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Part 2: Cases

The aerospace-electronics industrial complex of Southern California: The formative years, 1940–1960

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Abstract

This paper deals with the growth and development of the aerospace-electronics industrial complex of Southern California over its formative period from 1940 to 1960. The origins of the complex in the aircraft industry of Los Angeles and San Diego in the 1920s and 1930s are briefly described. The consolidation of the complex during World War II is analyzed. The earliest beginnings of the missile and military electronics industries are shown to coincide with the period of World War II. It is demonstrated how Southern California emerged after the War as a major recipient of Department of Defense prime contract awards. These awards constitute the main driving force of the whole high-technology industrial system of the region over the post-World War II decades. During and shortly after the Korean War, the missile and electronics industries

began to expand with particular rapidity. By the 1950s, a dense system of agglomeration economies had formed within and around the region's aerospace-electronics industrial complex. The paper ends with a brief allusion to Southern California's developmental pathway after the 1950s.



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