

# The Story of California

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**The Story of California**  
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# Chapter 1

## A Place Called California

**Industry and Opportunity** Every day, thousands of ships come to the Port of Los Angeles. These ships carry big box containers filled with clothes, cars, furniture, and other goods from countries around the world. Then the goods are sent by trains and trucks to stores for people to buy. The Port of Los Angeles has been important to the United States for a long time. It was first created in 1907. Back then, it was a hub for the fishing industry, with local sardines and tuna being processed and canned nearby. Many of the port workers were **immigrants** who brought their skills and traditions to California. Thanks to their work and its important location, the Port of Los Angeles is now the number-one port in the Western Hemisphere.

### Big Question

How does California's geography affect the way people live?

### Vocabulary

**immigrant**, n. a person from one country who moves to another country to live



Los Angeles has been an important center of trade since the days of Spanish rule in the 1500s CE.

There are many theories about where the name *California* came from. Many historians today have agreed on one explanation, In 1510 CE, there was a Spanish story about an island paradise called California. The island was full of gold and other riches. It was ruled by a warrior named Queen Califia. When Spanish settlers first arrived in the region, they were inspired by the story and called the land California.

Many people have called California a paradise. Throughout history, people have moved to California to seek wealth and fortune. Today, California is known for innovation and global connection and is an extremely **diverse** place.

### Vocabulary

**diverse**, adj. having many different types or parts

**contiguous**, adj. touching along a boundary

## Where Is California?

California is the westernmost state of the forty-eight **contiguous** states. It is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean and three other states: Oregon to the north, and Nevada and Arizona to the east. To the south is the Mexican territory of Baja California. On a map, vertical and horizontal lines form a grid. The lines running from the top to the bottom of the map are longitude lines. The lines running across the map from side to side are latitude lines. California's northern border is set at forty-two degrees latitude north of the equator. Its southern border is thirty-two degrees north latitude. By size, California is the third-largest state in the country, but it is by far the largest in population.

## California's Geography and Climate

The geography of California is diverse. There are mountains, deserts, valleys, and beaches. California's weather encourages outdoor activities. Many Californians enjoy hiking, rock climbing,

## California's Place in the United States



California is on the West Coast of the United States. It shares borders with Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, the Pacific Ocean, and Mexico.

and bicycling. Because the mountains and beaches are so close, people can surf and ski or snowboard in the same day.

The major regions of the state provide a variety of landscapes. Both the highest and lowest places in the continental United States are located here. Mount Whitney, a peak located in the Sierra Nevada mountain range, reaches 14,505 feet (4,421 m). Less than eighty miles (128 km) away is the lowest point—282 feet (86 m) below sea level in Death Valley.

Each region of California has its own unique resources and challenges. People living in different parts of the state might have completely different experiences. Mountains called the Coastal Range run along most of California's west coast. These mountains block much of the

## Geography of California



With mountains and beaches so close together, California is home to some of the highest and lowest places in the country.

wet ocean winds from reaching the middle of the state. The wet air makes the California coastal region warm and dry in the summer and cool and wet in the winter.

The California coast has a unique kind of plant family called **chaparral**. This group

### Vocabulary

**chaparral**, n. a group of plants native to California, consisting of shrubs and plants with thick leaves

of plants has hard leaves and thick shrubs. It covers most of the coastal regions of the state.



Chaparral on the Monterey Coast of California

To the east lies another mountain range. The Sierra Nevada range runs parallel to the coast. This range is over four hundred miles (640 km) long. It extends from the southern end of the Cascade Mountains south to the Mojave Desert. The western slopes of the Sierras are gradual while the eastern faces are steep. Most of the rivers that drain these mountains run into the Sacramento River, the longest river in California. The Kern River, however, drains south into the San Joaquin River. Like the Coastal Range, the Sierra Nevada mountains create a **rain shadow**. They stop moisture from traveling east, leaving their western slopes wet and rainy. This has created a home ideal for dense forests of oak, cedar, juniper, and pine. In Northern California, the wet western slopes are home to some of the largest trees

### Vocabulary

**rain shadow**, n. an area that gets less rain because it is on the protected side of a mountain



A hiker looks in wonder at two of the massive trees in the Giant Sequoia National Monument in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

in the world, the giant sequoia. The forests of California are an important source of lumber and other materials.

Between the Coastal Range and the Sierra Nevada lies the Central Valley. It



California's Central Valley is an ideal environment for livestock and agriculture.

covers over 18,000 square miles (47,000 sq km). It can be divided up into two smaller valleys, the Sacramento Valley and the San Joaquin Valley. To the west, the San Francisco Bay Area breaks up the Coastal Ranges. The opening in the mountains lets a small amount of wet air into the Central Valley. Still, the area gets over three hundred days of sun each year, and it almost never snows there. This makes perfect weather for certain kinds of farming. This area produces more than 350 different crops. Much of the nation's supply of fruit, vegetables, nuts, and dairy comes from the Central Valley.

The state also has **arid** regions, such as the Mojave Desert. The Mojave is in California's southeastern corner. The climate here is dry and warm. **Native** desert plants like the Joshua tree and the Mojave yucca grow well here. Death Valley, located in the northern Mojave Desert, is in the rain shadow of the Sierra Nevada mountains, so it doesn't get much rain. This area has the record for the warmest air temperature on Earth at 134°F (56.7°C) in July 1913.

### Vocabulary

**arid**, adj. having little or no rain

**native**, adj. living in or originally from a particular area

The physical landscape of California has many advantages. But there are also some challenges that have shaped where and how Californians live today. The San Andreas **Fault** line runs through most of the state. Some cities like San Francisco, Palmdale, and San Bernardino are right on top of it. The fault creates earthquakes that can damage structures like buildings and bridges. In 1906, an earthquake in San Francisco caused more than three thousand deaths and \$500 million in damage at the time. Wildfires are another hazard for Californians. Because of California's dry summers and frequent **droughts**, fires can spread quickly. In 2024, more than eight thousand wildfires burned over

**Vocabulary**

**fault**, n. a crack or split in Earth's crust along which movement takes place

**drought**, n. a long period of time with little to no rain



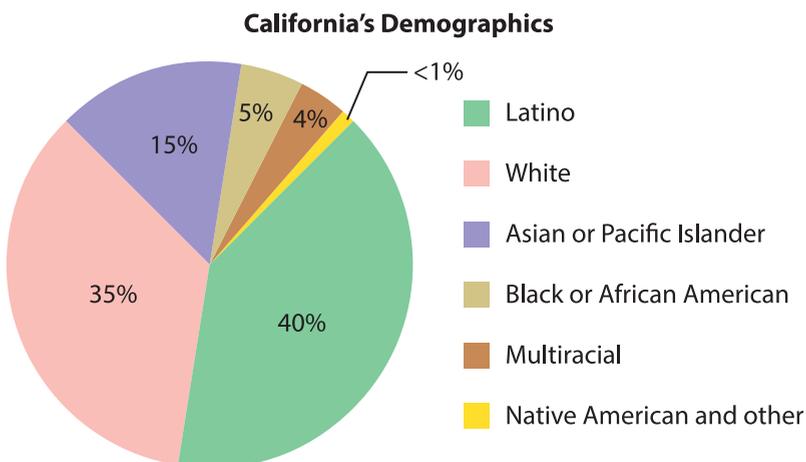
Wildfires destroy thousands of acres of forest and damage homes and property in California every year.

a million acres (4,046 sq km) of land. Farmers, land managers, and firefighters work to limit the damage of the fires. They do this by clearing plants along roads, keeping fields well-watered, and arranging crops in patterns designed to stop spreading fires.

## Where Californians Live

California has some of the country's largest cities, tiniest rural towns, and everything in between. People come to California from all over the world and bring their unique cultures with them. As of 2024, almost thirty-nine million people live in California. This makes it the most populated state in the country by far. By 2030, that number is expected to be more than forty million.

Almost one-third of California's population are immigrants. Immigrants from Asia have a long history in the state, dating back to the mid-1800s. Today, descendants of immigrants from India's Punjab region own around 10 percent of California's croplands. Latino immigrants from Mexico, Central America, and South



The nation's most populous and wealthiest state has a diverse population who come from all over the world.



Immigrants from a country sometimes settle near each other in the same neighborhoods, such as this area of San Francisco called Chinatown.

America have an even longer history here. Their culture and traditions are woven into the fabric of California's culture. Whether it's Mexican food, colorful murals, music festivals, or celebrations like Día de los Muertos and Fiestas Patrias, Latino culture is everywhere in the state.

Population density is a measurement of how many people live in an area. It is often reported by counting how many people live in one square mile (2.58 sq km). Cities, or **urban** areas, usually have a lot of people living close together. This is called a high population density. For example, the city of Santa Ana has 11,347 persons per square mile (4,381 per sq km).

### Vocabulary

**urban**, adj. relating to a city

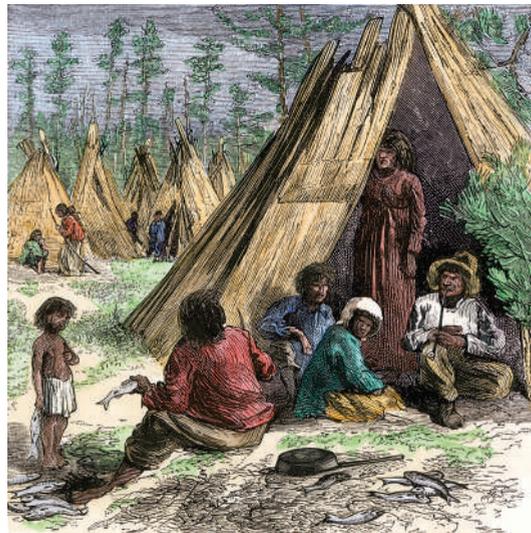
On the other hand, the town of Vernon has 11.4 persons per square mile (4.4 per sq km). Cities in California tend to have a lower population density than places like New York. This is because California cities don't have a lot of tall apartment buildings.

### Vocabulary

**suburb**, n. a town or small city within commuting, or easy traveling, distance of a large city

Tall buildings can be dangerous in places that have earthquakes. But when you include a city and the **suburbs** around it, it's called an urbanized area. California's urbanized areas have the greatest population density in the United States, with 4,790 people per square mile (1,849 per sq km). In fact, around 94 percent of Californians live in cities.

Many people moved to California after gold was discovered in 1848. When this happened, many Indigenous peoples were forced to leave their homes. The U.S. government wanted to make sure that the new arrivals could own land there. They negotiated land treaties with eighteen California tribes. However, California's representatives persuaded the government to block these treaties. As a result, most California Indians lost their lands. In 1906, the U.S. government started buying small pieces of land for Native Americans who didn't have tribal lands anymore. These pieces of land



Native American rancherias were places where Indigenous tribes could live and work and practice their traditions.

were called **rancherias**. They were different from reservations because they were much smaller.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. government tried to get rid of rancherias. This caused the Indigenous peoples to have to move again.

In 1978, California created a group called the

Native American Heritage Commission. This group helps protect the places important to Indigenous peoples and their cultures. One goal is to make sure Indigenous peoples have access to the plants used in traditional ceremonies and basketmaking. Since 2000, the government has been working to return some rancherias to Indigenous people. Today, there are fewer than 100 rancherias and reservations in California and 109 recognized tribes. Some examples are the Tachi Yokut peoples at the Santa Rosa Rancheria, the Pulikla Tribe of Yurok People of the Resighini Rancheria, and the Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria.

### Vocabulary

**rancheria**, n. a plot of land, typically small, reserved for Indigenous people, where they can practice their traditional ways of life

## California's Economy

The Californian economy is the largest in the country. If California were a country, its economy would be the fourth largest in the

### California's Leading Industries

Industry	Examples of Goods and Services
Agriculture	Grapes, lemons, plums, watermelons, strawberries, avocados, peaches, oranges
Media and film	Movies, music, television, radio
Tourism	Hotels, theme parks, national parks
Technology	Software, fiber optics, medical instruments, computers
Manufacturing	Electronics, aerospace parts

California's major industries produce a wide variety of goods and services.



The famous Hollywood sign in the Hollywood Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles

world. It would be even bigger than the economies of countries like India, the United Kingdom, and France. California is a leader in many industries that are important to the global economy.

California is a hub for international trade. It has twelve international harbors. Two of these, the Port of Los Angeles and the Port of Long Beach, are the biggest in the country. Around 30 percent of all goods that the United States sends to other countries go through these ports. They also handle around 40 percent of the goods that arrive from other countries.

With the Central Valley's rich land, California is able to produce large amounts of crops. Some examples are almonds, olives, and tomatoes. California's agriculture industry makes up one-fifth of the state's income. The state is also a leader in technology. Many

companies that make computers and software have headquarters in Silicon Valley. Silicon is a material that some computer parts are made of. *Silicon Valley* refers to the area south of San Francisco, around Stanford University, San Jose, and Santa Clara. This is where companies like Apple, Google, and Meta are located. Many people in Silicon Valley work with computers and technology.

Hollywood is another example of a place that is identified with a single industry. Hollywood is a district in Los Angeles. Film, music, and media have drawn millions of people to the Los Angeles area. Some people come for work, and others come on vacation. Hollywood's media companies make billions of dollars per year for California. Movies and television have made California famous across the country and around the world.

