

“The State of Jefferson”

A Disaffected Region's 160-Year Search for Identity

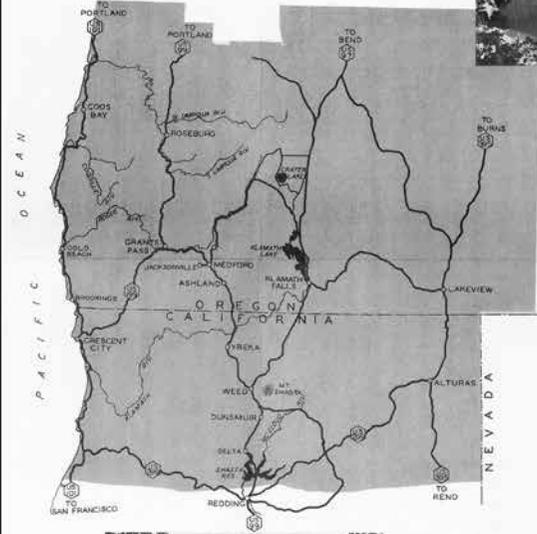
JEFF LALANDE

IF ONE WERE TO ASK RESIDENTS of Portland and the Willamette Valley, “Where and what is the State of Jefferson?,” many would shrug in puzzlement.¹ A few might be somewhat familiar with the broader reasons behind the events that culminated in late 1941 with a well-publicized State of Jefferson secession movement. Some residents of southwestern Oregon and northern-most California held (and some still hold) the belief that their regions had far more in common with each other than they do with the other parts of their respective states — and, that neither of them has gotten a fair shake from Salem or Sacramento, distant state capitals ever-dominated by the interests of far-more-heavily populated parts. Thus, the birth of the State of Jefferson idea, the sentiments of which can be summarized as: Let us depart from California and from Oregon; we shall throw in our lot together, make common cause, and decide our own destiny as a single, new state.

This secession idea — a symptom of geographic distance and political disaffection from more populated areas of the two states — has waxed and waned under various names over the course of 160 years. The twentieth-century episodes in this lengthy story were actually far less serious in their intent to separate from Oregon and California than many residents of the area now seem to believe. Still, the historical meaning of the State of Jefferson idea is more complex and, ultimately, more interesting than the present-day, somewhat romanticized versions of the 1941 episode in particular. This essay attempts to answer two questions: What are the historical facts of the State of Jefferson idea, and what is the larger contextual meaning of this 160-year search for regional identity? Relatively few historical studies of the State of Jefferson — studies both of the actual events of the 160-year-old Jefferson story and of the changing motivations behind the secession idea — have been published. In addition to focusing on the

IN THE STATE OF JEFFERSON*

*The boundaries of the State of Jefferson, since it is more a State of Mind than a physical state, have always been somewhat indefinite. The map below, however, shows the territory which most authorities agree to be Jefferson. It is an area rich in natural endowments, infinite in the variety of its recreational resources, and wealthy beyond belief in those qualities which lead its happy citizens to say . . . "Livability is our greatest resource."



- 1 - Artist's drawing of the new home of Ashland's internationally renowned Shakespearean Festival
- 2 - The picturesque Jefferson coast is bathed by warm Japanese currents
- 3 - Among Jefferson's many scenic wonders is famous Crater Lake
- 4 - Shooting the rapids through Hells Gate Canyon on the lower Rogue
- 5 - Mt. Shasta Ski Bowl—the nation's newest and largest
- 6 - Orchards and rolling farmland characterize Jefferson's valleys
- 7 - Jefferson's modern communities offer fine golf courses, swimming pools, and many other outdoor recreational facilities
- 8 - Buffalo still graze on a Jefferson ranch, against the backdrop of Table Rock, famous site of the Indian peace treaty signing
- 9 - Jefferson's entertainment includes many rodeos each year
- 10 - Jefferson's forests, wilderness areas, lakes and rivers bring tens of thousands of fishermen, hunters, and campers to the "state" every year
- 11 - The State of Jefferson encompasses the largest remaining stand of virgin timber in the United States, and provides lumber for building in all parts of the world



"LIVABILITY IS OUR GREATEST RESOURCE," is the theme of this brochure from about 1959 titled "The State of Jefferson, A History." It highlights the unique history of a region in northern California and southern Oregon that attempted a well-publicized secession movement in 1941.

two questions posed above, this essay also intends to encourage further inquiry into the broader State of Jefferson phenomenon.²

In brief, this re-occurring State of Jefferson movement — a century and a half of intermittent proposals for separation and secession — reflects three very distinctive phases in southwestern Oregon and adjacent California, each of them with three very differing reasons for such talk. The first phase occurred during the 1850s, while the Oregon-California borderland region was still in its infancy. This phase took place while it was first being resettled by gold miners and farmers — people who were, among other things, determined to subdue and remove the Native people. This initial period was dominated by a genuine search for *political identity*. The second phase lasted from shortly after 1900 (a period of major influx of population and wealth) through the 1950s. Most definitely it was dominated by the search for *political attention*. This phase of search entailed attempts to parlay a publicity gimmick — the bogus threat of secession — into heightened political attention in Salem and Sacramento. The third Jeffersonian phase, yet another time of search, began during the mid 1970s, and it continues into today. The current phase has indeed seen attempts by a few people to find a truly *political identity* as a new state. Nevertheless, this phase has largely transformed into a search for a satisfying regional, even geographic and psychological, identity — an identity without the necessity of having formal governmental boundaries on the map. It began when another great influx of newcomers arrived in the region. Because the definition of the region's identity is still contested — it can mean very different things to different people — this current search may represent the most interesting phase of all.

THE FIRST PHASE was the search for *political identity*. It began in 1852 with a serious proposal for a new State of Shasta. This entity would have included most of California north of Sacramento and San Francisco Bay. California, having been under military government since the Mexican War and thereby escaping the purgatorial period of territorial status, entered the Union as a state in 1850, while Oregon still remained a federal territory that included the rest of the Pacific Northwest. The entire Far West of the United States had only recently, in the late 1840s, come under the American flag. Politically, not only northern-most California and southwestern Oregon, but the entire country west of the Continental Divide, was in its political and economic infancy. Boundaries, whether physical or governmental and shown on maps or mental and within people's ways of thinking, remained fluid — that is, still in flux, as-yet undetermined.

By 1850 and 1851, following close on the initial 1848–1849 gold rush to the canyons of the central Sierras, rich new diggings were discovered fur-

ther to the north — even as far from the original mother-lode country as the remote canyon of the lower Klamath River. In 1851 and 1852, prospectors found gold further north, in the Oregon Territory’s Rogue River country. The resulting rapid influx of miners, merchants, and farmers into the area formed what some of the new residents believed to be a critical mass of political power in northern-most California. Voters had now become sufficient in numbers — living in a region that appeared sufficiently large and wealthy, and one located more than sufficiently distant from Sacramento — to justify creation of a new state. In 1852, some local politicians floated a serious proposal in the California State Assembly that would have created a new State of Shasta, encompassing the upper-most Sacramento Valley and the rest of California to the north. The 1852 State of Shasta attempt evidently died aborning, only to be resurrected and then abandoned again in 1855. During California’s politically turbulent first decade of statehood, a number of legislative proposals to divide it gained varying measures of traction.³

In 1853 and 1854, a State of Klamath proposal came to the state legislature meeting at the then-capital of California, Benicia; it would have extended the northern boundary of Klamath to include an adjacent piece of the Oregon Territory. With the magnitude of the Rogue River gold strike known by this time, southwestern-most Oregon Territory would have been a valuable part of the would-be new state. In December 1853, one correspondent to San Francisco’s *Daily Alta California* urged that the state legislature “let us [in northern California and southern Oregon] have a voice in the national councils where we can urge upon Congress our wants.” The writer stressed that the region “is distinct from the rest of either California or Oregon. . . . Its interests are separate and distinct and clogs the administration of both [California and Oregon].”⁴ Another correspondent, this one from southwestern Oregon and calling himself “Philom.,” wrote to the Scottsburg (Oregon) *Umpqua Weekly Gazette* in support of the Klamath idea, observing that the vast area in question suffered “under very many serious disadvantages for want of a medium through which its citizens might advocate their own rights and make their wants known.” Opining that “Southern Oregon and Northern California possess superior advantages over any other portion of the Pacific coast” and praising the region’s “agricultural and mineral resources, its metes and boundaries fixed by the God of Nature,” he concluded that “with the general good feeling existing among all classes of its citizens toward each other, it seems to be almost a Nation of itself.”⁵

