



Chapter 1: The Physical Setting

Regions and Landforms: Let's take a trip

The land surface of California covers almost 100 million acres. It's the third largest of the states; only Alaska and Texas are larger. Within this vast area are a greater range of landforms, a greater variety of habitats, and more species of plants and animals than in any area of comparable size in all of North America.



California Coast

The coastline of California stretches for 1,264 miles from the Oregon border in the north to Mexico in the south. Some of the most breathtaking scenery in all of California lies along the Pacific coast.



More than half of California's people reside in the coastal region. Most live in major cities that grew up around harbors at San Francisco Bay, San Diego Bay and the Los Angeles Basin.

San Francisco Bay

San Francisco Bay, one of the finest natural harbors in the world, covers some 450 square miles. It is two hundred feet deep at some points, but about two-thirds is less than twelve feet deep.



The bay region, the only real break in the coastal mountains, is the ancestral homeland of the Ohlone and Coast Miwok Indians. It became the gateway for newcomers heading to the state's interior in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Tourism today is San Francisco's leading industry.

Mt. Lassen was an active volcano between 1914 and 1921.

The Sierra Nevada and the Coast Ranges are California's two major mountain ranges. The Klamath Mountains and the Cascades are located along the northern border of the state. The Transverse Ranges bisect southern California. The mountainous spine of the Baja California peninsula extends north into the Peninsular Ranges.

Coast Ranges

The Coast Ranges extend from Cape Mendocino in the north to Point Conception in the south. Consisting of uplifted sedimentary material, much of which has been metamorphosed, the Coast Ranges average less than 4,000 feet in height. On the seaward slopes of the northern ranges are forests of coast redwoods, greatly diminished by more than a century of commercial logging.



Mount Hamilton, a 4,261-foot peak located east of San Jose, is the site of the Lick Observatory, built in 1888. Mount Diablo, rising to 3,849 in eastern Contra Costa County, was the scene of coal-mining activity in the 1860s.

Sierra Nevada



The Sierra Nevada is the largest mountain range in California, occupying one-fifth of the total area of the state. It extends more than 400 miles along California's eastern border and contains many snow-capped peaks over 13,000 feet. Several modern highways through the range--including those that cross Tioga, Sonora, and Ebbetts passes--are routinely closed in the winter.

The eastern side of the Sierra Nevada rises steeply, whereas the western side has a more gentle slope. Forests of pine, fir, and cedar cover the lower elevations. Rushing mountain rivers have cut dozens of deep canyons in the western Sierra. Glaciers sculpted the sheer granite cliffs of the spectacular Yosemite Valley.

The placer gold discovered in California in 1848 was eroded from rock outcroppings in the high Sierra and deposited in stream banks and ancient riverbeds of the western foothills.

Central Valley



The Central Valley lies between the Coast Ranges and the Sierra Nevada. More than four hundred miles long and about fifty miles wide, the Central Valley is the most productive agricultural area in California.

Oak woodlands and bunchgrass prairies once covered the valley floor and great tule marshes extended over the flood plain. Beavers in the inland streams first lured European Americans across the continent to California in the 1820s. Overhead is the Pacific flyway, a heavily traveled route for migrating birds. Beneath the surface of the valley lie rich deposits of oil and natural gas, created millions of years ago from the remains of marine plants and animals. Irrigated cropland today covers most of the valley and produces more agricultural products than any comparable region in the world.

The Central Valley is really two valleys in one. In the south is the San Joaquin Valley , drained by the northward flowing San Joaquin River; the Sacramento Valley lies to the north and is drained by the southward flowing Sacramento River.

San Joaquin Valley



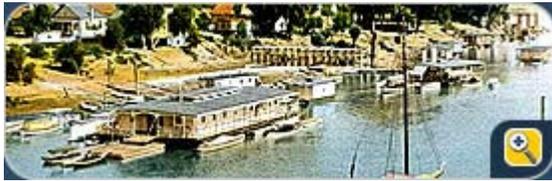
Ancestral home of the Yokuts and Miwok Indians, the San Joaquin Valley extends southward from the Sacramento River to the Tehachapi Mountains. European Americans first entered the valley in the 1770s, pursuing deserters from the coastal missions. When Jedediah Smith and other trappers came to the valley in the 1820s they reported that "Beaver were abundant in all the Creeks & Rivers."

After the gold rush European settlers established vast wheat farms on the valley's fertile soils. The coming of the Southern Pacific Railroad triggered further agricultural development but also led to disputes over land ownership between the farmers and the railroad.

The great Central Valley Project, constructed in the mid-twentieth century, guaranteed sufficient water for the diversification of crops. Today the valley produces tomatoes, potatoes, alfalfa, sugar beets, cotton, olives, almonds, peaches, and dozens of other fruits

and vegetables. The valley's largest cities are Stockton, Fresno, and Bakersfield.

Sacramento Valley



Flowing through the heart of the valley is the four hundred-mile long Sacramento River. The Sacramento River carries one-third of the annual runoff of all California streams, the largest flow of any river in the state.

Many Native American cultures flourished in the Sacramento Valley prior to European exploration in the late eighteenth century. The valley bears the Spanish name for the "Holy Sacrament," a name first applied to the Feather River by Gabriel Moraga in 1808.

Johann Sutter, a German-speaking Swiss immigrant, established the first European settlement in the valley on a Mexican land grant at the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers. During the gold rush hordes of people heading for the mines in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada crossed the valley. Sacramento, Marysville, Yuba City, and other towns flourished as supply centers for the miners.

Wheat farming dominated the valley economy in the 1870s and '80s. Improvements in irrigation and transportation led to diversification of crops, including the raising of apples, apricots, pears, walnuts, rice, barley, alfalfa, safflower, and sorghum. The largest city in the valley is Sacramento, the state capital.

California Deserts



Much of the eastern half of southern California is a large desert triangle--a vast expanse of sandy valleys, dried lake beds, and short ranges of rugged mountains. These southern deserts were as much a barrier to overland migration to California in the eighteenth century as the steep eastern face of the Sierra Nevada was in the nineteenth.

Mojave Desert



The Mojave is the largest desert in California, covering some 25,000 square miles. Much of the surface consists of immense stretches of sandy soil. Active volcanoes erupted long ago, depositing layers of lava, mud, and ash onto the desert floor. Today the region is dotted with extinct volcanic cones and small isolated mountain ranges.

Several Native cultures, including the Quechan (Yuma) and Mojave, flourished along the Colorado River. Others, such as the Cahuilla and Serrano, lived farther west. The Old Spanish Trail crossed the region in the late eighteenth century, as did the Santa Fe railroad in the nineteenth. Today the region supports several resort centers and successful farming communities in the western Antelope Valley. Dry lake beds contain rich deposits of boron, a valuable mineral used for jet-engine and rocket fuels.

Colorado Desert

The Colorado Desert stretches over 4,000 square miles in southeastern California. Part of a great depression that extends southward to the Gulf of California, the desert lies 245 feet below sea level at some points.



The Colorado Desert includes the Coachella and Imperial valleys with the Salton Sea between. The Salton Sea was formed in 1905-1907 when waters from the Colorado River overflowed an irrigation system. Irrigation today supports a thriving agricultural economy in both the Coachella and Imperial valleys. Leading crops include lettuce, alfalfa, cotton, and sugar beets. Palm Springs is an elegant resort community, famous for its warm winter sunshine and star-studded population.

Death Valley



The most notorious of the California deserts is Death Valley, a deep trough about 130 miles long and six to fourteen miles wide. In the center of the valley is Badwater, the lowest point in the Western Hemisphere at 282 feet below sea level.

Death Valley was named by a group of gold-seekers who struggled through the region in 1849. Following the discovery of rich deposits of borax in 1873, the valley became famous for its twenty-mule teams hauling out wagon-loads of this valuable mineral. Because of its scenic, scientific, and historical interest, the region was included within the Death Valley National Monument in 1933.

The Climates of California:

Is "Sunny California" always sunny?

As early as 1840, author Richard Henry Dana flatly asserted that "California is blessed with a climate of which there can be no better in the world."



The image of the state as a land of perpetual sunshine--"It Never Rains in Southern California," as the song goes--has an obvious appeal. But California's climates are far more complex than the popular image suggests. Indeed, the climates of California are as diverse as those of southern Ireland and the northern Sahara. California has four of the five major climate zones found around the world (only the hot and rainy tropical climate is not represented). Included are the Mediterranean, semi-arid or steppe, desert, and microthermal or Alpine climates.

And no, "Sunny California" is not always sunny! Average yearly precipitation is about 24 inches, with rainfall ordinarily occurring between late October and early May. The heaviest precipitation falls along the northwest coast where annual rainfall ranges up to 110 inches.

Mediterranean Climate

Historian Kevin Starr, in his *Americans and the California Dream* (1973), called the state "an American Mediterranean." The description is apt for much of coastal California and parts of the interior valleys that enjoy a Mediterranean climate with relatively warm, dry summers and mild winters.



Even within this zone, however, are important regional variations. Along the coast, marine air and fog keep temperatures more moderate than in the Central Valley where summers are generally hot and cloudless. An intermediate version of the Mediterranean climate is found in the Coast Ranges and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Semi-arid or Steppe Climate

The semi-arid or steppe climate zone encompasses much of the San Joaquin Valley and the fringes of the Mojave Desert. Rainfall here is less and temperatures are generally warmer than in the Mediterranean zone. A cooler version occurs in a narrow coastal strip from Los Angeles to San Diego.



Notable for its sunny summers, pleasant winters, and little rain, this and the Mediterranean climate zone are what best qualify California for inclusion in the nation's booming "Sunbelt." The air pollution that has plagued the region in the twentieth century--casting a noxious pall over sunny California--is the result of a sunlight-activated chemical reaction among pollutants trapped by a combination of onshore winds, interior mountains, and temperature inversions (in which cooler marine air is trapped beneath warmer air above.)

Desert Climate



A desert climate exists in the southeastern third of the state, east of the Sierra Nevada and Peninsular ranges and in the southwestern part of the San Joaquin Valley. Cut off by mountains from moisture-laden Pacific storms, this region receives very little precipitation. Here lies Owens Valley, celebrated by author Mary Austin as "the land of little rain" and scene of one of the most bitter water disputes in California history.

Summer temperatures in this region are the highest in the state, averaging over 100 degrees Fahrenheit in July in Death Valley. The highest temperature ever recorded in the United States, 134 degrees, was recorded in Death Valley on July 10, 1913.

Microthermal or Alpine Climate



The microthermal climate of California is much like that found in the Alps where summers are short and cool and winters are vigorous. Average temperatures in the coldest month are below freezing at the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada, the Modoc Plateau, and the Klamath Mountains.

Most of California's water supply originates in these higher elevations as winter

snowpack and spring runoff. About three fourths of the annual precipitation occurs in the mountainous northern third of the state, whereas about 80 percent of the water demand (mostly for agriculture) occurs in the southern two-thirds. Moving water from where it naturally occurs to where demand has been created has been one of the greatest challenges in the history of California.

The California State Flower

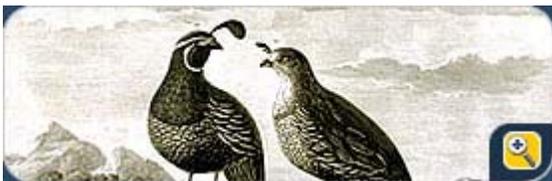


The official California State Flower is the Golden Poppy. Easily distinguished by its four brilliant orange, satiny petals and finely divided, gray-green leaves. It can be found blooming from March through May on hillsides and valleys across California.

The Golden Poppy's scientific name, *Escholtzia californica*, comes from an Estonian physician, Johann Friedrich Gustav von Escholtz, who visited San Francisco Bay aboard the Russian ship Rurik in 1816. Also aboard the Rurik was the self-taught botanist Adelbert von Chamisso who named the flower in honor of his friend and traveling companion.

In 1913 the legislature adopted the Golden Poppy as the California State Flower: "Its satiny petals, bright with the gleam of our gold mines, rich with the sheen of our fruits, and warm with the radiance of our sunshine, typify the ideal of California as no other flower could."

The California State Bird



The California quail (*Callipepla californica*) was named the official California State Bird in 1931. [Alternative name: California Valley Quail (*Lophortyx californica*). A plump bird, the California quail is easily recognized by its prominent forward-curving, teardrop-shaped plume. The adult male has a bluish-gray chest with white bands below its chin and over its eyes.

The California Quail is found in mixed woodlands, brushy foothills, and in suburban parks, usually near permanent sources of water. Highly gregarious, coveys of up to two hundred individuals may assemble in the fall and winter to descend on city parks and gardens to feed on seeds and invertebrates.

The California State Tree



In 1953 the magnificent California coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) became the official California State Tree. Among the coast redwoods are the world's tallest trees, some having reached a height of more than 360 feet. Their massive trunks are usually 10-15 feet in diameter, but their tiny cones are only about one inch long. The fibrous bark is reddish brown; the crown is open and irregular.

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Once widespread on the seaward slopes of the northern Coast Ranges, the redwoods have been greatly diminished by more than a century of commercial logging. Conservation efforts date back to the mid-nineteenth century. The Save-the-Redwoods League, founded in 1918, was among the many groups instrumental in funding and creating preserves of old-growth trees. Activists in the early 1990s renewed the campaign to block the cutting of the remaining 5 percent of virgin redwood forests.

The California State Animal



The official California State Animal is the grizzly bear (*Ursus horribilis californicus*), so designated by the state legislature in 1953. Once common in California, the grizzly bear was exterminated in the state because of its reported ferocity. The last reported California grizzly was killed in 1922.

Among the largest bears in the world, grizzlies grow up to eight feet long and weigh more than eight hundred pounds. Their name comes from the white-tipped fur that gives them a grizzled or gray-streaked appearance. Their overall color varies from creamy-brown to almost black.

The grizzly bear was feared and honored in many Native American cultures. During the Spanish and Mexican periods, grizzlies were hunted for meat and captured for sport.

Vaqueros would capture a grizzly, transport it to a bull ring, and tie its hindleg to the foreleg of an enormous, long-horned California bull. Spectators then placed their bets on whichever animal they believed would survive the fight.

A favorite symbol for California, the grizzly bear appears on the state seal and flag.

The California State Mineral



Not surprisingly, gold is the official mineral of the Golden State. Treasured because of its scarcity, beauty, softness, and malleability, gold has been valued throughout the ages.

The origins of California gold stretch back through the mists of geologic time to the very creation of California. According to the theory of plate tectonics, the subduction of the Pacific Plate beneath the western edge of the North American Plate generated enormous heat. Within this molten crucible, metal-rich compounds dissolved into solutions that were injected into fissures of rocks being formed above. Thousands of veins of gold thus were created in the granite core of California's primordial mountains. Over eons of time, erosion tore loose tiny particles of gold and washed them into rivers and streams, where they lodged on sandbars or behind stones. There most of the particles lay undisturbed until their widely publicized discovery on January 24, 1848.

As news of the gold discovery spread, newcomers came to California from across the country and around the world. Between 1848 and 1854, the peak year of production, miners harvested nearly \$350 million in gold. The gold rush was the foundation for the economic history of California, and for much of its social, cultural, and political history as well.

The California State Rock



The official California State Rock is serpentine. It serves as a host rock for such valuable minerals as asbestos, chromite, magnesite, and cinnabar.

Often mottled in various shades of green, serpentine can be polished to a marblelike sheen. It is often used as an ornamental stone, known as verd antique or serpentine marble. Buildings throughout California have decorative elements fashioned from this

beautiful native rock.

The California State Reptile



The state legislature designated the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizi*) as the official California State Reptile in 1973. The desert tortoise grows to ten to fourteen inches long and can be found in dry, sandy areas throughout southeastern California. Like its distant relative, the giant tortoise of the Galapagos Islands, the desert tortoise has a brown, dome-shaped shell and thick, stumpy legs.

A protected species, the desert tortoise is remarkably long lived if not removed from its native habitat. It typically feeds at dawn and dusk and lies in a shallow burrow throughout the day, sometimes sharing its underground home with the occasional rattlesnake or owl.

The California State Fish



In 1947 the state legislature selected the golden trout (*Salmo aguabonita*) as the official California State Fish. (*Alternative name: Oncorhynchus aguabonita.*)

A brilliantly colored fish, the golden trout has bright red markings on its sides, underbelly, and cheeks. Along its spine, dorsal and caudal fins, are large, black spots. It grows to 28 inches in length.

The golden trout was originally found only in the waters of the Kern River in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Later it was introduced to mountain streams throughout the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada.

The California State Insect



In 1973 the state legislature selected the dog face butterfly (*Zerene eurydice*) as the

official California State Insect. [*Alternative name: Colias eurydice.*] The dog face butterfly is brilliantly colored and has a wingspan of less than two inches. The male's fore wing is purplish to pinkish orange with dark purplish brown along the front and outer edges. The pattern of the orange area resembles a dog's face in profile. The female's fore wing is entirely yellow except for a conspicuous black dot. The hind wings of both sexes are a brilliant yellow.

The dog face butterfly is found in open woodlands along coastal California south to the Baja California peninsula.

The California State Marine Mammal



In 1976 the state legislature named the gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) as the official California State Marine Mammal.

Gray whales were hunted almost to extinction in the nineteenth century. Whalers from the United States and England frequented California ports during the Spanish and Mexican periods. Stations for offshore hunting were established during the early American period from Crescent City in the north to Point Loma on San Diego Bay in the south.

The gray whale averages about 36 feet in length and can be spotted from the California coast during their migration. The gray whales summer in the Bering sea or other northern waters and spend the winter in favored breeding areas in coastal Baja California. In most years, the first southern-migrating individuals pass along the California coast in December with peak numbers passing by in early January. Northward movement may begin as early as February. Mother-calf pairs often travel at a leisurely speed and very close to the shoreline from April to June. Their migration is the farthest of any mammal.

The California State Fossil

The saber-toothed cat (*Smilodon californicus*) was named the official California State Fossil in 1968. Common in California 40 million years ago, the saber-toothed cat was a powerful, tiger-sized carnivore with eight-inch fangs. It hunted thick-skinned animals such as mastodons and woolly mammoths.



The saber-toothed cat became extinct about 12,000 years ago, but many bones have been excavated from the La Brea tar pits in Los Angeles. The saber-toothed cat and other prehistoric mammal bones from the tar pits are displayed at the George C. Page Museum on Wilshire Boulevard.

The First Californians: Native Cultures

California has a greater variety of geographical regions, landforms, and climates than any area of comparable size in what is now the United States. Likewise, an extraordinary cultural diversity prevailed among the Indian people of California. Styles of housing, dress, and transportation varied from one region to the other. Kinship systems and forms of political organization differed throughout the state, as did religious beliefs and practices.

In an effort to describe the great diversity of California Native communities, scholars have divided the state into six geographically distinct "culture areas." The residents of each culture area shared many common traits, such as dress, housing, manufacturing methods, and other routine activities.

A Diverse People in a Diverse Land



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Origins and Antiquity

According to the traditional beliefs of California Indians, they are a people who were created here and who have lived forever in their ancestral homelands. Each culture has its own creation story. Widely differing versions of creation flourish even within individual communities. The Native people recognize the unlikelihood of agreement on matters of such importance: "This is how we tell it; they tell it differently." Most anthropologists believe that the aboriginal population of California descended from ancient people who crossed into North America from Asia over the land bridge connecting the

two continents during the glaciations of the late Pleistocene Epoch.

No one knows when those first people reached California, but it is likely that Native Americans were living here for fifteen thousand years before European explorers first sailed along the California coast in the sixteenth century.

Food and Population

Most California Indians lived entirely by hunting and gathering the abundant resources provided by nature. Yet these hunter-gatherers engaged in an array of sophisticated practices to manage their resources and enhance the yield of potential food sources. They pruned plants and trees, culled animal and insect populations, and practiced periodic burning

of groundcover to replenish the soil. The Cahuilla, whose homeland includes the northern Colorado Desert, also practiced agriculture. In areas where water was scarce, the Cahuilla dug deep wells in the desert sand. By banking the sand around the wells, they created small pools. They used the water to grow corn, squash, beans, and melons. Likewise, the Mojaves

and the Yumas planted seeds of corn, bean, and pumpkins in the mud left by the annual floodwaters along the lower Colorado. The staple throughout much of California was the acorn, a nutritious food source that has a higher caloric content than wheat. Several species of oaks in central California annually produce more than a million tons of acorns, far more than could be gathered or consumed. Large game--including deer, antelope, elk, sheep, and bear--were present over more than half of the state. Fish were abundant in the many streams and rivers. The actual number of persons supported by these various activities, before the coming of Europeans, can never be precisely determined.

According to the most reliable contemporary estimates, the indigenous population of California was at least 300,000. This means that the Native population in California before

European contact was much greater than the average for other areas in what is now the United States.

Languages and Tribes

The Indians of California spoke perhaps as many as one hundred different languages. Seventy percent of these sounded as different from each other as English and Cantonese.

No area of comparable size in North America, or perhaps in the world, contained a greater variety of Native languages and cultures than did aboriginal California.

Anthropologists and linguists classify the California Native languages into seven stocks--Hokan, Penutian, Utian, Algic, Na-Dene, Uto-Aztecan, and Yukian. Each of these stocks includes several language families that are further divided into individual languages. Within the Pomoan family, for instance, are seven distinct languages--Northern,

Northeastern, Eastern, Central, Southeastern, Southern, and Kashaya Pomo. In many areas, the languages were spoken in different regional dialects. About half of the state's Native languages are no longer spoken. Most of the languages still in use today are spoken fluently by only a handful of elders. California's Native people, however, are

increasingly active in a wide range of activities to revive and preserve their traditional languages. Anthropologists have attempted various definitions of the "tribe" in California. It may be considered a body of people who occupied a distinct territory and shared a similar culture. On this basis, there were more than one hundred such tribes. The tribes themselves were divided into smaller "tribelets," groups of several neighboring villages, perhaps with a principal village and three or four smaller ones. As many as five hundred of these autonomous land-owning communities flourished in California.



The Southern Culture Area

Some of the most populous tribes in California were located in the southern culture area. Villages along the southern coast, sustained by the great abundance of sea life, contained as many as two thousand residents each.



Among the many tribes in the southern culture area are the Kumeyaay (Diegueno), Cahuilla, Tongva (Gabrielino), and Chumash.

Kumeyaay (Diegueno)



The territory of the Kumeyaay extended over much of extreme southern California and the northern parts of the Baja California peninsula. Their homeland included coastal, mountain, and desert regions.

Like many of their southern California neighbors, the Kumeyaay seasonally exploited various ecological niches. Each village community engaged in an annual migration, following the ripening of major plants within their territory. In the spring, the Kumeyaay gathered budding plants and small game in the canyons and lower foothills. In the early summer they harvested and dried ripening cactus fruits for winter storage. In July and

August they moved into the higher elevations to gather ripening seeds, wild plums, and other fruits. They harvested acorns and piñon nuts in the fall before returning to their winter villages.

The Tongva (Gabrielino)

The homeland of the Tongva included all of present-day Los Angeles and much of neighboring Orange County as well as parts of the offshore islands of San Clemente, Santa Catalina, and San Nicolas.



Tongva society was divided into distinct social classes. The elite included the families of the headmen and other wealthy individuals. The remainder of the population was divided between a middle class of affluent families and a lower class of families of more modest means.

Marriage among the Tongva was generally between individuals from the same social class. On her wedding day, a Tongva bride was adorned with beads, skins, paint, and flowers. She was carried halfway to her future husband's home by her family and friends who danced and sang along the way. The groom's relatives met the entourage and carried the bride the rest of the way. They placed the bride beside the groom and poured baskets of seeds over their heads to ensure a rich and bountiful life together.

Cahuilla

The Cahuilla occupied a diverse territory of canyons, mountain passes, and windswept deserts that stretched from the Chocolate Mountains in the south to the San Bernardino Mountains in the north.

The Cahuilla supplemented traditional hunting and gathering activities with some limited agriculture. Hunters shot rabbits and other small game with bows and arrows, killed them with throwing sticks, or captured them with nets and snares. Women gathered acorns, mesquite pods, piñon nuts, and the fruit of various species of cacti. When water supplies were sufficient, the Cahuilla planted crops of corn, beans, squash, and melons.

Like other peoples of the American Southwest, the Cahuilla produced both pottery and basketry. They fashioned their pottery by coiling narrow ropes of clay and smoothing the sides with a rounded stone and wooden paddle. The finished product, usually thin and brittle, was painted or incised with geometric designs.

The Chumash

The Chumash occupied an expansive territory along the southern California coast, from Malibu Canyon in the south to Estero Bay in the north, and as far inland as the western San Joaquin Valley. Also included in Chumash territory were the large offshore islands--San Miguel, Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, and Anacapa.



Chumash villages were among the largest in California, some containing as many as two thousands residents. Their homes were made of poles driven into the ground and arched into the center, overlaid with a thatch of interwoven grasses, tules, and ferns. In addition to family homes, the typical Chumash village also included a storehouse, sweathouse, cemetery, ceremonial enclosure, and playing field.

The Chumash also produced some of the most colorful and spectacular rock paintings in North America. The extant paintings, found in caves and on rock outcroppings throughout southern California, are almost always abstract in design; even when life forms are depicted they are highly stylized and imaginative.

Central California Culture Area

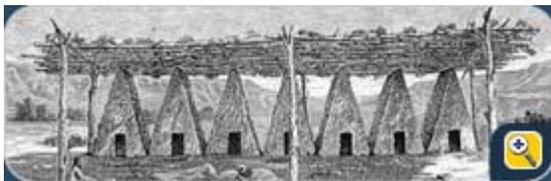
The central culture area covered about half the present territory of California and included three-fifths of all the Native people.

Along the central coast and throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys the climate was mild, and plant and animal life was abundant. Tribal dress and housing reflected the mild climate, and both were often minimal. Material-culture items, such as weapons and tools, were generally simple and unornamented, but in basketry the people of the central area exceeded all others in skill and accomplishment.



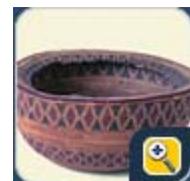
The basic unit of political organization was the village community, or tribelet, comprising several small villages with an area of two hundred to three hundred square miles. The acknowledged leader or chief of a tribelet customarily resided in the community's principal village. There was a strong sense of territoriality among the various tribes of the central area, and trespassing was often met by forceful opposition. Warfare, however, was rare and usually limited to small conflicts with few casualties.

The Yokuts



The Yokuts occupied the San Joaquin Valley from the Kern Lake area in the south to the mouth of the San Joaquin River in the north. Within this vast territory were three distinct cultural groups: the Southern Valley, Northern Valley, and Foothill Yokuts.

The southern San Joaquin Valley once was filled with tule-covered wetlands, an area teeming with aquatic birds, migrating ducks and geese, schools of trout and perch, and great herds of tule elk and pronghorn



antelope. The Southern Valley Yokuts fished from canoe-shaped rafts or balsas made of dried tules lashed together.

The Northern Valley Yokuts relied heavily on salmon and acorns for subsistence. Using harpoons and dragnets, they caught spawning salmon in the fall and spring. From the groves of valley oaks, they gathered great quantities of acorns that were ground into meal and cooked as a thick soup or gruel.

The mountainous territory of the Foothill Yokuts supplied them with a wide variety of food resources: deer, quail, acorns, mussels, trout, ducks, wild oats, manzanita berries, pine nuts, rabbits, and ground squirrels. The Foothill Yokuts developed several ingenious strategies for capturing game. They stalked their prey wearing disguises made of deer heads, antlers, and skins. They caught quail by constructing long fences with noose traps, powered by bent sticks under tension, set at openings every twenty to fifty feet.