Other creative arts play an important role in California, too. Many authors and artists, such as John Steinbeck, Amy Tan, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Margaret Garcia, were born here. California has many museums. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Museum of African American Art in Los Angeles, and the Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach celebrate the local communities and promote the arts. Native arts like oral storytelling and basket weaving are important parts of the state's history. People still practice these traditional crafts today.

Life in California is a mix of modern and historical traditions. Native traditions, cutting-edge industries, and a diverse blend of immigrant cultures make California a unique and interesting place.

# Chapter 2

## California's Government

### Principles of Government

For over ten thousand years, Indigenous tribes along the California coast have collected

black abalone snail shells. The tribes were careful to protect the black abalone snails because the shells were used in important ceremonies. They also didn't want to harm the population of the snails. But today, black abalone snails are **endangered**. If nothing is done

to protect the species, they could soon die out completely. In 2024, the California state government named the black abalone as the official state seashell of California. For people working to protect this species, it's a step in the right direction.

### Big Question

How do California's governments work?

### Vocabulary

**endangered**,  
adj. having few  
numbers and at  
risk of becoming  
extinct, or dying out  
completely



an endangered black abalone snail picked up on the California coast

Governments do far more than protect snails! They help organize society and help people live together. In the United States, the national government was created by the U.S. Constitution.

The Constitution organized the government into three branches: legislative, executive, and judicial. The legislative branch, or Congress, makes laws. The executive branch, led by the president, enforces the laws. The judicial branch decides whether the laws and their enforcement are fair. The judicial branch is made up of many courts. The highest court is the U.S. Supreme Court. The Constitution also includes a Bill of Rights that is meant to protect people's rights and freedoms.

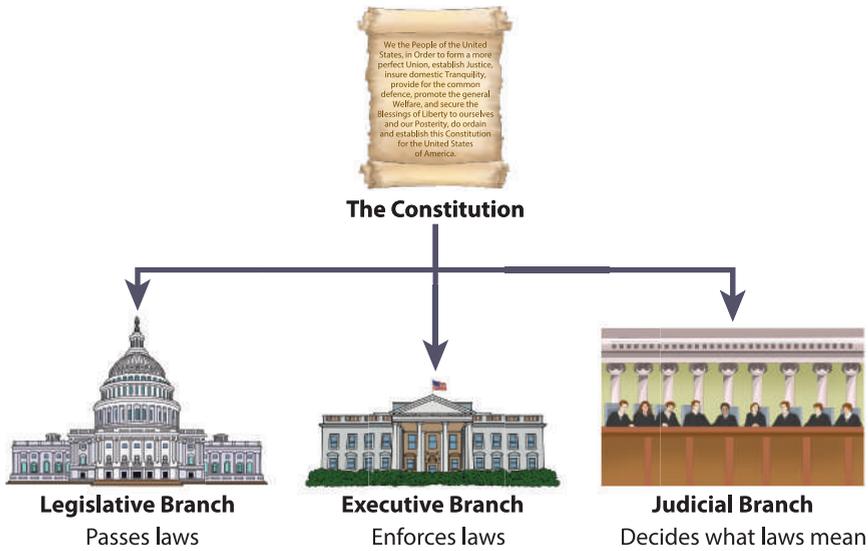
The most basic principle of our constitutional system is the rule of law. This is the idea that government power has clear limits. The government must follow the law, just like everybody else.

To keep anyone from holding too much power, the Constitution describes a system of checks and balances. Each branch has the power to check, or limit, the power of the other two branches. The Constitution also balances power through a system known as **federalism**.

The U.S. Constitution governs the whole country, but individual states have their own constitutions as well. California's constitution was adopted in 1849 and revised in 1879. California has grown and changed over time. Because of this, the state's constitution needed to change. The California Constitution has been changed over five hundred times!

### Vocabulary

**federalism**,  
n. a system of government in which the national government shares power with other levels of government, such as the states



The U.S. Constitution organizes the federal government into three branches, each with its own area of responsibility.

The federal and California constitutions have many things in common. For example, both constitutions protect a person’s freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Both begin with “We the People.” However, the constitution of California was written in both English and Spanish, whereas the U.S. Constitution was written only in English. The state constitution is also much longer than the federal constitution because of all the changes that have been made to it over time.

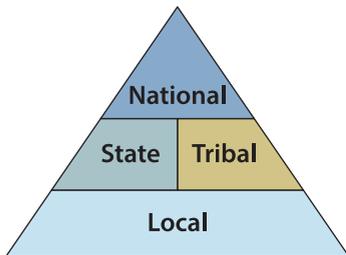
California’s constitution also gives a little more power directly to the citizens of the state than the federal constitution does. Therefore, California’s government has some elements of what is called direct democracy. In a direct democracy, people vote on laws themselves instead of relying on elected representatives. Californians have the power to decide whether the state constitution should be changed or if a state official should be replaced. For example, in 2003, the people voted to remove Gray Davis as the governor and elected Arnold Schwarzenegger to replace him. This was the first vote of its kind in California.

States have unique laws and structures to reflect their differences. For example, California was the first state to specify that people have an **inalienable** right to privacy. Other measures in the state constitution include free textbooks for public schools and the right to fish in public waters. Another example is Proposition 65, passed in 1986, which requires businesses to warn Californians about harmful chemicals. This environmental measure reflects the state's commitment to health and environmental protection.

### Vocabulary

**inalienable**, adj.  
cannot be taken away or denied

## The Four Levels of Government



There are far more local governments in the United States, but they still must follow the rule of law according to the levels above them.

There are four levels of government in the United States: federal, state, local, and tribal. The federal government is responsible for things that affect the whole country. These responsibilities include dealing with other countries, creating a military force, establishing nationwide laws, and printing money.

Federal law is the supreme law of the land. This means that the federal government has power over all the other levels. If there is ever a conflict between state and federal laws, the federal law will always win.

State governments are responsible for matters that affect their state. Driver's licenses, marriage licenses, business licenses, and even elections are managed by the state government. Because of

federalism, the state shares some responsibilities with the federal government. These responsibilities include enforcing laws and collecting taxes.

Local governments also have very important responsibilities. The state of California has fifty-eight counties. Each county is governed by a five-member board of supervisors. The state constitution gives counties certain powers. Examples of county powers include maintaining highways and providing public health services. Generally, counties can make rules and regulations that don't interfere with any state or federal laws.

The governments of cities and towns are called municipal governments. Cities have a council of elected leaders that oversees local resources and law enforcement. Municipal governments provide police and fire services, manage parks, and provide utilities like water and electricity.

School districts are another kind of local governing body. They serve as a middle ground between individual schools and the county board of education. The governing body of a school district is called a board. A school district board can make decisions about how the schools in its area operate.

Lastly, there are tribal governments that oversee Indigenous reservations and rancherias. Tribal governments have **sovereignty** within the United

States. People living under tribal governments are citizens of both the state and tribe. They have to pay state taxes and also follow tribal law. Tribal governments work closely with state

**Vocabulary**

**sovereignty**, n.  
the right to govern oneself



The Hupa Indian K'ima:w Medical Center provides medical services to those living on the Hoopa Valley Reservation in Northern California.

governments but as equal partners. Many local matters are run by the tribal government. Tribal governments are responsible for the protection, education, and health of their citizens. They have the power to make decisions about their own people. Tribal governments can be organized in many ways. They often have a primary leader and a tribal council that acts as a legislature. California recognizes 109 tribes in the state. Some tribal lands extend into other states. For example, the Karuk and Yurok tribes have homelands that straddle the California–Oregon border.

Tribal governments also interact with the federal government through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The BIA provides support for education, law enforcement, and infrastructure on tribal lands. While the BIA helps administer federal programs, tribal

governments retain the authority to govern their own people and lands.

State and tribal governments have their own separate functions. For example, tribal governments may provide education or

health care services on reservations. However, they often work with the state to ensure the well-being of citizens. For example, the California state government supports the Tribal Research Program. A group of tribal-led researchers within the program are working to combat **climate change**. They use traditional knowledge and modern climate science to protect California from things like wildfires and droughts. The state government helps by providing money for the program.

### Vocabulary

**climate change**, n.  
a long-term change in global climate and weather patterns

## Inside California's State Government

California's state government is modeled after that of the U.S. government. It divides power among judicial, legislative, and executive branches. The powers of each branch are named in the state constitution.

The U.S. Constitution says, "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government." This means that every state in the United States must be governed by representatives elected by the people. California's constitution also creates a republican form of government for the state.

Like the U.S. Congress, the California legislature is made up of two houses: the California State Senate and the California State Assembly. Forty people serve in the State Senate. They are elected



The California State Senate chamber, where laws are debated and voted on, is located in the capital city of Sacramento.

by Californians to serve four-year terms. The State Assembly includes eighty elected members who serve two-year terms. The State Senate and State Assembly debate proposed laws, called bills. If a bill is approved by both houses and the governor, it becomes a law specific to California.

The governor of California is in charge of the state executive branch. California's governor is elected to a four-year term. The governor oversees agencies that enforce and administer laws. The heads of some agencies are elected, but many are appointed by the governor.

The judicial branch is a system of courts. California's judicial branch and the federal judiciary are similar in some ways, but they have key differences. The federal constitution describes one

California's Executive Agencies	
Agency	Responsibilities
Transportation Agency	Vehicles, trains, and infrastructure
Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation	State prisons and release programs
Environmental Protection Agency	Laws protecting environment and public health
Department of Finance	Budgeting state resources
Health and Human Services Agency	State programs that support health of citizens
Department of Food and Agriculture	Food supply and safety
Labor and Workforce Development Agency	Labor laws and state employment benefits
Natural Resources Agency	Natural resources, including wildlife, water, and more
Department of Veterans Affairs	Support of veterans and their families
Government Operations Agency	Government management
Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency	Licensing and regulation businesses and creation of affordable housing

The executive branch manages several agencies.

Supreme Court and allows Congress to create smaller courts if necessary. California's court system has three levels of courts. At the lowest local level are the superior courts. There are fifty-eight superior courts, one in each county. Sometimes these courts are called trial courts because they conduct trials and decide cases based on evidence.

Trials are conducted by a judge according to the laws, but not all cases are decided by the judge. Often, a trial is decided by a **jury**.

At the next level are courts of appeals.

An appeal is a case in which a court reviews the actions or decisions of another

### Vocabulary

**jury**, n. a group of people who listen to information presented during a trial in a court and make decisions about whether someone is guilty or innocent

court. The courts of appeals determine whether a trial was fair and followed the law. Hearings in the courts of appeals do not use juries. Lawyers make arguments, but they do not present evidence or witnesses. Often, when an appeals court decides that a mistake was made, it sends the case back to the lower court for another trial.

The highest court in California is the California Supreme Court. It is led by a chief justice and six associate justices. Justices are first appointed by the governor when a position needs to be filled. Californians vote on whether the justices should continue to serve a twelve-year term when elections occur. Sometimes decisions made by the California Supreme Court are sent to be reviewed by the U.S. Supreme Court.

## **Civic Participation**

Citizens have civic responsibilities to perform within their local, state, and even federal governments. One of these is jury service. Eligible citizens are selected at random to serve on juries. Serving on a jury is a way to contribute to justice in your state and your community. Unless people agree to serve on juries, some people will not receive a speedy and fair trial.

Voting is another example of civic responsibility. By voting, citizens age eighteen and older can choose their government's officials, approve or veto decisions made by legislators, and even change the state constitution.

There are other ways to practice civic participation. Everyone can attend city council or school board meetings, volunteer for

local organizations, donate unused clothes or books, collect food for a food bank, or write to local representatives about their communities. Many California cities even have youth commissions, groups of kids and teens who share their experiences and opinions with city officials.

Being a helper is more important than you might think.

Upstanders are people who stand up for someone or something.

Being an upstander is a way to help people in your community.

Knowing what you believe in and helping your community are great ways to practice civic responsibility.

# Chapter 3

## California's Native Peoples

### **The Native Peoples of California**

Long before Europeans arrived, the people of the Chumash tribe lived along the coast of the area we now call Southern California.

They built boats and used them to fish in the ocean and to travel to other villages for trade. The plants they gathered were used to make homes, baskets, and clothing. Woven out of plant stems and sealed with tar, their baskets were so well made that they could even hold water. The Chumash sometimes used these baskets to boil soup by adding heated rocks. At night, people of the villages would gather around fires and tell stories about adventures and the world around them. These stories echoed into the future. Today, we still hear their tales, told by the descendants of ancestors long gone.

### **Big Question** .....

What was life like for Native Californians before other settlers arrived?



The Chumash Indian Museum has rebuilt some historical Chumash homes. They were made with traditional techniques using wood and tule reeds.

## Native Tribes of California



California is home to more than one hundred Indigenous tribes.

Historians don't know for sure how and when the first Californians arrived. What historians do know is that long ago, many different cultures developed across California. It is estimated that by the 1700s, more than 300,000 Native peoples lived in the region.