A convention — drawing delegates from the upper Sacramento, Trinity, Klamath, Rogue, and Umpqua River drainages — to discuss the proposed new state of Klamath was held in Jacksonville, Oregon Territory, in early 1854.⁶ Despite local support, this statehood effort also came to naught. Legisla-

tors from elsewhere saw to it that northern-most California would remain an economic hinterland of the Golden State, and that the southwestern chunk of Oregon Territory stayed part of Oregon. Oregon's territorial delegate in the U.S. Congress, Joseph Lane, for example, counseled fellow Oregonians against the move, claiming that "the [Congressional] delegation from California

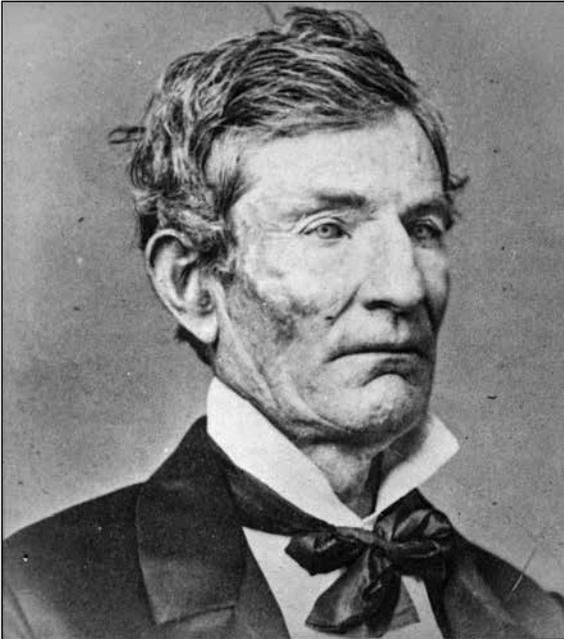
don't think of entertaining the idea of clipping their state" and promised his unstinting efforts in Congress to bring federal attention and dollars to the southern part of Oregon Territory.⁷ In 1859, one bill calling for a popular vote on splitting California in half actually passed the legislature, was signed by the governor, and received overwhelming approval in the southern part of the state. Forwarded to President James Buchanan in 1860 for Congressional consideration, the growing North-South crisis back East scuttled the effort.⁸ Some Oregonians also made serious attempts to split their territory.

As southwestern Oregon steadily filled with settlers during the mid 1850s, politically ambitious men, lawyers for the

most part, flocked to its largest community, Jacksonville. Among them was William Green T'Vault, a Tennessean who had come to Oregon City ten years earlier and worked as the editor of the territory's first newspaper. T'Vault arrived in Rogue River Valley during the gold rush and stayed. Hanging out his shingle as an attorney, T'Vault also began southern Oregon's first newspaper, the *Table Rock* (later *Oregon Sentinel*), using it to promote his truculent pro-Southern, pro-slavery, states-rights views as well as to launch his political career.⁹

Beginning in 1853, T'Vault and like-minded pro-slavery politicians living south of the Willamette Valley, such as Lafayette Mosier of Roseburg, proposed creation of a new federal territory out of the southern half of Oregon — one to be named the Territory of Jackson and, unlike Oregon Territory, to

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WILLIAM GREEN T'VAULT, pictured here in about 1860, proposed that a new pro-slavery federal territory be formed out of the southern half of Oregon and northern California.

be open to slavery. This idea was met with scorn and disapproval elsewhere in Oregon. And, it is probable that very few of T'Vault's southern Oregon supporters actually wanted to live in the slave society that he envisioned. Originally, he intended for the Jackson Territory scheme to incorporate northern-most California into its borders. Hostilities that erupted between the region's Native people and the flood of settlers and miners to the Klamath River canyon and the Rogue River country halted the plan for several years. After the warfare ended and many of the surviving Native people were removed to distant reservations, the forceful T'Vault won election to the territorial legislature in 1858 and soon became Speaker of the House. In the pages of his Jacksonville newspaper, T'Vault resurrected his brainchild. During the intervening years, however, neighboring Californians had apparently lost interest. By 1858, most Oregonians were focused on gaining statehood; they ignored the Territory of Jackson idea as a distraction.¹⁰

During the American Civil War, the irrepressible T'Vault (whose newspaper was suppressed by Oregon's military authorities for its fiery pro-Southern statements) encouraged secession of the entire West Coast to form a slave-holding "Pacific Republic." Politically, southwestern Oregon remained for decades thereafter a reliably conservative, states-rights Democratic stronghold while much of the rest of Oregon steadily transformed into a Republican majority. Following the end of the Civil War, however, there were very few murmurs about forming a new state out of the region encompassing northern California and southwestern Oregon. With the arrival of the telegraph in the 1860s and of the railroad in the 1870s and 1880s, the two adjacent areas became more firmly embedded — politically and economically — within their respective states.¹¹

If there ever really was to be a separate state, a state of Shasta, Klamath, Jackson, Siskiyou, or Jefferson, likely it could have succeeded only during this first phase. It was a time when political entities in the Far West were populated only by Native peoples and newcomers. The political entities were not, as yet, formally fixed in geography or in mentality as they would become after the close of the Civil War.¹²

THE SECOND PHASE of the 160-year-long State of Jefferson story was a search for *political attention*. It consisted of three quite similar episodes of allegedly authentic secession bids — bids that, although there were serious purposes behind them, did not actually intend for any state separation to occur. This phase began shortly after the turn of the last century, during the region's second major economic boom time (the 1850s and 1860s gold rush being the first), and it ended during the nation's post-World War II economic boom.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, the Southern Pacific Railroad had brought thousands of new arrivals into the region — many of them lured

by promotional brochures and by word-of-mouth claims about the tremendous agricultural and commercial possibilities of northern-most California and southwestern Oregon. This was a time of big new gold and copper mining ventures, large-scale irrigation developments, the Rogue Valley's fruit-orchard boom, and steadily increasing prices for real estate. While much of the latter trend turned out to be an unsustainable speculative bubble and the boom times subsided by World War I, the region did prosper.¹³

During the early twentieth century, railroads tied the area ever more closely to national, and even (through steamships and the opening of the Panama Canal) international, markets. The more populated and distant parts of the two neighbor states, however, continued to wield by far most of the political power in Salem and Sacramento. Resentments held by elites of the less-populated region grew, especially the often-voiced (but inaccurate) perception that those far-off places enjoyed far more than their fair share of tax expenditures. In 1909 and 1910, rather than float a potentially viable and realistic idea of secession, as had occurred in the early 1850s, commercial-club types and other local boosters (such as Medford newspaperman George Putnam) — people who probably were often prone to hyperbole in their writings — proposed to form the State of Siskiyou from several contiguous northern-California and southwestern-Oregon counties. Here, again, was a would-be political unit that schemed to incorporate parts of both California and Oregon.

