JEFFERSON STATE

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Abstract

of

JEFFERSON STATE

by

Kaena Horowitz

In 1941, counties in northern California and southern Oregon expressed a growing dissatisfaction with their respective governments’ inadequate attention to the needs of these communities to either develop their economic infrastructure, nor address the perceived political disparity between rural populations and urban centers. As the lack of assistance led to economic stagnation, these regions could not achieve similar political recognition as their urban counterparts.

Thus, these counties united to create Jefferson, a new, independent, more responsive state, hoping to downsizing overburdened state bureaucracies in favor of conceptions of equal representation through popular mandate.

This social movement was abandoned in 1941, but the tradition of critical judgment of an unresponsive legislature is memorialized and celebrated in the region today. It is this state of mind that embodies the spirit of Jefferson State and persists in the American ideal of democracy.

Committee Chair

Christopher Castaneda, PhD

Date

May 4, ’09
PREFACE

Halfway between Portland, Oregon, and Sacramento, California, by the side of the road, is a large barn with a banner painted across its top declaring the State of Jefferson. The first time I passed it, over ten years ago, I dismissed it as some local festival. As I made the trip from Portland to Sacramento two to three times per year with my family, I remember watching for the barn to come into view and as it retreated into the foothills of the Siskiyou Mountain pass. As the barn remained, my curiosity grew about this State of Jefferson.

As I began to research the State of Jefferson, I discovered a lack of sources, both primary and secondary. As I accumulated what documents could be found referencing the State of Jefferson, I found that all relied heavily, if not solely, on secondary sources. In addition, they relied only on one or two secondary sources. These works uniformly described the State of Jefferson as simply localized anger at a distant, faceless government. Further, these sources largely ignored the State of Jefferson within the larger international occurrences of 1941, namely the entrance of the United States into World War II. The State of Jefferson presented an interesting, unexplained paradox: why would its existence be proclaimed by its citizens on a barn in the 1990s, yet be relegated to a veritable footnote on a failed secessionist movement of 1941 in all historical sources?

Finding primary sources would either confirm or disagree with the analysis that described the State of Jefferson as simply a failed rebellion proved a challenge. The available primary sources were limited: no diaries, letters, or personal journals exist. By
seeking out primary sources documenting the political forces that gave rise to the State of Jefferson, I eventually discovered unique material that has not been referenced. Through the perspective of Randolph Collier, I was able to give a voice to the leaders who planned this historic movement.

Along with the lack of available documents, I was further intrigued by the actions taken by this group of separatists. Individual decisions were indicated by the sentiments and responses of their respective counties, a definition which would permeate their legacy. While much secondary research describes them as "hill-billys" acting out against the Union, via California and Oregon, I discovered that their actions were methodical, reasoned, and most importantly, followed the Constitutional mandates required of any area declaring statehood. They were not secessionists, but rather chose to re-organize local governance. Why then was the interpretation of their movement so denigrating rather than celebratory of the American legal system? Through my research of the events of 1941, furthered by the actions of Randolph Collier in the state senate, I discovered that the long-term success of their political philosophy and state of mind was their ability to work within American legal protocols to resolve apparent problems they faced.

As you read through the following manuscript, you will notice my own limitation of source citations. This is not by design, but simply because few have attempted to collect, read, and analyze the materials regarding this historical event, and none have previously gone to the depth and breadth to uncover multiple perspectives.

I hope my work serves as encouragement for readers and researchers who may one day read it. I analyze the motives of the leaders in southern Oregon and Northern vi
California who were so frustrated with their own governments that they ventured to create their own state – Jefferson. This State of Jefferson was the movement in which they, in their own words, in their trusted reporter’s words, and in the continuation of the goals of this movement through the service of one of its protagonists in the California state senate.

The sources that took the time and effort to engage with primary research agree: the State of Jefferson was not just a failed rebellion, as so many have attempted to dismiss it. Rather, the State of Jefferson was, and some believe still is, that political and philosophical state of mind that demands equitable treatment of all citizens.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Franklin Delano Roosevelt swept to the presidency by forty-two states in 1932, and by forty-six states in 1936. These landslide victories followed the stock market crash of 1929 and pervasive bank failures. Growing unemployment led the country first into a recession, then a depression of staggering proportions. Three prior Republican administrations espoused a traditional approach, with the Hoover administration slow to react to the growing tide of human suffering. These conditions converged, creating the nation's perception of the middle class as those most responsible for economic recovery, and ultimately a change in political philosophy.

For the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, California and much of the rural West leaned Republican. However, these farmers, foresters, and ranchers embraced Roosevelt's proposed changes. As a result, previously Western Progressive Republican strongholds swept Democratic congressmen into power, with the promise of a New

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1 Heather Richardson, *West from Appomattox* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 343. Emerging from Reconstruction, American economic success was firmly based on middle class business owners like the farmer, forester, and rancher who personified hard work and self reliance leading to success. Therefore, the government owed these business people the assistance to continue being successful, since the American economy relied on that success.
However, the forty-year career of state senator Randolph Collier of Siskiyou County contrasted this change. Collier entered office in 1938 as a Republican amidst the New Deal. However, he experienced a catalyzing change: the Jefferson State movement of 1941 – which defined Collier’s career as a champion of limited, directly representative government.

While most of the United States reeled from the stock market crash, in the far West, widespread poverty served as a unifying political issue. The inability to turn the unique natural resources found in California’s and Oregon’s rural counties into a living wage for its citizens led Collier and a group of like-minded businessmen to realize that all levels of government, from federal through state, ignored the needs of these citizens. Much to their dismay, the New Deal changed practically nothing for them. After a decade since the passage of the New Deal, pockets of rural Americans interspersed throughout Northern California and Southern Oregon remained isolated and politically disenfranchised. Despite electing Collier as their representative in 1938 to articulate their cause in Sacramento, the citizens of Northern California saw their taxes continue to be funneled to programs, needs, issues, and concerns for use elsewhere in the state, with no

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return in any form to them. In Southern Oregon, similar concerns and agitation grew. By 1941, the normal democratic processes had failed to improve the lives of this rural group of Americans. To achieve their political goals of equal and adequate representation, a committee of concerned citizens proposed these counties separate from California and Oregon to form a new state: the State of Jefferson.

The often-minimized history of the State of Jefferson, the proposed forty-ninth state, is traditionally described as occupying only several weeks in the late fall of 1941 with a roadside rebellion. In that year, citizens of Northern California and Southern Oregon united to remedy common grievances by trying to create a new political entity consisting of several counties from the region. This rebellion sprang from frustration stemming from the nonexistent response by both California and Oregon to the needs of its rural constituencies. The State of Jefferson was the proposed solution to this disparity between needs and response: a new, legal political entity, a purely democratic institution, electing its own governor, a responsive state legislature, and one that would serve its citizens.

Four days after the new state was announced, an event tested the national loyalty of those potential citizens of the State of Jefferson, making the thought of separation from California and Oregon unconscionable. As the nation prepared for World War II, the State of Jefferson was dissolved and their adherents pledged to return to work within the existing system to address their needs, hoping still to achieve their aims of adequate representation, while remaining part of their respective states. It is here that most

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5 Ibid, 8.
histories and analyses of the State of Jefferson end. The State of Jefferson has largely been deemed a failure, and as a result, its existence forgotten. It is not included on any map or atlas, nor discussed by any academic treatment as an exemplary event. The efforts undertaken in 1941, when, and if, noted, are relegated to a footnote in the broader history of the mid-twentieth century of California and Oregon, due largely to the plethora of literature focusing on the New Deal and World War II, immediately prior to and after the separatist movement, obscuring the local history of these regions. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbor just days after the State of Jefferson appointed its new governor, the nation entered World War II and the attempt to form a new state was abandoned; the State of Jefferson seemingly was consigned to its fate as an afterthought in historical texts.

Instead, this democratic effort formed a political movement born of legitimate frustration whose legacy persists: the State of Jefferson movement was a solution


7 Ibid.


intended to attract the attention of unresponsive bureaucracies to address ongoing
care of its participating citizens. When all traditional political protocols to remedy
dissatisfaction for taxes paid without any benefits received are exhausted, the separatists
of the State of Jefferson declared it is the right of citizens to create a responsive state.

Historical studies referencing the State of Jefferson end this fledgling state’s tale
in December 1941, overly simplified to an abandoned rebellion. These sources
examine only the events of late 1941, and since the State of Jefferson did not achieve its
goal of separation from either California or Oregon, these historians maintain that the
event failed. This perspective relies on preconceived, often derogatory, assumptions of
the State of Jefferson and its citizens as solely embodying regional, rural anger without
any further assessment of the separatists’ underlying motivation. These same critics

10 Michael DiLeo and Eleanor Smith, Two Californias: The Truth About the Split-
State Movement (Covelo, CA: Island Press, 1983). This is one of the few sources to
directly describe the State of Jefferson, referencing it as a regional, albeit doomed event
lasting for a short duration in 1941.

11 Daniel Cornford, Workers and Dissent in the Redwoods Empire (Philadelphia,
PA: Temple University Press, 1987); Daniel Cornford, Working People of California
(Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995); George Washington Fuller, A
Starr, California: A History (New York: Modern Library, 2007); Kevin Starr, Embattled
Dreams: California in War and Peace, 1940–1950 (New York: Oxford University
Press, 2003); Catherine McNicol Stock, Rural Radicals: Righteous Rage in the American
Grain (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996). These sources, each researching the
time period surrounding the State of Jefferson movement and subsequent years of impact,
all omit the separatist movement. Even works describing regionalism in California do
not allow more than a paragraph to mention the State of Jefferson as a passing reference,
nor do any of these sources, in later chapters, describe the impact of the State of Jefferson
and its democratic idealism. The ramifications of dissent and revolution in rural areas,
particularly on California or Oregon are generally omitted or marginalized in the above
works.
employ degrading terms of backwardness to dismiss the State of Jefferson as reactionary and anti-progressive. This classification as an unsuccessful separatist effort only accounts for the immediate, stated goals; whereas these historians fail to consider any lasting impact described by the participants, especially in the papers of the leading individuals. By ignoring the primary sources recently discovered from the State of Jefferson, historians are guilty of the same injustice that the movement perceived state legislature committed to their needs through 1941. Analysis of this scholarship reveals a distinct limitation by previous historians in using primary sources. These scholars rely instead on preconceived rural stereotypes: the image of angry farmers upset at a distant government without any real support or recourse – describing the reluctance of local individuals and groups to speak about the State of Jefferson and thus the absence of documentation leading to difficulties in assessing the effects of this movement past 1941. This perceived limitation of first-hand accounts results in later studies further portraying the State of Jefferson as solely a media event aimed at leveraging attention on their ignored needs, one that folded when confronted with the crisis of world events. In the course of this project, many documents that have never been previously cited were found. Similarly, information that has never been recovered, including oral histories from principal actors or through their descendants, has never been and may never be captured in written or audio form.
Much of this literature describes the State of Jefferson as existing for a singular reason, the creation of roads and transportation infrastructure into the region.\footnote{12} Academics such as Kevin Starr and William Issel argue that the New Deal not only rejuvenated failing economic infrastructures, but also raised the expectations for federal involvement and individual interaction with the American government.\footnote{13} New Deal programs brought in money and personnel to rebuild many communities across northern California, however, little federal bailout reached the counties that were to become the State of Jefferson.\footnote{14}

Starr and Issel further maintain that economic intervention bolstered political involvement. In the State of Jefferson, where little federal economic stimulus occurred,  

\footnote{12} The curator of the Siskiyou County Museum, who personally knew the family of Randolph Collier, refused to identify himself when asked about the “Jefferson State of Mind.” In addition, requests for interviews with the Collier family were rejected. Searches for Gilbert Gable have revealed no information from Port Orford, the Oregon State Archives, or the Oregon Historical Society, and a review of the census fails to even document his presence in the State of Oregon.

\footnote{13} Kevin Starr, The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940s (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 224; William Issel, “New Deal and Wartime Origins of San Francisco’s Postwar Political Culture: The Case of Growth Politics and Policy,” in The Way We Really Were: The Golden State in the Second World War, ed. Roger W. Lotchin (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 70-72. These sources address specific examples of direct relationships between individuals and the federal government that strengthened as a result of the New Deal. For example, Starr discusses the power of optimism portrayed in photographs, bolstering Issel’s argument about the strength of democracy and the belief in the power of the federal government, which Issel writes about in the case of San Francisco.

expectations of direct political interaction declined.\textsuperscript{15} Decades later, Collier, the elected representative at the center of the movement, would restore faith in democracy, become a prime figure in the national highway system, and achieve some degree of governmental responsibility for the well-being of its most disenfranchised region.\textsuperscript{16} Historians such as Starr and Issel argue that for the citizens of the State of Jefferson, New Deal politics should have served as a means to achieve both the tangible goals of economic building through federal aid, and further empowerment of the Democratic Party in rural America. However, unlike ambitious projects in other rural areas such as the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dam projects, no visible federal masterwork came to the State of Jefferson.\textsuperscript{17} Similarly, the California legislature saw fit to build campgrounds for Southern California, rather than roads to mining and forestry industries in The State of Jefferson. The single Northern California New Deal project of any size, the Shasta Dam, actually eliminated roads within its flood plain, forcing the diversion of Highway 99, the sole corridor through the State of Jefferson.\textsuperscript{18} The elected officials and newspapers in Sacramento further disenfranchised the Jefferson populace by repeatedly characterizing them as “hillbillies” and angry backwoodsmen.

These same historians, limited in the scope of their discussion, argue that the singular issue of roads was not enough to continue a political movement, by

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 199.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.; Lowitt, 25.
contextualizing the movement as a footnote within the framework of the New Deal.¹⁹ Yet, by 1941, the impact of the New Deal was over, and the war effort began to restore economic prosperity. Academics largely focus on the tangible demand for roads, an issue that would not be addressed until after the war ended, in 1947.²⁰ By overemphasizing the roadway aspect of the State of Jefferson movement, these works largely disregard the political implications, and long-lasting consciousness associated with the democratic political movement as it occurred in the West.²⁴

Closer examination and assessment of the primary documents left behind – largely newspapers, journals, and personal papers – indicate the formation of a new state was the only tactical method left by which these citizens could acquire equitable distribution of resources from the state and federal government. The demand for acknowledgement of the needs of Northern California by those elected to represent these rural counties, reveals that the State of Jefferson Citizens Committee wanted nothing less than appropriate, equal treatment owed to a participating member of a democracy. Unified and driven by such a political philosophy, the State of Jefferson exemplified a democratic movement opposing an unresponsive state government.