The early people of California were hunter-gatherers. Depending on where they lived, they ate the meat of animals such as deer, elk, and rabbit as well as fish from the ocean, lakes, and rivers

around them. They also ate berries, nuts, and plant roots. Native Californians made their homes out of plants and other available materials. Exactly how they built homes and villages varied from one tribe to another.

Individual tribes lived in areas that were often defined by natural landmarks like rivers, mountains, and valleys. Tribes had relationships with one another, too. Some tribes didn't get along well while others traded peacefully. Sometimes the boundaries of tribal lands would change through negotiations or conflicts. California's mountains and deserts made travel difficult. This meant that tribes didn't have as many chances to interact with faraway peoples. As a result, California has many smaller tribal groups instead of a few larger tribes.

## The Hoopa Valley

The Hoopa Valley Tribe has lived in the forests and valleys of northwestern California for thousands of years. In their language, the Hoopa call themselves *Natinixwe*. This means "people of the place where the trails return." Many Hoopa villages were settled near the banks of the Trinity River, which flows through narrow gorges and mountain meadows. Their homes were called *xontah*. These *xontah*, or **dwelling**s, were made of cedar wood partially dug into the ground. People ate fish from the rivers, hunted elk and other animals, and gathered berries and mushrooms. The Hoopa used long spears or bows and arrows to catch salmon in the river. These methods are still used today. Meal from ground-up acorns was

### Vocabulary

**dwelling**, n. a structure in which people live



The Trinity and Klamath rivers are very special to the Hoopa people. They have been fishing salmon from these waters for thousands of years.

also an important food for the Hoopa, as it was for many California peoples.

The Hoopa people made beautiful baskets and beaded clothing. These artistic practices served as both spiritual expression and entertainment. Throughout the year, the Hoopa people celebrated six ceremonies.

These events marked the new year, planting season, harvests, and more. The Make

the World ceremony honored all living things. Another ceremony, the Tree Dance, was meant to bring peace by settling arguments. People used song and dance to express their spiritual beliefs. Music, dances, and stories were passed on to each generation.

The Hoopa had mostly friendly relations with their neighbors the Yurok, who lived along the coast. Hoopa people traded acorns and salmon to the Yurok. In exchange, the Yurok gave them goods from the ocean, such as mussels and seaweed. It is thought that the shell money used by the Hoopa people came from the Yurok people. Within the Hoopa tribe, the leader, called a headman, was usually the man who owned the most land. Power in a tribe usually passed to the headman's son. However, if someone was able to gain more property first, he would take over as headman.

## The Modoc

The Modoc people lived between the Cascades and the Sierra Nevada ranges, near the present-day border between northeastern California and Oregon. The region has pine forests, mountains, and lakes. Tule, a plant that grows in marshy areas around these lakes, was very important. The Modoc people used tule reeds to make footwear, baskets, boats, and homes.

Many natural places were considered holy to the Modoc tribe, like mountains and rivers. The southern part of Modoc lands included an area they called “the land of burnt-out fires.” This area was made of volcanic rocks and lava beds. The lava beds are a sacred place to the Modoc people. They were created by the Medicine Lake Volcano in the Southern Cascades. Volcanic



Modoc rock art can still be seen today at Lava Beds National Monument.

eruptions formed long caves. The Modoc painted the cave walls and carved into the stone. Some of the carvings are over fourteen thousand years old. Many of the Modoc's carvings and paintings are of patterns. Unfortunately, historians don't know much about what the patterns meant in Modoc culture.



Chief Yellow Hammer (Ha-kar-gar-ush), later known as Benjamin Lawver, was a *la'qi*. He died in 1915.

Modoc land was rich with fish, game animals, and forests.

The people were mainly hunters and fishers but also ate berries and nuts. They built various types of homes. Modoc earth lodges were built partly underground. Over the top was a roof made of tule reeds woven together tightly to block the rain. To get in, people would climb a ladder down from the entrance in the roof. Another kind of home was a wickiup. Wickiups had a framework of poles set into the ground in a circle. The poles were tied together at the top to make a dome. Bark, reeds, or mats were

used for the walls. Fires were built in the middle of the floor, and smoke escaped through a hole at the top.

Modoc people held ceremonies for important life events like weddings and funerals. Young people often participated

in a *spu'do*, or vision quest. It was thought that some places in nature held spiritual powers. During a vision quest, a person would take a journey alone into nature to visit these places.

**Shamans** had to perform these vision quests multiple times to gain the wisdom necessary for the position. The village's shaman was a spiritual leader. Among the Modoc, this person was either a man or an older woman.

The Modoc people were fierce warriors. The leader of the Modoc tribe was called the *la'qi*. The *la'qi* led the fighters when there was conflict with other tribes. The *la'qi* was also responsible for teaching younger people about Modoc history and morals.

## The Yokuts Tribes

The Yokuts people are native to the San Joaquin Valley of central California. The group was made up of several smaller tribes. Each of the tribes occupied a particular area of the region and spoke a slightly different language. In many of the Yokuts languages, the word *Yokuts* meant "people." Yokuts homes were wickiups, round and made of wooden frames and tule walls. However, some tribes used separate homes for individual families while other tribes had up to ten families living in one big home.

### Vocabulary

**shaman**, n. a Native American spiritual leader who is believed to have special powers



Yokuts children were taught their tribe's traditional dances and songs by the village shaman.

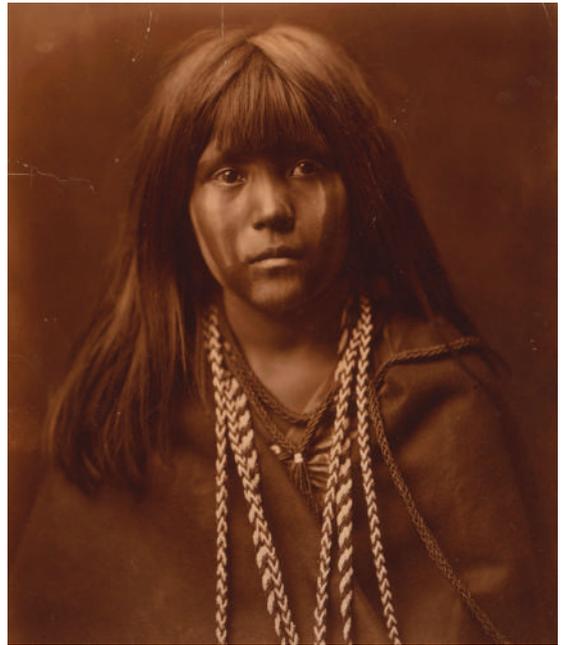
The San Joaquin Valley has mild winters, but summers are hot and dry. Because of this, the Yokuts would travel across the valley to collect food during the summer. Much like the Modoc and Hoopa people, they relied on wild plants and hunting. Important foods included acorns and other nuts and seeds. In the eastern regions of the Yokuts lands, there were marshes and several smaller rivers. Here, the Yokuts fished and hunted for ducks and geese.

Spiritual beliefs were important to the Yokuts. Shamans were thought to have power that was given to them in dreams by spirit animals. Throughout the year, shamans would lead ceremonies,

rituals, and events. The most important ritual was the mourning ceremony. Once each year, tribes dedicated several days to honor loved ones who had died during the past year. Often, members of neighboring tribes would attend the mourning ceremonies. After mourning, people gathered to eat and play games.

## The Mojave Tribe

The Mojave people lived in the deserts of southeastern California, western Arizona, and southern Nevada. They believed their creator had split them up into twenty-two clans. The clans were named after natural objects like the moon, coyotes, or rain clouds. There were three regions, or bands, of families within the Mojave tribe: northern, central, and southern.



Many Mojave people painted or tattooed their faces as a way to express themselves.

In the Mojave language, they call themselves *Pipa Aha Macav*, or the “People by the River.” This is because most Mojave people lived along or near the Colorado River. In early spring, the river would flood with snowmelt from the Rocky Mountains. The rushing river brought nutrients to the soil from upstream. Later, when the river receded, Mojave people planted crops that would feed them for the rest of the year. The most common crops were

pumpkins, corn, beans, and melons. People also ate wild plants like cactus fruits and hunted small animals like rabbits and lizards.

The land that the Mojave lived on was very rich in resources. Because of this, the Mojave people grew very protective of their lands. However, they were also known for their peaceful trade with other tribes. They traded their extra crops for things like shells and feathers. They developed extensive trade routes that went all the way to the Pacific coast. They even sometimes helped other tribes trade by delivering their goods for them.

The Mojave did not believe that any one person naturally had power over others. A group of four people led the tribe. There was one representative from each of the three bands of families and one chief. The position of chief was passed from father to son. The authority of the Mojave leaders was only as strong as their support. They could only hold power in the tribe if they had earned the people's respect.

Mojave cultural practices were deeply connected with the land. People made pottery from the clay along the riverbanks. Sometimes women would paint the pottery or make clay dolls for children. Many Mojave people would also paint or tattoo line and dot patterns on their faces.

Dreams were very important in Mojave culture. Songs that were learned in dreams were sung and passed down through generations. It was said that some people had dreams that granted them special skills or knowledge. When a Mojave person died, the tribe gathered for a funeral ceremony. In Mojave

tradition, this ceremony was the last time the deceased person’s name could be said aloud.

California is a large and diverse place that has been home to many different cultures for thousands of years. Today, more than a hundred state-recognized tribes continue to preserve their unique stories and histories, offering insight into California’s Indigenous past.



Today, murals across the state honor California’s Native peoples. This mural in El Monte was created by artist Man One. It recognizes the Kizh people.

# Chapter 4

## California's Colonial History

**Mission Life in California** In the early morning hours, church bells rang across the Spanish **missions** of California. This was the signal for the Native residents to wake up and begin their day. Immediately after waking, it was time for worship. Residents gathered for prayers before eating a breakfast of corn or grain. Then they began the difficult workday. Work in the missions would continue until sunset, only stopping at midday for lunch and a nap. After work, there

### Big Question

What was California like under Spanish and then Mexican rule?

### Vocabulary

**mission**, n. a settlement built for the purpose of converting Native Americans to Christianity

were more prayers and religious services, Spanish lessons, and finally, much-needed sleep. Almost six thousand miles (9,200 km) from Spain, Indigenous residents of the California missions were being forced to live like the Spanish.



Mission Santa Clara de Asís in 1777

The Spanish came to California for religious, economic, and political reasons. Many wanted to spread their Christian faith to new lands and often violently forced it onto those they encountered. They also wanted to find direct trade routes to valuable resources like spices and gold.

### Vocabulary

**colony**, n. an area, region, or country that is controlled and settled by people from another country

Spain and other European nations competed for access to these resources. Starting in the early 1400s CE, Portugal and other European countries began sending ships to discover new trade routes. Over time, they built **colonies** to grow and strengthen their empires.

## The First Europeans in California

In the early 1500s CE, Spanish expeditions began exploring and settling in Central America and Mexico. By the 1540s, Spain occupied land in the Americas from the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico (recently renamed the Gulf of America). This territory is known as New Spain.

The Spanish used negotiations and military force to expand their territory. Eventually, they began to look toward California. In the mid-1530s, Spanish explorers sailed northward along the western coast of Central America. They found the peninsula of Baja California and were impressed by the many pearls they found on the coast. They thought the peninsula was an island at first. After two more journeys to Baja California, they realized they were wrong.



Even after land was discovered to the north, mapmakers still showed California as an island well into the 1700s.

The first Europeans to explore California's lands were a Spanish expedition led by Juan Cabrillo in 1542. The explorers departed from Mexico and traveled along most of California's coast, stopping in the San Diego, Monterey, and San Francisco Bays. But the coastal winds were difficult to navigate. Along the Pacific coast, winds usually come from the northwest. Sailing north along the coast was challenging because ships struggled to sail against the wind. This meant that sailors often had to wait for better winds. However, this was still faster than traveling on land, where the mountains and deserts were serious challenges. Along the journey, Cabrillo met many of California's Indigenous peoples. He met the Kumeyaay people of the San Diego Bay. At first, the Kumeyaay fled from the newcomers. After a while, they came onto the ships and greeted the Spanish explorers. Cabrillo also met with



Juan Cabrillo's expedition encountered many of California's Native peoples.

the Tongva and Chumash tribes and noted the canoes and villages they built. He claimed many coastal areas for Spain.

Sebastián Vizcaíno, another Spanish explorer, sailed along Cabrillo's path. He visited the same ports and met many of the same tribes. He found that the land was full of animals and plants and had a good climate. His interactions with the Native peoples were generally peaceful. He was pleased by his contact with the Ohlone tribe. Their lands overlapped the San Francisco and Monterey Bays. In 1602, Vizcaíno wrote to the king of Spain about his meeting with the Ohlone: "[This land] 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."

Vizcaíno was the last Spanish explorer to visit these lands for about 160 years. Eventually, the desire to spread the Spanish way of life would bring them back.

## Spanish Exploration of California



Spain wasn't able to focus its military resources on the American West until the 1760s. After a series of European wars, it decided to settle in California.

## Spanish Settlements

In the 1760s, Spanish explorers in the Mexican colonies began traveling north to California once more. On their journeys, they established three types of settlements. One type was a military fort called a **presidio**. Presidios were constructed to protect Spain's claim to the land. Spain built four presidios in California: San Diego, Monterey, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara.