The Miwok



The Miwok were one of the most populous groups in California, occupying areas from the Pacific Coast to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. They included several major linguistic and cultural groups, each of which was further divided into distinct subgroups and numerous individual tribelets.

Variations in Miwok architecture reflected the great diversity of local conditions and materials within Miwok territory. Among the Miwok who lived in the Sacramento Valley, the more substantial families lived in semisubterranean earth-covered homes. In the upper foothills of the Sierra Nevada, houses were made of three or four layers of bark slabs. The homes of the Coast Miwok were built of interlocking poles of willow or driftwood to which were lashed horizontal poles. Bunches of grass or reeds were tied in rows of thatch on the pole frame.



The Maidu

The Maidu language was spoken by groups variously known as the Maidu, Konkow, and Nisenan. Each group spoke related but distinct forms of the Maidu language.

The usual settlement pattern among the Maidu was a cluster of three to five small villages around a more populous, centrally located village. Lands for hunting and fishing were held in common by the tribelet or village-community. Each tribelet was an autonomous entity and served as the primary unit of political organization. The leader played a fairly

minor role in the day-to-day affairs of the community and served primarily during times of war or in negotiations for peace.

The Pomo



The northern California people known collectively as the Pomo were actually seven different cultural groups, each speaking distinctly different languages within the Hokan linguistic family.

Their territory centered on the valley of the Russian River and covered nearly all of the river's draining basin. The most remarkable technological achievement of the Pomo was their basketry. The baskets of California Indians are generally of the highest quality, and the Pomo are the best known of the California basketmakers.

Pomo baskets, including both twined and coiled ware, were executed in a great variety of shapes from flat plate styles to nearly perfect spheres. Intricate geometrical and banded patterns were often outlined with brightly colored feathers, plumes, beads, and shells.

The Northwestern Culture Area

The northwestern culture area was part of the larger North Pacific Coast culture that extended from California to Alaska. Northwestern California is an area with a bold and craggy coastline and dense woodlands of towering coast redwoods. Rainfall here is far greater than elsewhere in the state.

One of the distinctive features of the northwestern culture area was the great value placed upon the accumulation of material wealth. A family's social status was determined by its possession of conspicuous objects of wealth, such as woodpecker scalps, large obsidian blades, white deerskins, or strips of the tubular mollusk shells known as dentalia. Political leadership in the northwest rested upon the richest men, who surrounded themselves with their relatives.

Included among the people of the northwestern cultural area were the Yurok ,Hupa , and Shasta .

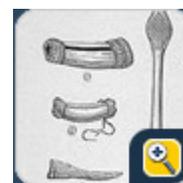
The Yurok



The Yurok lived on the Pacific coast of northwestern California. Many of their villages were either on lagoons or at the mouths of streams; others were along the lower course of the Klamath River.

The Yurok placed a great emphasis on accumulating wealth and asserting status. The wealthiest members of Yurok society owned multiple sets of dance regalia and served as hosts for ceremonial gatherings. They wore distinctive clothing, such as highly decorative basketry caps, as a means of displaying their wealth. Even their style of speech was more elaborate than the contracted version spoken by commoners.

The natural resources of northwestern California were abundant, permitting the Yurok to live in permanent, year-round villages. They harvested salmon, sturgeon, eel, surf fish, shellfish, sea lions, deer, elk, and acorns. Dense redwood forests provided the Yurok with wood for their distinctive split-plank houses, constructed with either single-pitched or double-pitched roofs. Redwood also was used for the manufacture of a variety of household items, such as wooden stools, storage boxes, and cooking implements. Using stone adzes and wedges, Yurok craftsmen carved blunt-ended dugout canoes from large redwood logs.



The Hupa

The traditional territory of the Hupa people centers on the Hoopa Valley of northwestern California and includes all of the lower course of the Trinity River.

Social rank among the Hupa was calculated almost exclusively upon the basis of wealth. Wealthy families retained their privileged positions by passing on their fortunes from one generation to the next.

The most important items in Hupa diet were salmon and acorns. The salmon were caught in the spring and fall as they returned to the Trinity River to spawn.

Hupa religious practice included world-renewal rituals known as the White Deerskin and Jumping Dances. These ceremonies were performed each year, during the late summer or early fall, to renew the world, and to ward off disease, famine, or other disasters in the coming year. These annual events included elaborate dance regalia, the display of wealth objects, and the recitation of long narratives.



The Shasta

The Shasta people of northwestern California occupied a rugged mountain area. Their villages were mainly in river valleys, often at the mouths of creeks flowing into larger rivers.

Individual families within a typical Shasta village owned their own hunting and fishing grounds, tobacco plots, and oak trees. Real estate was passed on from generation to

generation along the male line. The medium of exchange for bridal purchases and other transactions was money in the form of clamshell disks and dentalia.

The Shasta participated in extensive trade with their neighbors who traveled to Shasta territory along trails that crossed northwestern California. They obtained pine nut necklaces from their southern neighbors, the Wintu, and unworked obsidian from the Achumawi, their neighbors to the east. The main trading partners for the Shasta were the Karok, Hupa, and Yurok from whom they obtained baskets, dentalia, abalone, and other shells in exchange for obsidian blades, juniper beads, and Wintu pine nut beads.

The Northeastern Culture Area

Anthropologists generally consider the northeastern culture area of California to be part of the periphery of the Columbia-Fraser Plateau culture area that extends far to the north

Conditions in northeastern California varied considerably. A few tribes lived in richly endowed lands and enjoyed a way of life similar to that of their northwest neighbors. Most, however, subsisted in more desolate areas where food was often scarce and the people had to spend a large portion of their time hunting small game and gathering seeds and roots. In contrast to the densely populated heartland of central California, much of the northeastern corner of the state was only thinly settled.

Among the people of the northeastern culture area were the Achumawi and Atsugewi.

The Achumawi

The territory of the Achumawi included nearly all of the lands along the westward-flowing Pit River.

Early European American settlers in northeastern California noted numerous pitfalls along animal trails in the area. From these pitfalls, dug by the Indians to trap deer, the settlers named the Pit river and subsequently called the Achumawi the Pit River Indians. Deer were abundant in northeastern California and provided the Achumawi with a plentiful supply of venison as well as deerskin for the manufacture of quivers, caps, capes, skirts, belts, moccasins, and leggings.

The life cycle of the Achumawi included an elaborate puberty ceremony for girls and a somewhat more modest affair for boys. Marriage was accompanied by an exchange of gifts between the two families, regarded as a form of mutual purchase. Death was the occasion of great mourning. Close relatives of the deceased shaved their hair and covered their heads with pitch. The body and all the personal property of the dead were burned.

Shamans played a key role in Achumawi culture. They obtained their healing ability from their tamakomi, variously translated as "medicine" or "power." About half of all Achumawi shamans were women.

The Atsugewi

The homeland of the Atsugewi included the rugged valleys north of Mount Lassen and the barren plains to the east. Perhaps because of their difficult environment, the Atsugewi placed a high value on hard work. Parents taught their children to avoid laziness. The man who worked hard and became rich was considered the social ideal.

The diet of the Atsugewi included a wide variety of plants and animals. Trout and other fish were gathered in baskets and nets in the rivers and lakes of Atsugewi territory. Small game such as rabbits often were hunted in groups. Larger game, such as deer and antelope, usually were hunted by individual hunters who turned over their kill to the village headman for general distribution.

The rhythm of Atsugewi life included ample opportunities for play and celebration. Every sixth day usually was set aside as a time of rest. The great celebration of the year was the autumnal pakapi, or "big time," called by a village headman when he felt that sufficient food had been accumulated for the coming winter months. Invitations were sent to the people of neighboring villages to come and share in the festivities.

The Great Basin

The Great Basin culture area of California included most of the lands along the present eastern border of the state and the eastern deserts of southern California. This area is at the western periphery of a much larger culture area that extends across Nevada and Utah. Food and even water are scarce in much of the area.

To sustain themselves, many groups in the Great Basin had to move frequently in search of such game as desert rats and rabbits. Included in the Great Basin culture area are the Tubatulabal and the Owens Valley Paiute.

The Tubatulabal

The homeland of the Tubatulabal was the southern foothills of the Sierra Nevada, especially that part drained by the upper Kern River. The Tubatulabal were divided into three distinct bands, each of which spoke a different version of the Tubatulabal language.

Each of the Tubatulabal bands had a high level of internal unity and was led by a headman or timiwal. The timiwal was appointed by a council of elders and usually served a life term. His powers were limited, however, and he functioned primarily as a counselor and arbitrator. The timiwal helped to settle disputes within the band and served as the band's representative in dealing with neighboring groups.

The staples of the Tubatulabal diet were acorns, gathered in the early fall from six different species of oaks, and piñon nuts, gathered in the late fall from trees on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada. Various small seeds, berries, and tubers were gathered throughout the year. Also important were the fish caught in the mountain streams and

rivers of Tubatulabal territory. The major game animals were deer, bear, mountain lion, mountain sheep, and antelope.

The Owens Valley Paiute

The homeland of the Owens Valley Paiute, also known as the Mono Paiute, is a territory with very little rainfall. Many short rivers flow eastward from the Sierra Nevada, but much of the water evaporates soon after reaching the valley floor. Vegetation is scarce in the lowlands and scattered growths of trees in the higher mountains are characteristic.

The Owens Valley Paiute were divided into relatively small bands. Of necessity, the bands were migratory, frequently shifting from place to place in search of water and food. The men hunted animals of all sizes, and the women gathered seeds, nuts, and fruits. The Paiute also developed a distinctive form of agriculture based on communal labor. They constructed ditches and dams to irrigate various wild plants, thus increasing their productivity.



The Colorado River Culture Area

The Colorado River culture area of California was on the western periphery of the greater Southwest culture area. Like other peoples of the Southwest, the California Indians along the Colorado River supplemented their hunting and gathering activities with agriculture. They cultivated crops of corn, beans, and pumpkins in the fertile flood plains along the river.

The tribes of this area regarded themselves more as national entities, unlike the village- or tribelet-oriented people elsewhere in the state. The people of the Colorado River area also traveled extensively outside of their own territory, carrying trade goods to the coast and into the southern San Joaquin Valley.

The peoples of the Colorado River culture area include the Quechan (Yuma), Halchidhoma, and Mohave.



European Exploration: *Voyages of Discovery*

After untold millennia of settlement by Native Americans, California was visited by a series of European explorers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The explorers sailed along the California coast and occasionally landed to take on water or make repairs. The records of their voyages contain fascinating glimpses of the land and people of early California.

Exploration Motives: Headin' West and North



No one knows for certain when the first Europeans reached the Americas, but certainly the most famous voyage of exploration was that of Christopher Columbus in the epoch-making year of 1492. Columbus sailed westward from Europe in search of a sea route to Asia, seeking access to the magnificent wealth of the Indies.

The landfall of Columbus in the islands of the Caribbean stirred great excitement throughout Europe. Subsequent voyages explored along the coasts of North and South America. At first the Europeans viewed the Americas as obstacles, masses of land that blocked their way to the Indies. But soon they discovered that the

Americas themselves contained riches of extraordinary value.



It was the search for wealth that first brought Europeans toward California. Some came looking for a sea route--called the Strait of Anián--through the Americas to Asia. Others came in pursuit of the legendary lands shrouded in the northern mysteries. A Spanish novel described one such land, very near the Terrestrial Paradise, that was home to passionate black women and wild animals in harnesses of gold. This fabled land was called the Island of California.

The Strait of Anián

Ever since the days of Marco Polo, Europeans were fascinated with the products that came from Asia--porcelain, silk, jewels, and spices of cloves, cinnamon, and pepper. Columbus's famous voyage in 1492 was in search of a western sea route from Europe to Asia.

For more than two centuries, Europeans searched in vain for a water route to Asia through North America. Spaniards called this long-rumored route the Strait of Anián. British explorers called it the Northwest Passage. The only such passage, in fact, is through the ice-choked waters around the islands of North America above the Arctic Circle.

Several of the early European explorers to sail along the California coast came looking for the Strait of Anián. Some maps indicated where this mythical strait was hoped to be.

The Island of California

Early in the sixteenth century, Spanish writer Garcí Rodríguez Ordóñez de Montalvo published a book called *Las Sergas de Esplandián* (The Exploits of Esplandián). One of the characters in this fantasy was Calafía, the queen of California, "more beautiful than all the rest."

Montalvo described this mythical California as an island inhabited solely by black women who lived "in the manner of Amazons."

Historians assume that Montalvo's novel was known to the Spanish explorers who first sailed along the coast of the Baja California peninsula in the early 1500s. Apparently the explorers named the peninsula "California" after the mythical island in the novel. Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of the Aztec empire, reported in 1524 that he expected to find an island of Amazons along the northwest coast of Mexico.

Montalvo's novel includes these words: "Know ye that on the right hand of the Indies there is an island called California, very near the Terrestrial Paradise and inhabited by black women without a single man among them and living in the manner of Amazons. They are robust of body, strong and passionate in heart, and of great valor. Their island is one of the most rugged in the world with bold rocks and crags. Their arms are all of gold, as is the harnesses of the wild beasts which, after taming, they ride. In all the island there is no other metal."

First Contacts in Baja



The first Europeans to approach California came from the south. Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century sailed northward from the ports of Acapulco and Navidad along the west coast of what is today Mexico. They came in search of fabled riches and the mythical Strait of Anián. Among the most important of these early explorers were Hernán Cortés, Fortún Jiménez, and Francisco de Ulloa. They sailed along the coast of Baja (or Lower) California.

Hernán Cortés, a Spanish adventurer and conquistador, was chiefly responsible for the European discovery of the lower part of what the Spanish ultimately called "the Californias." In 1519 Cortés and about 500 Spanish soldiers arrived in Mexico. After defeating the Aztecs in 1521, he declared the conquered lands to be a colony of Spain. Between the years 1527 and 1539 Cortés sponsored many expeditions into the Pacific. Several of the expeditions were sent to search for the Strait of Anián and to discover new lands to conquer. Other expeditions were sent westward to establish Spanish trade with the Philippine Islands.

In 1533 Cortés sent an expedition northward along the west coast of Mexico. The expedition was under the command of Captain Diego de Becerra. During the course of the expedition, the pilot Fortún Jiménez led a mutiny and killed Becerra. Jiménez and the mutineers continued the voyage and landed at the Bay of La Paz on the Baja California peninsula. Shortly after landing, Jiménez and twenty of his crew were killed by the local Guaycura Indians. The two surviving members of the expedition then returned to Cortés with news of the disaster. They also reported that the waters along the peninsula contained rich beds of pearls. Although Jiménez's expedition ended in disaster, it was the first contact by Europeans with native California Indians.

The European Discovery of Alta California

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, at the request of the viceroy of New Spain, led an expedition in search of the Strait of Anián.



The viceroy instructed Cabrillo to sail beyond the northern latitudes reached by Francisco de Ulloa. Cabrillo's expedition is important because it resulted in the European discovery of Alta California.

Cabrillo set sail from the port of Navidad on the west coast of New Spain on June 27, 1542. His two ships, the San Salvador and Victoria, were small and poorly made. His crew of 250 sailors and soldiers included two dozen Africans and Indians held in slavery.

For three months, the expedition slowly made its way northward. Their progress was slow because the currents along the coast flow from north to south and the prevailing winds also blow from the northwest. The expedition sailed into San Diego Bay on September 28, 1542. Cabrillo described the bay as "a closed and very good port." After dropping anchor, a small party of sailors went ashore. They were the first Europeans to visit what is today the state of California.

Sailing farther north, the expedition passed by San Pedro Bay near present-day Los Angeles and through the Santa Barbara Channel. By the middle of November, Cabrillo had reached the mouth of the Russian River. It was there that he decided to turn and head south.

Not much is known about the background or personal life of Cabrillo. No one knows for certain the place of his birth, his family lineage, or even his nationality. Most historians believe that Cabrillo was Portuguese, but others maintain that he was Spanish. We do know that at the time of his death in 1543, Cabrillo left an estate that was one of the richest in the Americas.

Cortés personally led an expedition northward from Acapulco to the peninsula of Baja California in 1535. On the shores of the Bay of La Paz, Cortés founded a base for further exploration. This colonial outpost was the first European settlement in "the Californias." The surrounding land proved to be hot, dry, and sterile; the only exploitable resources were pearls in the coastal waters. The outpost was abandoned in 1536.

Cortés sent a final voyage of exploration northward from the port of Acapulco in 1539. Commanded by Francisco de Ulloa, the expedition included three small vessels. They sailed northward along the west coast of Mexico to the head of the Gulf of California. Believing that the Baja California peninsula was an island, Ulloa searched in vain for a passage through to the open sea. The expedition then turned and sailed southward along the eastern coast of the peninsula and landed at the Bay of La Paz to take on supplies of wood and water. With great difficulty,

Ulloa then rounded the tip of the Baja peninsula and sailed northward along the outer shore. His small ships encountered fierce winds and high seas. Eventually Ulloa reached about 20 degrees north latitude before turning and heading south. Ulloa's voyage extended European knowledge of the lower regions of "the Californias" and should have proved unequivocally that Baja California was a peninsula and not an island. Nevertheless, European cartographers for the next two hundred years continued to produce maps depicting the Island of California.

First European Images of the Kumeyaay, Tongva, and Chumash



The voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542 produced the earliest European descriptions of the Native people of California.

When Cabrillo's ships sailed into San Diego Bay in late September, most of the local Kumeyaay people fled. Within a few days, however, several of the Kumeyaay came on board one of the ships. The journal of the expedition reports that the Indians, using signs, indicated that "people like us were going about in the interior [inland California], bearded, clothed, and armed like those on the ships." Historians speculate that the Kumeyaay may have been describing members of the Coronado expedition that had traveled through what is now New Mexico and Arizona two years earlier.

As Cabrillo passed along Catalina Island, "many Indians came out of the grass and bushes, shouting, dancing, and making signs to come ashore." Later these hospitable Tongva people "launched a fine canoe carrying eight or ten Indians, and came out to the ships."

The Cabrillo expedition passed through Chumash territory as it entered the Santa Barbara Channel. Cabrillo wrote in his journal: "We saw an Indian town on the land next to the sea, with large houses built much like those of New Spain. Many fine canoes each with twelve or thirteen Indians came to the ships." Cabrillo named the place Pueblo de las Canoas, the Town of the Canoes.

The Earliest European Artifact in California?

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo anchored his two tiny ships in a sheltered cove on an island along the southern California coast in late November 1542. It was there that Cabrillo decided to spend the winter of 1542-1543, waiting for better

weather before continuing his search for the elusive Strait of Anián.

Relations between the wintering Europeans and the local Indian people worsened as the weeks dragged by. One of the sailors reported that "the Indians there never stopped fighting us." Following an Indian attack on a group of sailors, Cabrillo went ashore and was injured as he fell on a rocky ledge. The journal of the expedition reports: "On January 3, 1543, Juan Rodríguez, captain of these ships, departed this life from a fall...in which he broke an arm near the shoulder." Cabrillo's sailors buried their captain's body on the island.

Historians are uncertain where these events took place. Some believe that Cabrillo died and was buried on San Miguel Island in the Santa Barbara Channel. Others think his burial place is much farther south on Santa Catalina Island.

In the spring of 1901 an archaeologist discovered a stone on Santa Rosa Island, an island just to the south of San Miguel. The stone was placed in the anthropology museum at the University of California, Berkeley. Years later an anthropologist concluded that the markings on the stone said "JRC" and that the stone once marked the grave of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. If that interpretation is correct, this carved stone is the earliest European artifact in California.

Bartolomé Ferrelo



Following the death of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1543, the pilot of the expedition assumed leadership. The journal of the expedition tells us that as Cabrillo lay dying, he "left as captain the chief pilot, Bartolomé Ferrelo." Cabrillo instructed Ferrelo "not to abandon the exploration of as much as possible of all that coast."

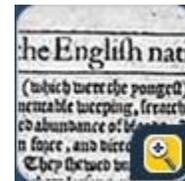
Ferrelo continued the fruitless search for the Strait of Anián. The expedition's two small ships left their winter anchorage in February 1543 and headed north. Historians are not sure how far they reached, but perhaps they got as far north as what is now Oregon. Somewhere along the way, the expedition was caught in a terrible storm. Both ships were damaged and several sailors lost their lives. Ferrelo decided to end the search. He arrived back in Navidad on April 14, 1543, nearly nine months after leaving.

Sir Francis Drake



The English privateer Francis Drake sailed from England in December 1577, commissioned by Queen Elizabeth I to raid Spanish shipping and settlements in the Americas. Another incidental purpose of the voyage was to search for the Northwest Passage, known to the Spanish as the Strait of Anián.

For a year and a half, Drake had a field day loading some thirty tons of Spanish gold and silver aboard his ship the Golden Hind. But Drake's greed nearly did him in. By the time he reached the California coast in June 1579, his ship was bursting at the seams with its ill-gotten Spanish booty. Drake was forced to put in to shore and make emergency repairs.



Drake's Encounter with the Coast Miwok



The first recorded encounter between English-speaking people and the Indians of California occurred during the visit of Francis Drake in 1579. Accounts of Drake's visit contain detailed descriptions of the houses, feathered baskets, ceremonies and language of the local Indians. Based on these accounts, anthropologists have identified them as Coast Miwok, a people whose homeland included the Point Reyes Peninsula in present-day Marin County.

The English visitors misinterpreted the actions of the Coast Miwok. The English mistakenly believed that the Miwok were turning over sovereignty to their country by placing a feathered crown on Drake's head. The Miwok also wailed and scratched their cheeks. The English misinterpreted this response as an act of worship and concluded that the Indians believed them to be gods. We now know that that these were the mourning customs of the Coast Miwok. Most likely the Indians regarded the English visitors as relatives who had returned from the dead.

Drake's Landing

The exact location of Francis Drake's landing spot on the California coast remains a mystery. Accounts of the voyage say only that on June 17, 1579, the Golden Hind entered "a faire and good Baye." Drake and his crew remained for

thirty-six days, repairing their ship, building a small fortification, exploring the surrounding territory, interacting with the local Indians, and erecting a brass plate which claimed for England's Queen Elizabeth "this kingdome...to be knowne unto all men as Nova Albion."

Some scholars believe that Drake landed on the west shore of Bolinas Lagoon in Marin County. Archaeologists in 1973 unearthed there the remains of what they believed was Drake's long-lost fort. Other scholars maintain that Drake sailed into San Francisco Bay. They believe that Drake anchored and careened the Golden Hind in a cove at Point San Quentin near where Drake's plate of brass was found in 1936. Most scholars, however, agree that the weight of documentary and archaeological evidence points to Drake's Estero, an arm of Drake's Bay on the Point Reyes Peninsula. Members of the Drake's Navigators Guild discovered there in 1952 what they believed was Drake's encampment site.

A summary of the scholarly controversy over Drake's landing place was published in the California Historical Quarterly (Summer 1974).

Manila Galleons



The Spanish empire stretched around the world in the sixteenth century, encompassing not only lands in the Americas but also in Asia. Manila, the capital of the Philippine Islands, became a bustling Spanish trading center for the riches of the Indies.

A regular trade flourished between Manila and the city of Acapulco on the west coast of Mexico. Manila galleons, heavy sailing ships with many decks for cargo, lumbered across the Pacific each year. The galleons were filled with Asian silks, jewels, spices, and fine china. They returned to Manila carrying cargoes of gold and silver from the mines of New Spain.

The eastbound voyage from Manila usually took six months or more. During this long and difficult voyage, the crews suffered horribly from starvation, thirst, and scurvy. They also faced the danger of raids by English privateers like Francis Drake. What was needed was a west coast port, perhaps in California, where the galleons could get fresh supplies and an escort vessel.

The captain of the Manila galleon in 1595 was Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño, charged by the viceroy of New Spain to explore the California coast for a safe harbor. After sailing from Manila across the Pacific, Cermeño anchored his ship

the San Agustín at Drake's Bay on the Point Reyes Peninsula. There he encountered the Coast Miwok Indians and recorded his impressions in considerable detail. Soon a powerful storm blew in from the southeast, destroying Cermeño's ship. Archaeological evidence of the San Agustín has been discovered at Drake's Bay.

In 1602 Sebastián Vizcaíno led an expedition along the California coast, continuing the search for a harbor for the Manila galleons.

Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño

Cermeño was a Portuguese merchant-adventurer, known as a dependable and experienced sailor. He sailed out of Manila aboard the San Agustín on July 5, 1595, his ship filled with crates of china and other valuable cargo. Cermeño reached the California coast in early November and anchored in Drake's Bay. On November 30, powerful winds from the southeast drove the San Agustín aground and pounded it to pieces in a few hours. Soon the beach was littered with cargo, provisions, and shattered timbers.

To the consternation of his crew, Cermeño insisted on continuing his exploration of the coast in a small open boat. The local Coast Miwok people outfitted the sailors with a supply of acorns. Thus the expedition continued. Cermeño described accurately many points along the California coast before returning to the port of Navidad in late January 1596.

Cermeño's Encounter with the Coast Miwok

In the Archives of Seville are several records of the voyage of Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño to California in 1595. Cermeño's own account was translated by historian Henry R. Wagner and published in the California Historical Society Quarterly, 3:12-15 (April 1924).

The following portion contains Cermeño's description of his encounter with the Coast Miwok people at Drake's Bay on the Point Reyes Peninsula in Marin County:

" [The Indians here] are well set up and robust with long hair, and go entirely naked, only the women wearing skirts of grass and deerskins.... Having anchored in this bay on the 6th, shortly an Indian, one of those living on the beach, came out in a small boat made of grass which looks like the bulrushes of the lake of Mexico. The Indian was seated in the middle of this, and he had in his hand an oar with two blades with which he rowed with great swiftness. He came alongside the ship, where he remained a good while, talking his language without anyone understanding what he was saying. Being addressed with kind words, he came closer to the ship, and there we gave him things such as pieces of silk and

cotton and other trifles which the ship carried, and with which he returned to shore very contented. The next day, the 7th, four other Indians came out to the ship in the same kind of boats. They came aboard and did the same as the first one."

Sebastián Vizcaíno



Sebastián Vizcaíno led the last in a long series of Spanish expeditions to explore the California coast in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His specific mission was to find a safe harbor for the Manila galleons. If Vizcaíno succeeded, he was promised the future command of a galleon.

Vizcaíno's voyage of 1602 set off from Acapulco and headed north. He explored the coast of California, renaming many places that had been described by earlier Spanish explorers. On December 16 he entered a bay that he renamed for the viceroy of New Spain, the Count of Monterey. The bay had been visited seven years earlier--and described more accurately--by Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño. Vizcaíno reported that the bay was a safe harbor "sheltered from all winds," a claim that was fraudulent. Monterey Bay, in fact, is open the sea and includes no proper harbor.

After nearly a year, Vizcaíno returned to Acapulco. The viceroy, pleased that a fine new port would bear his name, awarded Vizcaíno the command of the next Manila galleon. Unfortunately for Vizcaíno, a new viceroy soon arrived in New Spain. The new viceroy doubted Vizcaíno's veracity and revoked the award of the galleon.

