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A study of the proposals to divide the state of California from 1860 to 1952

Roberta Blakley McDow
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A STUDY OF THE PROPOSALS TO DIVIDE THE STATE OF
CALIFORNIA FROM 1860 TO 1952

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Political Science
College of the Pacific

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Roberta Blakley McDow
June 1952

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CHAPTER I

DIVISION PROPOSALS BEFORE 1860

The California of today is a union of complexities. It is a geographic giant composed of startling climatic and topographic variations. It is an economic elasticity satisfying the differing demands of agriculture, industry, and commerce. It is a social syncretism uniting a vast assortment of living patterns. With all of these diversities, California is a single, sovereign state.

Within the state, however, there are two obvious sections: Northern and Southern California.¹ They are separated, theoretically, by the Tehachapi mountain range, which runs east and west, on a line with the city of Santa Barbara. So pronounced is this sectionalism that Carey McWilliams said of it, "While other states have an east-west or a north-south division, in no state in the Union is the schism as sharp as in California."² Even more forceful is the comment by John Gunther, "California is . . . two states; the dividing line is the Tehachapi"³

¹ McWilliams suggests that the practice of capitalizing the "s" in Southern California was well established by 1920. Carey McWilliams, Southern California Country (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), p. 3.

² Ibid., p. 4.

³ John Gunther, Inside U. S. A. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 3-4.

The present distinction between the two areas is not based only upon geographic factors, but also upon the duplication of many economic and social institutions. For example: California not only supports the state University of California at Berkeley, but also maintains a separate and virtually autonomous branch at Los Angeles.⁴ Penal institutions, religious, social, fraternal and commercial organizations also recognize the boundary that is the Tehachapi range.⁵

The distinction between Northern and Southern California, although it is more highly developed, is not the only manifestation of sectionalism within the state. Other geographic areas have also developed varying degrees of sectionalism. The subsequent rivalry of two or more localities has frequently intensified to become a movement to divide California. William Henry Ellison,⁶ in his monograph "The Movement for State Division in California, 1849-1860," presents a thorough study of this problem during the first decade of California's statehood. It is the purpose of this study to record the proposals for political division from 1860 to 1952.

To understand the division attempts after 1860, it is

⁴ Ibid., p. 4

⁵ McWilliams, op. cit., p. 4.

⁶ William Henry Ellison, "The Movement for State Division in California, 1849-1860," Reprint from The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association, Vol. XVII, No. 2 (October, 1913), pp. 101-139.

appropriate to summarize the agitations prior to this period.

I. DIVISION BEFORE THE AMERICAN CONQUEST

While European civilization was being transplanted on the Atlantic seaboard of the New World, the Pacific Coast region was being opened by the sons of Spain. The Spanish recognized from the beginning the geographic boundaries of the new land naming the great peninsula Baja California, or Lower California, and the region above it Alta or Upper California. Together these sections formed Las Californias or the two Californias. When the Church began its missionary efforts in Las Californias, Alta California was designated as the Franciscan field of proselyting. Baja California became the domain of the Dominicans.⁷ Thus the first geographic division became the basis for the first, though nominal, cultural differentiation.

As Las Californias developed, the settlers capitalized on the most obvious of its resources, the fertility of the soil, and the Hispano-California culture flourished through pastoral and agricultural pursuits.⁸ Although the region was sparsely populated, cities began to grow. By the time Mexico controlled the territory, Monterey was ready to become the

⁷ Rockwell D. Hunt, "History of the California State Division Controversy," Annual Publications of the Historical Society of Southern California, Vol. XIII, Part I (Los Angeles, California: McBride Printing Company, 1924), p. 37.

⁸ Ellison, op. cit., p. 102.

capital. During the short Mexican regime the position of Monterey as seat of the government was challenged by San Diego and Los Angeles. Both contests for the capital developed into serious conflicts between the North and the South, and were subsequently the first agitations for political division.⁹ As it became evident that the United States was expanding to California, the rivalry between the two sections subsided so that all efforts could be brought to bear against the conqueror.

II. THE GREAT DIVISION DECADE, 1849-1859

Soon after the American Conquest, the question of the political division of California reappeared. The Hispano-Californians, centered in Southern California, were now outnumbered by the American gold seekers in the North. When the Constitutional Convention met in 1849, the shift of population from the South to the North was so great that the representation of the Southern region was only one-fourth of the total delegation.¹⁰ The old established culture of the South was aware of the threat to its existence, and the Southern delegates were prepared to fight against the inclusion of their homes in the new state proposed by the North.

Two principal objections to state government were

⁹ Hunt, op. cit., pp. 37-38.

¹⁰ Ellison, op. cit., pp. 102-103.

presented by the Southern delegation. First, the proposed method of representation would be unfair because it ignored the permanence of the Southern population as differentiated from the transitoriness of the population in the North. Second, the burden of taxation would fall more heavily upon the land-owning South than upon the land-leasing North. The solution to these problems, the Southerners contended, was to sever the territory at a line west from San Luis Obispo giving the North the state government it desired and the South a territorial government which would more adequately satisfy its needs.¹¹ The majority prevailed, however, and the convention continued to prepare a constitution for a state government which would include all of California.

Although the Southern delegates joined in the work of the convention, the South had not given up its struggle against state government. In 1850 a meeting was held in Los Angeles to sign a petition directed to Congress. The petition objected to the inclusion of the Southern region in the plans for admitting California into the Union. The reasons for the opposition were: first, the South was not acquainted with American institutions; second, the greater share of the expense of state government would be the responsibility of the Southern land owners; third, the extent of the territory was too large for one state; fourth, the small permanent

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 104-105.

population of the South would be dominated by the transitory population of the North; fifth, the distance to the capital would be burdensome and inconvenient for the Southern citizens. For these reasons, the petition concluded, that portion of California south of a line beginning in the Pacific Ocean and including San Luis Obispo should become the Territory of Southern California.¹² (See Figure 1, page 7)

When the question of admission was introduced in Congress, more thought was given to dividing California. Congress considered the division of California as part of the national slavery issue, although in California itself this issue was incidental.¹³ Consequently, an attempt was made to fix the southern boundary of the new state at thirty-six degrees, thirty minutes. The area south of the boundary was to become the Territory of Colorado. (See Figure 2, page 8) The Congressional proposal of division also failed, and California entered the Union with the boundaries that exist today.¹⁴

Statehood mellowed none of the sectionalism in California. The decade following admission was a period of unrest as the South attempted to free itself from the yoke of statehood that it shared with the North. In 1851 meetings were

¹² Ibid., pp. 105-107.

¹³ Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 107-110.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

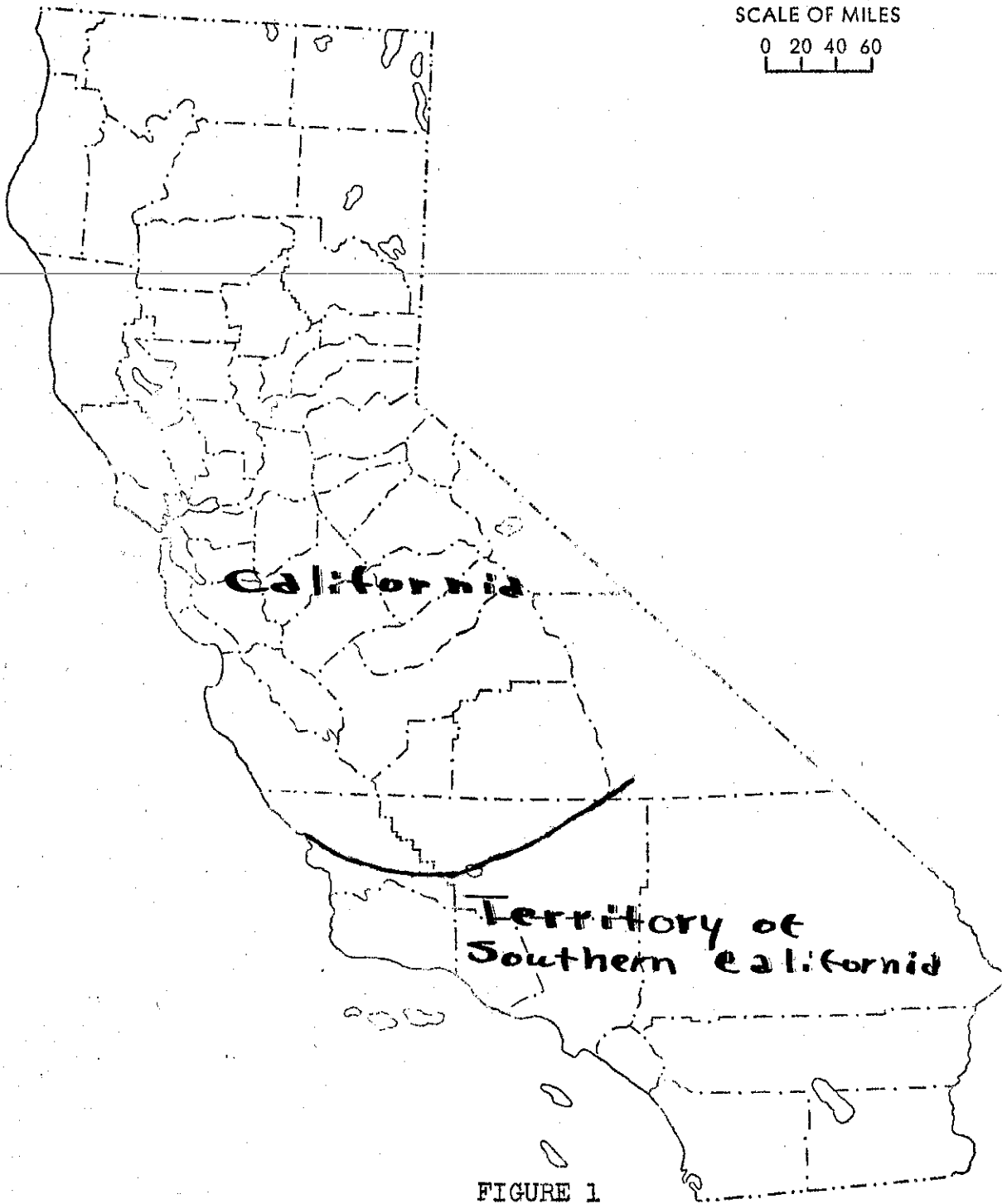
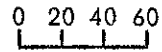


FIGURE 1

THE PROPOSED TERRITORY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, 1850
15 Owen C. Coy, A Guide to California History
(Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company, 1951), p. 55.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

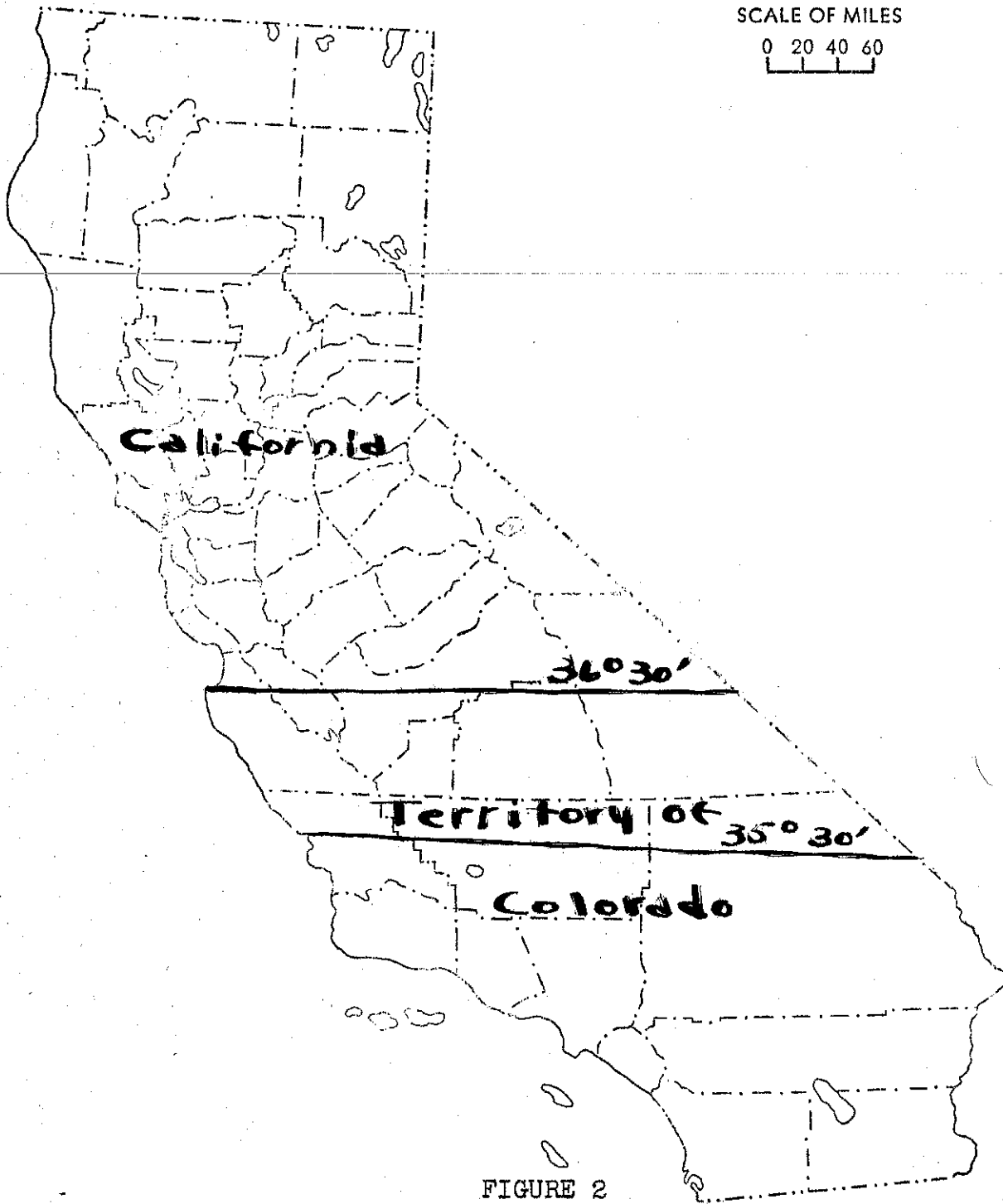
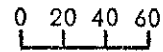


FIGURE 2

THE CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS FOR DIVISION, 1850
16 Coy, op. cit., p. 55.

held in San Diego, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara, at which the South reiterated its grievances against state government and renewed its pleas for division.¹⁷ (See Figure 3, page 10) By 1852 the problem reached the state legislature. Governor McDougal acknowledged before the legislature that the six Southern counties were taxed more heavily in proportion to their population than the Northern counties.¹⁸ A resolution was subsequently submitted to the Assembly to call a convention to revise the Constitution, but the resolution failed to pass the Senate.¹⁹

The following year, 1853, another bill was introduced in the Assembly to put before the electorate the question of calling a constitutional convention. Although the bill was not directly concerned with state division, it renewed the discussion of separation. Once again the old reasons for division were revived, with the problem of taxation leading the list of grievances. Those favoring state division also added a new argument. They suggested that division into two states would increase the representation of the Pacific Coast in Congress. It was also proposed that the southern, middle,

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 111-116.

¹⁸ Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, editor, History of California, Vol. IV (New York: The Century History Company, n. d.), p. 48.

¹⁹ Ellison, op. cit., pp. 119-120.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

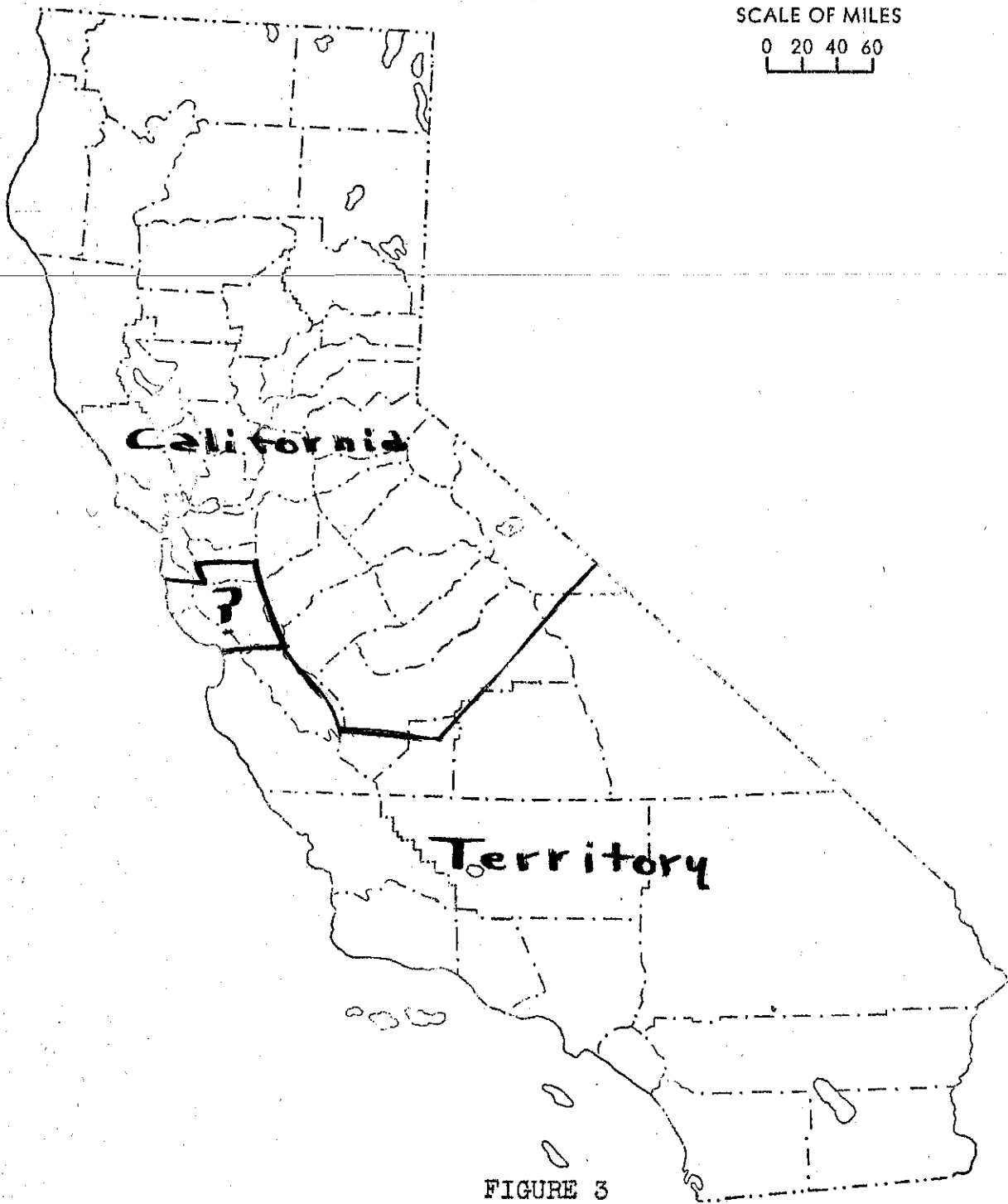
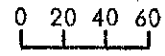


FIGURE 3

THE DIVISION OF CALIFORNIA PROPOSED AT SANTA BARBARA, 1851
20 Coy, op. cit., p. 55.

and northern portions of California should be autonomous; creating the new states of El Dorado, California, and Sacramento respectively. When the bill for calling a constitutional convention died, however, the division agitation soon subsided.²¹

From 1854 to 1858, division discussion continued. Proposals were made for the revision of the Constitution, and for the separation of California into two and three states.²² (See Figures 4 and 5, pages 12 and 13) These efforts also failed. It was not until 1859 that California's unity was seriously threatened.