This State of Siskiyou was not, however, a serious secession proposal. It was largely a bid for attention. Accompanied by prominent coverage in local newspapers, the Jackson County Press Association launched the idea as a way to bring even more publicity to the then-booming region. Local newspaper publishers, commercial-club members, and other proponents presented their State of Siskiyou — which would have embraced Oregon's Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, and Klamath counties and California's Siskiyou, Del Norte, and Shasta counties — as a place of tremendous wealth potential, especially with regard to its agricultural fertility and natural resources. In addition, supporters used the Siskiyou idea to amplify ongoing complaints about the two states' allegedly inadequate expenditure on local construction, such as for highly desired roads — especially new gravel-surfaced roads from Medford to Crater Lake National Park and from Yreka down the Klamath River canyon.¹⁴

The State of Siskiyou's advocates likely drew their inspiration directly from a similar campaign then being waged by publicity-seeking boosters of eastern Washington, northeastern Oregon, and northern Idaho who proposed to form a state of Lincoln, a region they had already dubbed the "Inland Empire." Fred D. Wagner, publisher of the *Ashland Daily Tidings*, was one prominent Siskiyou promoter; claiming that sentiment for secession was

strong in “Ashland, and in Jackson County it is nearly unanimous,” Wagner laid blame for the “bitter feeling against both Oregon and California” on those in “control in both the states, the continued taxation without representation, and our inability to secure redress.”¹⁵ Another Rogue River valley editor, mentioning that the Siskiyou talk had attracted the attention of a large-circulation newspaper published in the “satisfied wilds of New York City,” admitted the publicity value of the secession movement: “When a Gothamite [New Yorker] sees Rogue river apples on sale, he will buy and eat.” Complaining that the counties of southern Oregon did “not receive proper treatment at the hands of our Washington [D.C.] delegation,” he promised readers that, with a new state of Siskiyou, “the Crater Lake Road will be built, for one thing, Medford will get that coveted federal building and perhaps the state capitol” and that “present political minnows will become political whales.”¹⁶

The State of Siskiyou proposal, which included three northern California counties, drew the attention of San Francisco and Los Angeles newspapers. When distant editors smirked at the idea of Yreka, the seat of Siskiyou County, California, as a future capital of Siskiyou, the Jackson County *Valley Record* rose to the town’s defense, pointing out its municipal water works, “fine high school structure,” and other such improvements, as well as Yreka’s historic pluck in building its own rail connection, of some miles in length, to the Southern Pacific’s nearest rail-point of Montague in the 1880s: “the little city of Yreka, famous in the history of the [West C]oast, is today an exhibition of courage, resolution, and progress that would shame many Willamette [Valley] towns by contrast.”¹⁷



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NEWCOMERS TO THE ROGUE VALLEY prospered in the early twentieth century with agricultural, mining, and real estate opportunities. Pictured here are miners panning for gold in Jackson County in 1907.

Interestingly, one Jackson County man who fully supported the “secession” campaign, C.H. Klum, urged that the new state’s name be changed from *Siskiyou* to *Jefferson*. Thinking that this name could garner even wider national publicity than would *Siskiyou*, Klum sought to pay due honor to the president who had first encouraged American expansion into and settlement of the West. Although the term *Siskiyou* was indeed unfamiliar to (and often unpronounceable by) people living outside the region, *Siskiyou*’s Jackson County proponents retained the original name. One reason may have been to cement the cross-border secession alliance with residents of huge *Siskiyou* County, just across the state line in California. A *Siskiyou* County newspaper man proposed that *Siskiyou*’s coat of arms be the Goddess of Liberty reclining upon the slope of Mount Shasta, holding the scales of justice: “She will be weighing the inequity between California and Oregon.” This editor left no doubt as to his sentiments: “On the south [i.e., the bottom of *Siskiyou*’s coat of arms] would be a swift-moving ship of state, with all the wicked people of San Francisco . . . laden with greed, blackmail, assassination of character and libel.” While to the north of Liberty would be “old Oregon, a rotten hulk of a ship whose progress has been retarded by barnacles and moss. In the background will be [Portland *Oregonian* editor] Harvey Scott, on the stool of repentance, as happy as a tombstone at grief.” Further south, however, the leading residents of Redding, which would have been *Siskiyou*’s largest city, scoffed at the proposal. Redding, located at the northern edge of the flat, heavily farmed terrain of the Sacramento Valley, lacked the remote, mountainous character of much of the rest of the proposed State of *Siskiyou*, and its political and economic ties to the south evidently proved satisfactory.¹⁸

Putnam, in the pages of his *Medford Mail Tribune*, led the charge of would-be secessionists with frequent promotion of *Siskiyou*’s bountiful orchards, immense stands of timber, and great mineral wealth: “The creation of a new state is bound to come.” During the 1909 and 1910 *Siskiyou* episode, Putnam, a relative progressive in political outlook, especially enjoyed mocking the *Oregonian* and its aging but still powerful and reactionary editor. Scott had ridiculed the *Siskiyou* secession idea, describing Putnam as “mad.” Putnam, in turn, decried Scott’s *Oregonian* for its “baleful influence upon the state . . . in opposing every move for a greater Oregon.” He pointed out that the “*Oregonian* has no one to blame but itself when it rises in its wrath to heap calumnies upon those who advocate a new state — one free from the blight of this monarch of mossbacks.” Putnam, reprinting one of Scott’s anti-*Siskiyou* screeds in the pages of the *Mail Tribune*, stated that “there is not a country editor within the broad boundary of *Siskiyou* that could not do better” than Scott’s writing. “Evidently some donkey has climbed into Harvey Scott’s chair,” wrote Putnam, “when the old man wasn’t looking, wrapped the lion’s



THE PACIFIC HIGHWAY (U.S. Highway 99) through the Siskiyou mountains is pictured here in this photograph taken in about 1922. By World War I, the highway through southwest Oregon and northern California had been completed.

skin about him and begun to bray — and who can answer the undisputed logic of an ass’s bray?”¹⁹

By the end of January 1910, the audacious Siskiyou scheme seemed to have run its course in the pages of local papers, enjoying a brief renewal in February when the Oregon Supreme Court found unconstitutional an act that had provided special state funding for improving the road from Medford to Crater Lake.²⁰ Relentless lobbying eventually resulted in a straightened, gravel-surface road to the lake, one built with both state and federal (U.S. Forest Service) dollars. The tongue-in-cheek Siskiyou-secession idea quickly faded from popular memory after 1910. By World War I, the north/south Pacific Highway (U.S. Highway 99) had essentially been completed through most of the southwestern-Oregon/northern-California region — due to the challenging topography, these were among the most expensive per-mile stretches of that lengthy road to be built. During the 1920s, the Oregon Highway Department constructed the asphalt-paved Green Springs Highway (Highway 66) between Ashland and Klamath Falls, bringing increasing numbers of tourists to see Crater Lake and other natural wonders of Klamath County; in the



PICTURED HERE from left to right are Royce Brier; Pulitzer Prize winner Stanton Delaplaine, reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*; and Bill Chandler, managing editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Delaplaine is credited with drawing national attention to the State of Jefferson movement .

early 1930s, it realigned and paved the Crater Lake Highway (Highway 62). The region's transportation infrastructure grew even more during the Great Depression, due to generous amounts of the New Deal's federal dollars.²¹ The 1910 State of Siskiyou proposal clearly had been a publicity gimmick. It had been geared specifically toward bringing *public* attention to the region's bounty as well as *governmental* attention to the consequent need for more roads to access the area's natural resources. Not surprisingly then, the Siskiyou idea formed the template for the second phase's far more successful secession attempt — that is, successful in terms of gaining attention — the one of 1941.

By the closing months of 1941, fierce battles of the Second World War raged in Russia, North Africa, China, and elsewhere. Military and other

defense-related spending by the as-yet officially neutral United States was soaring. The nation was gearing up for war. Northern-most California and southwestern Oregon, with their stands of timber and deposits of strategic minerals largely inaccessible due to lack of roads, once again felt ignored and left out. The region, allegedly still not getting its due in terms of new road building, improved bridges, and other development during the run-up to American entry into the war, became ripe for another attention-getting secession movement.