### Vocabulary

**presidio**, n. a fort

Another kind of settlement was the mission. Missions set out to convert Native peoples to Christianity. They were centered around a church and included living spaces, workshops, farmlands, and ranch lands. They were often protected by soldiers from the



The presidio at Monterey was built in 1770 and has been a military outpost ever since. Today, there is a U.S. Army base stationed in the historic presidio at Monterey.

presidios. Over the next decades, twenty-one missions were built across California. Spanish settlers also built many little towns called pueblos.

Starting in 1769, the Spanish sent teams of explorers from Baja California to establish new missions. The first expedition was led by a priest named Junípero Serra. Father Serra brought along his disciple, Juan Crespí. He assigned Crespí to record the events of the expedition. Crespí's journals give us a lot of information about the missionaries' relationships with local tribes. The group also included forty-two Natives who had converted to Christianity. The missionaries were also accompanied by twenty-five soldiers. Their job was to protect the missionaries from dangers like wild animals and hostile tribes. Gaspar de Portolá was put in charge of the soldiers for Serra's journey.

Together, Serra, Crespí, Portolá, and their crew traveled by sea and land along the California coast. They built missions near tribal villages along the way. Missions were built near rivers, valleys, or the coast to make trading easier. Trading was one way that missions received important supplies from Mexico. Missions also sold goods grown on mission grounds. Producing food and trading with other Spanish settlements was easier with access to water.



Junípero Serra is considered to be the father of the California missions.

From 1769 to 1782, Serra founded nine missions. The cities of San Diego, San Gabriel, San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Ventura all began as missions founded by Father Serra. The expeditions and creation of the missions changed how people lived in California.

## **Life in Spanish California**

The Spanish missions in New Spain were led by priests. They wanted to convert the local people to Christianity. Spain thought the best way to do this was to bring people to the missions and make them live the way the Spanish did.

## Spanish Missions in California



Father Serra founded nine of California's twenty-one missions before he died in 1784.

The first problem the Spanish needed to solve was how to get the Native peoples to come live at the missions. Before the Spanish arrived, the tribes had lived off the land around them, as they had for thousands of years. Over time, many found they had no choice but to move into the missions. The Spanish settlers brought livestock with them that ate up much of the local plants. They also introduced invasive plant species like the mustard plant. An invasive species is a plant or animal that is not native to an area

but is brought there by people. The Spanish built farms and dug channels for **irrigation**. This required the clearing of forests and natural habitats. These actions changed the environment. The mission areas now consisted of open spaces where crops and livestock were raised. This made it more difficult for Native peoples to live off the land on their own. Crops and invasive plants overtook the food that the tribes traditionally relied on. Animals they hunted were driven away from the settlements or overhunted.

### Vocabulary

**irrigation**, n. the watering of crops by moving water from a well, a river, or a lake to a place where it does not rain enough to grow crops

Diseases also reshaped Native life. The Europeans brought diseases like smallpox, syphilis, diphtheria, and measles. The germs that cause these diseases had been present in Europe for hundreds of years. European peoples' immune systems had learned how to fight them. But the peoples indigenous to the Americas had never encountered these germs. Their immune systems could not protect them. Disease spread quickly through Native villages. By the end of the mission period, thousands had died. Tribal healers and shamans didn't know how to heal these new diseases. Eventually, the tribes saw that the Spanish were not falling ill. They thought the missionaries could help the sick. However, the Spanish only had an immunity to these diseases and could not cure them.

Life in Spanish settlements was not easy. This was especially true for Native mission residents. Native converts had to live within the walls of the missions. They had to work for most of the day. They were made to work in the fields or in construction for the community. If they did not want to work or if they broke rules,



The mission system required conversion to Christianity and forced many Native Americans to do hard labor.

they were punished severely. They also spent many hours learning Spanish and attending prayers every day. Missionaries taught the Natives skills that were important to the Spanish way of life. These were skills like raising livestock, making bricks, and blacksmithing. The Spanish missionaries insisted that the Indigenous peoples leave behind their language and old ways of life. Over time, the missions worked to erase the Californian Indians' cultures.

In 1775, the Native people living at the San Diego mission had had enough. They were tired of being forced to work all day, losing their traditions, and being punished for breaking rules. A group of Native people decided to fight back. Led by a man named Antonio and others from the Kumeyaay tribe, they attacked and set fire to the mission.

The rebels did great damage to the mission, but their rebellion ultimately failed. The Spanish regained control of the mission. Still, it was an important moment in California's history. It showed that Native people were not passive. Many fought to keep their traditions, languages, and cultures alive, even in the face of great pressure from the Spanish.

The missions grew to be the primary force of California's new economy. They grew crops like wheat and barley. They also grew fruits like apples and peaches. The missions traded with other Spanish settlements and supplied them with food.

Presidios were mostly home to soldiers and their military leaders. Life in the four presidios was also very difficult. It would sometimes take a very long time for soldiers to be paid by the Spanish government down in Mexico. Many soldiers didn't have enough money to pay for basic necessities. The presidios did not produce their own goods and relied on other settlements. Their food came from the farms in the missions nearby.

Soldiers were responsible for guard duty, patrols, or expeditions to escort the priests to other missions or towns. When off duty, soldiers maintained their weapons and trained. They farmed on small family plots and were expected to be model citizens. The soldiers and their families lived together



Because living quarters in presidios were cramped, sometimes people had to get creative with their space. Rooms were used for multiple purposes, like eating and sleeping.

in one room, sometimes with fifteen people or more. Their families helped farm the land while the women were expected to take care of household tasks. Children helped with chores, too. At first, there were no schools. But after a while, the Spanish government established schools to teach children how to read and write.

Eventually, larger pieces of land called **ranchos** were granted to people who were loyal to Spain. The ranchos were mostly used for raising livestock like cattle and sheep. Like the missions, most of the work was done by Native Californians who had converted to Christianity. They had small homes made of **adobe** where they and their families lived. Some of them worked outdoors in orchards or croplands. Others worked in the home of the rancho owner tending to the cleaning or cooking. Most workers on the ranchos raised cattle for beef and leather. Californians began to trade more often with merchants from Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Life in the ranchos was very similar to the missions but without the religious lessons. After work, residents took part in socialization and entertainment. They had dances, bullfights, and wedding celebrations. One of the first ranchos was given to Juan José Dominguez, a retired soldier. Dominguez had sailed with Junípero Serra. His land was called the Rancho San Pedro. This land eventually became roughly what is now Los Angeles County.

### Vocabulary

**rancho**, n. a plot of land given to someone who was loyal to the government

**adobe**, n. a type of brick made from sun-dried clay

Then there were the pueblos. These were little towns that formed around the missions and presidios. The first pueblo in California,

San José, was founded in 1777. The people who lived here were settlers from Mexico, not Native peoples or soldiers. There were no religious or military leaders here, so the town was run by the people. The leader was called an *alcalde*. He was like the mayor. One of the biggest jobs of the pueblos was to farm crops and livestock to help feed the soldiers of the presidios. To encourage people to live in the pueblos, families were given land for free. As a result, most people in the pueblos were farmers and ranchers. They traded and sold crops that they grew. Many of these pueblos grew into major cities today.

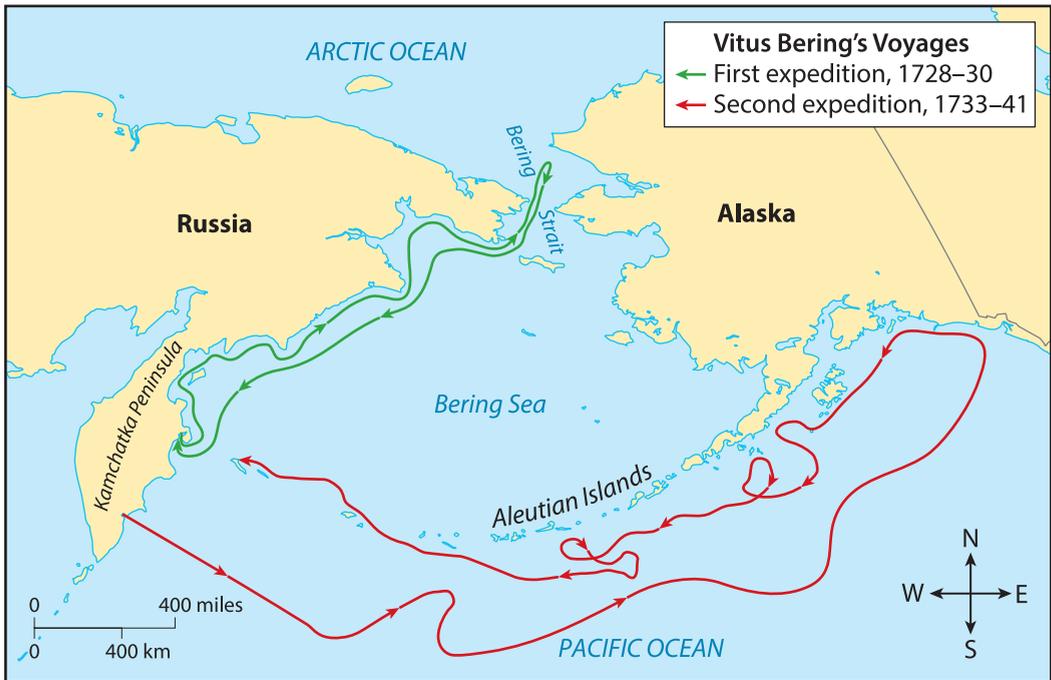
## **Other European Countries Come to California**

The Spanish weren't the only Europeans interested in North America. Many countries sent ships to investigate the Pacific coast. Many European nations were interested in finding an easier way to travel from western Europe to Asia. Several explorers like England's Henry Hudson and Portugal's Ferdinand Magellan traveled by the California coast on their journeys.

Vitus Bering was a navigator from Denmark. He spent most of his life in Russia, where he joined the navy and learned about sailing. In 1724, the Russian czar appointed Bering to lead an expedition. He was to learn whether Asia and North America were connected by land or by sea. This would have great benefits for trade. Russia was also interested in building colonies in North America to expand its empire.

Bering and his crew set out from Kamchatka on two ships in July of 1728, heading north. After a month of sailing, they confirmed

## Vitus Bering's Explorations of the Pacific Ocean



The Bering Strait is the passage between the continents of Asia and North America. It was named after Vitus Bering.

that the landmasses were not connected. The sea passage they discovered between Asia and North America is now called the Bering Strait in Bering's honor. The crew did not reach North America on this journey.

In 1741, Bering tried again. This time, he was joined by another explorer, Aleksey Chirikov, who led a second ship on the journey. However, the two were soon caught up in a sea storm and were separated. Weary and hoping to get his ship to safety, Bering sailed into the Gulf of Alaska. In the search for land and safety, they finally found the southwestern Alaska Peninsula. They also found the Aleutian Islands. Along the journey, Bering became ill. He struggled to navigate effectively, and the ship was wrecked on an island now called Bering Island.

Years later, Britain was also looking to find places to build colonies. James Cook explored the Pacific Ocean during several journeys. In 1778, his ship *Resolution* left the South Pacific and headed north. Cook was on a mission similar to Vitus Bering's. He was searching for a sea passage connecting England and Alaska. The ship fought against the wind and ocean currents for most of their journey. After reaching North America's Oregon coast, the *Resolution* continued north along the coast and around Alaska. The explorers reached the Bering Strait in the summer of 1778. However, they failed to find an easy passage from the strait to England.



Cook kept a careful journal about his travels. He described everything from his breakfast to the fascinating peoples of North America.

## Independence and Mexican California

Meanwhile, in California, missions, presidios, and pueblos continued to grow. They became more **self-reliant**. However, by the early 1800s, Spain was facing political challenges in Europe. It had trouble governing its American colonies and keeping them well-supplied. In 1808, violent revolution broke out in the colonies. People demanded independence from Spanish rule. Revolution spread to Mexico in 1810.

### Vocabulary

**self-reliant**, adj.  
needing no help  
from other people

The governments of Spain and New Spain tried unsuccessfully to put an end to the rebellions. War broke out in many colonies. During the wars, the Spanish rulers left the missions and presidios to mostly manage themselves.

Previously, the Spanish had forbidden colonists to trade with foreign merchants. But now the Spanish rulers were distracted. Restrictions on trading with non-Spanish merchants were relaxed, and Californians were able to trade with visitors from the United Kingdom, Russia, and the United States.

In 1821, after years of fighting, Mexico won its independence from Spain. California now fell under Mexican rule. This meant that Mexico's lands reached all the way up to Northern California. It also included present-day Nevada, Arizona, and parts of Colorado and New Mexico.

The new Mexican Constitution said all Mexicans were equal. Many officials argued that the Natives in the missions were not treated fairly and were denied their basic rights. They also thought the missions blocked new settlers from owning land. In 1833, the government decided to **secularize** the missions. This meant taking control of missions, removing the priests, and giving away the mission lands. The land was supposed to go back to the Native peoples, but only small pieces were given to Natives families. Many of these families struggled to farm the land and couldn't maintain it. Most Mission Indians ended up working on ranchos. By the end of secularization, the mission lands were divided among new owners, mostly Mexican settlers.