Senator Andrés Pico, representing the counties of Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego, introduced a resolution at the legislature of 1858 to form a territory from that portion of the state south of parallel thirty-five degrees, forty-five minutes. His reasoning was essentially the same as that of division proponents through the years, emphasizing the geographic and the cultural differences of the two areas. The resolution was introduced too late in the session to be seriously considered, but it led the way for Pico's next effort.

The following year, 1859, Pico introduced another resolution in the Assembly which would create the Territory

²¹ Ibid., pp. 121-125.

²² Ibid., pp. 125-129.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

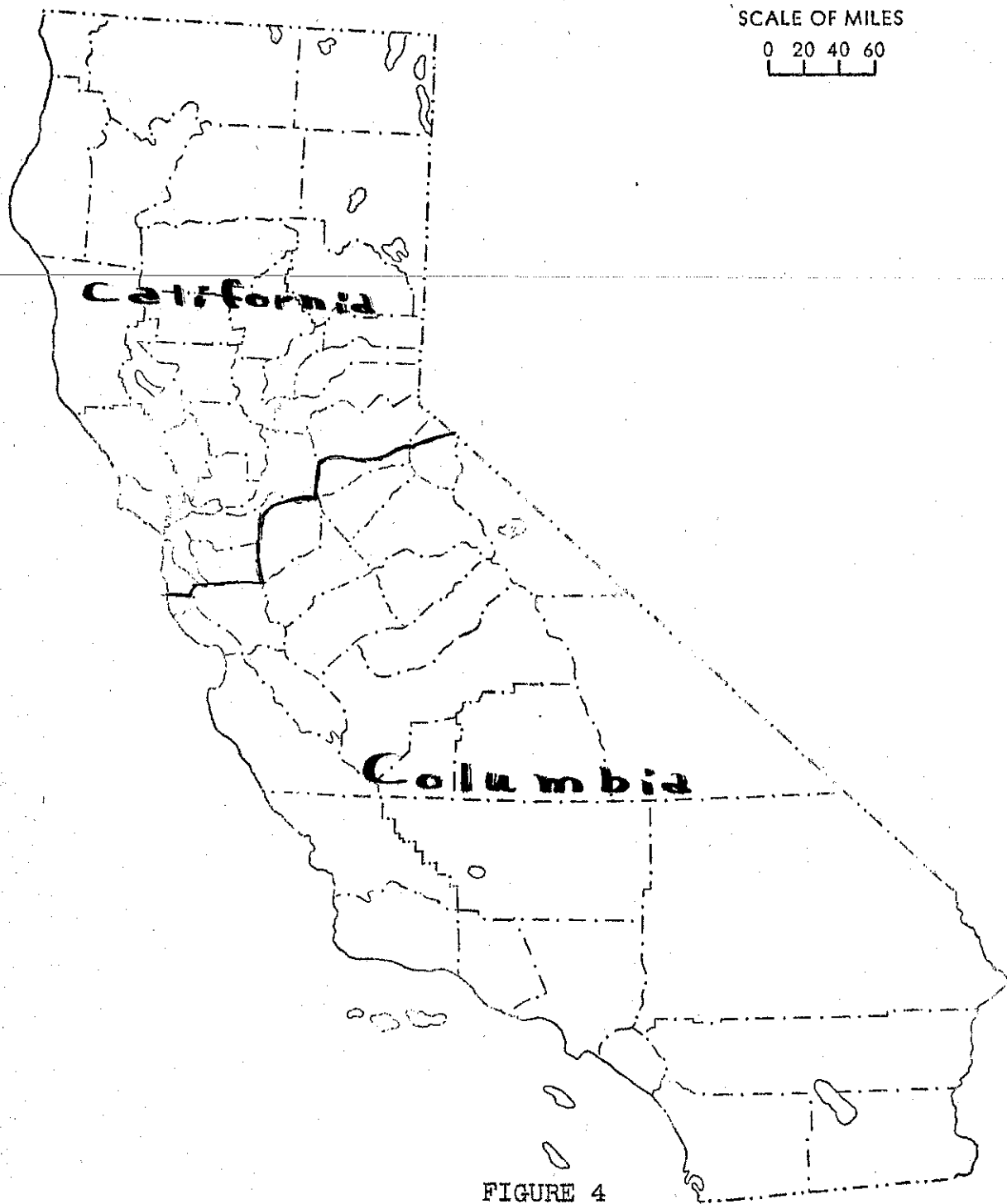
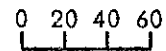


FIGURE 4

THE PROPOSED STATE OF COLUMBIA, 1855
23 Coy, op. cit., p. 56.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

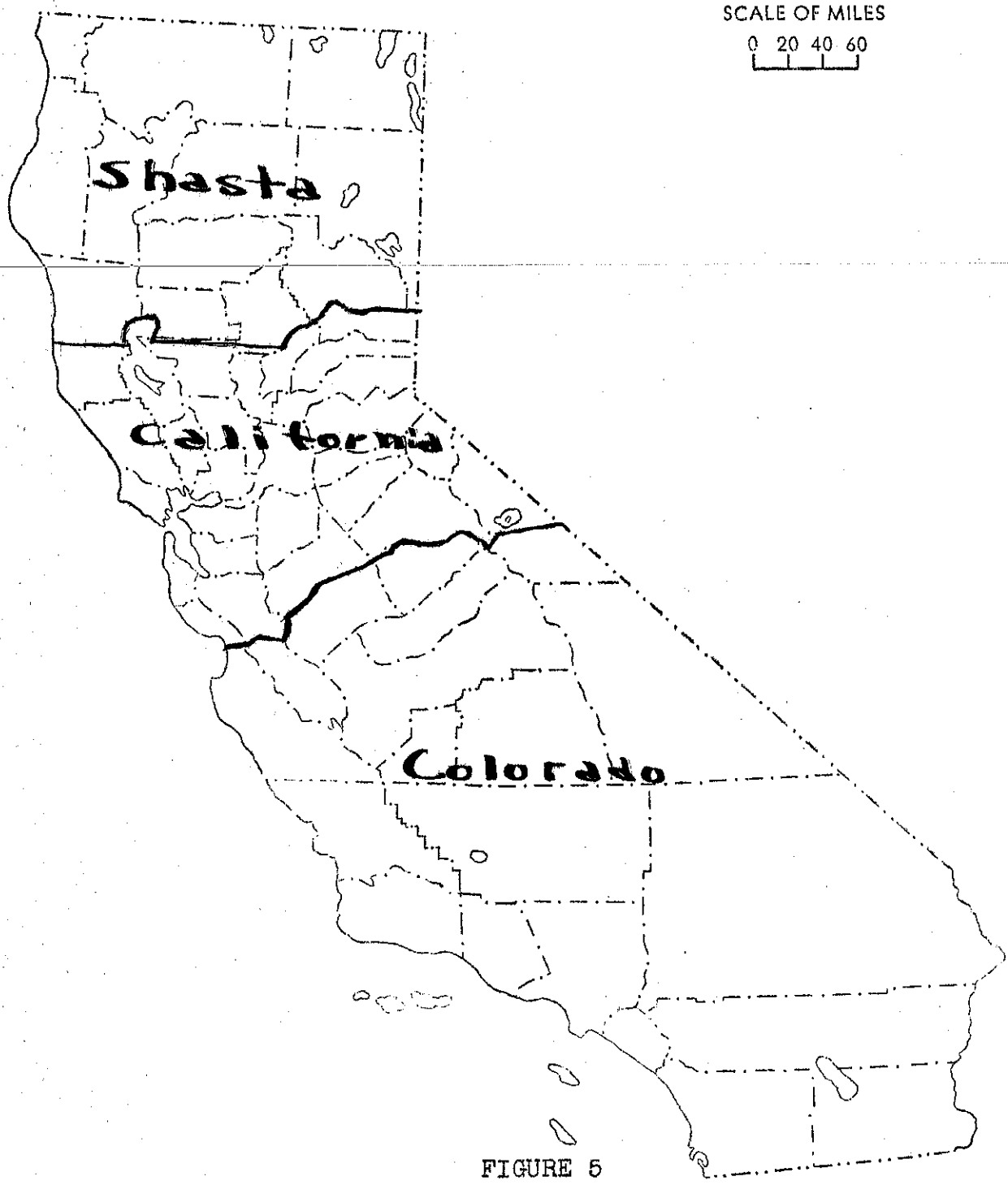
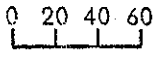


FIGURE 5

THE PROPOSED DIVISION OF CALIFORNIA, 1855
24 Coy, op. cit., p. 56.

of Colorado from the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Bernardino, and part of Buena Vista. (See Figure 6, page 15) The case for the South was similar to the one of the preceding year, but unlike the previous resolution, the Act of 1859 was successful. It was passed by both houses of the state legislature, and it was approved by the Governor. The approval of two-thirds of the electorate in the seceding counties was also necessary, and this, too, was obtained. Only the consent of Congress was needed before the law would become effective!²⁵ On the eve of the Civil War, however, Congressional action was not forthcoming.²⁶

While the plans of the South to withdraw from the state were proceeding so successfully, division agitation was spreading to the far north. Although the proposal of the counties in the far north may have been an attempt to halt the division activities in the South, the counties of Siskiyou, Del Norte, Klamath, Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta, Plumas, and Tehama were the center of a proposal to form a new state. Unlike the Southern movement, however, the Northern attempt for division made no appreciable progress.²⁷ (See figure 7, page 16)

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 129-133

²⁶ Robert Glass Cleland, From Wilderness to Empire, A History of California, 1542-1900 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), p. 301.

²⁷ Ellison, op. cit., pp. 133-134.

CALIFORNIA

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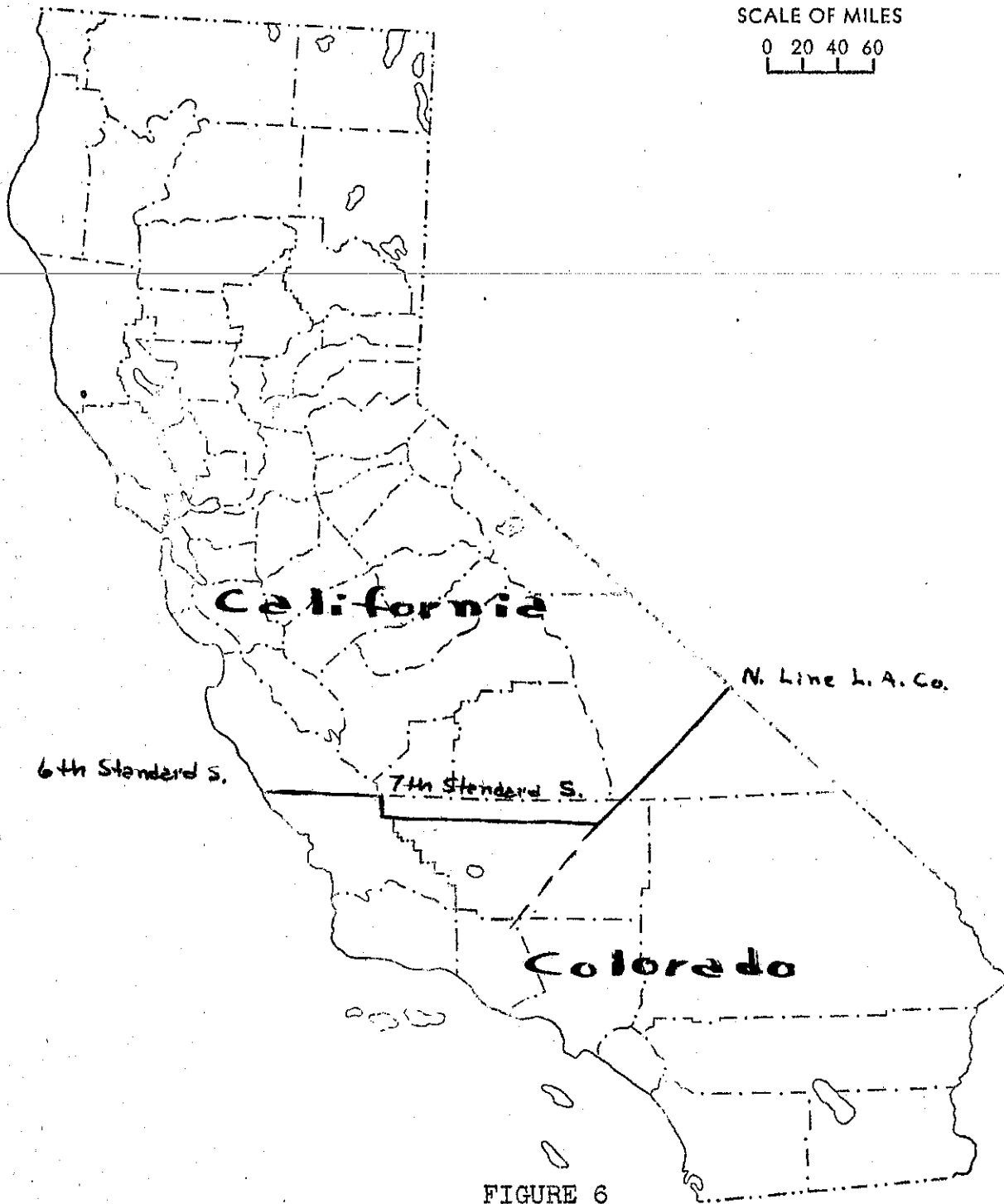
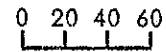


FIGURE 6

THE TERRITORY OF COLORADO PROPOSED BY THE ACT OF 1859
28 Coy, op. cit., p. 57.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

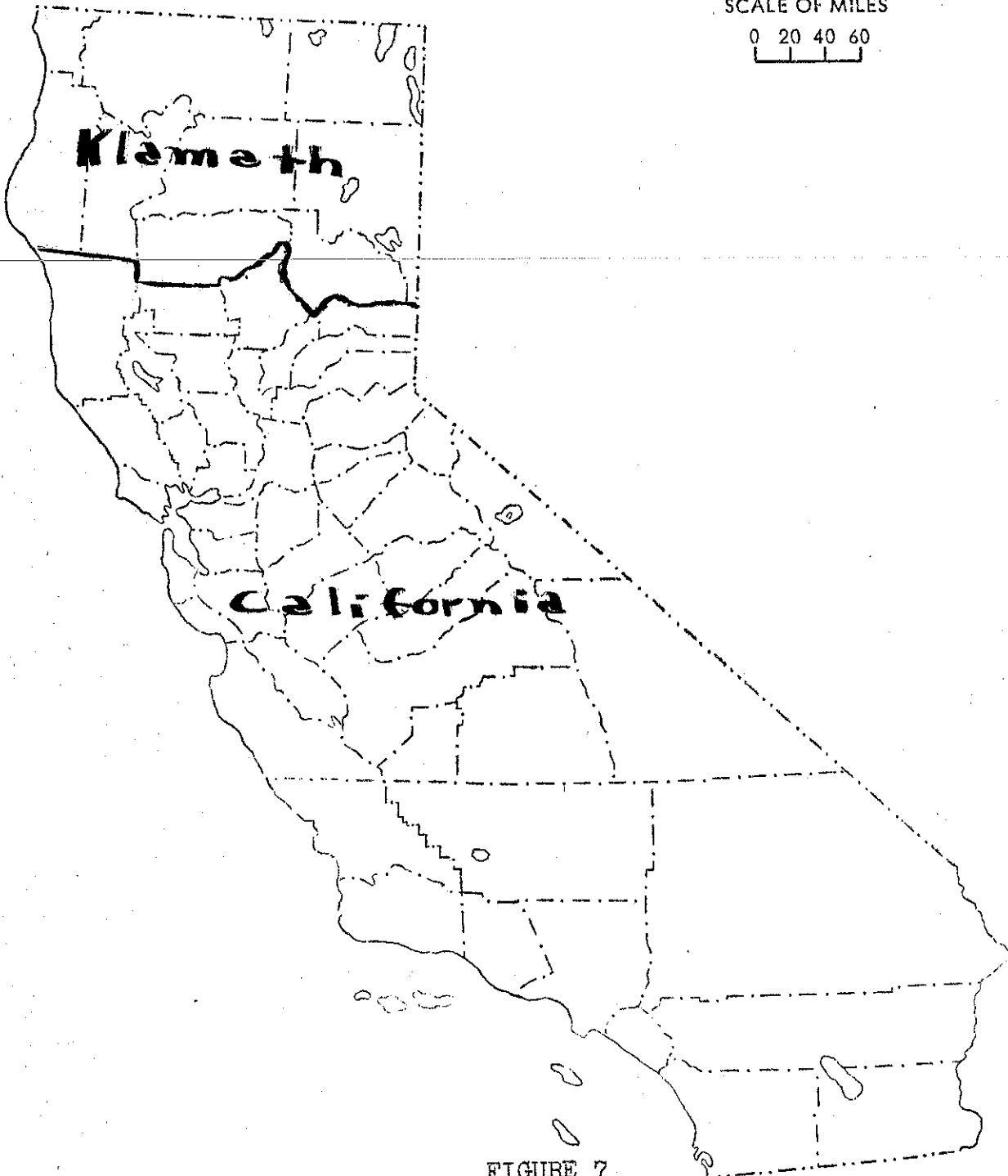
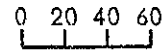


FIGURE 7

THE PROPOSED STATE OF KLAMATH, 1859
29 Coy, op. cit., p. 56.

CHAPTER II

TWO DECADES OF DIVISION DORMANCY, 1860-1880

The year 1860 marks the end of the most successful attempt to divide the state, and the beginning of a twenty-year period in which the subject of division was raised infrequently with very little popular support.

I. THE DEATH OF THE PICO ACT

Early in January, 1860, Governor Milton S. Latham sent to President James Buchanan a certified copy of the Act of 1859, a statement of the vote in the Southern counties, and his personal views on the question of division.¹ His evaluation of the situation was primarily concerned with the grievances of the South, the attitude of the people in the entire state, and the legal intricacies of the division action.² The latter was of considerable importance to Latham because he was also Senator-elect from California, and he might soon have to advocate or oppose the approval of the Act in the Senate. Years later the message of Latham to the President was to be interpreted both as a rejection and an endorsement

¹ Sacramento Daily Union, January 13, 1860.

² Milton S. Latham, "Communications of Governor Latham to the President of the United States" (California Political Pamphlets, Vol. VI), January 17, 1860.

of the division of the state.³

As the communication was on its way to Washington, D. C., the question of division was still an important subject of debate in the state legislature. Mr. Rodgers of San Francisco introduced a resolution to require California's Congressmen to exert their influence against the approval of the Act of 1859.⁴ The resolution was referred to the Federal Relations Committee which was also studying the Act of 1859. The committee found the Act to be valid and recommended the indefinite postponement of the Rodgers' bill. The minority report, however, questioned that the Act was constitutional and expedient.⁵ Several weeks later the Rodgers' bill was introduced as a special order of the day, and after considerable debate, the bill was referred back to the committee where no further action was taken.⁶ On March 1, when the

³ Cf.; Theodore H. Hittell, History of California, Vol. IV (San Francisco: N. J. Stone and Company, 1898), pp. 260-261.; Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California, 1860-1890, Vol. VII (San Francisco: The History Company, Publishers, 1890), p. 255.; Elijah A. Kennedy, The Contest for California in 1861. How Colonel E. D. Baker Saved the Pacific States to the Union (Boston and New York: Houghton and Mifflin Company, 1912), p. 46.; Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, editor, History of California, Vol. IV (New York: The Century History Company, n. d.), pp. 50-52.; Robert W. Bulla, "Division of California," from a paper read before the Sunset Club, Los Angeles, March 29, 1907.; John G. Downey in the Sacramento Daily Record Union, February 8, 1877.

⁴ Sacramento Daily Union, January 16, 1860.

⁵ Ibid., January 27, 1860.

⁶ Ibid., February 16, 1860.