¹⁹ Issel, 72.


²⁴ Ibid.


This thesis traces the emergence and legacy of the State of Jefferson as a political movement, based on political and philosophical ideals of democratic representation before the state. Examining the State of Jefferson from this perspective sheds light on its impact and how that impact continues to reverberate through the western United States. The State of Jefferson is still remembered as a defining historical moment during which disenfranchised citizens banded together and claimed their independence from an unresponsive bureaucracy in order to become fully participatory citizens of the nation that chose to ignore them.

The State of Jefferson was more than just an uprising in 1941 by under-appreciated citizens demanding attention in an isolated part of the United States, although the story and the legacy of demanding democratic responsibility begins there. This thesis introduces the narrative of the State of Jefferson with the roadside rebellion in late 1941. Beginning in 1935, attempts to work through the established governmental system bore no results, frustration mounted and ultimately led these disenfranchised citizens and their elected officials to a bold move not considered since the end of the 1864 states’ war. Through the efforts of the political leaders of Jefferson, this staged event fueled a media frenzy, succeeding in prompting the state of California’s legislative committee and planning board to evaluate their claims, before summarily dismissing them.

Unlike other studies, this analysis continues and examines the report of California State Planning Board chairman, Willis H. Miller, generated in response to requests from these citizens to separate from California. His official interpretation of the Jefferson movement was divided. On the one hand, he legitimated the claims of the State of
Jefferson: they had raw materials in demand because of the impending World War II and they made their needs known through the established political process by voting in representatives to represent them in Sacramento. In spite of following protocol, they continued to be precluded from economic participation as they never received the money for the roads they sought for years and they could not get the needed raw materials to market. Thus, these counties' participation as citizens of the United States was relegated to paying taxes without receiving benefits. In spite of acknowledging these inequities, his official position and published conclusions oppose the separatists' political demands for the creation of a new state.

This thesis also examines the life and actions of Senator Randolph Collier. In advocating for his constituents, Collier worked within the California representative governmental structure. However, as he began to realize that even his actions were being ignored, he accepted working outside of the defined California senate, joining the State of Jefferson movement and embracing the philosophy that government exists on behalf of its constituents. However, his loyalty to those he represented returned him to the California State Senate, where his work arguably provided a benefit to his county, his region, his state, and the United States as a whole.²¹

A persistent demand for representation for all Californians still exists throughout the regions of northern California and southern Oregon. Whenever individuals feel a

legitimate complaint has been ignored by their government, especially when they have sought redress through the process designated to address that complaint, the symbol of the State of Jefferson is raised again and again to remind legislators of their political responsibility and to gain their attention.

Rural northern Californians continue to, when needed, politically leverage the event that worked as a publicity stunt in 1941. For example, in 1978, Assemblyman Keene attempted to create a new state from the same counties, and in 2000, rumblings of discontent were heard again as the state of California overstepped its political bounds, interfering with local politics and economics. New musings about a State of Cascadia encompassing parts of California and Oregon are still occurring.

Inherent distrust exists when a government fails to address the legitimate needs of all contributing citizens, especially to the extent that those citizens are precluded from equally participating as citizens. When all political avenues have been exhausted, a responsive system of governance is created, continuing the philosophy that is the Jefferson State of Mind. Because the spirit of the State of Jefferson lives into the twenty-first century, the movement cannot be ignored as a quaint footnote in history, for it is the process that needs analysis. The seeds of change first planted in 1935, flowering in 1941, flourished throughout in certain regions of California, particularly among those who support participatory democracy.
Chapter 2

A DEMOCRATIC PROPOSAL:

THE CREATION OF THE 49TH STATE OF JEFFERSON, 1941

Thursday, November 27, 1941: Interstate 99, Outside of Yreka, California

In the early dawn, four sentinels stood silently, backs to a manmade wooden barricade blocking Interstate 99. Behind the blockade, two more men on horseback stared grimly forward. Appearing as “rough-shirted miners” in simple clothes – pants, shirts, a thin coat, and a full-brimmed hat, these “booted men” intended to stay all day and night, until their task was accomplished. In a gloved hand, each held a bulk of flyers, typewritten statements of their purpose, to be handed out to all who stopped at the blockade. These documents were so vitally important they required protection by a show of arms. The men on horseback tucked six-shot pistols into their belts and rested loaded shotguns across the saddle as the foot soldiers each braced a loaded rifle.

The darkening clouds and chilly weather forecasted snow would fall, if not later in the afternoon, at least by nightfall. All six men drew their coats about them. Though the weather might dampen their bodies, their spirits were very much alive. In front of them, miles of paved highway served as the only entrance to Yreka and across the border

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into Oregon. 24 Motorists passing along the road must stop at the barricade and speak with this small band of grim, determined men.

These nameless men arrived shortly after dawn. They tore down any road markers that provided location information and replaced them with hand-painted signs that read: “Stop – State of Jefferson.” 25 A truck pulling a long wagon arrived and the three-foot wooden barrier was quickly constructed from the supplies in the bed of the truck. The six men dragged the long barricade across the highway and assumed their positions as the guardians of Jefferson State. The truck left, its riders hollering and shouting loud calls of support for the action, and drove off towards Yreka. The six men were now alone with only their mission. 26

For many hours, nothing happened, yet the men remained stoic and reserved, patient in their cause. Around ten o’clock in the morning, a lonely car made its way north along Highway 99, approaching the barricade. It slowed to a stop upon seeing the obstacle. 27 Inside the car, the driver and passenger gesticulated regarding the blockade, and inquisitive stares greeted the six men. One sentinel approached the car. The driver’s eyes widened with fear as the loaded rifle swung nearer to his vehicle. The guard shifted

24 Ibid.


26 Editor, “Yreka Motorists Are Given Handbills By Secessionists,” The Sacramento Bee, 28 November 1941, E section.

27 Delaplane, “The Yreka Rebellion,” 1
the weight of the weapon, pointing it downward and produced one of the documents, handing it to the driver.\footnote{State of Jefferson Secession, newsreel.}

The motorist opened the piece of paper and read aloud, “Welcome to the State of Jefferson.” Leaning out from the vehicle, the driver continued, still reading the document out loud:

State of Jefferson Proclamation of Independence.

You are now entering Jefferson, the 49th State of the Union.
The State has seceded from California and Oregon this Thursday, November 27, 1941.
Patriotic Jeffersonians intend to secede each Thursday until further notice.
For the next hundred miles as you drive along Highway 99, you are traveling parallel to the greatest copper belt in the Far West, seventy-five miles from here.
The United States Government needs this vital mineral. But Gross neglect by California and Oregon deprives us of necessary roads to bring out the copper ore.
If you don’t believe this, drive down the Klamath River highway and see for yourself. Take your chains, shovel and dynamite.
Until California and Oregon build a road into the copper country, Jefferson, as a defense-minded state, will be forced to rebel each Thursday and act as a separate State . . .

The exchange thus completed, the driver nodded, folding the paper into a coat pocket.

The armed representatives of the Citizens Committee, their task completed, moved aside the wooden barricade and let the car continue driving northward.\footnote{Editor, “Yreka Motorists Are Given Handbills By Secessionists.”}
On this Thursday, all vehicles would be stopped and the Proclamation of
Independence handed out in such a manner.31 “Motorists were asked to distribute the
Thursday rebellion proclamation along the road.”32 As the automobile passed, the
obstacle was replaced and the men returned to their positions officially announcing the
entrance to the separatist State of Jefferson. This Thursday would prove to be a long and
successful rebellion for the six nameless sentinels who now stood stoically barring
Highway 99 into and out of the State of Jefferson.33

Gilbert Gable and the Origins of the State of Jefferson

Eight years before these six men volunteered as guardians, the very notion of the
State of Jefferson lay within one man. In that year, 1933, Gilbert Elledy Gable arrived in
southwestern Oregon, where only he sought to create an “empire” among the redwoods.34
This future catalyst for change married into a lumber family, where he learned that in the
West, beneath an “evergreen blanket of several billion feet of virgin timber,” lay rich
deposits of gold, copper, coal, iron, platinum, and other resources. “To exploit this
domain ha[d] been a local dream for 50 years.”35

32 Ibid.
33 State of Jefferson Secession, newsreel.
34 Editor, “Gable’s Gold Coast,” Time, 4 April 1938, Regional section, 1.
35 Ibid.
In 1935, Gable settled in Port Orford, Oregon, a small coastal town of less than three hundred occupants in Curry County, Oregon, where Gable saw potential for infrastructure development. In 1881, Congress had “appropriated $150,000 to develop Port Orford . . . but nothing was done” and so it took Gable to obtain $300,000 from a patron to begin the development and engineering necessary to build a suitable deep water harbor that would serve as the principal shipping port between Seattle and San Francisco. In addition, Gable formed six local companies to promote the town as the sole deep-water harbor between Puget Sound and San Francisco. Gable’s economic reinvigoration of the community won over the public in the process. After fifty-four years of unkept federal monetary promises, in less than a year, Gilbert Gable spent “$750,000 . . . for a huge breakwater dock, an administration building, [and] a new lumber mill.”

Immediately following his dedication ceremony of the dock on Labor Day, Gable approached the Interstate Commerce Commission for a permit to build a ninety mile railroad spur across the coastal mountain range from Port Orford inland, connecting his “Gold Coast Railroad” with the Southern Pacific. This would serve as the “life line” for

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36 Patrick Masterson, *Port Orford: A History* (Wilsonville, OR: BookPartners, Inc., 1994), 153. Unfortunately the dock facilities were destroyed in a winter storm that first year. Interestingly, the port facilities themselves, although rebuilt six times, still fail to withstand the forces of nature, even as recently as 2008. Masterson, 180.

37 Editor, “Gable’s Gold Coast,” *Time*, 4 April 1938, Regional section, 1.

38 Ibid., 2.
ore and timber by rail. The next day, out of “convenience and necessity,” the permit was granted.\textsuperscript{39} However, while the railroad was surveyed, it was never approved or built.\textsuperscript{40}

Three months later, the dock collapsed, the railroad construction had not yet commenced, but Gable was elected mayor of Port Orford, which had grown to over one thousand residents. Due to the population growth and infrastructure development spearheaded by Gable, Army surveyors of the area announced, “the prospect of future growing importance of Port Orford and Crescent City [Del Norte County, California].”\textsuperscript{41} Gable requested assistance from the state of Oregon to continue and finish the projects. However, even with sustained growth and potential, the state legislature deferred to the Interstate Commerce Commission on this issue of the railroad that would join the coast with the southern Oregon communities. The interstate commerce commissioner withdrew the permit, giving as a reason “prospect of future growing importance of the ports of Port Orford and Crescent City definitely may be discarded as a factor of consequence in the proceeding.”\textsuperscript{42} No railroad would be built into the area, and the dock would remain unfinished, though the initial funds and support had been promised three months prior.

In his tenure as mayor, Gable perceived a disproportionate disparity between the requests of his constituents and the willingness of the state to help financially or in

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 1-2.

\textsuperscript{40} Masterson, 155.

\textsuperscript{41} Editor, “Gable’s Gold Coast,” \textit{Time}, 4 April 1938, Regional section, 1.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
personnel, the railroad being but one example.\textsuperscript{43} For the better part of the century, the Oregon legislature promised to develop these rural communities and their agrarian economy. These state commitments remained consistently unfulfilled. Gable, as the elected mayor of Port Orford and its surrounding areas, sought alternative solutions for the problems he perceived.\textsuperscript{44} The completion of new roads which streamlined access to external capital alleviated some concerns by the populace, but the undercurrent of insensitivity by the state government toward rural problems persisted.

Noticing a similar trend in surrounding rural counties, Gable, with three others, visited California, specifically to Del Norte, Siskiyou, Modoc, and Lassen Counties, knowing similar conditions hampered economic development.\textsuperscript{45} Gable suggested separation from their respective states as:

\begin{quote}
the beginning of a very useful and timely movement, getting rid of the accumulated clutter of unnecessary officials and ordinances which have been obstructing our attempts to make a living with ever-increasing technicalities and delays ... [to] organize as the District of Jefferson, discarding at one blow all the accumulated trash in the ... State governments ... It might also then be possible for all of us to concentrate on the most important thing ... as to each of us. \textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

Gable saw a similar distress among these communities in their relationship with the state legislature and their political leadership. Namely, these counties felt disenfranchised, not only as a result of their distance from the seat of political power, but because an

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{45} Masterson, 155.

\textsuperscript{46} Editor, "Gable’s Gold Coast," \textit{Time}, 4 April 1938, Regional section, 1.
unresponsive government, overburdened with bureaucratic “trash,” actively marginalized the rural counties, essentially creating acute disparity between local need and state assistance.47

Gable believed the most efficient solution was to create a smaller, more manageable government that would respond to the needs of the governed directly, as he had during his tenure as acting mayor of Port Orford, Oregon. On October 2, 1941, he appeared in court in Curry County and argued for the four southernmost counties in Oregon (Curry, Josephine, Jackson, and Klamath) to form an alliance with three counties in Northern California (Del Norte, Modoc, and Siskiyou). The judge approved a commission, led by Gable, to study the proposal. The Oregon attorney general sarcastically remarked:

They [the counties] are free to annex itself to a dry lake, all they would need was the consent of the United States Congress, the Oregon and California Legislatures, and the approval of a majority of the Oregon electorate.48

Out of anger, the attorney general essentially outlined the precise legal route Gable would have to pass through to achieve success by creating the State of Jefferson.

Protocol not yet exhausted, two days later The Oregonian accused the movement of “trying to acquire the glorious climate of California, and become a haven … that would add much more to the population.”49 The story, highlighting the threat of

47 Ibid.

separation, also piqued the interest of several San Francisco and Oakland newspapers, as well as the New York Times. With national media coverage pending, Governor Olson of California commented, "We are glad they think enough of California to want to join it." Three weeks later on October 30, Governor Olson sat down with a delegation from Oregon and advised they first seek the consent of the Oregon Legislature in Salem. What once was considered only a possibility now had potentially real merit as a political movement with a legal course of action, national media coverage, and the attention of both Oregon and California.

