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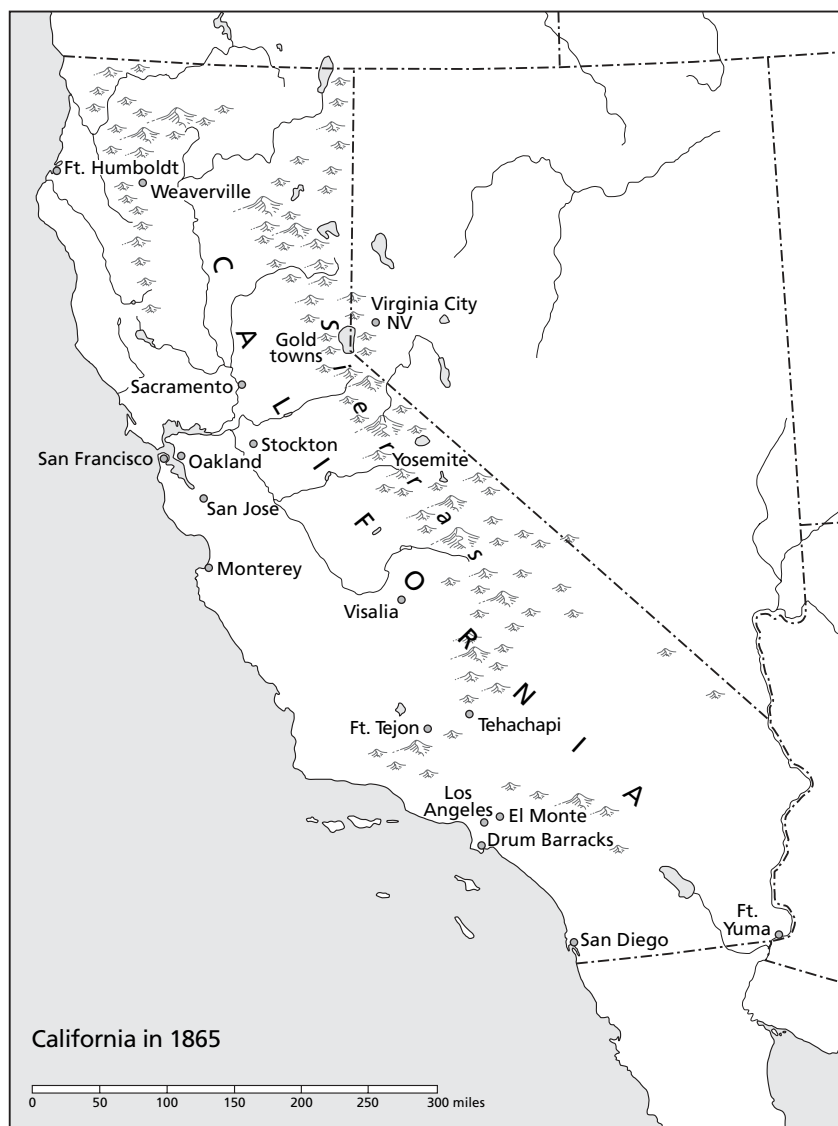
The Golden State in the Civil War

Thomas Starr King, the Republican Party, and the Birth of Modern California

This book breaks new ground, not only in its coverage of California, but also in its treatment of the role of cultural links in enhancing national loyalty and in its attention to many groups of people of color, including Chinese and Latinos, and what happened to them during the Civil War. In addition, the book devotes attention to the ebb and flow of the two political parties and to the little-known fact that nearly 17,000 California men volunteered for military service on behalf of the Union. Glenna Matthews broadens understanding of the Civil War era both in terms of geography and in terms of social groupings.

Glenna Matthews holds a PhD in American history from Stanford University. She has been an associate professor of history at Oklahoma State University and a visiting associate professor at the University of California, Berkeley; Stanford University; University of California, Los Angeles; University of California, Davis; and University of California, Irvine. Her books include “*Just a Housewife*,” *The Rise of Public Woman*, *American Women’s History: A Student Companion*, and *Silicon Valley, Women, and the California Dream*.

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1. Map of California in 1865, featuring the places named in the text.

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*Thomas Starr King, the Republican Party,
and the Birth of Modern California*

GLENN A MATTHEWS

Independent Scholar



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For my grandson, Justin Matthews
In memory of my great-grandfather, Jasper Hooker
Company G, 73rd Illinois

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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book owes its existence to an exhibit I curated in 1996 on the history of San Francisco. As a historian of women, I was stepping outside my comfort zone to undertake such a project, but my love for the city trumped my anxiety, so I took a deep breath and proceeded. The San Francisco Public Library was mounting the exhibit to celebrate the opening of its new main branch, and thus it was especially important to do a good job.