The 1941 State of Jefferson episode came about in large part due to the actions of four figures: first and foremost, Gilbert Gable, mayor of tiny Port Orford, Oregon, since 1935; John Childs, judge and prominent political figure of Del Norte County, California; Randolph Collier, an ambitious state representative from Siskiyou County, California; and Stanton Delaplane, reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, whose editor evidently knew a good story when he smelled one. Delaplane's stories almost single-handedly made Gable's brainchild into a national story.

Energetic, charismatic, and imaginative, Gable arrived in the mid 1930s on the northern Curry County coast as a fifty-year-old Philadelphian with a previous career in public relations (including long-time work for Bell Telephone Company) and as an NBC radio personality. Gable proceeded to promote his vision of sleepy Port Orford as the nation's bustling farthest-west seaport and entrepôt of a mineral and timber empire. Successful in getting the community incorporated, he was then elected its first mayor. Gable invested his and others' wealth in major harbor improvements, but his new jetty crumbled during a winter storm less than a year after it was built. His proposal for an extremely expensive railroad connection from Port Orford southward along the coast and then east, up the Rogue River canyon to Oregon's interior, was rejected by state authorities. As a result, he saw the publicity (and possible political) value in Curry County's asking to become part of California. Gable and a delegation of other Curry County representatives even traveled to Sacramento in early October 1941 to meet with California Governor Culbert Olson, who greeted the Oregonians courteously but noncommittally. A likely bemused Olson politely rebuffed Gable's group. Gable, calling Curry County "Oregon's orphan," publicly challenged Oregon governor Charles Sprague to answer "13 questions" about the state's inadequate efforts to aid development of the county's resources — "questions" that, more correctly, voiced Gable's demands.²²

Receiving no satisfactory answers, Gable approached acquaintances in neighboring Del Norte County, California, where similar frustration with California's allegedly parsimonious road-spending had simmered for years. Among them was long-time political figure and superior court judge Childs.

The idea of an attention-getting secession of neighboring rural counties, from both the Golden State and the Beaver State, to propose creating a forty-ninth state rapidly took hold on both sides of the forty-second parallel, the California-Oregon state line. It promptly grew to include Siskiyou County, California, where Walter B. Stafford, editor of Yreka's *Siskiyou Daily News*, fanned local enthusiasm with repeated promotional news accounts and editorials. By mid November, political representatives of the three counties — led by Gable, Childs, and Siskiyou County's Collier — had begun to orchestrate the movement and to encourage nearby counties to join.²³

During November, Randolph Collier and local supporters proclaimed Yreka the capital of Jefferson. The seat of Siskiyou County, sitting astride the Pacific Highway and located a few miles from the Southern Pacific Railroad, Yreka was less than thirty miles south of the Oregon border. The 1850s mining town was an obvious choice in terms of both its history and its convenient location for news coverage. The *San Francisco Chronicle* sent Delaplane north to cover the story; his on-the-scene dispatches went over the wire to many other papers, including the far-distant *New York Times*. The secession campaign became nationally known during November, with major events planned for late that month and into early December.

The movement suffered a blow when Gable, who had been tapped to become Jefferson's governor, died suddenly of a massive heart attack on December 2. Childs, quickly acclaimed by organizers to fill Gable's position, brought political gravitas to the non-elected role. Collier — who would later go on to become the longest-serving legislator in state history and to earn the title "Father of California's Freeway System" — worked with fellow Yrekans to organize publicity-generating events. Secessionists portrayed Jefferson not only as a rich state — one full of as-yet inaccessible war-related metal ores (such as copper and chromite) and high-quality timber — but also as a place whose residents were unfairly taxed by California and Oregon. A page-one story in the *San Francisco Chronicle* quoted a disgruntled Jeffersonian, a garage owner in Yreka: "Folks want roads here, and if they don't get them pretty soon, there's no telling what they might do." Delaplane's series of front-page stories in the *Chronicle* mixed hints of genuine local anger with portrayals of secessionists' colorful activities and claims. The more staid *Portland Oregonian* sniffed that the "malcontent counties, protesting that nobody loves them" were "more frequented by fishermen and hunters than by anyone else" and that Jefferson's "road ahead toward statehood is as rough and rugged as the country."²⁴

During late November, secessionists led by Gable, Childs, and Collier urged commissioners of all adjacent counties to join in establishing the "Forty-ninth State." Three days before his death, Gable traveled to the little "copper/chromite mining belt" town of Cave Junction, in Josephine County

(Oregon), to give a pro-secession speech to a crowd of 200 intrigued, rural Oregonians.²⁵ Although California's Modoc and Lassen counties joined Del Norte and Siskiyou in formally becoming part of Jefferson, the commissioners of others (including Oregon's Jackson and Josephine) ultimately declined formal participation, and Modoc County later backed out. Childs came to Jackson County to urge Rogue Valley residents to become "citizens" of Jefferson. The *Medford Mail Tribune*, which had been in the vanguard of the State of Siskiyou promotion three decades previous, instead labeled the Jefferson proposal as a "hoax"; Jackson County Judge Blin Coleman dismissed the move as "merely an advertising stunt and such is frankly admitted" and declined to join.²⁶

In contrast to Yreka's *Siskiyou Daily News*, which became a mouthpiece for the secession movement's leaders, regional newspapers north of the border (such as the *Medford Mail Tribune* and the *Ashland Daily Tidings*) carried few stories about the State of Jefferson proposal — a marked change from the 1910 Siskiyou-secession campaign. A similar contrast holds between the amounts of coverage in the *San Francisco Chronicle* versus that in the *Portland Oregonian*. Oregon newspapers were far less positive in their tone than were those in Yreka and San Francisco, and they stated repeatedly that the movement was merely a stunt. Jackson County's reluctance to join the 1941 secession campaign may have been because representatives of the federal government had recently visited Medford to finalize plans to build a huge Army cantonment (training base) a few miles from town. County leaders would have been reluctant to complicate that project in any way, and construction of Camp White commenced in early 1942.²⁷

In Josephine County, the Grants Pass Cavemen, a lively civic-booster club whose members dressed up in animal skins, wore fright wigs, and carried clubs, gave the secessionists' invitation a comic-opera response when the group's "Chief Big Horn" swore loyalty to Oregon and "declared war" on Jefferson. Curry County was the single Oregon entity to become part of Jefferson. Ironically, residents of the tiny hamlet of Marial, in eastern-most Curry County's extremely remote Rogue River canyon, displayed pique at their own county government by proposing to stay part of Oregon, by separating three townships of mountainous terrain from Curry and joining them to Josephine County. Marial residents may have felt more connected to Josephine County due to long-time mail service and supply from upriver communities of Grants Pass and Glendale, as opposed to Curry County's Gold Beach, at the mouth of the Rogue River.²⁸

Reflecting the tongue-in-cheek nature of the Jefferson episode, among the other names suggested by Siskiyou County residents for the state were "Middlewestcoastia," "DelCuriskiyou" (from parts of the three original counties' names), and the highly accurate "State of Discontent." The new state's symbol was a gold pan with two Xes — the "double-cross" — to evoke



THE STATE OF JEFFERSON symbol, pictured above, was adopted in 1941. The seal is a gold pan with two Xes that symbolize residents' resentment toward the two states' capitols — Sacramento, California, and Salem, Oregon.

residents' resentment toward faithless Sacramento and Salem. Among the several proposed tongue-in-cheek state mottos was "Our roads are not passable; they're hardly jackassable"; proponents affirmed that new state would "secede every other Thursday" until further notice. For his part, Delaplane — hoping to generate further good copy for his newspaper — almost single-handedly made Jefferson's "secession" into a national story.

