

**THE WEST THE BEST AND CALIFORNIA
THE BEST OF THE WEST; A STORY OF
SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES
IN THE BUSINESS LIFE OF THE
GOLDEN STATE**

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The West the best and California the best of the West; a story of some of the principal features in the business life of the golden state by Benj. C. Wright

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BENJ. C. WRIGHT

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The West the Best
—and—
California the Best of the West

A Story of Some of the Principal Features in the
Business Life of the Golden State

BY BENJ. C. WRIGHT

*Author of "Banking in California 1849-1910" and
"San Francisco's Ocean Trade—Past and Future."*

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UNIV OF
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Gift
of father

TO MIND
AMERICAN

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The West the Best

— and —

California the Best of the West

General Remarks.

That the western half of the land area of the United States is the best half, is a proposition that needs little argument to establish, if one is willing to eliminate from the consideration wealth, population and political powers. In these three factors and a few of minor importance the advantage lies with the eastern half of the country, because, as a rule, longer settled.

A plumb line north to south from the east boundary line of North Dakota fairly divides the territory of the United States between what may be termed the eastern and western halves of the country.

East of that imaginary line are 31 States, while west of it there are 17 States and the Territory of Alaska.

The land area of the 48 States comprises 2,973,830 square miles, according to the Bureau of Statistics. The 31 States on the east of the above dividing line have been given 1,119,155 square miles of this area, while the 17 States on the west of that line possess 1,854,666 square miles of land area.

The 17 Western States therefore have the largest half of the land area of the country; and as most of the wealth of the country, in the last analysis, can be traced back to the earth, the future of the Western States, if not the present, places them in the lead. This large difference in land area is an important asset in the future wealth, population and political powers of the Western States.

All these 17 States have been organized in the last 67 years. Texas headed the list, having been admitted on December 29, 1845, with 262,400 square miles of land area, the largest in the country. The combined area of the largest five of the original thirteen States is only 270,700 square miles.

As the territory of the United States expanded, the people were more generous in the establishment of State boundaries, and therefore seven of the States in the western group have a land area in excess of 100,000 square miles. California is second in this list of large States, with a land area of 155,652 square miles, equal to the combined area of the largest three of the original States.

According to the last census, the population of the United States, exclusive of Alaska and the District of Columbia, was 91,641,000, an increase of a little over 21 per cent compared with the previous census.

During the same decade the population of the 31 States in the eastern half of the country increased 15½ per cent, while that of the 17 States in the western half increased over 47 per cent.

Confining the comparison to California, Oregon, Washington, and the ten adjoining States, the combined population of the 13 States shows an increase of over 50 per cent in the same interval, while the increase in the 13 original States, which include two of the largest in the country, was less than 23 per cent.

These comparisons show in which direction the population of the country is drifting. The people are going west, as they were advised to do by a great philosopher many years ago.

The western half of the country is growing more rapidly than the eastern half, because it affords more room for the people and better opportunities for advancement.

It was ascertained in the last census that there was an average of 31 persons to every square mile in the 48 States. In the 31 States in the eastern half the average was 64, while in the 17 States in the western half it was only 9. There is plenty of room here and a cordial welcome for all who will come, and they are coming in increasing numbers from year to year.

The commerce of the leading four ports on the Atlantic compared with the leading four ports on the Pacific for the fiscal years ending June 30, 1911, and June 30, 1901, shows that the Pacific ports are making the greatest gains. In the line of imports, there was a gain of 140 per cent in that decade in the aggregate of the Pacific ports, against 67 per cent in the Atlantic ports. In the line of exports to foreign countries, the Pacific ports show a gain of 30 per cent, against 16 per cent for the Atlantic ports.

While the matter of bank clearings is not so well developed in the western half as in the eastern half of the country, because of the later settlement of the former section, the aggregate increase in these clearings in the last ten years shows a large percentage of gain in favor of the western cities.

Nearly all of the gold and silver produced in the United States has come from the 17 States in the western half of the country. Michigan was the first to open up the copper deposits, and for many years held the lead in the production of that metal. A few years ago Montana supplanted Michigan in that industry. Since then Arizona has come to the front as the largest producer of copper. These western States are also large producers of lead and a variety of other metals. California has the unique distinction of practically controlling the quicksilver product of the country, as well as the largest producer of mineral oil.

The great forests of the country lie in the western half,