On November 17 and 18, 1941, a committee consisting of Gable, Judge John Childs of Crescent City, Senator Randolph Collier representing Siskiyou, members of the 20-30 Club of Yreka, the Yreka Chamber of Commerce, the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors, and all interested parties to the movement met in Yreka, California. The Yreka Chamber of Commerce voted on the first day to investigate the possibility of forming a new state, and the Yreka newspaper, the Siskiyou Daily News announced a contest to name the state. Over the next few weeks, the directly adjacent counties, via the county supervisors, investigated the possibility of joining this political movement. On November 19, 1941, the Modoc County supervisor declared Modoc County would join

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49 Editor, The Oregonian, 3 Oct 1941, 1

50 Rock, 5.
the new state.\textsuperscript{51} Lassen County joined the State of Jefferson movement on November 28, 1941, the day after the roadside rebellion.\textsuperscript{52}

As the separatist movement continued, including the first Thursday rebellion, Gable’s role as a former publicity man for Bell Telephone Company led him to encourage reporters and film crews to shape the public message through broadcast by emphasizing the themes of independence, fundamental American democracy, and responsive governance.\textsuperscript{53} Gable insisted that, as recognition of the separatists’ actions spread, “the drive for a 49th State [carries] ... an underlying seriousness that cannot be denied.”\textsuperscript{54}

More than just a publicity stunt, Gable espoused a political ideology for the fledgling state. Primarily, he emphasized that state government had not been responsive to the stated needs of their citizens, who for their part had been responsible citizens. He proposed outlawing slot machines, sales tax, income tax and the liquor tax, all money he felt was leaving the State of Jefferson for other parts of the state. He wrote Governor Olson, establishing that Jefferson State would collect its own penny sales tax, placing buckets adjacent to cash registers in Yreka to collect this tax, disbursing it as the State of Jefferson saw fit. He appointed the local undertaker as the new state comptroller.

\textsuperscript{51} Although by November 23, the county declared they would rather join the State of Nevada.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 5-8.

\textsuperscript{53} Editor, “Gable’s Gold Coast,” 1-2.

Capitalizing on the copper penny tax, he declared there would be no more copper for California until roads were built to dig it from the ground. He also wanted to forbid strikes, which crippled other industries during the New Deal after the Wagner Act was passed. With a political platform, Gable believed the movement would gain credibility.\textsuperscript{55}

Many reporters chose to focus largely on the tangible goal of road maintenance and development. Instead, the underlying philosophical principles of participatory democracy drove the new state forward as a political movement, not just a publicity event. Gable proudly declared the movement, “reflects a resentment of a great body of people... who are tired of being regarded as a hill-billy group who are not of sufficient importance to be given considerate treatment.”\textsuperscript{56} The unifying sentiment for these disparate communities, he added, was the fundamental notion of equitable treatment. Gable, and his supporters, perceived California and Oregon’s past negligence of their constituencies as absolutely unconscionable:

This sentiment lies apparently among people who still have the free spirit of America in there [sic] souls; people who want another frontier to develop; people who are willing to work and sacrifice to that end as their forefathers did; people who are wearied of governmental pap, demagoguery, waste and excessive taxation. In short, people who want to be Americans again.\textsuperscript{57}

Therefore, Gable reasoned, preserving an anachronistic status quo defended by an out-of-touch state legislature could no longer be sanctioned.

\textsuperscript{55} Rock, 8-9.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{57} EE Carden, “Chance For New Style Government,” San Francisco Chronicle, 3 December 1941, Letter to the Editor section.
Separation from the states of California and Oregon provided the only logical recourse, since the people and their elected representatives exhausted all other available remedies. They elected a senator to represent their interests in the California legislature, whose efforts were being stymied. Although he worked on their behalf, neither funds nor remedies were forthcoming. In fact, the New Deal funds earmarked specifically for use by the northern counties of California were sent to Southern California to build a park. 58

To provide the raw materials and natural resources from the State of Jefferson for the use and benefit of the United States, the region would have to raise their own funds, build their own infrastructure, and order their own economies: in essence, become their own political entity, separating from both California and Oregon before petitioning both states to request the federal government for an application for statehood, as established by the United States Constitution. 59

This process required not only unity among all participating regions in achieving this objective, but more importantly, a conscious political identity to form a new government that would avoid “tremendous wastage of money by governmental agencies for nonessentials and pap.” 60 Gable sought to downsize the overburdened bureaucracy of state governments that easily ignored the populace it claimed to represent. 61 Instead, the


59 U.S. Constitution, Section IV, Article 3.

60 Editor, “A State of Mind.”
State of Jefferson offered equitable representation through the creation of a smaller, directly responsible governing body:

It reflects, further, a will on the part of these people to join forces with others in California and Oregon whose needs are similar and to establish a political commonwealth that will be interested in and responsible only to the people in this area.62

Yreka, California Jefferson

When Stanton Delaplane, a reporter from the San Francisco Chronicle, arrived in the small city of Yreka, California, on November 26, 1941, he saw a throwback to the Gold Rush days, full of cowboys and miners, saloons, and dance halls. The local residents welcomed him as one of their own, impressed that such an “ace reporter” had arrived to document their revolution.63 Although discouraged that reporters from The Sacramento Bee, a rival paper from the Central Valley, arrived before him, Delaplane hadn’t missed any of the action. The streets and businesses of Yreka were bustling with activity, reporters milling about, and even various film companies sent cameras to shoot newsreels to be played before movie-going audiences.64 After Delaplane sent in his first article on the Thursday rebellion, along with a copy of the “Jefferson Proclamation of

61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
63 Carden, “Chance For New Style Government.”
64 Ibid.
Independence” to the Chronicle, he decided to research the newly declared state, to better understand where he was and what exactly they wanted.65

The most interesting observation Delaplane made, by his own account, had to do with the nature of the media, himself included, and its relationship with the local populace.66 Many of the residents of the State of Jefferson, he noted, seemed to distrust these reporters, who jokingly dismissed the local movement as a publicity stunt, a circus event, and refused to take the movement’s intentions seriously.67 The booming economy over the past few days was a testament to these assertions. Newspapers persisted in portraying the community as a colorful collection of “lumberjacks, miners, ranchers,” “Indian fighters . . . mountain men,” and invoking images of “Johnny Rebs” and other such pejoratives in describing rural miners, angry at the state, but without any real recourse or legitimate complaints.68

However, Delaplane also acknowledged that the media was necessary if this new state was to gain critical public attention in both the press and in the seats of power, especially Sacramento, where political change could occur.69 If residents understood the value of the press, they remained cautious and their interactions with reporters limited,


67 Editor, “Yreka Motorists Are Given Handbills By Secessionists.”

68 Ibid.

and few granted interviews. Reporters that used the term “hill-billy” were noticeably shunned, and given only limited access to even the larger events.\textsuperscript{70} That word, Delaplane recorded, particularly seemed to strike a negative chord among the State of Jefferson’s citizens, a term inherently meaning backward and illegitimate. The separatists chafed at the refusal of journalists to understand the Jeffersonian point of view, relying instead upon archetypes and symbols of rugged individualism and independent pioneers.

And yet, knowing that reporters’ expected them to act according to the frontier script, many citizens played on these tropes in a tongue-in-cheek manner in ways that only helped reinforce their “hill-billy” image. Since few interviews were granted to the press, questions of Jeffersonian self-perception remain largely unanswered by the historical record.

After Stanton Delaplane’s initial report on the Thursday rebellion, he traveled through the eight counties, gathering interviews to use in his articles, though he knew many would be edited out prior to publishing by the \textit{Chronicle}. As he toured the region, Delaplane discovered a more complex reality than suggested by his initial impressions. The proposed State of Jefferson was comprised of eight counties in southern Oregon and northern California: Curry, Josephine, and Jackson Counties in Oregon, and Del Norte, Siskiyou, Lassen, Modoc, and Trinity counties in California.\textsuperscript{71} Yreka, situated in Siskiyou County, served as the provisional capital of Jefferson, due mostly to its existence as the largest established city, its accessibility, and its central location among

\textsuperscript{70} Delaplane, “The Yreka Rebellion,” 7.

\textsuperscript{71} Miller, “State of Jefferson,” 1.
the eight counties. Port Orford, in Curry County, Oregon, challenged Yreka for the capital seat, because it was home to Gilbert Gable, the visionary leader of the State of Jefferson separation movement, the man “who started it all.”

These eight counties, totaling 17,246 square miles, shared similarities in geography and cultural demography, fueling a common unity of complaints against their respective states of California and Oregon. The citizens of Jefferson, roughly estimated at around 61,000, worked largely in mining, logging, farming, fishing, and auxiliary service industries. By comparison, the state of California as of July 1941 had 7,237,000 individuals, a growth rate of 287,000 from 1940. These northern communities, in many cases created by the 1849 California Gold Rush, flourished as supply towns into the twentieth century. Mining still served as one of the largest enterprises in Jefferson, not only for gold but also silver, platinum, stones, and copper. As many towns faded as the gold supply declined, the communities of Jefferson persisted, though with diminishing populations.

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72 Ibid., 2.
75 Ibid.
77 U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1940.
Eventually new jobs replaced employment in the mines, particularly involving the exploitation of the region's rich timber and river resources. In the early years of the twentieth century, logging, milling, and paper companies such as Weyerhauser, Incorporated, arrived in Jefferson to harvest the timber.\textsuperscript{79} Dairy farming, berry harvesting, ranching, and small subsistence farms provided further internal revenue for the communities of Jefferson.\textsuperscript{80} Fishing represented a small portion of the economic activity in Jefferson, although for Curry, Josephine, and Jackson counties, this was a larger industry, though small in relation to the massive mining and logging industries.\textsuperscript{81}

As a result of Delaplane's efforts to understand the Jeffersonian movement, he gained the trust of the residents of the northern California counties involved, and even managed to arrange a meeting with the heads of The State of Jefferson, which other reporters had referred to as the "brain trust," no doubt a sarcastic analogy referencing Franklin Roosevelt's own inner advisors.\textsuperscript{82} Delaplane was most excited about the series of interviews he conducted with the founder and popular leader of the State of Jefferson, the jocularly self-proclaimed "hick mayor" of Port Orford, Oregon, Gilbert Gable.\textsuperscript{83} To

\begin{itemize}
  \item[78] Bunting, 421 – 426.
  \item[80] Ibid.
  \item[81] Ibid.
  \item[82] Delaplane, "The Secession," 8.
\end{itemize}
Gable, the formation of this new state, "suits me because of its independence aspects. However, I feel that we should have . . . the promised land impression . . . . We have been promised so much – received so little."\(^{84}\) Delaplane noted in each of his interviews that Gable seemed to truly believe the State of Jefferson offered the only political means by which the rural populace could achieve equal representation before a governing body.\(^{85}\) Assessing Delaplane’s articles, it appears that his efforts to befriend local residents were rewarded with an ability to write more stories about the State of Jefferson than any other reporter, including those from *The Sacramento Bee*.

Delaplane returned from his tour of the State of Jefferson during the week after the first Thursday rebellion, to find Yreka a hubbub of activity in anticipation of the next scheduled rebellion on December 4, 1941. True to their word, the residents of Jefferson congregated in Yreka in anticipation of the future announcement. While this was going on at the grassroots level, Delaplane, unlike his rival reporters, also followed the political heads of the State of Jefferson, who were busy planning the logistics of creating a new state. He wrote,

> The separation counties planned to put a horsemen’s blockade across the State highway on the second Rebellion Thursday tomorrow while the provisional assembly was meeting tonight to choose a Governor of the Forty-ninth State . . . . There was a fighting list of candidates for Governor of the new State of Jefferson.\(^{86}\)

\(^{84}\) Ibid.

\(^{85}\) Ibid.

Delaplane interviewed this proto-government, named the Citizens’ Committee, including most notably Gilbert Gable, Judge John Childs, and California State Senator Randolph Collier.

Thus, Gable, Childs, and Collier invoked the tradition embodied in the democratic spirit of the movement through the figurehead of "Thomas Jefferson . . . the author of the Declaration of Independence, the great instrument that states that the people have a right to govern themselves."87 This basic tenet of freedom, individualism, and democratic political philosophy served a dual purpose in the mind of Gable, who supported bestowing the name of Jefferson on the new state, "because of its independence aspects," and also because of the support for limiting government.88 The State of Jefferson's committee also noted the historical importance of Thomas Jefferson in adding northern California and southern Oregon to the Union, through his "influence and foresight . . . the Lewis Clark Expedition was organized and sent to explore the new . . . part of the United States."89 Further, Thomas Jefferson's staunch support of the anti-federalist image of the idealized yeoman farmer, who would govern himself as a civic-minded individual, necessitated local governance.90 The State of Jefferson's leaders invoked Thomas Jefferson, not only as the man who accepted the region as part of America, but moreover

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88 Editor, “Jefferson is ‘Promised’ Land.”

89 The News Editor, “Here Are Winner’s Reasons for Suggesting Name of Jefferson.”

90 Ibid.
to demonstrate the movement's dedication to downsizing large government in favor of Jeffersonian equitable representation.

Delaplane was impressed with the high level of dedication and organization behind what the majority of others referred to as an apparent “publicity stunt.” It suggested to him a deeper commitment to the region than simply a movement to build more roads and bolster the local economy. The cursory arguments provided by the State of Jefferson in their own “Proclamation of Independence” were interpreted by *The Sacramento Bee* to mean the sole mission of the State of Jefferson, and its proposed governing body, rested on re-vitalizing the economy by building roads into these rural regions with the hopes of inviting further mining interests to help develop the community infrastructure. According to *The Sacramento Bee*, even if the movement succeeded in forming its own state, none of the reporters believed that a single-issue platform would be enough to bring disparate counties into a unified, fully functioning state. Supporting the newspaper reporters’ opinion was the dismissive responses of the states of California and Oregon who already regarded this movement as doomed, especially as it seemed to lack a plan or system for self-governance.


92 Ibid.

93 Editor, “Yreka Motorists Are Given Handbills By Secessionists.”

94 Editor, “When ‘49th State’ Was Created.”

However, this view ignored Governor Olson’s earlier advice to Gilbert Gable to proceed first with Oregon. Stanton Delaplane saw the issue differently, as the result of his rapport with the local populace, but more importantly, because of his direct interactions with the State of Jefferson’s political leadership.