Delaplane actively participated in the unfolding story by suggesting, urging, and apparently actually choreographing such well-photographed, late-November events as

a "torch-light" parade in Yreka and a staged "roadblock" on the Pacific Highway, just outside Yreka, with armed, Stetson-wearing Jeffersonians passing out the new state's "Declaration of Secession" to passing motorists. These and other actions gained nation-wide news coverage. Although the main energy for the movement came from businesspeople and politicians in the three counties, scores of Siskiyou County residents dutifully showed up as extras at such events — whether posing as placard-carrying marchers or as members of a cheering throng in front of the Yreka Courthouse — to be filmed by newsreel cameras. On December 7, far more significant events intervened. State of Jefferson representatives — as shocked as the rest of the nation by the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor — quickly disbanded their effort, accompanied by patriotic pledges of loyalty and unity, and the story immediately disappeared from the news.²⁹

The political attention-seeking phase of regional secessionism had one last hurrah in early December 1956 — exactly fifteen years after the Jefferson declaration of secession in 1941 — when residents of eight northern-California counties (including Siskiyou) again threatened secession. This

time the name chosen was, in a return to the 1850s, *Shasta*. The 1956 call for separation sprang from a traditional Far Western concern: anxiety over water rights. In this case, the fear stemmed from resentment over “vote-heavy” southern California’s relentless thirst for (and perceived imminent theft of) northern California’s water. Although a severe snowstorm prevented some enthusiasts from attending the initial organizational meeting in the tiny Siskiyou County town of Dunsmuir, representatives agreed to lobby their respective county supervisors to approve plebiscite votes on the secession proposal. They also proposed to fund the new state through legalized gambling; Shasta was to have no income or sales tax. As in 1941, residents in self-described “Oregon orphan” Curry County again threatened to join the Californians. Feeling left out of the postwar boom, some of its citizens, particularly Brookings loggers and millworkers, protested the poor conditions of the Coast Highway (Highway 101). They demanded faster and safer travel for heavily loaded log trucks to the Brookings plywood mill and for the tractor-trailer trucks carrying the mill’s product to railheads situated to the north and south. Groups of smiling millworkers held up pro-secession “State of Shasta” placards in plain view of the passing traffic on Highway



Siskiyou County Museum

THIS PHOTOGRAPH documents a late-November roadblock on the Pacific Highway just outside Yreka, which was orchestrated by Stanton Delaplane, a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.



JOHN CHILDS (center) and Randolph Collier (right) attend a rally at the Yreka Courthouse in early December 1941. News crews filmed the event where State of Jefferson leaders encouraged neighboring counties to join the movement.

101. Although news accounts of this proposed “49th State of Shasta” made reference to the 1941 episode, this final, similarly half-in-jest, attention-getting effort of the second Jeffersonian phase failed to gain nearly as much publicity as had the State of Jefferson.³⁰

The years after World War II brought the country’s great postwar economic upswing, including the housing boom that created a vibrant timber-based economy in the region and gave respite between the second and third phases of its search. The four decades between 1950 and 1990 brought thousands of miles of new logging roads into formerly roadless country. By 1976, the Rogue River National Forest (situated largely in Jackson and Josephine counties) alone contained over 3,000 miles of roads. These roads featured numerous new bridges strong enough to carry the loaded log trucks, coming one-after-another, down from the forests to the proliferating new sawmills and plywood mills that, working double and triple shifts, now produced for a national and even international market. Almost all of this bounty resulted from the growing harvest of immense amounts of federal timber.

IN THE LONG RUN, the market needs of the postwar era succeeded beyond those of 1941 Jeffersonians' wildest dreams — federal and state dollars came pouring into the region. Ironically perhaps, it was largely as a consequence of those boom years that the third phase of search began. That search is ongoing still. It is what could be called a *contested search for a true regional identity*. A search for one's identity can be taken as a sign of a person's sense of uncertainty, perhaps even of anxiety. At least metaphorically, that has seemingly been the case with this current phase of the region's search.

When I, as a young man in the late 1960s, first came to the Rogue River Valley from the East Coast, I had never heard of the 1941 State of Jefferson movement. At that time, the story was not nearly as widely known and



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IN 1959, this group of millworkers from Brookings Plywood Corporation held pro-secession “State of Shasta” signs along Highway 101 in Oregon.

prominent in local popular consciousness as it later became. By the 1960s, the 1941 episode had become — for many southern Oregonians — a dimly recalled legend, something of a historic footnote, a bit of local lore. Renewed popular knowledge of the Jefferson episode among postwar Jackson and Josephine County residents, including the many new arrivals after 1950, likely first began to gestate by the mid 1960s, due in part to two publications. One was local historian Jack Sutton’s *The Mythical State of Jefferson: A Pictorial History of Early Northern California and Southern Oregon*, a brief but heavily illustrated work with an intriguing title that dealt almost entirely with the region’s history before 1900. The other was a Jackson County Chamber of Commerce promotional brochure from about 1960 to 1962: “The State of Jefferson: A History.” William Dawkins, author of the brochure’s text, had been made aware of the 1941 State of Jefferson movement in 1959 while serving as chair of the local area’s committee for celebrating the 1959 centennial of Oregon statehood. His brochure gave a short synopsis of the secession episode while also touting the pleasures of work or play in “Jefferson Today . . . [where] livability is our greatest resource.” A third source for renewal of the State of Jefferson concept in the region may well have been Pacific Power and Light Company’s five-minute “State of Jefferson” history spots, regularly re-broadcast as part of that company’s “Stories of Pacific Powerland” radio series during the late 1960s and early 1970s. By the early 1970s, *Jefferson* and *State of Jefferson* had begun to appear as names for Rogue Valley businesses.³¹

In southwestern Oregon, within what one might call northern Jefferson, dollars generated by logging on National Forests and other federal timber lands poured into county coffers, building new schools, justice centers, jails, parks, and county roads. During the late 1960s, and continuing for another two decades, the area’s economy was riding high from logging immense quantities of federal timber. The mills remained continuously busy, and the Southern Pacific Railroad’s trains pulled out of Medford every few days filled with lumber, plywood, and bins of pears. People set their watches by the Medford Corporation’s big saw-mill’s lunch-time whistle, audible from one end of town to the other. As well, by the mid to late 1970s, a very large (and continuing) influx of newcomers began arriving from elsewhere: the San Francisco Bay Area, southern California, Portland, and Puget Sound, as well as the American Midwest, the South, and the East Coast. Simultaneously began a greatly expanding stream of people from Mexico.

Economic success can often bring its own set of new problems — perceived or real — and its own new worries. For some residents of our region,

especially newcomers, it was worry about the rate and amount of the area's commodification of natural resources from the mountains, as well as worry about of pace of development down in the valleys. This anxiety, I believe, contributed to development of a new regional consciousness, a sense of this region's specialness. This search for what might be called a "useable regional identity" fairly naturally, if opportunistically, took over the old State of Jefferson name as a means of increasing the growing consciousness of a unique bio-region. Environmental activists and others utilized the phrase *State of Jefferson* as a way to highlight the region's undeniable biological diversity and aesthetic value.³²

For other self-proclaimed Jeffersonians — some of them newcomers who might have come to northern-most California and southwestern Oregon for the low tax rates and simply "to be left the Hell alone" — the State of Jefferson identity became their badge as self-professed rebels, concerned largely with personal-property rights in their own little patch of Heaven. Various Jefferson secession proposals that reflected this outlook, usually of brief duration and limited popularity, occurred from the 1980s into the 2000s. The most recent began in 2013 and continues into 2017. For some residents of Siskiyou County and neighboring northern California counties, secession sentiment became aroused by anger at perceived unfair taxation as well as fears of what some people saw as encroaching state and federal takeover of local sovereignty. These discontented, largely rural residents, encouraged by certain county politicians, have mounted a three-year-long State of Jefferson secession campaign.³³

As in years past, the Jefferson movement begun in 2013 garnered the attention of West Coast and national news media. Instead of an attention-getting prank, as in 1941, however, many of the 2013 effort's supporters — stimulated by conservative "Tea Party" rhetoric and likely encouraged by activities of the Far West's Sagebrush Rebels of the 1980s and 1990s and subsequent local-sovereignty movements of the twenty-first century — were completely serious in their belief in the possibility of secession. Leaders hoped to obtain a grant from the conservative Heritage Foundation, in Washington, D.C., for a detailed cost analysis and study of the political feasibility of separation from California. Siskiyou, Modoc, and Tehama county commissioners voted overwhelmingly to support secession. Del Norte and Tehama county commissioners decided to put the secession question before the voters as a ballot measure. The June 2014 measure failed in the 1941 Jeffersonian hotbed of Del Norte, but garnered 55 percent in Tehama County.³⁴

