

## PREFACE

In the preparation of this book the author has attempted to trace the history of the public land legislation in Congress, to portray the sentiment of the different sections of the country relative to the disposal of the public domain, and to estimate the influence of the public lands on the political and legislative situation in general in the period from 1840 to 1862. The first task was comparatively simple, the second more difficult, and the last often perplexing. In many instances the leaders and spokesmen of public opinion have been allowed to state their position in their own words; and frequently where quotation marks will not be found, the actual expression of the writer or speaker has been closely followed.

The research was begun in a seminar at Harvard University in 1911, later expanding into a doctoral dissertation. Those who have profited by the stimulating scholarship, illuminating criticism, and the never-failing encouragement and courtesy of Professor Frederick J. Turner, will understand the author's deep obligation to him. He has blazed the way for those who seek to understand the significance of the West in American History.

Reference has been made in the Bibliography to the libraries where the material for this study was found. The author desires to thank the officials for their assistance.

GEORGE M. STEPHENSON.

Dartmouth College,  
August, 1917.