The sprawling Los Angeles basin, today the nation’s second-largest population center and a leader in agriculture, commerce, and industry, attained its modern configuration during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Greater Los Angeles is, in fact, one of the best examples of areas where urban entrepreneurs have played a primary role in creating and expanding a metropolis. Of this group, Henry Huntington stands out among the rest. His southern California business empire was based on a triad of interrelated businesses critical for regional development. It consisted of a vast trolley network, electric power generation and distribution, and real estate development. Because Huntington operated this group of companies in an era when city and county planning commissions held little regulatory power, he became, in effect, the region’s metropolitan planner. Early in his southern California career, he expressed his vision of the Los Angeles basin’s future: “I am a foresighted man and I believe Los Angeles is destined to become the most important city in this country. It can extend in any direction as far as you like. . . . We will join this whole region into one big family.” Huntington did this by building interurban lines where and when he wanted, and in so doing, he determined the spatial layout of the area. Then, as a large-scale subdivider, he also decided the socioeconomic mix of many suburbs. Besides operating his triad of companies, Huntington, a builder by nature and the possessor of immense energy, worked in many other ways to develop southern California. The huge scale and scope of Huntington’s ventures, combined with the lasting imprint he left on the Los
Angeles basin, put him in a category by himself: the metropolitan entrepreneur.

Although urban entrepreneurs remain an important topic of study, the focus has shifted away from the elites' role in urban development and instead usually concerns the social dynamics and composition of a regional urban elite. Fewer works offer analyses of individual city-builders and their contributions to urban economics. An especially important book that returns the focus to the entrepreneurs' role in establishing prosperous cities is Burt W. Folsom, Jr., *Urban Capitalists* (1981). Similarly, although scholarship on Los Angeles is growing, recent works have concentrated on the post-1920 period. With this in mind, what follows is a study exploring Huntington's primary role in the development of metropolitan Los Angeles.

Originally a Spanish pueblo founded in 1781, Los Angeles, a town 15 miles from the coast and 120 miles from a natural harbor at San Diego, did not appear to have any great economic prospects in the early nineteenth century. The severe droughts of the early 1860s brought about the collapse of great *ranchos* and the cattle industry as well as the region's land values.

In 1868, the Southern Pacific began construction of a rail extension from California's central valley southward. Thinking that the railroad would eventually reach Los Angeles and knowing that such a link would stimulate the area's economy, adventurous businessmen began investing in southern California. Yet when the rail connection was completed in 1876, it set off only a minor real estate boom, and by 1880 Los Angeles remained a small town of 11,200 inhabitants.

The stage was set for the town's first major boom in 1885, when a competing transcontinental line, the Santa Fe, reached southern California. A rate war ensued between the rival railroads until, by early 1887, a passenger could travel from Kansas City to Los Angeles for only one dollar. Lured by low ticket prices and enticing advertising, large numbers of Midwesterners came to purchase land and settle in Los Angeles. Although the boom collapsed toward the end of the decade, Los Angeles's population reached 50,400 by 1890. From this point on, until about 1920, real estate speculation became the main dynamic for growth in southern California. Local banker H. S. McKee explained in 1915: "The most conspicuous fact about Los Angeles lies in its being a residential and not industrial community. The half million people who reside here did not come here in any considerable numbers to engage in business,
they came to reside.” To accommodate the swelling population, commerce and services dominated the Los Angeles economy until after World War I, when the movie industry and oil production rapidly expanded and became the region’s leading sectors.  

In the 1880s Los Angeles entrepreneurs arrived at the formula that would be repeated over and over and would ultimately be successful in developing the area. To overcome the region’s major natural handicaps—lack of transportation, fuel (oil had not yet been discovered), and water—they combined heavy capital investment with slick advertising and promotion to attract settlers and encourage growth. Carey McWilliams, a keen observer of the southland, has written:

Without lumber and minerals, with only one natural harbor [San Diego], lacking water and fuels, and surrounded by mountains, desert, and ocean, there was seemingly never a region so unlikely to become a vast metropolitan area as Southern California. It is an artificial region, a product of forced growth and rapid change. . . . Like the entire region, Los Angeles, its heart and center, has developed in spite of its location rather than because of it. Southern California is a man-made, gigantic improvisation.

