

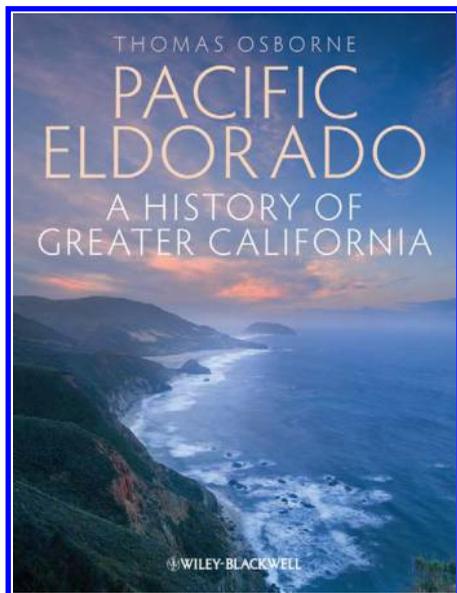
working class in what Bottoms describes as “ethnic cleansing” (171). In 1885 and 1886, Chinese communities across the Far West were uprooted and dispersed by violent white mobs.

While Bottoms effectively documents the agency of black Californians and Chinese immigrants, much less attention is paid to Native Americans. Bottoms argues, perhaps too dismissively, that they were “little more than ideological foils” (169) in the racial debates of late nineteenth-century California. Fortunately, he devotes more attention to native-born Californios, who repeatedly distanced themselves from the Chinese in an effort to bolster their tenuous claims to whiteness. Bottoms does a superb job of explaining white responses to black and Chinese demands. White Californians learned—with some judicial coaching—to focus on “municipal police powers” (164) as a way to avoid constitutional snags when persecuting the Chinese. While this strategy ultimately failed to pass muster with the US Supreme Court, it was part of an evolution from “state legislation to municipal ordinance to private arrangement” that culminated in racially restrictive covenants. In *Gandolfo v. Hartman*, a racial covenant directed at the Chinese was ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge in California. Nevertheless, Bottoms suggests that this 1892 case “may very well have been the catalyst for the sudden appearance of covenants in every state in the Union” (207). The early appearance of racial covenants and separate-but-equal education are two powerful examples of nineteenth-century California’s central, if often overlooked, importance to national development. More work is needed along these lines to uncover the obscured legacy of Reconstruction-era California.

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PACIFIC ELDORADO: *A History of Greater California*. By Thomas J. Osborne. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. 412 pp. \$44.95 paper.) Reviewed by Brett Garcia Myhren.

Teachers looking for a comprehensive textbook on California history for non-specialists will discover that the field is quite crowded. Some of these textbooks, like *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California* (2011), *California: A History* (2008), and *California: An Interpretive History* (2011), have long publication histories. Others, such as *Competing Visions: A History of California* (2013), are newer entrants to the field. One of these new additions is Osborne’s *Pacific Eldorado*, which seeks not only to give readers a “comprehensive account” of more than 500 years of history but also “to be among those on the cutting edge of internationalizing state and local history and giving the state’s long-time Pacific connections their due” (xviii). This is quite an ambitious goal, even without the added task of incorporating the Pacific. Indeed, the assignment for authors of textbooks is almost absurdly difficult: they must summarize and synthesize into a coherent narrative the historiography of a very large and complex region from prehistory to the present—with brevity and



grace. As scholars of more specialized areas would be quick to admit, simply treating a single aspect of California's history can be complex; attempting to cover everything from prehistoric volcanoes all the way up to the Facebook IPO requires a remarkable skill set.