Vizcaíno's Account of the Ohlone

Sebastián Vizcaíno wrote a letter to the King of Spain on May 23, 1602, reporting on his voyage of exploration along the California coast. In the following excerpt, Vizcaíno describes the Ohlone Indians whom he encountered around the shores of Monterey Bay:

" [This region] is thickly settled with people whom I found to be of gentle disposition, peaceable and docile, and who can be brought readily within the fold of the holy gospel and into subjection to the crown of Your Majesty. Their food consists of seeds which they have in abundance and variety and of the flesh of game, such as deer which are larger than cows, and bear.... The Indians are of

good stature and fair complexion, the women being somewhat less in size than the men and of pleasing countenance. The clothing of the people of the coast consists of the skins of the sea-wolves abounding there, which they tan and dress better than is done in Castile; they possess also, in great quantity, flax like that of Castile, hemp and cotton, from which they make fishing-lines and nets for rabbits and hares. They have vessels of pine-wood very well made, in which they go to sea with fourteen paddle-men on each side, with great dexterity--even in very stormy weather...."

Spanish Colonial History

A Spanish Colonial Frontier: Missions, Presidios, Pueblos

California was a colonial province of the Spanish empire during the years 1769 to 1821. Located on the northern frontier of New Spain, California was far removed from the cosmopolitan center of the empire.

The central institutions of Spanish California were the Franciscan missions founded along the coast from San Diego to San Francisco. Presidios provided limited military protection while pueblos emerged as fledgling civilian centers.

The Spanish empire rested upon the inclusion, transformation, and exploitation of the Native peoples of the Americas.

Central to the success of this enterprise was the mission, a frontier institution designed to advance the empire as well as to convert Indians to Roman Catholicism.



Junípero Serra, a Spanish Franciscan, arrived in California in 1769 as a leader of what came to be called the Sacred Expedition. He founded California's first nine missions and served as father-president of the mission system. The proposed canonization of Serra in recent years has sparked an intense debate among scholars; headlines in the popular press asked the question "Saint or Sinner?"

After Serra's death, Fermín Francisco de Lasuén became father-president and doubled the number of California missions. Founding a mission was always the occasion of solemn ceremony including fervent prayers by the missionary priests. Mission architecture evolved slowly and reflected a variety of influences from Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

The missionaries used various methods of recruitment to gather the Native people to the missions. Once at the missions, the Indians received religious instruction as well as training in practical skills. Mission Indian testimony often described the missions as oppressive institutions and Native resistance took a variety of forms.



La Pérouse and Vancouver both produced insightful commentaries and detailed renderings of Spanish California while visiting California in the late 1780s and 90s. These and other documents are prime sources for our understanding of these early years of California history.

Frontier Institutions

California's missions were frontier institutions, established to advance and consolidate the Spanish empire as well as to convert Indians to Roman Catholicism.

The roots of the mission system lie in the long struggle by Spaniards against the Moors on the Iberian peninsula. The cross and the sword moved forward together in the reconquest of Spain long before the Spanish conquest of the Americas.

The principal aim of the missionaries was the religious conversion of the Indians, but they believed that effective Christianization could not be separated from the larger process of acculturation. Their aim was to bring about a rapid and thorough transformation of the Native people. The Indians were to be Hispanicized not only in religion but also in social organization, language, dress, work habits, and virtually every other aspect of their lives.

The missions always were intended to be temporary institutions. Once the local Indians were Hispanicized, the missions were to be disbanded and the Indians were to assume their place as useful, productive members of the Spanish empire.



Junípero Serra

The founder of California's mission system was Junípero Serra, a Spanish Franciscan missionary priest.

Born on the island of Majorca on November 24, 1713, Serra began his career as a professor of theology in Palma. He resigned his professorship in 1749 to become a missionary to the Indians of the Americas.

For twenty years, Serra served as a missionary in New Spain, founding missions in the Sierra Gorda and elsewhere.

In 1768 he assumed the presidency of the former Jesuit missions on the Baja California peninsula. The next year he joined the Sacred Expedition to extend the mission system northward into Alta California. Between 1769 and 1784, Serra founded the following nine missions: San Diego (1769), San Carlos Borromeo (1770), San Antonio (1771), San Gabriel (1771), San Luis Obispo (1772), San Francisco (1776), San Juan Capistrano (1776), Santa Clara (1777), and San Buenaventura (1782). He served as father-president of the system from its headquarters at Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel, and it was there that he died at the age of seventy on August 28, 1784.

Serra was small in stature, just five feet two inches in height, but was a giant in determination. His friend and colleague Francisco Palóu paid Serra this tribute in 1787: "His memory shall not fail, because the works he performed when alive shall be impressed in the minds of the dwellers of this New California; despite the ravages of time, they shall not be forgotten."

Saint or Sinner?

Conflicting views of Junípero Serra and the missions have produced an ongoing debate among scholars and others interested in the impact of the missions on the Native people of California.

The debate intensified in the 1980s when Pope John Paul II declared Serra to be "Venerable," the first step toward sainthood. Just three years later the pope moved Serra to the second step by declaring him "Beatific." Supporters of Serra rejoiced that the church at last "recognized the extraordinary holiness of this man who was the founder of civilization in California." Critics of the missions, particularly among Native American groups, denounced the move. Some described Serra as a "sadist" and a "fanatic," while one critic of the mission system complained that the canonization of Serra "would be another insensitive reminder of past oppression and maltreatment."



Press coverage of the Serra controversy reflected the deep division in contemporary opinion. An article in The Sacramento Bee in February 1987 was headlined simply "Serra: Saint or Sinner?" When a similar article appeared in the San Jose Mercury News five months later, the question was slightly more extreme: "Serra's Mission: Saint or Sadist?" Meanwhile the Contra Costa Times puzzled its readers the following year with the query: "Serra: Saint or Enslaver?"

Fermín Francisco de Lasuén

Following the death of Junípero Serra in 1784, Fermín Francisco de Lasuén became father-president of the California missions.

Born in Spain on June 7, 1736, Lasuén served for many years as a missionary in the Sierra Gorda and elsewhere in New Spain. He sailed with Serra to Baja California in 1768 and served as president of the Baja missions after Serra's departure with the Sacred Expedition. Later, in 1773, Lasuén joined Serra in Alta California.



Lasuén assumed the presidency of the Alta California missions in 1785 and doubled their number. During his eighteen-year tenure he founded the following missions: Santa Barbara (1786), La Purísima Concepción (1787), Santa Cruz (1791), Soledad (1791), San José (1797), San Juan Bautista (1797), San Miguel (1797), San Fernando (1797), and San Luis Rey (1798). Lasuén died at Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel on June 26, 1803.





Although not nearly as well known today as Junípero Serra, Lasuén supervised the building of many of the impressive mission structures that are extant today. Historian Charles Chapman wrote of Lasuén: "In zeal as a Christian and missionary he equaled, though he could not surpass, Father Junípero."



The Sacred Expedition

An ambitious colonial administrator named José de Gálvez arrived in New Spain in 1765. It was Gálvez who conceived and ordered what came to be called the "Sacred Expedition," an expedition to extend Spanish settlement northward to Alta California. Gálvez hoped that the success of the expedition would lead to his appointment to higher colonial office.

The specific goals of the expedition were to found missions and presidios at the bays of San Diego and Monterey. The expedition included three ships and two land parties, all under the command of Captain Gaspar de Portolá. In the expedition were soldiers, christianized Indians, various artisans, and a contingent of Franciscan missionaries headed by Junípero Serra.

The various components of the expedition began heading northward from Baja California in 1769. Serra soon began to suffer from an old leg injury. When Portolá advised him to turn back, Serra refused. Serra wrote in his diary, "I trust that God will give me the strength to reach San Diego, as He has given me the strength to come so far.... Even though I should die on the way, I shall not turn back."

Founding a Mission

The sites for each of the California missions were carefully selected by the Spanish missionaries. The sites had to have good supplies of water and fertile soils for growing crops. Most important of all, the missions had to be located near Native population centers.



Junípero Serra founded Mission San Antonio de Padua in 1771 in the heartland of the Salinan Indians. The founding included prayers and other signs of Serra's "ardent zeal for the conversion" of the Native people. Francisco Palóu, a companion and early biographer of Serra, offered in 1787 the following account:

"[The missionaries] inspected the terrain and found an extensive and attractive plain...adjoining a river, which they named the San Antonio. To them it seemed quite an apt site for the new mission because of the good current of water flowing even in the month of July, which is the high point of the dry season. They realized that they could readily utilize the river for irrigation purposes. They all concurred in the choice of this spot for the settlement; whereupon the Venerable Father [Serra] ordered the mules to be unloaded and the bells hung from the branch of a tree. As soon as they could be rung, the

servant of God began to sound them in a merry peal and to shout as if enraptured: 'Come, you pagans; come, come to the Holy Church; come, come to receive the Faith of Jesus Christ.'"

Mission Architecture

The earliest mission structures in California were simple affairs made of logs, branches, and thatch. These early structures soon were replaced by larger buildings made of adobe, sun-dried mud bricks.



Several of the missions, such as those at Santa Barbara and San Juan Capistrano, reached a more elaborate stage. Architectural elements were rendered in shaped stones and fired brick.

The designs of the missions, at first, were strictly utilitarian. Later, as more flexible building materials were introduced, the designs incorporated a variety of decorative elements. Stone pilasters, entablatures, and friezes defined the neoclassic facade at Mission Santa Barbara. Roman arches of fired brick lined the arcades in nearly every mission quadrangle. A Moorish dome topped the church at Mission San Carlos Borromeo and a Moorish doorway led to the mortuary chapel.

The designs of the missions also reflected the limitations imposed by the materials available on this colonial frontier. The maximum height of the mission walls, for instance, was determined by the bearing capacity of the adobe bricks.

Methods of Recruitment

The Franciscan priests in Spanish California used many different methods to recruit Native people into the missions.

The missionaries hoped at first that recruits would come voluntarily, attracted by the ceremonies and rituals of the church. Some Indians did freely join the missions because they believed the missionaries were shaman-like intermediaries to the spirit world. The missionaries attracted additional recruits by offering glass beads, colored cloth, and other gifts.

Sometimes the missionaries entered Native villages and baptized the young children. Later the missionaries required the children to come to the missions for further religious instruction. Naturally the parents wanted to be with their children and so they also came to live at the missions.

As time went on, the regular food supply available at the missions became a powerful inducement. Mission farms and ranches destroyed the Indians' traditional food-gathering grounds, thus people came to the missions seeking nourishment. Several observers also



reported that Spanish soldiers used force to remove people from their villages and take them to the missions.

The Impact of the Missions

Historians and others continue to debate the question of the impact of the missions on the California Indians. Some scholars believe that the missions benefited the Native people; others regard their impact as catastrophic.

One sad fact is beyond dispute: the Indians at the missions suffered a high death rate, caused primarily by diseases for which they lacked immunity. The concentration of Indians in large numbers at the missions, the changes in diet, and the imposition of an alien discipline all contributed to the high rate of death.

During the mission period, the Native population from San Diego to San Francisco fell from an estimated 72,000 to 18,000--a decline of more than 75 percent.



Religious Instruction

The Indians of California have always been a deeply religious people. Their traditional ways are rooted in age-old spiritual beliefs and practices. Spanish missionaries introduced to California the Roman Catholic religion. The missionaries baptized thousands of Indians into this new religion at the missions.

The missionary friars insisted that the Indians remain at the missions once they had been baptized. Neophytes, or converted Indians, were not allowed to reject their vows and return to their former way of life. Soldiers garrisoned at the missions assisted in the recapture of runaway Indians.

This policy of "enforced residence" was deemed necessary to instruct the converted Indians in Catholicism. Twice a day the missionaries required the neophytes to recite the doctrina, a statement of basic Christian beliefs.

No one today can determine the effectiveness of the missionaries' program of religious conversion and instruction. One skeptical California ranchero, Antonio Maria Osio, doubted that the Indians in the missions ever adopted a true Christianity "simply because they had been sprinkled with baptismal water."

Indian Testimony

In recent years historians have come to appreciate the value of the testimony of California Indians who lived in the



Spanish missions. Their testimony provides an "inside look" at mission life.

The testimony of Pablo Tac, a mission Indian born at San Luis Rey, offers a positive view. He and another Luiseño youth were taken to Rome by a missionary in 1833. In the manuscript of his testimony, deposited in the Vatican Library, Tac expressed thanks to God for the coming of the missionaries to his country. He did observe, however, that thousands of his people died "as a result of the sickness that came to California."

Victoria, a Tongva woman who grew up in Mission San Gabriel, testified that mission life was filled with misery, humiliation, and terror. She reported that the missionaries punished an Indian woman who had a miscarriage by having her head shaved, by being flogged every day for fifteen days, and by wearing iron shackles on her feet for three months, and by "having to appear every Sunday in church, on the steps leading up to the altar, with a hideous painted wooden child in her arms."



Lorenzo Asisaro, a neophyte at Mission Santa Cruz, testified that the mission Indians were subject to strict discipline: "The Indians at the missions were very severely treated by the padres, often punished by fifty lashes on the bare back. They were governed somewhat in the military style, having sergeants, corporals, and overseers, who were Indians, and they reported to the padres any disobedience or infraction of the rules, and then came the lash without mercy, the women the same as the men. The lash was made of rawhide."

Native Resistance

The Native people of California responded to the Spanish missions in a variety of ways. Some cooperated fully while others resisted.

Passive resistance by mission Indians included strategies of noncooperation, work slowdowns, and the destruction of tools and equipment. Others resisted by running away. Soldiers stationed at the missions were charged with the duty of tracking down and bringing back the fugitives.

Active resistance to the missions included short-lived revolts, occasional attempts to murder individual missionaries, and raids on mission herds by mission fugitives and unconverted Indians. The first violent attack occurred in 1769 at San Diego, just a month after the mission was founded. The most successful instance of violent resistance was the destruction of two interior missions founded along the Colorado River. The Yuma people in 1781 attacked the missions and killed thirty soldiers and four missionaries.

Four years later, a 24-year-old Tongva shaman named Toypurina participated in an Indian conspiracy to destroy Mission San Gabriel. Like other Native leaders, Toypurina probably regarded the missionaries as a threat to her traditional status and authority. When questioned about her role in planning the revolt, Toypurina said: "I hate the padres

and all of you, for living here on my native soil, for trespassing upon the land of my forefathers."

The Visit of La Pérouse

The Spanish missions in California were visited by several European expeditions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The records from these expeditions provide historians with an "outside look" at mission operations.



The first outsider to visit the missions was Jean Francois Galaup de La Pérouse, the leader of a voyage of scientific exploration for the French government. La Pérouse praised the character of the individual missionaries--"these men, truly apostolic, who have abandoned the idle life of a cloister to give themselves up to fatigues, cares, and anxieties of every kind." La Pérouse was less complimentary, however, of the missionaries' treatment of the California Indians.

In the following passage, La Pérouse compares Mission San Carlos Borromeo with the slave plantations he had earlier visited in the West Indies: "In a word, everything reminded us of a habitation in Saint Domingo, or any other West Indian [slave] colony. The men and women are assembled by the sound of the bell, one of the religious conducts them to their work, to church, and to all other exercises. We mention it with pain. The resemblance is so perfect, that we saw men and women loaded with irons, others in the stocks; and at length the noise of the strokes of a whip struck our ears...."

Vancouver's Visit

One of the most observant European visitors to Spanish California was the English naval officer George Vancouver, leader of an around-the-world voyage of exploration.



He visited San Francisco Bay in November 1792, and also traveled to the missions at Santa Clara, Monterey, and San Diego. The following year he returned to California, and in the winter of 1794 he came back to Monterey for a final visit.

Vancouver persisted in referring to California as "New Albion," always using the name applied to California by the Englishman Francis Drake during his visit in 1579.

Presidios

One of the most important military leaders in Spanish California was Juan Baustita de Anza. While serving as captain of the presidio at Tubac, a military outpost south of present-day Tucson, Anza led an expedition to California in 1774. This trail-blazing expedition opened the way for other overland parties to travel to California.



In 1775 Anza led a second expedition northward from Tubac. Its goal was to establish a presidio and mission at San Francisco Bay. Included in the expedition were thirty soldier-colonists and their families, along with four civilian families. Altogether the expedition included about 240 men, women, and children.

After an arduous journey of more than two thousand miles, the expedition reached San Francisco Bay. Anza selected the site for the presidio near the northern tip of the San Francisco peninsula. About three miles to the southeast, near a little creek, he chose the site for the mission.

Anza left before either the presidio or mission in San Francisco was officially established. His second-in-command, Lieutenant José Moraga, founded the presidio on September 17, 1776. Father Francisco Palóu dedicated Mission San Francisco on October 9.

Leather-Jacket Soldiers

The soldiers at the presidios of Spanish California wore long sleeveless jackets of deerhide, horsehide, or cowhide for protection against Indian arrows. From this body armor the soldiers came to be called *soldados de cuera*, or "leather-jacket soldiers." Their weapons included swords, spears, and muskets.

The soldiers also manned a few cannon mounted on the ramparts of the presidios, but the cannon often lacked sufficient gun powder to be fired. The cannon eventually rusted and fell into disrepair. In one famous incident, the Spanish garrison at San Francisco had to borrow powder from a visiting Russian ship in order to fire a salute from the only cannon in the presidio that could still be fired safely.

Skilled as equestrians, the presidial soldiers engaged in numerous battles with the Indians of California. The soldiers' horses were outfitted with thick leather aprons that protected both riders and horses. The soldiers effectively used their long lances against unmounted foes.



In addition to military duties, the soldiers also assisted in exploring, hunting, carrying the mails, building and maintaining the presidial structures, cultivating the soil, and caring for herds and flocks. Local Indians often were pressed into service to perform the most

menial tasks. Small "military towns," called pueblos developed around each of the presidios where soldiers lived with their families.

Plan of the Santa Barbara Presidio

The typical presidio in Spanish California consisted of a quadrangular enclosure surrounded by a ditch and a rampart of earth or adobe brick. Inside the quadrangle were quarters for the officers and soldiers, civilian houses, workshops, storehouses, wells, cisterns, and a small church or chapel. Additional dwellings were grouped outside the walls of the quadrangle, the homes of other Spanish settlers and traders. At a greater distance were fields for crops and pastures.

The design of the Santa Barbara Presidio was typical.



Military Expeditions into the Central Valley

The Spanish settlements in California generally were located near the coast. But Spanish military expeditions regularly traveled into the Central Valley, usually to pursue escaped mission Indians or to recover cattle and horses taken by Indian raiders.

One of the most active figures in the Spanish exploration of the California interior was Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga. His father, José, had come to California in the second of the Anza expeditions and was the first commandante of the San Francisco Presidio. Between 1805 and 1817 the younger Moraga led several expeditions into the Central Valley. He visited and named such prominent geographical features in the interior as the Sacramento River (named for the Holy Sacrament), the San Joaquin River (named for Saint Joseph), and the Merced River (named for Our Lady of Mercy). Moraga named Mariposa for the butterflies seen in the area, and Calaveras for its many skulls.

The Russian Presence

Spaniards were not the only Europeans to establish colonial outposts in California. In 1812 the Russian-American Fur Company built Fort Ross, a fortified village north of San Francisco. Spanish officials objected to the Russian presence, but they lacked sufficient military force to back up their objections. The Russians professed to believe that San Francisco was the northern limit to Spain's claim of exclusive right of settlement in California.

Fort Ross, a name derived from the same root as that of Russia, had several purposes. Its primary mission was to serve as the headquarters for hunting sea otter in northern California waters. Sea-otter pelts, with their thick, black,



glossy fur, could be sold in China for about \$300 apiece. Aleuts, Kodiaks, and other Alaskan Natives served at the fort as sea-otter hunters.

Fort Ross also was to produce food for itself and for other Russian fur-trading posts in Alaska. The Russians hoped to establish regular trade relations with the Spanish California settlements. Although such trade was strictly forbidden by the Spanish imperial government, local trading did occur.

A Presidio Love Story

Count Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, the 42-year-old commander of the Russian brig Juno, sailed into San Francisco Bay in 1806. He came seeking supplies to relieve the danger of starvation at the Russian fur-trading outpost in Sitka, Alaska. He also hoped to explore the possibilities of establishing trade relations with the Spaniards in California.

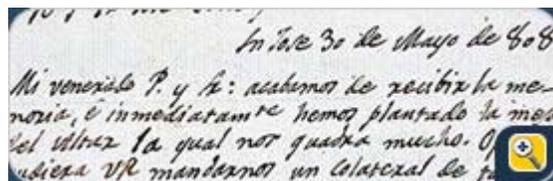
Shortly after his arrival, Count Rezanov met Dona Concepcion Arguello, the fifteen-year-old daughter of the commandant of the San Francisco Presidio. Whether the count was motivated primarily by romance or economics is unknown, but we do know that he and the young San Franciscan soon became engaged.

Before the couple could "accomplish their nuptials," Rezanov was summoned back to Russia. At his parting, according to local legend, the two lovers pledged their undying devotion to one another. Dona Concepcion placed around the Count's neck a small gold locket containing two strands of hair--hers intertwined with his. The Count then sailed away, never to return. While crossing Siberia on horseback, he was thrown from his horse and fatally injured.

As Rezanov lay dying, he asked a soldier to promise to find Dona Concepcion, tell her of his love, and return to her the locket. It was several years before a messenger reached California and delivered to her the sad news.

PUEBLOS

One of the most pressing problems in the early days of Spanish California was obtaining a sufficient food supply for the soldiers at the presidios. Government officials attempted to solve this problem by founding civilian towns, or pueblos, in northern and southern California.



To attract settlers to the new towns, the government provided free land, livestock, farming equipment, and an annual allowance for the purchase of clothing and other supplies. In addition, the settlers were exempt from all taxes for five years. In return for this aid, the settlers were required to sell their surplus agricultural products to the presidios.

The first city to be established was San José, founded in 1777. It was followed in 1781 by El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles del Río de Porciúncula, also known as Los Angeles. African-American founding families made up more than half of the original settlers of Los Angeles. The third civic community, Villa de Branciforte, was founded in 1797 near the present-day city of Santa Cruz. The local government of the pueblos consisted of an alcalde or mayor and a city council known as the ayuntamiento.



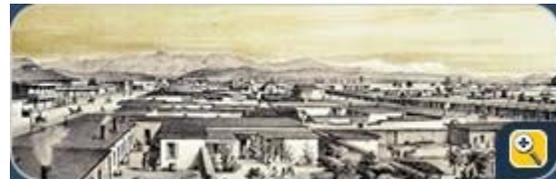
The First City

California Governor Felipe de Neve established the first civilian town or pueblo in California on November 29, 1777. Founded near the southern end of San Francisco Bay, it was christened El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe. Neve recruited the settlers for the pueblo from the nearby presidios of Monterey and San Francisco. The founders consisted of a mere fourteen men and their families.

San José, as the pueblo soon came to be known, began as a collection of adobe huts along the banks of the Guadalupe River. Little changed during the early years. The settlers of San José barely eked out a living and did not receive formal title to their lands until 1786. Over the next several decades, the pueblo grew slowly. In 1797 Mission San José de Guadalupe was founded about fifteen miles to the northeast. By 1848 the pueblo had about 700 residents and was the largest Spanish-speaking community north of Monterey.

El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles del Río de Porciúncula

To recruit settlers for a second California pueblo, Governor Felipe de Neve sent Captain Fernando Rivera to the colonial provinces of Sonora and Sinaloa. Rivera was authorized to recruit twenty-four married settlers and thirty-four married soldiers for the new pueblo. Even with the inducement of free land and supplies, Rivera could enlist only eleven families.



Disappointed but determined, Governor Neve personally surveyed several possible locations for the new pueblo. He chose a point near the Porciúncula River, about nine miles southwest of Mission San Gabriel. The pueblo was christened El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles del Río de Porciúncula. It soon came to be known simply as Los Angeles. The site had no harbor and no navigable river, but these were deemed not essential for the success of a small agricultural community.



No records survive of the actual founding of the pueblo on September 4, 1781. By 1784 the settlers had replaced their first crude huts with more substantial adobe houses and laid the foundations for a church and other public buildings. Six years later the pueblo had grown to 141 persons, of whom 80 percent were under sixteen. In the fields around the

pueblo grazed three thousand head of cattle. By 1820 the pueblo had increased to about 650 residents, the largest civilian community in Spanish California.

African-American Founding Families

More than half of the original settlers of El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles were of partial African ancestry. Many had been recruited from Sinaloa, a colonial province of New Spain where one-third of the population was of African descent. Several came from the Sinaloan pueblo of Rosario, a town in which two-thirds of the residents were mulatto.

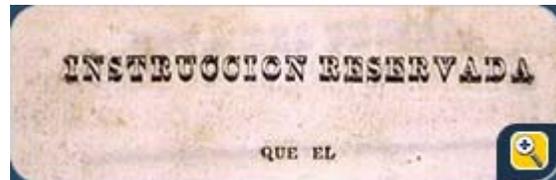
According to the scheme of racial classification used at the time, the eleven founding families of Los Angeles in 1781 included the following:

Two families--Negro-Mulatto
Two families--Indian-Indian
Two families--Mulatto-Mulatto
Two families--Spanish-Indian
One family--Mestizo-Mulatto
One family--Indian-Mulatto
One family--Indian-Coyote (3/4 Indian, 1/4 Spanish)

Historian Rick Moss, curator of history at the California African American Museum in Los Angeles, has calculated that twenty-six of the founding forty-four settlers were of African ancestry. "Thus, from the town's most humble origins, people of color were active participants in the development of Los Angeles."

Villa de Branciforte

The least successful of the early pueblos in Spanish California was Villa de Branciforte, founded in 1797 near the present-day city of Santa Cruz.



The pueblo was inspired by the viceroy of New Spain, the Marqués of Branciforte, and California Governor Diego de Borica. Their idea was to found a new type of pueblo in California using retired soldiers and their families. The soldiers would become self-supporting colonists and also provide a ready reserve of additional military forces to defend the province. Unfortunately, no retired soldiers could be induced to come to California.

Local Government

The pueblos of Spanish California were governed by various municipal officials. Initially the officials were appointed by the governor, but afterwards they were elected by the people.



The chief executive officer of a pueblo was the alcalde, an office that combined the functions of mayor and justice of the peace. The powers of the alcalde were

almost unlimited within each pueblo but were subordinate to the governor's appointed military representative, the comisionado.

The alcalde served as the president of the local city council or ayuntamiento. The regidores, members of the ayuntamiento, managed the public business of the pueblo and the surrounding territory. The ayuntamiento passed ordinances for governing the pueblo and regulating municipal affairs in general.

Local governments reflected the ethnic diversity of the pueblos' citizens. Mulattos served as regidores in the pueblo of Los Angeles, and the pueblo's first alcalde was a mulatto, Francisco Reyes.

The site for the new pueblo also was problematic. The governor selected a location adjoining the lands of Mission Santa Cruz, but the missionary priests bitterly objected. Also the funds for founding the town were hopelessly inadequate.

Nearly all of the forty original settlers of the pueblo were men convicted of petty crimes elsewhere in New Spain and banished to California. Not surprisingly, the pueblo did not flourish. In 1802 the government suspended all further support for Branciforte.

Mexican California: The Heyday of the Ranchos

For a quarter century after the achievement of Mexican independence in 1821, California was a remote northern province of the nation of Mexico. Huge cattle ranches, or ranchos, emerged as the dominant institutions of Mexican California. Traders and settlers from the United States began to arrive, harbingers of the great changes that would sweep California during the Mexican American War of 1846-1848.

Life in Mexican California



After three centuries of imperial rule, the American colonies of Spain began to demand their freedom. Mexican independence was achieved in 1821 following a long and bloody struggle.

