment and History	20
		The World Before Europeans Came	23
PART I		FEATURE ESSAY	
		“The Damndest Finest Ruins”	24
PROLOGUE		3. THE NATIVE PEOPLES	30
1. CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR HISTORY: MYTHS AND REALITIES		The “Digger” Stereotype	30
	2	Native Origins, Languages, and Populations	31
California’s Love Affair with History	2	Economy: Foods	34
The New Eden	3	Economy: Industry and Trade	36
The Traditional View of California History	4	Science, Ecology, and Agriculture	37
Reconsidering California History	6	Religion	39
		Politics and Society	40
2. THE NATURAL SETTING	9	The Arts	43
California, An Island World	9	On the Eve of European Colonization	44
The Dynamic Landscape	9		

**SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER
READING 46**

PART II

**EUROPEANS AND INDIANS:
THE CALIFORNIA EXPERIENCE**

4. ESTANISLAO'S REBELLION, 1829	53
5. EXPLORERS AND INDIANS	69
The Meeting of Indians and Europeans	69
Discovery and Naming	69
Cabrillo's Voyage	71
Francis Drake in California	73
The Manila Galleon and Revived Exploration	77
Vizcaíno's Expedition	80
California Forsaken	82
Explorers and Indians: An Assessment	83
6. SPANISH CALIFORNIA	86
Imperial Problems and the Founding of Spanish California	86
FEATURE ESSAY	
Junípero Serra: Apostle of California	88
The Founding of San Francisco	90
The Missions	91
The Presidios and Pueblos	93
Economic Development, Labor, and Society	95
The European Conquest of Nature	98
Missions and the Acculturation of Indians	99
Early Indian Resistance: The San Diego and Colorado River Rebellions	101

Disease, Fugitives, and Horses	102
Spanish California on the Eve of Mexican Independence	106

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	106
--	------------

PART III

THE PASTORAL ERA

7. THE BEAR FLAG REVOLT	113
8. MEXICAN CALIFORNIA, 1821–1848	128
Establishment of Mexican Government in California	128
Secularization of the Missions	132
The Gómez Farías Plan	132
Secularization Under Figueroa	133
Political Turmoil	135
The Hide and Tallow Trade	135
Rancho and Pueblo Society	137
FEATURE ESSAY	
Richard Henry Dana, Jr.: Success and Disappointment	138
FEATURE ESSAY	
Rancho San Pedro: A Classic Spanish Land Grant	142
9. FOREIGN PENETRATION OF CALIFORNIA	148
The Russians in California	148
The Hide-and-Tallow Traders	149
The Mountain Men	151
Mavericks	154
Frontier Settlers	155
The Breakdown of Mexican Government	157
American Interest	158

John C. Frémont	160
The Prize of War	161
Culture in Spanish and Mexican California	163
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	165

PART IV

GOLD AND THE AMERICANIZATION OF CALIFORNIA

10. DAME SHIRLEY: A YANKEE LADY IN THE CALIFORNIA MINES	171
11. THE NEW <i>EL DORADO</i>	185
The Great Discovery	185
Sources of <i>La Bonanza</i>	186
FEATURE ESSAY	
Sam Brannan:	
Forty-Eighter	187
The Gold Rush of 1848	189
Spreading the News	191
By Sea to California	192
Crossing the Plains	192
Searching for <i>La Bonanza</i>	195
Mechanized Mining	195
Life in the Mines	197
<i>Bonanza to Borrasca</i>	199
<i>Californios</i> in the Mines	200
The Foreign Miners' Tax Law of 1850	201
"Diggers" in the Mines	201
Solving the "Indian Problem"	202
12. THE THIRTY-FIRST STATE	205
The Military Interregnum	205

The Constitution of 1849	206
Statehood	208
Early Political Rumbles:	
Broderick and Gwin	209
Building an American State	211
Vigilante Justice: "Their Majesties the Mob"	212
The Vigilance Committee of 1856	213
A Cosmopolitan Society	215
Anti-Chinese Prejudice	216
Black <i>Californios</i>	217
<i>Californios</i> and the Land-Grant Question	218
Pioneer Agriculture	219
Land Speculation on the Urban Frontier	221
FEATURE ESSAY	
Tom Maguire:	
Frontier Impresario	222
Cultural Americanization	224
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	226