Assembly upheld the Federal Relations Committee's report approving the Act of 1859, active opposition in the legislature terminated.⁷

In Congress, the Act of 1859 became one of the first casualties of the War Between the States, for the proposal to divide California was too similar to the growing crisis between the Northern and Southern states to be considered without suspicion, prejudice, or fear.⁸

II. DIVISION AND THE WAR

Just as the Civil War brought death to the Pico Act, so did it bring an end, temporarily, to active sectionalism in California. During the 1860's, the only action that seems to have occurred in the division controversy was of a military nature. In June, 1861, General Scott ordered General Sumner, "in concert with the naval commander on the Pacific Station," to prevent the success of rebel plans for "annexing Lower California to the so-called Southern Confederacy."⁹ Since the Southern portion of the state had emphatically denounced slavery, and it was far removed from the Confederacy, there was little cause for alarm. What sympathy there may have been for the Southern states was subdued by

⁷ Ellison, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

⁸ Cleland, op. cit., p. 301.

⁹ Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 215-216.

Union arms and Union loyalty.

Two years later the subject of division arose again, but only as an incidental issue in the state gubernatorial election. In August, 1863, John G. Downey, Democratic candidate for Governor, suggested that the severance of Virginia might revitalize the division enthusiasts in California. He formally stated his opposition to division primarily because it would add to the tax burden of the citizens of Southern California.¹⁰ Several years later, Downey reversed his stand on the division question. This was the period of the Civil War, however, and support of division would have been political suicide.

III. THE PREMATURE REVIVAL

Two of the strongest arguments opposing division ended with the Confederacy. Californians who demanded separation could no longer be charged with promoting slavery or wishing to join the Southern states. Not until 1877, however, did the division question reappear. In February former-Governor John G. Downey urged the people to renew the separation issue in a communication published by the Los Angeles Express. Since the Act of 1859 had never been repealed, Downey contended that division could be accomplished by Congressional approval of the Act. He suggested that Governor Latham had

¹⁰ Sacramento Daily Union, August 19, 1863.

opposed the Act of 1859, and his opposition had caused the death of the Act in Congress. Not only did Downey favor separation into two states, but he also predicted that California would become three independent states.¹¹ Downey's appeal to the people was too early, for it caused no apparent reaction.

When the Los Angeles Express published a letter from Judge Robert M. Widney later in 1877, a two-months debate began between the Northern and the Southern newspapers.

According to Widney, the Southern industries were unlike those in the North. The interests of these industries was not being facilitated by Northern control of the corporations. Further, the South needed greater appropriations to develop its harbors. A separate state government, Widney continued, would be more honest and economical, and it would enhance the possibility of a southern railroad terminus. To this the Daily Alta California of San Francisco, a traditional foe of state division,¹² suggested that Widney's arguments were drawn largely from the imagination. The Alta added that Los Angeles should not urge division at this time.¹³ The Los Angeles Express, however, followed Widney's letter with the

¹¹ Sacramento Daily Record Union, February 8, 1877.

¹² Josiah Royce, California, From the Conquest in 1846 to the Second Vigilance Committee in San Francisco (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), p. 487.

¹³ Daily Alta California^a [San Francisco], November 20, 1877.

observation that California's two sections were rapidly drifting apart, and that a separate state government would be advantageous to the South.¹⁴

The debate continued in the editorial columns of the newspapers. The Petaluma Argus, after summarizing the case for division, brought to the attention of its readers that dividing California could be contrary to the provisions for the admission of new states in the Constitution of the United States. Thus the Argus was one of the first to recognize the significance of Section Three, Article Four in the proposals to divide California.¹⁵ With no fuel to add to the fire, the division debate died as suddenly as it had begun. Only casually, when the proposal to remove the state capital from Sacramento was being considered in 1878 and 1879, did the question arise again in this decade.¹⁶

¹⁴ Sacramento Daily Record Union, November 24, 1877.

¹⁵ Ibid., December 8, 1877.

¹⁶ The Morning Call [San Francisco], March 19, 1893.

CHAPTER III

THE ISSUE AWAKENS, 1880-1907

After a comparatively uninterrupted repose of twenty years, the issue of division began to awaken in 1880. For the next twenty-seven years, separation was urged frequently. The attitude of the people, as indicated by the press, was divided, and public support was given to both sides of the issue. At no time during this period was the support of division sustained as it had been during the great division decade. Consequently, the issue rose and fell with little progress or continuity.

I. THE BEGINNING OF UNREST

Early in May, 1880, former-Governor John G. Downey raised the question of division again in a letter written to the Los Angeles Evening Express. Included with his letter was a copy of the Act of 1859, and a review of its approval twenty years before. Downey concluded that the only action necessary to create a separate state was the reenactment of the Act by Congress.¹ Stating his reasons for urging division, he said:

From the morning of our existence as a commonwealth, the southern counties of this state have been uneasy and restless under the lash of unequal taxation and the

¹ Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1921.

unequal distribution of the benefits derivable therefrom.²

The editors of both Northern and Southern California newspapers lost no time in choosing sides. Their alignment, however, did not always follow their geographic positions. For example: the Santa Barbara Press opposed state division because there seemed to be no universal sentiment for it even in Los Angeles. The Press added that in ten years, when the population of Southern California would be half a million, the question of division could be more profitably considered. Now, however, the time was not ripe.³

If the time was not ripe for division, it was for the expression of sectionalism. One of the principal causes of agitation during this period was the issue of riparian rights. The Southern irrigationists contended that the laws of the state were not suited to their problems, but to the needs of the Northern miners.⁴ The old arguments for division were also reviewed. Doctor Joseph P. Widney, in an article published in the Californian, asserted that the geographic, topographic, climatic, and commercial laws were all working

² Los Angeles Express, September 13, 1909.

³ Daily Alta California, May 18, 1880.

⁴ Charles Dwight Willard, The Herald's History of Los Angeles City (Los Angeles: Kingsley-Barnes and Neuner Company, Publishers, December, 1901), p. 342.

together for the separation of the state.⁵

II. THE MEETING AND ITS AFTERMATH

On February 1, 1921, a mass meeting was held in Los Angeles to discuss the improvement of Wilmington harbor.⁶ At the suggestion of Doctor Joseph P. Widney, the meeting soon turned to the topic of state division.⁷ Six prominent Southern Californians addressed the meeting: E. F. Spence, J. G. Estudillo, W. H. Perry, Judge A. B. Moffitt, former-Governor John G. Downey, and Doctor Widney.⁸

After some discussion of the division proposal, two committees were appointed to investigate the matter further. The six citizens who had addressed the meeting were appointed to the executive committee.⁹ Their duties were to confer with citizens in the other Southern counties, and to take necessary

⁵ Joseph P. Widney, "A Historical Sketch of the Movement for a Political Separation of the two Californias, Northern and Southern, under both the Spanish and American Regimes," Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, 1888-9, Vol. I (Los Angeles: Frank Cobler, "The Plain Printer," 1889), pp. 21-24.

⁶ James Miller Guinn, "How California Escaped State Division," Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, 1906, Vol. VI (Los Angeles: George Rice and Sons, 1906), p. 231.

⁷ Widney, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

⁸ Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1921.

⁹ Harris Newmark, Sixty Years in Southern California (third edition; Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930), p. 521.

action to continue the division activity.¹⁰ Nine attorneys were appointed as a legal committee to consider the validity of the Act of 1859.¹¹ Among those appointed were: Henry T. Hazard, Thomas A. Stephens, C. E. Thom, A. Brunson, S. C. Hubbell, George H. Smith, H. A. Barclay,¹² and Judge Robert M. Widney.¹³ The meeting ended enthusiastically with three cheers for the State of Southern California.¹⁴

Not everyone in Los Angeles was optimistic, however. The Los Angeles Herald, seeing no chance for organizing the new state at this time, suggested that the counties of Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Bernardino associate themselves with the Territory of Arizona.¹⁵ (See figure 8, page 27)

The Herald's skepticism found favor with the newspapers in the North. The Daily Alta California commended the Herald for its good judgment and common sense, adding that the demand for state division was limited to a few other Southern newspapers.¹⁶

In May, 1881, the movement gained new strength. The

10 Sacramento Daily Record Union, February 2, 1881.

11 Guinn, op. cit., p. 231

12 Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1921.

13 Newmark, op. cit., p. 521.

14 Sacramento Daily Record Union, February 2, 1881.

15 Daily Alta California, February 5, 1881.

16 Ibid., February 12, 1881.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

0 20 40 60



FIGURE 8

THE COUNTIES INCLUDED IN THE PROPOSED STATE OF CALIZONIA, 1881
17 Joseph Hayford Quire, "State Division in California," (unpublished manuscript in the California State Library, Sacramento, June, 1910).

legal committee appointed in February reported that the Act of 1859 was still in force,¹⁸ and the only remaining action was for Congress to admit the new state.¹⁹

Three months later the executive committee issued a circular letter to the Democratic and the Republican leaders in the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Kern, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego. The circular requested each county to appoint two delegates. The delegates, fourteen Republicans and fourteen Democrats, were to meet at a convention at Los Angeles in September. The purpose of the conference was to make preparations for the calling of a constitutional convention for the new state of Southern California.²⁰ (See Figure 9, page 29)

During these months of organized activity, the battle of the press continued. The San Diego Sun,²¹ the Ventura Free Press,²² the Bakersfield Californian, and the Visalia Daily,²³ were among the Southern newspapers which opposed division at this time. Typical of the reasoning of these Southern editors is the following comment from the Ventura

¹⁸ Sacramento Daily Record Union, May 27, 1881.

¹⁹ Los Angeles Times, April 17, 1921.

²⁰ Sacramento Daily Record Union, August 18, 1881.

²¹ Ibid., August 4, 1881.

²² The Daily Bee, [Sacramento], September 7, 1881.

²³ Daily Alta California, August 24, 1881.

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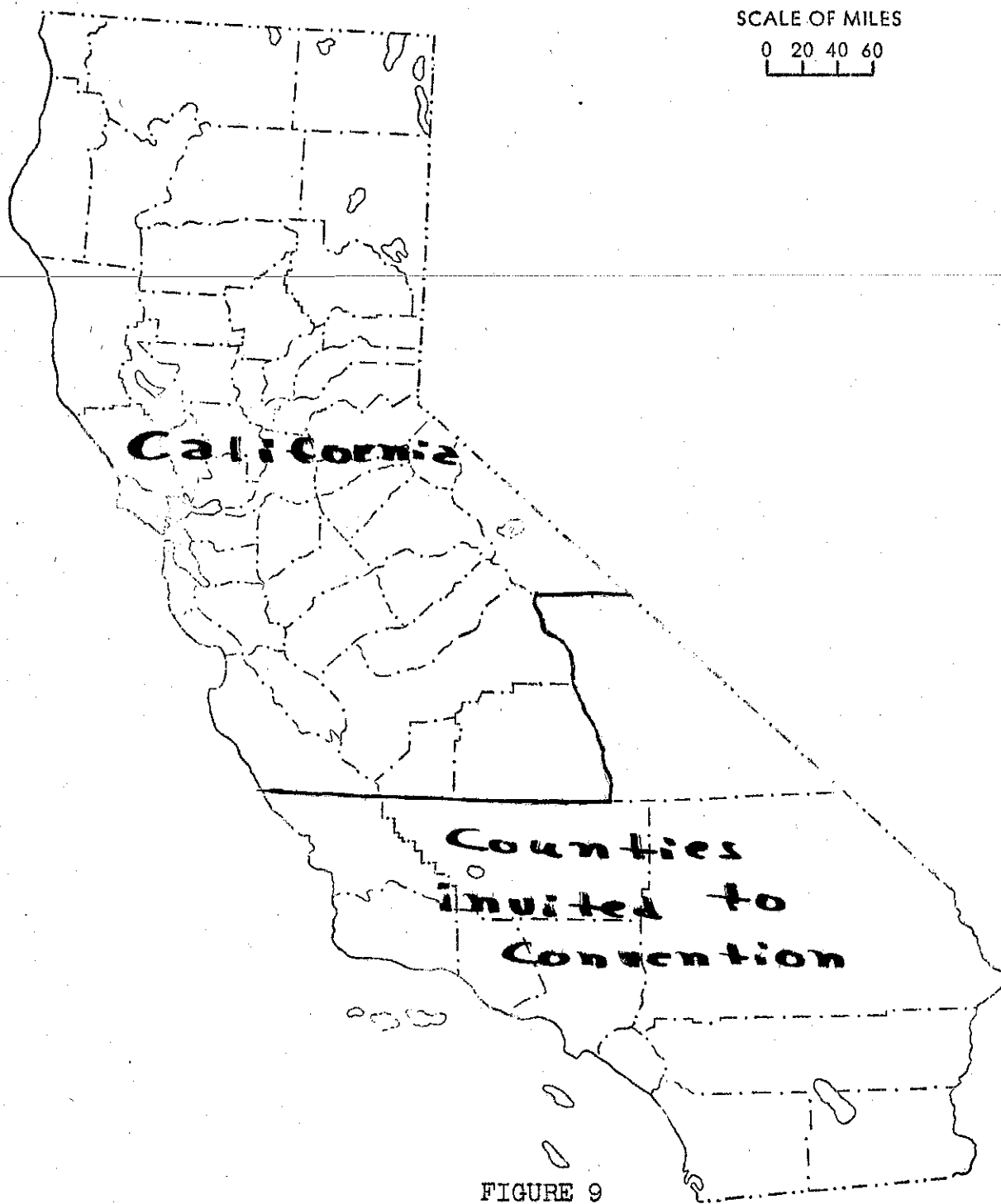
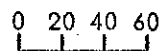


FIGURE 9

THE COUNTIES INVITED TO THE CONVENTION OF 1881
24 Quire, op. cit.

Free Press:

There are a lot of hungry office-seekers in Los Angeles who want a new State, which they think will support them, and there are a lot of property-owners who want a few millions spent there to enhance the value of their real estate, and that is about all there is of the move to establish a new State.²⁵

Seasoning the pages of serious arguments were light commentaries such as this amusing observation from the

Visalia Daily:

When the question was up before, it found sixteen supporters in this county. Out of this number several have since died. We do not believe that the move can obtain any considerable support in Kern or San Luis Obispo counties, and as for the counties to the north, they are not remarkable for the number of insane.²⁶

In accordance with the arrangements made in August, the Republican and Democratic delegates met at Union Hall in Los Angeles on September 8, 1881. All of the counties concerned were represented,²⁷ with full delegations from Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Santa Barbara.²⁸ The interested public, however, seemed to be limited to a few citizens of Los Angeles who attended the conference.

With considerably less of the enthusiasm and public support demonstrated at the previous meetings, the business of the convention began. The Los Angeles delegation, by far

²⁵ Ventura Free Press as quoted in The Daily Bee, September 7, 1881.

²⁶ Visalia Daily as quoted in the Daily Alta California, August 24, 1881.

²⁷ Willard, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

²⁸ Daily Alta California, September 9, 1881.

the most active, made known its plan to make the city of Los Angeles the capital of the new state. It was also clear that Los Angeles expected to control the state offices. Unable to see what benefit these plans would be to them, the delegates from the other counties did not favor the suggestions of the Los Angeles delegation.²⁹ Resolutions were passed approving state division, but it was also decided to take no further action on the matter until the population of the Southern counties was large enough to insure success in the statehood venture.³⁰ It was apparent, then, that the majority of the delegates thought that the division plans were premature and unnecessary. The conference concluded by resolving to meet at a second convention in Los Angeles on February 22, 1882.³¹ It appears that this convention never materialized, and the organized efforts at state division were brought to an end for a short time.

A few days after the convention adjourned, the Los Angeles Herald concluded that its failure was due to the lack of attendance and to the lack of enthusiasm. In the opinion of the Herald, the creation of a new state was premature, and suggested again that the Southern counties merge

²⁹ Guinn, op. cit., p. 231.

³⁰ Willard, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

³¹ Daily Alta California, September 9, 1881.

with the Territory of Arizona.³²

The Sacramento Daily Union, observing the recent activities of the Southern counties, added its opposition to division. The Union contended that government in a state as large as California would have to be removed from some portions of the territory. The separatists' objection to the expense of state government was also an argument against division and its duplication of governmental machinery. The Union concluded with this sober analysis of the problem:

The question of dividing the State may not be regarded as of serious import, but its agitation proves the existence of either a real or fancied grievance, and in either case it deserves candid and serious consideration.³³

III. THE ACTIVITY DECLINES

It was not until 1885 that the cry for division was heard again. The immediate cause for separation agitation was the increase of five million dollars on the assessed valuation in Los Angeles county, set by the State Board of Equalization.³⁴ It was suggested by some persons that this increase was part of a conspiracy to check Eastern immigration to Southern California.³⁵ The Los Angeles Herald, which had

³² Daily Alta California, September 12, 1881.

³³ Sacramento Daily Record Union, September 15, 1881.

³⁴ The Morning Call, September 27, 1885.

³⁵ Hunt, op. cit., p. 47.

virtually opposed division in 1881, now favored the separation. The Morning Call countered the Herald's stand by suggesting that a separate state government would cost the South much more than the present government. It added that the irrigation issue was the only real point of dispute between the two sections.³⁶ The irritation caused by the tax increase soon subsided, and nothing more was said of state division at this time.

By 1887 the problem of separation was reappearing in the newspapers. During the first half of the year division discussion was limited to the old affirmative and negative contentions, and resumés of preceding division activities.³⁷ In July, Judge Robert M. Widney, who had stimulated the question in 1877, brought to the attention of the public that state division could be accomplished through the Act of 1859. For several months the newspapers and prominent citizens entered the debate.³⁸ Those opposed to division suggested that the Southern area could expect as much difficulty in the creation of the new state as the Dakotas were having in their attempt to enter the Federal Union.³⁹ It was the argument of Chief Justice Field, however, that quieted the agitation for

³⁶ The Morning Call, September 27, 1885.

³⁷ Ibid., April 25 and June 14, 1887.

³⁸ Ibid., July 8 and July 9, 1887.

³⁹ Ibid., July 17, 1887.

a time. Judge Field, who was a resident of the North, stated that division would eventually be accomplished, but not on the foundation of the old Act of 1859.⁴⁰

Southern California was well underway in the business of attracting Eastern immigrants by 1888. One of the first books of value to be written about Southern California appeared at this time.⁴¹ The book, California of the South, was devoted to advertising the climate, resorts, and other attractions of Southern California. It is of added significance to the division activities because it was written by Doctor Walter Lindley and that old friend of state division, Doctor Joseph P. Widney. Doctor Widney, who had been prominent in the separation activities in 1881, was probably responsible for this statement in the book:

So unlike are the California of the North and the California of the South that already two distinct peoples are growing up, and the time is rapidly drawing near when the separation which the working of natural laws is making in the people must become a separation of civil laws as well, and two Californias stand side by side as distinct and separate States.⁴²

Although at least one Southern newspaper, the Pasadena Union, publicized its approval of state division,⁴³ no separation efforts were made until December.

⁴⁰ Ibid., August 11, 1887.

⁴¹ Newmark, op. cit., p. 589.

⁴² Walter Lindley and Joseph P. Widney, California of the South (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888), p. 1.

⁴³ The Morning Call, May 3, 1888.

IV. THE VANDEVER BILL

On December 5, 1888, General William Vandever of Ventura, representing the sixth California district, introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to divide the state and thus create the state of Southern California.⁴⁴ The northern boundary of the proposed state would begin in the Northeast and run Southwest along the northern boundaries of the counties of Alpine, Tuolumne, Merced, San Benito, and Monterey. The new state would include the counties of Monterey, San Benito, Fresno, Tulare, Kern, San Luis Obispo, San Diego, San Bernardino, Inyo, Mono, Alpine, Merced, Mariposa, and Tuolumne.⁴⁵ (See Figure 10, page 36)

Soon after General Vandever introduced his bill, a mass meeting was held in Los Angeles at Hazard's Pavilion.⁴⁶ Although the South did not greet the prospect of state division as enthusiastically as it had in 1881,⁴⁷ those who attended the meeting indorsed the Vandever Bill.⁴⁸ They also

⁴⁴ Guinn, op. cit., p. 231.

