



# Practicing Law in Frontier California (Law in the American West)

*Gordon Morris Bakken*

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## **Practicing Law in Frontier California (Law in the American West)** Gordon Morris Bakken

In *Practicing Law in Frontier California* Gordon Morris Bakken combines collective biography with an analysis of the function of the bar in a rapidly changing socioeconomic setting. Drawing on manuscript collections, Bakken considers hundreds of men and women who came to California to practice law during the gold rush and later, their reasons for coming, their training, and their usefulness to clients during a period of rapid population growth and social turmoil. He shows how law practice changed over the decades with the establishment of large firms and bar associations, how the state's boom-and-bust economy made debt collection the lawyer's bread and butter, and how personal injury and criminal cases and questions of property rights were handled. In Bakken's book frontier lawyers become complex human beings, contributing to and protecting the social and economic fabric of society, expanding their public roles even as their professional expertise becomes more narrowly specialized.

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