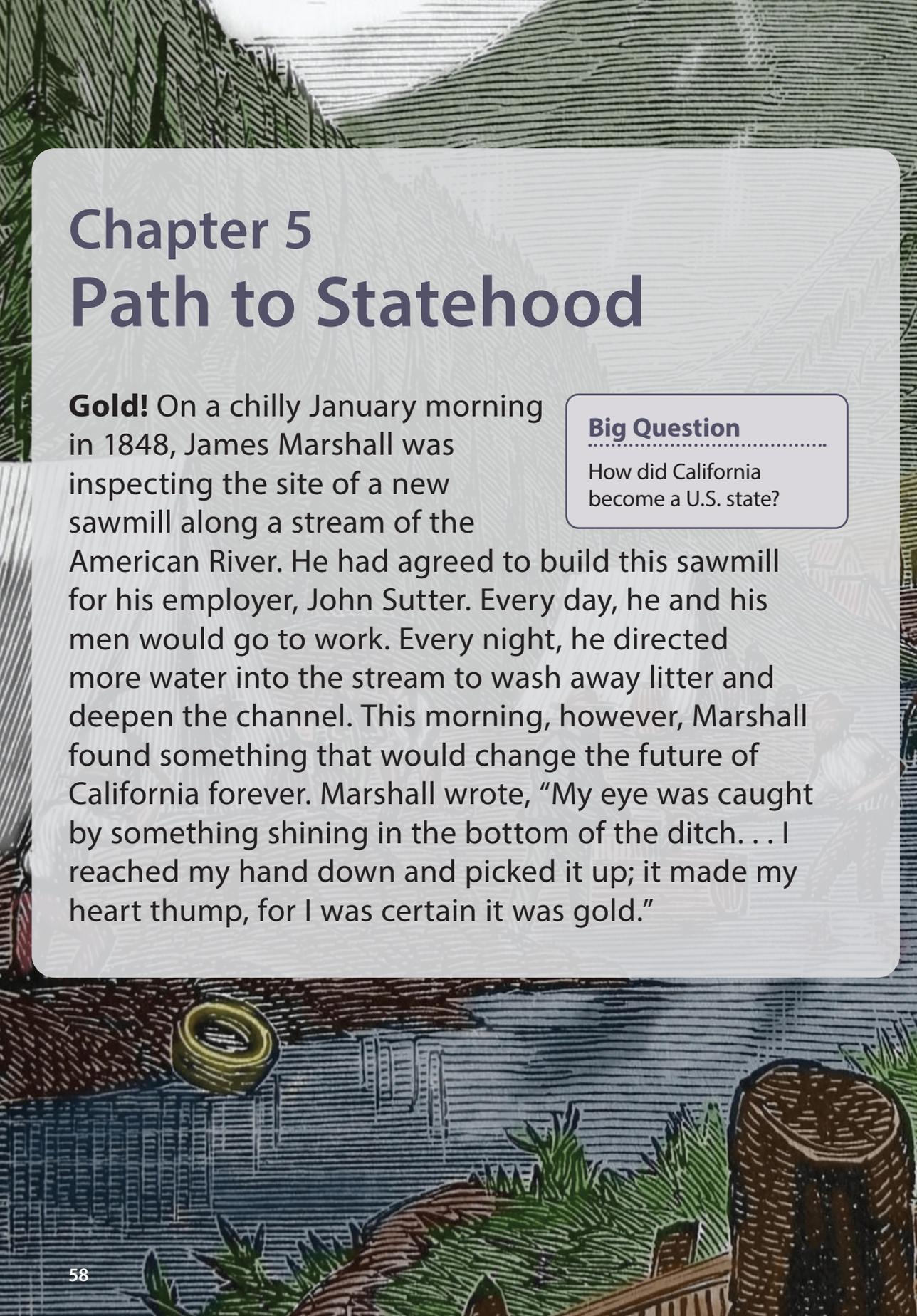
### Vocabulary

**secularize**, v. to take religion out of something



What is now Los Angeles County was once nearly forty ranchos.

Under Mexican rule, hundreds of ranchos in California were given to new landowners. The government wanted to encourage people to settle on less populated lands. This created a new class of landowning people who were mostly Spanish Californians or wealthy Mexicans. The new class of wealthy landowners further increased the distance between those in power and those who worked. The Native peoples of California lost even more control of the lands they had lived on for generations.



## Chapter 5

# Path to Statehood

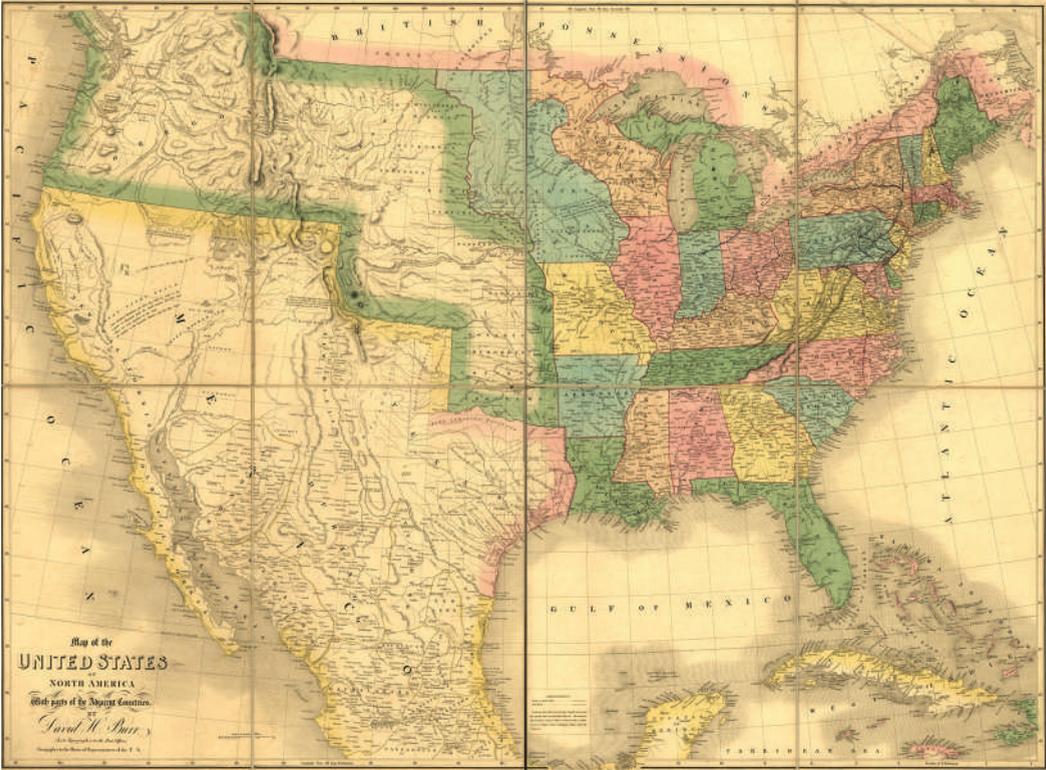
**Gold!** On a chilly January morning in 1848, James Marshall was inspecting the site of a new sawmill along a stream of the American River. He had agreed to build this sawmill for his employer, John Sutter. Every day, he and his men would go to work. Every night, he directed more water into the stream to wash away litter and deepen the channel. This morning, however, Marshall found something that would change the future of California forever. Marshall wrote, “My eye was caught by something shining in the bottom of the ditch. . . I reached my hand down and picked it up; it made my heart thump, for I was certain it was gold.”

### Big Question

How did California become a U.S. state?



After Marshall's discovery at Sutter's Mill, thousands of people flocked to California in 1849 to find gold. Many searched the rivers and streams for nuggets that had washed down from the mountains.



In 1839, Mexico owned much of the present-day southwestern United States.

News of Marshall's discovery spread fast. By May, word had spread to San Francisco. Having just returned from Sacramento, a businessman named Samuel Brannan announced as he ran down the street, "Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!"

## Mexican California

The lives of people living in California changed after Mexico gained independence. The Spanish missions no longer had power over the people. Much of California's land had been given to a new group of Californian

**elites**. The elite landowners were the bosses of the ranchos. Ranchos became the source of the new economy and culture.

### Vocabulary

**elite**, n. a member of a group of people who have more talent, wealth, power, or privilege than everyone else

Ranchos raised large herds of cattle and sold beef. The hides were stretched and dried into leather. Leather was an important material for things like saddles and clothing. Life on the ranchos was tough for

### Vocabulary

**vaquero**, n. a person who tends and manages livestock; a cowhand

the workers. The lands were still wild, with dangerous animals like grizzly bears and rattlesnakes. **Vaqueros**, or cowhands, worked on these ranchos along with other laborers. In exchange for their work, the rancho owners, or rancheros, provided them with food and some form of shelter. They almost always were not paid in money. In the early days, homes were made from reeds or earth. After some time, the wealthier rancheros were able to build homes out of adobe bricks or wood. For leisure, people gathered for events like bullfights, bear hunts, or **fandangos**. Fandangos were dancing parties hosted by rich rancheros.

### Vocabulary

**fandango**, n. a ball or party with dancing

Ranchos weren't the only types of places where Californians lived during this time. In 1812, Russian fur traders established Fort Ross just north of what is now San Francisco. The Russian American Fur Company that built the fort intended to set up North American colonies to trade animal furs. The Russians then sold the fort to a Swiss immigrant named John Sutter.

Sutter had come to California in 1839 after fleeing Switzerland, where he had large debts. He left his wife and five children behind. He convinced the governor of Mexico to grant him land. With the governor's approval, he converted to Catholicism and became a Mexican citizen. He was given a land grant for the area where the American and Sacramento Rivers meet. These



People wore their nicest clothes to fandangos. Common dances at fandangos included the *jota vieja*, *La Cachucha*, and the *contradanza*.

were Maidu and Miwok tribal lands. Sutter wanted to create a colony there, which he named *New Helvetia*, after the Latin name for Switzerland.

Sutter took some of the materials from Fort Ross and repurposed them. He built Sutter's Fort on these lands using the labor of the Miwok and Maidu tribes. At first, Sutter promised these local tribes protection from other tribes. However, it was soon clear that living in Sutter's Fort was not safe. Sutter captured and enslaved hundreds of Indigenous people during this time. He and his employees treated them inhumanely and kept them in unhealthy living conditions.

Sutter's Fort was completed in 1844. It soon became a successful trading post. Sutter sold the goods produced by enslaved workers on his land. These included peas, beans, cotton, wheat, and wool. Enslaved Native peoples built and maintained the fort. They worked



The walls of Sutter's Fort were eighteen feet 5.5 m high and three feet 1 m thick to protect it from raiders.

long days in Sutter's fields. If any of them tried to flee or didn't want to work, they were severely punished. Sutter's customers were often travelers and settlers from the United States and other outposts. Sutter's Fort was located at the very end of the California Trail used by wagon trains. This trail crossed the Sierra Nevada range, through a mountain passage now called the Donner Pass. People moving into California started as far east as Independence, Missouri. Most people came in wagons, on horseback, or on foot. They traveled for months before reaching the end at Sutter's Fort. They rested there after their long, dangerous journeys.

## **The Mexican-American War and the Bear Flag Republic**

California was under Mexican control for only twenty-two years. During this time, people in the United States had other interests in

the West. Some believed that expanding the country's boundaries would bring the blessings of liberty to the people who would live there. Others believed that it was America's Manifest Destiny to expand to the Pacific Ocean. By that, they meant that it was obvious, or manifest, that America's march to the Pacific Ocean was fated to happen. Sadly, at this point in history, this vision of freedom did not extend to Native Americans or African Americans.

James Polk was elected president in 1844, and he vowed to expand the country. He did this by provoking a war with Mexico.

The United States focused on a two-part strategy during the Mexican-American War. One army was sent to occupy the areas of New Mexico and California. They were met with little resistance from the locals. The second force was sent to invade Mexico. In 1847, President Polk sent troops by sea to capture the Mexican seaport Veracruz. From there, they marched to the capital, capturing Mexico City on September 14, 1847. The United States sent a negotiator to discuss a treaty in February of 1848. This led to the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In this agreement, Mexico **ceded**

525,000 square miles (1,300,000 sq km) of land. The Mexican Cession eventually became the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and

Wyoming. With the signing of the treaty, the Native peoples of these lands went from being under Mexican control to American control overnight.

When the Mexican-American War began, more than five hundred Americans lived in California. They had traveled mostly

### Vocabulary

**cede**, v. to grant or transfer

from Missouri in wagon trains to claim land and start farms. They settled on lands that belonged to Native peoples, further pushing the Indigenous peoples away. Mexican law allowed only Mexican Catholics to own land. However, settlers could convert to Catholicism, which many did to get around the law.

The American settlers were viewed negatively by Californian Mexicans, known as Californios. Many Californios who owned land considered themselves separate from Mexicans. They felt pressure from the American settlers. This pressure increased dramatically when Mexico and the United States went to war.