⁴⁵ The Morning Call, December 6, 1888.

⁴⁶ Newmark, op. cit., pp. 591-592.

⁴⁷ Willard, op. cit., p. 343.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, An Illustrated History of Los Angeles County, California (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1889), p. 96.

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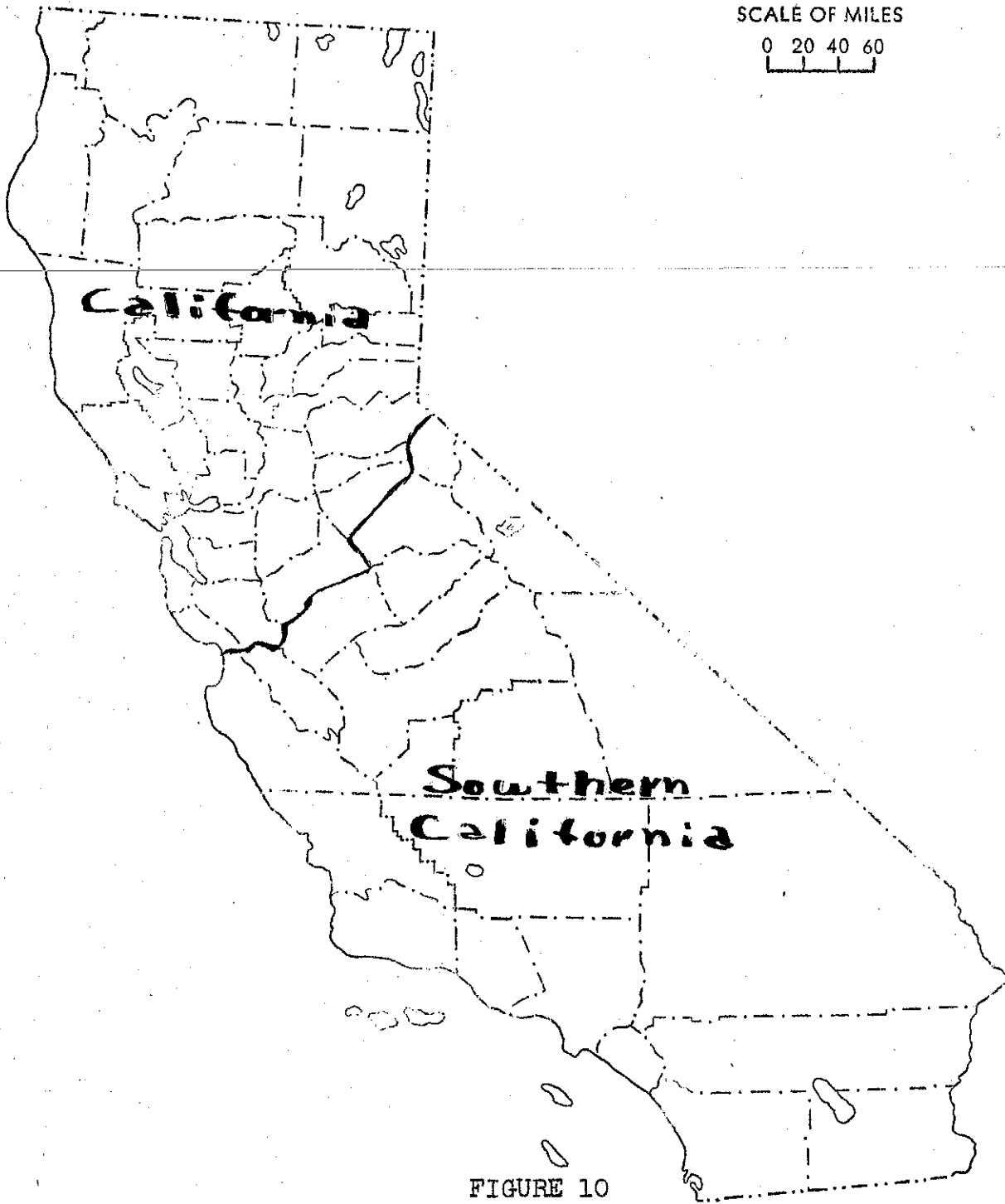
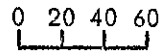


FIGURE 10

THE STATE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PROPOSED
BY THE VANDEVER BILL, 1885

selected an executive committee to further the movement.⁴⁹

One of the principal objections of the North to the Vandever proposal seemed to be concerned with the name of the new state. The Sacramento Daily Record Union said that the upper portion of the state would not change its name to Northern California, which seemed to be necessary if the new state became Southern California, and that no force outside of the state could change it.⁵⁰

The lack of strenuous objections from the North was probably the result of the lack of enthusiasm for the proposal in the South. In San Diego county, for example, the majority of the citizens who were polled on the question were opposed to the scheme.⁵¹ This lack of enthusiasm may have been responsible for the fate of the Vandever bill, for the resolution was never reported back from the committee.⁵²

Without the Vandever bill, there was little reason to pursue the question of state division. The normal activity of the Southern counties was resumed, and the discussion of state division subsided to occasional comments in the newspapers of the state. One such comment was the interesting assertion made in the San Francisco Chronicle in December,

49 Newmark, op. cit., pp. 591-592.

50 Sacramento Daily Record Union, December 6, 1888.

51 The Morning Call, December 12, 1888.

52 Willard, op. cit., p. 543.

1888. Thirty years after the referral of the Act of 1859 to the electorate in the Southern counties, it was contended that the necessary two-thirds approval had not been obtained.⁵³

V. THE ACTIVITY DECLINES AGAIN

During the following year, 1889, Doctor Joseph P. Widney published an historical sketch of the division movement in the Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California. Doctor Widney summarized his rôle in the state division controversy, but he added no comment on the future of the proposal.⁵⁴

Early in 1890 the San Francisco Chronicle reported that some attempts were being made by the newspapers in Southern California to revive the issue of separation.⁵⁵ In May, the Sacramento Daily Record Union predicted that state division would be proposed in the near future. The Union added, however, that there was no reason for separation; for there is no geographic obstacle in the administration of the public affairs of the state.⁵⁶ John Wasson, editor of the Chino Valley Champion in San Bernardino county, quickly contradicted the Union. He declared that the people of the South

⁵³ San Francisco Chronicle, December 18, 1888.

⁵⁴ Widney, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

⁵⁵ San Francisco Chronicle, February 2, 1890.

⁵⁶ Sacramento Daily Record Union, May 3, 1890.

sincerely felt that their general welfare would be better promoted by a separate government. Remaining a part of the present state government, he continued, would not alleviate the sectional abuse and misrepresentation which the South had endured.⁵⁷ State division, however, was still only a question infrequently considered in the editorial columns.

When the Democratic Convention was held at San Jose in August, the party passed a resolution opposing state division. The resolution stated:

The democratic party of California declares itself unalterably opposed to all schemes having for their object the division of the state of California, and pledges itself to maintain this great commonwealth, brought into the American union by democratic statesmanship, undivided in its greatness.⁵⁸

For a brief period in 1891, it appeared that division agitation might rekindle. (See Figure 11, page 40) The State Board of Equalization raised the assessed valuation in the Southern, as well as the Northern counties. To remedy this "raid on the property of the tax-payers," some Southerners urged separation.⁵⁹ No support was given to the suggestion, and the division issue slumbered for two years.

San Diego was the scene for the beginning, and the

⁵⁷ Ibid., May 18, 1890.

⁵⁸ Winfield J. Davis, History of Political Conventions in California, 1849-1892 (Sacramento: California State Library, 1893), p. 568.

⁵⁹ The Morning Call, September 16, 1891.

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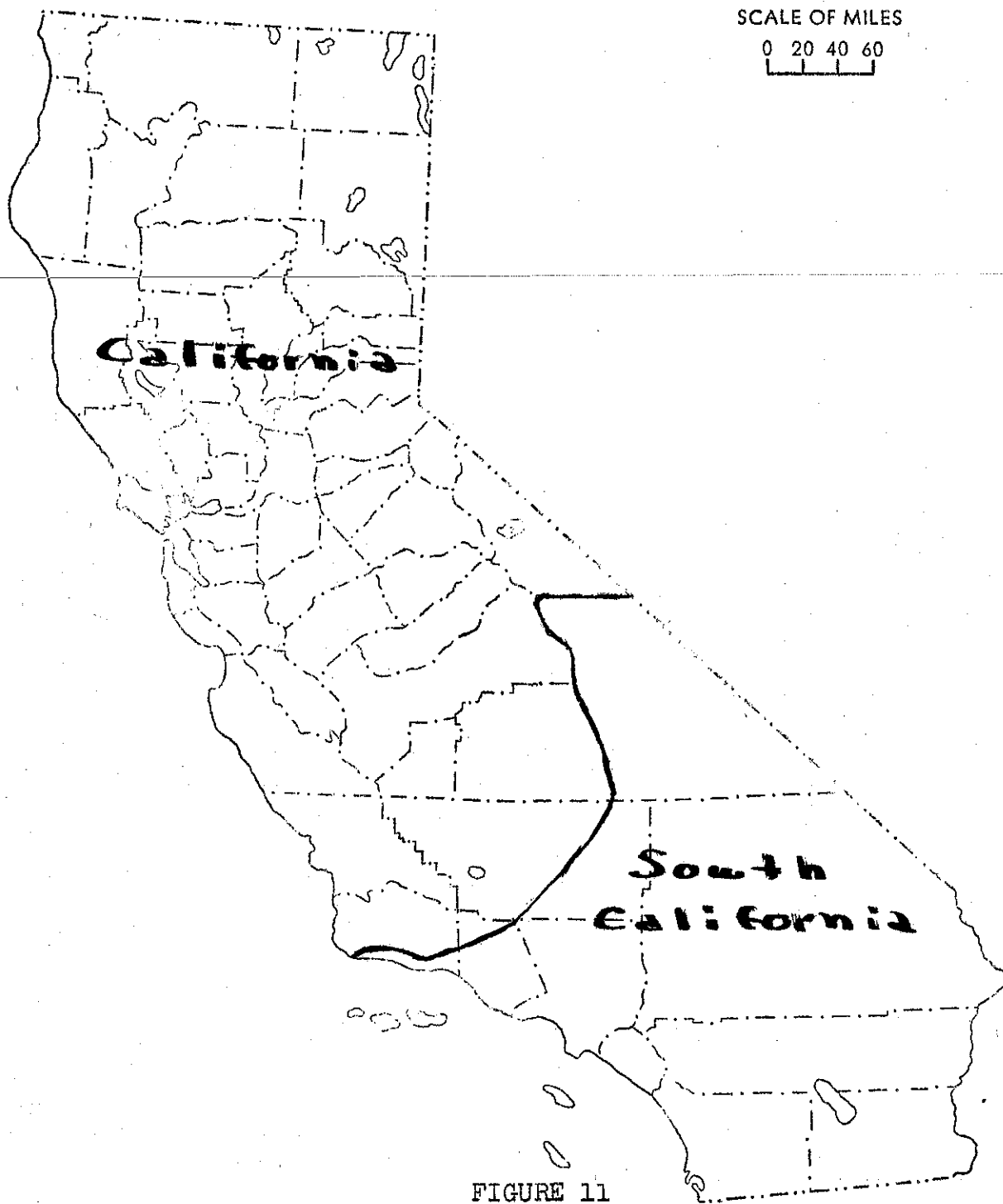
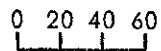


FIGURE 11

THE PROPOSED STATE OF SOUTH CALIFORNIA, 1891
60 Coy, op. cit., p. 57.

end, of the separation activity in 1893. In March, a petition was circulated in San Diego for the purpose of organizing a non-partisan club to promote the division of the state.⁶¹ The petition stated:

We, the undersigned citizens of San Diego, believing that the interests of all Californians demand that the State be divided and a new State, to be known as South California, added to the glorious sisterhood of States, hereby call upon good citizens interested in the movement to bring about the above results, to meet us at a time and place to be determined and announced in the press for the purpose of organizing the first South California club.⁶²

The movement in San Diego may have been promoted by the San Diegan Sun, which had been urging division a short time before.⁶³ The petition appears to have accomplished very little.

The only other evidence of organized activity was the attempt to combine the issue of state division with the capital removal bill. This scheme also failed.⁶⁴

The other important contribution to the question of state division in 1893 was a literary debate between the Honorable Abbot Kinney and Morris M. Estee in the Californian Illustrated Magazine.

⁶¹ Sacramento Record Union, March 24, 1893.

⁶² The Morning Call, March 24, 1893.

⁶³ Ibid., March 18, 1893.

⁶⁴ The Themis [Sacramento], April 1, 1893.

Abbot Kinney's⁶⁵ remarks favoring division were substantially the same as those which had caused men to advocate separation through the years. He began his article with the announcement that, "California is divided," pointing out that Southern California was a separate identity recognized not only in the United States, but also abroad. This division was already a fact of geography, industry, commerce, and interest. Only political unity remained, and, under such conditions, it was logical to sever this bond also.

Kinney contradicted the argument that Southern politicians had promoted division for their own interests by asserting that the politicians did not dare to mention division because of its controversial nature. The South was politically strong, he continued, and it was getting stronger and bolder. Its population, area, and assessed valuation were adequate for a separate state government. Therefore, the state should be divided now while both sections were on friendly terms. ". . . the plan of State Government in the West," he concluded, "is not suitable to extended territory or diverse interests."

Opposing division, Morris M. Estee⁶⁶ declared that he

⁶⁵ Abbot Kinney, "The Division of a State; the Reasons in Favor," The Californian Illustrated Magazine, Vol. IV, No. 3, August, 1893, pp. 387-397.

⁶⁶ Morris M. Estee, "The Division of the State. Why It Is Impossible," Ibid., pp. 397-403.

did not believe that the subject of separation was being generally discussed or that Southern California favored it. His article was an excellent summary of the obstacles to division that had been used by the opponents of the issue for some time. Among the barriers he mentioned were these:

First, business would be harmed by division. Taxes would have to be increased in both sections to support the two state governments, and the increase in taxes could seriously affect property values in both sections.

Second, only a few ambitious men are seeking division. It is, therefore, politically expedient for the state to remain a single unit.

Third, there is no geographic reason for division. If natural boundaries between the two sections justify separation, then California should be divided into many different states. The old argument that California is too large for one state is no longer valid, because the progress in transportation has brought the two sections closer together.

Fourth, one of the greatest barriers would be the legal objections to division. Congress would have to be shown very strong reasons for dividing the state. Even if these reasons could be found, there is no issue greater than that of admitting a new state. Further, Section Three, Article Four of the Federal Constitution does not indicate clearly that California could divide and become two states.

The articles of Kinney and Estee did not further the efforts of either side in the division controversy. They did, however, clarify the major issues that were involved in the dispute.

After 1893 division was even more infrequently mentioned. The North was content to allow the issue to subside, and the South was devoting most of its efforts to the attraction of migrants to its counties. In December, 1894, a meeting of the Congress of Supervisors from the Southern counties was held to further the interests of their section in immigration, commerce, harbor development, and the Nicaraguan Canal. The counties represented were: Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, Santa Barbara, Riverside, Ventura, and San Diego. Some thought had been given to introducing a resolution for division at the conference. The issue was left out, however, because it had no chance of being approved.⁶⁷

Several newspapers were now contending that the South was not strong enough to promote division. Among these were the Los Angeles Herald, the San Jose Mercury, and the Fresno Expositor. The Expositor also suggested that if the state were ever divided, it would not be for any of the reasons used to support the measure in the past.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ The Morning Call, December 13, 1894.

⁶⁸ Sacramento Daily-Record Union, December 18, 1894.

To counteract what little support division had been given, the Sacramento Daily-Record Union added its voice in January, 1895. The Union contended that the demands of Southern California in the past had not been denied by the state. For twelve years the Governor had been from the South, and the Southern section was well represented in the legislature.⁶⁹

By the end of the decade a few Southern newspapers were attempting to revive the issue. One of these, The Redlands Citrograph, brought attention to the Act of 1869 and stated:

The people of Southern California would never consent to the repeal of the Pico Law, hence it will stand until the new State of South California shall come to life by virtue of its provisions. The passage of the Pico Law was an act of Providence. Whenever the people shall choose to take advantage of the benefits bestowed by the Pico Law, it is theirs to have and enjoy. The State of South California can send two new United States Senators from the Pacific Coast to Washington whenever it is the will of the people.⁷⁰

At the beginning of the twentieth century, some persons in the South renewed the effort to divide the state. The opposition of the Northern citizens and leaders was so formidable that the activity was soon terminated.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Ibid., January 18, 1895.

⁷⁰ The Redlands Citrograph as quoted in The Evening Bee [Sacramento], September 30, 1899.

⁷¹ Los Angeles Tribune, March 25, 1915.

VI. THE NORTH URGES DIVISION

By 1902 an interesting development was taking place in the Northern counties. Through the American period in California history, the North had consistently opposed all of the efforts of the Southern counties to separate. Now, however, some of the Northern citizens were beginning to urge division. Northerners were admitting that the climatic conditions of the two sections were very different, that the two peoples did not have similar tastes and dispositions, and that revenue adjustments could not be satisfactory in such a large state. It appears that the underlying cause for this change of sentiment was the desire for more representation in the Federal Government.⁷² Although the new attitude in the North was shared by only a few citizens, it was the beginning of a change which was to play an important part in later division agitations.

If some of the Northern citizens were ready for division, most of the Southerners were not. Another year passed before the South expressed any desire to separate. In 1803 the California Water and Forest Society prepared an irrigation bill to which the Southern counties were opposed. Assemblyman Amerige from Southern California warned that if the Northern counties persisted in passing the bill, it would

⁷² The Wednesday Press [Sacramento], December 24, 1902.

result in a new demand for state division.⁷³ However, the new demand was not forthcoming.

VII. NATIONAL INTEREST

In 1906 another surprising development occurred. Both sides of the Tehachapi were allowing the separation issue to rest. The earthquake had scarred San Francisco, and the city was busily rebuilding when the Chicago Tribune startled the state. The Tribune reported that a few persons in Los Angeles were urging division while San Francisco was still weak! To this charge the Santa Barbara Morning Press replied:

The State of Southern California will ultimately be created; but it may not come immediately, and its coming can never be traced to the earthquake and fire in San Francisco. The need of division has been recognized as a problem for many years.⁷⁴

During this same period James Miller Guinn wrote a monograph reviewing the efforts of division. His closing words suggest how inactive the issue had become:

While the men who in the past championed dismemberment of the state were no doubt sincere in their belief that such action would be beneficial to the people of the various sections, we should be thankful that their schemes failed--that our magnificent state escaped division.⁷⁵

But California had not heard the last of division.

⁷³ San Francisco Chronicle, January 16, 1903.

⁷⁴ Santa Barbara Morning Press as quoted in The Sacramento Union, May 29, 1906.

⁷⁵ Guinn, op. cit., pp. 231-232.

When Guinn wrote these words California was moving rapidly toward the greatest period of division agitation that occurred since the approval of the Act of 1859.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECOND GREAT DIVISION PERIOD, 1907-1922

From 1907 to 1922 California experienced a period of sectional controversy comparable only to the great division decade from 1849 to 1860. The smoldering agitation which characterized the late years of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries now burst into flame. During those years the newspapers had virtually kept the issue alive, but now it appeared that the division controversy was giving vitality to the press.

I. THE NEW LEADERS

In March, 1907, former-Senator Frank H. Short¹ wrote an article for the Los Angeles Times. He quoted Section Three, Article Four of the Constitution of the United States which reads:

New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States, without the consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress.

Other opponents of division had used this portion of the Constitution to nullify the Act of 1859 and other division proposals, but no prominent person had analysed and interpreted it as Short did. He asserted that the clause,

¹ Los Angeles Times, March 10, 1907.