PART V

THE RAILROAD ERA

13. CONFRONTATION AT MUSSEL SLOUGH, 1880	233
14. THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD	255
Transportation Problems in Gold Rush California	255
Early Transcontinental Railroad Schemes	255
Pioneer Rail Lines	256
Theodore Judah, Visionary	256
The Founding of the Central Pacific	

Railroad	257	Concern	289
The Civil War and the Transcontinental Railway	259	FEATURE ESSAY	
The Central Pacific Besieged	259	John Muir and Early Wilderness Preservation	290
The Pacific Railway Act of 1862	260	Social and Political Conflict	292
Local Subsidies and Mounting Opposition to the Central Pacific	261	Early Labor Movements and the "Indispensable Enemy"	295
Breaking Ground	263	The Workingmen's Party of California	296
Judah versus the Big Four	263	Anti-railroad Politics	297
FEATURE ESSAY		The Constitution of 1879	298
The Big Four:		Chinese Exclusion	299
Villains or Heroes?	264	Culture in the Railroad Era	299
The Pacific Railway Act of 1864	267	SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	304
Completing the Transcontinental Railway	268		
The Big Four and the Emerging Rail System	271		
The Southern Pacific Company	275		

PART VI

CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION, 1880–1920

15. CALIFORNIA'S RAILWAY ERA: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL UNREST

	276
"The Terrible Seventies"	276
Urban Growth	276
San Francisco: From Instant City to Pacific Metropolis	279
Industrialization	279
Railroads and the <i>Bonanza</i> Wheat Era	281
Fruit and Specialty-Crop Farming	282
FEATURE ESSAY	
The University of California and the Beginning of Higher Education	284
Water Resources	287
The Assault on Nature and the Beginning of Environmental	

FEATURE ESSAY

Eadweard Muybridge: Photographer of the City	312
---	------------

16. SAN FRANCISCO'S BLIND BOSS

17. BEGINNINGS OF MODERN CALIFORNIA

Southern California	329
Population: "The One Great Desideratum"	332
The "Boom of the '80s"	333
The First Oil Boom	335
Black Gold	336
The Fight Against Monopoly	337
Political Change in the 1890s	339

The Free Harbor Fight and the Funding Bill	339	Turn-of-the-Century California Culture	373
Agrarian Revolt	340	SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	375
Populism in California	341		
FEATURE ESSAY		PART VII	
William Randolph Hearst: California Journalist	342	<hr/> CALIFORNIA BETWEEN THE WARS, 1920–1940 <hr/>	
The Urban Scene: Prelude to Progressivism	344		
FEATURE ESSAY			
Kaweah: The Quest for Utopia	346	19. SUPER SISTER: AIMEE SEMPLE McPHERSON IN LOS ANGELES	381
Preprogressive Women	349	20. PROSPERITY AND THE RISE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	396
FEATURE ESSAY		Water and Power for Growth	396
Anna Morrison Reed: “The California Girl”	350	California and the Automobile	398
18. PROGRESSIVE CALIFORNIA	354	FEATURE ESSAY	
Abraham Ruef and the Union Labor Party	354	Henry Edwards Huntington and the “Big Red Cars”	400
Indictment and Trial	355	FEATURE ESSAY	
The Lincoln–Roosevelt League	357	How Do You Say M-O-T-E-L? A California Original	402
Hiram Johnson and the Election of 1910	357	Oil	404
Economic Regulation	359	Gas and Hydroelectric Power	406
Political Reform	360	The Movies	407
Labor in Progressive California	361	Agribusiness	409
FEATURE ESSAY		FEATURE ESSAY	
Katherine Philips Edson and Equality for Women	362	Robinson Jeffers: Poet of the Coast	410
Fears of Radicalism	365	Farm Labor	413
FEATURE ESSAY		Other Industries	413
Jack London: Sometime Socialist	366	The Decline of Organized Labor	414
The Criminal Syndicalism Act, 1919	368	Urban Rivalry and the Military	414
Race in Progressive California	368	A Changing Society	415
Water for the Cities: Hetch Hetchy and Owens Valley	370	The New Freedom of Women	415
The End of an Era	371	The Role of Religion	416
		Prohibition	417