The challenge was to explore “The Dimensions of Diversity,” the title chosen for the project. One such dimension, not surprisingly, was religion. I decided to display a letter from the most celebrated clergyman in the city’s history, the Reverend Thomas Starr King – a letter written to his best friend on the eve of the Civil War. The letter had captured my imagination because it was so impassioned about the writer’s Unionist sentiments. In it King described a speech he had given to a large crowd in the city – an oration in which he wholeheartedly denounced secession – as well as the enthusiastic response the speech received. I had never thought much about what happened in my home state during the war, but the letter alerted me to the possibility that it might have been very interesting. I was then involved in completing other projects, but I promised myself that I would return to the subject of the letter when life permitted me to do so. This book is the result.

I have incurred many debts along the way. First, I should mention that I worked with two wonderful historians in formulating the ideas for the exhibit, Bob Cherny and Bill Issel. Bill then curated his own exhibit for the library, one that focused on politics where mine had focused on culture.

Next, I need to thank the many, many librarians and archivists who have helped me. Peter Blodgett of the Huntington Library deserves special mention for the imaginative support he provides to scholars. His colleagues Bill Frank and Olga Tsapina were also very helpful. Additional special mention should go to Lucinda Glenn of the Graduate Theological Union Archives in Berkeley, to Peter Drummey of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and to Frances O'Donnell and Gloria Korsman of the Andover-Harvard Theological Library. Indeed, I'm especially grateful to Lucinda, because in 1996 she called to my attention the Thomas Starr King letter I used in the exhibit; thus she was the catalyst for what would eventually become this book. Finally, just when I thought I had finished my research, my friend Lynn Bonfield, archivist extraordinaire, let me know about collections in the Clements Library at the University of Michigan that might prove useful. Taking her advice, I found that the staff at the Clements could not have been more welcoming and more proactive in alerting me to the riches in their archives. In sum, conducting the research for this book has been one of the great pleasures of my professional life, a journey of discovery that has led me to Boston; New York City; Victoria, Canada; and Washington, DC; in addition to Ann Arbor and many places throughout the state of California.

Chris McKay of New York City provided very helpful research assistance with respect to an important personal relationship of Thomas Starr King. In several letters to that earlier-mentioned best friend, Randolph Ryer of New York City, King used phrases such as "you black scamp." Therefore a number of modern writers have suggested that the friend was an African American. Chris is a whiz at looking through New York records, and although she easily found Ryer, she found nothing in the records to confirm that he had any African heritage. It's nice to think about a cross-racial friendship in the nineteenth century, but the records don't support such a contention.

Next, I want to acknowledge my good fortune in being asked to give a presentation at a conference on Lincoln and the West, held at the Lane Center at Stanford University to commemorate the Lincoln Bicentennial. This conference came just as I was finalizing my ideas for the book, so it was all the more valuable an experience in either pointing me in new directions or validating ideas I already had. And while I'm on the subject of Stanford, let me acknowledge, as well, the inspirational role of two historians of the middle period of the nineteenth century with whom I studied during my first year of graduate school there – the late Don

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Fehrenbacher and the late David Potter. Thanks also to my wonderful mentor, Carl Degler.

A year after the Stanford conference, in April 2010, I gave the annual Conrad Wright lecture on Unitarian Universalist history at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley. Appropriately enough the subject was Thomas Starr King and his pioneering antiracism. Very moving to me was the fact that one of King's descendants was in the audience; in fact, I've met several others in the course of working on the book. If I needed any further reason for seeing this project through, experiences such as this certainly provided it.

Heartfelt gratitude goes out to Monica Loewi and Chris Newcomb, who hosted my trip to Victoria and shared my enthusiasm about unearthing a few gems about California during the Civil War in so unlikely a spot.

Special thanks as well to those who have tramped Civil War battlefields with me in my effort to go beyond the written word to learn about the era. These include my elementary school chums and Laguna Beach High School classmates John Conover (and his wife Teresa Sullivan), Barbara Nash, and Fred Nash. They also include my daughter Karen and granddaughter Margaret, who accompanied me on a trip to visit the places in Tennessee where our ancestor Jasper Hooker fought with his Illinois regiment.

An author is always indebted to those who have read all or part of a manuscript as it goes through the process of revision. Robin Einhorn and Arliss Ungar read selected chapters. Adam Arenson, Oakley Frost, Deborah Gardner, Tom Osborne, and John Snetsinger read all of it. Their comments greatly enriched and strengthened the end result.

Other than my family, Lew Bateman of Cambridge University Press deserves the biggest share of thanks. He believed in the book from our earliest conversation, found remarkably constructive readers to critique both the proposal and the finished manuscript, and in short, has been what authors dream of having in an editor.

As for my family, it is difficult to overstate how much loving support I've received from them, beginning with my late parents, Glen and Alberta Ingles. I want to mention as well my late aunt, Virginia Ingles Haradon, my father's sister. She was our family's historian, and I know that she would be pleased that the book is dedicated in part to the memory of her grandfather. Her children, my cousins John and Susan, have been an important part of my life as well. My children, Karen and David, and my

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three grandchildren, Monica, Margaret, and Justin, bring me great joy, for which I'm deeply grateful.

This is for Justin. It's also in memory of his great-great-great-grandfather, a forebear who fought in the Civil War and then went home to Illinois a shattered man, according to my Aunt Virginia.

Glenna Matthews
Laguna Beach