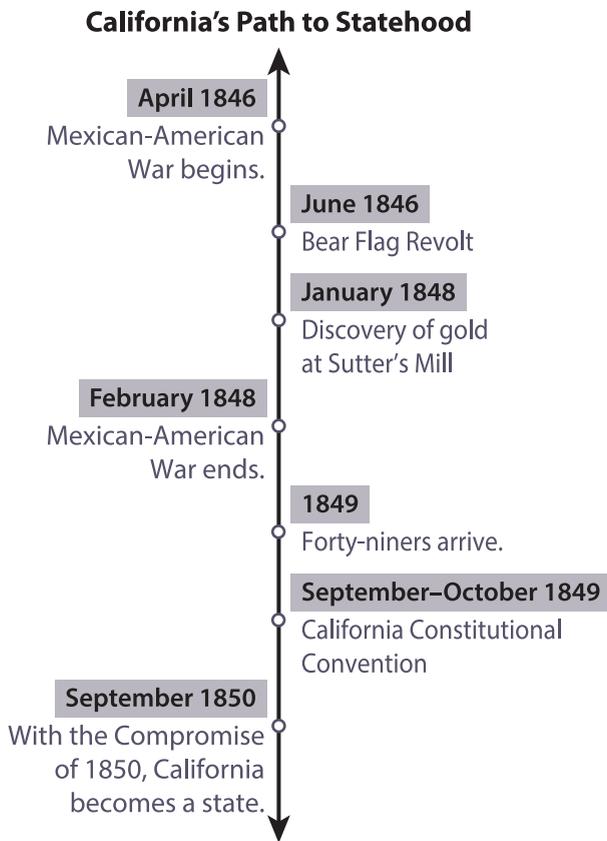
In the fall of 1846, rumors began to spread that the Americans would no longer be able to convert. More rumors followed stating



**The rebels of the Bear Flag Revolt held an independent republic in California for twenty-six days.**

that American settlers were going to be expelled after the winter was over. A young American officer named John C. Frémont encouraged local Americans to prepare for conflict with the Californios and promised them military support.

On June 14, 1846, a group of American settlers led by William Ide and Ezekiel Merritt gathered their forces. They seized the Mexican outpost of Sonoma, which had few defenses. Living here was Mariano Vallejo, a retired Mexican general and one of the most influential landowners in California. Merritt and his men demanded the general surrender. Surprisingly, Vallejo invited them in for food and drink. He explained that he was in favor of U.S.



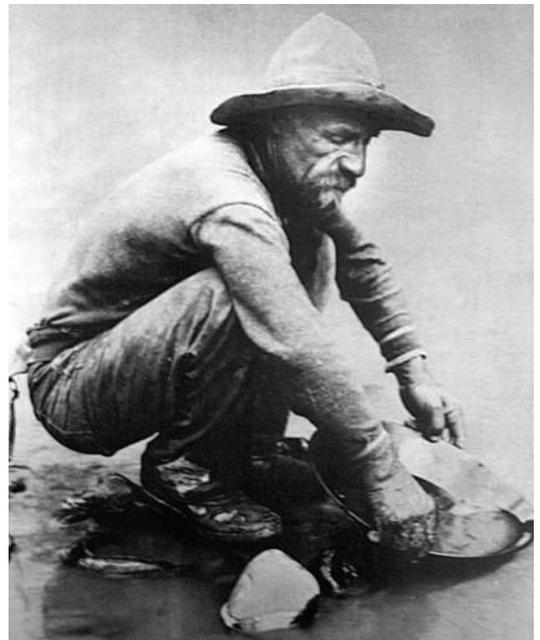
**In only five years, California's population saw multiple changes of government and the arrival of immigrants from all around the world.**

annexation of California and willingly surrendered. The American rebels named themselves the California Republic. They called themselves the Osos, or bears, and put a symbol of a bear on their new flag. Decades later, this revolt became known as the Bear Flag Revolt. The rebels elected John Frémont as the military governor of their new republic. By July 9, U.S. troops led by Commodore John Sloat arrived and claimed the land for the United States.

## The Discovery of Gold

In the summer of 1847, a measles epidemic swept through Sutter's Fort. Many enslaved Native workers died. Because there were fewer people to perform labor for him, Sutter decided to build a sawmill. He hired a carpenter named James Marshall. On January 24, 1848, Marshall was inspecting the sawmill. As he was walking along the stream with some Native guides, something glittery caught his eye. James Marshall showed the nugget of gold to John Sutter. But this discovery couldn't be kept a secret for long. Over the next few months, word spread to San Francisco and from there to the world.

Nine days after Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Fort, the United States signed the Treaty of Guadalupe



The simplest way that prospectors looked for gold was by panning. They used wide, flat bowls to sift out all the rocks, leaving just the gold at the bottom.

Hidalgo. This placed the resource-rich lands of California squarely in U.S. hands. Over the next year, thousands of people flocked to the area around Sutter's Mill. They were eager to find their own gold. Among the first gold seekers were Hawaiians, Mexicans, Chileans, Peruvians, and Chinese people. Word finally reached President Polk in December. He announced the discovery to the American public in his inaugural address. This led to a wave of people coming into California.

The next year brought more than eighty thousand **prospectors** into the goldfields of California. The gold seekers of 1849 were known as "forty-niners." California's population continued to rise in the years that followed. By 1853, 250,000 people had come in search of gold. A great majority of these people never found gold at all. However, those that did found an estimated 750,000 pounds of it.

### Vocabulary

**prospector**, n. a person who searches an area for gold, minerals, or oil

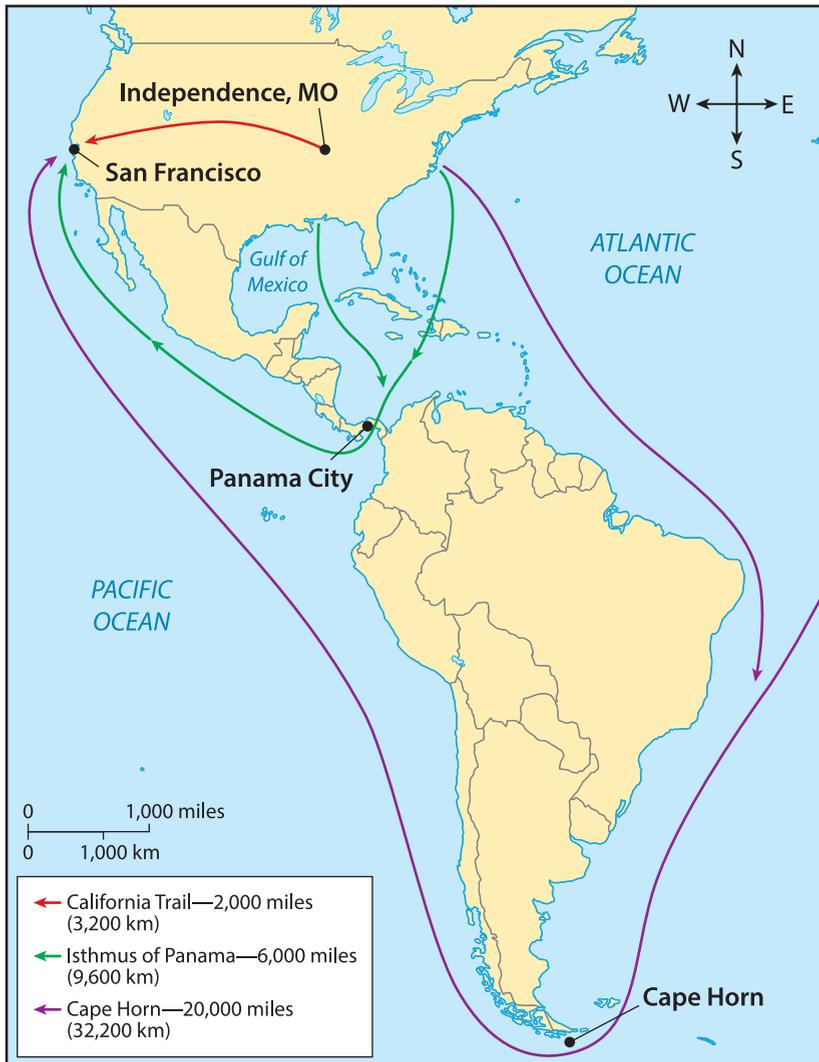
## Journeys to California

At this time, it was easier to travel to or from California by ship than it was to travel overland for three to five months. The fastest way to get from the east to west coasts was a three-part journey. Ships would sail south along the east coast and continue down to Chagres, in what is now Panama. People coming from the southern states sailed south through the Gulf of Mexico. From there, people then crossed the **Isthmus** of Panama, the strip of land that connects North and South America. Lastly, forty-niners had to wait in Panama City for a

### Vocabulary

**isthmus**, n. a narrow piece of land that connects two larger landmasses

## Travel Routes for Forty-Niners



Settlers had many options to choose from on their journey, but they faced grueling challenges along the way. Whether it was bandits, disease, or weather, settlers faced a lot of danger.

ship to take them north to San Francisco. Depending on the routes taken, the Panama trip took about two to three months.

There was also a route completely by sea. Would-be miners booked passage on ships that sailed around Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America. However, this route was more than twenty thousand miles (32,000 km) long and could take up to eight months.

Regardless of the methods, journeys to California were dangerous. Travelers struggled with illnesses like malaria, yellow fever, and cholera. Others experienced wagon accidents or shipwrecks along the way. Sometimes people would lose their belongings or lives to bandits.

## **Gold Rush Life: Boomtowns and Busts**

Three major settlements grew quickly during the Gold Rush. Nearly all of the immigrants arrived by ship at San Francisco, then known as Yerba Buena, the primary port of the area. The city became crowded and busy, with hotels, saloons, and gambling houses. Over fifteen years, more than 55,000 people moved to the city.

South of Yerba Buena, where there were many mines, ranchos grew into new settlements. Miners came to work and live on the wealthy landowners' land. Eventually, they grew from small villages into bigger towns. Originally called Tuleberg, the settlement of Stockton was located where the San Joaquin and Calaveras rivers join. Through this settlement, miners were able to connect mines from nearby areas. They could use boats to travel and carry goods from the mines to the larger town of Stockton.

Last were the well-known lands of John Sutter. He had lost his fortune and land, and the remaining enslaved workers fled. What remained of Sutter's Fort was a large population of miners and businessmen living two miles (3.2 km) south near the Sacramento River. These people decided to form a city, which they named Sacramento. It would eventually become the state capital of California. Settlements that saw sudden growth and prosperity

were soon known as **boomtowns**. As more people moved to California, boomtowns formed all across the state.

Many towns and villages were not as fortunate after the Gold Rush ended.

Boomtowns often sprang up near mines, thriving during the search for gold. But the Gold Rush couldn't last forever. Once the mines were emptied of their wealth, the nearby towns were sometimes abandoned. These deserted towns became known as ghost towns.

The Gold Rush brought a diverse group of new prospectors to California. Immigrants brought their own languages and customs. American miners became frustrated with immigrants. This worsened as the gold mines dried up over the next decade. White miners were particularly resentful of Chinese immigrants, who made up a large portion of the new immigrants. In 1850, the new California legislature started charging immigrants twenty dollars a month to mine. This was about eight hundred dollars in today's money. Unable or unwilling to pay the price, many Chinese people left San Francisco. A year later, the fee was reduced to four dollars a month (\$160 today).



The buildings of several ghost towns across California still exist. Some have schoolhouses and churches you can visit. This one, in Bodie, California, is now a state historic park.

### Vocabulary

**boomtown**, n. a town that grows quickly in size and wealth



By 1870, 70 percent of Chinese people in the United States lived in California. Some searched for gold, though most worked as hired hands or service workers.

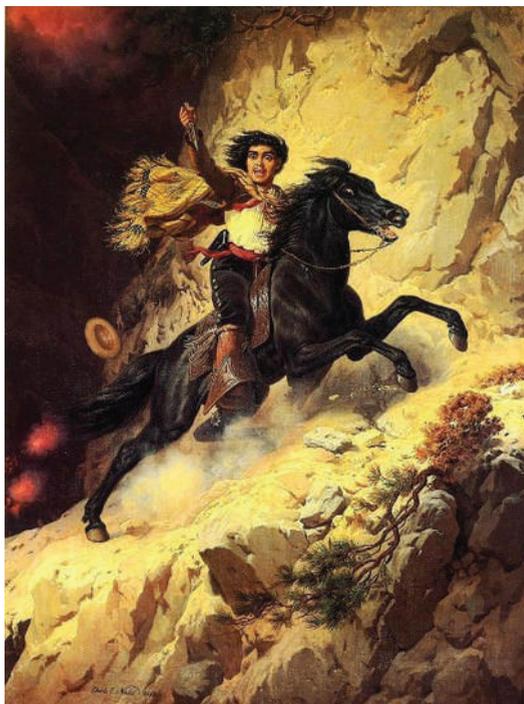
Mining wasn't the only way people found wealth. Many found it easier to farm or establish general stores that sold goods to the miners. Some offered transportation or housing to immigrants. A man named Levi Strauss was one example. He came from Bavaria in 1853 to open a dry goods business in San Francisco. He began making clothes for miners and workers in the area. Strauss and a tailor named Jacob Davis invented a way to reinforce denim with rivets. Their sturdy pants became known as blue jeans and Levi's.