". . . but no new State shall be formed or erected within the jurisdiction of any other State . . ." was independent from the remainder of the section. Therefore, the creation of a new state by the division of a state already a part of the Union is prohibited. Short continued that Virginia had been the only state divided since the adoption of the Federal Constitution. This instance could not be considered a precedent for California. The creation of West Virginia was possible only because the remainder of Virginia, as part of the Confederacy, had relinquished the rights and privileges guaranteed to it by the Constitution.

Only by amending the Constitution, Short concluded, could division be achieved in California. The obstacles in the amendment process were thus barriers in the path of separation. California would be the only state interested in the amendment, consequently the possibility of its being ratified or even initiated was very doubtful.

Short considered briefly some of the arguments presented by the state divisionists. He denied that the large area of California caused irreconcilable conflicts among the various resources and interests. In fact, only a few areas of California were not directly engaged in irrigation. What geographic differences there were between the North and the South were not as great as the differences that existed within each section. He then called upon the state to terminate

its division attempts and work toward the development of all of California. He concluded, in part, with this statement:

Before California is divided into two States we will doubtless be traveling around the world in practical flying machines, sending wireless messages to the inhabitants of Mars . . . all these and many other things will come to pass before California is divided.

In the same issue that carried the comments of Frank H. Short, the Los Angeles Times clearly stated its opposition to division. After reiterating Short's remarks, the Times added:

If we, the people of the South had done our duty at the primaries and the State election, the feeling beneath this talk of State division would not have been engendered. The remedy for conditions we deplore lies not in State division, not in lazily farming out our civic duties to a private political party or to a committee of fifteen dominated by one, but in each man painstakingly doing his duty himself.²

With such powerful opposition within the South, the progress of division depended upon the appearance of equal strength in support of the proposal. The needed strength was not long in appearing. On March 29, 1907, the Honorable Robert N. Bulla³ read a paper before the Sunset Club in Los Angeles in which he considered the three questions: can the state be divided, should the state be divided, and will the state be divided.

In answer to the first question, Bulla presented an

² Ibid.

³ Bulla, op. cit.

excellent summary of the division agitation from 1849 to 1860, considering thoroughly the Act of 1859. He concluded that the Act was still in force, and that state division could be accomplished with only the consent of Congress. In arriving at this conclusion, Bulla contradicted the arguments of Frank H. Short. He suggested that the controversial clause in Section Three, Article Four of the Constitution was not set apart from the remainder of the Section. Further, not only West Virginia, which had been cited by Short as the only possible precedent for California's division, but Vermont, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maine, and Mississippi were created from the territory of other states and admitted into the Union. Bulla also brought attention to the conditions under which Texas entered the Union. Texas, he recalled, may be divided into as many as four states if each portion has sufficient population, and the consent of the state has been obtained. If Short's interpretation of the Constitution were correct, then Congress could not have admitted Texas with such a provision.

Bulla's answer to the second question, should the state be divided, was also affirmative. His reasons were:

First, the people of Southern California wanted to form a separate state.

Second, the state was too large for all of its citizens to transact business at the capital promptly and economically. The citizens of San Diego, for example, traveled

four or five days to reach the capital at the cost of nearly one hundred dollars.

Third, the new state would provide institutions in the South for criminals and incompetents, eliminating the present cost of transporting them to the North.

Fourth, the political influence of transportation companies, obtained through the bribery of state officials with free passes, would be reduced.

Fifth, the duplication of Supreme Court functions in different localities would no longer be necessary.

Sixth, the representation of the Pacific Coast would be increased in the United States Senate, thus furthering appropriations for necessary developments in the Pacific region.

Seventh, the jealousy between the two sections of the state would be considerably lessened.

Eighth, although the initial cost of the new state would cause a temporary increase in the taxes of the South, it would soon reduce the cost of state government.

Although Bulla contended that the state could be and should be divided, he was not confident that division would be accomplished. Perhaps his attitude was intended to challenge the citizens of the South. Among the obstacles he cited were these:

First, would the citizens of Southern California give

their active support to the division proposal?

Second, would "Uncle Joe" Cannon in the House of Representatives give his approval to the proposal, thus determining the fate of the measure in Congress?

Third, would the Eastern states allow any increase in the power of the Pacific Coast?

Fourth, would it be advisable to use the Act of 1859 which did not include in the new state Inyo county with the Owens River Project?

Bulla also mentioned the Northern opposition to the use of "California" in the name of the new state. He suggested that this minor obstacle could be overcome by naming the new state Los Angeles. (See Figure 12, page 55)

The division controversy had not been as active and with such prominent and brilliant leadership on both sides of the issue since 1859. The debate continued as other influential men voiced their opinions. Senator H. E. Carter,⁴ who opposed state division, contradicted the divisionists' arguments of sectional differences and taxation. He said that there was no longer any industry within the state that was exclusive. Inter-communication had erased the differences; consequently, what was good legislation for one section was also good for the other. He reversed the argument

⁴ H. E. Carter, "State Division," Grizzly Bear, San Francisco, 1:49, June 1907.

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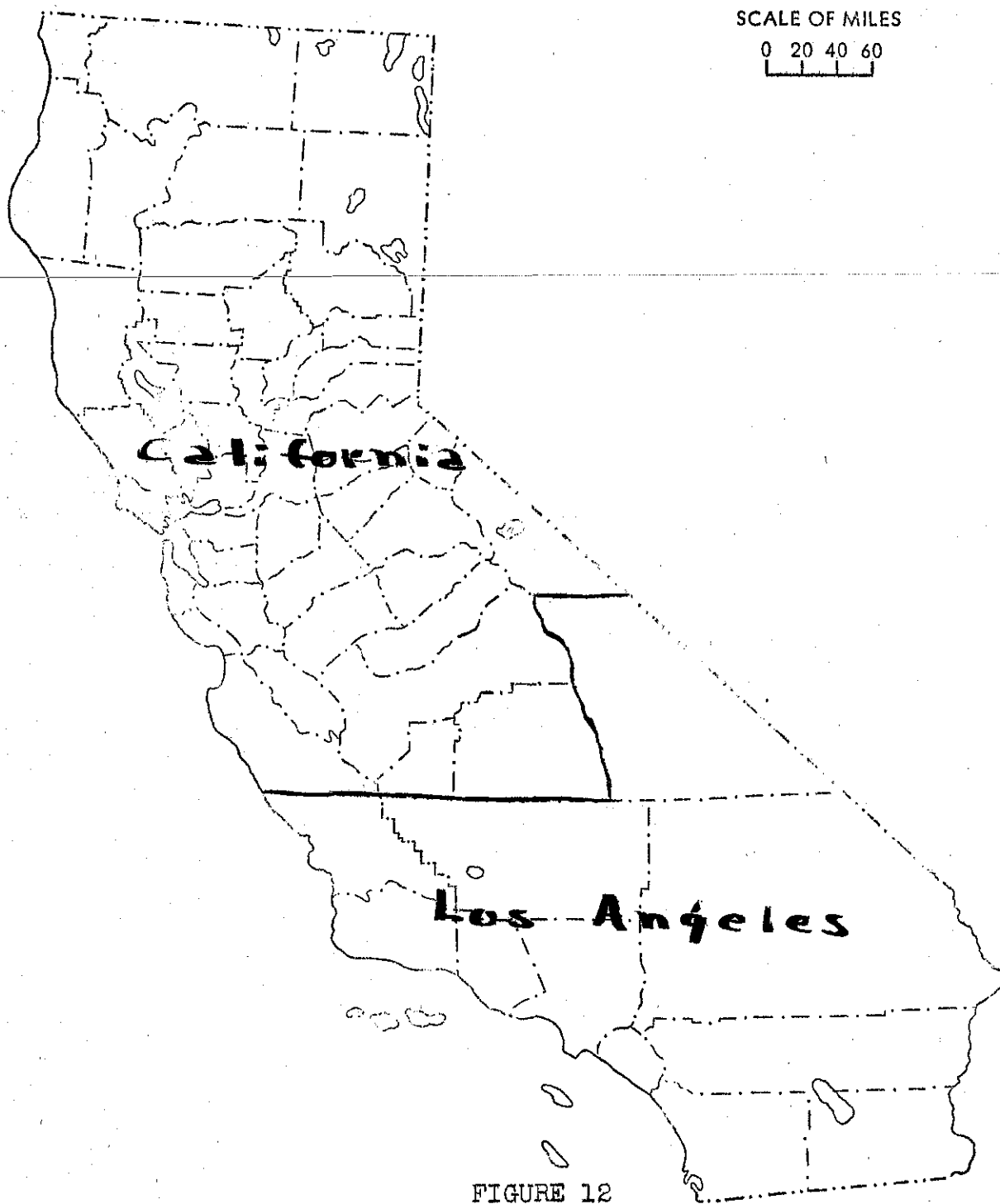
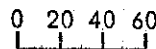


FIGURE 12

THE PROPOSED STATE OF LOS ANGELES, 1907
5 Quire, op. cit.

of taxation by asserting that Southern California was receiving more benefits from government spending than it was paying for through taxation. In support of this, he cited such examples as education in Southern California. The local units paid only a portion of the total cost of education in the South. He concluded:

Contrary to being unable to get needed legislation, the Southern California delegation, for the past eight years, has been able to and did get through all and every bit of legislation requested by the people of Southern California.

Other division opponents were concentrating on the Owens River Project. If the terms of the Act of 1859 were accepted, as Bulla had mentioned in his address, Los Angeles would be separated from its valuable water rights in Inyo county by a state boundary. As an interstate project, Los Angeles would not have as much influence in protecting those water rights.⁶

Opposition to division came not only from individuals, but also from groups such as the Native Sons of the Golden West. In its publication, the Grizzly Bear, this statement appeared in May, 1907:

The Grizzly Bear informs all who care to know that the Native Sons of the Golden West as an Order, are unanimous upon this subject and will positively fight State Division. We recognize no North, no South, but one united commonwealth, and will oppose determinedly and fearlessly to the last trench any attempt to disrupt the State

⁶ Grant Jackson, "Owens River and State Division," Ibid., 1:50, May, 1907.

founded by our fathers, the Pioneers of "49".⁷

A bill to remove the capital from Sacramento was introduced in the legislature at this time. It was considered to be a political trial balloon to determine the popular opinion on state separation.⁸ This tactic did not succeed, however, and the agitation subsided for a year.

II. NATIONAL INTEREST

Although division activity did not gain new impetus until the autumn of 1909, the arguments of the leaders on both sides of the issue still reverberated throughout the state and the nation. As far East as Massachusetts, people were watching the division movement with interest. The Springfield Republican of that state wondered why the prospect of increased representation in the Senate had not caused the North to support division. The California Weekly promptly answered this inquiry by stating:

The representation of California in the United States Senate has not usually been of such quality as to stimulate a universal desire to have it multiplied by two.⁹

The Weekly added that the Southern Pacific Railroad was already well represented by the Congressmen from California. If such corporate influence decreased, enthusiasm for

⁷ Editorial, Ibid., 1:4.

⁸ Clarence M. Hunt, "Our State Capital," Ibid., 1:34.

⁹ Anonymous, "The Explanation Easy," California Weekly, San Francisco, 1:387, May 14, 1909.

added representation might increase in the North.¹⁰

III. "TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION"

As in 1885 and 1891, the action of the State Board of Equalization stimulated the sentiment for separation in the South. In September, 1909, the assessed valuation was raised forty per cent in Los Angeles county, fifty per cent in Orange county, and one hundred per cent in Ventura county. The assessed valuation of San Francisco county, however, was raised only ten per cent. Announcing these increases in an interview in Los Angeles, County Assessor E. W. Hopkins said: "My trip was useless. . . . It was all fixed up and I came away with my pretty speeches unspoken. . . . I knew it was prearranged and that I might as well start home."¹¹

The Northern newspapers defended the action of the Board. The San Francisco Call reported that early in January the county assessors had been informed of the position of the Board in a letter by Chairman Alexander Brown.¹²

Forewarned or not, the counties of the South were indignant over the increase in assessed valuation. The Los Angeles Express reprinted the letter of former-Governor John G. Downey, and said that his call for state division was as

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Los Angeles Herald, September 13, 1909.

¹² The San Francisco Call, September 13, 1909.

valid today as it had been in 1880.¹³

On September 13, 1909, several days after the increase had been announced, two mass meetings were held in Los Angeles to consider the action of the Board of Equalization. The first was conducted by the Los Angeles Realty Board at Symphony Hall. The other was an evening meeting of the Federation of State Societies.¹⁴

The meeting at Symphony Hall was the more active. George N. Black, acting president of the Realty Board, presided over it. Resolutions were passed denouncing the action of the State Board of Equalization. The sentiment which had been present from the start of the meeting was voiced by Will D. Gould. He suggested that division was the only remedy for the affronts to which Southern California had been subjected.¹⁵ B. A. Stephens, one of the secretaries of the meeting¹⁶ and president of the South California State League, declared that division could be accomplished immediately through the Act of 1859. J. H. Braly, who had opposed division until this time, not only consented to the separation of the Southern counties, but also suggested that Arizona should be included as part of the new state. In spite of the objections of

¹³ Los Angeles Express, September 13, 1909.

¹⁴ The San Francisco Call, September 14, 1909.

¹⁵ Los Angeles Times, September 14, 1909.

¹⁶ San Francisco Chronicle, September 14, 1909.

Percy H. Clark and E. W. Britt, the meeting continued to concentrate on division.¹⁷ Finally, a resolution favoring state division was passed. It stated:

Resolved, That this Convention appoint ten of its members to extend an invitation to and meet with ten members from the Los Angeles realty board and ten members from the City club, the Merchants and Manufacturers' association, chamber of commerce, Jobber's association, Municipal League, South California State League and Credit Men's association to meet within thirty days and confer as to the advisability of calling a convention of delegates from fourteen southern counties for the purpose of considering a movement for state division.¹⁸

In accordance with the resolution, an executive committee was chosen, with eleven members for good measure.

They were: Will D. Gould, D. A. Hamburger, A. E. Pomeroy, A. J. Wallace, H. Jevne, C. J. Lang, S. G. Marshutz, J. H. Braly, Richmond Plant, T. E. Gibbon, and James Miller Guinn.¹⁹

The problem of taxation was not the only reason given for state division. As in the past, the differences of topography, the variety of industry, and the ambitions of Southern California were added to the arguments for state division.²⁰ Even the Los Angeles Times, which had steadfastly opposed division, cried out against what it termed the unjust action of the State Board of Equalization, and presented other

¹⁷ Los Angeles Times, September 14, 1909.

¹⁸ Los Angeles Herald, September 14, 1909.

¹⁹ Los Angeles Express, September 14, 1909.

²⁰ Ibid., September 13, 1909.

reasons for division. The Times suggested that the people of the South were superior in intelligence and morality to a large portion of the people in the North. It conservatively added, however, that division was premature.²¹

Public opinion in the North, indicated by the press, fairly bristled at the division agitation in the South.

Buried under its indignation was whatever sentiment for division the North had expressed in 1902. The San Francisco Call screamed that the spirit of the South was not Californian.²² It charged that only Los Angeles was urging division because such Southern publications as the San Diego Union and the San Bernardino Sun opposed separation.²³ The California Weekly, also published in San Francisco, centered its attack on "Calizonia", or the proposal to add Arizona to the seceding counties. The Weekly also contended that there were no reasons sufficient for separation, although there were differences in interest, spirit, ideals, industry, and commerce. If the Southern counties wished to secede, however, no harm would be done to the Northern counties.²⁴

A few days after the meeting at Symphony Hall, former

²¹ Los Angeles Times, September 14, 1909.

²² The San Francisco Call, September 15, 1909.

²³ Ibid., September 16, 1909.

²⁴ Editorial in the California Weekly, 1:673, September 17, 1909.

State Senator Robert N. Bulla²⁵ added his powerful voice to the cry for state division. His address at the City Club in Los Angeles on September 18, 1909²⁶ was essentially the same as his remarks before the Sunset Club in 1907. His analysis of the problem was still pertinent and inspiring to the divisionists.

The agitation for division was drawing attention not only from California, but also from the nation. The San Francisco Call reported that the officials in Washington, D. C. were very interested in the movement for division.²⁷

A week after the executive committee had been appointed at Symphony Hall, plans were being made to hold a convention on October 5, 1909.²⁸ Eight civic and commercial organizations had been invited and were already choosing their representatives.²⁹

The concern of the nation and the well-organized activities of the South clearly indicated the seriousness of the division proposal. In spite of the protests of the North, the issue seemed to progress. The San Francisco Call, realizing the need for added strength on the side of unity,

²⁵ Robert N. Bulla, "Division of California," Pacific Outlook, 7:6, 11-12, September 25, 1909.

²⁶ Los Angeles Express, September 18, 1909.

²⁷ The San Francisco Call, September 20, 1909.

²⁸ Ibid., September 21, 1909.

²⁹ Ibid., September 22, 1909.

referred to Section One, Article Twenty-one of the Constitution of the State of California. The Call contended that this section, which stated the boundaries of the state, would have to be amended before division could be achieved.³⁰ The section reads:

The boundary of the State of California shall be as follows: Commencing at the point of intersection of the forty-second degree of north latitude with the one hundred and twentieth degree of longitude west from Greenwich, and running south on the line of said one hundred and twentieth degree of west longitude until it intersects the thirty-ninth degree of north latitude; thence running in a straight line, in a southeasterly direction, to the River Colorado, at a point where it intersects the thirty-fifth degree of north latitude; thence down the middle of the channel of said river to the boundary line between the United States and Mexico, as established by the treaty of May 30, 1848; thence running west and along said boundary line to the Pacific Ocean, and extending therein three English miles; thence running in a northwesterly direction and following the direction of the Pacific Coast to the forty-second degree of north latitude; thence on the line of said forty-second degree of north latitude to the place of beginning. Also, including all the islands, harbors, and bays along and adjacent to the coast.

This obstacle in the State Constitution was ignored at this time, but it would not be overlooked by division enthusiasts in the future.

Not all of the opposition to division was as profound as that presented by the Call. The San Jose Mercury, for example, mockingly suggested that the new state choose for its motto, "Taxation without our misrepresentations is

³⁰ Ibid., September 27, 1909.

tyranny,"³¹

The State Board of Equalization was also moved by the seriousness of the issue. W. A. Varcoe, a representative of the Board, defended its action in a letter to the Los Angeles Times. He stated that the increase in assessed valuation was not the result of sectional rivalry, but it was caused by the rapid development of Southern California. The increase in assessment, he continued, logically followed the increase in population, wealth, and property values.³²

Whether or not Southern Californians saw the logic of the Board, they were beginning to resign themselves to the increase in assessed valuation. When the day had arrived for the convention, which had developed out of the Symphony Hall meeting, the urgency with which the South had proposed division had subsided. The Realty Board was divided on the issue, and only three of the eight organizations invited to attend were represented. With a total of forty-one persons in attendance, the convention ended in magnificent failure.³³

Clarence M. Hunt, in the Grizzly Bear, suggested that the failure of the movement was caused by the fact that division agitation was not as great as some of the Southern newspapers had reported. The Los Angeles Herald, for example,

³¹ Ibid., September 30, 1909.

³² Los Angeles Times, October 22, 1909.

³³ Clarence M. Hunt, "Before and After the Secession 'Convention'," Grizzly Bear, 6:1, November, 1909.

had been motivated to urge division because of Edwin T. Earl, who wished to be a United States Senator. State division would increase his chances of achieving this goal.³⁴ Perhaps these charges were true. After the fire of agitation was out, and the smoke had cleared, the division opponents in the South counted in their number such publications as: the Ventura Democrat, the Santa Barbara Independent, the Los Angeles Cultivator, the San Diego Union, the Long Beach Telegram, the Los Angeles Times, and the Santa Barbara Press.³⁵

The opponents of division continued their efforts after the threat of separation appeared to have passed. Grant Jackson,³⁶ prominent Los Angeles attorney, attacked the arguments of Robert N. Bulla in an address at the City Club on October 2, 1909. Jackson concentrated on the question: Should the state be divided? He reviewed the fact that if the state were divided through the Act of 1859, Inyo county with part of the Owens River Project would remain in the northern state. The project, financed by the city of Los Angeles, was the source of added water and power, necessary to the development of the Southern counties. If part of the project were not included in the new state, three serious results could occur: first, Los Angeles could be

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Editorial, Ibid., 6:10.