Prior to Huntington’s arrival, many local entrepreneurs had been active in establishing the infrastructural industries of southern California. In the 1880s, James Crank and banker Isaias W. Hellman operated a local horse-drawn and cable car system; they were supplanted in the 1890s by electric trolley barons Moses H. Sherman and his brother-in-law, Eli P. Clark. The real estate market for individual home lots was concentrated in the hands of several prominent land speculators, including Benjamin Wilson; his son-in-law, J. de Barth Shorb; John D. Bicknell; Andrew Chaffey; and Jonathan S. Slauson. Still in its infancy, the hydroelectric power business in the 1890s was headed by such entrepreneurs as William G. Kerckhoff and Allan C. Balch. Thus, by 1898, when Huntington initially invested in southern California, the established urban elites of the business community had already laid much of the groundwork for the southland’s future growth.

Although Los Angeles was one of the most visible and spectacular successes of urban entrepreneurs, these businessmen operated in other West Coast areas from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. As population grew and transportation improved with the spread of the railroads, thousands of new communities were created. Many of the new settlements were established along railroad routes that acted as the cities’ economic lifelines to
the rest of the country. Entrepreneurs recognized the importance of the transportation industry to the expansion of new cities, and they generally worked to secure rail lines for their regions of interest. Similarly, these urban businessmen were frequently involved in the primary infrastructural industries necessary for the growth of a city—real estate development, construction, public utilities, and banking.

Thomas Burke (1849–1925), a successful lawyer and judge, became involved in the expansion of Seattle, Washington, through real estate speculation and investments in area banks and mines. He realized the importance of railroad connections and organized a company to build and operate a railway from Seattle to Walla Walla. But Burke’s major contribution to the city’s growth was his work with James J. Hill to make Seattle the western terminus for the Great Northern Railroad.

Several entrepreneurs played key roles in the development of San Francisco: two of the most important were William C. Ralston and James Phelan. Ralston (1826–75) came to San Francisco in 1854 as a partner in the steamship company of Garrison and Morgan. During his career in the city, he organized several banking firms, among them the Bank of California, which soon became the leading bank of the region. Along with banking, Ralston expanded into other areas with such companies as Mission Woolen Mills, Kimball Carriage Factory, and Pacific Insurance. In addition, his activities in real estate development took him into the hotel business, and he built the grandest hostelry in the city, the Palace Hotel. Like Burke, Ralston knew the importance of a railroad connection and loaned the Central Pacific $3 million to complete its line.

James Phelan (1824–92) came to San Francisco following news of the discovery of gold and became a successful merchant. In 1870 he entered banking by incorporating the First National Gold Bank (it would later become Crocker First National Bank) and then served as its president. He also invested heavily in San Francisco real estate, and in 1881–82 he constructed the $500,000 Phelan Building.

Across the bay, Francis Marion (“Borax”) Smith (1846–1931) began making huge investments in Oakland in the 1890s. With a fortune made in the borax business, Smith and several partners formed the Realty Syndicate and purchased thousands of acres in and around Oakland. Then Smith merged the streetcar lines of Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and when this network was combined with his ferry service between Oakland and San
Francisco, it became the Key Route System. Not designed to make money on their own, the Key Route trolleys were used to promote and sell lots in Smith’s many real estate subdivisions.\[12\]

In many respects, Huntington resembled such West Coast entrepreneurs. Like other city-builders, Huntington was audacious, future-oriented, and willing to gamble on the growth of his area of choice—the Los Angeles basin. In addition, with his supreme optimism and self-confidence, Huntington seemed to personify the avid boosterism that pervaded the southland’s business community.\[13\] Finally, he was interested in a number of different businesses and concentrated on the infrastructural industries of transportation, power generation and distribution, and real estate development, which encouraged expansion. With these three basic businesses, Huntington tied his financial success to metropolitan growth. If the expected expansion took place, Huntington, with his multifarious enterprises, was destined to benefit handsomely from the urban economic boom he had helped create.

But Huntington also differed from other entrepreneurs. His operations were spread over an entire metropolitan area, and his investments were huge and in several sectors basic to urban growth. He possessed several attributes that set him apart from the majority of city-builders; these characteristics enabled him to lay out metropolitan Los Angeles and prompt its development over a period of twenty years. Most urban entrepreneurs conducted business on a small scale and were almost always seeking additional capital to expand their operations. Many went into banking in attempts to locate needed financing. Unlike others, Huntington began his career employed as a manager for several large-scale railroads. His move through various administrative posts culminated in 1900 in the position of vice-president of the Southern Pacific (SP), of which his uncle, Collis P. Huntington, was president. Because of a close link to Collis, Huntington inherited a fortune estimated at $15 million, which gave him the ability to finance many large projects simultaneously. With the necessary capital and a railroad management background, he envisioned development on a massive scale.