Life in California changed slowly. The most visible impact of Mexican independence was the secularization of the missions. The missions lost their lands and much of their power. In "dividing the spoils," Mexican administrators created huge cattle ranches or ranchos. A few wealthy land-owning families emerged as a rancho elite, while most of the labor was performed by California Indians serving as Native American serfs.

Native-born Californios grew restive under Mexican rule and in 1842 asserted the provincial autonomy of California. The autonomy was short-lived.

Most rancheros occupied themselves with trading hides and tallow for manufactured goods brought to California by ships from the United States. In their leisure hours, the Californios amused themselves with popular entertainments such as bull and bear fights or the festive celebration of a California wedding.

Mexican Independence



The same spirit of liberty that led British colonists to declare their independence in 1776 inspired Spanish colonists to assert their independence in the early 1800s. On the morning of September 16, 1810, a priest named Miguel Hidalgo made a fiery speech in the town of Dolores in New Spain. His words set off a long and bloody war to make New Spain an independent country.

During most of the war for Mexican independence, California remained uninvolved and unaffected. The only direct contact with the war came in 1818 when two "revolutionary" ships sacked and burned several settlements along the California coast. Three more years of fighting, all to the south of California, were necessary before Mexico achieved its independence in 1821.

When news of Mexican independence reached California the following year, the old red and gold imperial flag of Spain was lowered over the presidio at Monterey. A crisp new flag, bearing an eagle and a snake, rose in its place. As the flag unfolded in the breeze, the assembled soldiers shouted: "Viva la independencia Mexicana!"

Secularization of the Missions



The missions of California, like the missions on all Spanish colonial frontiers, were intended to be temporary institutions. When the work of Christianization and acculturation was finished, the missionaries were to be replaced by secular clergy and the mission lands distributed among the former neophytes. This process was known as secularization.

Following the establishment of Mexican independence in 1821, demands for the secularization of the missions intensified. The constitution of the Republic of Mexico endorsed the equality of all Mexicans regardless of race. Mexican liberals concluded that the missions--which denied basic liberties to the Indians--were unconstitutional.

The Indians themselves were becoming increasingly restive under mission rule. A coordinated revolt broke out in 1824 among Chumash neophytes at three of the

missions along the Santa Barbara Channel. Meanwhile, Native-born Californios saw the missions as an obstacle to the economic development of the province; they believed that the missions' control of prime agricultural lands and the indigenous labor force retarded the growth of private ranches and farms.



In 1834 Governor José Figueroa issued a proclamation ordering the secularization of the California missions.

Dividing the Spoils



According to the 1834 secularization proclamation of Governor José Figueroa, half the property of the California missions was to be distributed to the former mission Indians.

Unfortunately most Indians did not receive any of the mission lands; those who did rarely kept them for long. Lorenzo Asisara, a former neophyte at Mission Santa Cruz, later remembered that during secularization his people were given some "old mares that were no longer productive and very old rams." They also received a portion of the mission lands, "but it did not do the Indians any good."

Between 1834 and 1836 each of the twenty-one California missions was secularized. Governor Figueroa, who died in the midst of the secularization proceedings, appointed administrators to supervise the disposal of mission properties. The administrators sold off the cattle, grain, and lands that rightly should have gone to the former neophytes. The vast bulk of the mission properties ended up in the hands of a few prominent Californio families.

The final blow to the missions came in 1845 when cash-strapped Governor Pío Pico auctioned off the remaining mission properties--including the crumbling mission churches. One dispirited padre lamented: "All is destruction, all is misery, humiliation and despair."

The Rancho Elite

A small group of rancho families, mostly California-born, emerged as the new elite of Mexican California. Their wealth and power was based on the enormous ranchos they acquired from the Mexican government. Each rancho grant was accompanied by a *diseño* or map. The maximum legal limit for a private rancho grant was 11 square leagues--about 50,000 acres. Not even this generous limit

was always applied; some individuals received multiple grants.

Typical of the new elite was Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, grantee of several ranchos in present-day Solano and Sonoma counties. Born in Monterey, Vallejo became the most prominent land-owner in northern California. From his casa grande in the new pueblo of Sonoma, Vallejo ruled over a feudal barony of vast lands, herds of cattle, and a large retinue of Indian laborers.

The rancharo oligarchy was divided by personal, factional, and sectional disputes. Rivalries between norteños and sureños foreshadowed later disagreements between northern and southern Californians in the twentieth century.

Native American Serfs

The ranchos of Mexican California depended upon the labor of Native Americans. A typical California rancho might employ as few as twenty or as many as several hundred Indian workers. The Native work force totaled perhaps four thousand in all, including both former mission Indians and new recruits gathered by the rancheros.

The Native workers tended the fields and herds of the ranchos. Some became highly skilled cowhands or vaqueros. In return for their labor the Indians usually received nothing more than shelter, food, and clothing. The rancheros used various means of coercion--persuasion, economic pressure, violent force--to recruit and maintain their labor supply.

The Indian workers were nominally free, but in practice they were bound to the service of the rancharo as long as he cared to hold them. Thus rancho society of Mexican California was essentially a feudal society. The rancheros ruled as lords on their great landed estates; the Indian workers who tended the fields and herds were their serfs.

Provincial Autonomy



During the years of Mexican sovereignty, California was ruled by a governor appointed by officials in faraway Mexico City. A provincial legislature, or diputación, met in Monterey but its powers were strictly limited.

Politics in Mexican California were turbulent and often chaotic. In one five-year period, from 1831 to 1836, California had eleven different gubernatorial administrations--not counting three hapless individuals who were appointed to the governorship but whom the Californians did not permit to take office. The native-born Californios grew discontented with Mexican rule and sought greater control over their own affairs.



The most dramatic assertion of Californio discontent was the "revolution" led by Juan Bautista Alvarado in 1836. Alvarado, president of the diputación, seized control of the capital in Monterey and deported most of the Mexican officials. On November 7, 1836, he proclaimed California "a free and sovereign State."

The revolution was short-lived. The Mexican government in 1837 offered Alvarado the governorship of California. He accepted the offer.

Trading Hides and Tallow



The economy of Mexican California was based on the raising of huge herds of cattle. Skilled vaqueros or cowhands periodically rounded up the cattle, slaughtered them, stripped and cleaned the hides, and stretched the hides in the sun to dry. The hides were a valuable source of leather for making saddles, shoes, and other products. Fat from the cattle was boiled in iron pots until it melted into a fatty liquid called tallow. The tallow was used to make soap and candles.

The rancho elite traded hides and tallow for manufactured goods from foreign traders who sailed along the coast. In the following account, Prudencia Higuera recalled a time in 1840 when a ship from the United States sailed into San Pablo Bay to trade for hides and tallow:

"The next morning my father gave orders, and my brothers, with the peons, went on horseback into the mountains and smaller valleys to round up all the best cattle. They drove them to the beach, killed them there, and salted the hides. They tried out the tallow in some iron kettles.... The captain soon came to our landing with a small boat and two sailors.... The captain looked over the hides, and then asked my father to get into the boat and go to the vessel.... [My father] came back the next day, bringing four boat-loads of cloth, axes, shoes, fish-lines, and many new things. There were two grindstones, and some cheap jewelry. My brother had traded some deerskins for a gun and four tooth-brushes, the first ones I had ever seen."

Bull and Bear Fights

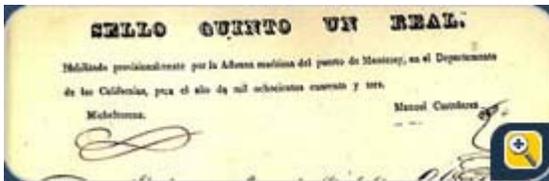


Among the popular pastimes of Mexican California were horse races, bull fights, and bull and bear fights. For the latter, fearless vaqueros would capture a California grizzly bear, take him to a bull ring, and tie or chain his hindleg to the foreleg of a long-horned California bull. Spectators would then place their bets, sit back, and wait for the swatting, goring, and biting to begin. Whoever survived the fight was declared the winner.

The nephew of ranchero Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo offered the following play-by-play account of one such contest:

"The bull began the fight by charging the grizzly with his horns. A blow from the grizzly's paw did not stop the onset. In a moment they were rolling over each other in the dust. But the bear finally, though badly gored, got his teeth fastened into the bull's neck, and bull was pulled to his knees. The bull's tongue hung out. This was what the bear wanted. He got his claw into the bull's mouth, pulled the tongue out still further, and then bit it off. With this the bull gave up the contest, and soon after both animals were dispatched."

California Wedding



The rancho elite of Mexican California was noted for its prodigal hospitality and spirited entertainments. Singing and dancing were passions for Californios of all ages.

Wedding festivities among the elite Californio families lasted from three days to a week or more, and for each event the bride usually wore a different outfit. To her wedding breakfast, she might wear a dress of brightly colored silk or satin; then change into a low-cut, short-sleeved gown of delicate pink or blue for the afternoon activities. For the actual wedding itself, the bride wore black. Her gown was often of silk brocade, with silk stockings and satin slippers. She wore her hair piled high on her head, accented by a beautiful tortoise-shell comb set

with precious stones, and highlighted by an elegant black Spanish lace mantilla.

Harbingers of Change

During the years California was ruled by Mexico, visitors and settlers from the United States arrived in ever greater numbers. These interlopers were harbingers of the change in sovereignty that would come to California with the Mexican American War.

The earliest visitors from the United States were sea-otter hunters who sailed along the California coast. The story of "Jedediah and the Beaver" reminds us that the first group of Americans to arrive overland came in search of beaver pelts in California's great Central Valley. New Englander Richard Henry Dana was among those who came to take advantage of the California's penchant for trading hides and tallow for imported manufactured goods.

The first wagon train of overland settlers from the United States arrived in California in 1841. The perils of the Donner Party while attempting to cross the Sierra Nevada starkly revealed the dangers of the overland trail--dangers that would take the lives of countless others in the years ahead.

Official United States interest in acquiring California grew steadily in the 1840s. The Jones Incident of 1842 was an embarrassing prelude to the far more decisive events of the upcoming war between Mexico and the United States.

Sea-Otter Hunters



The first visitors from the United States to come to California were men engaged in hunting sea otter along the western coast of North America. The skin of a full-grown sea otter was five feet long and more than two feet wide, with a thick, black, glossy fur highlighted by silvery hair. A pelt's value when shipped to the Chinese port of Canton was about \$300. Sea otters could be found at many points along the coast from the Aleutians to Baja California, and some of the greatest concentrations were in the bays and channels of Alta California.

Ebenezer Dorr, captain of the aptly named ship the Otter, sailed along the California coast in 1796 and collected hundreds of sea-otter pelts. Dorr put into Monterey for fresh supplies of water and wood, but Spanish mercantile restrictions prohibited him from engaging in any trade.

Other American ships followed the lead of the Otter. They occasionally defied Spanish prohibitions and engaged in clandestine trade with local otter hunters. Trading was encouraged by local officials only after the achievement of Mexican independence in 1821, but by then the sea otter had been nearly exterminated along the coast of California.

Jedediah and the Beaver

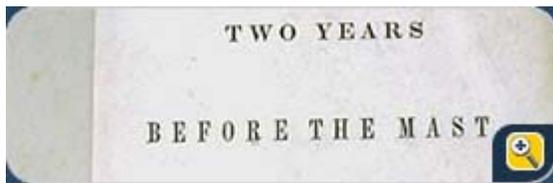
On November 26, 1826, Jedediah Strong Smith, leader of an expedition of American beaver trappers, reached Mission San Gabriel after an arduous crossing of the Mohave Desert and the San Bernardino Mountains. Smith and his party were the first white men from the United States to cross overland to California, thereby effectively opening the fur trade of the far Southwest.

California Governor José María Echeandía was perplexed by Smith's arrival. Suspecting that he was a spy, the governor ordered Smith arrested. He was released only after promising to leave California.

As Smith traveled northwestward over the Tehachapis and into the southern Central Valley, he found a trapper's paradise. There he collected a large quantity of pelts and then turned eastward and left California by way of Ebbetts Pass. Smith thus accomplished the first recorded European-American crossing of the Sierra Nevada.

Smith shared with other trappers the story of his successful hunting in California. One trapper later recalled that he "reported California to be the finest country in the world--having a charming Italian climate & a soil remarkably productive...& Beaver were abundant in all the Creeks & Rivers."

Richard Henry Dana



The hide and tallow trade was important not only for its immediate economic effects but also because the writings of men engaged in the trade greatly heightened American interest in California.

On board the ship Pilgrim in 1835 was a young Bostonian named Richard Henry Dana. For eighteen months, Dana and his shipmates collected hides along the California coast. He also made close observations of California's land and people.

When Dana returned to New England, he published his recollections in Two

Years Before the Mast (1840). He described for his countrymen in precise detail the beauties of the California landscape, its capacious harbors, abundant wildlife, and salubrious climate "than which there can be no better in the world." He was contemptuous of the Californios, "an idle thriftless people" who could "make nothing for themselves." He was amazed that they bought "bad wine made in Boston and brought round by us" when their own country abounded in grapes. "In the hands of an enterprising people," he concluded, "what a country this might be!"



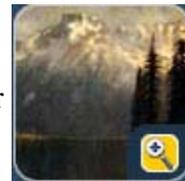
The Donner Party



Among the several parties of overland pioneers that come to Mexican California, none suffered more hardships than the Donner party. The party was organized in Springfield, Illinois, and made good time in the early spring of 1846 as it headed westward across the plains. It later lost valuable time by taking what was believed to be a shortcut south of the Great Salt Lake.

The Donner party began its ascent of the Sierra Nevada in October and had the misfortune of being caught near the summit during the heaviest snowfall in thirty years. As the snow reached a depth of more than twenty feet, the group lived in crude log cabins and lean-tos. When food provisions ran out, first the pack animals were eaten, then the hides and the boiled leather from their snowshoes, and finally the flesh of those who died. Only about half of the eighty-seven members of the party survived the winter.

There was heroism as well as horror during that terrible winter in the Sierra. James Reed left the party to seek help and returned leading a relief expedition. When rescuers arrived, Tamsen Donner refused to leave her husband George who was too weak to travel. Their three daughters were saved, but George and Tamsen died.



The Jones Incident

One of the strangest episodes in California history was the premature invasion of Monterey by a squad of United States Marines in 1842.

It all started when Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones, an impetuous young

naval officer, got wind of a rumor that the United States and Mexico were at war. Jones was under standing orders that, in the event of such a war, he was to set sail and seize Monterey, the capital of Mexican California.



On October 18, Commodore Jones sailed confidently into Monterey Bay and demanded that the Mexican officials surrender. The next morning, a triumphant Jones landed 150 marines and sailors on the beach. The marines lowered the Mexican flag, raised the Stars and Stripes, fired a salute, and proclaimed California to be under the benevolent protection of the United States of America.

Unfortunately, Commodore Jones had made a big mistake. He soon learned that the war rumor was false. With all the dignity he could muster, Jones hustled his marines back on board his ship and sailed away.

Four years later, the military forces of the United States again invaded California. But this time it was for real, and the conquest was permanent.

Mexican American War

The United States in 1846 declared war on Mexico, and during the course of that war American military forces seized California. The war was fueled in part by feelings of Manifest Destiny, a popular sentiment in the United States that viewed the expansion of the nation as an inevitability.

The arrival in Mexican California of John C. Frémont, a loose cannon, sparked a rebellion by Anglo-Americans in the province. Their uprising became known as the Bear Flag Revolt, although the image on their banner resembled more a pig than a bear.

Military forces from the United States soon landed along the coast and marched into the interior. The Californios fought well against the Americans, scoring a victory with their long lances at San Pascual. Ultimately, however, the Mexican forces were defeated in far larger engagements elsewhere. The war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 and the cession of vast lands from Mexico to the United States. This treaty and transfer marked the end of Mexican sovereignty in California.

A Loose Cannon

A "loose cannon" is someone whose actions often are unrestrained and impulsive. Lieutenant John C. Frémont, an officer in the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, fit this definition perfectly. He arrived in Mexican California in 1846 with sixty armed men, all expert marksmen.

The Bear Flag Revolt



The California state flag commemorates an event that occurred in the little town of Sonoma on Sunday morning, June 14, 1846.

A band of some thirty rough-hewn American settlers seized Colonel Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and informed him that he was a prisoner of war. The Americans proudly proclaimed that theirs was a war for the independence of California. In front of Vallejo's casa grande, the rebels hoisted a flag emblazoned with a crude drawing of a bear, a lone star, and the words "CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC."

The original bear flag was made by William Todd, nephew of an up-and-coming Illinois attorney named Abraham Lincoln. Todd used a three-by-five piece of white cotton cloth. Along the bottom he sewed several strips of red flannel taken from either a man's shirt or a woman's petticoat. He then painted a five-pointed red star in the upper left-hand corner and drew a picture of a California grizzly bear. But William Todd clearly was no artist. His grizzly looked more like a pig than a bear.

Shortly after the arrival of United States naval forces along the California coast, the Stars and Stripes replaced the Bear Flag over Sonoma. The life of the "California Republic" thus ended on July 9, less than a month after it had begun. The main result of the Bear Flag Revolt--an event that would later be fantastically romanticized--was an unnecessary embitterment of feelings between Anglo-Americans and the Spanish-speaking Californios.

Lances at San Pascual



Following the outbreak of the Mexican American War in 1846, military forces from the United States invaded Mexico. Naval forces landed along the coast of California in July and proclaimed that "henceforward California will be a portion of the United States."

California's Mexican leaders denounced the invasion and mobilized their forces against the Americans. On August 9, 1846, Colonel José Castro called upon his

fellow Californios "to give to the entire world an example of loyalty and firmness, maintaining in your breasts the unfailing love of liberty, and eternal hatred toward your invaders! Long live the Mexican Republic! Death to the invaders!"

Treaty and Transfer



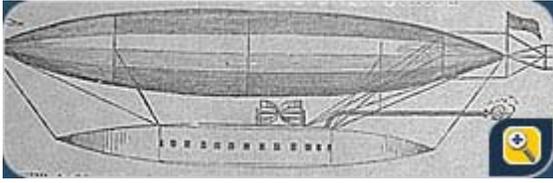
Fighting in California during the Mexican American War ended with the surrender of Andrés Pico to John C. Frémont on January 13, 1847, at Cahuenga Pass in present-day Los Angeles County. The meeting was arranged by Bernarda Ruiz, a woman in Santa Barbara who was saddened by all the bloodshed in her country. Fighting elsewhere in Mexico continued for another year.

The war formally ended on February 2, 1848, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In the treaty, the United States agreed to pay Mexico \$15 million and to assume unpaid claims against Mexico. For its part, Mexico agreed to transfer to the United States more than 525,000 square miles of land. From this vast area would come the future states of California, Nevada, and Utah, most of Arizona and New Mexico, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming.

The Mexican American War was a great tragedy for Mexico. Under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico transferred half of its land to the United States. For the American people, the war was a great victory. Many Americans believed that their nation at last had achieved its Manifest Destiny.

The Gold Rush: California Transformed

The World Rushed In



James Wilson Marshall, a moody and eccentric master found "some kind of mettle" in the waters of the American River on January 24, 1848. The "mettle," of course, proved to be gold.

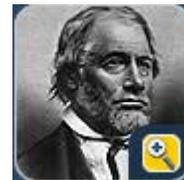
As news of Marshall's discovery began to spread, Californians rushed to the site. These eager "forty-eighters" were seized by a gold fever that soon swept the world.



carpenter,



the nation and



"Some Kind of Mettle"

On January 24, 1848, a young Virginian named Henry William Bigler recorded in his diary one of the most fateful sentences in American history: "This day some kind of mettle was found in the tail race that looks like gold first discovered by James Martial, the Boss of the Mill."



Thus was recorded, in a scrawl barely legible, the momentous discovery of California gold by master carpenter James Wilson Marshall while working at a sawmill on the south fork of the American River.

Marshall later said that he made the discovery while inspecting the tailrace of the mill. He found there a glittering particle, caught behind a stone beneath the water.



When he showed his find to **Johann August Sutter**, the owner of the mill, Sutter exclaimed "It's gold--at least twenty-three-carat gold."

For an event of such importance, it's surprising that so little is known about the exact circumstances of the discovery. Marshall was never entirely sure of the date. He later speculated that he had made the discovery "on or about the 19th of January." Several other accounts, including Bigler's diary entry, contradict Marshall.

The discovery of gold in California was an epoch-making event. News of the discovery attracted to California hundreds of thousands of gold-seekers from across the country and around the world. Their coming transformed not only the economic history of California, but much of its social, cultural, and political history as well.

Forty-Eighters



The first published accounts of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill appeared in San Francisco's two weekly newspapers in March 1848. The news caused little excitement...at first.

An enterprising young merchant named Sam Brannan soon saw the possibilities of making a profit from whipping up some gold fever. He stocked his store at Sutter's Fort with merchandise that he thought would be in demand by gold seekers. Then, on May 12, he came to San Francisco, waved a bottle of gold dust in one hand and his hat in the other, and shouted "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!"

Brannan's carefully staged announcement had the desired effect. San Franciscans rushed to the American River--some stopping along the way at Brannan's store--to look for gold. The San Francisco Californian ceased publication on May 29, complaining that "the whole country, from San Francisco to Los Angeles and from the sea shore to the base of the Sierra Nevada, resounds with the sordid cry of 'Gold! Gold!! Gold!!!' while the field is left half planted, the house half built, and everything neglected but the manufacture of shovels and pickaxes."

During the summer of 1848, the gold fever spread to Hawaii, Oregon and Utah, and in the fall to Mexico, Peru, and Chile. Altogether about 6,000 "forty-eighters" rushed to the gold fields.

Gold Fever



Like ripples in a pond pulsing outward from a skipping stone, news of the California gold discovery circled the globe. At first, reasonable people responded with disbelief. Tales of nuggets as large as hens' eggs were dismissed as tall tales. Only as the initial rumors were confirmed by subsequent reports did reasonable people find themselves possessed by a gold mania.

Their intense excitement was compounded by a determination to make up for the time they had lost in doubt.

Monterey resident James H. Carson later recalled that he had remained an "unbeliever" until he saw with his own eyes a sack of gold nuggets, some truly as large as hens' eggs. His description of what happened next is a classic account of the contagion that was raging out of control:

" I looked on for a moment; a frenzy seized my soul; unbidden my legs performed some entirely new movements of Polka steps--I took several--houses were too small for me to stay in; I was soon in the street in search of necessary outfits; piles of gold rose up before me at every step; castles of marble, dazzling the eye with their rich appliances; thousands of slaves, bowing to my beck and call; myriads of fair virgins contending with each other for

my love, were among the fancies of my fevered imagination. The Rothschilds, Girards and Astors appeared to me but poor people; in short, I had a very violent attack of the Gold Fever."

Sea Routes



The worldwide rush to the California goldfields began in earnest during the winter and early spring of 1849. Gold seekers from the eastern United States followed three main routes to California: by way of the Isthmus of Panama, around Cape Horn, or via the overland trail.



Sea routes were the most popular at first. Sailing to Central America and crossing the Panamanian isthmus was the quickest way to get to California. The average time from New York to San Francisco was three to five months in 1850, but later the travel time was reduced to six to eight weeks. Travelers on this route risked contracting malaria, yellow fever, and other tropical diseases.

Sailing around Cape Horn was a voyage of 18,000 nautical miles and took five to eight months. Accommodations on the ships were crowded and uncomfortable. Violent storms off the Cape posed a constant danger to even the most experienced mariners. As one seaborne Argonaut recalled, the gales at the Cape "produce long, loud, fierce blasts, bearing down on the sea and ship for hours and hours together. Their effect...is to produce long, huge swells, over which the ship mounts with a roll, then plunges into the abyss again as if never to rise."



The Overland Trail

Although the sea routes drew the heavy traffic in the early months of the gold rush, ultimately most California-bound Argonauts from the eastern United States traveled by various overland routes through the American heartland. This journey of 2,000 miles took at least three or four months and meant crossing incredibly difficult terrain.

Young Sallie Hester, traveling overland with her parents in 1849, recorded in her diary the rigors of making it across the unbroken deserts of the southwest: "The weary, weary tramp of men and beasts, worn out with heat and famished for water, will never be erased from my memory."

The biggest killer on the overland trail was disease, responsible for nine out of every ten deaths. Cholera was by far the greatest scourge, but scurvy, typhoid fever, and dysentery also took their toll. Drowning while fording swollen rivers contributed to the mortality rate, as did fatal accidents caused by the careless or reckless use of firearms. Following the accidental death of a ten-year-old boy, overlander Lucia Williams wrote to her mother that "for many days we could not forget this agonizing experience. It hung over us like a black shadow. It took all the joy out of our lives."

Jim Beckwourth of Beckwourth Pass

Jim Beckwourth was an African-American mountain man and frontier scout. He dressed in fringed buckskins and beaded moccasins; around his neck hung a pendant of a rifle bullet and two brightly colored oblong beads. Today, Jim Beckwourth is recognized as one of the great African-American pioneers in California history.

Born in Virginia in 1798, Beckwourth escaped from the slaveholding south at his earliest opportunity and headed for the freedom of the west. He was adopted by the Crow Indians and lived with them for a while along the Yellowstone and Bighorn rivers. Among the Snake Indians, he was known as "Bloody Arm" because of his prowess in battle.

Beckwourth came to California during the gold rush and prospected around Murderer's Bar and Rich Bar on the Feather River. He was well aware that one of the greatest challenges facing his fellow forty-niners was making it through the Sierra Nevada. The high passes, or narrow openings through the mountains, were difficult to cross.

In 1851, Beckwourth discovered a pass through the northern Sierra that now bears his name. Because the route had excellent commercial possibilities, the citizens of Marysville agreed to pay him to build a toll road over the pass. He spent some of his own money completing the road and succeeded in safely guiding across the first party of immigrants.

Boom Towns



Hundreds of towns sprang to life in California during the gold rush. Wherever gold was discovered, mining camps appeared almost overnight. Some disappeared just as quickly, once the easily available gold was gone. Often located near rutted wagon roads or free-flowing streams, the towns and camps served as supply centers as well as places where miners could gather for entertainment.

The largest towns in the interior were Sacramento and Stockton. Sacramento served as the gateway to the central and northern mines, while Stockton was the supply center for settlements in the southern mining regions.

The greatest boom town of all was San Francisco. Its population swelled from just 600 in 1848 to 25,000 in 1849. San Francisco was the port of entry for all seaborne Argonauts and for supplies arriving from around the world. It also served as the center for California banking, manufacturing, and other economic activities.

New Yorker Bayard Taylor arrived in San Francisco in September 1849. This is what he saw and heard: "Hundreds of tents and houses...scattered all over the heights, and along the shore for over a mile. A furious wind was blowing through a gap in the hills, filling the streets with clouds of dust. On every side stood buildings of all

kinds, begun or half-finished, and the greater part of them mere canvas sheds, open in front and covered with all kinds of signs in all languages. Great quantities of goods were piled in the open air, for want of a place to store them. The streets were full of people, hurrying to and fro, and of divers and bizarre a character as the houses... One knows not whether he is awake or in some wonderful dream."

Life in the Diggings



"Gold-rush California was a tumultuous place. Mark Twain aptly called it "a wild, free, disorderly, grotesque society!"