³⁶ Los Angeles Times, October 3, 1909.

required to pay heavy taxes on that part of the project outside of the new state; second, Los Angeles could no longer protect its rights through the exercise of eminent domain; third, Los Angeles could lose the property entirely. If for no other reason, Jackson concluded, the state should not be divided because of the danger to the Owens River Project.

In another address given before the College Men's Association in Los Angeles, Jackson attacked a second of Bulla's considerations: Can the state be divided? Jackson declared that the Constitution of the United States did not make any provision for the type of division California contemplated. He also asserted that no precedents had occurred for such division. Those states which were cited as precedents by division supporters were admitted into the Union under entirely different circumstances and could not be considered as precursors for California.³⁷

IV. THE STATE OF SISKIYOU

While division agitation was subsiding in the South, the far northern counties of the state were growing restless. Since August, 1909, there had been expressions of discontent, but the Southern counties had created such a storm that the agitation in the far north had gone almost unnoticed. As in 1859, the far northern portion of the state was taking

³⁷ Los Angeles Times, November 21, 1909.

advantage of the success of the South in furthering its own division proposal. The movement was begun by the Medford Tribune of Medford, Oregon. The Tribune suggested that the counties of Southern Oregon and Northern California form a new state. The Jackson County Press Club in Oregon was asked to support the movement so that all newspapermen in the area would unite to sell the new state.³⁸ This movement was openly a promotion by the newspapers, perhaps as many of the division attempts had been.

By December, 1909, the Jackson County Press Association formally indorsed the movement for the state of Siskiyou. With this support, the Medford Tribune stated the issues causing the agitation:

Southern Oregon, like Northern California, is utterly ignored, except when it comes to paying taxes, without representation in state or national government--a vast empire with ocean harbors, with greater natural resources, greater timber and mineral wealth and scenic attractions than any section on the globe.³⁹

Plans were made to call a convention to outline a course of action. The proposed state was to include the Oregon counties of Coos, Douglas, Curry, Josephine, Jackson, Klamath, and Lake; and the California counties of Del Norte, Siskiyou, Modoc, Humboldt, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, and

³⁸ Medford Tribune as quoted in The Yreka Journal, August 25, 1909.

³⁹ Ibid., December 22, 1909.

Tehama. (See Figure 13, page 69) Yreka in Siskiyou county was to be the new capital.⁴⁰

The rest of the state did not take the proposal very seriously, and it soon was abandoned. A comment in The Yreka Journal indicates the purpose of the movement was for publicity. The Journal said:

Whether anything ever comes of the proposition or not, Siskiyou county and its county seat Yreka is getting the best advertising it ever had and the whole cost of the same is at the expense of the Journal.⁴¹

V. THE ACTIVITY DECLINES

This phase of division activity was not without lulls and levelings of agitation. The years from 1909 to 1915 were such a plateau. Although the question was still in the public mind, no important development occurred.

An indication of this plateau is given by Joseph Hayford Quire whose monograph, "State Division in California," appeared in 1910. After an excellent summary of the division movement from the early days of statehood, Quire concluded:

It must be admitted, however, that the state division agitation is on the decline. If California is an abnormality, nature seems to be surmounting that difficulty. The occupations and character of the people of the two sections are coming more and more into harmony. . . . One race of people now exists where two had formerly lived. All conditions go to show that we will have no

⁴⁰ Los Angeles Times, December 16, 1909.

⁴¹ The Yreka Journal, November 10, 1909.

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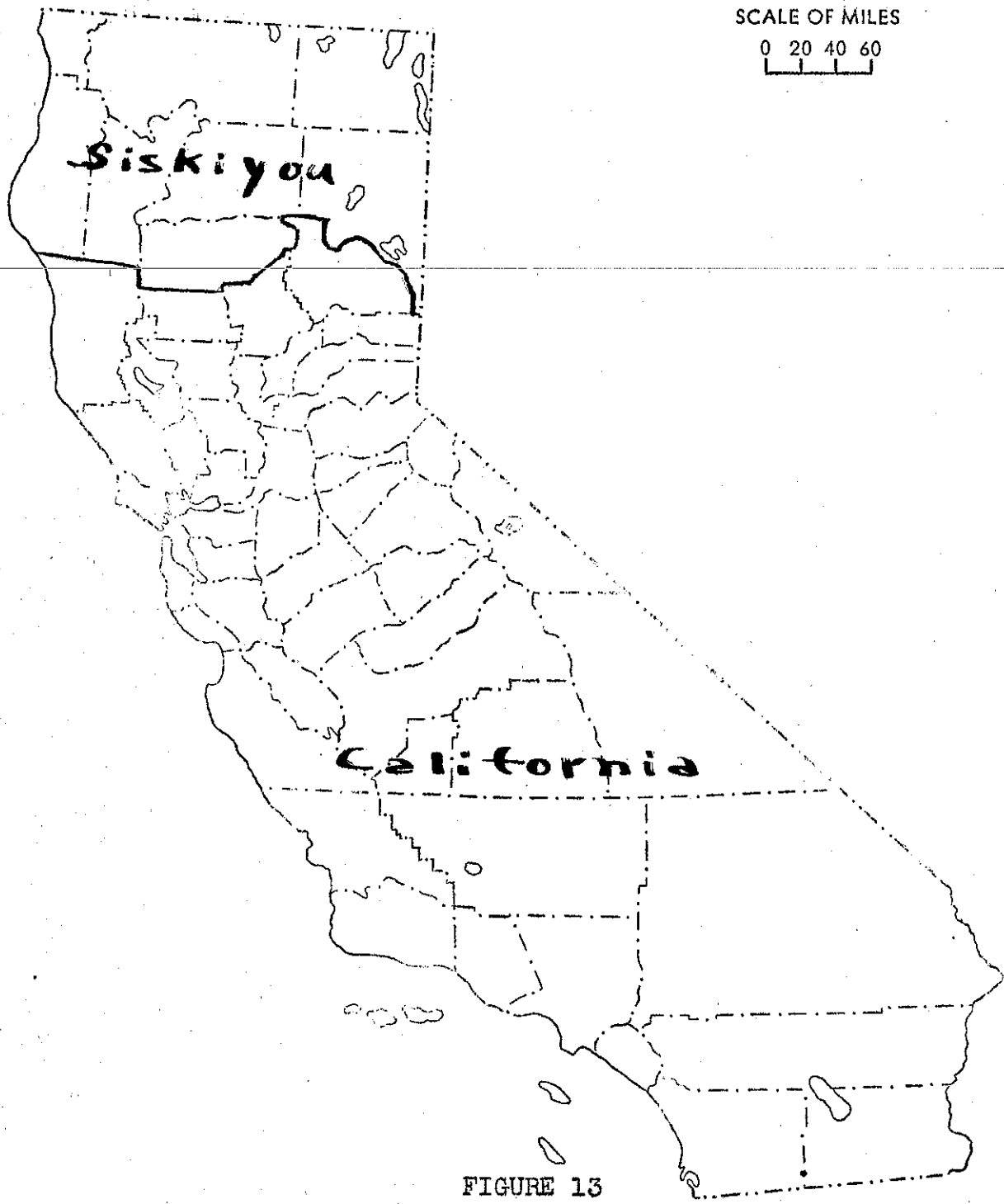
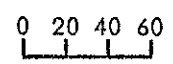


FIGURE 13

THE PROPOSED STATE OF SISKIYOU, 1909
42 Quire, op. cit.

"North California," "Central California," or "South California," but instead a unified, a strong, and an incomparable Golden State of California.⁴³

VI. THE NORTH URGES DIVISION

After the election in 1914, the issue reappeared.⁴⁴ Some Northern Californians were unhappy with the results at the polls, and feared the growing political power of the South. State division, they reasoned, was the answer to their problem. On December 22, 1914, the Articles of Incorporation of the California State Division League were filed in the Superior Court in San Francisco. The founders of the organization were: Albert Assur, collection agency operator and reported head of the League; W. M. Dean, real estate dealer; J. S. A. Macdonald; and N. B. Anderson. According to the League, division should be accomplished because both sections were in favor of it, and that the majority of the people in Southern California were not natives and not, therefore, in sympathy with the spirit and traditions of California.⁴⁵

It was not until 1915 that Northern support of division became noticeable. The attitude of the North toward state division was undergoing some change in 1902. This did

⁴³ Quire, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Rockwell D. Hunt, op. cit., p. 49.

⁴⁵ San Francisco Examiner, December 23, 1914.

not mean that the major portion of the Northern citizens were in harmony with the Southern divisionists, but rather that a few of the Southern arguments were considered valid. Also, a small number of persons in the North were favoring division for reasons of their own. It was not impossible, therefore, for division agitation to begin in the North.

In January, 1915, an organization called the People's Association for Changing the Boundary of California by Amending the Constitution began to appear in Northern California. Its purpose was to cut off the eight Southern counties at the Tehachapi by amending Section One, Article Twenty-one of the State Constitution. The plan of action was to circulate petitions to bring the proposition before the voters at a special election in 1915, or at the regular election the following year. Russell L. Dunn, civil engineer and resident of San Francisco, was the secretary of the organization. By the end of January nearly five thousand persons had signed the petition, including many prominent San Franciscans.⁴⁶

By February 2, it was reported that there were one hundred and fifty initiative petitions being circulated by the organization. At first the Californians in the South were not enthusiastic about the plan. John W. Kemp, member of the Los Angeles Water Board, declared that no division proposal would be successful which did not provide for the

⁴⁶ Ibid., January 31, 1915.

inclusion of Inyo county where Los Angeles had spent millions of dollars in developing the Owens River Project. Secretary Dunn and his colleagues amiably suggested that this could be arranged. Santa Barbara could be included with the Northern counties, and Inyo could join with the South.⁴⁷

The grand old man of division, the Honorable Robert N. Bulla, still favored separation. Although he was ill, he promised to help if the activity were properly directed.⁴⁸ Thus on February 3, 1915, Bulla spoke for division declaring that it was advantageous to both sections from the standpoints of economy, legislation, and geography.⁴⁹

In an interview at Stockton in February, Secretary Russell L. Dunn of the People's Association for Changing the Boundary of California by Amending the Constitution clearly expressed the reasoning of those Northerners favoring division. Among the reasons were: first, the South with its preponderance of Eastern immigrants was attempting to force its ideas and wishes on the North; second, the South was supporting measures that were bad for business and discouraging to out-of-state capital; third, the compensation law was urged by the South at the expense of the mining interests;

⁴⁷ Ibid., February 2, 1915.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., February 4, 1915.

fourth, Southern influence was being exerted to enact prohibition; fifth, the division of the state would give two Senators to each of the two sections. He added that the North would assume all of the state bonded indebtedness. It would hold all of the state properties in the South, and the new state would be expected to purchase them.⁵⁰

The third reason suggests the motive of Dunn and possibly of the whole organization. Dunn was a civil engineer with mining interests which were affected by the compensation law.⁵¹

Dunn was not the only one who had charged that the "drys" of Southern California were urging prohibition.⁵² The California Christian Advocate asserted that prohibition was not a sectional issue, however. An analysis of the vote in the last election had shown that the people of Northern California were as "dry" as the South.⁵³

By February 19, 1915, it was estimated that there were approximately two hundred petitions in circulation with a total of almost ten thousand⁵⁴ of the necessary seventy-one

⁵⁰ Los Angeles Express, February 8, 1915.

⁵¹ San Francisco Examiner, January 31, 1915.

⁵² Ibid., February 2, 1915.

⁵³ Herbert A. Wheeler, "State Division and Prohibition," California Christian Advocate, 64:7, February 25, 1915.

⁵⁴ San Francisco Examiner, February 19, 1915.

thousand signatures.⁵⁵ Concerning the success of the petitions, the San Francisco Chronicle remarked that there was never any difficulty in obtaining signatures if someone was willing to pay for them. The truth, according to the Chronicle, was that the organization was a propoganda move, and that the North as a whole did not choose to rid itself of the South.⁵⁶

The progress of the proposal in the North was not equalled in the South. The greatest opposition to the issue came from Los Angeles county. Although Dunn had suggested that Inyo county could be included in the new state, the organization had taken no action on the matter,⁵⁷ and Los Angeles was reluctant to support the scheme at the expense of the Owens River Project.

The reasoning of the organization had also alienated the support of the South. The Southerners resented the charge that, as Easterners, they did not express the spirit of California.⁵⁸ As this indignation subsided, the South slowly began to consider division. R. H. Norton in the Los Angeles Tribune indicated the changing attitude of the South. He contended that state division was advisable, but the plan

⁵⁵ San Francisco Chronicle, February 27, 1915.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ San Francisco Examiner, February 19, 1915.

⁵⁸ Los Angeles Express, February 8 and 11, 1915.

of the North was not acceptable. The South, he continued, should circulate a counter petition providing for the inclusion of San Luis Obispo, Kern, Inyo, and Mono counties in the new state.⁵⁹

The division proposals, whether Northern or Southern, were certain to have strong and influential opposition.

Governor Hiram W. Johnson was one of these opponents. At a banquet given in honor of the members of the forty-first legislature, he declared that California must be kept united.⁶⁰

There was no need for whatever counter activities which may have developed in the South. The agitation in the North, which had been aroused by the People's Association for Changing the Boundary of California by Amending the Constitution, soon disappeared. The Los Angeles Times suggested that the movement collapsed "perhaps under the weight of its name."⁶¹

VII. THE ACTIVITY DECLINES AGAIN

In December, 1916, John L. Davis in the Sacramento Bee summarized the division proposals and observed:

While we still have with us the same old desire--fostered on occasions by differences on political questions--it is significant that now the cry for State division comes from the Easterners.⁶²

⁵⁹ R. H. Norton, "State Division," Los Angeles Tribune, March 25, 1916.

⁶⁰ The Sacramento Union, March 10, 1916.

⁶¹ Los Angeles Times, November 14, 1926.

⁶² The Sacramento Bee, December 16, 1916.

Several days after Davis made this comment, a plea for separation was made by no less an Easterner than Mayor Fredrick F. Woodman of Los Angeles. Mayor Woodman declared that the South had not received its fair share of state highway development; that eighty-five per cent of the state employees were from the North; and that the citrus industry and the irrigation interests of the South were not justly considered by the legislature.⁶³ The principal cause for Woodman's plea was the probable decrease in federal appropriations for Los Angeles Harbor. This, he asserted, was the fault of the Senators from California who were from the North.⁶⁴

The comments of Mayor Woodman seemed to be the outburst of an angry man, rather than the challenge of a division leader. The Los Angeles Times, taking this view, said in January, 1917:

It is true that the north seems to have a monopoly on the Senators and on the Governors. But it is the south that elects them. The south can have representation at the State Capital and at Washington without breaking California apart.⁶⁵

The South must have shared the view of the Times, for there the matter rested. Not even the press mentioned division for the next three years. Occasionally an irate citizen would demand division, such as the "separatist" who wrote

⁶³ Los Angeles Examiner, December 27, 1916.

⁶⁴ San Francisco Examiner, December 26, 1916.

⁶⁵ Los Angeles Times, January 5, 1917.

this letter to the San Francisco Chronicle in September, 1918. Asserting that the population of the South was from the "crude, provincial regions of the Middle West," and therefore not really Californian, he said:

I notice in the election returns that the people of the sanitary southland are preparing another slaughter of real Californians. . . . Give 'em a separate State and let them call it Puritangeles.⁶⁶

VIII. THE BEAL BILL

In spite of the absence of agitation, the period of great division activity had not ended. The Southern counties were patiently waiting, and adding to their list of grievances. Finally, the issue of legislative reapportionment revived division. After the 1920 census, the South reasoned that its growth justified an increase in representation. When this demand was not satisfied, separation was suggested as the remedy.⁶⁷

A few months later, in 1921, Assemblyman Beal of Imperial county introduced a bill in the state legislature to create the state of Southern California⁶⁸ from the eight Southern counties: Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Orange, San Bernardino, Imperial, and Riverside.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ San Francisco Chronicle, September 15, 1918.

⁶⁷ Rockwell D. Hunt, op. cit., p. 50.

⁶⁸ Los Angeles Times, November 24, 1926.

⁶⁹ Ibid., November 11, 1926.

(See Figure 14, page 79) Some of the Southern newspapers took up the issue. The Los Angeles Times printed a history of the division movements, and added that the area and population of the proposed state were sufficient for its admission into the Union.⁷⁰ The strategy of Assemblyman Beal, with the advice of competent authorities was embraced in the following steps: first, an initiative by the people or action by the legislature was necessary to begin the action; second, the people of the whole state would have to approve the measure; third, the approval of Congress on the division was necessary; fourth, the new state would have to formulate and adopt a constitution; fifth, the new constitution must have the approval of Congress; sixth, the new state would have to elect a Governor, United States Senators, Representative, and other state officials.

Problems such as taxes and the division of bonded indebtedness could be settled by joint commissions of the two states.⁷¹ Thus Beal's proposal successfully circumvented the problems involved in reactivating the Act of 1859, which had fatally wounded the division attempts in the past.

Like the South, the reasoning of the North had also developed. The San Francisco Chronicle, in an article by

⁷⁰ J. M. Scanland, "Shall California Be Divided?" Ibid., April 17, 1921.

⁷¹ Ibid., November 24, 1926.

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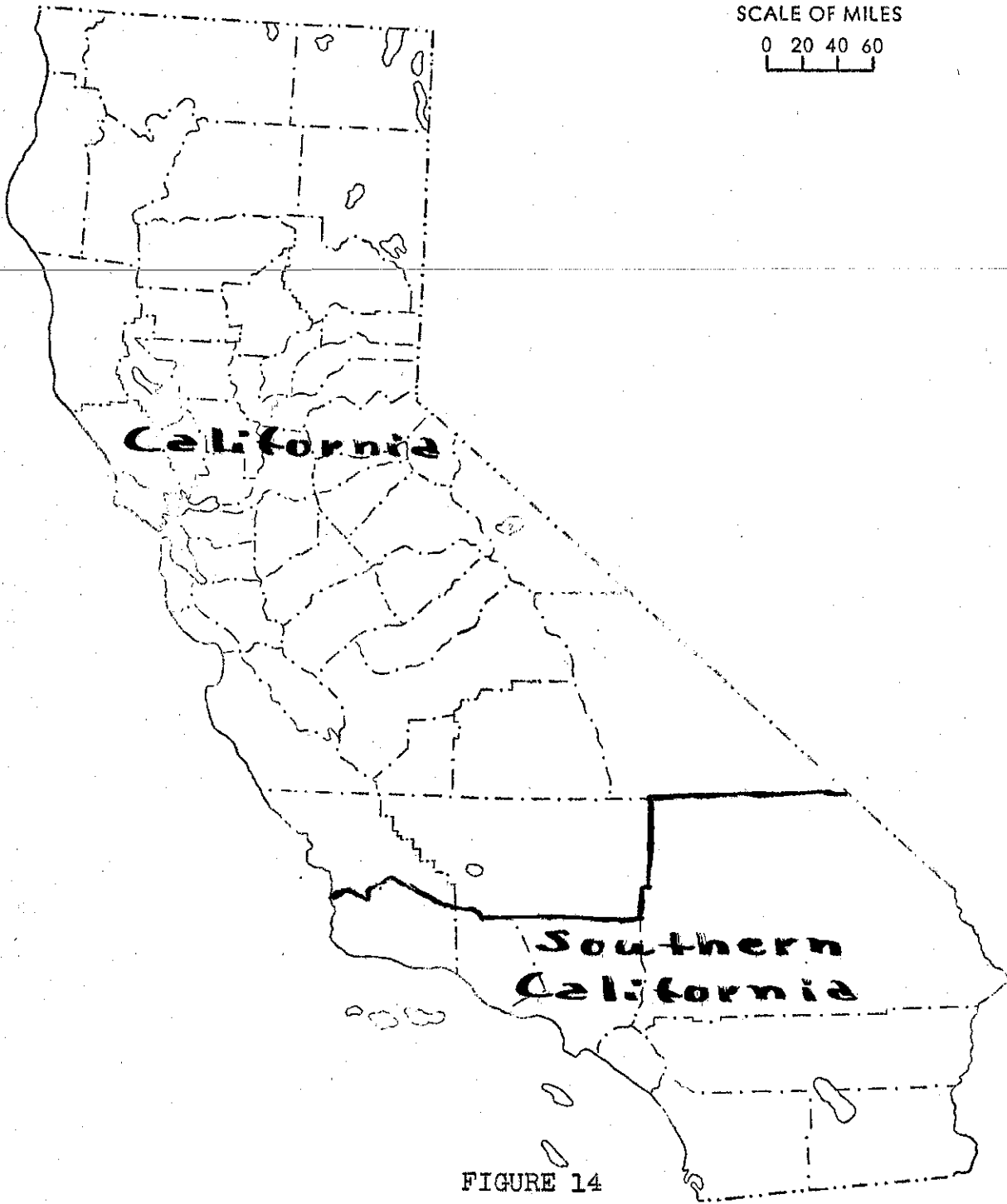
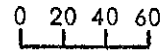


FIGURE 14

THE STATE OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA PROPOSED

BY THE BEAL BILL, 1921

72 Coy, op. cit., p. 57.

Harry C. Donoho, based its opposition on the official data of the State Banking Department and the Federal Reserve Bank.