As pointed out by journalist Sarah Goodyear in 2016, the current movement is not without its internal conflicts. While some of Siskiyou County's more vocal proponents of secession agree on its desirability, they simultaneously reject each other's reasons for promoting it. This conflict is illustrated most clearly by current secession leaders' refusal to accept into their company those "left-libertarian" residents who sought secession as a means to legalize the use of marijuana in the new state or to loosen certain moralistic measures that had been favored by social conservatives. In addition, some of the self-described "Natives of Jefferson State" who are most fiercely in favor of secession will voice their anger — without any apparent sense of irony — at the area's American Indian tribes, its original residents, for urging federal and state conservation measures to save the Klamath River's dwindling runs of salmon. On January 6, 2015, on what they termed "Declaration Day," secession proponents mounted the steps of the California capitol to present putative declarations from residents and leaders of six counties that they wished to form a new state of Jefferson. On the same date in 2016, movement leaders returned to Sacramento, bringing similar petitions from additional northern counties. The 2016 event provided an impetus for a lengthy feature story in the New York *Daily News* about the current secession movement's background, personalities, and conflicting goals.³⁵

There is a further irony: the region's notably low tax rates during the 1950s through the 1980s. Those lower cost-of-living benefits of high-volume logging drew so many newcomers here in the first place, and many residents still wax nostalgic for them. That particular lure, some people remain loath to admit, had been largely courtesy of receipts from logging federal timber during those same decades. These plentiful funds to county coffers were generated by what may be called Jefferson's unsustainable "Great Cutover" of public land. This lower-tax benefit was especially important in southwestern Oregon's Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas counties due not only to the harvest of national-forest timber but also to the federal government's notably generous receipt-sharing formula for logging the O-and-C Lands (a vast, former railroad-building land grant that, after years of court battles, was revested to the federal government). The Oregon counties' "O-and-C formula," developed by big government during the New Deal, was far more generous than the standard federal timber-receipt arrangements found in any other part of the American West. With harvest of federal timber exceeding sustainable levels, taxpayers in southwestern Oregon happily rode on a veritable, but unsustainable, gravy train.³⁶

Still, for many, perhaps even most, residents of the region, the State of Jefferson regional-identity consciousness is much less specific and more subtle



Terry Rapoza

STATE OF JEFFERSON organizers gather at the California State Capitol in Sacramento on one of three Declaration Days that took place between 2014 and 2016. Participants brought declarations of separation to state legislators asking for permission to become an independent state.

than either the bio-regional or the local-sovereignty approaches discussed above. It may have strong appeal simply because, since the late 1970s, the region has become less and less distinctive, more and more like every place else. It has been steadily becoming, and at an accelerating rate, ever less rural. There is far less of the small-town feel in southwestern Oregon than when I first arrived; the commercial centers are far less peppered with long-time *local* businesses at which to shop. The area has become more urban, more cosmopolitan, more dominated by the very same big-box chain stores that some newer residents saw pop up like mushrooms in the places they left to move here.

After nearly five decades of personal observation as a resident of the region, I think it is *that* search for identity — a search born in part of newer residents' anxiety over what they feel is being lost in terms of regional distinctiveness — that has partially fueled this current phase. In addition, it seems highly likely to me that some newcomers claim to be Jeffersonians out of their wish to quickly put on the mantle — to don the cloak, so to speak — of being a real 'local' as soon as possible. That is, it serves as a means to claim

personal ownership to the region, to put down self-comforting psychological roots in one's new home. One can put down such roots by reveling in a bit of distinctive, if not always fully understood, regional history.

Today, Oregon's Jackson County and Josephine County are the two places in the region that beat the Jefferson drum the loudest. They promote the colorful secession story of 1941 as their very own. The episode has been commemorated by a plethora of institutional names, from Jefferson State Bank, Jefferson State Plumbing, and Jefferson State Freight Company to Jefferson Public Radio (with its *Jefferson Journal* bi-monthly magazine), and Medford's Jefferson Nature Center and Josephine County's Jefferson Hemp Fair and Rock Festival. In 1941, however, it was these two counties' faint-hearted commissioners who had refused to join the secession movement, and instead stood by as onlookers.

Today, the State of Jefferson movement of 1941 has become far more widely known than it was some years ago, thanks in part to the more recent secession movements. In addition, specialists in various disciplines have begun using the concept to frame their research and interpretations of the region. The very fact of this special issue of *Oregon Historical Quarterly* clearly demonstrates that shift. In 2014, a "Perspectives on the State of Jefferson" conference (unrelated to the planning and compiling of this issue of the *Quarterly*) was held at the University of Oregon. That gathering resulted in wider dissemination of several of the conference's papers in a volume published by Humboldt State University, in Arcata, California. These two publications demonstrate that the State of Jefferson concept is now beginning to receive its due as a subject of focused interpretation by scholars.³⁷

Although dramatically different in their intent, both the apparently sincere attempts by the region at separation from Oregon and California during the 1850s (the search's first phase) and its subsequent, largely publicity-gimmick episodes of the first half of the twentieth century (the search's second phase) had single-focus, easily understood objectives: actual statehood during the first phase and increased investment by the federal and two state governments during the second phase.³⁸ Desire for increased self-determination is indeed a theme common to all three phases of the Jefferson story. The founding American mantra of "No taxation without representation" can also be detected throughout Jefferson's history. Nevertheless, secession proponents during both the second and third phases linked — without any apparent acknowledgement of the inherent contradiction — their threatened tax rebellion with their desire for expenditure of far more funds locally by the two state governments,

expenditures well in excess of Jefferson residents' total taxes paid to those same governments.³⁹ The region's continuing third phase of the search displays multiple, sometimes conflicting, objectives as well as elements of internal discord. In this regard, the State of Jefferson of today displays some of the same dissonant political tendencies of the present-day United States as a whole.

NOTES

1. This essay began as a presentation given in 2015 at the thirty-ninth annual "State of Jefferson Meeting" in Jacksonville, Oregon (these yearly meetings bring together archaeologists, historians, and others each year to discuss their research results from projects within northern-most California and south-western Oregon). I sent a copy of that presentation, essentially un-changed from the verbal version, to the *Oregon Historical Quarterly* for consideration. The author is grateful to the *Quarterly's* editor, Eliza Canty-Jones, and to the two anonymous reviewers for wading through the original version's plentiful informal language, written for an audience of listeners, and for their constructive criticisms of it.

2. Although it has garnered substantial attention in regional popular media in recent decades (including magazine essays, feature newspaper articles, and public-television documentaries), scholarly treatment of the 1941 secession movement remains quite sparse. On commercial radio stations in the 1970s, the episode was given region-wide publicity in one of Pacific Power and Light Company's (now Pacificorp) "Stories of Pacific Powerland" five-minute spots; this and other "Tales" were subsequently collected and published in print: Thomas K. Worcester, *The State of Jefferson and Other Yarns of the*

Klamaths, Siskiyou, Southern Cascades and Northern Sierras (Beaverton, Ore.: TMS Book Service: 1982); the text for the State of Jefferson "yarn" is only a single page in length and is not in any sense a work of scholarship. In contrast, James T. Rock's *The State of Jefferson: The Dream Lives On* (Yreka: Siskiyou County Historical Society, 1985) and his subsequent summarizing article, "'State of Jefferson' Vision Hangs On," *California Historian* (Spring 1998), provide a solid if still brief narrative of the 1941 events. The following two sources re-tell the same basic narrative without citations or interpretation: Richard Reinhardt. "The Short Happy History of the State of Jefferson," *American West* 9:30 (May 1972): 36–42; and Steve Wilson, "American Places: Jefferson State of Mind," *American History* 39:6 (February 2005): 20–22 and 69. Jack Sutton's *The Mythical State of Jefferson* (Medford: Klocker Printery, 1967) is a pictorial history of the region from pre-contact geology through to about 1900; it provides a few pages on past state-splitting efforts, including the 1941 effort. A more detailed scholarly narrative is W.N. Davis, Jr. "State of Jefferson," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 31:1 (Spring 1952): 125–38. Peter Laufer, *The Elusive State of Jefferson: A Journey Through the 51st State* (Guilford,

Conn., and Helena, Mont.: Globe Pequot Press, 2013), provides a narrative review of the 1941 episode but concentrates on exploring the region's present-day political character. Laufer provides an addendum to his 2013 book with some additional interpretation: "All We Ask Is To Be Left Alone," *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 36 (2014): 17–33. Kaena Horowitz, "Jefferson State" (M.A. thesis, California State University, Sacramento, 2009), offers an enthusiastic interpretation of the episode but is factually inaccurate in a number of crucial places and gives a highly romanticized version of events.