At the 20-30 Club of Yreka, on December 4, 1941, at the steps of the Assayer’s Office, delegates of the Jefferson communities gathered for a meeting. It was the second Thursday of the rebellion, and one of three men would be elected governor of the newly declared state: Gilbert Gable, John Childs, or Randolph Collier. A moment of silence fell across the meeting. Word had just reached them that Gilbert Gable died suddenly at his home at Port Orford. A new leader was needed to carry on Gable’s work. The committee chose Judge John Childs from Crescent City in Del Norte County as the first governor of the State of Jefferson, who once in 1935 declared himself governor of a separation movement in that county. By this date, everyone was watching: *Time* and *Life* magazines sent photojournalists and four Hollywood newsreel studios were filming anyone who was willing to talk. A school holiday in the State of Jefferson was declared for the inauguration.\(^\text{96}\)

Aside from deciding on elected leadership, the December 4, 1941, meeting centered on questions of inclusion, most notably, which counties, should they decide to join the State of Jefferson, would be welcome?\(^\text{97}\) Several counties requested joinder to

\(^{96}\) Rock, 10.

\(^{97}\) Delaplane, “The Secession,” 8.
the movement, most notably Trinity County in California, but Trinity’s and others’
decisions were still tentative. 98

The next steps towards achieving their objectives would be to gain recognition for
the new state, first from California and Oregon, then petitioning for official statehood
from Congress. 99 Delaplane’s articles describe the importance of the democratic process
for the acting legislature of the State of Jefferson, as the most important method not only
for governance, but also for gaining recognition as a new American state. 100

Stanton Delaplane was one of only two reporters welcomed to these proceedings.
The other was the editor of the Siskiyou Daily News, the local paper that reported on the
events and released firsthand information from the Jeffersonian committee to the public.
As such, Delaplane was unique, as he attempted to represent the citizens of the State of
Jefferson, whereas other newspaper reporters, with limited access to the community,
reported only from the perspective of the California and Oregon state governments.
Many of these papers called upon external sources from the State of California to justify
their opinions. 101 These reports all saw the revolution as doomed. 102

98 Editor, “When ‘49th State’ Was Created;” Editor, “Modoc Stays Loyal, Trinity
Joins Jeffersonian Forces,” The Sacramento Bee, 2 December 1941, Editorial section.


100 Ibid.

101 Editor, “When 49th State Was Created.”

102 Editor, “Yreka’s Motorists Are Given Handbills by Secessionists.”
Delaplane, in contrast, expressed his personal understanding of the State of Jefferson as a community fighting for democratic equality and fair representation. Instead of being backwards, they represented progress. The “Proclamation of Independence” and especially Gilbert Gable’s political philosophy charged that overburdened state governments, in both California and Oregon, took advantage of the authority granted them by their constituencies, and ignored their citizens’ needs and requests, as exemplified by many unfulfilled demands for infrastructure development.103

The concept of this new, more responsive state was not backward, as the reporters suggested, but rather as Delaplane recorded, the very essence of democracy and equal representation.104 The ambitions and dreams of the citizens of the State of Jefferson for democratic idealism in the possibility of a new state revealed their fundamental belief in themselves as true Americans. For this, Delaplane argued, their efforts could not, and should not, be ignored nor taken as lightly as his colleagues attempted.105

Ending in Irony

There is no State of Jefferson on any current map; it exists in the hearts of the citizens of that region. Although the idealism and ardor existed, the movement faced several insurmountable setbacks. The first hurdle was the abandonment of the movement.

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103 Editor, “Jefferson is ‘Promised’ Land.”


by Modoc County in late November of 1941. The State of Jefferson Governor John L. Childs realized this was a problem. For the movement to succeed, the Jeffersonians needed to demonstrate unity, solidarity, and staying power. Losing Modoc did more than diminish the constituency’s base of support, it undermined the authority of the movement. Humboldt County, which entertained the notion of joining Jefferson, also declared their loyalty to California on December 1, 1941. Neither county believed the movement had any real chance of success. Jackson County in Oregon also backed away from the movement and refused to join the new State. Fortunately, Lassen and Trinity Counties, which had cautiously vacillated, now joined the movement. The setback of losing Modoc County was momentarily replaced by the optimism of new counties joining. This demonstrated that the State of Jefferson’s message was spreading, as evinced by dissatisfaction at the treatment of rural counties by the states of California and Oregon.

However, in the midst of this optimism, the State of Jefferson lost one of its most important organizers. On December 2, 1941, Gilbert Gable died of acute indigestion. “He was 55 and perhaps he was too tense,” wrote Delaplane, one of the last individuals to

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106 Editor, “Modoc Stays Loyal, Trinity Joins Jeffersonian Forces.”


108 Editor, “Modoc Stays Loyal, Trinity Joins Jeffersonian Forces.”

speak to Gable. The leader and “spark plug” visionary of the separation movement “left a great idea unfinished.” The outpouring of sympathy from supporters and reporters alike regarding the passing of the founder of the State of Jefferson resonated throughout the communities, from Gable’s home in Port Orford, Oregon, even through the newly joined counties of Lassen and Trinity. He was remembered and revered for his accomplishments in stabilizing the economy of Port Orford, where he was still mayor. By putting pressure on these state governments through the threat of separation, Gable inspired the counties of Jefferson to mobilize. He was remembered not as an instigator, nor as the “hick mayor” he claimed to be, but rather as a pioneer, independently embracing the spirit of American democracy as “a man whose historical importance had yet to come. If Gilbert Gable’s dreams had come to fruition, a new area of the West would have been opened . . . He had an historical future, not as a forty-ninth State Governor, but as one of the last of the pioneers.” More importantly, the council of Jefferson and their constituents remembered “Gable [as] a pioneer who used the tools

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10 Stanton Delaplane, “Mayor Gable, 49th State Leader, Dies,” San Francisco Chronicle, 3 December 1941, 1.

11 Ibid., 1.

12 Stanton Delaplane, “Jefferson Flag At Half Staff for Gable,” San Francisco Chronicle, 2 December 1941, Editorial section.

13 Ibid.

14 Delaplane, “Mayor Gable, 49th State Leader, Dies,” 1 and 14 column 6.
at hand to fulfill his dreams of the West as men a century ago had used long rifles and axes to build the Nation.”115

The loss of Gable was devastating, and came in the middle of choosing a governor. The election of a governor was decided, nonetheless, and Judge John L. Childs was solemnly sworn in, narrowly defeating the California state senator Randolph Collier. In his speech, Childs promised to uphold the values that Gable espoused.116 Childs promised to continue the separatist effort and the plans that Gable laid out, the formation of a new state, and the equal representation for which it stood. Delaplane wrote of the common belief that “The death of the founder of the State of Jefferson failed . . . to dampen the separation spirit of the last frontier.”117 December 4, 1941, inauguration day, heralded parades in Yreka; cannons were fired, school was let out, and out on Highway 99, the second Thursday Rebellion was held, blockading the road outside of Yreka, the new provisional seat of Jefferson’s state capital.118 At his gubernatorial inauguration, Childs addressed the audience:

The State of Jefferson is a natural division geographically, topographically, and emotionally. In many ways, a world until itself: self-sufficient with enough water, fish, wild life, farm, orchid land, mineral resources, and gumption to exist on its own.119

115 Ibid., 14 column 6.


117 Editor, “Death of Founder Fails To Dampen Ardor of 49th State,” The Sacramento Bee, 3 December 1941, Editorial section.

118 Tickner, 19.
Gable’s democratic idealism lived on.

Three days later, the movement abruptly ended.120 On the morning of December 7, 1941, the Japanese Imperial Navy attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and the United States promptly entered World War II in both the Pacific and European theaters. Washington requested complete unity and support for entry into the war from all of its citizens. The Jeffersonians honored this call and abandoned their separation movement to support the war effort.121 Governor Childs, in office only three days, declared his last official executive action, “In view of the national emergency, the acting officers of the Provisional Territory of Jefferson here and now discontinue any and all activities.”122

The roadways remained in poor condition, but the war contracts provided extra capital to move lumber and copper from their mines to distant transportation facilities.123 If not for Pearl Harbor, the democratic State of Jefferson might very well have come to fruition.124

The voices of Jefferson were heard, recorded, and disseminated by newspapers and film reels. Their exploits were immortalized along Highway 99, where they had

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119 Ibid., 117.

120 Wilson, 68.

121 Sutton, 65-67.

122 Wilson, 69.

123 Wilson, 68; Sutton, 66.

124 It was the choice of those of the State of Jefferson that doomed the State, for even with the advent of World War II, they received no monies to build the infrastructure that they had been requesting. It would take Senator Collier and his actions to finally provide for them the infrastructure they needed.
taken a stand for their democratic independence and belief in the formation of a new, responsive, and democratic state. Their wholly American ideals, fostered by the reality of taxation without benefit and their belief in the rules laid out by the Federal and democratic government, allowed the spirit and goals of the separatists to survive to the present.

Unbeknownst to even their elected representative, Collier, the state of California commissioned an inquiry by the California State Planning Board into their complaints, documenting the legitimacy and validity of the State of Jefferson's complaints.
Chapter 3

CALIFORNIA SUPPORTS

WILLIS H. MILLER AND THE STATE PLANNING BOARD

Willis H. Miller sat behind his desk to write his official report to the California State Planning Board regarding "mumblings of dissatisfaction" occurring in the northern part of California. Although the State of California predetermined there was limited "reason to take it very seriously," as acting Executive Secretary of the Planning Board, Miller was responsible to the Board for making the proper inquiries and investigating the legitimacies of these "mumblings" stemming largely from disruptive Siskiyou County.

These regional demands resulted in an application for statehood, which brought the issue before the State Planning Board. Miller's presentation, and the ensuing vote by the Planning Board, a subcommittee of the state legislature, would determine whether or not

125 Willis H. Miller, "State of Jefferson," 4 December 1941. First draft, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA, 1-2. None of the other studies of the Jefferson State movement of 1941 has addressed or identified this piece of information in their analysis. The character composite of Willis H. Miller is derived from his marginal comments in the rough draft of his paperwork and assorted writing scribbled on the documents he perused and analyzed. From the nature, tone, and style of his comments, I have derived Miller's motivations for writing and the interpretation of his analysis and especially his conclusions. Taken in context with his official releases, the two sources—marginalia and the text produced—create a fuller character for Willis H. Miller as both a member of the California State Planning Board and as a historical actor researching and producing historical documents, preserved for later analysis. Later in his life, Willis H. Miller would direct the California State Archives. Miller's paper on Jefferson State was later published in the California Historical Society in 1952.

Willis H. Miller, "State of Jefferson," California Historical Society 31 (1952): 125. However, this thesis relies on the unedited and unpublished draft of Miller's paper as a direct reflection of both his personal and profession opinions in 1941.

126 Ibid.
the state of California would recognize the separatists and their complaints, by allowing such a separation to continue unrestrained.\textsuperscript{127}

With a rough idea of the chronology of events, and the data that had been efficiently provided by various state agencies to help in his presentation, Miller’s job was to analyze the likelihood, efficacy, and legitimacy of the claims issued from Yreka, California, the center of this movement to create a new state called “Jefferson.” Miller, in this draft copy, wrote in his final report, submitted after December 7, 1941, that the state had limited possible success in sustaining its separation even from Oregon.

As the drama of separation unfolded in Yreka, Willis H. Miller, both a politician and an amateur historian, prepared his report, took notes in pencil, typed the important sections, and edited in red pen. His large, looping cursive script covered the pages of his draft report.\textsuperscript{128} His narrative began with a description of the events and an outline of the pertinent conditions delineated by the proposed State of Jefferson. His analysis centered on a single question: was there any legitimacy to their complaints? Based on the evidence, was there any possibility this so-called “publicity stunt,” one which amassed media attention from five different news companies and film studios, could be taken seriously? Could these separationists have a point? If so, Miller would need to find demonstrable proof that the communities of Jefferson had a need that remained unfulfilled, or that California’s response was inadequate proportionate to this need.

Analyzing the political standpoint of the separatists would inevitably result in a

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{128} Miller, “State of Jefferson,” marginal comments.
disagreement over semantics, so Miller chose to examine the tangible demands of the State of Jefferson. If California proved unresponsive in these matters, then the political and philosophical denunciation of unequal state representation by these rural communities could be potentially legitimate.\textsuperscript{129}

The tangible problems enumerated by the “State of Jefferson Proclamation of Independence” revolved largely around the lack of feasible transportation routes into and out of northern California and southern Oregon.\textsuperscript{130} However, this claim centered on two assumptions. First, the separatists believed that their communities possessed enough strategic resources that could be profitably extracted, if new roads, bridges, and highways were built into Jefferson. Miller had already sent letters to the Department of Natural Resources Divisions of Mines and Forestry to determine whether or not this supply existed to merit more roads. Secondly, the separatist movement asserted that the current roads were either inaccessible or inadequate to unlock the economic treasures of these counties. As a caveat, the movement assumed that taxes were levied and disbursed in such a way that did not represent their needs to develop these roads and maintain their highways. To determine the veracity of these claims, Miller contacted both the Division of Highways and the Department of Finance.

The reply to Miller’s inquiry regarding profitable resources in Jefferson came from Walter Bradley, the State Mineralogist from the Department of Natural Resources.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.

Division of Mines. Bradley’s letter provided data pertaining to the yields and production from Siskiyou, Del Norte, and Trinity counties. Accompanying the results was a brief history of mining in the area and the specifics of excavation efforts. Bradley wrote, "From the standpoint of mineral resources, the northwest corner of California . . . has been far less developed commercially than probably any other area of the state. This has been due primarily to lack of adequate transportation facilities."\textsuperscript{1131} The Department of Natural Resources’ findings supported the separatists’ claims of underdeveloped transportation leading to a stagnant mining industry.