Predictably enough, Huntington undertook his first business venture in southern California in an industry in which he had previous experience—street railroads. His partners included men with whom he had been associated in San Francisco’s trolley company, the Market Street Railway. Together, Huntington and his fellow investors—Isaías W. Hellman, Antoine Borel, and Christian DeGuigne—purchased the downtown-oriented Los Angeles Rail-
way in 1898. By the end of that year, Huntington and his syndicate had acquired most of the city's smaller urban railroads. They soon dominated the market. Three years later, when it became clear that he would not succeed his deceased Uncle Collis as president of the SP, Huntington moved quickly to increase his investments in greater Los Angeles.

The majority of the wealth that Henry Huntington infused into Los Angeles was inherited from his uncle's estate, the lion's share of which was divided by Huntington and Collis's widow—later Henry's second wife—Arabella Huntington. When Collis died, Henry received one-third of his uncle's Southern Pacific stock, valued at $4.35 million, and another $4.9 million worth of stocks, bonds, and real estate. Arabella Huntington received the largest share of the estate; she was granted two-thirds of her deceased husband's SP stock, valued at $8.7 million, and another $6.3 million worth of stock, bonds, and real estate. The value of the SP stock was based on its market value; at the time of Collis's death in August 1900—$33.5 per share. When Henry and Arabella sold their 432,700 shares of SP stock to E. H. Harriman in February 1901, they received $51.5 per share, or $22.3 million.¹⁴

The inability to emulate his uncle and mentor by following him as head of the SP had a profound effect on Huntington. Unable to match Collis's achievements, Huntington apparently sought to build a business empire that would rival or even surpass that of his famous relative.¹⁵ To carry out this vision, he had to maintain a free hand and avoid future situations where his plans might be thwarted. Therefore, his southern California enterprises were usually set up as small syndicates that Huntington dominated by holding a controlling share of stock. His penchant for working with a few partners, or completely alone, also reflected the faith he had in his own judgment, and it was only on rare occasions that he allied himself with other members of the business community.

Huntington continued to concentrate on the transit sector of the southland metropolis. With his experience in railroads, he understood the relationship between the location of rail lines and corresponding land values; property served by rail was more desirable and hence much more valuable than land remote from convenient transportation.

Adding to the largely downtown Los Angeles Railway, Huntington, his syndicate partners, and several other local investors incorporated the interurban Pacific Electric Railway (PE) in 1901. The PE was intended to connect many of the basin's small periph-
eral communities, located at distances ranging from ten to ninety miles away, to the downtown core of Los Angeles. Yet unlike the commuter-carrying Los Angeles Railway, the interurban PE's primary purpose was not the passenger business but rather the promotion of residential real estate. Other entrepreneurs also understood the promotional power of the streetcars but lacked the capital to build trolley lines wherever they wished. Prior to Huntington's arrival in the southland, trolley lines were usually paid for by landowners along the proposed routes who thought their property would appreciate once the railways were completed. Moses Sherman, a Los Angeles interurban builder, described how this worked: "We might build five, or six, or even seven miles of road, and we might build less, according to the amount of money they [the landowners] raise, but the understanding is that the Railway Company does not put in anything." \(^{16}\)

Huntington, however, did not face such constraints. With access to vast capital, he was free to select routes for his electric railway lines and then build them. Huntington explained his rail expansion strategy in 1904: "It would never do for an electric line to wait until the demand for it came. It must anticipate the growth of communities and be there when the builders arrive—or they may very likely never arrive at all, but go to some other section already provided with arteries of traffic." \(^{17}\) Many of his interurban lines were planned in exactly this manner. When people later decided to move into these areas, Huntington was among the developers ready to sell them real estate.

In order to take full advantage of the developmental power of the trolleys, Huntington formed two companies to operate closely with the interurban. He incorporated several land companies to purchase, subdivide, and sell real estate. Of these, Huntington's first and foremost was his solely owned Huntington Land and Improvement Company, established in 1902. Also in 1902, Huntington and several other investors incorporated the Pacific Light and Power Company (PL&P). Its purpose was first to generate and supply electricity to the rapidly growing trolley network and second to distribute excess power to various parts of Los Angeles County.