Ethnic Minorities in the 1920s	418	War in Europe	471
One-Party Government	419	The Impact of Pearl Harbor	472
21. THE DEPRESSION DECADE	423	The Rise of the Aircraft Industry	473
The Impact of the Depression	423	FEATURE ESSAY	
The Problem of Relief	425	Port Chicago and the Mare Island Mutiny	474
FEATURE ESSAY		Shipbuilding	475
Dorothea Lange:		Other War Industries and	
The Photographer and the Migrant Mother	426	Agriculture	475
Large-Scale Public Works	428	Science	477
The Central Valley Project	429	Women in the War	477
Depression Politics	430	Removal of the Japanese Americans	479
The Sinclair Episode	431	Consequences of the Evacuation	480
Merriam's "Pragmatic Conservatism"	433	Other Minorities and the War	482
Utopian Schemes and the Pension Movement	434	Community Problems	483
Olson's "New Deal for California"	435	Preparing for Peace	484
The Revival of Labor	436	The Warren Administrations	485
The Open Shop in Los Angeles	438	24. AMAZING GROWTH: CALIFORNIA AFTER WORLD WAR II	488
Agricultural Labor	439	The Great Migration	488
FEATURE ESSAY		The Housing Boom	489
John Steinbeck:		Transportation	491
Galahad of the Long Valley	440	Education	493
The "Okies"	442	FEATURE ESSAY	
The Cultural Scene Between the Wars	444	Walt Disney:	
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	446	Last of the Movie Moguls	494
		Recreation	496
		Postwar Economic Growth	497
		The Defense and Aerospace Industries	497
		The New Hollywood	499
		Postwar Politics and the Anticommunist Crusade	499
		Goodwin Knight Moves Left	501
		FEATURE ESSAY	
		Jack Kerouac:	
PART VIII			
WORLD WAR II AND POSTWAR EXPANSION			
22. A QUESTION OF LOYALTY	453		
23. WORLD WAR II: THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA	471		

King of the Beats	502
California Culture in Transition	504
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	505

PART IX

THE 1960s AND AFTER

25. PROLOGUES TO VIOLENCE: GENESIS OF A GHETTO	511
26. DREAMS DEFERRED: THE 1960s	527
The Election of 1958	527
The First Governor Brown	528
The California Water Plan	530
Civil Rights and Minorities	531
Reforms in Politics and Government	534
Schools and Society	535
Election of 1962	536
The Politics of Confrontation	537
Hispanic Californians in the 1960s	538
FEATURE ESSAY	
César Chavez and "La Causa": The Union as a Social Movement	540
Students in Revolt	542
FEATURE ESSAY	
Eric Hoffer: Uncommon Common Man	544
The 1960s: An Assessment	546
27. ERAS OF LIMITS: RONALD REAGAN, JERRY BROWN, AND AFTER	548
The Rise of Ronald Reagan	548
Reagan in Power: The First Term	550
The Election of 1970	551

The Second Reagan Administration	551
The Second Governor Brown	553
The Election of 1974	554
New Blood and Farm Labor	555
"Small Is Beautiful"	557
The Era of Possibilities and the Election of 1978	559
The Tax Revolt of 1978	561
Energy Crisis and Response	563
After Thirteen	566
Another Boom of the Eighties	567
High-Tech Revolution	568
Cultural Maturity and Diversity	570
FEATURE ESSAY	
Jefe Rojas: The Vaqueros' Homer	571
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING	574

PART X

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY: CRISIS IN THE MOST POPULOUS STATE

28. THE DELTA AND THE PERIPHERAL CANAL: CALIFORNIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS IN MICROCOSM	580
29. CALIFORNIA: EDEN OR WASTELAND?	600
The "Not So Golden State"	600
Twentieth-Century Conservation	602
From Conservation to Environmentalism: The 1960s	603
Building a Regulatory Framework: Clean Air	605