Although the area lacked infrastructure, as the report noted, this did not necessarily mean that resources valuable enough to be mined existed in these counties. Bradley commented that:

Of the mineral resources of significance in the present national defense program, [Jefferson] . . . has important potentialities particularly in chromite, copper, and platinum. There are also possibilities in quicksilver and manganese. Gold has been the leading item, both through the years and in total yield to date . . . [These counties] contributed significant tonnages in the World War I period (1915-1918).\textsuperscript{1132}

Although the area had at these times been economically viable for mining, by 1918, the mines appeared to have yielded significantly less.\textsuperscript{1133} However, by 1939 production rates appeared to be booming, yet the lack of infrastructure development

\begin{footnotes}
\item[1131] Walter W. Bradley to Mr. Willis H. Miller, 5 December 1941, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA, cover page.
\item[1132] Ibid.
\item[1133] Bradley to Miller, cover page.
\end{footnotes}
suggested limited investment in the area, even with knowledge of available and viable resources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Gold</th>
<th>Stone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Del Norte</td>
<td>$4,410</td>
<td>$7,250</td>
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<td>Lassen</td>
<td>3,325</td>
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<td>Modoc</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>17,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siskiyou</td>
<td>1,708,840</td>
<td>99,906</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As recently as 1939, then, the state of California determined that the mines in northern California could be mined for profit in both gold and stone, which could be used for paving highways. Accompanied with Washington’s raising of the price of gold, mining investment should have increased. However, as Miller noted from the data, the state of California chose not to fund the development of these mines. No reason was given.  

The “Proclamation of Independence” specifically cited copper as being not only significant to the war effort, but in abundance in the counties of Jefferson. Miller and the Division of Mines concurred that the strategic necessity for copper output evident during World War I, would again hold true for current domestic wartime contracts in 1941. How much copper could be mined from Jefferson, and did it necessitate improved transportation facilities into the counties? The state mineralogist found that:

134 Ibid., 1.
135 Ibid.
137 From September through October of 1941, The Oregonian was rife with information portending the impending struggle in which the US would soon find itself, although the threat appeared to be from Europe, as opposed to the Far East.
According to the best information available, a body of copper ore of a fair grade amounting to 1,000,000 tons has been developed [in Siskiyou County] .... The mine has been shut down for more than 20 years, and a considerable sum of money must be spent to re-open it and to determine the size and grade of the orebody accurately.\textsuperscript{138}

Although the ore produced in Siskiyou County demonstrated that copper had been mined successfully twenty years earlier, no definitive data existed to demonstrate that this was still the case. Bradley’s report continued, suggesting that the investigation could not be fully conducted because it was impossible to access the mines: “There can be no question that the completion of a hard-surfaced road down the Klamath River would aid . . . copper mining . . . [but] the roads to these deposits are usually impassable for several months during the rainy season.”\textsuperscript{139} Walter Bradley’s findings supported the tangible claims of the separatists in the proposed State of Jefferson: their mines most likely contained strategic resources which would assist the national economy, but their requests to develop mining and access roads to the mines were being ignored by the state without response of any nature.

When Miller sent letters to the Department of Natural Resources, he also made inquiries about the available assets that the counties of Jefferson boasted, the development of these industries, and the reasons, according to each division, that they might be hampered. In response to these queries, M.B. Pratt, the State Forester, began,

There are about eight billion feet of uncut privately owned timberland . . . There is a particular problem of liquidating this timber due to the inadequate means of transportation. The nearest railway terminal is located in Arcata, Humboldt

\textsuperscript{138} Bradley to Miller, 1-2.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid. 2.
County, approximately eighty miles distant... This means that all the timber cut for outside markets has to be loaded upon trucks and transferred... Shipping by water has ceased almost entirely... The cost of shipping by water has been too high from an economical standpoint.\(^{140}\)

Pratt also noted that in each of these counties, over half of the developed industry was due to either mining or logging. In Del Norte County alone, eighty percent of the economic output from the county resulted from milling, and unfortunately, "lumbering (in Del Norte county)...is nearly at a standstill."\(^{141}\)

The land, being the main source of economic viability, was underdeveloped, and as a result, the workers in these areas became increasingly dissatisfied. "According to the Charles Tebbe United States Forest Service Report," Pratt stated, "Siskiyou County is producing 40% of the present one and a half billion feet of the timber cut in California; and with the exception of Plumas County, Modoc and Lassen are the two other largest producers of timber in the State."\(^{142}\) If this statement was accurate, then the milling industry relied upon the counties of Jefferson, which were highly valuable to the state of California.

\(^{140}\) Ibid.

\(^{141}\) M.B. Pratt to Willis H. Miller, 4 December 1941, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA, 1. I add "Del Norte County for clarification. This county is one of the five northern California counties to be considered and is separate and apart from Siskiyou County. While the economies of the counties of northern California appear to overlap, given the geographical uniqueness of each, certain aspects lead to differing results. Here Del Norte county specialized in milling the lumber as opposed to Siskiyou that produced (or grew) the trees that would yield the raw lumber.

\(^{142}\) Ibid., 2. Interestingly, with the five counties of northern California, each county specialized in the natural resource that it could offer as an economic good. Here, Del Norte provided the milling, while Siskiyou provided the lumber for the milling.
Echoing the conclusions of the Department of Mines, Pratt’s letter further suggested that expanding the access roads to these counties might produce higher yields from the mills. Pratt summarized, “redwood timber comprises about five hundred million feet of the annual cut in California, and at the present time very little of this is coming from . . . [Jefferson] . . . due to the underdeveloped transportation facilities.”  However, Pratt also noted that as much as one-third of the five hundred million feet included timber imported from Oregon and Washington.  Thus, California’s own yield stemmed largely from the counties of the State of Jefferson, an area California refused to develop to increase production. Miller found no substantiating evidence for why this was done.

Both previous documents referenced the poor road conditions, as did the data supplied by the Division of Highways, in the form of a 1940 map of California detailing the status of roads throughout the state. The “Map of California Inadequate Rural State Highways” had two delineated markings: the darker one highlighted “Inadequate Roads Carrying Less Than 1000 Vehicles Per Day,” while the lighter, hash-marked notation referred to byways “Carrying 1000 Or More Vehicles” on a daily basis. Further, the Division of Highways marked that the determining factor for these

143 Ibid., 4.
144 Ibid., 5.
145 Ibid.
147 Ibid., Legend.
“Inadequate” conditions, as assessed by the Department of Public Works pertained directly to “Deficiencies involv[ing] one or more of the following: alignment, grade, type, width of surface.”

Of the darker markings, Highways 30, 28, 29, 35, 46, 73, and 82 all passed through the counties of Jefferson, most notably through Shasta and Siskiyou County. Highways 1 and 3 were hash-marked similarly, although Highway 1, the Pacific Coast Highway, veered west of Jefferson, so Miller disregarded it as an access route to the lumber and mining regions. “The main handicap,” Miller concluded, “is the lack of a paved highway between the interior . . . and the Coast. State Highway 96 . . . is only a graded dirt road.”

The map provided by the Division of Highways demonstrated that not only were the roads insufficient for commercial travel, but inaccessible for economic development.

Miller’s analysis had thus far supported the claims of the separatists in the State of Jefferson – their complaints were legitimate – but was the response of the state of California truly inadequate? A chart from the Department of Finance noted the revenue collections from 1941 for these counties, compared to the annual average, were significantly higher, in some cases almost double. For example, the average income tax levied from these counties usually fluctuated around $27,250, throughout the course of the decade. However, in 1941, the annual revenue tax collected by the State was $54,500. Retail sales and use tax was also almost two-to-one in ratio: $1,429,400 as

148 Ibid., Key.

149 Ibid., 5.
opposed to the average of $714,700.\textsuperscript{150} According to the Department of Finance’s own figures, these counties were being overtaxed.

The second part of the chart showed the budgeted State payments to these counties, based on their rate of taxation and amount collected. The average prior to 1941 was 1.25 dollars per every dollar collected, biennium. This amount seemed to directly correlate, but the finances earmarked for the development of county roads did not: $594,700 of the $5,461,400 total, which amounted to roughly ten percent of the disbursed total.\textsuperscript{151} The State of California’s disbursement chart demonstrated a certain unwillingness to develop these county roads, in favor of larger highway projects. Coupled with overtaxation, Jefferson was economically handicapped. Miller’s evidence showed that as long as these counties remained isolated, their economic survival remained in question.

The Jefferson separation movement was not just a publicity stunt, as many of the papers suggested. The claims of California’s separatists, Miller found, were legitimate.\textsuperscript{152} The counties of Jefferson possessed within their borders natural resources in the mines and forests that could have aided in economic development. Further,

\textsuperscript{150} Department of Finance, “Estimated State Revenue Collections In Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, and Siskiyou Counties, 1941-1943 Biennium,” Chart, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA.

\textsuperscript{151} Department of Finance, “Estimated State Payments To Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, and Siskiyou Counties, And State Expenditures For Highways and District Fairs In These Counties, 1941-1943 Biennium,” Chart, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA.

\textsuperscript{152} Miller, “State of Jefferson,” 5.
California's own government agencies verified that the inadequate transportation facilities not only impeded commerce, but also directly adversely affected the potential economic development of mining, lumber, agriculture, livestock, and fishing. The overarching assumptions of the "Proclamation of Independence," both tangible and political, were supported by the data Miller reviewed – the state government ignored the needs and requests of these individuals and counties. Miller wrote that this lack of attention by the state government to its own constituents reflected a larger problem of equal representation.

Several days after the State of Jefferson separatist movement was abandoned, Willis H. Miller finalized his report and presented his conclusions before the California State Planning Board. Had Jefferson’s fate not been already pre-determined by the committee, Miller’s findings had the potential to determine the success of these counties in forming a new state. Miller’s data supported the legitimacy of Jefferson’s complaints; but his own conclusions, written in his first draft, actively opposed these findings.

His outline and logic clearly supported the claims of neglect articulated by the separatists. The neglect by California to respond to requests for infrastructure development was the tangible proof that the needs of the populace went unheeded by the state, thereby supporting the political perception of unequal representation before their elected representatives. Miller outlined the legitimacy of the complaints, as supported by the data – the abundance of copper and lumber, the dismal condition of roads into and out

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153 Ibid.

154 Ibid.
of Jefferson, the overtaxation and unrepresentative disbursal of State funds towards economic development, the largest (and unanswered) request stemming from these counties.

However, the movement, in Miller’s mind, was done, its goals set aside for patriotic national cooperation in a time of war. As Miller presented his material a few days later, his retrospective analysis supported those opposed to the separation:

The interest of California in the four “Jefferson” counties appears to be sentimental rather than practical. From a fiscal point of view they are a liability... California is justified in being willing to keep these northern counties. Whether California should fight to keep them, or try to bribe them to stay, however, is doubtful. 155

Miller’s conclusions did not fit the data he presented from the various state organizations, but it did not seem to matter. He wrote the history of the proposed State of Jefferson into failure, because Pearl Harbor, admittedly an extenuating circumstance, rendered the goals of the separatists irrelevant for the immediate future. Miller’s conflict reflected in his work and presentation were entirely apparent — international occurrences shaped his conclusions, even if the data he presented did not match it directly, or at all. Because of his rejection of the separatist movement, the demands by the State of Jefferson would never be investigated, nor would the region’s sources of discontent be alleviated. Miller concluded, “At present, it seems very unlikely that there will be a new ‘State of Jefferson’... Unless conditions change materially, this probably would be virtually impossible.” 156

155 Ibid., 9.
Though, in Miller’s estimation, the State of Jefferson would not succeed as a movement, the objectives and ambitions of its constituents could not be entirely ignored. When he published his findings as a paper in the *California Historical Quarterly*, his views had not changed in the interceding decade. Those northern California counties that petitioned to be considered for separation raised legitimate claims of economic strength. Their overtaxation was documented. Their demands for assistance from the state were not being responded to. State government ignored this rural region for decades, leading Miller to conclude, “Presumably the assumption [of the citizens of the State of Jefferson] is that, were these several counties an independent state, they would do better.”\(^{157}\) Miller himself could not substantiate this claim, as the evidence was not available. However, though the vision of an independent state did not come to fruition in 1941, the political philosophy lived on.

\(^{156}\) Ibid., 9-10.

\(^{157}\) Ibid., 1.
It was remarkable to Randolph Collier that only two days before he had been in the city of Yreka, California, attending parades and rallies with his friends and neighbors. When last he was there, that very city claimed itself as part of an entirely different state. While Yreka now sat in the northern region of California, as recently as December 6, 1941, it had been the capital of the State of Jefferson. It would be Collier, senator of the northern California counties, who would carry the ideals of responsive government forward from December 10, 1941.

While visiting Yreka, a town not far from the community where he grew up, Randolph Collier was not just another local man, caught up in the fervor of separatism and idealism in creating the forty-ninth State of Jefferson. In 1938, three years prior, the counties of Siskiyou, Humboldt, Trinity, Lake, Del Norte, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties had elected him to the California State Senate as their representative and their voice before the state legislature. Severely under-represented numerically and

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158 Editor, “It Was A Tough Battle Men, But We Won,” Siskiyou Daily News, 19 November 1941, Editorial section. This newspaper article posits an alternative narrative with the movement successfully forming its own state and the next steps that would be taken under these conditions, alluding to the importance of Randolph Collier’s activities and the ideology of the movement as the reason for their success.

159 Randolph Collier, “Biographical Data,” Subject Folder 1, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA, 1.
proportionately in the Senate — these seven counties had only two representatives to serve their constituencies and speak on their behalf, as opposed to other counties in the state which had individual representation. For three years, Collier dutifully served these interests in the state capital, pushing for initiatives such as snow removal from the Shasta roads in the winter to assist the social and economic development of the rural region.\textsuperscript{160}

While this simple initiative would be common sense, this snow removal was never passed. But clearly, having an elected representative had not been enough, in the estimation of the people arguing for the formation of the State of Jefferson. Their desire for change reflected disappointment, not necessarily in Collier, but in the recalcitrant nature of the State of California, which had consistently ignored their pleas for assistance. Their needs not attended to, the State of Jefferson formed to express its inhabitants’ desire for equal participation.\textsuperscript{161}

As Collier visited the town of Yreka in November of 1941, the center of separatist fervor in northern California, he joined the movement as a political advisor, one of the council members elected, and the youngest of the “brain trust” to lead the new state once it became a reality. Senator Randolph Collier decided the best way to serve his constituents was to join the movement they promoted, even if it appeared to contradict his purpose as a member of the California Senate.\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{162} Collier, “Biographical Data,” 1-12.
Many newspaper reporters, especially those from The Sacramento Bee, extensively critical of the separatist campaign as simply a spectacle and public relations circus, questioned why a state senator, a man with a position of power and respect, chose to join the ranks of the State of Jefferson.\footnote{Editor, “Is This Appeasement? State Makes Concession,” The Sacramento Bee 1 December 1941, Editorial section.} In their opinion, Collier’s action not only betrayed the status quo of California, threatening to sunder its unity, but also tarnished Collier’s own political reputation and career by joining the “hill-billy” separatists, who, in these same reporters’ opinions, was assured of failure.\footnote{Ibid.} Collier considered himself both an elected representative and a citizen of the counties he represented, whichever state they chose to recognize as their home, be it California, Oregon, or Jefferson.