With more people came a need for law and order. For the most part, miners were responsible for governing themselves. Often, the people were able to maintain order, but not always. One famous legend is of a bandit named Joaquín Murrieta. He was a Mexican-born immigrant in California during the Gold Rush. He, like many immigrants of the time, was upset about the taxes

and fees charged to non-Americans. The legends say that he led a group of outlaws across the San Joaquin Valley. They robbed white miners and travelers. Allegedly, the California governor offered a reward for his capture dead or alive.

The lifestyles and goals of men during the Gold Rush are well known. But women took advantage of opportunities in California, too. They were cooks, laundresses, boarding house and saloon keepers, wives, and journalists. Some were even miners themselves. Louise Clappe was one such woman. She and her husband moved to California in 1849 to start his medical practice. They lived in the mining camps near the Feather River, traveling where their business was needed. Clapp wrote letters to her sister describing everything that went on in the mines, from gambling to mining techniques. In 1851, she published her letters in the San Francisco magazine *The Pioneer*.

This sudden surge of new arrivals devastated the Indigenous population. When gold was discovered, around 150,000 Native Californians lived in the state. Over the next two decades, their population was reduced to just 30,000. Many lost their lives due to the diseases brought by the new settlers, others to outright



The story of Joaquín Murrieta was retold uncountable times, later influencing authors such as Johnston McCulley, who created the character Zorro in 1919.

violence. Many Native Americans were enslaved or forced to work, including women and children. Discrimination toward the Native peoples continued.

The environment took a heavy toll as well. Many of the forests were **depleted** because of the need for lumber. Rivers were clogged with sediment and debris from the mining upstream. The soil was polluted with chemicals. The Gold Rush led California into a new era of economic wealth but at an environmental cost.

### Vocabulary

**deplete**, v. to use up the supply or resources of

## Stories of California

Californians were affected by the Gold Rush in many ways. Pío Pico was the last governor of Mexican California. After the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, he became a citizen and businessman. He built a hotel in Los Angeles called the Pico House and bought the Rancho Paso de Partolo Viejo. His business ventures were successful for some time during the Gold Rush. When the traffic to his hotel started to fade, Pico was forced to face his debts. He ended up losing much of his business.

Elsewhere in California, people shared stories of a frontiersman named James “Jim” Beckwourth. His parents were a well-to-



Pío Pico helped to make Los Angeles into the prosperous city it is today.

do white man and an enslaved African American woman. He was born into slavery in Virginia, but his father took him west when he was twelve and released him as a free man. Over the decades, Beckwourth made a name for himself on expeditions and fur trading ventures. Everywhere he went, he told stories, often much exaggerated, about his deeds and adventures. He lived for several years among the Crow people in what is now Montana. After he participated in the Mexican-American War, Beckwourth traveled to California to seek gold. There, he met a journalist named Thomas Bonner. Bonner later published Beckwourth's recollections and preserved his knowledge about the Crow people.

John C. Frémont was disciplined by the U.S. Army for his role in the Bear Flag Revolt. He was charged with disobedience and mutiny for encouraging the Californios to revolt. Frémont was found guilty and discharged from the army. President Polk had him reinstated, but Frémont chose to leave the army. He returned to California in 1848 to land he had bought in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. He earned millions of dollars from gold found on his land. Once California became a state, Frémont was elected one of the first two senators of California.

John Bidwell served under Frémont during the Bear Flag Revolt and helped create the Californios' resolution of independence. He had served in the Mexican-American War and returned to Sutter's Fort in 1847. Later, he was the first person to find gold in the Feather River. He used his new wealth to purchase a large amount of land, where he founded the city of Chico. He also served in the State Senate. Bidwell even ran for president in 1892.

Bridget “Biddy” Mason was a Black woman born enslaved in Mississippi. Her enslavers moved her several times to new cities across the South and into the West, eventually ending up in California. After five years in California, Mason realized that enslavement was illegal in the state. Her enslavers attempted to move her and her family back to Texas but were unsuccessful. Mason sued for her freedom and the freedom of her family. She won. Her legal case was the first ruling of its kind. It set a **precedent** for other enslaved people to fight for their freedom.



Biddy Mason’s bravery and generosity helped the Black community in Los Angeles for years to come.

### Vocabulary

**precedent**, n. an example for future actions or decisions

Biddy Mason was a keen businesswoman and was fluent in English and Spanish. She settled her family in Los Angeles and

became a nurse and a midwife. Starting in 1866, she bought land with her earnings. As the city grew, Mason made more successful land deals and acquired more wealth. She used her money for charity as often as she could. She provided shelter and food to less fortunate people. She helped build an elementary school for Black children and the first Black church in Los Angeles.

## California Statehood

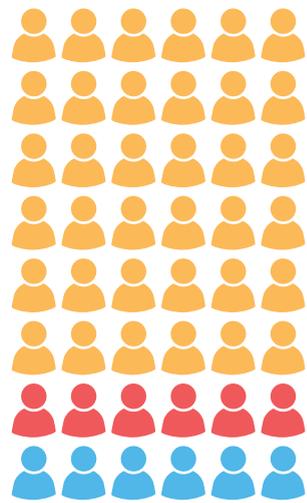
Thousands of people had come to California during the Gold Rush, and the people needed a government that could resolve many outstanding issues. In 1849, a constitutional convention was

held in Monterey. Forty-eight delegates from the state gathered to discuss the future of California. For six weeks, the delegates debated issues such as the state's boundaries, whether slavery should be outlawed, and who would be allowed to hold office. The delegates all agreed to prohibit slavery. By October 13, the first California Constitution was written in both English and Spanish. The delegates requested permission from the United States to join as a free state. Two months later, in December, Californians elected a governor.

Disagreement arose in Congress about whether to admit California as a state. There had been an important balance between slave and free states in the Senate. If California were admitted as a free state, this would disturb the balance. The Compromise of 1850 solved this by allowing California to join the Union as a free state. However, the free states compromised by agreeing to strengthen the Fugitive Slave Act. Now, free states would be legally bound to capture and return people who had escaped enslavement.

California became the thirty-first state on September 9, 1850, realizing the U.S. goal of Manifest Destiny by occupying the continent from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific. While statehood brought economic benefits, it also led to further displacement and the deaths of thousands of Native Californians.

**Delegates at the California Constitutional Convention**



The vast majority of the forty-eight delegates to California's Constitutional Convention were white American men.

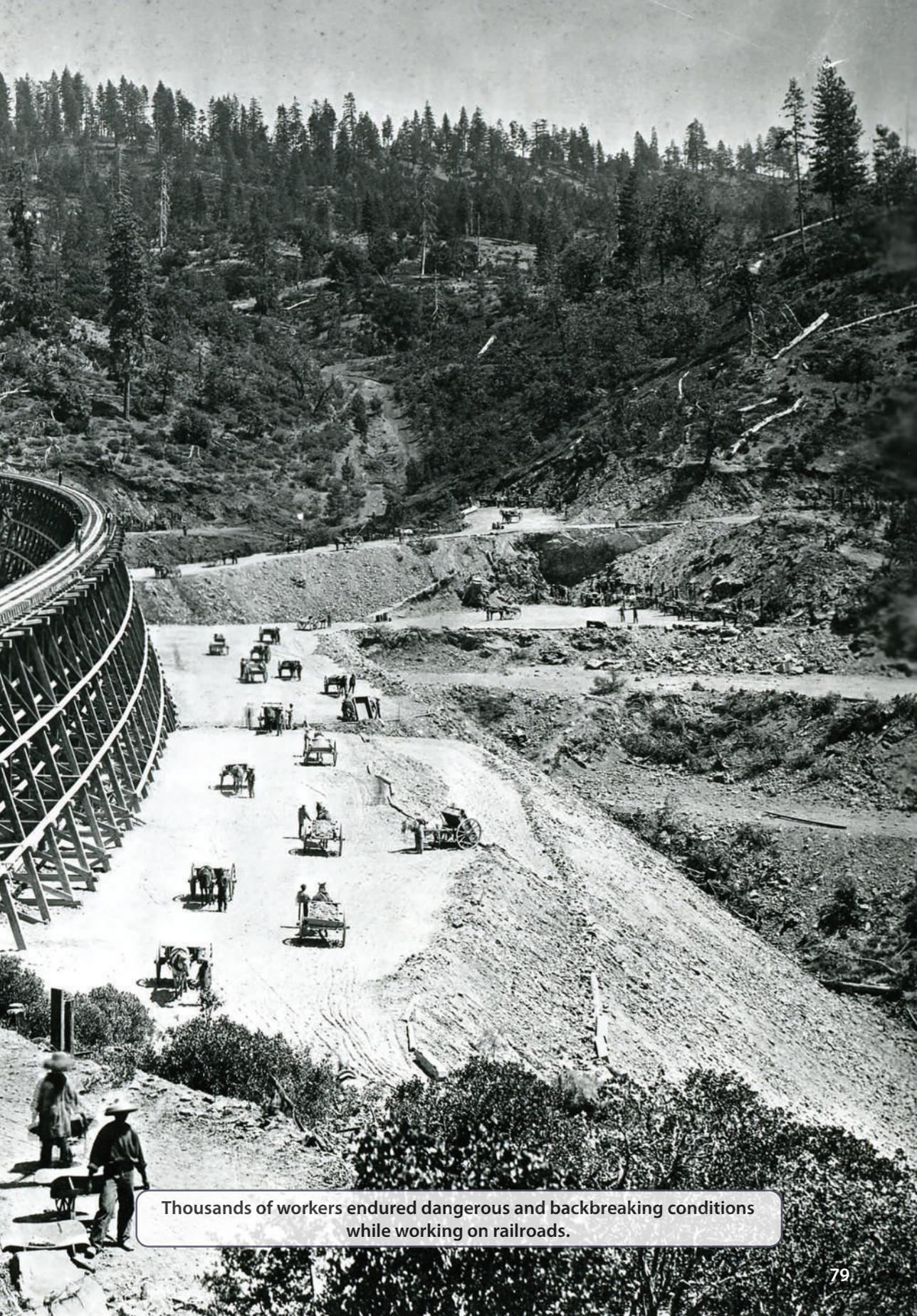
# Chapter 6

## California Grows

**A New Era Begins** In the early and mid 1800s, California was isolated from the rest of the country. California was so far away from the eastern states that it took months to reach by carriage. On a wet and chilly day on January 8, 1863, the governor of California, Leland Stanford, broke ground on a new project in Sacramento. Central Pacific Railroad workers spent six years laying 690 miles (1,110 km) of track. Working from the west, Stanford's railroad workers were hurrying eastward toward Promontory Summit, Utah. Workers laid rails and ties and secured them with spikes at an incredible speed. Finally, on May 10, 1869, the project was completed when the Central Pacific Railroad met the Union Pacific Railroad, and the two tracks were joined.

### Big Question

How did California grow after it became a state?



Thousands of workers endured dangerous and backbreaking conditions while working on railroads.

To celebrate the achievement of six years' work, something special was made. The very last spike driven into the railroad was made of gold. It was engraved with the names of the directors and officers in charge of the project. But also, it had a special message: "May God continue the unity of our Country as this Railroad unites the two great Oceans of the world." The quiet California of the past was gone. Now officially connected to the rest of the United States, everything would change rapidly.

## **California Joins the Union**

President Millard Fillmore signed the California Admission Act into law on September 9, 1850. Now that California was a state, Californians needed to decide on a capital and official representatives.

San Jose served as the first capital. But the city didn't have a building big enough for the new state assembly to meet. Mariano Vallejo was elected as a state senator when Californians approved the new constitution. He donated land for a new capital in a town called Vallejo. Still, it wasn't the right fit. The town's construction wasn't completed quickly enough, and transportation and weather were unfavorable. After trying Vallejo, Benicia, and San Francisco, the state settled on Sacramento in 1854.

By the 1860s, gold was becoming harder and harder to find. Most of the gold on the surface had been mined by the forty-niners and others who followed in their footsteps. Only major mining companies could afford the technology to dig deeper. However, people didn't stop immigrating to California. Boomtowns and cities were still growing. They were fueled by construction, farming,



Sacramento was eventually chosen as the state capital due to its convenient location and access to river travel.

and trading. The years following California's admission brought challenges and changes that shaped the state into what it is today.

## **Immigration and Migration**

In 1850, more than 92,000 people were living in California. By 1860, just one decade later, the total population had grown to almost 380,000. The new state had citizens who had been born in Mexico, Ireland, China, and elsewhere. This caused some tensions among racial and ethnic groups.

In 1860, the largest immigrant group in California was from China. As mining opportunities declined, job competition increased, leading to growing frustration among white Californians. Many directed their resentment toward immigrants, particularly those from China and Mexico. Chinese workers were often paid less than white workers, further fueling anti-Chinese feelings across the population.

Immigrants from China continued to face **prejudice** over the next century. Many had immigrated due to challenges they faced in their home country. In the early 1850s, southern China experienced crop failures, floods, and civil disorder. Thousands of people left from the port of Guangzhou to find a better life. They called California *gam saan*, or “gold mountain.” By 1880, more than 81,000 Chinese immigrants lived in California. They settled in rapidly growing cities like San Francisco and Los Angeles. Often, Chinese immigrants moved to neighborhoods where other people from China already lived.