The 1941 Jefferson episode is unmentioned in the standard histories of Oregon and California published in recent decades. David W. Lantis, *California: Land of Contrast* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing, 1963), is a cultural geography of California's ten major sub-regions but gives no mention of the State of Jefferson episode in his chapter on California's "Northwest" region (which includes a smaller area the author terms "Klamath Country"); tellingly, Lantis's discussion of the future prospects of the region concludes that "the Northwest . . . appears certain to remain marginal in the California economy" (p. 442), with the role of Klamath Country (essentially the California portion of the State of Jefferson) being especially minor.

3. Sacramento, although by far California's largest inland city, did not become the state's capital until 1854; previous capitals during the early 1850s included Monterey, San Jose, Vallejo (quite briefly and twice, in 1852 and 1853), and Vallejo's neighboring city, Benicia. The 1852 State of Shasta proposal died in committee; see Davis, "State of Jefferson," 125; Sutton, *The Mythical State of Jefferson*, 55–56. For a brief period in the early 1850s, due to question over the actual, on-the-ground position of the Forty-Second Parallel through the rugged region, the California-Oregon state line's location was uncertain; Oregon mining camps, such as Jacksonville, in Jackson County, and especially Waldo, in Josephine County, were initially thought possibly to lie within California. See Francis S. Landrum, "A Major Monument: The Oregon-California Boundary," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 72:1

(March 1971): 5–53; and Willard and Elsie Street, *Sailors' Diggings* (Grants Pass, Oregon: Josephine County Historical Society, 1973).

4. *Daily Alta California*, December 19, 1853, p. 1.

5. Scottsburg *Umpqua Weekly Gazette*, May 26, 1854, p. 2. The author is grateful to Ben Truwe, an indefatigable historical researcher living in Medford, Oregon, for finding and sharing this and a second quote from the *Umpqua Gazette*.

6. "A convention has been called, to meet at Jacksonville, Oregon, to consult on the erection of the new territory and delegates are to be sent from Oregon, south of the Calapooia Mountains, and from California, north of the Trinity Mountains. The calls for the convention were very numerous signed." From: "Summary of the Events of the Fort-night," *Daily Alta California*, January 16, 1854, p. 1. On the second State of Shasta idea, see Davis, "State of Jefferson," 136n1.

7. Scottsburg *Umpqua Weekly Gazette*, June 23, 1854, p.2.

8. Ralph J. Roske, *Everyman's Eden: A History of California* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 301–302.

9. Jeff LaLande, "William T'Vault," *The Oregon Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/t_vault_william_green_1806_1869_/#.WUJgi-18rJaQ (accessed October 17, 2016).

10. Jeff LaLande, "'Dixie' of the Pacific Northwest: Southern Oregon's Civil War," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 100:1 (Spring 1999): 32–81; Sutton, *The Mythical State of Jefferson*, 56–58. The region is notable for the large number of very distinct ethnographic peoples who lived there before the 1850s, when hostilities with, and mass removals of, these indigenous groups dramatically reduced and changed the Native presence. See the relevant chapters in Robert F. Heizer, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians—California*, vol. 8 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978); and Wayne Suttles, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians—Northwest Coast*, vol. 7 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1990).

11. See LaLande, "'Dixie' of the Pacific Northwest."

12. Not coincidentally, all of the nation's successful instances of the separation of one part of a state to form a new state happened in the years before the end of the Civil War: Vermont from New York and Kentucky from Virginia prior to 1800, Maine from Massachusetts in 1820, and West Virginia from Virginia in 1863. Although its boundaries can vary, standard definitions of the "Far West" restrict the region to the three Pacific Coast states, but with the three Intermountain West states of Nevada, Utah, and Idaho often included; other Rocky Mountain states are usually excluded, as are Arizona and New Mexico. See Earl Pomeroy, *Pacific Slope* (New York: Knopf, 1965); and David Johnson, *Founding the Far West: California, Oregon, and Nevada, 1840–1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992). Prior to the American take-over of the Far West, a relatively small population of Hispanic settlers had begun arriving in Alta California by the late 1770s, and a very few British subjects were farming isolated patches of the Willamette Valley as early as the 1830s; however, like the later-arriving American settlers of the 1840s and 1850s, these people were all very much newcomers relative to the region's Native people.

13. See Kay Atwood, *Blossoms and Branches: A Gathering of Rogue Valley Orchard Memories* (Medford: Gandee Printers, 1980); and Cathy Noah, "Age of Speculation and Orchard Boom, 1900–1920," in *Land in Common: An Illustrated History of Jackson County, Oregon* (Medford: Southern Oregon Historical Society, 1993).

14. Unlike the 1941 State of Jefferson secession movement, which resulted in subsequent accounts that clearly characterized it as a good-natured stunt with serious purposes, the State of Siskiyou episode faded without leaving behind any available record of its motivations other than the various newspaper stories and editorial opinions of 1910, including those cited in the following six notes. No known official county statements of support or action came forth from the effort; however, to this essay's author at least, the tenor and language of the news coverage clearly indicates that it was not a serious attempt at secession.

15. *Medford Mail Tribune*, December 12, 1909, p. 1.

16. *Gold Hill News*, reprinted in *Medford Mail Tribune*, January 17, 1910, p. 6.

17. *Jackson County Valley Record*, reprinted in *Medford Mail Tribune*, December 26, 1909, p. 4.

18. *Medford Mail Tribune*, March 25, 1910, p.1; Dorris, *Booster*, reprinted in *Medford Mail Tribune*, January 12, 1910, p. 4.

19. *Medford Mail Tribune*, December 31, 1909, p. 4; January 12, 1910, p. 4; January 16, 1910, p. 4. Leaving Jackson County in 1919, Putnam went on to become the long-time owner-editor of the *Salem Capital Journal*; see George S. Turnbull, *An Oregon Crusader* (Portland: Binfords and Mort, 1955).

20. *Medford Mail Tribune*, February 15, 1910, p. 1; and February 17, 1910, p. 1.

21. For example: the "new" Pacific Highway of the mid 1930s, and an improved road from Weed, California, northeast to Klamath Falls, Oregon, and the "Redwood" (initially called the "Caves") Highway (Hwy 199) from Grants Pass southward.

22. On Gable, see Bill Kauffman, "The Regionalist — State of Dis Union, the Jefferson Story," in *First Principles: Web Journal of the Intercollegiate Studies Institute* (www.isi.org), March 5, 2008; "Business — Gilbert Gable's Gold Coast," *Time*, April 4, 1938; and Patrick Masterson, *Port Orford: A History*, (Wilsonville, Ore.: BookPartners, 1994). The NBC radio program, "High Road to Adventure," featured Gable narrating stories of his personal adventures as a dinosaur-egg hunter and "exploring" wild landscapes; Gable may have first come to Curry County to search for the alleged Port Orford Meteorite.