Collier maintained that as the elected representative of these counties, he would serve his constituents’ political interests, even should they choose to no longer recognize the authority of the State of California on Thursdays.\footnote{Ibid.}

Collier made it expressly clear, however, in each of his public speeches and campaigns, especially as late as November and December of 1941, that he supported the notion of a democratic mandate of authority as earned, not simply given.\footnote{Ibid.} Collier emphasized the importance of the democratic tradition and the betrayal of that social
contract by the state of California. Much of the press, especially *The Sacramento Bee*, claimed that, as a senator, Collier should present a more “loyal” face to the state of California, which he served, and disparage the State of Jefferson as treasonous. Whereas the media believed in a superceding duty to the state, Collier argued that a government that does not respect its own people, and which the people do not respect, has no authoritative hold over its citizenry. For this reason, Collier did not perceive himself as a traitor, but rather as fulfilling his duty to his community.

The senator’s presence in Yreka, California that December, 1941, to join the State of Jefferson separation also served to provide legitimacy to the campaign among the skeptics in the California State Legislature. The California State Planning Board, originally not disposed to even consider demands from the newly formed state, could no longer ignore the compelling power and presence of a state senator’s endorsement of the movement.

The events of the first week of December in 1941, as described in Chapter I changed the course of the State of Jefferson. First, even though the untimely death of

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169 Editor, “Inaugural Speeches,” 1.

170 Editor, “Is This Appeasement? State Makes Concession.”

Gilbert Gable unified Jeffersonians to continue his dream, it also left a political vacuum among the leaders of the separatists.172 They were determined to persevere; “Gilbert Gable would not want us to falter now, after the project he supported so long and so well was near success,” Collier told the Jeffersonians.173 While Gable was never the officially elected leader of the state, his vision and support unified and drove the movement.

Senator Collier hoped to fill the leadership void by calling for the convening of “the provisional assembly [of the presumptive State of Jefferson to be] . . . held Thursday in accordance with Gable’s first – and last – official proclamation.”174 However, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor three days later, the United States declared war, the State of Jefferson abandoned its goal of separation to support the war effort, and Randolph Collier returned to Sacramento to resume his post as State Senator.175 The citizens of northern California still demanded recognition as equal citizens with political, economic, and social needs to be addressed by their governing body. This motivation was the reason for their creation of a new state: to establish a legislature that would work for them, not at their expense.176 American democracy allowed the voice of Collier’s constituents to provide him the authority to act as their

172 Stanton Delaplane, “Mayor Gable, 49th State Leader, Dies,” San Francisco Chronicle, 3 December 1941, 1.

173 Editor, “Many Envoys Will Attend Mass Meeting,” Editorial section.

174 Delaplane, “Jefferson Flag At Half Staff for Gable.” Italics mine for explanation.

175 Collier, “Biographical Data,” Subject Folder 1, 12-15.

representative. As the senator of these northern counties, it was Collier’s duty to represent these citizens to their governing body, if not their own creation of Jefferson, then in the California legislature. 177

Though California remained opposed to disbursing funds to develop these northern regions, Collier focused his energies in the Senate on passing bills to alleviate the financial burden on his constituents. 178 During his forty-year career in the legislature, Randolph Collier became the living legacy of Jefferson State. Between 1942 and 1947, Randolph Collier wrote and co-authored over a dozen state Senate bills pertaining to taxation, fishing, wildlife, water resource rights, and agricultural concerns throughout the state of California, though largely focused in northern California, and especially within the counties he directly represented. 179 Collier’s bills aimed to both demonstrate that a rift existed between developed communities and under-represented populations, and more importantly to narrow this gap through creating demand by enhancing the market value of the natural resources in the area. 180

The individual-issue bills Collier helped pass between 1942 and 1947 provided for regulation and restriction of land and land use, especially of natural resources such as timberlands, streams, and rivers, earmarking territory for the development of natural resources. 177 Collier, “Biographical Data,” Subject Folder 1, 12-15.

178 Collier, “SB 76-77,” Legislative Summaries.

179 Randolph Collier, Legislative Summaries, Author Bill Files (1939-1976), California State Archives, Sacramento, CA.

180 Collier, “SB 13,” Legislative Summaries.
parks and recreational areas to expand tourism and limit deforestation and economic infringement on these natural areas.\textsuperscript{181} Current, cursory analysis of these issues suggests that they directly diverge from the interests of the loggers, miners, and farmers that lived in Collier's communities and had been part of the State of Jefferson.\textsuperscript{182} These groups hoped for further economic development of roads to allow for capital investment and development of the area for its natural resources, a goal that seemed counter to the preservationist efforts advanced by Collier's legislation.\textsuperscript{183} Collier's bills, however, regulated the supply of natural resources available to the market, and in the process created commodities that resulted in the development of California's rural economic infrastructure.\textsuperscript{184} By enforcing restrictions on land use and development, Collier instituted scarcity in the production value of northern California, especially in the timber, mining, and fishing industries.\textsuperscript{185} This policy had the desired effect of keeping prices at a premium because of high demand and limited supply.\textsuperscript{186} Further, Collier passed legislation to furnish subsidies to larger farms, ranches, and mines, curtailing output.

\textsuperscript{181} Collier, "SB 220-223," \textit{Legislative Summaries}; Collier, "SB 343-344," \textit{Legislative Summaries}; Collier, "SB 927-928," \textit{Legislative Summaries}.

\textsuperscript{182} Collier, \textit{Legislative Summaries}, Author Bill Files (1939-1976).

\textsuperscript{183} Miller, "State of Jefferson," 5-7.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid. Collier's bills are listed throughout the citations by bill number as only the Collier-Burns Highway Act was commonly known and referred to by his name.

\textsuperscript{185} Collier, "SB 220-223," \textit{Legislative Summaries}; Collier, "SB 169-173," \textit{Legislative Summaries}.

\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
Like aspects of New Deal legislation, particularly the production codes of the Agricultural Adjustment Act and National Industrial Recovery Act, Collier pushed for keeping prices competitive by limiting production. Collier also successfully authored bills to significantly reduce the amount of taxes paid by small farmers based on their output, allowing these rural communities to retain a larger percentage of their income.

Even though access to these economic resources remained limited because of the recalcitrance of the California legislature to fund roadway improvements, Collier was able to foster economic competition by reducing supply and keeping smaller, under-developed farms, ranches, and mines competitive throughout the state. In this manner, Collier bolstered the economy of rural, under-developed, and politically under-represented communities by limiting supply to increase demand of natural resources and elevating these disparate communities' respective power by bringing their needs before the legislature and exploiting California's indifference in developing rural areas.

Through his single-issue bills between 1942 and 1947 that Collier was able to realize many of the material demands articulated in 1941 by the State of Jefferson movement. Many of these bills proved effective in creating a more balanced resource

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187 Collier, “SB 744-747,” Legislative Summaries; Collier, “SB 982-987,” Legislative Summaries. However, unlike the AAA and the NIRA his legislative actions were never declared unconstitutional as attempts to regulate commerce directly. See Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States, 295 U. S, (1935).

188 Collier, “SB 1057-1059,” Legislative Summaries.

189 Ibid.

market between rural and urban centers of production, especially for the timber industry, which after World War II boomed as a result of population explosion to California and the desire for building materials. New industrial contractors and conglomerates arrived in northern California and southern Oregon both during and after the war to expand the lumber industry and auxiliary service industries.

Collier’s bills each addressed singular issues and enforced seemingly minor restrictions: earmarking land for natural parks, subsidizing a few larger farms, and limiting tax collection based on comparative subsidies. Arguably, the California State Senate passed these bills because these measures were perceived to have minimal impact on changing state economic practices. Collier’s ambitions to realize both democratically philosophical aims as well as the tangible goals of the State of Jefferson movement began to take effect, as demonstrated by the passage of these bills. Through these legislative acts, Collier’s bills arguably compelled state recognition of the demands of its northernmost constituents, thereby reinforcing the practice of a democratic mandate for representative authority.

Collier also helped bring parity to an unequal market system, a secondary complaint of the State of Jefferson. This tangible goal was originally expressed as a need.

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191 Collier, “SB 245,” Legislative Summaries.


193 Collier, “SB 734,” Legislative Summaries; Collier, “SB 258,” Legislative Summaries; Collier, “SB 62,” Legislative Summaries.

194 Collier, Legislative Summaries, Author Bill Files (1939-1976).
for roads that would facilitate the development of the economy of the northern counties in California to remain competitive with a quickly developing state, both industrially and with larger, commercial farms.\(^{195}\) While these small bills between 1942 and 1947 did not address the desire to build roads, Collier introduced the economic underpinnings of the State of Jefferson movement and the goal of economic parity, to the state government.\(^{196}\)

These early steps toward achieving economic and political regional equality within the state of California culminated in 1947, with the passage of the Collier-Burns Highway Act, for which Collier is remembered and celebrated in California state history.\(^{197}\) Through passage of this legislation, Senator Randolph Collier found a way to unite disparate regions with centers of political, economic, and social power through the creation of a centralized roadway system.\(^{198}\) New highways allowed distant communities to participate as members of their state. Through the 1947 Highway Act, Collier provided the means by which under-represented regions from across the state could attain political, economic, and social parity before the California State legislature by literally creating roads of access to seats of political and economic power.

\(^{195}\) Ibid.

\(^{196}\) Ibid.

\(^{197}\) Randolph Collier, “Senate Bill 5x (1947) (Collier-Burns Highway Act),” Author Bill File 1947, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA.

In 1945 and throughout 1946, Randolph Collier and Senator Michael Burns of Marin County spearheaded an investigative committee on infrastructure development throughout California as a result of the massive influx of jobs and economic development from World War II domestic projects.\(^{199}\) Their findings suggested that while certain metropolitan areas grew from the war contracts, areas between these sites stagnated or diminished in population over the same time period, resulting in negative economic growth, further polarizing the state along regional disparities.\(^{200}\)

Together, these state senators authored a bill in late 1946 and early 1947 designed to centralize state responsibility over city, county, and access roads between larger urbanized populations and rural areas as a means to co-ordinate rapid growth throughout California.\(^{201}\) This Senate Bill not only provided a system for establishing, maintaining, and paying for the development of roads as a physical network throughout California, it also centralized the bureaucratic control over these operations, effectively providing more power to the state government.

To accomplish this, the disparate counties that controlled the roads inside their regional borders prior to 1947 were consolidated into a single operational unit within the California State government under the executive branch led by "a single road commissioner . . . approved by the State Department of Public Works . . . to handle the

\(^{199}\) Randolph Collier and Michael Burns, "Findings of the Collier-Burns Investigative Committee," Author Bill File 1947, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA.

\(^{200}\) Ibid.

\(^{201}\) Collier, "Senate Bill 5x," Author Bill File 1947.
road and highway work.” A strong, centralized maintenance system was put in place to organize and co-ordinate all roadwork functions and monetary distribution. The bill outlined the revenue features to pay for the development of this project as a unifying infrastructure network throughout the state of California.

In early 1947, Collier chaired the Senate-sponsored Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Highways, Streets, and Bridges, formed to inquire into the effectiveness, feasibility, and cost of the proposal. The Committee determined that the most effective way of evaluating the new proposal was to compare it to the existing method of road maintenance, control, and development.

Prior to 1947, each county controlled the financial and structural maintenance for the roads within its respective region, and the defined geographical boundaries enforced jurisdictional responsibility. Therefore, if one county deemed a road running through it as less important for development it might ignore its upkeep and maintenance, even at the cost of adjoining counties affected by this road. Randolph Collier’s plan perceived this inequitable consideration of roads to be unfair, as a rural county existing next to an

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202 Ibid.; Zettel, 10-11.
203 Ibid.
204 Randolph Collier, chairman, “Findings of the Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Highways, Streets, and Bridges,” Author Bill File 1947, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA.
205 Ibid.
206 Ibid.; Collier and Burns, 2-5.
urban county was apt to suffer economically as a result.\textsuperscript{208} The distribution of construction crews on a statewide basis reflected this disparity, as larger, more populated thoroughfares drew considerably more attention from their county seats than rural access roads.\textsuperscript{209} In this way, by 1947, the existing system actively discriminated against non-urban populations. A key demand of the Jeffersonians all along had been for the construction and maintenance of quality roads, a need that arguably would have been addressed had their tax dollars been used to support their infrastructural needs.

In 1947 another of the State of Jefferson's causes was rectified when the Collier-Burns Act was passed. This Act overturned the formula for the funding of transportation projects as established in 1927 by the Breed Act. The Collier-Burns Act "based tax revenues dedicated to transportation improvement must be 'equitable, geographical, and jurisdictional'" as provided for by Article XIX of the California State Constitution. The funds at issue came from the State Highway Account. Originally, the Breed Act of 1927 established the "North-South split" where the forty-five northern counties of California obtained 53% of the expenditures while the thirteen southern counties obtained 46% of the expenditures. Funding was based on the number of highway miles. In addition to the number of highway miles, the Collier-Burns Act took into account population numbers. Under the Collier-Burns Act, the forty-five northern counties received 45% of the funds while the southern counties received 55%, and although this provided for fewer funds, it created a discretionary county minimum so that those less populated northern counties,

\textsuperscript{208} Zettel, 2-8.

\textsuperscript{209} Ibid., 4-7.
with higher “centerline” miles would obtain increased funding. Centerline miles were measured as those miles of road along the median or “centerline” of the State highway system, in California: Interstate 5.\textsuperscript{210}

A secondary problem under the established system was the allocation of money and resources to maintain and develop roadways, dependent on each county’s respective budget.\textsuperscript{211} In this matter, the Department of Transportation, as a centralized bureaucratic unit, disbursed money to each county on a percentage system based on “qualified need” and further bolstered by county income versus state revenue.\textsuperscript{212} Thus, larger, more developed counties, especially urban populations and corporate farming counties, received more aid from the Department of Transportation, regardless of need, while under-developed communities with more need received less financial support.\textsuperscript{213}

\textsuperscript{210} Lewison Lem, \textit{California’s Highway Funding Apportionment Formula: Geographic Redistribution Among Counties} (Los Angeles: The Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, 1997), 9-10; California Department of Transportation, “California Department of Transportation,” http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tsip/dirb.php, accessed on March 24, 2009. Note that the state highway mileage and travel, upon which funding is based, shows that only two counties have more centerline miles than the North District 2 of Siskiyou, Modoc, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, Tehama, and Plumas Counties with 1,734 centerline miles. District 6 of Fresno, Madera, Kings, Tulare, and Kern Counties have 2,041 centerline miles, and District 8 of San Bernardino and Riverside have 1,900 centerline miles. The rural counties still get the most allocated discretionary funds because of the established “county minimum.”