In their relentless pursuit of wealth, the Argonauts used a variety of mining methods. Some their methods, such as hydraulic king, left ugly scars upon the land.



of

To introduce law and order into this chaotic society, Californians formed mining districts and drafted mining codes. In the cities, they formed vigilance committees. One enterprising Argonaut published a fanciful set of rules, The Miner's Ten Commandments.

and



Many of the most successful gold-rush Californians were merchants who sold supplies to the miners. Mining the miners often proved to be a more lucrative enterprise than simply mining the gold. Sadly, many of the miners themselves failed to realize their dreams of wealth. Gold-rush songs such as "The Lousy Miner" are poignant reminders of the miners' loneliness and disappointment.

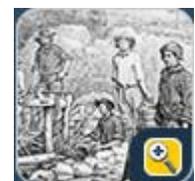
One of the finest eye witness accounts of the gold rush is a set of letters written by Dame Shirley, the pen name of Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe. Dame Shirley realistically portrayed the hardships of life in the diggings, conditions that often were forgotten by those in later years who engaged in remembering the gold rush.

Early Mining Methods



Miners in California used a variety of methods to extract gold.

The simplest method was panning. Squatting by the side of a river or a stream, the miner shallow, flat-bottomed pan with what he hoped would be "pay dirt." Then he held the pan the surface of the water and swirled it about with a gently rotating motion for several minutes. With one side of the pan held lower than the other, the water washed away the



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dirt and sand. The heaviest gold particles--if any--would remain in the bottom of the pan.



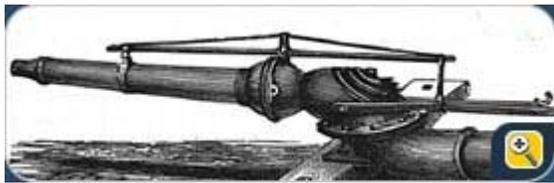
Panning was a tedious and backbreaking job. Miners improved on this simple method by using a rocker, an oblong box without a top, several feet in length, mounted on rockers like a child's cradle and placed in a sloping position. Pay dirt was shoveled into the rocker, followed by buckets of water. As the miner vigorously rocked the cradle back and forth, the muddy water rushed through and the gold was trapped behind "riffles" or cleats in bottom of the rocker.



the

Further improvements appeared by the end of 1849. The "long tom" was an open wooden trough about twelve feet long. Water and dirt flowed through the tom more rapidly and in greater quantity than could be handled by a rocker. The long tom later evolved into a sluice, a series of riffle boxes fitted together, sometimes as much as several hundred feet in length.

Hydraulicking



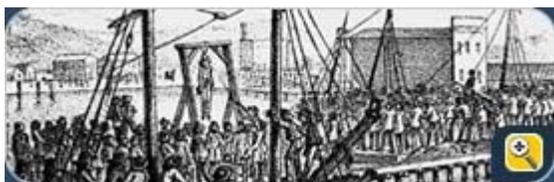
The easily available gold in California soon was depleted, but rich deposits of the precious metal remained far below the surface. Thus the early mining methods gave way to methods more complex--and more destructive.



Working together in large mining companies, miners turned aside entire rivers to expose the pay dirt of streambeds. They also dug deep shafts or tunnels into the earth. One of the most spectacular of the new mining methods was "hydraulicking." Miners used the destructive power of high-pressure water to wash away banks and hills, uncovering gold-bearing gravel far beneath the surface. Hydraulicking left the earth deeply scarred and in some places unrecognizable from its previous state.

Hydraulic mining was a true California innovation. In 1853 a former sailmaker named Anthony Chabot constructed a sturdy canvas hose, and a Connecticut Yankee named Edward E. Matteson invented a tapered nozzle of sheet brass. For the next three decades, hydraulic mining was the dominant form of gold extraction in northern California.

Law and Order



As the world rushed in to California, the gold seekers found themselves in a land beyond the reach of any established law. They ignored the tribal governments of the California Indians and had little respect for the past

practices of Mexican rule. The mining regions remained largely unaffected by the actions of American military governors and officials of the newly formed state government.

Concerned about regulating and securing their mining claims, the miners took matters into their own hands. They formed more than 500 self-governing mining districts. Within each district was an elected recorder, variously called an arbitrator or chairman, whose duties were to keep a record of all claims in the district and to settle disputes over contested claims.

Each district adopted its own unique mining codes. The codes defined such things as the maximum size of claims, the process of filing them, the necessity for continually working them, and what constituted the abandonment of a claim.

The mining districts were democratic bodies, but many also were discriminatory. They commonly excluded African Americans, Asians, and Latinos. The miners also banded together to administer vigilante justice, banishing or lynching those whom they suspected of wrongdoing.

The Miner's Ten Commandment



James Mason Hutchings, an English-born author and editor, published in 1853 a gold-rush letter sheet called "The Miner's Ten Commandments." A letter sheet is a type of illustrated stationery that can be folded to form a self-made envelope. Hutchings sold more than one hundred thousand copies of his "Commandments" in just one year.

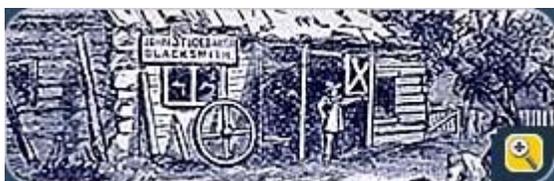


The First Commandment was simple and direct. It reflected a stipulation found in many actual mining codes: "Thou shalt have no other claim than one."

The Sixth Commandment was a bit more complex but just as important: "Thou shalt not kill thy body by working in the rain.... Neither shalt thou kill thy neighbor's body in a duel.... Neither shalt thou suck through a straw...nor gurgle from a bottle...."

The Eighth Commandment was the toughest: "Thou shalt not steal a pick, or a pan, or a shovel, from thy fellow miner, nor take away his tools without his leave...for he will be sure to discover what thou hast done, and will straightaway call his fellow miners together, and if the law hinder them not they will hang thee, or give thee fifty lashes, or shave thy head and brand thee like a horse thief with 'R' upon thy cheek."

Mining the Miners



Many of the most successful Californians during the gold rush were enterprising merchants who sold supplies to the miners. Rather than mining gold, the merchants prospered by "mining the miners."

A Bavarian-born dry goods merchant arrived in California in 1853 with a load of canvas he hoped to sell to the miners for tents. But this merchant soon found a better use for his canvas, making pants for the miners. The merchant's name was Levi Strauss, creator of those trousers known around the world as "Levi's."

Railroad barons Mark Hopkins and Collis P. Huntington got their start as hardware merchants in the gold-rush town of Placerville. One of their neighbors, John M. Studebaker, did a brisk business building and selling wheelbarrows for the miners. Later he and his brothers became the world's leading manufacturers of wagons and buggies. Eventually they went on to build automobiles, and from 1902 until 1963 the streets and highways of America were graced with sleek new Studebakers.

Another up-and-coming gold-rush merchant was a butcher from New York named Philip Danforth Armour. He made a small fortune cutting meat in Placerville and then went back to Chicago where he and his family became multi-millionaires running the largest meat-packing business in the world.

"The Lousy Miner"



Historian Oscar Lewis has estimated that fewer than one out of twenty California gold seekers returned home richer than when they left. They expressed their frustration in the names of ramshackle mining camps like Poverty Hill, Skunk Gulch, and Hell's Delight.



Loneliness and despair also were recurring themes in gold-rush ballads such as "The Unhappy Miner," "I'm Sad and Lonely Here," "I Often Think of Writing Home," and "The Miner's Lament." One of the most poignant ballads was "The Lousy Miner," first published in John A. Stone's *Original California Songster* (1855). The opening stanza begins:

It's four long years since I reached this land,
In search among the rocks and sand;
And yet I'm poor when the truth is told,
I'm a lousy miner,
I'm a lousy miner in search of shining gold.

The final refrain is one of bitter disappointment:

Oh, land of gold, you did me deceive,
And I intend in thee my bones to leave;
So farewell, home, now my friends grow cold,
I'm a lousy miner,
I'm a lousy miner in search of shining gold.

Dame Shirley



Women were a rarity in most gold-rush communities. They represented about one-twelfth of the state's non-native population in 1850, and increased only to one third by 1880.

One of the most remarkable women in gold-rush California was Louise Amelia Knapp Smith Clappe. She lived for over a year in a rough-and-tumble mining camp along the Feather River. She's known to us today by a marvelous series of letters she published under the pen name Dame Shirley. The letters are a valuable resource because they provide a woman's perspective on life in the gold rush. They contain a wealth of detail on the interior furnishings of miners' cabins, the clothing worn by the forty-niners, and their typical daily fare.



Dame Shirley also records the miners' unusual figures of speech. "Seeing the elephant," for instance, meant having a truly remarkable experience, something as unusual and unexpected as encountering an elephant in the mines.

Remembering the Gold Rush



Like so many episodes in California history, the gold rush has been considerably romanticized by many of its later chroniclers. Memoirs and fictionalized accounts, published decades after the event, tended to view the "days of '49" through a golden haze. Understandably, the aging Argonauts wished to put the best possible spin on their youthful exploits.



Heroic pioneers, stouthearted and triumphant, were popular images in Gold Rush anniversary celebrations. "California's Golden Jubilee" in 1898 included a procession through the streets of San Francisco witnessed by a crowd of two hundred thousand enthusiastic celebrants. The glorification was complete by 1948 when Californians observed the centennial of the gold discovery. Gordon Jenkins and his orchestra recorded a "musical narrative" that unabashedly celebrated the gold rush as part of the national legendary:

There's gold in California,
Gold out California way.
Streets are paved with it,
Fortunes are made with it,

Even golden razors
So you can get shaved with it.

The mood during the gold-rush sesquicentennial in the late 1990s was considerably different. Thomas Frye, curator of a gold-rush exhibit at The Oakland Museum of California, commented: "In 1948, everyone identified with California's golden history. Today, it is very different. Not everyone believes in the golden history." State librarian Kevin Starr agreed, noting that Californians no longer "have a coherent society where everyone can agree on what is being celebrated."

Diversity and Conflict



Following the discovery of gold in California in 1848, the world rushed in. Eager gold seekers headed south from Oregon; north from Mexico, Chile, and Peru; east from China and the islands of the Pacific; and west from every state in the union and countries throughout Europe. This richness of intersecting frontiers produced the most ethnically diverse region in the nation.

Gold-rush California also became a region noted for its ethnic conflict. Frustrated ambitions of unsuccessful gold seekers were vented in an almost unending round of ethnic hostilities. Scapegoats were eagerly sought, identified with lightning speed, and dispatched with little regret.



Native American miners were forced to abandon the diggings, and many fell victim to genocidal campaigns. The destruction of the ranchos dispossessed members of the old rancho elite, and Latino miners endured violent opposition as well as discriminatory taxes. French miners, derided as Keskydees, bitterly complained when they too were compelled to pay extra fees as foreign miners. Hawaiians in the gold fields were commonly called Kanakas. Chinese immigrants came seeking their fortune in the fabled land known as Gam Saan. African Americans were a small minority in gold rush California and unfair laws and practices too bound them. In spite of discrimination and hardship, individuals like Biddy Mason left a legacy of pride and accomplishment.

Native American Miners



The discovery of gold brought hundreds of thousands of newcomers onto the lands of the California Indians. The Native people responded in a variety of ways. Many retreated into the interior as the flood of gold seekers invaded their homelands. Others, especially among the Miwok and Yokuts in the Central Valley, raided the settlements of the newcomers for horses and other livestock.

Many Native people joined in the rush for gold and became miners themselves. Colonel Richard B. Mason estimated in 1848 that more than half the gold diggers during the first year of the gold rush were Indians. Miwok prospectors and miners, for instance, helped open the extraordinary riches of the southern mines.

At first, many Indian miners worked as laborers for white Californians, often in a state of peonage similar to their status on the Mexican ranchos. Others labored as independent agents and traded their gold to white merchants for a variety of goods. In the early days, California Indians were unaware of the true value of the gold they were trading, and the whites competed with one another in cheating them. A common practice was to trade glass beads to Indian miners for gold, weight for weight. But soon the Native miners developed a finer appreciation of the white man's high regard for gold and became increasingly able and sophisticated traders themselves.

Episodes in Extermination



The Native American population of California declined from an estimated 150,000 in 1846 to 30,000 by 1870. Most of the decline was caused by disease and malnutrition, but thousands of Indians died in genocidal campaigns carried out by white Californians. Miners and ranchers banded together for the express purpose of killing Indians. These men roamed through the hills and valleys of northern California, hitting especially hard the Native people who lived in the heart of the mother lode, the Nisenan Maidu and the Miwok.

Local sentiment was strongly in favor of Indian extermination. The Yreka Herald in 1853 made its position unequivocally clear: "Extermination is no longer a question of time--the time has arrived, the work has commenced, and let the first man that says treaty or peace be regarded as a traitor." In 1866 the Chico Courant concurred: "It is a mercy to the red devils to exterminate them, and a saving of many white lives. Treaties are played out--there is only one kind of treaty that is effective--cold lead."

Frontier communities raised subscriptions to pay bounties for Indian scalps and Indian heads. In addition to such local remuneration, the state legislature authorized payments of expense claims totaling over \$1 million. The federal government subsequently reimbursed the state. Thus the process of extermination went forward with the financial support of local, state, and federal governments. It was legalized and subsidized murder on a mass scale.

The Destruction of the Ranchos



The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican American War. It provided that the property rights of Mexicans living in the lands ceded to the United States would be "inviolably respected." Hundreds of Mexican ranchos covered some thirteen million acres of land in California. As the world rushed in during the gold rush, the property rights of the rancho owners often were ignored. Newcomers settled on the rancho lands as squatters.

To resolve the confusion over land ownership, the United States Congress in 1851 passed a new land law. The law established a lengthy legal procedure by which the rancho owners could prove the validity of their land titles and remove the squatters. Ultimately the owners won confirmation of about 600 claims, involving nearly nine million acres, and lost about 200 claims, covering four million acres. But the average length of time required by the

grantees to prove the validity of their titles was 17 years. By the time their grants were confirmed, the original grantees usually were bankrupt. Thus the grantees often lost their lands in the process of proving ownership.

The impoverishment of the old rancho elite of California evoked expressions of intense bitterness. Apolinaria Lorenzano, once the proud owner of three ranchos, mourned the loss of her lands: "I find myself in the greatest poverty, living by the favor of God and from handouts."

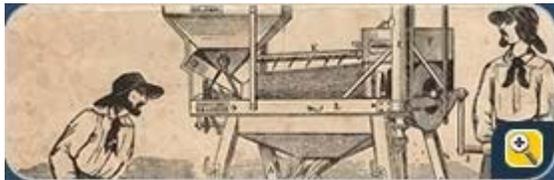
Latino Miners



The largest group of foreign miners in the early years of the California gold rush was Latin Americans. Some came from Chile and Peru, but most were Mexicans from the state of Sonora

Animosities between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking Californians became intense in the early years of the gold rush. Part of the animosity was due to leftover hostilities from the Mexican American War. But economic competition also propelled the antagonism. Many of the Latinos were expert miners, possessing superior mining knowledge and experience.

Keskydees



A San Francisco French-language newspaper in 1853 estimated that some 32,000 French gold seekers were in California. Throughout the gold country today are reminders of their presence--place names like French Camp, French Corral, and French Gulch.

The French, like other foreigners, were subject to discrimination by United States citizens who wished to exclude miners from other lands. The Americans derided the French by calling "Keskydees," derived from the Frenchmen's frequent and uncomprehending question, "Qu'est-ce qu'il dit?" meaning, "What does he say?"



who
them



Anglo-Americans tried to rid the state of foreign miners by requiring them to pay a special monthly tax of twenty dollars for the privilege of mining gold in California. The French, along with

Mexicans and some Germans, mobilized opposition to the tax and staged an unarmed protest in the town of Sonora in 1850. Their protest came to be known as "The French Revolution."

Kanakas



Natives of the Hawaiian Islands first arrived in California in the early 1800s. These Pacific Islanders, then known as Kanakas, worked on ships engaged in the hide and tallow trade and in the hunting of sea otter. Richard Henry Dana included a striking portrait of the Kanaka sailors of California in *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840).

During the gold rush, hundreds of Hawaiians came to California to work in the mines. Place names like Kanaka Creek in Sierra County and Trinity County's Kanaka Bar remind us of their early presence in the gold country.

Even two young members of the Hawaiian royal family became forty-niners, Prince Lot and Prince Alexander. Like boys everywhere, the two young princes weren't very conscientious about writing letters to the folks back home. Fifteen-year-old Prince Alexander later explained that he hadn't written because he didn't think his family and friends would "like to hear about sufferings and murder and gamblers."

Gam Saan



Many Chinese came to California during the gold rush. By 1870 approximately one-fourth of the miners in California were Chinese. News of the gold discovery spread rapidly throughout China, and California become known as a fabulous land--Gam Saan or "Gold Mountain."

Unfortunately the Chinese immigrants often received a hostile reception in California. Many Anglo-American miners feared the Chinese would take too much of the gold. Others opposed the Chinese because of their willingness to accept low wages. Much of the opposition was based on essentially irrational fears directed against a foreign people whose way of life was thought to be somehow dangerous to the well being of the state.



In 1852 the state legislature created a new Foreign Miners License Tax with the clear understanding that it would be enforced primarily against the Chinese. The tax was set at \$3 per month, later raised to \$4. The tax was collected, month after month, until it was declared unconstitutional in 1870. During these eighteen years, this discriminatory tax brought in nearly a quarter of the state's annual revenue.

African Americans



About one percent of the non-Indian population of gold rush California was African American, including enslaved persons as well as free men and women. The free blacks came to California on their own, seeking gold. Their southern masters in spite of California's status as a free state brought those enslaved. Some who came as slaves, such as Biddy Mason, later obtained their freedom.

The status of African Americans in California was restricted by various discriminatory public policies. The state constitution restricted suffrage to "free white males," thus excluding all nonwhites and women from the right to vote. Likewise, the state legislature restricted membership in the state militia to whites. The legislature also adopted a harsh fugitive slave law. The most odious of these anti-black statutes were the state testimony laws that prohibited "blacks, Negroes, mulattoes" and Indians from testifying in any civil or criminal proceeding either "in favor of, or against a white man."



African Americans in San Francisco organized a Franchise League in 1852 to petition the legislature to grant them their full civil rights. Later, in 1855, black residents organized a statewide California Convention of Colored Citizens to protest unfair and unequal treatment.

Biddy Mason

One of California's most intrepid African American pioneers was a woman named Biddy Mason. Born a slave on a Georgia plantation in 1818, she was taken by her owner to San Bernardino, California in 1851.

California was officially a free state. The state constitution of 1849 was very clear about this: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall ever be tolerated in this state." Nevertheless thousands of African Americans like Biddy Mason were brought to California by their masters and kept in bondage. When Mason's owner attempted to take her back to the slave-holding south, a California judge ruled that she and her family were "entitled to their freedom and are free forever."

Biddy Mason, free at last, stayed in California and went on to become one of the first African American women to own property in Los Angeles. From her home on Spring Street, she tended her family and helped the poor. She was a woman with a large and generous heart. "If you hold your hand closed," she was fond of saying, "nothing good can come in. The open hand is blessed, for it gives in abundance, even as it receives."

Statehood



Political affairs in California were confused and chaotic in the early years of the gold rush. Deadlocked over the future of slavery in lands acquired during the Mexican American War, Congress provided no legal form of government for California until its admission to the union in the fall of 1850.

Impatient Californians assembled in a constitutional convention in Monterey in 1849 to engage in some serious constitution making. The delegates to the convention drafted a constitution that established the fundamental structure of California government. They also attended to such minor matters as approving a design for the great seal of the state of California.

President Millard Fillmore signed a bill for the admission of California on September 9, 1850, a date celebrated forever after as Admission Day.

California political affairs remained somewhat unsettled as the roving capital moved from city to city in search of a permanent home.

Constitution Making



Forty-eight prominent Californians assembled in Monterey's Colton Hall early in September 1849. Their task was to draft a constitution for California. Eight of the delegates were Spanish-speaking members of the old rancho elite, including Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo of Sonoma. A majority of the delegates had lived in California more than three years; about half were less than 35 years old.

Perhaps the most pressing issue facing the delegates was whether to petition Congress for admission as a territory or as a state. Because the gold rush had already brought in such a large population, the delegates understandably resolved to skip the territorial stage and apply immediately for statehood. Another issue of great importance was the question of slavery. By a unanimous vote, the delegates decided to seek California's admission to the union as a free state.

The delegates also voted to include in the constitution a provision for the separate ownership of property by a married woman. All property of a wife, owned before she got married or acquired afterward, would remain her property. Such had been the practice in Mexican California, but no other American state yet allowed women this privilege.

The question that gave the delegates the most trouble was the issue of California's eastern boundary. After considerable discussion, the boundary was set at its present location along the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada.

Admissions Day



The prospect of admitting the state of California to the union sparked one of the great debates in our nation's history. California's admission as a free state would upset the equal balance in the number of free and slave states, a balance that had long allowed the south to protect its "peculiar institution."



The controversy was resolved when northern senators agreed to pass a stringent new fugitive slave law. Southern senators, thus mollified, agreed to the admission of California as a free state. President Millard Fillmore signed the bill for the admission of California on September 9, 1850.

News of the momentous event did not reach California for about five weeks. On the morning of October 18, the S.S. Oregon sailed into San Francisco Bay with all flags flying in celebration of the exciting news it bore. Soon a parade was organized down Market Street. City marshals in crimson scarves led the festivities, marching along with a brass band of buglers and a troupe of Chinese revelers carrying bright blue silk banners. That night, huge bonfires on Twin Peaks and other hills

The Roving Capital



One of the important issues left unresolved by the California constitutional convention was the location of a permanent state capital. In a remarkable display of fiscal responsibility, they left its location open to future bids from rival towns. They hoped thereby to acquire land and buildings for the capital without cost to the state treasury.

San Jose was the first city to enter the capital sweepstakes. The state legislature assembled in San Jose for its inaugural session on December 15, 1849. The proceedings were not altogether as stately as one might have hoped. Contemporary critics dubbed it "the legislature of a thousand drinks."

In June 1851 the legislators moved to Vallejo, but were then lured back to San Jose, back to Vallejo, to Sacramento, back to Vallejo again, and then to Benicia. There the legislators took a breather, enjoying for several months the splendid accommodations at the new Benicia City Hall. But even this was not to be their final resting spot. At last, in 1854, the legislators settled on Sacramento as their permanent headquarters. They met in the Sacramento County Courthouse until construction of the present capitol building was nearly completed in 1869.



The Impact of the Railroad: The Iron Horse and the Octopus

The completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 was a major event in California history. The iron horse linked California with the rest of the nation and ushered in an era of economic consolidation.

The Californians who controlled this new technology became the wealthiest and most powerful men of their generation. The railroad also stirred intense controversy. It was denounced by its opponents as a grasping and greedy octopus.

Early Transportation and Communication

The admission of California to the union in 1850 linked the state politically with the rest of the nation, but California remained geographically isolated.

Several early attempts were made to solve the problem of isolation. Stagecoaches carrying the overland mail began crossing the continent to California in 1858. Writer Mark Twain chronicled the plight of one group of hapless passengers who accompanied the west-bound mail. Among the more colorful stagecoach drivers in California was Charlotte Parkhurst, a tough character also known as "Cock-eyed Charley." The Pony Express began providing transcontinental mail service to California in 1860, but its impact was minimal. Perhaps the most ingenious attempt to solve the problem of California's isolation was the introduction of camel caravans across the deserts of the southwest. Meanwhile, river boats carried passengers and cargo on the inland rivers of the state. The wires of the telegraph established instant communication between California and the rest of the nation in 1861, but the larger challenge of providing a system of transcontinental transportation remained unmet.

Overland Mail



The United States Congress in 1857 passed the Overland California Mail Act. This act offered government aid in the form of mail contracts to any company that could provide stagecoach service from the eastern United States to California. Soon

the postmaster general awarded the first contract to the Overland Mail Company, headed by John Butterfield of New York.

Butterfield's stagecoaches began carrying passengers and mail across the continent from St. Louis to San Francisco in 1858. The coaches crossed 2,800 miles of roads that were little more than rutted dirt trails. The trip lasted about three weeks.



As Mark Twain once discovered, riding in a stagecoach was not nearly as much fun as one might imagine. Meals along the way usually were a combination of beans, stale bacon, and crusty bread. Overnight accommodations were dirty and uncomfortable. The ride itself was a bone-jarring, teeth-rattling, muscle-straining experience.

Mark Twain



One of the many young Americans to cross the continent in a stagecoach carrying the overland mail was the writer Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain. He came to Nevada in 1861 and worked on the Territorial Enterprise newspaper. Later in 1864 he moved to San Francisco and began writing for the Golden Era.

"Whenever the stage stopped to change horses, we would wake up, and try to recollect where we were.... We began to get into country, now, threaded here and there with little streams. These had high, steep banks on each side, and every time we flew down one bank and scrambled up the other, our party inside got mixed somewhat.



First we would all be down in a pile at the forward end of the stage, nearly in a sitting posture, and in a second we would shoot to the other end, and stand on our heads. And we would sprawl and kick, too, and ward off ends and corners of mailbags that came lumbering after us and about us; and as the dust rose from the tumult, we would all sneeze in chorus, and the majority of us would grumble, and probably say some hasty thing, like: "Take your elbow out of my ribs! --Can't you quit crowding."

Charlotte Parkhurst

Charlotte Parkhurst was a stagecoach driver in the 1850s and '60s. She drove a four-horse team for Wells, Fargo and Company on the road from Santa Cruz to San Jose. Since the stagecoach companies in those days hired only men as drivers, she dressed in men's clothing and applied for the job as "Charley Parkhurst." She wore gloves (in both summer and winter) to hide her small hands and pleated shirts to hide her figure.

Apparently no one suspected Parkhurst's true identity. One of her unknowing companions later said that Charley Parkhurst "out-swore, out-drunk, and out-chewed even the Monterey whalers." Parkhurst was a tough-looking hombre with a patch over one eye, blinded by the kick of a horse. In later years, this colorful character was known as "Cock-eyed Charley."

When Parkhurst died in 1879, the San Francisco Morning Call mourned the passing of "the most dexterous and celebrated of the California drivers, and it was an honor to occupy the spare end of the driver's seat when the fearless Charley Parkhurst held the reins."

Pony Express



The Pony Express began carrying mail between California and St. Joseph, Missouri, on April 3, 1860. The route was nearly 2,000 miles long and service was provided semi-weekly. In summer, the trip took ten and a half days.



The freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell hired eighty young riders to carry mail across the continent aboard fleet-footed ponies. The average age of the riders was just sixteen. The company outfitted them with revolvers and knives to defend themselves against the dangers they might meet along the trail, critters like wolves and mountain lions. The company supplied the riders with bibles and prohibited them from engaging in any "drinking or swearing." The riders wore close-fitting clothes to reduce wind resistance and on their ponies were light racing saddles. They carried leather pouches filled with twenty pounds of mail wrapped in oiled silk to keep out the moisture.



These dashing young riders sped across the continent at twenty-five miles an hour, stopping every ten to fifteen miles for a fresh horse at one of the hundreds of relay stations along the way. As the rider approached each station, his replacement mount would be saddled and ready to go. The rider would transfer his mail pouch and be on his way again in less than two minutes.

The Pony Express delivered the mail to California far faster than other means. But the cost was much higher. After only about eighteen months, the Pony Express went out of business. It ended on October 24, 1861, the day the transcontinental telegraph began providing instant communication across the continent.