23. "Curry County Seeks Action," *Portland Oregonian*, November 16, 1941; "Siskiyou County Proposes to Establish 49th State," *Oregonian*, November 19, 1941, p. 1. See also Davis, "State of Jefferson," 135. Davis, who became California State Historian, was an observer of the Jefferson episode as it unfolded and subsequently interviewed prominent Siskiyou County participants for his 1952 essay in the *California Historical Society Quarterly*. Davis points out that both *Siskiyou Daily News* editor Walter Stafford and Senator Raymond Collier admitted openly in late November 1941 — just days before Jefferson's much-

promoted “official” proclamation of secession — that “the State of Jefferson,” having by then accomplished its goals of publicity, “will die in a few days”; Collier admitted to Davis that “the impossibility of the project would bring its hasty demise.”

24. Stanton Delaplane, “Secession Snowball: It’s No Joke,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 27, 1941, p. 1; *Portland Oregonian*, November 11, 1941, p. 1.

25. Stanton Delaplane, “The 49th State: Don’t Sell This Movement Short,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 1, 1941, p. 1.

26. “Jackson County Asked to Join Secession Hoax,” *Medford Mail Tribune*, November 18, 1941, p. 1.

27. *Medford Mail Tribune*, November 13, 1941, p. 1.

28. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1941, p.1; November 10, 1941, p. 1.

29. In recent years, some have suggested that the Jefferson name was inspired by President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy. Although a true secessionist, Davis never served as the namesake of the 1941 episode. Various public statements made by the movement’s leaders made it clear that Thomas Jefferson filled that role, and newsreel footage of the Yreka “torchlight” parade (held during daylight hours for the benefit of the cameras) show marchers carrying placards bearing simple but recognizable portraits of the nation’s third president. The idea that the name chosen for the “49th State” honored Jefferson Davis is without merit. See also Stanton Delaplane, “The Yreka Rebellion,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 28, 1941, p. 1. For more on the various publicity stunts, see: Rock, “The State of Jefferson”; Davis, “State of Jefferson”; and Laufer, *The Elusive State of Jefferson*.

30. *Medford Mail Tribune*, December 5, 1956, p. 1; and December 6, 1956, p. 1. See also Madera [Cal.] *Daily News-Tribune*, December 6 and 19, 1956. The eight California counties involved included Siskiyou, Modoc, Del Norte, Humboldt, Shasta, Trinity, Lassen, and Plumas. Apparently, the main goal of publicity generated by the threat of secession was to have some impact on the state legislature’s upcoming session, where a major issue loomed: a north-south arrangement on

revised rights to water supplies from northern California’s rivers. The point having been made through state-wide news accounts, northern California’s greatly outnumbered band of legislators proved able to quit the field with a water-sharing agreement grudgingly acceptable to all.

31. Sutton, *The Mythical State of Jefferson*. A personal copy of the brochure was made available to me by Michael Dawkins, of Ashland; the brochure’s full title is: “The State of Jefferson: A History, in which is set down a brief account of its colorful past, its appealing present, and its promising future.” The narrative gives a brief summary of the 1941 episode, with much of the text promoting Jackson and Josephine county attractions and livability; the brochure does not mention the fact that neither county joined the 1941 secession movement.

32. This tendency is exemplified by such terms as the “Jefferson Nature Center” and the “State of Jefferson Backcountry Scenic Byway.”

33. For examples of news accounts about this most recent State of Jefferson secession movement, see various issues of the *Medford Mail Tribune*, including “A State of Jefferson Revival?,” September 5, 2013, p. 1; “Secession: Realistic Hope or Illusion?,” September 8, 2013, p. 1; “Second California county votes on secession,” September 26, 2013, p. 1; and “Tehama County voters will have say on secession,” December 15, 2013, p. 1. Although residents of southwestern Oregon wrote letters to the *Mail Tribune* urging that Jackson and Josephine counties participate in the campaign, the Oregon portion of “Jefferson State” has thus far remained only an observer.

34. See Sarah Goodyear, “The 51st State?,” *New York Daily News*, February 9, 2016 (on-line version of this article is unpaginated). In addition to rhetoric, the current secessionists’ connections with the broader Tea Party movement is made clear by their adoption a new State of Jefferson flag and seal that add to the 1941 “Double X” symbol the “Don’t Tread On Me” rattlesnake so favored by Tea Party adherents. The U.S. Constitution makes any ultimately successful outcome of such proposals for separation, particularly that of a sparsely populated and

thus politically impotent region, so difficult as to be virtually impossible. On claims of “unfair taxation,” see the California state government’s official study of the “Jefferson” counties’ financial situation: Willis H. Miller, “State of Jefferson report,” State of California Planning Board, December 4, 1941 (California State Archives). Some Jackson County residents strongly favored joining the resurrected secession movement. One frequent, self-described “conservative” writer of letters to the *Mail Tribune*’s opinion page stated that becoming part of Jefferson would mean “closer local and state control . . . less tax on citizens, hospitals, businesses and less governmental interference in land-use regulation, environmental intrusion, as well as health care oversight” (October 5, 2013, p. 9A). Both the Medford *Mail Tribune* and the Yreka *Siskiyou Daily News* provide intermittent coverage of the secession campaign for the 2013–2016 period.

35. Goodyear, “The 51st State?,” *New York Daily News*, 2016. Goodyear’s in-depth feature article is based on her visit to northern California in early 2016, including her interviews with a number of secession proponents; it should prove useful to future historians of this most-recent State of Jefferson movement.

36. For background on the Oregon-and-California Lands and their importance to the postwar economy of western Oregon (and southwestern Oregon, in particular), see Elmo Richardson, *BLM’s Billion-Dollar Checkboard: Managing the O&C Lands* (Santa Cruz, Cal.: Forest History Society, 1980). For a discussion of the late-twentieth-century controversies over logging in southwestern Oregon, see William G. Robbins, *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940–2000* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); and Robbins “Oregon-and-California Lands Act,” *The Oregon Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/oregon_and_california_lands_act/#.WAUk9o8rJaQ (accessed October 17, 2016).

37. See Humboldt State University Department of Sociology, “Perspectives on the State of Jefferson,” *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 36 (2014). Both the 2014 Jefferson conference in Eugene and the resulting volume

featured an eclectic collection of topics, ranging from current professional photography in the region, Native land rights, and the effects of fire exclusion on the region’s vegetation to aspects of regional journalism, conceptual art, and climate change; the one thing tying these disparate papers together is geographic location. The only Jeffersonian history provided in the volume’s pages is Peter Laufer’s essay, “All We Ask is To Be Left Alone.” Also useful is geographer Matthew Derrick’s opening essay, “The State of Jefferson, Beyond Myth and Mindset, Toward Enhanced Conceptualization of a Region,” which explores potential new ways for geographers to frame their treatment of the region. A brief paper prepared by Nicolas Fox and other, unnamed Humboldt State University students graphically demonstrates the region’s heavy dependence on federal and state funds and the precarious fiscal situation that any separate State of Jefferson would immediately face.

38. Certainly, the separation movements of the northern-California and southwestern-Oregon region are not unique in American history. Such attempts have stretched from the 1790s’ “State of Franklin” proposal (which would have combined western North Carolina with eastern Tennessee) on through 1920s secession threat of northern Illinois/Chicago (which, the polar opposite of the State of Jefferson, erupted from long-standing urban resentment at rural control of the state’s government). It has continued into quite recent schemes, from sawing California in half to separation of New York City and Long Island from upstate New York. In recent decades, our perhaps not-so-United States have seen at least two dozen “secession” or “separation” schemes, of varying degrees of seriousness. See James L. Erwin, *Declarations of Independence: Encyclopedia of American Autonomous and Secessionist Movements* (Santa Barbara, Cal.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2007).

39. See, for example, the California government’s official study of the “Jefferson” counties’ financial situation: Willis H. Miller, “State of Jefferson Report,” State of California Planning Board, December 4, 1941 (California State Archives).