\textsuperscript{211} Collier, “Findings of the Joint Fact-Finding Committee,” 9-11.

\textsuperscript{212} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{213} Zettel, 9.
In Collier’s opinion, this was an imperfect system, centering on the definition of “qualified need.” 214 Each county could file a proposal for state funds for work on underdeveloped roads, along with “an application for priority ratings . . . to cover proposed contracts for which funds have been allocated by the Commission.” 215 This form, requiring a clear listing of the road’s specific benefit to California’s economic infrastructure and a priority based on “qualified need,” was determined and given largely to access routes to military and business interests in the cities and the suburban sprawl that came as a byproduct of urban development. As the State Highway Engineer C.H. Purcell accentuated, “Projects that require priorities . . . [include] access road[s] to military or naval establishment . . . [and] access road[s] to Defense Manufacturing establishment[s] . . . [or other] strategic network[s].” 216 Similar to the maintenance of roads by geographic standardization, the unequal disbursement of funds to counties favored larger, urbanized populations and regions with access roads to military and business sites, disproportionately disfavoring rural counties such as the ones Collier served in northern California. 217

As a result, during the war, the division between urban and rural populations grew, as developed areas received further funding and even more construction crews,


215 C.H. Purcell, State Highway Engineer to the District Engineers And Heads of Departments of the Division of Highways, 23 September 1941, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA, 1.

216 Ibid., 2-3

while under-developed rural areas remained stagnant. Roads determined economic development and access to resources. Without an amendment to the existing method for maintaining these roadways, Randolph Collier’s constituents and other similar rural denizens would continue to lag behind rapidly growing urban communities.\(^{218}\)

According to the Joint Fact-Finding Committee, Senator Collier’s proposal took a fuel tax from all motorists in the state of California and using a direct, flat-rate system, as opposed to a need-based and revenue-based system, disbursed funds to build and maintain roadways evenly. The bill mentioned that:

> Counties will receive $5,400,000 annually adjusted proportionally with changes in the total number of registered motor vehicles . . . The money is divided on the basis of vehicle registrations . . . [throughout the state and] an additional grant of the net proceeds of 3/8 cent gasoline tax distributed . . . enough to bring the amount of state aid to each county . . . distributed on the basis of motor vehicle registration.\(^{219}\)

This meant that each county, regardless of population or location, would receive matching funds from the Department of Highways.\(^{220}\) Some prioritization remained, as the bill allowed for distribution of extra construction money on a need basis, especially in crisis situations, proportionate to access to cities. However, the new bill provided that a more equitable share of funds be allocated to rural areas and their roadways.\(^{221}\)

\(^{218}\) Ibid.

\(^{219}\) Collier, “Senate Bill 5x,” Author Bill File 1947.

\(^{220}\) Collier and Burns, 8.

\(^{221}\) Zettel, 11-15.
Collier’s plan, as the Committee assessed its objectives, created a more balanced system for all of California’s counties to develop their roads and highways, not just select regions.222 The desired result narrowed the growing economic divide between expansive urban populations and rural regions, allowing the state of California’s infrastructure to develop evenly throughout the state, as opposed to continuing the disproportionate growth between urban and rural areas.223

Further, as the state’s population grew, so did the income generated from the fuel tax, adding to the economic development of the state.224 This revenue would increase the budget of the Department of Highways, alleviating existing maintenance problems, and importantly, create more, larger highways that would enhance the state’s economic and social-political infrastructure.225 This burgeoning development of the state’s highway system, according to Collier’s proposal, would not only assist the economic growth of California as a whole, but more importantly, create a stronger, more unified network throughout the state.226 The Committee determined that previously perceived divisions within the State – economically, demographically, and in political representation, would gradually decrease as the state of California flourished evenly.227


223 Zettel, 12-14.

224 Ibid., 12.

225 Ibid.

226 Ibid., 2-4.
The Joint Fact-Finding Committee on Highways, Streets, and Bridges determined that the impact and importance of the Collier-Burns Highway Act was more than just to develop roads throughout California and assist rural development.\(^{228}\) While these tangible goals were easily accomplished with the consolidation of the Department of Highways and a newly formed flat-rate financial disbursement plan, Randolph Collier’s goal of parity in regional representation before the state was arguably achieved as well.\(^{229}\) In the spring of 1947, at the opening session of California’s fifty-seventh legislature, lawmakers weighed the findings of the Committee, and passed Collier’s bill.\(^{230}\)

In serving his constituents, Randolph Collier’s proposal to develop roadways immediately and directly affected the regions he represented by providing new roadways to their under-funded and under-developed areas, assisting their economic development.\(^{231}\) More importantly, Collier created a network throughout the state, the California highway system, allowing freer and more even access to seats of economic and political power throughout the state, not just between growing metropolises such as Sacramento, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.\(^{232}\)


\(^{228}\) Ibid.

\(^{229}\) Zettel, Conclusions.

\(^{230}\) Collier, “Senate Bill 5x,” Author Bill File 1947.

\(^{231}\) Zettel, Conclusions; Collier, “Findings of the Joint Fact-Finding Committee,” 15.

\(^{232}\) Ibid.
By facilitating the ability to travel, especially for his rural constituencies, Collier succeeded in furthering his philosophical beliefs born of the experience with the State of Jefferson to expand democratic participation. To reach main sites of political action, prior to establishing California’s network of roadways, was limited to those living in urban areas. However, the Collier-Bums Act of 1947 changed this perceived inequity that favored the city, by increasing proportionality in representation from rural areas. This is reflected in the increased political activity between Collier and the citizens he represented reflected in his legislative papers. Collier’s own constituents celebrated with an increase in correspondence with their representative. The number of letters he received from his region nearly doubled throughout the decade following the passage of the Collier-Bums Highway Act of 1947. Many of these letters included resolutions from local authorities regarding new route adoption, the nomination of roads into the

233 Randolph Collier, “Correspondences From Constituents,” The Highway Files, 1939-1971, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA. This file includes copies of series of letters and postcards sent to the Office of Randolph Collier from the counties he represented. Included as well are several responses from his office, many of these facsimiles written in Collier’s own hand. Unfortunately, because of the condition of the documents and the writing across many, it is difficult to discern the names of the authors of these correspondences, and many are almost illegible. Further, by collecting them into a single file, the California State Archives organizes these letters into one group, as opposed to differentiating among authors. For this reason, and for the purpose of citation, the correspondences to and from Randolph Collier by his constituents are noted as one file.

234 Collier and Burns, 1-3.

235 Collier, “Correspondences From Constituents.”

236 Ibid.

237 Ibid.
state’s highway system, and initiatives. These documents attest to the flourishing of democratic participation in the political process. Inequity and disproportionate representation were no longer the status quo – change was possible within the existing state government, as spearheaded by Randolph Collier.

The Collier-Bums Act of 1947 provided physical unity throughout the state in the form of transportation and the possibility for equal participation at the centers of political, economic, and cultural power. With developing roads of concrete and compressed gravel, not just oiled dirt roads and crushed stone with the occasional cement passage, motorists could travel freely and unhindered throughout the state. In a very literal sense, Randolph Collier unified the state of California by improving and centralizing its roadways, creating a network throughout California. The amendment of the act, culminating in the passage of the California Highway Act of 1953, also sponsored by Collier, served as a national model for infrastructure development and maintenance, as county access roads and rural paths were progressively replaced with stretches of pavement allowing for freer access and equitable disbursement and development. Six

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239 Zettel, Conclusions.

240 Ibid.


242 Randolph Collier, “Council of State Governments (1954-1968),” Highway and Transportation Files, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA. This amendment and
years later, in 1959, the California State Legislature amended the act, establishing the California Freeway and Expressway system, heralded throughout the state and the nation as a progressive platform for proportionate development, economically and politically.\textsuperscript{243}

The letters to Randolph Collier demonstrate an outpouring of support, especially for local resolutions and initiatives.\textsuperscript{244} However, without a response from the state legislature, these acts of political awareness could easily have been disregarded. Many of these resolutions provided accounts of local roadway conditions, including maintenance, installation of guardrails, snow removal, and other important information.\textsuperscript{245} The Department of Highways responded, and these maintenance issues were handled effectively and efficiently, as part of the new, more proportionate plan provided for by the Collier-Burns Highway Act of 1947.\textsuperscript{246} The support for local efforts and local politics demonstrated the responsiveness of the state of California, now willing to attend to even its most disparate constituent populations.\textsuperscript{247}

Collier may not have set out to be remembered as “the Father of the California Highway System,” but on the occasion when his name appears in surveys of the history the amendments of 1959 were made possible through the position of Randolph Collier continuing as the chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee.

\textsuperscript{243} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{244} Collier, “Correspondences From Constituents.”

\textsuperscript{245} Collier, “Resolutions from Local Authorities.”

\textsuperscript{246} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{247} Zettel, 15.
of California and of the modern western United States, that is how he is most often referred in the historical record. In 1963, the state of California dedicated the construction of a new, safer tunnel along the main thoroughfare running east and west on Highway 199, mainly through Del Norte County, in his honor.

The tunnel ran through the snowy passes that branched off the Sierra Nevada mountain range. The previous roadway, perpetually hazardous to motorists and truckers, consisted mainly of oiled dirt roads with occasional pavement markings running along the gusty and unstable summit peaks, sliding through 128 hairpin turns and constant changes in gradation and slope. Under normal climate conditions, by late December, the roads would effectively close until the middle of February. In exceptionally snowy winters, the roadway might be impassable for even longer stretches of time, proving an impasse for transportation running between the Pacific Coast and Nevada.

However, this new tunnel provided a safer alternative, as it ran through the mountain passes, outmoding the necessity for hairpin turns and the dangerous summit passes, allowing freedom of movement for trucks and passenger vehicles even in the snowiest weather. The Randolph Collier Tunnel provided the first direct route from

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248 Collier, “Biographical Data,” Subject Folder 2. A cursory search for Randolph Collier in the California State Archives and collegiate library search systems finds a plethora of resources regarding the interstate system.

249 Ibid.

250 Collier, “The Oregon Tunnel,” Subject Folder 2.

251 Ibid.
northwestern Nevada to the Pacific Ocean. It honored its namesake, the father of the California Highway system.\textsuperscript{253}

It is interesting to note that the federal interstate highway system is historically given credit for uniting disparate regions through the roadway network established and developed in the early through mid-1950s, usually recorded as starting in 1956.\textsuperscript{254} However, Collier’s proposal was introduced and implemented beginning in 1947, predating the national system. In surveys of the history of road development and the post-World War II population spread throughout the United States, Collier’s name is often omitted.\textsuperscript{255} By comparing these secondary sources with available primary sources and the California Department of Transportation’s history, these documents seem to suggest that Collier’s plan is the model upon which the national interstate system is based, though he receives limited accolades for such a proposition. While many secondary sources share credit with a variety of individuals, if this assertion were proven

\textsuperscript{252} Collier, “The Oregon Tunnel,” Highway and Transportation Files.

\textsuperscript{253} Ibid.


true, this would make him the father of not only California’s highway system, but the mind behind the entire national interstate network of travel and communication.\textsuperscript{256} Even though Collier is well-recognized for his role in creating California’s modern roadway system, his work on local issues is often overshadowed by the grandeur of the Collier-Burns Highway Act of 1947.\textsuperscript{257}

Through his legislative actions, Senator Randolph Collier demonstrated his tie to the State of Jefferson, a movement that sought to obtain for the people acknowledgement of their political participation.\textsuperscript{258} It is ironic then, that this same man, the political voice and legacy of the 1941 movement, created legislative measures which effectively unified the state of California regionally, politically, and economically, in the process he centralized the power of governance and legislation.\textsuperscript{259}

The State of Jefferson movement demonstrated that a rift existed between urban and rural regions, between under-represented communities and economically developed areas, and that the states of California and Oregon recognized only certain voices.\textsuperscript{260} These separatists believed that American democracy required that their perspectives be weighed equally with these more economically developed communities. As California and Oregon accepted their taxes paid in exchange for citizenship, and then ignored their

\textsuperscript{256} California Department of Transportation, Origins.

\textsuperscript{257} Ibid.; Collier, Subject Folder 2; Lewis, 121; Whitman, 69.

\textsuperscript{258} Editor, “Inaugural Speeches,” 1.

\textsuperscript{259} Collier, \textit{Legislative Summaries}, Author Bill Files 1939-1947.

\textsuperscript{260} Editor, “Inaugural Speeches,” 1.
demands, they sought to create their own state that would respond to their own needs. When the movement was abandoned, the internal divisions remained within California, and the problem remained unresolved.\textsuperscript{261}

However, Randolph Collier, as a State Senator, authored bills designed to narrow this gap. The contentious issue, as Collier perceived it, was that a disparity existed, and that the gap produced acute economic and political inequities. For this reason, the values espoused by the State of Jefferson, most notably the responsibility of representatives to serve their constituents and of governments to serve their populace, maintained that change was necessary, when all routes of action had been exhausted, through separation and through the proposal to form a new state.\textsuperscript{262}

Collier achieved the first steps towards political and economic parity by promoting the commoditization of rural production in a free market system. As production continued to grow, roads proved invaluable as a means for production and development, so his 1947 Highway Act proportionately disbursed funds and maintenance throughout the state.\textsuperscript{263} Collier’s political ambitions, stemming from his participation in the State of Jefferson movement favored equity, regardless of location, economics, demographics, or other distinguishing feature.

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\textsuperscript{261} Ibid.; Collier and Burns, 2; Zettel, 1-3.
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\textsuperscript{262} Collier, \textit{Legislative Summaries}, Author Bill Files 1939-1947.
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\textsuperscript{263} Collier, “Senate Bill 5x,” Author Bill File 1947; Collier, “Findings of the Joint Fact-Finding Committee,” 3-9.
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The democratic idealism of equal representation defined and shaped the State of Jefferson movement. When the movement's goals were set aside to support the war effort, the philosophical goals of a responsive, responsible state persisted. Collier's constituency believed in the democratic process and their importance as participatory members of the State of California and the United States itself could no longer be overlooked, or prioritized by location.