Despite these formidable challenges, Osborne generally does a very good job of updating standard narratives and finding a way to pull them together. For instance, the material on Native Americans is robust and thoughtful, and Osborne frequently includes insights on race and gender. He also strives for balance with controversial incidents, such as Mussel Slough (188). Moreover, the text is accessible, which is critical for students at this

level. Osborn frames each chapter with timelines and summaries. He breaks up the text with photographs, drawings, charts, and what he calls "Pacific profiles," which are essentially miniature biographies of historical figures. In addition, Osborne includes review questions and a list of readings at the end of each chapter. With fewer than 400 pages of narrative and plenty of devices to help students find an entry point into what can be a disorienting span of time, the book also shouldn't feel too overwhelming for students who may not see California history as their consuming passion. On the other hand, for students who do want more information, Osborne has provided plenty of leads in his chapter bibliographies.

Though the book succeeds as a textbook on California history and includes a generous sampling of canonical material (as well as modest historiographical reassessment), Osborne did not set out to create a standard textbook. Instead, as mentioned earlier, he has more ambitious goals in mind, which include conceptualizing what he calls "greater" California, "a place whose history in numerous instances extends well beyond the geographical boundaries of the state" (xvii), and writing a "Pacific-centered California history" (xix). According to Osborne, these goals require a "spatial re-framing of California's past," an endeavor that he claims has produced "the first textbook to take up [Kevin] Starr's challenge" to integrate California's history with that of the Pacific (xix). Thus, in his inclusion of the Pacific, Osborne has set the bar very high for himself, and it is in this regard that the book does not completely accomplish all that it claims.

While the Pacific Ocean has long been a part of California's historiography, Osborne correctly observes that the scholarly conversation is undergoing what might be called a Pacific shift. Recent and forthcoming books (such as David Iglar's *The Great Ocean* and Bruce Cumings's *Dominion from Sea to Sea*) engage extensively with California's role in the Pacific basin and the influence of the Pacific on California. Most of this reconsideration has occurred in books and articles aimed at

other scholars. Osborne, however, seeks to bring this conversation to non-specialists in the classroom. He frequently connects California to the Pacific, and often these connections are smart and appropriate (such as his discussions of transpacific labor and trade), but on occasion they feel little forced. For instance, his claim that “the gold rush was mainly a maritime venture” (94) is puzzling, not only because mining occurred on land but also because he later writes that historians are still debating whether more miners arrived by land or sea (95). At other times, the Pacific concept simply feels stretched, as when Osborne argues that because the epicenter of San Francisco’s 1906 earthquake was located two miles offshore it provides “a striking natural example of how the Pacific has shaped . . . California’s history” (108).

The attempts to expand the geographical reach of California don’t always deliver as promised, either. Osborne certainly shows many ways in which the influence of California extends beyond the borders of the state and nation, but, despite his gestures toward an expansive conception of “greater” California, this still feels like a nation-based textbook. With the exception of the first few chapters, where Osborne astutely demonstrates that “the location and boundaries” of California “remained vague and unfixed” (27), the analysis is decidedly focused on that portion of California within the boundaries of the contemporary United States, especially after the narrative crosses the mid-nineteenth century. While it isn’t reasonable to expect that a book for non-specialists would devote entire chapters, for example, to regions that eventually came to be called Baja California and Baja California Sur, a deeper engagement with areas outside the current borders, like the fascinating community of African Americans in Baja California called “Little Liberia” (230), would have made the book’s claims and subtitle more credible.

Despite these minor reservations about the theme, the book still succeeds as an introductory text and would be a good addition to any survey of California history. Furthermore, it is important to remember that Osborne’s achievements are being evaluated according to his own (very ambitious) goals. Even moderate success in reaching those standards should be considered admirable. If Osborne simply convinces students that California is not as isolated as they are often told, that would be a worthy accomplishment. If they also begin to grasp a few of the region’s many connections to the Pacific, so much the better.

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LAND OF SMOKE AND MIRRORS: *A Cultural History of Los Angeles*. By Vincent Brook. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013. 288 pp. \$27.95 paper.) Reviewed by Sean Smith.

In *Land of Smoke and Mirrors: A Cultural History of Los Angeles*, Vincent Brook explores the cultural evolution of Los Angeles by examining the city as a rhetorical text or, as Brook describes, “via the myriad, often contradictory, images of Los Angeles that have been projected from within and without its geographical and