The trolley, the key to Huntington's southern California development scheme, was so successful in blanketing the region with rail lines that E. H. Harriman and the Southern Pacific were pushed to acquire a half-interest in the PE to protect their regional steam transportation network from electric railway competition. Once the SP became his trolley partner in 1903, Huntington was not always
able to build interurban routes to sites he had selected for future residential subdivision. Although the SP encouraged expansion of the interurban if the extension benefited its own regional transit system, it blocked construction of some proposed lines if they might be detrimental to the SP. For example, the SP scotched Huntington’s equally grand development project for San Diego County, which involved thousands of acres of subdivisions, the construction of hydroelectric power stations, and an electric railway from Los Angeles to San Diego. The rationale was that a PE line to San Diego would compete with the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe’s existing track and upset the harmonious relationship that Harriman had recently established between the SP and the AT&SF.

The expansion of southern California during the first two decades of the twentieth century was spectacular. From 1900 to 1920, the population of the city of Los Angeles increased from 102,479 to 576,673, and Los Angeles County grew nearly sixfold, from 170,298 to 936,455. During the same period, bank clearings in the city of Los Angeles rose from a mere $123 million in 1900 to $4 billion in 1920. From 1899 to 1920, the value of products manufactured in Los Angeles jumped from $15 million to $790 million, and the value of the city’s building permits increased from about $2 million to $60 million.

Local observers explained the rapid growth of the Los Angeles basin in a variety of ways. Writer and booster Charles Fletcher Lummis believed the area’s success was directly related to its mild climate. Yet many contemporaries attributed the expansion and development of the Los Angeles basin to bold entrepreneurs whose broad vision, large capital investments, and innovative promotion turned an area lacking in natural resources into a bustling southern California metropolis. Among this group of entrepreneurs, Huntington was clearly the most important. In 1905, William M. Garland, one-time president of the local realty board who sometimes acted as Huntington’s land agent, placed a full-page advertisement in Los Angeles newspapers extolling the trolley magnate’s importance to the region: “Mr. Huntington’s advent into Los Angeles placed our city ten years ahead of its natural growth.” Twelve years later, Southern California Edison president John B. Miller expressed similar sentiments. He thought Huntington’s “faith in Southern California has been the dominating factor in its return from the depression of the latter eighties and its new and wonderful growth, substantiality and prosperity.”

Huntington’s impact was far reaching. Rapidly pouring his
INTRODUCTION

financial resources into the southland, he increased his investment in the Los Angeles basin from approximately $200,000 in 1901 to more than $45 million in 1917. The majority of his capital investments went into the three legs of his southern California business operations that, functioning together, shaped the region and spurred its urban boom.²²

With the exception of Sherman and Clark’s 180-mile Los Angeles Pacific Railway, which dominated the western section of Los Angeles County, particularly along the coast, Huntington at one point held a virtual monopoly in the Los Angeles basin’s public intracity and intercity transit. From 1901 to 1904, Huntington owned a controlling interest in both a money-making transit system, the city-oriented Los Angeles Railway, and the sprawling interurban PE. From 1904 to 1910, he acquired the Los Angeles and Redondo Railway, remained the majority stockholder of the Los Angeles Railway, and shared equal ownership of the PE with the Southern Pacific. By 1910, the Huntington trolley systems stretched over approximately 1,300 miles of southern California.²³

This streetcar network serviced downtown Los Angeles and sent lines north and east to the foothill communities of Glendale, Pasadena, Sierra Madre, and Glendora; east through Whittier and La Habra; southeast to Anaheim, Santa Ana, and Orange; south to the coastal villages of Long Beach and San Pedro, Newport, and Balboa; and southwest to Redondo Beach. With the exception of the PE connection to the San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles Pacific, the 1910 Huntington system was “a detailed sketch for the whole Los Angeles that exists today.”²⁴ While it would be left to the automobile—which encouraged development between and beyond the trolley lines—to fill in and extend this outline, the basic spatial design of downtown Los Angeles and the surrounding suburbs was created by Huntington’s streetcars.²⁵

Many of the transit corridors Huntington laid out for his inter­ur­bans remain important to present-day Los Angeles commuters—several of the region’s major freeways closely follow rights-of-way of the PE system.²⁶ But Huntington’s transportation legacy in southern California runs even deeper. Angelenos, who once gave up the electric railway in favor of the automobile, have decided to build another rapid transit rail system and are presently constructing a $3.4 billion subway, the Metro Rail, as well as three light-rail lines running to various parts of the county. As Neal Peterson, executive director of the Los Angeles Transportation Commission, explained in July 1989: “What we are trying to do is re-rail Los Angeles. Basi-
cally, we are trying to re-create the old Red Car [Pacific Electric] system.”

