

State of Jefferson Brochure

By Unknown

The "State of Jefferson" was a publicity stunt organized in 1935 by disaffected residents of southern Oregon and northern California who were concerned that Salem and Sacramento were ignoring their region's needs. In response to this perceived neglect, regional boosters threatened to form their own state, which they named "Jefferson" after the nation's third president. The idea found few supporters and soon fizzled out.

The State of Jefferson campaign was revived in the fall of 1941. World War II was raging in Europe and Asia, and though the United States had yet to officially enter into the fray, it was clear that the time would soon arrive. Community leaders of southern Oregon and northern California, dissatisfied with the state of the region's transportation networks, revived the State of Jefferson idea to push for more outside funding in order to develop the area's mineral resources, purportedly to aid in the war effort. They chose "XX" as their official seal to symbolize Oregon and California's double crossing of the region.

In November 1941, proponents of the State of Jefferson issued a mock proclamation of independence, setting up an armed roadblock on Highway 99 and handing out leaflets informing motorists that they were entering "Jefferson, the 49th State of the Union."

The half-serious secessionist movement was quickly forgotten on December 7, 1941, the day the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The pamphlet reproduced here, written in the summer of 1959, revived the idea of a State of Jefferson once again, this time as a way to attract tourists and new residents to the region, where, they declared, "Livability is our greatest resource."

Further Reading: Davis, W.N., Jr. "State of Jefferson." *California Historical Quarterly* 31, 1952: 125-138.

Sutton, Jack. *The Mythical State of Jefferson: A Pictorial History of Early Northern California and Southern Oregon*. Grants Pass, Oreg., 1973.

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