Among the statistics cited by the Chronicle were:

First, according to the 1920 census, only twenty-five of the sixty-one cities with populations of five thousand or more were South of the Tehachapi range.

Second, the bank clearings in 1920 for the Southern counties were less than half of those in the Northern counties alone. More graphically, the bank clearings of San Francisco exceeded the combined clearings of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Pasadena, and San Diego.

Third, the total resources and liabilities of the Southern banks were only one-third of those in the North.

Fourth, the individual deposits in the South were less than those of the North.

These and other financial statistics led the San Francisco Chronicle to contend that the South could not afford division.⁷³

The Deal bill was never reported out of committee,⁷⁴ and the movement for division failed. This failure marks the end of the second great division period. Although it lacked the continuity and the enthusiasm of the movement following California's admission, it was an era of overt sectionalism which threatened the unity of California.

⁷³ San Francisco Chronicle, April 24, 1921.

⁷⁴ Los Angeles Times, November 11, 1926.

CHAPTER V

THREE DECADES OF DIVISION DORMANCY, 1922-1952

The nature of the division activities from 1922 to 1952 is difficult to determine. During these years the greatest advances in unity between the two sections were achieved, but there were also expressions of unrest and waves of agitation. It is certain, however, that there was no great movement for division, as in the periods of 1849 to 1860 and of 1907 to 1922. It is also not apparent that these three decades are a preface or an awakening to division. Therefore, the period from 1922 to 1952 may be characterized as another era of division dormancy, similar to that which occurred from 1860 to 1880.

I. REAPPORTIONMENT

In the early months of 1923, the Southern counties were loudly demanding reapportionment. In a blazing editorial, the Los Angeles Times declared, "Taxation without representation is as intolerable in Los Angeles in 1923 as it was in Boston and Philadelphia in 1776." According to the census statistics of 1920, the Times continued, Los Angeles county should have ten Senators and twenty-one Assemblymen. Yet Los Angeles had only seven Senators and fifteen Assemblymen. The Times recognized that other areas of the state were

also deserving of added representation, and it declared that the fight was not for Los Angeles alone, but for all who suffered under the injustice. Adding further evidence to support its demand, the Times said:

Los Angeles county now pays one-third of the entire revenue collected by the State. It has more than one-fourth the population of the State, and it is entitled both by the letter and the spirit of the constitution to one-fourth the total number of Senate and Assembly districts in California.¹

The issue of reapportionment caused some of the Southern citizens to urge separation.² The Los Angeles Times, which had so fervently urged that the South be given its share of representation, could not agree that division was a suitable solution. In an editorial in March, 1923, the Times said:

There is no real reason for dividing California. Even this conspiracy [reapportionment] would not constitute a justification. . . . We need Northern California and they need us; together, by doing consistent teamwork, both in business and politics. California has the natural advantages to make her, in the future, the greatest commonwealth in the Union.³

This attitude was a preface to a development taking place in California. As the issue of reapportionment faded, the state was embarking on a new era.

II. UNITY

On September 13, 1923, a meeting of the California

1 Los Angeles Times, January 20, 1923.

2 Ibid., January 29, 1923.

3 Ibid., March 22, 1923.

Development Association was held in Pasadena. For the first time in the history of the state representatives from all sections were brought together to promote the development of California industry. Further, the organization encouraged the cooperation of all parts of the state to achieve this goal.⁴

With the spirit demonstrated by the Association, efforts were soon made to reconcile the two greatest rivals within the state: Los Angeles and San Francisco. The Los Angeles Times and the San Francisco Chronicle contributed their part to the venture. A reporter from the Times visited San Francisco, and a member of the Chronicle staff went to Los Angeles. Their articles were published simultaneously by both newspapers.⁵

For two years the spirit of unity reigned, and the tired cry of independence was replaced by the vigorous slogan of interdependence. The differences once used as reasons for division now became reasons for harmony. The Los Angeles Times, for example, said of California's geography in 1924:

Topographically California is not a unit. The southeastern corner of the State drains into the Colorado River; the central-eastern into the Great Basin; the Sacramento-San Joaquin system picks up the streams of the central areas and the northeast corner; the Klamath and many smaller streams flow directly into the Pacific.

⁴ Ibid., September 14, 1923.

⁵ Ibid.; November 12 to 18, 1923.

The same mountain ranges that turn the many streams in different channels, however, help to unify the State.⁶

On September 13, 1924, the anniversary of its historic meeting in Pasadena, the directors of the California Development Association met to continue the work of the Association. Clinton R. Miller, regional vice-president of the organization,⁷ made this statement concerning the new goals:

The inter-relation and inter-dependence of all sections of the State are fundamental. Development activities in one part of the State affect the progress of all other communities. We plan to co-ordinate the development of individual communities so California will realize a hundred per cent on its natural resources.⁸

The Association sponsored such projects as "State Day" observed in San Francisco on November 19, 1924. This celebration brought together leaders in production, development, and industry to study conservation in California.⁹

Only on one occasion did any attempt to revive division appear. The Los Angeles Pioneers' Association, meeting on December 9, 1924, was presented with a resolution by Joseph Mesmer which would begin action to create the state of Southern California. The resolution asked for a referendum in the ten Southern counties on the proposal. The reasons for this action were: the failure of the legislature

⁶ Ibid., February 17, 1924.

⁷ Ibid., September 13, 1924.

⁸ Los Angeles Examiner, September 13, 1924.

⁹ Los Angeles Times, November 19, 1924.

to provide for state redistricting after the federal census, and that both United States Senators were from Northern California. The resolution was made the special order of business for the next meeting.¹⁰ No further action seems to have been taken on the matter.

This obscure suggestion did not mar the overall effect of the new period of unity. In 1925 the work of the California Development Association continued,¹¹ and Los Angeles and San Francisco were renewing their pledges of cooperation.¹² Rockwell D. Hunt, in a monograph on the history of the division controversy, summarized very aptly the new-found unity of California:

If physical unity were unattainable, if occupational divergence were fixed and permanent, if political anomalies were incorrigible, it is doubtful whether the logic of division could overcome the momentum of the spirit and tradition of unity in a hundred years; but when geography and climate itself become the hand-maids of unity, when the conscious interdependence of north and south in industry and commerce binds the sections ever more firmly together, when the common problems of the Empire State of the Pacific bespeak the strength of unity--then the heritage of a loyal people, the tradition that binds as with hooks of steel, give full assurance of a Commonwealth fronting the Pacific and the future with the strength of union,--California, one and indivisible!¹³

¹⁰ Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express, December 10, 1924.

¹¹ Los Angeles Times, January 30, 1925.

¹² Ibid., January 25, 1925.

¹³ Rockwell D. Hunt, op. cit., p. 53.

III. THE SOUTH URGES DIVISION

The drastic change in the relationship of Northern and Southern California was too good to last. The election of 1926 destroyed much of the good that the California Development Association had accomplished. Although the North and the South may have felt united in commerce, they reverted to sectional rivalry at the polls. The issue of reapportionment also added to the conflict, and it was this issue which brought about another organized effort to divide the state.

The Los Angeles Times expressed the attitude of part of the Southern population:

There has been slowly developing in California two divergent civic points of view, each definite, pronounced, supported by two great populous localities, one embracing the southern half and the other the northern half of this exceptionally favored State. . . . Last Tuesday's general election in California did not in certain of its aspects create a situation satisfactory to the great body of citizens, north and south, which sincerely and earnestly desires the State to go forward in a spirit of cooperation and unity.¹⁴

Not all of the South was reluctant to sever the bonds of unity. Several days after the election, the All-parties Reapportionment Committee, which had fought a losing battle for reapportionment satisfactory to the South, changed its name to the All-parties State Separation Committee. The purpose of the organization, as the name implied, was to divide California into two independent commonwealths. The principal

¹⁴ Los Angeles Times, November 7, 1926.

reason for urging division was the defeat of the Southern proposition to redistrict the legislative powers of the state on the basis of population. The plan which did win at the polls was promoted by the North and based reapportionment on geographic area. Other reasons were also given for division. The Southerners contended that they were paying more taxes and receiving less of the benefits of government expenditures than the North. The Governor and the two United States Senators were from the North, while the South had furnished no Senator for twelve years.

The Committee consisted of the county chairmen of all political parties in Los Angeles county. They were: Ralph Arnold, Republican, chairman; William Neblet, Democrat; M. O. Graves, Progressive; R. W. Anderson, Socialist; J. A. Murray, Prohibition; and Helga Morberg Qually, secretary.¹⁵ The legal problems of division were to be studied and reported on by M. O. Graves, attorney and member of the Committee, W. Fleet Palmer, and Arthur W. Eckman.¹⁶

This most recent action to divide the state lost no time in drawing commentaries from national figures. Senator Borah of Idaho, regarded as one of the foremost constitutional lawyers of this era, stated that no Constitutional amendment would be necessary to divide California. The division could

¹⁵ Los Angeles Record, November 10, 1926.

¹⁶ Los Angeles Times, November 11, 1926.

be accomplished through Section Three, Article Four through three steps: obtaining the consent of the people, obtaining the consent of the state legislature, and obtaining the consent of Congress.¹⁷

The editors of California were sharpening their pencils in preparation for the battle. The Los Angeles Times renewed its traditional opposition to division. It compared the conflict between Northern and Southern California to a disagreement within a family, and said that division would be as disastrous as the disruption of a family.¹⁸ The San Francisco Chronicle accused Los Angeles of scheming to dominate the state by supporting reapportionment on the basis of population.¹⁹ The Chronicle continued that division would never become a serious issue, for the major portion of Southern California was opposed to it, and that only Los Angeles was agitating for division.²⁰ Reviews of past grievances and of past division movements were published,²¹ and as the controversy continued, the divisionists found added reasons for separation.

The agitation gained strength from the arguments of

17 Ibid., November 10, 1926.

18 Ibid.

19 San Francisco Chronicle, November 11, 1926.

20 Ibid., November 15, 1926.

21 Los Angeles Times, November 14, 1926.

the Honorable Robert W. Bulla. His contentions were similar to those which he had expressed as early as 1907. He declared that large subdivisions of government were always exceedingly expensive, inconvenient, and often a hardship to the citizens. For example: the distances involved in transacting business at the capital, in transporting criminals and incompetents to institutions, and in seeking justice at the state Supreme Court proved the single state impractical. The variety of products, he continued, which resulted from the variety of climatic conditions caused constant conflicts of interest. The North was interested in timber because of its large wooded areas. The South, without these resources, was not concerned with the development of timber. More important, the North had an abundance of water, while the South was semi-barren, depending upon irrigation. It was, therefore, impossible to have general laws to meet the requirements of both sections.²²

Contemporary arguments supplemented the reasoning of Bulla. First, the voting strength of the two added Senators the new state would provide, would give the Pacific Coast the attention it deserved. It would also protect the variety of interests and industries in California.

Second, the North and the South were morally

²² Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express, November 13, 1926.

incompatible.²³ At the polls, the North demonstrated its desire to promote liquor interests and race-track gambling, while the South was opposed to both.²⁴

Third, the two sections disagreed on highway construction. During the recent elections, the North had supported a proposition asking for increased taxation for highway developments to be made primarily in the North. The South supported a counter proposition. Each section defeated the proposition of the other, with the result that no highway funds were provided, and highway construction could not be made! Moreover, of the highways developed in the past, two-thirds of the construction was in the North, while the South had furnished one-half of the funds.

Fourth, state and federal officials and political leaders were predominantly Northern residents. Besides the Governor and the United States Senators, eight members of Congress were from the North. Only three Congressmen were from the South which had over one-half of the population of the state. Five of the seven members of the state Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice, were residents of Northern California. The Republican national committeeman, and the chairman of the Republican state central committee were also

²³ Ibid., November 11, 1926.

²⁴ Ibid., November 15, 1926.

from the North.²⁵

Fifth, the people of the two sections had little in common. Their tastes were unlike and their dispositions, due to the difference in climate, were also dissimilar.²⁶ The population of the North was predominantly native-born, but the major portion of the Southern population was from the East, the Middle West, and the South.²⁷

Sixth, the North and the South rarely agreed on any political question. This rivalry was also expressed by San Francisco and Los Angeles. In labor, for example, San Francisco was well unionized, while the open shop prevailed in Los Angeles. Moral issues were also a source of conflict between the two cities.²⁸

In spite of the fact that the major portion of division activity originated in the South, especially in Los Angeles, the South was also the source of the most active opposition to the issue. Those who opposed division gave these reasons:

First, for reasons of sentiment the state should not be divided. California had always been a great state with an interesting and picturesque history. The romance of the

²⁵ Ibid., November 11, 1926.

²⁶ Ibid., November 15, 1926.

²⁷ Ibid., November 11, 1926.

²⁸ Ibid., November 15, 1926.

state would be destroyed by division.²⁹

Second, division would weaken the state politically and financially much as the nation was weakened by the Civil War.³⁰

Third, if California were divided, the Northern state, without the help of Los Angeles, would be at the mercy of immoral San Francisco!

Fourth, when Congress reapportions, the South would have its fair share of representation and would be able to protect its interests.

Fifth, the North did have more than its share of government officials, but in recent years two Governors had been from the South.³¹

Sixth, the diversity of climate, people, and agriculture made California famous. In agriculture, for example, the state was attractive, for the exclusive products of each section supplemented the other. As a unit, the state could do anything it wished.³²

Not only was Los Angeles and the whole South divided on the issue of separation, but there was also disagreement among the divisionists. Some declared that state division

²⁹ Ibid., November 11, 1926.

³⁰ Ibid., November 15, 1926.

³¹ Ibid., November 11, 1926.

³² Ibid., November 15, 1926.

could be accomplished through the Act of 1859. Others reasoned that the statute of limitations required the Act to be voted upon by the people again before it could be effective.³³ Still others contended that the adoption of the new state Constitution in 1879 had rendered the Act ineffective.³⁴

The shock of the election results soon passed, and the agitation for division disappeared once again. Analysing the election and the division agitation, the San Bernardino Sun said:

On three very vital questions, therefore, Los Angeles was out of step with all the rest of the State, including her closest neighbors, for whom she pretends to speak in the name of "Southern California."³⁵

In 1928 reapportionment was still a major problem. A few persons in the South declared that Southern California would have either satisfactory reapportionment or a separate state. One of these, Judge Frank G. Tyrrell, said at a meeting of the Los Angeles City Club, "State division is a probability if the attempt to disfranchise the South is carried."³⁶ Judge Tyrrell expressed the sentiments of a very small minority, however. As the reapportionment controversy continued, any agitation for division would have been useless.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., November 13, 1926.

³⁵ San Bernardino Sun as quoted in the San Francisco Chronicle, November 13, 1926.

³⁶ Los Angeles Times, October 16, 1928.

The conflict had become a struggle between the metropolitan centers and the rural areas or "cow counties."³⁷ The South was finally satisfied, at least temporarily, by the reapportionment proposals in 1931.³⁸

IV. THE ACTIVITY DECLINES

For ten years little thought was given to separating Northern and Southern California, although the issue was mentioned on several occasions.

In September, 1934, W. W. Hoffman of Oakland and John H. O'Donnell of Woodland introduced a resolution in the state Assembly to study the question of dividing California. The resolution provided for a committee of three to study the question and report to the next session, which was to convene in January. According to Hoffman, the issue of division was becoming more important, and the legislature should study the question thoroughly now to be prepared for future legislation on the issue. He said that the economic development of Southern and Northern California differed widely, especially during the past few years. The resolution was not well received. For example: acting-Governor Merriam said, "I'm for one bigger and better California."³⁹

³⁷ Los Angeles Record, November 13, 1928.

³⁸ Los Angeles Times, August 15, 1931.

³⁹ San Francisco Chronicle, September 15, 1934.

By 1937, a few Southerners were again attracted by the benefits of separation. They urged that a new state be formed consisting of Southern California and Arizona.⁴⁰ The immediate cause of the proposal was the conflict of interests that had arisen since the building of Hoover Dam. The San Francisco Chronicle challenged the reasoning of the divisionists and said that the existing conflicts of interests could be successfully solved without separation. The Chronicle continued that it would not be to Arizona's advantage to join Southern California for these reasons: first, Arizona would lose its rights to its name, its United States Senators, and its state officials; second, the South frequently embarrassed the North with its fantastic schemes, which the North was forced to combat; third compromise with the South could be had only at the expense of constant sacrifice of local political interests.

The Chronicle also presented some obstacles to division. Southern California, especially Los Angeles, provided the majority of the criminals in the state, but the two big prisons were in Northern California. The North was essential

⁴⁰ In April, 1952, another proposal was made to change the existing boundary between California and Arizona. On this occasion the suggestion was made by citizens of Arizona. The Yuma Junior Chamber of Commerce outlined a program which would divert the flow of the Colorado River around the city, placing Yuma on the California bank. The primary purpose of the proposal was to publicize the grievances of the city in its relationship to the remainder of the state. Stockton Record, April 17, 1952.

to the performance of state functions, including those in which Los Angeles was primarily concerned. The Chronicle concluded that Northern California was more vital to the South than Southern California was to the North. The thinking people of the South, realizing this fact, were opposing the scheme of division.⁴¹

After the 1940 census, Northern California became alarmed at the prospect of Southern control of the Assembly. For a short time Northern Californians urged division,⁴² and attracted the attention of the nation, but the issue subsided.

V. THE STATE OF JEFFERSON

Of the many proposals to divide California, the most colorful was that for the "State of Jefferson." Like their forefathers in 1859 and 1909, the citizens of the far northern counties had grown restless and tired of being neglected by the rest of the state.

The expression of dissatisfaction spread to the northern counties from Oregon, as it had in 1909. Mayor Gilbert Gable, of Port Orford, Curry County, expressed the desire to secede from Oregon and join California.⁴³ Although Curry county had vast timber and mineral resources, it had no

⁴¹ Ibid., November 26, 1937.

⁴² New York Times, February 2, 1941.