In 1927, historian Robert G. Cleland noted the enormous effect of the PE on the expansion of the Los Angeles basin. The interurban system “has . . . knit the surrounding cities into a compact community with the larger city, made possible the upbuilding of hundreds of square miles of rural territory, and furnished easy access to the beaches and mountains for the city’s population.” He added that the extensive trolley system had enabled “the wage earner to own his own home in one of the many subdivisions which have sprung up along the company’s various lines.”

The immense value of trolley lines was well recognized by contemporary real estate developers. Promoters advertising subdivisions in local newspapers almost always emphasized the developments’ proximity to trolley lines and their accessibility to Los Angeles. In 1903, for example, the Carlson Investment Company stressed that three Huntington lines reached its Pasadena Villa tract; thus, homeowners were only minutes away from downtown Los Angeles. Historian Mark S. Foster noted that up to 1920 almost all real estate promotions tried to attract buyers by emphasizing the locations of the trolley connections. Because residents generally relied on such transportation, few advertisements offered homes with garages.

Furthermore, just as local governments and business groups in the latter decades of the nineteenth century had viewed steam railroads as engines of progress and struggled to obtain railway connections for their towns and communities, in the early decades of the twentieth century, urban leaders tried to cajole street railway companies to build to their respective communities. A trolley linking a suburb with the downtown core was considered not only synonymous with but necessary for growth and prosperity. This belief in the connection between interurban access and progress was captured by the Santa Ana Blade, quoting a resident of Tustin—an Orange County community northwest of Santa Ana—in 1906: “We’ve just got to have it [a trolley], and that’s all there is to it.”

Besides being a major factor in the growth of outlying communities, Huntington trolleys also shaped the retail districts of many suburbs. Established where passenger traffic was heaviest, suburban retail centers often were formed adjacent to major PE lines running through the various satellite cities. The main retail and business district in Glendale, for example, rose on either side of the PE line on Brand Boulevard. Similar concentrations of merc-
chants and retailers occurred along the PE arteries on Pine Avenue in Long Beach, Colorado Street in Pasadena, Second Street in Pomona, Third Street in San Bernardino, and Fourth Street in Santa Ana.  

Wherever Huntington’s electric railway lines were extended, undeveloped land was subdivided and brought on to the real estate market. From 1904 to 1913, for example, approximately five hundred new subdivisions were opened every year, and almost all were within a block or two of a streetcar line. Because Huntington decided the direction trolley lines were built and because trolley access was crucial to successful real estate development, he in effect determined how, when, and where the region would grow.

With the increasing population being dispersed by the trolleys to the many burgeoning suburbs, Huntington’s land companies and power firm also played significant roles in the region’s expansion. The southland’s market for new residential land was dominated by its wealthy elite. According to historian Frederic C. Jaher, between 1885 and 1915 the region’s elite—comprised of business, civic, professional, and political figures—numbered about four hundred. Jaher categorized the group according to primary occupation, and he found that twenty-two men were primarily interested in real estate. Others whose primary occupations were not in real estate owned substantial amounts of undeveloped property. A more accurate number of elites actively involved in southern California real estate may be obtained by including men in closely related occupations. Businessmen in professions that usually crossed over into real estate development included six in transportation, five in agriculture, fifty-two in finance, and four whom Jaher termed general capitalists. Thus, approximately ninety men were paramount in real estate in the Los Angeles basin, and the leaders were Harrison Gray Otis, Harry Chandler, Sherman, Clark, and Huntington.

Such subdividers wielded tremendous power in the pre-1920 southland. Although the state of California, and more specifically the city and county of Los Angeles, led the country in regulating the real estate industry and passing regional land-use zoning laws, the major impact of these statutes was not felt until the 1920s. In the absence of all but minimal government regulation over urban planning, “subdividers who engaged in fullscale community development . . . performed the function of being private planners for American cities and towns.”