Camel Caravans

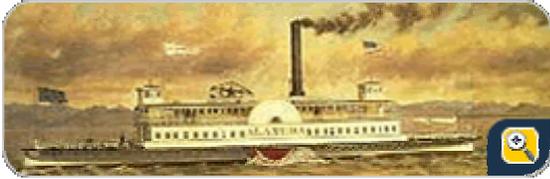


The United States Congress in 1855 approved a plan to use camels to carry goods across the deserts of the southwest to California.

The plan was the bright idea of Jefferson Davis, an imaginative young senator from Mississippi at the time. Davis was convinced that camels--famous for their sure-footedness in shifting sands and their ability to endure intense heat--would be an ideal means of transporting military supplies to California. After Davis became United States Secretary of War, he dispatched government agents to north Africa to purchase a small herd of camels. The camels eventually arrived in New Mexico where they were assigned the task of transporting goods over a twelve-hundred-mile desert trail to southern California.

Although the camels did well, the government soon lost interest. In the early 1860s, some thirty-five decommissioned camels were driven north from Los Angeles to the army's Benicia Arsenal in Solano County. There they were auctioned off as government surplus to the highest bidder.

River Boats



In the years before the advent of the railroad, the major arteries of inland trade and transportation in California were the routes of the great paddlewheel steamers on San Francisco Bay and on the larger rivers of the Central Valley.

The magnificent river boats that plied the waters of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers were every bit as elegant as any that ever paddled their way along the mighty Mississippi. They were dripping with Victorian gingerbread, and their staterooms were decked out with lace and cut velvet. One New Englander was delighted with the luxury and comfort he found aboard *The Senator* in 1850: "It was a strong, spacious, and elegant boat. After my recent barbaric life, her long upper saloon, with its sofas and faded carpet, seemed splendid enough for a palace."

Huge profits were to be made, and the competition for customers between San Francisco and Sacramento was particularly intense. Rival crews got into fist fights over who would carry a particular passenger or load of freight, while captains pushed their boats to the limit, trying to make the best time. The record from San Francisco was set in 1861: five hours and nineteen minutes. Price wars drove passenger fares down from \$30 to \$5. One desperate captain even offered to carry folks for free--just to get their business!

Telegraph

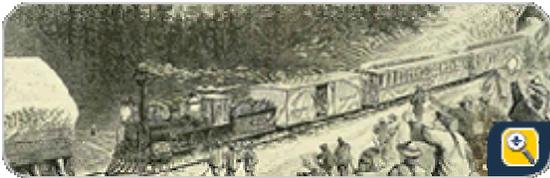


The overland mail reached California by stagecoach in about three weeks. The fleet-footed ponies of the Pony Express reduced delivery time to around ten days. But a new technology, the telegraph, promised instant communication across the continent.

The telegraph is a simple device that sends messages by electricity. It was developed by an American inventor named Samuel F. B. Morse. He also developed the Morse code, an ingenious code that uses dots and dashes to stand for the letters of the alphabet. Morse sent his first message from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, Maryland, in 1844. Telegraph lines soon connected cities throughout the eastern United States.

Workers began building a telegraph line across the country in the summer of 1861. It was completed on October 24, 1861. On that historic day, the first telegram was sent from California to the east. The chief justice of the California Supreme Court telegraphed President Abraham Lincoln to declare California's loyalty to the union. Also on that day the Pony Express went out of business. The telegraph had rendered its services obsolete.

The Iron Horse



The problem of California's isolation from the rest of the nation was solved with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. The person most responsible for launching that massive enterprise was a young civil engineer named Theodore Judah. Judah tirelessly pursued financial backers for the project and found them in four ambitious Sacramento merchants, known in the annals of California history as the Big Four. Judah also was instrumental in securing government aid for the construction of the railroad.

Building the railroad was a monumental undertaking. The greatest challenge was laying rails through the heart of the Sierra Nevada. After six years of toil, the railroad was completed with the Gold Spike ceremony at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869. Most of the construction work on the western portion of the line was performed by Chinese labor.

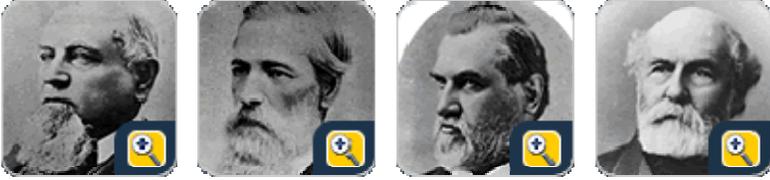
The railroad's economic impact on the state was far-reaching, although not quite what was expected. California agriculture was among those industries that prospered with the opening of eastern markets. Perishable farm products now could swiftly be shipped across the country in refrigerated rail cars. The completion of rival rail lines contributed to the boom of the eighties, a rapid expansion of the population and economy of southern California.

The great wealth produced by the railroad enabled its owners to become some of California's leading philanthropic benefactors. The wife of the first president of the Central Pacific Railroad, for example, became the mother of a university. Such benefactions were not always appreciated by those who condemned the railroad as an octopus strangling California.

Theodore Judah

Interest in building a transcontinental railroad was strong throughout the 1850s. The United States Congress authorized surveys of several potential routes but was unable to agree on which route to choose.

Civil engineer Theodore Judah deserves much of the credit for developing the specific plan that eventually won Congressional approval. A native of Connecticut, Judah came west in 1854 to build the first railroad on the Pacific Coast, a short line from Sacramento to Folsom. Having



completed this modest task, Judah became entranced--some would say "bewitched"--by a grand vision: building a railroad across the continent.

In 1860 Judah made an intensive search for the best crossing of the Sierra Nevada. He located and surveyed a feasible route, making detailed notes on the grade and terrain. Encouraged by his discovery, he drew up articles of association for the Central Pacific Railroad of California. After several rejections, Judah in 1860 turned to four Sacramento merchants for financial backing.

Judah's association with the Big Four proved to be deeply troubling. He wanted the railroad to be built well; they wanted it to be built cheaply so that profits would be high. In October 1863 Judah sailed for New York where he hoped to find other financial backers who might buy out the Big Four. During his trip eastward, Judah became deathly ill with yellow fever. He died shortly after his arrival in New York. Today a simple monument to Theodore Judah stands in the Old Town area of Sacramento. Surely his real monument is the ribbon of iron rails that tied California to the rest of the nation.

The Big Four

The Big Four were the chief entrepreneurs in the building of the first transcontinental railroad. They provided the initial financial backing for the plan proposed by civil engineer Theodore Judah. As directors of the Central Pacific and later the Southern Pacific, they became the wealthiest and most powerful Californians of their generation.

Elected president of the Central Pacific was a Sacramento grocer named Leland Stanford. His gregarious personality suited him perfectly for this position of leadership. He was active in the formation of the state Republican party, and in 1862 he ran successfully for the governorship of California. Later he served as a United States Senator from California.

Vice President of the newly formed corporation was Collis P. Huntington, a successful Sacramento hardware merchant. Huntington's business practices became legendary. His favorite maxim for setting prices was "How badly does the customer want it?" Within the inner circle of the railroad, Huntington was clearly the dominant personality. In later years he would serve as president of the Southern Pacific.

Huntington's partner in the hardware business was Mark Hopkins, elevated to the position of treasurer of the Central Pacific. Several years older than the other partners, Hopkins lacked their driving ambition. His greatest strength was his eye for detail, keeping meticulous accounts of all financial transactions.

Charles Crocker, the fourth member of the group, began his career in California as a seller of dry goods in Sacramento. As a director of the railroad, his greatest contribution was his unflagging energy and enthusiasm. He would serve as overseer of the actual building of the railroad.

Government Aid



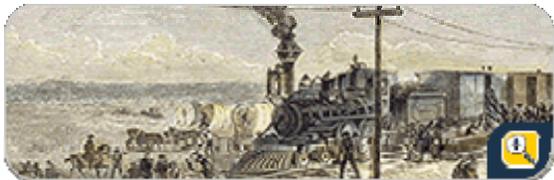
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Congress in 1862 and 1864 passed the Pacific Railroad Acts. Signed into law by President Lincoln, these acts provided enormous gifts of land and low-interest loans to the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads.

The Central Pacific was authorized to build the western portion of the transcontinental railroad beginning in Sacramento, and the Union Pacific was to build the eastern portion starting in Omaha. The loans were paid out at varying rates, from \$16,000 to \$48,000 per mile of track. The land was doled out in a checkerboard pattern of ten alternate sections (square miles) on each side of the track--half the land in a strip totaling forty miles in width. The railroad thus received from the federal government a total of 11,588,000 acres in California, about 11 1/2 percent of the entire land area of the state. This vast transfer of the public domain made the railroad, by far, the largest private landowner in California.

Building the Railroad



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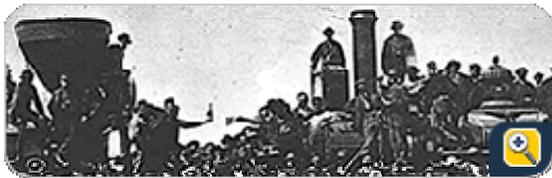
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The Gold Spike



After more than six years of construction, the tracks of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads approached each other just to the north of the Great Salt Lake. It was there, at a place called Promontory, that the lines were officially joined in a famous and colorful ceremony.

Witnessing the ceremony was a crowd of five hundred laborers, mostly Chinese and Irish immigrants. Workers carefully placed a final polished laurel tie on a bed of gravel. Company officials presented several commemorative spikes, including one of silver and two of gold. Central Pacific president Leland Stanford attempted to drive home the final spike with a mighty swing of his silver-headed sledgehammer. (Unfortunately he missed on the first attempt!)

Telegraphers reported the ceremony to an awaiting nation. A. J. Russell captured the significance of the moment in his carefully staged photograph, "East Meets West." Exactly a century after the founding of the first Spanish settlements in Alta California in 1769, iron rails now linked American California to its kindred states.

Economic Impact



Californians expected that the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 would usher in a new era of prosperity. Those expectations were not immediately realized. By a cruel paradox, the completion of the railroad not only failed to bring the expected good times, it also marked the beginning of a deep and general depression that continued through the next decade.

California merchants and manufacturers found themselves suddenly exposed to intense competition from those of eastern cities. Local merchants had overstocked merchandise in

anticipation of increased demand. Now, after 1869, they found the market glutted with goods shipped to California by rail. Nor did land prices rise as expected. Land values had become overinflated in anticipation of the completion of the railroad. When the road was completed, land prices in California actually fell.

The completion of the railroad released thousands of workers, most of whom drifted back to the California labor market. The oversupply of workers depressed wages and contributed to widespread unemployment.

On the positive side, the railroad did help California farmers and other producers transport their products to distant markets. Fruit growers benefited especially from the development of the refrigerated railroad car that kept fruit cool and ripe during shipment across the country.

The Boom of the Eighties



Southern California experienced tremendous growth in the 1880s, stimulated in part by the railroad. The Southern Pacific was the largest landowner in the state and it took a leading role in the advertising of California. The railroad's publicity department flooded the nation with articles and stories extolling the charms of California's natural beauty, climate, and romantic heritage.

The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad reached Los Angeles in the mid- 1880s and began a rate war with the Southern Pacific. Passenger fares from the Midwest to southern California dropped from \$125 to as little as \$1. More than 200,000 newcomers arrived in southern California in 1887, the peak year of "the boom of the eighties." Real estate sales in Los Angeles County exceeded \$200 million during a single year. Dozens of towns sprang up. A hundred new communities with 500,000 homesites were established.

Mother of a University



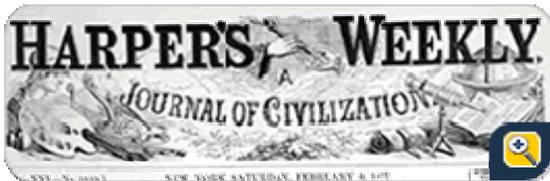
The great wealth produced by the railroad enabled the Big Four and their families to become some of California's leading philanthropic benefactors. Leland Stanford and his wife Jane founded Stanford University in 1885 as a memorial to their only son who had died the year before at age fifteen.



After her husband died in 1893, Jane Stanford played a major role in the governance and support of the university. Stanford was one of the few universities in the world to admit women, and Jane Stanford paid close attention to the conduct of the coeds on campus. She was alarmed to learn that some of them were becoming "quite lawless and free in their social relations with young men." She instructed the college president to place Stanford coeds under "strict surveillance."

Jane Stanford also was concerned about the growing number of women on campus. When the number of female undergraduates exceeded 40 percent, she feared that the university was developing a reputation as a women's school. In 1899 she issued a strongly worded edict: "Whereas the University was founded in memory of our dear son, Leland, and bears his name, I direct that the number of women attending the University as students shall at no time ever exceed 500.... I mean literally never in the future of the Leland Stanford Junior University can the number of female students at any one time exceed 500." The edict stayed in place until 1933 when university trustees found a loophole that allowed them to lift the limit.

Chinese Labor



The problem of California's isolation from the rest of the nation was solved with the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. The person most responsible for launching that massive enterprise was a young civil engineer named Theodore Judah. Judah tirelessly pursued financial backers for the project and found them in four ambitious Sacramento merchants, known in the annals of California history as the Big Four. Judah also was instrumental in securing government aid for the construction of the railroad.

Building the railroad was a monumental undertaking. The greatest challenge was laying rails through the heart of the Sierra Nevada. After six years of toil, the railroad was completed with the Gold Spike ceremony at Promontory, Utah, on May 10, 1869. Most of the construction work on the western portion of the line was performed by Chinese labor.

The railroad's economic impact on the state was far-reaching, although not quite what was expected. California agriculture was among those industries that prospered with the opening of eastern markets. Perishable farm products now could swiftly be shipped across the country in refrigerated rail cars. The completion of rival rail lines contributed to the boom of the eighties, a rapid expansion of the population and economy of southern California.

The great wealth produced by the railroad enabled its owners to become some of California's leading philanthropic benefactors. The wife of the first president of the Central Pacific Railroad, for example, became the mother of a university. Such benefactions were not always appreciated by those who condemned the railroad as an octopus strangling California.

Working on the Railroad



It was Charles Crocker, one of the members of the Big Four, who first experimented with Chinese construction workers on the transcontinental railroad. The experiment was so successful that railroad agents soon were recruiting Chinese workers by the thousands. "Come over and help!" said the recruiting posters in China. "We have money to spend, but no one to earn it.

At the peak of construction, the Central Pacific employed more than 10,000 Chinese laborers. "They are equal to the best white men," Crocker said proudly of his new labor force. "They are very trusty, they are intelligent, and they live up to their contracts."

The Chinese worked under incredibly dangerous conditions--for a dollar a day--to overcome some of the world's most extraordinary obstacles to the building of a railroad. Workers were suspended in wicker baskets over nearly vertical cliffs in the Sierra Nevada, chipping away with hammers and chisels to make a ledge for the track. In unknown numbers, Chinese workers were swept away in avalanches and rock slides. "The snowslides carried away our camps and we lost a good many men in these slides," reported one railroad official. "Many of them we did not find until the next season when the snow melted."

Chinese rail workers made one brief attempt to strike. Near Cisco, in Placer County, thirty-five hundred workers in July 1867 demanded forty dollars a month and a ten-hour work day. They gave up even these modest demands when the Central Pacific cut off the food supply and threatened to discharge the strikers.

Anti-Chinese Sentiment



Thousands of Chinese rail workers were laid off following the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. Most drifted back to crowd the already glutted labor market in California. Thousands of additional Chinese immigrants arrived each year during the next decade as California entered a period of hard times. Unemployment rose sharply and many businesses failed during "the terrible seventies."

White Californians often blamed the Chinese for the depressed economic conditions. Anti-Chinese riots broke out in cities and towns throughout the state, in places like Auburn, Petaluma, Roseville, Chico, and Santa Barbara. The worst anti-Chinese riot occurred in Los Angeles. On the evening of October 24, 1871, an angry mob looted and burned the local Chinatown, leaving fifteen Chinese immigrants hanging from makeshift gallows.



Many California cities also passed laws to harass the Chinese. San Francisco, for instance, passed an ordinance in 1870 that prohibited anyone from occupying a sleeping room with less than 500 cubic feet of breathing space per person. This "health law" allowed the police to make raids on crowded tenements in Chinatown and roust out any sleeping Chinese residents who were violating the ordinance while they slept. The law was vigorously enforced and soon the jails of San Francisco were so overcrowded that the city itself was in gross violation of its own ordinance.

The Workingmen's Party



Many white Californians blamed the Chinese immigrants for the hard times of the 1870s. Groups of unemployed whites gathered on the "sand lots" of San Francisco to denounce the Chinese and to castigate the railroad company that had employed so many of them. Such meetings occasionally erupted into violence, leaving Chinese businesses looted and burned.

Unemployed San Franciscans and their allies in 1877 formed a new political party that would represent their views. A fiery young Irish American named Denis Kearney emerged as the leader of the Workingmen's Party of California. Kearney acquired a large following mainly through his emotional and melodramatic style of oratory. On one occasion, he shouted to a crowd that "every workingman should have a musket."

Fearing that Kearney's speeches would lead to more violence, the city government adopted a ordinance that restricted public speaking that advocated violence. Kearney was arrested but acquitted because no violence had actually resulted from his speeches. Whatever his speeches may have advocated, one thing was clear: the leader of the Workingmen's Party won thunderous applause from his followers whenever he shouted "And whatever happens, the Chinese must go!"

A New Constitution



At the peak of anti-Chinese sentiment and the rise of the Workingmen's Party, Californians adopted a new state constitution. Voters in June 1878 elected delegates to a constitutional convention; a third of the delegates were members of the Workingmen's Party. The document the delegates produced was far longer and more complex than the original constitution drafted at the Monterey convention in 1849. It was approved by the voters of California on May 7, 1879.



The new constitution included provisions for regulating the railroad and other corporations. It also modified the tax structure to benefit farmers and established a state board of equalization.

The anti-Chinese provisions of the constitution were long, elaborate, and emotional. The ban on the public employment of Chinese was absolute: "No Chinese shall be employed on any state, county, municipal, or other public work, except in punishment for crime." The constitution also instructed the legislature to "delegate all necessary power to the incorporated cities and towns of this state for the removal of Chinese without the limits of such cities and towns, or for their location within prescribed portions of those limits." Thus California cities were empowered to exclude Chinese residents or to require them to live in Chinese ghettos. The presence of Chinese immigrants, ineligible by race to become American citizens, was declared "to be dangerous to the well-being of the state, and the legislature shall discourage their immigration by all means within its power."

Chinese Exclusion

Anti-Chinese sentiment in California found its ultimate expression in the Chinese Exclusion Act, approved by the United States Congress in 1882. The act prohibited Chinese immigration for ten years. In 1892 the law was extended for another ten years, and in 1902 it became permanent. The law was repealed during World War II, when China and the United States were allied in the struggle against Japan.

The exclusion law contributed to an economic and demographic decline of the Chinese immigrant population. Boycotts of Chinese-produced goods by white consumers reduced significantly the economic opportunities for the immigrants. Most Chinese workers were relegated to the ranks of common laborers or farm workers. Few Chinese women lived in California at the time of exclusion, and thus the immigrant population faced extraordinary difficulties replenishing itself through natural increase. The Chinese population in the United States declined from 107,000 in 1890 to just 75,000 in 1930.

The exclusion law not only made it nearly impossible for additional Chinese to enter California, it also caused great hardships for those who were already here.

The Octopus



Many Californians in the late nineteenth century came to believe that the Big Four had accumulated far too much wealth and power. Angry citizens portrayed the railroad as a monstrous octopus that was strangling other businesses and corrupting the affairs of government.

The Big Four's mansions on Nob Hill were denounced as evidence of their ill-gotten wealth. Political cartoons showed the Big Four under attack by those who wished to free the state from railroad domination. Author Frank Norris criticized the Southern Pacific in his muckraking novel *The Octopus* (1901). Embarrassing revelations in the press alleged corrupt dealings by railroad officials. Although the railroad suffered a few defeats at the hands of its enemies, its power remained substantial as California entered the new century. Scholars today continue to offer conflicting interpretations of the role of the railroad in the history of California.

Mansions on Nob Hill



Nob Hill in San Francisco has long been a symbol of the city's elegance and grace. Known originally as the California Street Hill, it became the home of San Francisco's wealthiest families in the 1870s. The city's elite were the "nabobs," (referring to the title of prominent governors of the Mogul empire in India) which was later shortened simply to "nobs."

On the crest of the hill sprawled the homes of the Big Four, the wealthiest and most powerful Californians of their generation. The home of Leland Stanford was on California Street where the Stanford Court Hotel stands today. Visitors to the magnificent Stanford home entered through a circular entrance hall, bathed in amber light from a glass dome in the ceiling seventy feet above. The family of Mark Hopkins lived just up the street, where the Mark Hopkins Hotel now stands. Topped by a crown of towers, gables and steeples, it looked like a fanciful medieval castle.

Charles Crocker's home was the grandest of them all, occupying an entire square block where Grace Cathedral stands today. It contained a fully equipped theater, library, and billiard room. An imposing seventy-six-foot tower offered Crocker an uninterrupted view of the entire Bay Area.

But the view was not so grand for Crocker's neighbor, a lowly San Francisco undertaker who refused to sell out when Crocker was buying up the block for his new residence. To spite the uncooperative undertaker, Crocker constructed a fence forty-feet high on three sides of his neighbor's property! The Crocker "spite fence" was denounced by the railroad's opponents as a galling symbol of the unrestrained wealth and power of the Big Four.

The Big Four under Attack

Following the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the Big Four established a virtual transportation monopoly in California and exercised great political power. Many of their fellow Californians came to believe that these four railroad tycoons had amassed too much wealth and power. They complained that the Big Four's transportation monopoly was draining the profit

from other business enterprises in the state and that their political machine was corrupting California government.

Anger against the Big Four was frequently expressed in contemporary editorials and political cartoons. One of the most devastating cartoons appeared in the San Francisco Examiner in 1898. "Highwayman Huntington to the Voters of California" pictured the president of the Southern Pacific Railroad as a vicious gunman, complete with skull cufflinks and a garish diamond stickpin. Collis P. Huntington was not amused.

The following year, several bills aimed at silencing offending journalists were introduced in the railroad-dominated state legislature. One bill effectively banned the future publication of political cartoons. It prohibited the publishing of any drawing which reflected adversely upon the "honor, integrity, manhood, virtue, or reputation" of any individual. This anti-cartoon bill became law in 1899 and remained on the books for fifteen years, a chilling legacy from the era of the Big Four.

Frank Norris



Born in Chicago in 1870, Frank Norris moved with his family to San Francisco when he was fourteen. Three years later, he was sent to Paris to study art, but was soon summoned home by his father who suspected that young Frank was wasting both his time and his money. Norris then enrolled at the University of California, Berkeley, where he studied for four years but failed to graduate. After leaving college, Norris became a professional writer in San Francisco and later in New York. He was much influenced by the works of Émile Zola, and Norris's fiction is an important contribution to American naturalism.

In 1901 Norris published *The Octopus*, a gripping story of the struggle between California wheat farmers and the Southern Pacific Railroad. The farmers in the novel believe that they have been cheated by the railroad's deceptive land practices. The farmers also complain that the railroad charges extortionate freight rates to ship their products to market.

In one memorable scene, an angry farmer denounces the local railroad agent with these words: "What next? My God, why don't you break into our houses at night? Why don't you steal the watch out of my pocket, steal the horses out of the harness, hold us up with a shotgun; yes, 'stand and deliver; your money or your life.'"

Revelations

IS IT TO BE **SUTRO** OR THE



Several embarrassing revelations in the late nineteenth century provided powerful evidence for those Californians who believed that the Southern Pacific Railroad had corrupted state politics. Two of the most damaging episodes involved the top leaders of the company.

David Colton was the confidential manager of the railroad's political interests in California. Following Colton's death in 1878, his widow sued the Big Four for cheating her out of part of her inheritance. During the trial, she introduced hundreds of letters between her late husband and other railroad officials. The letters starkly revealed the railroad's activities in influencing elections, reelections, and votes of members of the California Legislature.

Two members of the Big Four, Collis Huntington and Leland Stanford, became involved in a public feud in the early 1890s. Huntington publicly rebuked Stanford for using large amounts of railroad money to secure Stanford's election as a United States senator. Stanford's private secretary later published a series of letters filled with further charges of the wholesale corruption of national, state, and local officials by the railroad.

Anti-railroad candidates, pledging to end the corruption of government, won wide support from their fellow Californians. Adolph Sutro declared himself the defender of the people against the greed of The Octopus and was elected mayor of San Francisco in 1894.

Defeats



Although the Big Four wielded considerable political power in the late nineteenth century, they also suffered several major defeats at the hands of their opponents.

Collis Huntington, president of the Southern Pacific Railroad, supported proposals for federal aid to construct a harbor at Santa Monica where the railroad had exclusive access. Many of the leading citizens of Los Angeles wanted the harbor to be built at San Pedro, at a place that was free of railroad control. Huntington waged his battle throughout the 1890s but eventually had to concede defeat when a board of Army engineers approved the building of the harbor at San Pedro.

Government aid for the building of the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s included federal loans of nearly \$28 million payable in thirty years. As the loans became due, Huntington proposed a delay in payment of fifty to a hundred years. Huntington's proposal created a

firestorm of opposition. When the proposal was defeated by the United States Congress in 1897, the governor of California proclaimed a public holiday in celebration.

Progress and Its Discontents

The population and economy of California continued to grow during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Agricultural production expanded and new industries appeared.

The state's growth was accompanied by intense controversies over the natural resources of California and among the competing forces of labor and capital. As the new century dawned, the forces of reform gained strength and emerged triumphant.



Industries Old and New

The economic growth of California in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included industries both old and new. Advances in agricultural technology contributed to a bonanza in wheat on the rich farmlands of the great Central Valley. Horticulturist Luther Burbank, the wizard of Santa Rosa, developed specialty crops that transformed California farming. The growing of citrus fruits, most notably oranges and lemons, spread throughout the southern part of the state. Inspired publicists blanketed the midwest with the slogan, "Oranges for Health--California for Wealth."

The discovery of vast petroleum resources contributed to the oil boom of the twenties, a time of headlong economic expansion. The prosperity decade also witnessed the blossoming of California's love affair with the car. Automobility became an integral part of the much admired (and much imitated) "California life style."



The greatest promoters of things Californian, of course, were all those motion pictures produced locally and distributed globally. The movies discovered California in the early years of the new century and the film industry soon became a mainstay of the state's economy. The story of "A Polish Goldfish" reminds us that many of the pioneers in the early film industry were European immigrants. The glamour of Hollywood stars--including their shenanigans at palaces like Pickfair--became the stuff of enduring legend.

A Bonanza in Wheat



The most important California farm product in the late nineteenth century was wheat. The rich soils and dry summers of the Central Valley proved to be ideal for wheat production. Between the late 1860s and the early 1890s, grain poured out of the valley's enormous wheat ranches.

The scale of California wheat farming boggles the mind. The state's largest wheat grower was Hugh Glenn, owner of a mammoth ranch in Colusa County that covered 66,000 acres. He produced more than half a million bushels of wheat each year.

Wheat farming on such a scale could not have been possible without some fundamental advances in agricultural technology. The "Stockton gang plow" consisted of several plowshares attached to a beam mounted on wheels and pulled by a team of mules or horses. A hundred such gang plows, each drawn by an eight-mule team, plowed the fields of the Glenn ranch. The Central Valley also produced new machines for planting seeds and for cutting and threshing grain. Gargantuan steam-powered "combined harvests" were pulled by teams of thirty-six horses. The first steam-powered tractor appeared in the San Joaquin Valley in 1886. Benjamin Holt of Stockton later developed the nation's first tractor propelled by an internal combustion engine.