⁴³ San Francisco Chronicle, December 7, 1941.

incorporated city, no telegraph line, and no railroad.⁴⁴

Del Norte⁴⁵ and Siskiyou counties began to appraise their situations and also found that they had been ignored. On November 18, 1941, the Siskiyou County Supervisors appropriated one hundred dollars to study the advisability of forming a new state with Curry county. A special committee was appointed to invite the counties of Del Norte and Modoc in California, and Josephine and Jackson, in Oregon, to join in the venture. The committee was also given the task of selecting a name for the new state.⁴⁶

Modoc county required only one day to accept the invitation,⁴⁷ and the proposed state now consisted of Curry, Siskiyou, Del Norte, and Modoc counties, with the capital at Yreka. (See Figure 15, page 98)

One of the greatest grievances of the seceding counties was the issue of road development.⁴⁸ Perhaps reasoning that travellers in the area would thus have sympathy for the cause, the following proclamation was distributed to visitors:

PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

You are now entering Jefferson, the 49th State of the

⁴⁴ Ibid., November 30, 1941.

⁴⁵ Ibid., November 21, 1941.

⁴⁶ Ibid., November 19, 1941.

⁴⁷ Ibid., November 20, 1941.

⁴⁸ Ibid., November 27, 1941.

CALIFORNIA

SCALE OF MILES

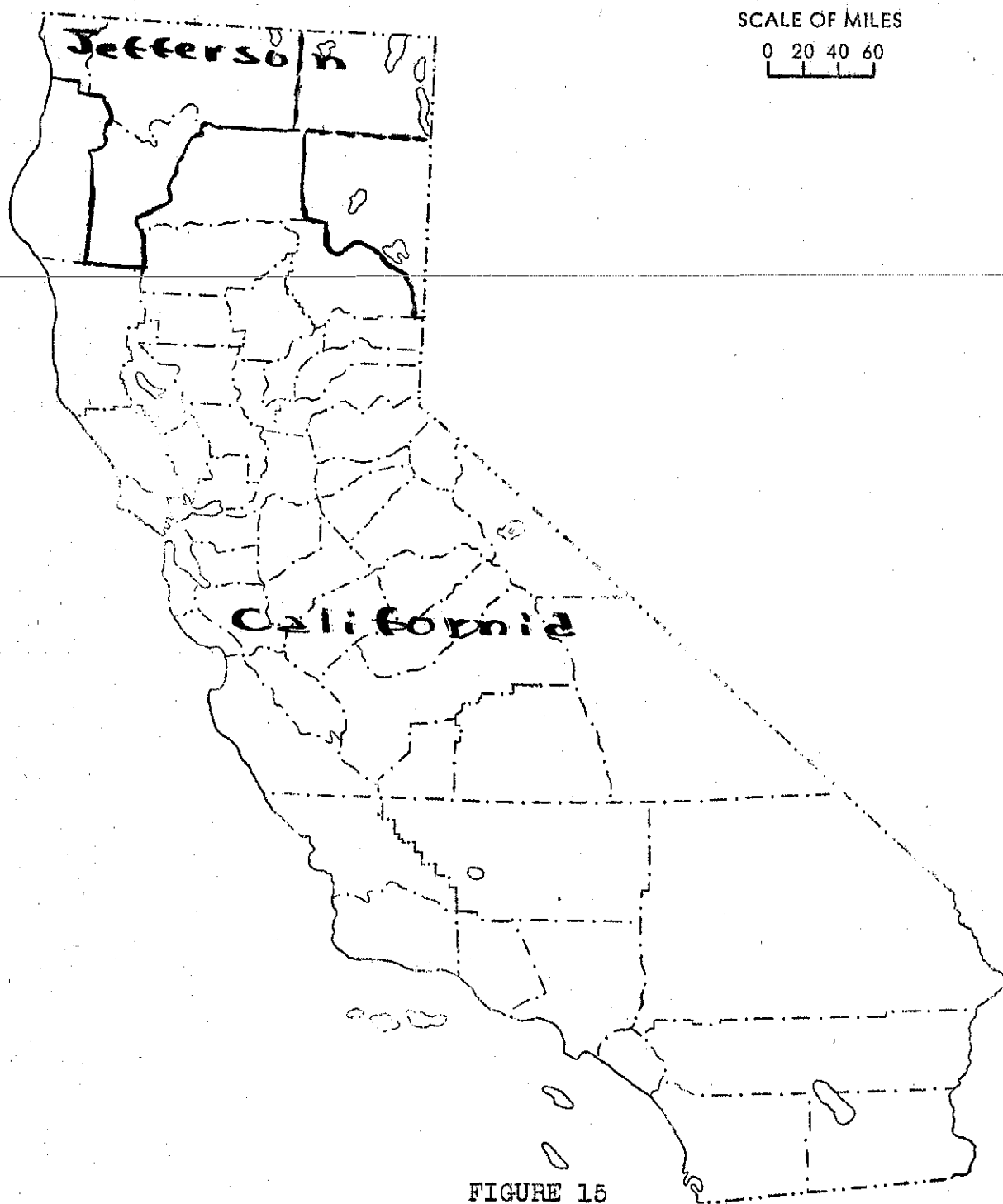
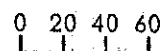


FIGURE 15

THE PROPOSED STATE OF JEFFERSON, 1941

Union.

Jefferson is now in patriotic rebellion against the States of California and Oregon.

This 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 travelling parallel to the greatest copper belt in the Far West, seventy-five miles west of 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.

(Please carry this proclamation with you and pass them out on your way.)

STATE OF JEFFERSON CITIZENS COMMITTEE
Temporary State Capital, Yreka⁴⁹

The proclamation stated the case for the seceding counties, and also for Lassen county which joined the proposed state on November 27, 1941.⁵⁰ At this time Stanton Delaplane⁵¹

⁴⁹ William Newell Davis, Jr., Notes and clippings concerning the proposed state of Jefferson, 1941-1942 (The Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley).

⁵⁰ San Francisco Chronicle, November 28, 1941.

⁵¹ Stanton Delaplane was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1942 for his coverage of the "State of Jefferson." The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1949 (New York: New York World-Telegram, 1949), p. 379.

wrote in the San Francisco Chronicle:

The counties were seceding so fast that it was almost impossible to keep track of them. Newest surprise was Surprise Valley in Eastern Modoc County. They want to go over and join Nevada.⁵²

With five counties and invitations to Trinity, Josephine, and Jackson,⁵³ the state of Jefferson progressed. The design of the double cross on a mining pan was adopted as the state seal. The tax structure for the new state was also formulated. Sales taxes, income taxes, and liquor taxes would be abolished. The revenue of the state would come from a small royalty on mining and timber development. Slot machines would be abolished because they were unfair competition to the native stud poker.⁵⁴

To most Californians, the idea of the proposed state of Jefferson was hilarious. This Jeffersonians obviously wished to convey. The editor of the Santa Cruz News added his bit to the fun. He proposed that Santa Cruz should secede from California, form a new state, withdraw from the Union, and become a colony of Portugal.⁵⁵

There were a few people in California, however, who found more indignation than humor in the Jefferson movement.

⁵² San Francisco Chronicle, November 29, 1941.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., December 7, 1941.

⁵⁵ Ibid., November 27, 1941.

This, too, was intended by Jeffersonians. Contradicting the charges concerning highway development, Charles H. Purcell, State Highway Engineer, declared that the state had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on highways in Del Norte, Modoc, and Siskiyou. Furthermore, the 1941-1943 budget provided four hundred thousand dollars for highway development in those areas. He added that the only persons responsible for highway neglect were those local officials who failed to take care of the county's share in road development.⁵⁶

A similar attitude was taken by Charles V. Averill, district engineer of the Division of Mines, Department of Natural Resources. He said that the Department of Natural Resources had aided the United States Bureau of Mines and the United States Geological Survey in surveying the resources of Curry and the other rebelling counties. This was done at the combined cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars. He added that when the counties proved that there was justification for development, they would receive federal and state aid.⁵⁷

People and organizations which could gain by the activity in the North, publicized their approval. The Associated Farmers of California expressed their sympathy with the Jeffersonians. It was suggested that the motive of the

⁵⁶ Ibid., November 29, 1941.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Association was to counteract the political influence of California's State Federation of Labor.⁵⁸ Four University of California students from the seceding counties also joined in the activity by advocating the establishment of Jefferson University. Like other states on the Pacific Coast, however, Jefferson was having domestic problems. Modoc county reconsidered its hasty action and decided not to secede from California.⁵⁹

Tragedy also occurred in Jefferson. Mayor Gilbert Gable, founder of the "state," died on December 2, 1941, and for the first time the Jefferson flag flew at half mast. Shortly before he died, however, Trinity county voted to join the secessionists, and thus replaced Modoc.⁶⁰

Even after the death of Gable, the movement continued. A provisional territorial assembly was held,⁶¹ a gubernatorial caucus was conducted,⁶² and rebellion continued every Thursday night according to schedule. On December 4, 1941, Judge John L. Childs of Crescent City, Del Norte county, was elected the first Governor of Jefferson.⁶³

⁵⁸ Ibid., December 1, 1941.

⁵⁹ Ibid., December 2, 1941.

⁶⁰ Ibid., December 3, 1941.

⁶¹ Ibid., December 7, 1941.

⁶² Ibid., December 4, 1941.

⁶³ Ibid., December 5, 1941.

The new Governor took up the tax problem immediately. He declared that the federal government owned so much tax-free land in the area that the citizens were burdened with more than their fair share of taxes. Childs also demanded funds for the development of roads.⁶⁴ Three days later the United States entered the Second World War, and the secession activities came to a sudden halt.

A few days later the "State of Jefferson" officially announced: "In view of the National emergency, the acting officers of the provisional territory of Jefferson here and now discontinue any and all activities."⁶⁵

The end of the Jefferson movement was the end of a superb publicity scheme. Mayor Gilbert Gable was not only the founder of "state," but was also an expert in public relations. He promoted the idea to obtain publicity for mining developments.⁶⁶ If there was any doubt in the minds of Californians concerning the purpose of the proposed state of Jefferson, Acting Governor John L. Childs erased it when he said:

The State of Jefferson was originated for the sole purpose of calling the attention of the proper authorities of Oregon and California, and the Federal authorities in Washington, to the fact we have immense deposits of strategic and necessary defense minerals and we need

⁶⁴ Ibid., December 6, 1941.

⁶⁵ Ibid., December 9, 1941.

⁶⁶ Ibid., December 3, 1941.

roads to develop these.

We have accomplished that purpose and henceforth all of our efforts will be directed toward assisting our States and Federal Governments in the defense of our country.⁶⁷

As a postscript to the "State of Jefferson,"⁶⁸ the financial backers publicized the cost of the movement. The expenditures, including the inauguration of the Governor, the manifestoes, and the signs for the torchlight parade, were less than one hundred dollars.⁶⁹ This was a small price to pay for a million dollars worth of publicity.

VI. CRAWFORD'S SECESSION

The Jefferson movement is the most recent of the proposals to form an independent state from territory within California. Since 1941, however, there have been several attempts to annex part of California to Nevada, and are thus a type of division activity.

As early as 1861, the boundary between Nevada and California had been a source of dispute between the two states. The boundary of the state of California was established by the Constitution of 1849 and is defined in the present Constitution.

⁶⁷ Ibid., December 9, 1941.

⁶⁸ For a more detailed account of the proposed state of Jefferson, see: William Newell Davis, Jr., "California's 'State of Jefferson'," to be published in the Quarterly of the California Historical Society, June, 1952.

⁶⁹ San Francisco Chronicle, December 16, 1941.

In March, 1861, Congress established a vague boundary at the summit of the Sierras. Several times since then Nevada had sent delegations to California to claim the disputed area.

In 1947 Assemblyman Don Crawford introduced a resolution in the Nevada legislature to ask California to release to it most of the disputed area. The resolution was adopted by the Nevada legislature. The legislature agreed, however, to respect the preference of the people as expressed in a plebiscite of the residents in the disputed territory. Previous petitions circulated in the area had indicated approval of secession from California, especially in those areas where residents conducted their business and educated their children across the border in Nevada.

Among the principal objections to secession was the possibility that Los Angeles would lose part of its property in Mono county in its Owens River Project. The proposal reached California just as the state legislature was adjourning, and no further action was taken on the matter.⁷⁰

In November, 1951, Assemblyman Crawford raised the proposal again. Although he claimed to have the support of the Nevada legislature,⁷¹ Crawford had more than a legislator's interest in the proposal. He lived near isolated Vya, Nevada near Cedarville in Modoc county. He said:

⁷⁰ Los Angeles News, June 23, 1947.

⁷¹ San Francisco Chronicle, November 29, 1951.

My ranch is so far isolated from any town in Nevada, that most of my contacts with the outside world are with California border towns. . . . [I have been] constantly besieged by residents of this disputed area to exert myself to get the state line put back where it was in 1861.

Crawford's present plan involved a narrow strip of territory between, "the present arbitrary California-Nevada state line and the summit where the waters divide to run to the Pacific Ocean." It affected part of the territory of nine counties in California: Modoc, Lassen, Plumas, Placer, Sierra, Alpine, El Dorado, Mono, and Nevada.

He planned to achieve the secession through a plebiscite of the people in that area. To obtain information concerning the procedures necessary in California, he asked the advice of California's Secretary of State, Frank M. Jordan. Jordan replied that the proposal could be accomplished only through the following steps:

First, the signatures of 303,687 persons must be obtained to qualify an initiative measure on the ballot, or 189,805 signatures for a petition for a legislative initiative.

Second, the approval of the voters of the state, or the approval of the state legislature must be obtained.⁷²

Apparently the necessary legal procedures for the secession were too discouraging, for there the proposal ended.

⁷² Stockton Record, November 29, 1951.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. SUMMARY

It has been the purpose of this study to record the proposals for the political division of California from 1860 to 1952.

Division proposals have risen and fallen through the history of California. They are a chain of events resembling the profile of the Tehachapi range which separates California's North and South.

Division activity began while California was still ruled by Mexico, but the summit of agitation was reached after the American Conquest. From 1849 to 1860 Southern California tirelessly urged the separation of the two sections. The Hispano-Californians did not wish to be politically united with the foreign culture of the American settlers. The South feared that the North would control the government, while it contributed the major portion of the funds. Geographic differences, the largeness of the territory, the distance to the capital, and the need for more representation in the United States Senate were added reasons supporting the cause of separation. The far northern counties also expressed a desire to be independent, but the South was more successful. Had it not been for the Civil War, Southern

California may have been autonomous through the Act of 1859.

For the next twenty years, 1860 to 1880, division activity descended into the valley of inactivity. Only on rare occasions was division discussed, as in the military precautions taken in 1861. At the end of this period a few Southern citizens advocated separation because of the differences in industrial pursuits and the need for harbor developments.

After 1880 separation activity climbed slowly upward. Division was proposed intermittently for twenty-seven years. Again, geographic and commercial differences were emphasized, and the new dispute concerning irrigation added to the conflict. The greatest single issue, however, was the increase in the taxes of the South. Some Northern citizens also advocated separation, motivated by the desire for more representation in the United States Senate, but neither section could retain the support of the public.

The second peak of division sentiment was reached in the period of 1907 to 1922. Both sides of the separation issue obtained powerful leaders and strong arguments. For a time at least, the Southern populace appeared to rally behind those who sought independence. The old arguments of the distance to the capital, the need for added Senatorial representation, and the excessiveness of taxation were also revived. These were augmented by the divisionists' contention

that a separate state government would be cheaper, and at this time the issue of reapportionment added to the unrest. The far northern counties also profited from the agitation. They urged the formation of a separate state of their own to attract attention to their underdeveloped natural resources. Some Northern citizens added their support to division because they feared the growing political power of the South. The agitation for division subsided, however, before legislative action had begun.

From 1922 to 1952 division agitation descended into another valley of inactivity. Great advances were made in uniting the two warring sections, but occasionally a conflict would develop, and division would be revived. The major source of dispute between Northern and Southern California was reapportionment. The South also rebelled against the political strength of the North exhibited at the polls, but this issue disappeared as the South became as powerful as the North. The last proposal to divide the state came from the far northern counties. Their scheme was primarily to publicize their natural resources, however. In the last ten years the only division activity has been the unsuccessful proposal of Nevada to annex part of California's border territory.

II. CONCLUSIONS

It is not the purpose of this study to justify any of the division proposals, to approve their legal procedures, to judge the validity of the contentions of either side, or to predict the reappearance or absence of division proposals in the future. Certain conclusions can be drawn from this study, however.

The following generalizations are evident in an analysis of the division proposals to separate Northern and Southern California:

First, no inherent differences between the two sections has been the principal cause of the proposals for separation. The geographic factors of climate and topography are the closest to inherent reasons. Although these differences have been reiterated by divisionists in almost every Southern proposal, they assumed a secondary importance after Southern California began to develop industrially and to increase in population.

Second, all reasons for division have experienced a decline in importance. The most noticeable example of this is the principal cause for division after the American Conquest. At that time the Hispano-Californians struggled desperately to maintain their independence from the foreign culture of the American settlers. The conflict between the two cultures diminished as the old Spanish way of life disappeared.

The differences between the people of the two sections became the variations within one culture. Another illustration is the Northern domination of Southern California. By 1915 the pendulum had swung to the other extreme, and the North feared the political strength of the South.

Third, none of the past reasons for division exist today. Besides the disappearance of the reasons mentioned above, such arguments as the extent of California, the distance to the capital, and the differences of the two peoples are negligible because of the rapid progress in transportation and communication. Geographic and industrial differences are no longer considered obstacles to unity, but are welcome variations which allow Californians a diversified and self-sustaining way of life. More recent causes for division have also disappeared. For example: Southern California no longer struggles with Northern California over the increases in taxation. Reapportionment has also dissolved as a barrier. It has now become an issue between rural and metropolitan areas within each, in both sections.

Fourth, it does not appear, therefore, that Northern and Southern California will ever separate for any of the reasons that have appeared in the past. If division is ever accomplished it will no doubt be for reasons which have not yet appeared.

Turning to the far northern counties and the border

area, it seems evident that:

First, division proposals in the far northern counties have been caused by the same reasons. Both proposals examined in this study revealed that the far northern citizens were agitating because they had been ignored by the remainder of the state, and their resources had been left undeveloped. Their division proposals were not made in the hope of establishing a separate state, but to attract attention to their needs.

Second, the plans to annex portions of California to Nevada are obviously the direct result of the border dispute. They were not a serious threat to California's unity.

From these conclusions it appears that division will not be accomplished between Northern and Southern California in the near future. Division proposals may appear, however, whenever individuals, organizations, or localities can gain by the publicity which results from a separation plan.

Several questions for further investigation appear in the study of division.

First, could California be divided? If Congress had approved the Act of 1859, the state would have been severed, but is the Act of 1859 still valid? Has the statute of limitations negated its effectiveness? Has the creation of the Constitution of the State of California in 1879 nullified the Act? Does the Constitution of the United States prohibit or

provide for the division of a state in Section Three, Article Four? Does the Constitution of the State of California prohibit division in the definition of the boundaries in Section One, Article Twenty-one?

Second, were the division agitations in Southern California expressions of the people, or the schemes of the press or the politicians?

Third, were division proposals the expressions of unrest within California alone, or were they caused by unrest within the nation? The great period of agitation from 1849 to 1860 immediately preceded the Civil War, and the issue slumbered during the Reconstruction. The issue began to be revived before the Spanish-American War, reaching another peak of agitation prior to the First World War. In the period of comparative inactivity, division was proposed in the era of the perious 'Twenties, and the last of the proposals was terminated suddenly as the result of the coming of the Second World War. Is this a series of history's coincidences, or is there a definite relationship to unrest within the Union and sectional controversy within a state?

The friendly rivalry that exists today between the North and the South is deeply rooted in the history of California. Whether or not this rivalry will develop again into sentiment for separation, only the future divulge; but the hope of division appears to have been fatally wounded by the unity of California.

and no

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