Huntington, one of the largest landholders in southern California, transformed vast stretches of rural undeveloped land along his
interurban lines into many suburban residential districts. Aware that there were several distinct classes of people seeking homesites in the Los Angeles basin, Huntington designed subdivisions to appeal to various markets. His developments differed, for example, according to street arrangement, lot size and price, and various deed restrictions such as minimum value of construction required. These controls determined the clientele each subdivision would attract.

Sometimes, Huntington supplied his residential developments with utilities. His Pacific Light and Power Company, one of the three major power firms in the Los Angeles basin and the largest developer of hydroelectric power, often provided electricity and sometimes natural gas to these new communities. Through his San Gabriel Valley Water Company, Huntington provided water to most of Alhambra and San Marino and parts of San Gabriel, South Pasadena, and Pasadena.

Thus, Huntington's major interests in southern California—the three legs of his business triad—were entrenched in critical sectors for regional growth. Operated together, these enterprises not only shaped the southern California landscape but also stimulated the area's economic boom, and they, in turn, benefited from such expansion.

Besides directing these companies, Huntington acted in many other ways to nurture and encourage the growth and development of the metropolis. Huntington wore many hats: he was at once a farmer, a city booster, an industrialist, a hotelier, a philanthropist, a member and promoter of exclusive social clubs, and a collector extraordinaire of rare books and fine art.

As in many of his ventures, Huntington's involvement in agriculture was actually a spin-off from another business interest. While purchasing immense tracts of southern California property for subdivision, Huntington obtained many acres of ranch land planted in fruit trees and other salable crops. Such incidental acquisitions led him into agriculture and created the possibility of making money from land otherwise idle until it was subdivided for residential development. Besides producing oranges, the almost mythical citrus fruit that brought fame and fortune to the southland, Huntington's ranches also yielded lemons, grapefruit, peaches, walnuts, hay, barley, alfalfa, and flowers.

In addition to growing produce, Huntington, in association with several other ranchers in the area, formed the San Marino Growers' Packing Association to prepare, box, and market the citrus fruit.
Always the entrepreneur, he was also interested in developing new crops for the area. In July 1911, Huntington signed an agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to experiment with the feasibility of growing avocados in southern California.

Through his acreage devoted to citrus crops, Huntington helped further the romantic image of southern California as a Mediterranean garden and a lush land of sunshine. He understood that highlighting the area's fertility and mild climate as well as its Spanish past would attract visitors, some of whom might become permanent residents.

In order to exploit and even exaggerate the region's colorful past, Huntington financed the transformation of Frank Miller's Glenwood Tavern, a roadside inn located in Riverside, a rich agricultural community east of Los Angeles, into a grand hotel modeled after the Spanish mission design. Known for its meticulous service, the inn attracted wealthy clientele from both the local area and the East Coast. Yet the Mission Inn turned out to be much more luxurious and ostentatious than anything out of the region's past. Writer Kevin Starr described the hotel as “a Spanish Revival Oz: a neo-Franciscan fantasy of courts, patios, halls, archways, and domes, which he [Miller, the proprietor] furnished with statuary, stained glass windows, and religious artifacts of Spain, Italy, and Mexico, gathered on pilgrimages abroad.”

Huntington played a more direct role of regional booster. Hoping to bring new industry to southern California, he believed if he set up a successful manufacturing business in the area, others might be encouraged to follow. Informed that the region had all the prerequisites for felt manufacture—sunshine, wool, and water, available from wells in parts of the San Gabriel Valley—he decided in 1903 to set up a felt factory. Created to produce piano hammers and shoes, the felt company was named after Alfred Dolge, the expert Huntington brought from New York to manage the operation. Unfortunately the felt enterprise was not a money maker. Even though it went through reorganization, the venture proved to be a constant financial drain on the primary stockholder, the Huntington Land and Improvement Company.

Huntington's failure to create a prosperous felt industry in southern California did not deter him from entering new businesses that might spur the area's development. Like his entrance into agriculture, Huntington had gone into the hotel industry because of his real estate investments. In 1906, in association with other developers, he opened the prestigious Oak Knoll subdivision
in Pasadena. Several acres of the property had been reserved for the construction of a luxury hotel. The partially completed Hotel Wentworth opened its doors in February 1907. It soon encountered financial troubles, and less than six months later the hotel was closed.