Senator Randolph Collier represented the living legacy of the State of Jefferson. After 1941, throughout the tenure of his political career until he retired from office in 1972 he continued to fight for representation that provided political, economic, and social parity, those fundamental tenets of democracy that all citizens demanded and deserved. In an interview a year before he died recorded in the California Department of Transportation archives, he warmly reminisced about the State of Jefferson movement:

Four or five northern California counties and four or five southwest Oregon counties thought that Sacramento and Salem had forgotten them on the road problem and the people up there became extremely interested in this new State... I was supposed to have been Governor of it, the State of Jefferson.  

Collier continued to work on highway transportation issues through a long political career that spanned from his election in the Jeffersonian counties of Northern

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264 Senator Randolph Collier, interviewed by Francis Hveem, 1980, *Highway Recollections Series*, CalTrans Transportation Library and History Center, 1-2. It is clear that the conflict inherent in the situation was of paramount concern to him. He believed in representing his constituents, those people who voted him in to office to represent them in Sacramento. Clearly, he had every intention of doing that job. However, after three years of being stymied, and clearly his constituents had formulated a plan to obtain the representation that they believed they were owed, he acted to continue to represent them.
California in 1938 until 1976. Like most rural westerners, he was a Republican, but in 1959 he filed to change parties from Republican to Democrat, when the practice of cross filing was abolished. One of the first to congratulate him on his new affiliation was Senator John Kennedy, who later as president offered to appoint him to the Federal Roads Commission. Collier demurred and continued to serve the region that almost became the State of Jefferson, winning four more elections as a Democrat before losing to a Republican newcomer in 1976.

Collier passed away in Sacramento in 1983. He is fondly remembered as a man of the people in Yreka. At the corner of Lane and Fourth Streets outside City Hall sits a bronzed figure on a park bench studying his papers spread out beside him: it is a monument to Randolph Collier, the father of the California Highway system, an original Jefferson Statesman, the one who created the material basis for the development of equal regional representation, whose dedication to his constituents remembered the ideals expressed by the State of Jefferson movement.

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Collier, Subject Files, 1959.
Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS

Once the United States entered World War II, most Americans, and subsequently historians, forgot the potential forty-ninth State of Jefferson. For them, the ideals and goals of Jefferson did not matter, overshadowed by the context of World War II. Though historians may have relegated the State of Jefferson to a footnote specifying a limited time and remote place; those citizens of the State of Jefferson had not faltered and their belief in achieving democratic parity grew and thrived.

Today, as they near Yreka, drivers traveling along Interstate 5 in Siskiyou County are informed that they have entered another state when they see the barn. In 1997, a local man, Brian Helsaple, and his nephew erected a large barn of wood and aluminum to cover the straw and hay bales stored within; they also painted in large black letters so every passerby can read clearly: “State of Jefferson.”

266 Road markers and signs of the State of Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, banners for the State of Jefferson Festival, and an advertisement for the locally run website confirm the existence of such a state. The radio dial has a National Public Radio station appropriately called Jefferson Public Radio. But no map of California or the United States shows travelers the existence of such a state. As drivers speed past this barn, the signs, and the officially celebrated artistically

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welded steel and iron cows that dot the hillside, the question lingers, “What is the State of Jefferson?”

Road signs, similar to other historical landmark placards along the interstate, advertise the State of Jefferson. However, the museum commemorating the State of Jefferson movement, hosted at the Yreka Chamber of Commerce Information Building is harder to find. The concrete building does not resemble a museum proudly bearing the history of a U.S. state. Outside the entrance, a long, steel flagpole flies the American flag, and just below it, a rectangular green flag adorned with a gold oval and two X’s in the middle – the official flag of the State of Jefferson.

Inside is a self-guided tour through a single room separated into three distinct sections with newspaper clippings, papers, assorted pictures, and a movie reel playing in a loop in the far corner. At first glance, many of the images have no caption save for an accompanying newspaper article, suggesting that the State of Jefferson’s ties to the media are, or at least were, a significant aspect for the movement. The museum exhibits pictures, newspaper clippings, and newsreels from the 1941 revolution. Also on display is a browning copy of the Proclamation of Independence. This conceptualization of a smaller, more democratic state is further supported by an image of the state’s official flag with the two X’s. These letters represent the dissatisfaction of the region, the X’s symbolizing how the communities were “double crossed” by those unresponsive

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267 Yreka Chamber of Commerce Information, Yreka, CA.

268 “State Flag,” Yreka Chamber of Commerce Information, Yreka, CA.

269 Yreka Chamber of Commerce Information, Yreka, CA.
representatives elected to serve their constituents’ needs, yet who neglected to adequately do so.\textsuperscript{270}

Other pictures of the participants remain in this separatist movement.\textsuperscript{271} Many remain anonymous, suggesting either a distinct recalcitrance to be identified to photographers, largely media representatives from Sacramento or San Francisco, in the same spirit that the sentries who distributed the proclamation to drivers also wished to remain anonymous. The museum itself offers limited interpretation of the relationship between individuals and their community, and it says little about the interaction of the media reporting on the movement. When asked if they really meant it, the museum’s aging curator in classical State of Jefferson wariness of outsiders refusing to give his name, exclaimed, perhaps with some exaggeration, “They sure as hell did and we’d do it again today in a heartbeat.”\textsuperscript{272} However, two men that appear throughout many of the pictures are named – Gilbert Gable, the mayor of Port Orford, Oregon, and Judge John Childs, a judge from neighboring Crescent City in Del Norte County, who would become the first and only (so far) governor of the State of Jefferson. In these pictures, they generally appear together and are usually speaking before a crowd, waving American or State of Jefferson flags or brandishing the Proclamation of Independence.\textsuperscript{273} These two

\textsuperscript{270} “State Flag,” State of Jefferson Museum.

\textsuperscript{271} State of Jefferson Museum.

\textsuperscript{272} Ibid.; Interview with curator, March 12, 2009, transcript in the hand of the author.

\textsuperscript{273} Ibid.
men seem to serve an important purpose, though the museum does not explicitly describe their role. Again, the museum offers limited analysis, simply shows the images from 1941 as they were taken.

Along the far wall of the museum display is a series of newspaper articles from the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Siskiyou Daily News* chronologically describing the events of 1941, with specific events highlighted, such as the road blockade, several influential speeches by Mayor Gable and Judge Childs, and the end of the movement in December of 1941.\(^{274}\) The museum seems to argue that the movement self-selected its own end as the counties decided not to secede from California and Oregon to support the burgeoning war effort, effectively writing the State of Jefferson into failure. This short timeline argues that the goals and ambitions of the State of Jefferson were abandoned and failed because of the outbreak of World War II, although the museum does not offer any interpretation more than a vague suggestion of tangible, economic, and possible democratic objectives.\(^{275}\)

The museum celebrates Gable and Childs, joined by Senator Randolph Collier, as organizers of a bold and daring strike against the complacency and perceived unequal representation by California and Oregon.\(^{276}\) They energized a community all but forgotten by their states. As part of this historical memory, these men unified a disparate rural population, and provided them with an optimistic vision for the future. Change was

\(^{274}\) Ibid.

\(^{275}\) Ibid.

\(^{276}\) Ibid.
possible, though not through adhering to the status quo offered by California and Oregon.277 A radical alternative was proposed: the new State of Jefferson. The schismatic state would be indebted to its democratic roots, endowed with its authority by the population. California and Oregon were too large; they could afford to ignore their rural constituencies. Jefferson arguably would not. The public figures of Childs, Gable, and Collier remind any visitor of the glorious effort to accomplish the practical and philosophical ambitions of a responsive, democratic state.278

Memory of the State of Jefferson exists outside of any museum. Fifty-seven years after the 1941 Thursday rebellion of the State of Jefferson, in 1998, two men walked proudly, heads held high, along the same stretch of highway. They wore jeans, tattered flannel shirts, work boots, and cloth hats, the same garb their predecessors donned in their blockade of the highway.279 But this was neither a struggle, nor a fight for statehood. This was a celebration! The two men carried a long, forest green banner bearing the state flag of the State of Jefferson that never came to be officially recognized.280 This flag, similar to the one waving in front of the museum, served as a reminder of the democratic tradition and history of the State of Jefferson.281

277 Ibid.
278 Ibid.
280 Ibid.
Behind the standard bearers, another flag proudly waved from a pole on the side of a pickup truck in the autumn breeze: the flag of the United States of America, a tribute to the patriotic dedication of the State of Jefferson to the country during a time of national crisis, World War II.\footnote{Bowen, “State of Jefferson re-enactment,” photograph.} The parade route in 1998 continued with a long procession of trucks, wagons, horses, and citizens, all cheering, many just revelers loudly clamoring down the highway, celebrating the memory of the State of Jefferson rebellion.\footnote{Tickner, \textit{The State of Jefferson}, 123.} Every single member of the parade, and even the crowded audience that applauded, carried the Proclamation of Independence, reprinted with permission from the \textit{Siskiyou Daily News}, the newspaper which ran official stories during the 1941 separation movement.\footnote{State of Jefferson Museum.} Many citizens that supported the movement in 1941 believed strongly in the document as a reminder of the democratic spirit of pioneering independence that thrived in the State of Jefferson, the proposed alternative that would respond to its constituents.\footnote{Ibid.} For many participating in the fifty-seventh anniversary celebration, these same fundamental tenets still held true. The cheering crowds reflected a persistent belief in the optimism and possibility for change and improvement upon an unresponsive state government.

This celebration existed as a historical site of memory: the heroic tradition of western rebellion in the region, and the impact and importance of local history on
individuals, families, communities, states, and the larger nation as a whole. Though the State of Jefferson came to be regarded as a footnote in history, to these citizens who still proudly waved the Double X standard alongside the Stars and Stripes, it served as a reminder of the belief in growing a responsive, democratically mandated state that would equitably attend to the citizens it claimed to represent. This legacy of the State of Jefferson is presented as a means of finding solutions to perceived inequities by breaking free from an overburdened bureaucracy.

The State of Jefferson’s influence may not have persisted directly in name, but its belief in democratic idealism, independence, and self-governance resurfaced in 1978. That year, Assemblyman Barry Keene, representing these same northern counties, perceived a distinct division between his rural communities and the state of California; as well as between northern and southern California in representation before the state for economic assistance. Assemblyman Keene proposed the creation of a new state, Alta California, splitting the current state in half along regional lines. Largely supported by his constituents in northern California, Keene argued for the equitable distribution of

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287 Tickner, 123.


289 Assemblyman Keene, “Assembly Bill 2929,” Author Bill File 1977-1978, California State Archives, Sacramento, CA. Accompanied with Assembly Bill 2929, Barry Keene authored “Assembly Joint Resolution 77,” a memorandum to the President and Congress of the United States “expressing its consent to the formation of a new state from the State of California,” as per the United States Constitution, Section 3, Article IV.
water and fair taxation. Keene maintained that southern California misused northern California’s environmental resources with impunity.²⁹⁰ Again, California’s state government intervened, restricting these regional communities’ claims of self-governance. Keene, as the representative of Alta California, like the State of Jefferson, aimed to address perceived inequalities by downsizing an overburdened bureaucracy and creating a new political entity that would be directly responsible to its constituents.²⁹¹

The region of northern California that still calls itself the State of Jefferson, less as a political demand for separatism, honors the historical tradition and democratic idealism of its predecessors.²⁹² Moreover, the fiery independence and inherent distrust of large government seems to remain a common characteristic among residents of the modern State of Jefferson.²⁹³ As recently as 2000, the state government of California passed legislation to restrict land use to preserve endangered Coho salmon, thereby limiting the use and sale of land in northern California.²⁹⁴ This legislation discouraged tourism, seized lands, and required certain businesses curtail their practices.²⁹⁵ Naturally,

²⁹⁰ Michael DiLeo and Eleanor Smith, Two Californias: The Truth About the Split-State Movement (Covelo, CA: Island Press, 1983).


²⁹³ Ibid.

in a region that is economically stagnant, this governmental intervention once again fostered distrust within the State of Jefferson. This current fight over land use restriction forced on the people by a distant legislature, along with the local traditions of distrusting government is another example of the longevity of the State of Jefferson’s ideals. 296 Local citizens argue and maintain that the state is attempting to define their region as backwards, forcing rural citizens into cities, instead of allowing the populace to continue living as they choose, freer from government intervention. 297

The fight over political equity in California continues. As legislative action confronts historical traditions of individualism, the demand for localized authority and independence from aggressive government persists in the State of Jefferson in the twenty-first century. 298 As long as this conflict exists, or is believed to exist, the State of Jefferson will remain a symbol and legacy for those who distrust the geographically distant yet demanding state bureaucracy, and favor instead downsizing the state to a more responsive, responsible size. The State of Jefferson continues to exist as the answer to the perception of inequities and the disparity of power in state government. 299 In this way, the State of Jefferson can never truly fail, for it is a persistent state of mind, a

295 Ibid.


conscious political philosophy providing the option for a state legitimized, mandated, and responsible to its citizens.\(^\text{300}\)

These exhibits, ceremonies, and political actions celebrate this democratic idealism, suggesting current similar sentiments among the population of Jefferson. However, a significant recalcitrance exists in discussing such concepts. As Stanton Delaplane noted in 1941, the citizens of Jefferson are reluctant to trust outsiders, especially those in a position of power. This lack of willingness to discuss their history and legacy makes analysis of the State of Jefferson difficult. The Yreka Chamber of Commerce Information Center and the Siskiyou County museum may serve as the physical site of historical memory. But they exist as the echo of the philosophical ideas to remind those citizens who will remain vigilant.

Driving along the sunny, windswept hills of farmland that comprise northern California, southern Oregon, and the optimistic State of Jefferson, a large wood and steel structure rises just on the side of the highway. It is a barn, and proudly emblazoned across its roof is "State of Jefferson." The barn, constructed fifty years after the movement is a testament to the living history of the area. It begs an answer to a question that can be found, but not in any book, article, library, archive, or website.

What is the State of Jefferson?

\(^{300}\) Ibid.
It is more than a place. It is a political movement that continues today, originating in response to inequities in economics and political representation – one that will never die.
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