The Wizard of Santa Rosa



Born on a Massachusetts farm in the gold rush year of 1849, Burbank moved to California in 1875. He decided to settle in Santa Rosa, a gardener's paradise that he called "the chosen spot of all this earth."

From his experimental gardens came eight hundred new varieties of plants, many of which are still grown in California today.

Included in Burbank's astonishing cornucopia of new species were over a hundred types of plums and prunes, more than fifty lilies, and ten new berries. He took special pride in his new breeds of apples, rhubarb, and quince. Somewhere along the way, he also managed to perfect the Calla lily and the Shasta daisy.

Each new discovery increased Burbank's fame. A steady stream of visitors--including Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Helen Keller--made a pilgrimage to meet this magical,

mystical Californian. But Burbank was painfully shy, uncomfortable with crowds or public speaking. He preferred to spend his time alone in his beloved gardens and greenhouses, where passersby would strain to get a glimpse of this gardener touched with genius--the wizard of Santa Rosa.

A key player in the development of California agriculture was the famed horticulturist Luther Burbank.

"Oranges for Health-- California for Wealth"

Spanish missionaries introduced the first oranges to California during the late eighteenth century, but it wasn't until a century later that citrus fruits became an important part of the state's economy.



One of the earliest Californians to grow oranges commercially was John Wesley North. In 1870 he began planting trees in the dry, sandy soil near Riverside and irrigating his grove with water from the Santa Ana River. Refrigerated railroad cars carried his winter-ripening "Riverside navels" to markets across the country.

California farmers in 1876 began growing summer-ripening Valencia oranges. Now Californians could produce and market oranges all year round. Soon southern California was producing two-thirds of the nation's oranges and more than 90 percent of its lemons.

To promote California's booming citrus industry--and the quality of life in the Golden State--the California Fruit Growers Exchange and the Southern Pacific Railroad launched an advertising campaign in 1907. They targeted the state of Iowa, blanketing the state with pro-California propaganda. Posters were put up everywhere showing a little girl, Miss California, feeding an orange to a barefoot boy, Master Iowa. Wherever folks turned, they saw the slogan, "Oranges for Health--California for Wealth."

The Oil Boom of the Twenties



Discoveries of huge deposits of oil spurred the rise of the California petroleum industry in the late nineteenth century. The major deposits were in the San Joaquin Valley, Santa Barbara County, and the Los Angeles basin.

New discoveries, all in the Los Angeles basin, launched an even bigger oil boom during the early 1920s. Massive new fields began production near Huntington Beach and

Whittier. The richest of the world's known oil deposits was discovered at Long Beach. California soon ranked first among the states in crude oil production.

Derricks of oil wells popped up in orange groves and in city neighborhoods throughout southern California. Petroleum refining became the state's largest manufacturing industry, providing jobs for thousands of Californians. The harbor at Los Angeles became the largest oil-exporting port in the world.

Automobility

The oil boom of the twenties in southern California occurred at the very time and in the very place where the use of the automobile was spreading more rapidly than in any other time or place in history.



The population of Los Angeles County more than doubled during the 1920s and the number of registered automobiles quintupled. By the middle of the decade, Los Angeles was the most thoroughly motorized and motor-conscious city in the world. The automobile allowed workers to live at a considerable distance from their places of employment. A network of roadways connected the city center with suburbs of single-family residences, supermarkets, and shopping malls. Tourism became a major industry, spawning "auto camps," "tourist cabins," and "drive-ins" throughout southern California.

Commenting on the transformation wrought by the automobile, the Los Angeles Times in 1926 observed: "Our forefathers, in their immortal independence creed set forth 'the pursuit of happiness' as an inalienable right of mankind. And how can one pursue happiness by any swifter and surer means...than by the use of the automobile?"

The Movies Discover California

The first major motion picture to be produced in the United States was filmed in the New Jersey countryside in 1903.



The Great Train Robbery was an eight-minute, one-reel western, produced by the film company of Thomas Edison and starring an ex-vaudevillian named Gilbert Anderson as Bronco Billy.

At the time, Edison and a few others controlled the patents on nearly all the available motion-picture cameras and projectors. Independent or "outlaw" filmmakers soon rebelled against Edison's monopoly. One of these independents was Gilbert Anderson.

In 1908 Anderson began scouting the country for a location to launch his own film company; he wanted to be as far away as possible from Edison's patent attorneys. He soon found an ideal location in California, just southeast of Oakland, in a rugged little canyon near the village of Niles. There he produced 375 films over the next six years--

more than one film a week! The films all starred, of course, that lovable cowpoke Bronco Billy.

Eventually the fledgling motion picture industry abandoned Niles Canyon for southern California. The Los Angeles suburb of Hollywood offered a superior climate, a greater variety of landscapes, and something northern California simply couldn't match--easy access to the Mexican border across which worried filmmakers could flee (if ever necessary) to escape those pesky patent attorneys from New Jersey.

A Polish Goldfish

Many of the greatest directors and producers in the early days of the Hollywood film industry were Eastern European refugees, many of whom were Jews fleeing persecution.

One of the most successful of the eastern European refugees was Schmucl Gelbfisz, born in Warsaw, Poland, in 1882. He was the eldest of six children in a family of Hasidic Jews. As a young man he left his troubled homeland for London and New York. Along the way he changed his name to Samuel Goldfish.

In 1913 the young Goldfish moved to California and entered a new profession, founding one of the first feature motion picture companies on the West Coast. His early partners were Edgar and Archibald Selwyn, and it was from them that he got his new American name. He combined the first syllable of his old name, GOLDfish, with the last syllable of his partners' name, SelWYN, to get GOLDWYN.

With his new name in place, Samuel Goldwyn and Russian-émigré Louis B. Mayer got together in 1925 and formed Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, for thirty years the leading studio in Hollywood.

Pickfair

Two of the biggest stars in the Golden Age of Hollywood were Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. Public fascination with their lives--both on screen and off--was emblematic of the worldwide adulation of film celebrities.



Mary Pickford was born Gladys Smith in Toronto, Canada. Known as "America's Sweetheart," she played child parts and sentimental roles in dozens of Hollywood films. For twenty years, she managed to appear ever the young innocent, her face framed in a cascade of long, golden curls.

Douglas Fairbanks (born Douglas Elton Ulman) was the first in a long line of Hollywood action heroes. He swashbuckled his way through countless leaps and flips and mid-air somersaults, making his mark in such films as *The Mark of Zorro* (1920).

Perhaps the grandest and most prestigious mansion in Beverly Hills was Pickfair, originally a hunting lodge that Douglas Fairbanks bought and remodeled as a wedding present for his bride Mary Pickford in 1919. During the 1920s and '30s, Pickfair was the scene of some of the film colony's most glittering parties. Anyone who was anybody considered it an honor to be among the invited guests. Newspapers and movie magazines reported every detail of the comings and goings of the smart set at Pickfair.

Land and Water

Controversies over land and water resources have been a part of California history since at least the days of the gold rush. One of the earliest struggles was between the hydraulic mining industry and the state's farmers. In the matter of miners v. farmers, the farmers emerged victorious.



Scottish immigrant John Muir was an eloquent defender of California's natural resources against unrestrained development. He worked tirelessly but unsuccessfully to halt the transformation of the Hetch Hetchy into a reservoir for the city of San Francisco. The farmers of the Owens Valley waged an equally unsuccessful battle to halt construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct.

Serious efforts were undertaken such as the Central Valley Project, a system of dams and canals designed to move massive amounts of California water from north to south.

Miners v. Farmers

Hydraulicking was the dominant form of gold mining in California from the 1850s through the 1880s. Miners used water from high-pressure hoses to wash away banks and hills, uncovering gold-bearing gravels far beneath the surface.



The hydraulickers' runoff dumped tons of mud, sand, and gravel into the Yuba, Bear, American, and Feather rivers. The accumulated mining debris buried farms and silted up the rivers. Floods became increasingly common and the rivers themselves, including the Sacramento, became unnavigable.

Angry farmers formed an Anti-Debris Association and won a decision of the United States circuit court in 1884 outlawing the dumping of mining debris into rivers. But many hydraulickers continued their operations secretly, in defiance of the law. The matter was finally resolved in 1893 when Congress created the California Debris Commission, a federal regulatory agency.

John Muir



John Muir arrived in California in 1868. Shortly after his first visit to the Sierra Nevada, he dedicated himself to preserving the natural beauty of his adopted homeland. He wrote in his diary that "John the Baptist was not more eager to get all of his fellow sinners into the Jordan River than I to baptize all of mine in the beauty of God's mountains.

When he tried to convince his "fellow sinners" to get out of the cities and go into the mountains, he wrote with the fervor of an evangelist: "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."



Muir's greatest success came in 1890 with the establishment of Yosemite National Park. Two years later he founded and became the first president of the Sierra Club, dedicated to "preserving the forests and other natural features of the Sierra Nevada." His greatest defeat came in the battle to save Hetch Hetchy.

Hetch Hetchy

About twenty miles northwest of the spectacular Yosemite Valley once lay a similar but smaller valley known as the Hetch Hetchy. (The name comes from the Miwok language, meaning "grass-seed valley" or "acorn valley.") The free-flowing waters of the Tuolumne River raced through the valley floor. Waterfalls cascaded over magnificent granite cliffs.



Meanwhile, the population of faraway San Francisco was growing steadily in the early 1900s. Officials began searching for new supplies of water for the city. After considering several possibilities, they selected the waters of the Tuolumne River and decided to build a dam across the river to form a reservoir in the Hetch Hetchy Valley.

When plans for the dam and reservoir were announced, John Muir and other conservationists objected. Muir said that the flooding of the Hetch Hetchy would be like destroying one of nature's great cathedrals. In spite of Muir's spirited objections, Congress in 1913 approved the building of the dam and reservoir. Muir was greatly saddened when he heard the news. Brokenhearted, he died a few months later.

Construction of the dam began in 1914 and was completed within nine years. An aqueduct carrying water from the reservoir to San Francisco was in full operation by 1934. Today the Hetch Hetchy provides San Franciscans with about 85 percent of their water.

The Los Angeles Aqueduct



The booming population of Los Angeles in the early twentieth century was rapidly outgrowing its local water supply. Charged with solving this critical problem was an Irish immigrant named William Mulholland, the city's chief engineer.

Mulholland soon learned of a supply of water about 250 miles northeast of the city. The water flowed from the melting snows of the Sierra Nevada and into the Owens River. Farmers in the Owens Valley used the water to irrigate their crops. But Mulholland believed the water could better be used to meet the needs of the growing metropolis of southern California.

In 1905 the voters of Los Angeles approved a plan to build an aqueduct to carry the waters of the Owens River to their city. Mulholland began buying up land and water rights in the Owens Valley. Construction of the aqueduct began in 1908 and continued for five years. An army of five thousand workers cut more than 140 tunnels through mountains and laid huge steel pipes eleven feet in diameter.

The farmers in the Owens Valley waged a bitter campaign against the aqueduct. They wanted to keep the water of the Owens River for the continued agricultural development of their own area. In 1924 the residents of the valley began to dramatize their protests. Unidentified saboteurs dynamited the aqueduct fourteen times in 1927.

The Central Valley Project



A recent observer of California water policy had this to say: "In a normal year, 70 million acre feet of water splash down on California. Three-fourths of that precipitation occurs in the northern third of the state, while 80 percent of the water need occurs in the southern two thirds. Thereby hangs the tale of California water--movement of water from where it is to where demand has been created."

The most ambitious plan for the movement of California water was the Central Valley Project (CVP). First proposed by the California legislature in 1933, the project was approved by the federal government two years later. Construction began in 1937.

The original phase of the CVP included three dams, five canals, and two power transmission lines. The largest feature was Shasta Dam, impounding the waters of the

Sacramento, McCloud, and Pit rivers in Shasta Lake. Other units included the Friant and Keswick dams, and the Friant-Kern, Madera, Delta-Mendota, and Contra Costa canals.

The CVP continues to provide flood control and water for agriculture throughout the Central Valley. For years, the amount of water an individual farmer could obtain from the project was limited to what was needed to irrigate 160 acres. The federal government imposed this "160-acre limit" to insure that family farms, not corporate landowners, received the benefits of the relatively cheap, federally subsidized water. Large landowners fought for decades to have the limit removed. In 1982 Congress repealed the 160-acre limit, increasing to 960 acres the amount of land that any one owner could irrigate with water from the project.

Labor and Capital

Historian Carey McWilliams once commented that the struggle between labor and capital in California has been one of "total engagement." The struggle was especially intense in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when organized labor steadily increased its strength and challenged the powers of corporate America. "Closed shop" San Francisco emerged as one of the most thoroughly unionized cities in the nation. In contrast, the opponents of organized labor remained dominant in Los Angeles, led by Harrison Gray Otis and his Times.



Radical organizations appealed to discontented workers and called for fundamental economic and political change. The Wobblies in California organized migratory farmworkers and stirred intense opposition from farm owners. The Mooney case revealed the fiery passions that swirled around the ongoing contest between labor and capital.

"Closed Shop" San Francisco

The center of early union organizing in San Francisco was along the waterfront. Working conditions in the maritime industry were particularly atrocious--sailors were subjected to corporal punishment, fed vile rations, slept in cramped quarters, and could be arrested for "desertion" if they left their jobs.



In 1885 Burnette Haskell formed the Coast Seamen's Union, an organization that six years later merged with a separate union of steamship sailors to form the Sailors' Union of the Pacific. The leader of the new union was Andrew Furuseth, a passionately dedicated Norwegian immigrant. Furuseth led a national campaign to win basic improvements in the working conditions of American sailors. His efforts culminated in the passage of the La Follette Seamen's Act of 1915, a law which regulated working conditions and abolished imprisonment for desertion.

Other unions in San Francisco also made considerable headway in improving the harsh conditions endured by working men and women. San Francisco gained the reputation of being "the first closed-shop city in the United States." A closed shop is one in which employers agree to hire only union members. Few employers in San Francisco actually signed closed-shop agreements with their workers, but it is true that the City by the Bay was a stronghold of unionism from about 1900 until the early 1920s.

Harrison Gray Otis and his *Times*

Harrison Gray Otis, editor and publisher of the Los Angeles Times, believed that the key to the future growth and prosperity of California was the leadership of vigorous individuals like himself.



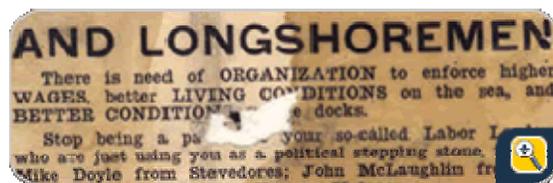
As part of his ardent individualism, Otis maintained an unwavering opposition to organized labor. He made the watchword of the Times "industrial freedom"--the freedom of workers not to join a union and the freedom of employers to discharge them if they did. Under his leadership, Los Angeles became the country's leading citadel of the open shop. An open shop is one in which employers refuse to make agreements requiring union membership of their employees.

When the metal trades workers of Los Angeles launched a strike on June 1, 1910, Otis and the Times denounced it as an assault on "the cradle of industrial freedom." The strike was the largest work stoppage the city had ever known, and it attracted nationwide attention because the whole future of the open shop seemed at stake in the city where it was the strongest.

Early on the morning of October 1, a tremendous explosion destroyed the Times building, killing twenty employees and injuring seventeen others. Otis called the blast "the crime of the century" and blamed it on the agents of organized labor. Six months later two officials of an iron workers' union were arrested and charged with the crime. When the union officials confessed their guilt, on December 1, 1911, organized labor across the country was demoralized. The result in Los Angeles was thirty more years of dominance for the open shop.

Wobblies in California

California agriculture long has depended upon the availability, season after season, of a supply of migratory farmworkers. Traditionally California farmworkers have been foreign-born, nonwhite, and unorganized.



The first widespread attempt to organize the farmworkers came in the early twentieth century with the appearance of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Members of the new union were known as Wobblies.

The IWW was unlike other unions. It organized unskilled workers, regardless of their place of birth or their race. The IWW also was more radical than other unions. Its "revolutionary watchword" was "the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism." It endorsed acts of sabotage and "any and all tactics that will get the results sought with the least expenditure of time and energy."

California farm owners regarded the IWW as a dangerous and threatening organization. Local governments adopted ordinances that made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Wobblies to organize the workers. The IWW launched "free speech fights," most notably in San Diego and Fresno, to overturn the ordinances.

California farmworkers often labored in barbaric conditions. They worked long hours for little pay. Shelter, water, and sanitation were woefully inadequate. They joined the IWW out of desperation.

The Mooney Case



At 2:06 in the afternoon of July 22, 1916, an explosion rocked San Francisco. The blast came from near the waterfront, at the corner of Market and Stewart streets. A bomb had gone off during a patriotic parade, killing ten persons and wounding forty others.

Suspicion soon fell upon a radical labor agitator named Thomas J. Mooney. He had been active in labor disputes for several years and had been arrested previously for the illegal possession of explosives.

The San Francisco district attorney charged Mooney with murder. Mooney was convicted of the charge and sentenced to hang. Labor leaders across the country believed that he had been framed as part of an anti-labor conspiracy. The opponents of organized labor regarded the Mooney case as proof of the dangers of labor radicalism.

Impassioned debate over the guilt or innocence of Tom Mooney continued for decades, even after the governor of California commuted his sentence to life imprisonment. Mooney was pardoned and released from prison in 1939. He died three years later.

The Age of Reform



Discontent with corrupt governments and economic inequities led to an age of reform in California and the nation during the early twentieth century.

The demand for reform in San Francisco was especially strong following the devastating earthquake and fire of 1906. The city celebrated its recovery in grand style by mounting the Panama Pacific International Exhibition, also known as the PPIE. The San Francisco

reformers' most notable achievement was putting behind bars Boss Ruef, the mastermind of a citywide system of corruption.

Katherine Philips Edson and other reformers in southern California tackled a host of urban problems while Allen Allensworth founded an all-black community in the rural San Joaquin Valley. Anti-Japanese sentiment was on the rise throughout the state, a plague that poisoned race relations in California for decades.

The election of Governor Hiram Johnson in 1910 was proof positive that the forces of progressive reform were in the ascendancy. With the progressives in power, a series of reforms came pouring from the state legislature.

Earthquake and Fire



At 5:12 a.m., Wednesday, April 18, 1906, a low-pitched rumble awakened the people of San Francisco. It was a deafening sound, rising from deep within the earth as the massive Pacific and North American tectonic plates lurched past each other along the San Andreas Fault. When the first shock hit San Francisco, the ground began to heave and shake for an agonizing forty-five seconds. After a brief interlude of eerie silence, an even stronger temblor, estimated at 8.3 on the Richter scale, shook the city for another twenty-five seconds.

Buildings throughout the city collapsed, gaping fissures opened in the streets, sidewalks buckled in grotesque shapes, and water and gas mains snapped. Within an hour of the first temblor, over fifty fires were raging out of control. The flames spread rapidly, joining in a huge firestorm with temperatures reaching an estimated 2,000 degrees.

On Saturday, April 21, the heavens blessed the city with a spring shower, dousing the flames. As the smoke cleared, the magnitude of the disaster was revealed in all its horrible clarity. Four square miles--or 490 city blocks--were leveled. More than 28,000 buildings had been destroyed. The official death toll was set at 478, but more recent research has found that as many as 3,000 people lost their lives.

The city soon began the mighty task of recovery. Rescue crews dug through the rubble in a desperate search for survivors, while workers put up 200,000 tents at the Presidio and in Golden Gate Park as temporary shelter for those who were left homeless.

San Franciscans took great pride in their recovery from this horrible disaster. They heralded their triumph by adopting a new emblem for the city, a phoenix rising from the ashes.

Panama Pacific International Exposition



To show the world that it had recovered from the devastating earthquake and fire of 1906, the city of San Francisco hosted the Panama Pacific International Exposition nine years later. It was a glitzy extravaganza, billed as a celebration of the recent opening of the Panama Canal.

The PPIE, as the exposition was affectionately known, opened its gates on the morning of February 20, 1915. San Francisco Mayor Jimmy Rolph led a procession of 150,000 eager visitors onto the grounds amid shrieks of factory whistles, clanging cable car bells, and cannons booming from the Presidio. Within nine months of opening day, the exposition had attracted 18 million visitors.

Monumental buildings filled the grounds of the fair. Most impressive was the 435-foot Tower of Jewels, decorated with thousands of hand-cut multicolored Austrian glass crystals that glistened in the sun during the day and sparkled under a battery of searchlights at night.

The most popular area of the PPIE was known as the Zone. It featured a working model of the Panama Canal and a talking horse named Captain. Here also was a fourteen-foot painting of a female nude called Stella. Viewed in a darkened room, Stella was said to be of "magnificent proportions." Her appeal was further enhanced by special effects that made her appear alive and breathing!

Boss Ruef

Abraham Ruef was a bright and ambitious San Francisco lawyer in the early twentieth century. He also was the mastermind of an elaborate system of graft inside city government.



Wealthy public utility corporations hired Ruef as an attorney to represent their interests before city officials. Ruef then passed on portions of his attorney's fees as bribes. For example, the United Railroads of San Francisco sought an ordinance from the city to convert its cable cars to electric trolleys. The company paid Ruef an attorney's fee of \$200,000. Ruef then divided \$85,000 among the members of the city board of supervisors who promptly voted to pass the ordinance. Similar corrupt dealings involved gas, electric, telephone, and water companies.

A group of public-spirited San Franciscans demanded an end to such graft. They exposed and removed from office the corrupt city officials. In a series of widely publicized trials, the executives of several utility companies were charged with accepting bribes. None, however, was convicted. Of all the defendants, Ruff alone ended up in state prison.

Katherine Philips Edson

One of the most energetic reformers in southern California during the early twentieth century was a remarkable woman named Katherine Philips Edson.



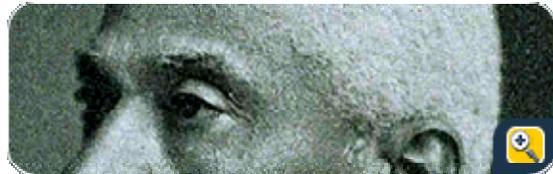
Edson began her fight for reform by demanding the passage of pure milk laws in Los Angeles. She had learned that babies were dying from drinking contaminated milk. In a letter to a friend, she wrote: "If the milk supply is in the hands of politicians, how can a woman who wants to do the right thing by her babies stay at home and keep quiet while they drink impure milk?" Edson pressured the city government to hire more inspectors to make sure that all milk sold in the city was pure.

Edson later became a leader in the fight for woman suffrage. California in 1911 became the sixth state in the nation to grant women the right to vote.

Women and children in the early twentieth century often worked ten or twelve hours a day in unhealthy and unsanitary conditions. Cannery workers, for instance, stood knee-deep in dirty water, breathed foul air, and received less than 15 cents an hour. Edson led the fight for the passage in 1913 of a minimum wage law for women and children. Governor Hiram Johnson appointed Edson to be the executive director of a state commission to enforce the new law.

Allen Allensworth

When Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth retired from the army in 1906, he was the highest ranking black officer in American history.



After leaving the army, Allensworth and his family settled in Los Angeles. It was there that he came up with the idea of establishing a self-sufficient, all-black California town, a place where African Americans could live their lives free of the racial discrimination that so often plagued them elsewhere. His dream was to build a town where black people might live and create "sentiment favorable to intellectual and industrial liberty."

In 1908 he founded the Tulare County town of Allensworth, a new settlement in the heart of the San Joaquin Valley about thirty miles north of Bakersfield. The black settlers of Allensworth built homes, laid out streets, and put up public buildings. They organized a glee club, an orchestra, and a brass band.

But the town soon ran into some serious problems. The dry and dusty soil made farming difficult, and poisons seeped into the drinking water. The town lost its founding father in 1914 when Colonel Allensworth was killed in an accident in Los Angeles. The town's discouraged settlers drifted away in the next couple of decades and Allensworth was reduced almost to a ghost town.

Anti-Japanese Sentiment

Japanese immigration to California steadily increased in the early twentieth century. As the number of immigrants grew, so too did anti-Japanese sentiment.

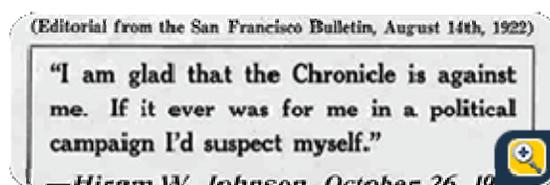
In 1905 San Francisco labor leaders formed an Asiatic Exclusion League to demand public policies against the new immigrants. Under pressure from the league, the city ordered Japanese children to attend a segregated school along with other Asian children in the city. Protests from Japan led President Theodore Roosevelt to intervene. The president persuaded the city to drop its segregation order in exchange for a promised limit on Japanese immigration. The promise was fulfilled in the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907 in which Japan agreed not to allow any more of its workers to come to the United States.

As Japanese immigrants became successful farmers in California, white farmers sought ways to eliminate the competition. The whites succeeded in 1913 when the state legislature passed a law prohibiting aliens ineligible for American citizenship from owning land in the state. Under federal law, all Asians were ineligible for naturalization.

The greatest triumph of the anti-Japanese forces came in 1924 when Congress passed the National Origins Quota Act barring all further immigration from Japan. The Grizzly Bear, a publication of the Native Sons of the Golden West, growled with satisfaction: "And so, after a strenuous campaign, has another advance been made in the battle with the Japs to keep California white."

Governor Hiram Johnson

Hiram Johnson first came to public attention during the prosecution of Boss Ruef in San Francisco. Johnson was a lawyer who served as a special assistant in the district attorney's office.



In 1910 Johnson won the Republican nomination for governor. He was supported by a group of reformers within the party known as "progressives." The progressives hoped that Johnson would clean up corruption in the state, just as he had helped to do in San Francisco.

Like many others, Johnson believed that the greatest source of corruption in California was that dreaded octopus, the railroad. Wherever he went during his gubernatorial campaign, he pledged "to kick the Southern Pacific Railroad out of politics." He was

outraged that the railroad charged high shipping rates to cover the costs of the bribes it paid to public officials. "Get us coming and going?" he asked the voters of Los Angeles. "Why they get us every way, and we foot the bill--we pick our own pockets to bribe ourselves with our own money!"

Johnson served two terms as governor, working to achieve a wide range of reforms with the other progressives in power. He ran for Vice President under Theodore Roosevelt on the Progressive Party ticket in 1912, and was elected to the Senate as a Progressive Republican in 1916. He remained a popular public figure throughout his life, being re-elected to the Senate four times. In his later years he became increasingly conservative. He led the fight against Japanese immigration in the 1920s and was an entrenched isolationist in the 1930s.

Progressives in Power

Hiram Johnson and his fellow California progressives scored an impressive victory in the election of 1910. Promising to establish a new political order, they gained control of both houses of the state legislature. In the next year, a wide range of reforms came flooding out of the state legislature. Theodore Roosevelt described the California reforms of 1911 as "the beginning of a new era in popular government" and "the greatest advance ever made by any state for the benefit of its people."

First on the list of priorities for the progressives was to establish effective regulation of the railroad. The legislature in 1911 granted the state railroad commission full and effective power to control railroad rates. Separate legislation assigned the commission the power to regulate rates charged by other public utilities.

To insure that the will of the people was truly expressed in government, the progressives in 1911 introduced the initiative, referendum, and recall. The initiative allowed voters to directly create laws or constitutional amendments. The referendum allowed voters to veto acts of the legislature. And the recall permitted voters to remove from office any elected official. California was further "democratized" in 1911 when it became the sixth state in the nation to adopt woman suffrage, thus doubling the size of the electorate.