After being entangled for over three years in complicated bankruptcy court proceedings, the Hotel Wentworth was put up for sale in 1911. The following year it was purchased by Huntington, who intended to fulfill the original plans of establishing a first-class hotel. Huntington added two stories to the hotel and directed his personal botanist and gardener, William Hertrich, to lay out the gardens. Renamed the Huntington Hotel, the beautiful structure opened for business in January 1914. A pamphlet advertising the new hotel used florid language to paint a romantic portrait that emphasized the sumptuous Spanish design of the building and surrounding grounds: "What you read about of palaces in Spain—what you have dreamed of Moorish architecture—graceful arches pillared on fragile columns—vine trailed balconies—low broad windows that make for daylight everywhere—tree embowered patios where fountains tinkle—trickling streams that wend through wondrous gardens, all these are 'come true' here." In three years the bankrupt property was turned around into a popular guest house for the wealthy, and Huntington sold it in 1917.

Like many urban entrepreneurs, Huntington was also a philanthropist. He donated land to cities for parks and schools and provided money to youth organizations such as the Boy Scouts and the YMCA. Huntington also wanted to enrich the intellectual and cultural life of the area, and he gave generous support to such regional institutions of higher education as Occidental College, the California Institute of Technology, and the University of Southern California. While his largess was designed to benefit strictly the local area, Huntington understood the ramifications of providing such gifts. Private monies and property granted for civic improvements made the region more alluring to outsiders. They encouraged migration to southern California and accelerated the growth of the metropolis.

To establish further the southland's civility and to provide places where well-to-do businessmen could meet others of their ilk, Huntington was active in promoting several of the area's most prestigious social clubs. He reasoned that these organizations brought together many elite entrepreneurs who had the necessary capital and shared the desire to build a major urban center in southern
California. Belonging to the same “correct” clubs, the area’s urban entrepreneurs met socially, and out of these meetings, business deals were often forged. These conservative, all-white organizations tended to cement the region’s elite into a cohesive unit.

Affiliated with most of the southland’s prominent country clubs, Huntington was also a member of the exclusive Bolsa Chica Gun Club, the California Club, and the University Club. His most intimate involvement was with the Jonathan Club. Besides serving as this organization’s president, Huntington set aside the top two floors of his nine-story Pacific Electric Building at the corner of Sixth and Main streets in downtown Los Angeles for the club’s facilities.

Huntington’s major cultural contribution to the area was the now famous Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino, a wealthy residential community lying east of Los Angeles and on the southeast side of Pasadena. Always interested in book collecting, he began to take the hobby more seriously after 1900. Ten years later, Huntington started to disengage himself from his various business concerns and devote more time to collecting rare books and paintings. By 1916, Huntington’s library consisted of approximately sixty thousand volumes, and it held one of the largest collections of early English literature in the world. His collection soon rivaled the library assembled by another great private collector, J. P. Morgan, but Huntington’s method of acquisition and the ultimate purpose of his library drastically differed from those of the famous financier. Rather than purchase individual rare works or manuscripts, as Morgan generally did, Huntington often bought entire libraries. In addition, although both men intended their collections to be open to the public, Huntington designed his institution to include facilities for scholarly research and to provide exhibitions for tourists. The Morgan Library, on the other hand, emphasized the museum aspect, offering changing exhibits for the public view and underplaying the library’s research component.

In 1919, Huntington endowed a trust creating an institution that established the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. They stand on part of the original San Marino Ranch that he purchased in 1903. Because he also wished to expand the area’s research facilities, Huntington called for bringing world-renowned scholars to study at the library and make use of his many fine rare books and manuscripts.

When the deed of the trust was recorded, construction began on a library building about two hundred feet northeast of Hunt-
Huntington's San Marino home. Although not completed until 1923, the structure was occupied in September 1920, when Huntington's library headquarters were transferred from New York to San Marino. Thus, Huntington gave southern California a major library and helped create an atmosphere conducive to intellectual and scholarly activity in the area.

