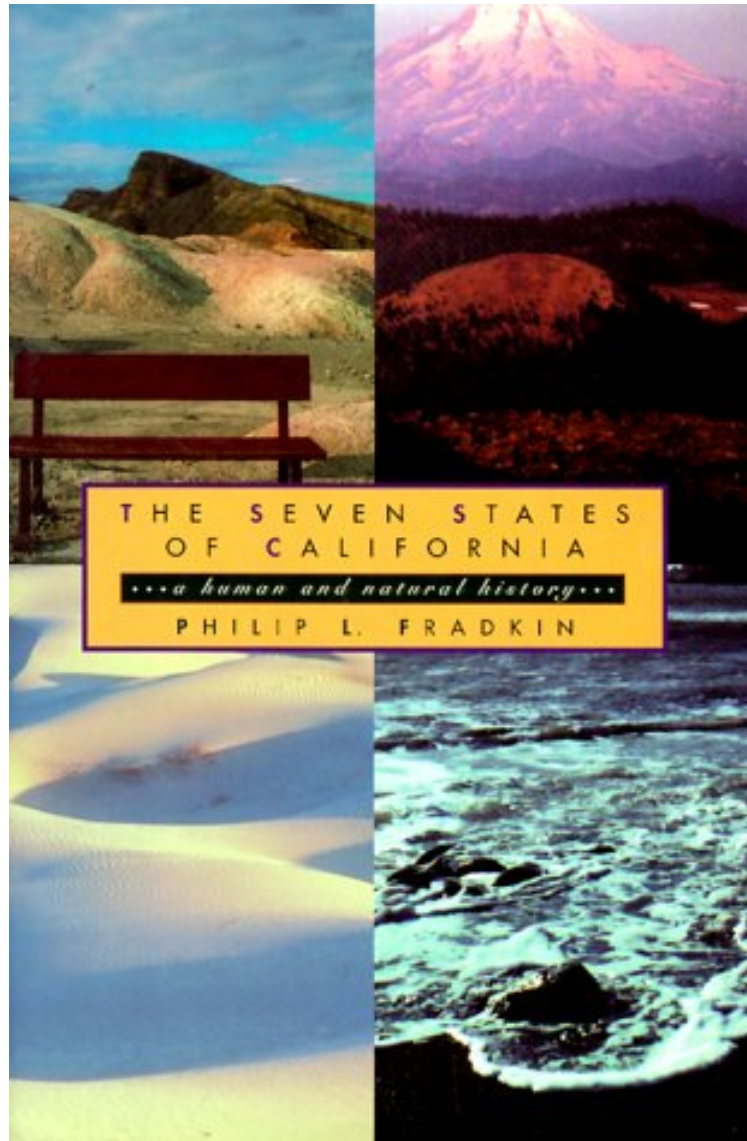


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## The Seven States of California: A Natural and Human History

*Philip L. Fradkin*

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#2597074 in Books Henry Holt n Co 1995-07Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.75 x 6.50 x 1.50l, #File Name: 0805019472474 pages | File size: 59.Mb

**Philip L. Fradkin : The Seven States of California: A Natural and Human History** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Seven States of California: A Natural and Human History:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This Book Is Not What It Says It IsBy Art CimentoI usually don't do online reviews, but in this case I feel that any future purchasers should know what they are getting if they buy this book. As I read it, I was puzzled at the author's logic. He divides California into seven provinces. As a long-time

California resident who has worked and traveled in every corner of the state, I'm not sure his divisions are logical, but that's the author's prerogative. However, he spends virtually no time developing the social or natural environment in any of his provinces. The Sierra is reduced to a lengthy history of Donner Pass, a 20-mile stretch of I-80 which is hardly representative of the 700-mile region. No mention of John Muir, the Gold Rush, or the conservation movements that led to the national parks. The Fractured Province manages to avoid any discussion of San Francisco, Silicon Valley, or Monterey - treating us to a simplistic and sensationalist discussion of earthquakes and the author's personal experiences in Marin County. The Great Valley goes into depth on Turlock; San Diego gets no mention; and so on. Along the way, we're treated to the author's progressive philosophies delivered in the form of standard tropes with cherry-picked anecdotes to support them. If you're in agreement with him, you might enjoy it, but there is no sophistication in any of his positions. The most interesting insight is when he describes a meeting he had with lumber company executives, whom he describes as "the bad guys". Nice to see what a public employee really thinks about other Californians. It wasn't until the acknowledgments (oddly placed at the end of the text) that it became clear what the book was about. In it, he mentions that he wanted to write a racial history of California, but his agent talked him to revising the concept. He wrote what he wanted anyway and just packaged it as something else to sell it. I felt cheated when I saw what he had done. So if you like rambling anecdotes about California and want to feel good about your progressive beliefs, go ahead and get this book. If you want insight into what makes California unique, you'll get more by reading the preface of any Cary McWilliams book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thoroughly researched  
By T. G. Cline  
This book is a blend of scholarly research, oral history, and personal anecdotes that take the reader on a journey through California as unique melange. To lovers of a particular California region (and we all have at least one), this book is invaluable.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Four Stars  
By J. C. Chambers  
Interesting book. As a second-generation California native, I learned a lot about my home state.

A survey of the seven distinct ecological areas of California looks at the natural features that typify each province, and links them to stories about the people found there, from Native Americans to Chinese laborers. 15,000 first printing.

From Publishers Weekly  
In this ambitious and highly readable attempt to explain California, Fradkin (*An American Nuclear Tragedy*) reveals how the state's landscape has helped shape its destiny. Hanging his narrative on geological features of seven regions of the state (e.g., a series of dry lakes, a mountain, a lava bed, an earthquake fault), he puts heavy emphasis on California's violent past and present: the destruction of the Modoc Indians, anti-Chinese pogroms, the incarceration of Japanese Americans in WWII, the death of James Dean ("a California life, a California death, a California life after death"), a serial killer in Marin County, drive-by shootings so common they are no longer news. Into these and numerous other topics Fradkin weaves personal impressions of this richly textured land and its restless population acquired during his 35 years residing in the state. The vision throughout is distinctly negative. As to California's future, Fradkin sees it as "a dark, chaotic time," a statement typical of this masterly but withering interpretation of the Golden State. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. "With the light, revealing touch of a master reporter, Fradkin (*Wanderings of an Environmental Journalist*, 1993, etc.) takes the Golden State's measure, top to bottom."--*Kirkus*

From the Inside Flap  
Philip Fradkin's work is full of foresight, good sense, and an understanding of the ties between social and environmental dilemmas. Taking Fradkin's writing seriously is an important step in figuring out the American West today.  
Patricia Nelson Limerick