Among the many other reforms adopted by the progressives were several laws that benefited California workers. The legislature in 1911 enacted a system of workers' compensation, establishing the employers' liability for industrial accidents. Also in 1911 the legislature adopted an eight-hour work day for women. Two years later, prompted by Katherine Philips Edson, the legislature passed a law setting a minimum wage for women and children.

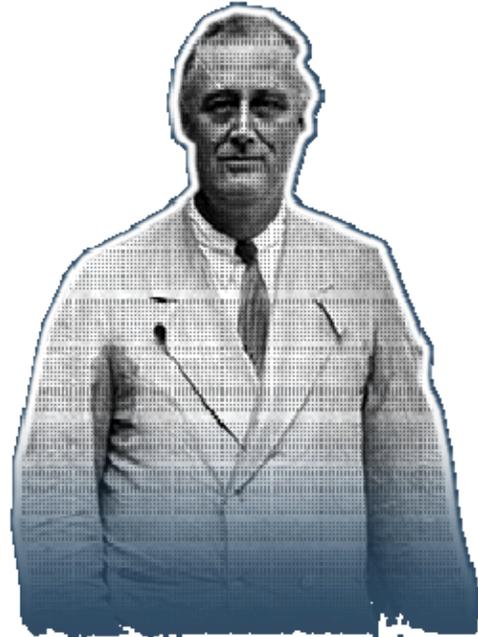
The Great Depression: California in the Thirties

California was hit hard by the economic collapse of the 1930s. Businesses failed, workers lost their jobs, and families fell into poverty. While the political response to the depression often was confused and ineffective, social messiahs offered alluring panaceas promising relief and recovery.

In spite of the general gloom of the decade, Californians continued to build and celebrate their Golden State.

Hard Times

Californians who lived through the 1920s and 1930s must have felt as though they were on a roller coaster. In a dizzying cycle of boom and bust, a decade of spectacular prosperity was followed by the worst economic collapse in the state's history. Ramshackle encampments, such as Pipe City in Oakland, filled with forlorn unemployed workers and their families. The crash of the Macon, a helium-filled dirigible, mirrored the collapsing fortunes of Californians everywhere. The hard times of the thirties contributed to a disturbing resurgence of nativism; authorities shipped thousands of Mexican deportees across the border.



Meanwhile, thousands of new Dust Bowl refugees from the heartland of America streamed into California seeking a better life. Their coming inspired John Steinbeck to write *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939) and Dorothea Lange to compile an epic photographic record. The newcomers created in California an "Okie subculture," a way of life still flourishing today.

Discontented workers in the thirties went on the offensive. Farmworkers and farm owners locked horns in yet another round of total engagement. The San Francisco General Strike of 1934 paralyzed the bay area and attracted national attention.

Boom and Bust

The decade of the 1920s was a time of booming economic growth in California. Older industries expanded and new ones were founded.

But the prosperity of the twenties was not well distributed. Proportionately, too much wealth was in profits and too little in wages. The income of many workers was so low that they couldn't afford to buy the products they produced. In other words, businesses produced more goods than could be consumed. This large supply of unsold products weakened the economy. The crash of the stock market in 1929 was followed by the worst depression in the history of California and the nation.

Businesses and banks throughout the state closed their doors in the 1930s; thousands of individual investors and depositors lost everything. California farm income in 1932 sank to just half of what it had been in 1929. The number of building permits in 1933 was less than one ninth what it had been eight years earlier. Many property-owners lost their farms and their homes. Unemployment in the Golden State reached a staggering 28 percent in 1932; two years later one-fifth of all Californians were dependent upon public relief.

Pipe City

Thousands of unemployed workers and their families lived in makeshift encampments throughout California in the 1930s. One such village was near downtown Oakland where out-of-work residents lived in huge concrete sewer pipes being stored above ground. Each six-foot section of concrete pipe became a "homeless shelter" for one of the nearly two hundred unemployed who lived there. Residents covered the ends of their pipes with burlap or cardboard, and survived on mulligan stew made from discarded vegetables scavenged from nearby grocery wholesalers. They called their village "Miseryville," but the press dubbed it "Pipe City."

Conditions in Pipe City were typical of what the homeless faced everywhere during the depression. The Oakland Post-Inquirer on December 3, 1932, offered the following account:

"To qualify for citizenship in Pipe City you must be jobless, homeless, hungry, and preferably shoeless, coatless, and hatless. If one also is discouraged, lonely, filled with a terrible feeling of hopelessness and helplessness, one's qualifications are that much stronger. One belongs. Not all of Pipe City's inhabitants are that way. Some of them have learned that a philosophical attitude helps. One may tinge his philosophy with a drop of irony, even bitterness, and the concrete may seem less hard and the blankets less thin and the mulligan less watery. But it takes a lot of philosophy, you bet, to make concrete either soft or warm!"

The Crash of the Macon

The world's largest aircraft ever was the USS Macon, a helium-filled, aluminum-framed dirigible, three times longer than a



Boeing 747. This "lighter-than-air" craft, built for the Navy in 1933, tipped the scales at just over 120 tons.

The Macon was returning home to Moffett Field on the San Francisco peninsula on the evening of February 12, 1935, when it was caught in a terrific rain squall off Point Sur. A freakish gust of wind collapsed its upper tail fin, ripping holes in three of its helium cells. The huge airship quickly lost altitude and hit the water tail first. The mist-shrouded wreckage floated just long enough for all but two of its crew of eighty-three to escape. With its nose pointing skyward and a mournful sigh of helium gasping from its open wounds, the Macon slowly slipped beneath the waves. "She soared in her death throes," wrote one local journalist, "and was lost to view in the mist."

The crash of the Macon was an event of symbolic importance. Its fate seemed to mirror the declining fortunes of millions of once prosperous Californians. Their collective epitaph was supplied by the radio operator of the Macon on that fateful evening in 1935. As the great silvery bulk dipped toward the sea at twilight, a single word flashed through the storm clouds off Point Sur: "Falling."

Deportees

Xenophobia and nativism experienced a resurgence during the Great Depression. California nativists eagerly sought scapegoats to blame for the hard times of the 1930s.

Filipinos were among the first to feel the brunt of anti-foreign hostility. White workers charged that recent immigrants from the Philippines posed an economic threat to native-born workers. Anti-Filipino riots broke out in several rural counties as well as in San Jose and San Francisco. In 1935 Congress passed the Filipino Repatriation Act, offering to pay the transportation expenses of any Filipinos who wished to return to their homeland.

California nativists also complained that Mexican immigrants were taking much-needed jobs away from American citizens. The federal government responded with a program of mass repatriation. Federal, state, and local authorities encouraged a voluntary exodus, but forced deportations also occurred. As many as 100,000 deportees left California for Mexico. The repatriados expressed the pain of removal in poignant folk ballads:

"Goodbye, my friends,
You are all witnesses
Of the bad payment they give us."

Dust Bowl Refugees

Of all the stories of western Americans, none is quite so poignant as that of the Dust Bowl refugees of the 1930s. A devastating



drought ravaged the farmlands of Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas; monstrous dust storms blackened the sky. George Turner, a resident of Oklahoma, later described what it was like when he and his family were hit by a blizzard of dust: "It was an unbelievable darkness... We seemed to be smothering in dust."

Hundreds of thousands of residents of the Dust Bowl salvaged what they could, piled their belongings into rattling jalopies, and headed for the promised land of California. They hoped to find good jobs and a better life. They soon found, however, that conditions in California were not quite what they imagined. Jobs were scarce. And many Californians greeted the newcomers with hostility.

Oklahoma-born song writer Woody Guthrie wrote several ballads about the plight of the Dust Bowl refugees. In "Do Re Mi" he offered an unheeded warning about the unfulfilled promises of the Golden State:

"California is a garden of Eden, a paradise to live in or see
But believe it or not, you won't find it so hot
If you ain't got the do re mi."

John Steinbeck

The most enduring account of the Dust Bowl refugees' trek to California is John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

Steinbeck was born on February 27, 1902, in the farming town of Salinas. After attending Stanford University for six years (and failing to complete the requirements for a degree), he went to New York City where he worked as a construction laborer and reporter. In the 1930s he published a series of critically acclaimed novels, each set in California's central coast and valleys.

Steinbeck began gathering material for *The Grapes of Wrath* by traveling among the Dust Bowl refugees, viewing first hand the deplorable conditions of their lives and labor. When the novel was published in April 1939, it became a runaway best seller. Darryl Zanuck of Twentieth-Century Fox released his film version of the book while it was still at the top of the best seller lists. Not everyone was pleased with the book. The Kern County Board of Supervisors banned *The Grapes of Wrath* from public schools and libraries, and corporate landowners launched a campaign to extend the ban to other counties. The credibility of the opposition diminished following Steinbeck's receipt of the Pulitzer Prize in 1940.

Dorothea Lange

Photographer Dorothea Lange captured the plight of the Dust Bowl refugees in a series of remarkable portraits, first published as *An American Exodus* (1940).

Born in New Jersey in 1895, Lange knew by age 17 that she wanted to be a professional photographer. In 1918 she came to California and opened a studio in San Francisco.

Later, in the 1930s, an agency of the federal government hired her to make a photographic record of depressed conditions in the American South and Southwest. From this record came *An American Exodus*.

Lange took the above photograph in 1936 at a pea pickers' camp in Nipomo, on Highway 101, south of San Luis Obispo. It is called *Migrant Mother*. Lange later described her experience:

"I saw and approached the hungry and desperate mother, as if drawn by a magnet. I do not remember how I explained my presence or camera to her, but I do remember she asked me no questions.... She told me her age, that she was 32. She said that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields, and birds that the children had killed. She had just sold the tires from the car to buy food. There she sat in that lean-to tent with her children huddled around her, and seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me...."

An "Okie Subculture"

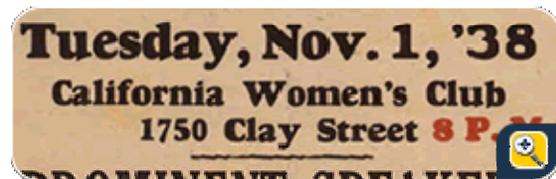
Historians recently have begun to analyze the inner dynamics and institutions of the "Okie subculture" in California. The term "Okie" encompassed not just displaced Oklahomans, but all those Dust Bowl refugees who fled the southwestern states hit by drought and depression.

The Okies who settled in California's Central Valley preserved their rural values and folkways, including their distinctive southwestern accents, food preferences, and country music. Thus, to a remarkable degree, the newcomers retained their separate identities and passed them on to succeeding generations.

The dance halls and honky-tonks of the Okies fostered positive social interaction and reinforced group identity. Country music stars, such as Gene Autry and Bob Wills, became important success symbols and sources of group pride. Known as "Nashville West," Bakersfield launched the careers of such notables as Merle Haggard, Buck Owens, Glen Campbell, and Ferlin Husky.

Total Engagement

Historian Carey McWilliams once characterized the struggle between labor and capital in California as one of "total engagement." The struggle intensified during the 1930s as agricultural workers suffered the peculiar agony of watching food rot in the fields because the crops could not be sold for enough to pay the costs of harvesting and marketing. John Steinbeck commented: "There is a crime here that goes beyond denunciation. There is a sorrow here that weeping cannot symbolize. There is a failure here that topples all our success."

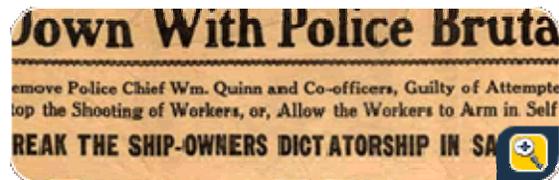


Workers formed new organizations to fight for improvements in wages and working conditions. Women were especially active in the formation of the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWA). The union's vice president was a gifted Latina organizer, Louisa Morena. Cannery workers in the thirties routinely worked sixteen-hour days for fifteen cents an hour. When women cannery workers struck in the Santa Clara Valley in 1931, police responded by breaking up a mass meeting with tear gas and fire hoses.

Agricultural workers in the thirties, as in previous decades, turned to radicals for leadership. The Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Industrial Union (CAWIU), formed in 1933, was an arm of the Communist party. The union organized strikes of farmworkers in the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys. Farm owners responded with repressive local ordinances and acts of violence.

The San Francisco General Strike

Militant labor leader Harry R. Bridges led a long and bitter strike of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) in San Francisco in 1934. The ILA demanded improved wages and working conditions, coastwide bargaining rights, and the establishment of union-controlled hiring halls. The strike began in early May and continued through the summer.



Employers and local officials denounced Bridges as a dangerous radical. The Chief of Police declared: "This strike is just a dress rehearsal by the Communists toward world revolution." On the morning of "bloody Thursday," July 5, 1934, a thousand police officers attempted to clear pickets from the waterfront so that strikebreakers could do the work of the striking dockworkers. In the ensuing riot, sixty-four people were injured and two strikers were killed. The governor sent in the National Guard to prevent further violence.

The ILA responded by calling for a general strike, asking members of other unions to go on strike in support of the dockworkers. Virtually every union in San Francisco and Alameda counties joined in the strike which began on July 16 and continued for four days. The general strike alienated public opinion, but also demonstrated the strength of united labor. The original waterfront strike was resolved when federal arbitrators granted the ILA most of its demands.

The Politics of Depression

As the depression of the 1930s worsened, voters looked to the nation's elected officials for leadership and reassurance. Millions of Americans gathered around their radios on March 4, 1933, to listen to the inaugural address of their new president. "Let me assert my firm belief," said Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."



Politics in California, however, continued to resound with fear and uncertainty. Governor "Sunny Jim" Rolph attempted to win public favor by openly encouraging and defending a lynching. Upton Sinclair, a former socialist, won the Democratic nomination for governor in 1932 but was defeated in a campaign of unprecedented viciousness. Culbert Olson's New Deal for California offered only modest reform.

"Sunny Jim"

Republican James Rolph, Jr., served as the mayor of San Francisco for nineteen years. His buoyant personality and ready smile won him the nickname "Sunny Jim."



In 1930 Rolph was elected governor. It soon became apparent that "Sunny Jim" was out of his depth in dealing with the massive economic problems caused by the depression. As his popularity declined, Rolph made the incredible decision to encourage and defend a lynching.

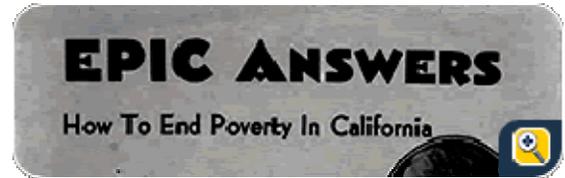
Two suspects were arrested in 1933 for the kidnapping and murder of the son of a prominent San Jose merchant. When there was talk of mob action, Governor Rolph made a public "promise" that he would never call out the National Guard "to protect those two fellows." An angry mob battered down the door of the Santa Clara County Jail, pulled the two suspects from their cells, and strung them up in St. James Park. Learning of this gross violation of due process, Governor Rolph promised to pardon anyone who might be arrested for this "good job," and added that he'd like to release all kidnapers into the hands of "those fine, patriotic San Jose citizens who know how to handle such a situation."

Upton Sinclair

One of the most memorable elections in California history was Upton Sinclair's campaign for governor in 1934. Sinclair was a well known writer, the author of dozens of books of social criticism.



A native of Maryland, Sinclair settled permanently in southern California in 1915. He soon became active in politics, running as a Socialist in several unsuccessful bids for Congress and the governorship. In 1934 he became a registered Democrat and entered the party's primary as a candidate for governor. He began his campaign by writing a utopian novel. *I, Governor of California*, and *How I Ended Poverty: A True Story of the Future* (1933) outlined Sinclair's vision for a series of new programs that would End Poverty in California (EPIC).



Sinclair won the Democratic nomination and faced incumbent Republican Frank Merriam in the general election. Thoroughly frightened at the prospect of a former socialist being elected governor, the Republicans launched a vitriolic campaign that soundly defeated Sinclair. The campaign included faked newsreels showing wild-eyed tramps coming to California to "launch the Sinclair revolution." The unrepentant candidate published his own account of the debacle in *I, Candidate for Governor*, and *How I Got Licked* (1934).

Olson's New Deal

In accepting the Democratic nomination for president in 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared: "I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people." Roosevelt and the Democratic Congress subsequently offered a depression-weary nation dozens of programs promising recovery, relief, and reform.

Democrat Culbert L. Olson, elected governor of California in 1938, was a loyal supporter of Roosevelt's New Deal. Many Californians hoped that the new governor would create programs for the state similar to those being enacted by Congress.

Early in his administration, Olson fulfilled his campaign promise to pardon labor radical Tom Mooney. The Mooney Case had been the subject of intense controversy for decades. But Olson was able to accomplish only a few modest reforms, primarily in the state's penal system and in provisions for the care of the mentally ill. Conservative Republicans remained in firm control of the state senate, and the Democratic majority in the assembly was divided into factions. Olson's administration was further weakened when the governor collapsed from exhaustion at the end of his first week in office.

Panaceas

The politics of depression produced few California leaders who could meet the awesome challenges presented by a collapsed economy. Into this leadership vacuum moved visionaries who offered hope and comfort to those in need. Their offerings usually were nothing more than panaceas, simple cure-alls for a universe of complex



problems.

Sister Aimee Semple McPherson preached the "Four Square Gospel" each Sunday to her enthusiastic followers in Los Angeles. A more secular approach was taken by the technocrats and utopians. Security for the elderly was offered by those who called their plan "Ham 'n' Eggs." Supporters of the Townsend plan for old-age relief became a powerful force in state and national politics.



Sister Aimee

Aimee Semple McPherson, known to the faithful as Sister Aimee, was an itinerant evangelist who arrived in Los Angeles in 1918. She built a five-thousand-seat temple for the members of her Church of the Four Square Gospel and started the nation's first religious radio station. A spell-binding preacher, she once startled her congregation on a Sunday morning by riding to the pulpit on a motorcycle.

In 1926, at the height of her popularity, Sister Aimee vanished. Her grieving congregation held a memorial service. Then, in what seemed like a miraculous return from the dead, she reappeared. She told police that she had been kidnapped. Sister Aimee's homecoming was a spectacular affair. Thousands of people lined the streets of Los Angeles, and an airplane showered rose petals in her path.

Investigative reporters later uncovered evidence that Sister Aimee's kidnapping was a hoax. The truth was she had spent her disappearance in Carmel, enjoying what the reporters called an "illicit vacation" in the company of the engineer from her radio station.

Sister Aimee's popularity inevitably declined. But throughout the 1930s she continued to attract a following. For all of her flash and pizzazz--and her scandalous indiscretions--Sister Aimee had a serious side. She and her congregation ministered to the sick, the hungry, and the homeless of depression-era Los Angeles.

Technocrats and Utopians

Californians in the 1930s were desperate for relief and recovery from the depression. Out of their desperation, they supported visionary movements such as technocracy and utopianism.

The chief advocate of technocracy was Howard Scott, a Los Angeles engineer who fervently believed that poverty could be eliminated through scientific management. The technocrats advocated placing technical experts in control of all aspects of industry and government. The experts would achieve maximum utilization of both human and natural resources,

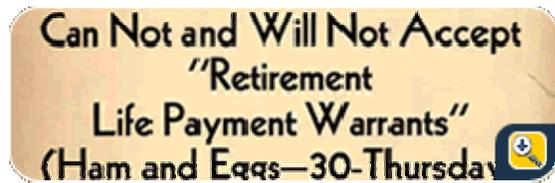


thus harnessing society's "energy" for the benefit of all. Technocrats, equipped with detailed blueprints, held meetings throughout California to explain how the golden age could be achieved.

A group of unemployed Los Angeles businesspeople broke off from technocracy in 1933 and formed the Utopian Society. The utopians went far beyond the technocrats in dramatizing their message for the masses. They staged elaborate pageants in the Hollywood Bowl, presenting their vision of the coming triumph of Abundance over Scarcity.

Ham 'n' Eggs

Thousands of elderly Americans retired to southern California in the 1920s. They lived fairly comfortably during that prosperous decade, but many lost their savings and retirement incomes during the Great Depression of the thirties.



Several panaceas offered relief to the elderly. A Los Angeles radio commentator, Robert Noble, formed an organization called California Revolving Pensions that promised to pay the elderly "twenty-five dollars every Monday morning." Noble hired an advertising agency owned by two brothers, Willis and Lawrence Allen, to promote the plan. The Allen brothers then formed their own pension organization, excluding Noble. They offered a more alliterative plan of paying every unemployed person over the age of fifty "thirty dollars every Thursday." To add to its folksy appeal, they dubbed their plan "Ham 'n' Eggs."

Denounced by economists as irresponsible, the Ham 'n' Eggs pension plan was to be financed by a 3 percent gross income tax on California individuals and businesses. It was defeated as an initiative in the 1938 election, but received more than 1,430,000 votes. The plan might have been adopted had not the corrupt practices of the Allen brothers been exposed shortly before the election

The Townsend Plan

"Youth for work and age for leisure" was the slogan of the Townsend Old Age Pension Plan. Created in 1934 by Dr. Francis E. Townsend, a retired Long Beach physician, the plan called for a \$200 monthly pension for each person over the age of sixty. The money would have to be spent within one month, thus restoring what Dr. Townsend called "the proper circulation of money." The monthly pensions were to be financed by a 2 percent federal sales tax.

The Townsend Plan received the enthusiastic support of elderly Americans across the country. Many had seen their savings and retirement incomes wiped out by the depression. Millions joined the five thousand Townsend Clubs and subscribed to The

Townsend Weekly. They gathered in regional and national conventions, singing their beloved anthem "Onward Townsend Soldiers."

Although the Townsendites failed to have their plan adopted, their movement was a powerful force in both state and national politics. It contributed to the congressional passage of the Social Security Act in 1935.

Building California

In the midst of the worst depression in the nation's history, Californians continued to build and celebrate their Golden State.



Attended by the athletes of forty nations, the Los Angeles Olympics of 1932 was a spectacular success. Three years later, President Roosevelt officially dedicated Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. Bridging the Bay was an enormous undertaking in northern California, a process that included the completion of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge in 1936 and the Golden Gate Bridge the following year.



Standing tall on nearby Telegraph Hill was a more modest construction, Coit Tower, decorated with murals depicting scenes from the 1930s. The decade ending in grand style with the opening of the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay.



The Los Angeles Olympics

It was a bold move, indeed, for the city of Los Angeles to host the summer games of the Xth Olympiad in 1932. Southern California, like the rest of the nation, was in the midst of the Great Depression.



The city had begun preparing for the games nearly a decade earlier with the construction of Memorial Coliseum. After the stock market crash of 1929, some members of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee wanted to call the games off. Most rem

The city went on to provide not only a new coliseum, but also an Olympic Village on 250 acres atop the Baldwin Hills. The village included Mexican-style haciendas, dining complexes, a theater, hospital, and fire department. Never before had a city provided such an extensive facility for its visiting athletes.



Fifteen hundred competitors, representing forty nations, participated in the games. The opening ceremonies in the coliseum, witnessed by a capacity crowd of more than 100,000, set a new standard for artistry and pageantry. The games themselves were a sports reporter's paradise, with new



Olympic records set in every event but the broad jump. "I came to chronicle sports' biggest disaster," wrote Westbrook Pegler. "I am leaving to describe its greatest triumph."

Hoover Dam

One of the most monumental undertakings in California during the 1930s was the construction of Hoover Dam on the Colorado River. The dam was needed both for the generation of hydroelectric power and for the diversion of water to the cities and farms of southern California.



One of the engineers on the project later described the challenges the builders faced: "Sheer canyon walls so high that they distorted perspective; the lack of even a sand bar for initial footage; the desert on each side without housing or transportation facilities; and greatest of all, the terrific current of the silt-filled river."

Construction of the dam began with the drilling of four bypass tunnels through the rock walls of Boulder Canyon. The tunnels, two on each side of the canyon, were a mile long and fifty-feet in diameter. The completed dam reached the height of a sixty-story building. At its base was the world's largest powerhouse, containing the world's largest turbines and generators. Behind the dam was the world's largest reservoir, Lake Mead. The dam was dedicated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on September 11, 1936.

Bridging the Bay

The building of a bridge across San Francisco Bay had been a dream since the days of the gold rush. It wasn't until the 1930s that the dream became a reality.



Construction of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge began in 1933 and was completed three years later. Extending for more than eight miles, it was the world's longest steel bridge. The western portion consisted of twin suspension bridges, while the eastern segment included a cantilevered span and several truss bridges. Its completion in November 1936 was hailed by a gala celebration. Deck guns on fourteen naval ships boomed out a thunderous salute, fifteen hundred pigeons burst into flight, and a skywriter scrawled out the fateful words: THE BRIDGE IS OPEN.

The building of the Golden Gate Bridge also began in 1933. Its central span was 4,200 feet long and its 746-foot towers were the largest ever built. The most difficult part of the project was the south tower, built a thousand feet from shore on a rocky ledge sixty-five feet below the surface. Engineer Joseph Strauss later described the challenges faced by the builders: "I know of no place on the globe which has more violent conditions of water and weather than the Golden gate. For eleven months it was an



unequal battle of men against the sea." When the bridge opened on May 27, 1937, Strauss called it "an eternal rainbow." A poet said it was "a curve of soaring steel, graceful and confident."

Standing Tall

Perhaps the most familiar landmark of the San Francisco skyline is Coit Tower, a concrete obelisk erected in 1933 as a memorial to the city's volunteer firemen. Inside the tower is a fascinating panorama of California cultural history in the 1930s, the Coit Tower Murals.



The murals were commissioned in 1933 by the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), one of the many agencies of the New Deal to provide jobs for the unemployed. The PWAP hired more than two dozen artists to cover the walls with murals and paid them an average of \$31.22 a week. The completed paintings stirred quite a controversy. One mural included images of a newsstand copy of *The Daily Worker* and Karl Marx's *Das Kapital* on a library shelf. Conservatives argued that this kind of art should not be supported by public funds. Right-wing vigilantes threatened to storm the tower and chisel out the offending murals.

One local critic viewed the controversy with bemused detachment: "There is something about [art] when it is applied to the walls of public buildings that seems to breed dissension. There have always been naughty little boys who drew vilifications on schoolroom walls when their teachers were not looking. Likewise, there have always been mischievous little artists who put something over while they were not being watched. Of such substance is history made."

Treasure Island

Old-timers still recall with fondness those days of lost innocence on the eve of World War II when San Francisco hosted the glittering Golden Gate International Exposition.

This grand extravaganza of culture and kitsch was held in the middle of San Francisco Bay, on an island built especially for the fair. Millions of cubic yards of mud were pumped up from the bottom of the bay to form what was called Treasure Island. Promoters hoped the name would conjure up visions of buried gold and nostalgia for the days when Robert Louis Stevenson lived on San Francisco's Bush Street.

Over ten million fair-goers visited the exposition between the time it opened on February 18, 1939, and its closing that October. The decorative motif for the fair was "Pacific Basin," an odd mishmash of Mayan and Cambodian architectural styles, with some Old West and Pirate themes thrown in for good measure. Every space on the Island had an exotic name--Tower of the Sun, Court of the Seven Seas, Court of the Moon. But just to remind visitors that they were, after all, in California, the official palette for the fair was

Santa Barbara Taupe, Death Valley Mauve, Pebble Beach Coral, and Santa Clara
Apricot.