Of all his achievements, Huntington was apparently proudest of the library. When asked if he wanted a biography of himself written, Huntington replied: "I have been approached regarding a biography, but I do not want that. This library will tell the story. It represents the reward of all the work I have ever done and the realization of much happiness.""^42

Whether justifiably most satisfied with the library he established for the public or overly modest about his major achievements in southern California, Huntington, from his first investment in the area in 1898 to his death in 1927, was involved in such a wide array of projects that his name became ubiquitous throughout the region. In 1914, writer Isaac F. Marcosson stressed Huntington's tremendous involvement in the area by relating the story of a mother taking her inquisitive young daughter on a trolley excursion to the beach. Early in the journey, the little girl asked a string of questions:

"Whose streetcar are we riding in?"
"Mr. Huntington's," was the reply. Passing a park, the little one asked:
"What place is that?"
"Huntington Park."
"Where are we going, mother?" continued the girl.
"To Huntington Beach." Arriving at the sea, the child, impressed by the sameness of all the replies, ventured one more query:
"Mother, does Mr. Huntington own the ocean or does that still belong to God?"^45

Although it is unlikely that a single man combining Huntington's wealth and management background could have replaced him or could have rapidly established such a widespread business empire, various individuals or business syndicates might have operated a similar array of firms as separate and independent entities. However, because southern California entrepreneurs were short of capital, financing was often a problem. Without Huntington and his vast wealth, which was quickly poured into essential sectors in the economy, the Los Angeles basin would have developed much more slowly and possibly differently.

Rather than being rapidly built or constructed ahead of demand, the streetcar system would have been laid out by inter-
urban builders such as Sherman, but because it would be financed by landowners along the route, it would have spread much more slowly and only through areas where property owners were willing to capitalize lines. Furthermore, because of this slow growth, the Southern Pacific, not feeling a threat to its steam railway system in the Los Angeles basin, might not have become involved in the region's interurban network or continued to expand it.

Although the power business would have been dominated by Kerckhoff and Balch's San Gabriel Electric, John Miller's SoCal Edison, and C. O. G. Miller's Los Angeles Gas and Electric, the demand for electricity would not have been as high because of the trolley network's slow expansion. This being the case, massive hydroelectric projects that Huntington built would not have been needed for years.

Finally, without Huntington the southern California real estate market would still have been dominated by a small group of entrepreneurs. However, with the interurban system being built piecemeal and financed by landowners along the route, the Los Angeles basin would have been subdivided much more slowly. This sluggish suburban expansion could have led to a city much more dominated by a downtown core, and vast metropolitan sprawl would have awaited the advent of the automobile. Later suburban development, generated by the automobile rather than established by the trolleys, as well as a more concentrated downtown area, could have altered Los Angeles's metropolitan layout.

The Los Angeles basin lacked many of the obvious natural resources for becoming a large population center. But creative and energetic businessmen took advantage of the region's chief asset—its mild climate—to promote the southland and lay the necessary foundations for metropolitan civilization. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, once people had been lured out to southern California, Huntington trolleys, powered by his PL&P, carried them to newly opened subdivisions—many times, Huntington developments—and there they were frequently provided with utilities by Huntington companies. These enterprises made Huntington the foremost city-builder who transformed the rural southern California landscape into a major urban center. On 5 August 1927, the remaining directors of the Huntington Land and Improvement Company recorded their beliefs about their recently deceased associate, Henry Huntington, in the firm's minutes: "No single individual has done so much to promote the phenomenal growth of southern California." 11

Huntington's broad strategy resembled other smaller-scale Los
Angeles entrepreneurs, but he operated on a much grander level. Like others, he became involved in urban infrastructural industries. Unlike others, he had experience with mammoth ventures and had the capital and vision to carry out such large undertakings. These advantages, combined with Huntington's tenacious drive and indefatigable energy, led him to dominate the area's streetcar industry, electric power generation, and the real estate business. The very size and scope of Huntington's enterprises—spanning metropolitan Los Angeles—set him apart from other urban developers. Operating his three businesses together, Huntington developed, and dictated where others would develop, Los Angeles. He became, in essence, the region's metropolitan planner, determining transit corridors, establishing a mix of subdivisions along the interurban routes, and frequently providing utilities to the new communities.

The epitome of the successful metropolitan entrepreneur, Huntington was a shrewd developer of key industries in the area and a prime example of an individual who caused economic change and thereby benefited from it. The success of his numerous ventures produced a snowball effect. His activities generated opportunities for other businessmen to invest in the future of southern California. Huntington had used his wealth as well as managerial and organizational talents to shape greater Los Angeles and accelerate even more the growth of a metropolitan area that was destined to become the nation's leader in manufacturing and entertainment services by the last quarter of the twentieth century.