From the 18th century, African Americans, like many others, have migrated to California to seek fortunes or, often, the more modest goals of being able to find work, own a home, and raise a family relatively free of discrimination. Not only their search but also its outcome is covered in Seeking El Dorado. Whether they settled in major cities or smaller towns, African Americans created institutions and organizations— churches, social clubs, literary societies, fraternal orders, civil rights organizations—that embodied the legacy of their past and the values they shared. Blacks came in search of the same jobs as other Americans, but the search often proved frustrating. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, African American leadership in the state consistently focused on achieving racial justice. The essays in this book speak of triumph and hardship, success, discrimination, and disappointment.

Seeking El Dorado is a major contribution to black history and the history of the American West and will be of interest to both scholars and general readers.

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