## Vocabulary

**prejudice**, n.  
hostility toward a person, race, or group, often without basis in fact

A number of new laws attempted to exclude Chinese immigrants. The Foreign Miners License Law of 1850 targeted all foreign-born miners by charging a high fee to mine in the state. In 1882, the United States passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. It prohibited all immigration of Chinese laborers for ten years and barred them from becoming citizens. However, it did not apply to upper-class Chinese immigrants like diplomats and merchants. As a result, Chinese Americans now had to have a certificate that identified their occupation.



Photographer Arnold Genthe took several photos of San Francisco’s Chinatown in the early 1900s. His photos have been important to historians studying Chinese immigration.

They needed to show this certificate if and when they wanted to leave or enter the country. The restrictions prevented many Chinese immigrants from visiting their families in their home country. California's Chinese-born population shrunk from more than 81,000 in 1880 to just over 43,000 in 1900. However, people from other areas, such as the United Kingdom and Germany, would continue to immigrate to California for years to come.

By 1900, the California population surpassed 1,470,000. Immigrants born in another country made up almost 820,000 of that number.

## **The Transcontinental Railroad**

In 1858, the quickest way to get mail from Missouri to San Francisco was by the Overland Mail Service. The company ran stagecoaches that made the trip in twenty-five days, with scheduled stops every ten to twenty or so miles (16 to 32 km) along the way.

In 1860, this delivery time was beaten by the Pony Express. The Pony Express was a mail service that operated between Missouri and California. Young men rode horses on a route that was divided into around 190 stations. At each station, the rider would change to a new, rested horse and drop off and pick up any mail. At the end of a long day, riders would rest and let the next rider carry on with the mail. The riders rode through difficult conditions. They traveled through rough terrain and risked conflict with bandits and hostile Native tribes. The entire 1,670-mile (2,690 km) trip between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento took only ten days. People were excited to have a quick communication system across such a far distance.



The last rider of the very first journey of the Pony Express arrived in Sacramento, California, just after 5:00 p.m. on April 3, 1860. The city was joyous and celebrated with music, shouting, and ringing bells.

The Pony Express service only lasted eighteen months. New technology soon replaced the mail-carrying riders. In 1861, the first **telegraph** line across the country was constructed by the Western Union Company. This allowed people to communicate quickly over long distances using Morse code, an early form of radio communication that used signals and rhythms to represent letters. This groundbreaking technology was the nation's first electronic communication method and signaled the end of the Pony Express.

### Vocabulary

**telegraph**, n. a machine that relays messages over long distances by sending signals through wires

While communication grew easier, travel did not. It was challenging to settle in the West. The new western states were still separated from the rest of the country by hundreds

of miles of sparsely populated land. The journey across that land was long and dangerous—that is, until the **transcontinental** railroad was built.

**Vocabulary**  
.....  
**transcontinental**,  
adj. across a continent

In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act. The law granted money and land for a railroad connecting the East and the West. Two companies would start on opposite ends and build toward each other. The Central Pacific Railroad started in Sacramento on October 26, 1863. The Union Pacific Railroad started in Omaha, Nebraska, but was delayed due to the Civil War (1861–65). When the Union Pacific finally began the eastern portion of the line in July 1865, it was already behind schedule.

### The Transcontinental Railroad



The transcontinental railroad was just under two thousand miles (3,218 km) long and only took a few days to travel from Omaha to Sacramento.

The Central Pacific Railroad needed skilled workers for a very difficult job. During the first years of the project, work went slowly. It took time for materials to arrive from the eastern states. And the project often lost American workers to rumors of new gold discoveries nearby. However, even before the Chinese Exclusion Act, many Chinese workers found it difficult to find work in mining. The fees and taxes imposed on them, as well as the prejudice from non-Chinese miners, pushed Chinese workers away from the mines. The Central Pacific Railroad hired thousands of Chinese workers to build the train lines. Chinese workers were paid less than white workers. They made up about 80 to 90 percent of the Central Pacific Railroad's workforce. The remaining workers were mostly Irish immigrants.

Building the railroad was dangerous, difficult work. Dynamite was used to blast passages through the Sierra Nevada. Often, it was the Chinese workers who worked closely with the explosives. They worked for long hours through harsh winters and dry, hot summers. Falling rocks and debris were a constant danger when digging through the mountain passes. Thousands of Chinese workers lost their lives.

The railway companies competed to see how many miles they could complete in one day. Union Pacific Railroad held the record of constructing eight miles (12.9 km) of new track in a day. The Central Pacific Railroad was determined to beat that record. In 1869, as the two railroad companies got closer to meeting, they decided on a spot where their tracks would join. Meanwhile, the track-laying contest continued. On April 28, the Central Pacific Railroad made history by laying over ten miles (16 km) of track in



It is estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 Chinese men worked on the railroad in very dangerous conditions.

under twelve hours. A month later, on May 10, the two railroads met in Promontory Summit, Utah. The last spike was hammered in to secure the rails, completing almost two thousand miles (3,218 km) of track.

Now finished, the transcontinental railroad reduced the time to cross the continent from six months to only one week!

## California's Role in a Nation Divided

By the 1860s, cultural and economic divisions in the United States that had been growing for many decades had reached a breaking point. Northern states invested in an economy based on **industrialization**.

### Vocabulary

**industrialization**,  
n. a shift to the widespread use of machines and factories to produce goods

## Events in the Early Years of California Statehood



Some of the biggest changes to California in the late 1800s involved connecting the eastern and western United States.

They built steel plants and factories that manufactured and were powered by steam engines. However, in Southern states, most of the economy relied on large **plantations**. These plantations used enslaved labor. This unpaid labor was so important to the economy of the South that the idea of outlawing slavery threatened the South's entire way of life.

### Vocabulary

**plantation**, n. a large farm where cash crops are grown on behalf of the person who owns the land

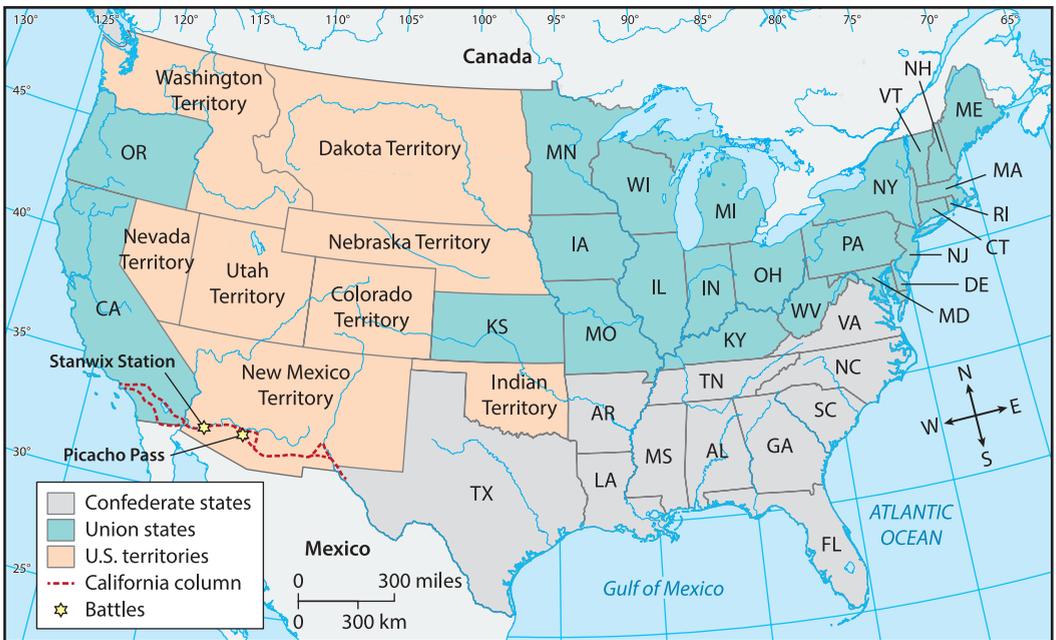
Abraham Lincoln became the sixteenth president of the United States in 1860. He opposed allowing slavery to spread into new U.S. territories. He said he would not try to end slavery where it already existed, but people in the South did not believe him.

Shortly after this election, eleven Southern states **seceded** from the country. These states declared themselves a new country called the Confederate States of America.

**Vocabulary**  
.....  
**secede**, v. to formally withdraw membership

The Northern states said that secession was illegal. The dispute grew into the American Civil War. It lasted more than four years and killed more than 750,000 people, making it the deadliest war in U.S. history.

Even though California was more than two thousand miles (3,200 km) from the battles, it still played an important role in the war. The Union relied heavily on California for money from gold mined in the Sierra Nevada. The state government of California contributed a large amount of money to the U.S. Sanitary Commission. This was an organization that was responsible for the medical treatment of U.S. soldiers.



California played an important part in keeping the Confederate army from taking any land west of Texas.

Californians were divided about the war. About three-fifths of eligible voters in California had been born in states that seceded. A large portion of people in Southern California supported the idea of California seceding, too.

Meanwhile, Northern California mostly supported the Union.



A monument to the California regiment stands in Gettysburg National Military Park.

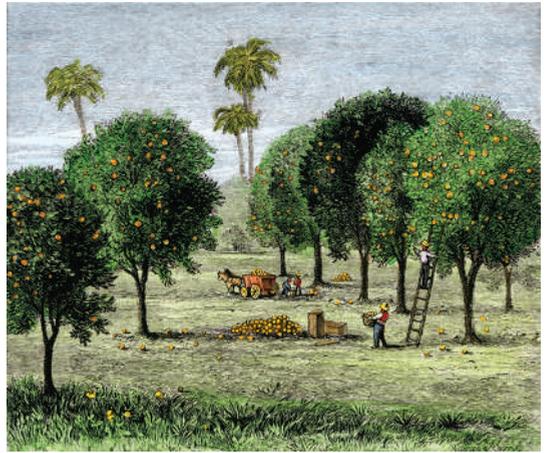
Some Californians joined the fighting. The California Column was a regiment of five thousand volunteers who fought for the Union. They fought against Texan troops trying to capture southwestern states in the battles of Picacho Pass and Stanwix Station, Arizona. The California Column succeeded in keeping Texas forces from moving westward.

Californians also fought in battles in the eastern states. In the Battle of Gettysburg, three Californian brigades guarded an area called “the Angle” against Confederate forces. They successfully kept the Confederates from passing farther into the Gettysburg battlefield.

## **From Gold to Growth: The Economic Transformation**

California’s economy was completely transformed following the Gold Rush. The gold from the mountains funded a lot of its growth. A less obvious benefit of the Gold Rush was the number of people who came to the state. With more people came the need for more homes and settlements. California has many forests, especially in

the northern part of the state. The lumber industry grew as newer and better sawmills were built. There was also a greater demand for more clothes, which strengthened the leather and cotton industries. These materials were produced in the fertile valleys of California.



Eliza Tibbets is credited with being the first to grow the seedless navel orange in her front yard in Riverside, California.

Agriculture flourished after the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Access to train lines made farming and shipping crops much easier. Increasingly, most of California's agricultural lands came to be owned and run by large corporations. Family farming became less common and less important to the state's economy. The ability to trade with eastern states encouraged farms to increase their production. Large farms invested in irrigation systems and tried new types of crops. Fruit became a common export. Along with expanded orchards came rapid growth in related industries like canning, packing, and transportation. In the 1880s, new methods of transporting perishable foods were introduced. Ventilated and refrigerated railcars helped keep crops fresh for longer, allowing them to travel much farther.

By 1900, California's population had soared to 1.4 million in just two generations. The state was also becoming a growing source of wealth and resources for the entire country.

# Chapter 7

## An Agricultural and Industrial Power

### Birth of a New Technology

Hedy Lamarr was one of the most popular actresses in Hollywood in the early 1940s. She was also a brilliant inventor. While working as an actor, Lamarr was also trying to solve a high-stakes problem. The United States would soon be engaged in a violent, global conflict. The U.S. Navy had been struggling with interference that interrupted the signals to its radio-controlled torpedoes.

#### Big Question

How did California change in the first half of the twentieth century?

Lamarr had some experience with the science behind the weaponry. Using her knowledge and creativity, she came up with what she called the “Secret Communication System.” It used constantly changing frequencies to make the navy’s radio systems harder to tamper with.



Hedy Lamarr was an accomplished actor and inventor who died in the year 2000.

In 1942, Lamarr filed for a patent. Unfortunately, the navy did not use her invention until decades later. Hedy Lamarr's invention laid the groundwork for the technology we use today. Thanks to her, we now have Bluetooth headphones and Wi-Fi.

## California in the Early 1900s

Many of the characteristics of California we know today got their start in the early 1900s. At the start of the twentieth century, more than 1,485,000 people called California home. Almost a quarter of the population were immigrants from other countries. The fastest-growing and largest city was Los Angeles. Between 1900 and 1910, the city's population grew by over 67 percent.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, both California and the United States as a whole experienced rapid growth and industrialization. Small businesses, like family farms and small workshops, were being replaced and taken over. Big companies were growing and making more money than ever before. The gap between rich business owners and everyone else was widening.

Workers were often treated unfairly. Big companies often fixed prices to make more money and destroy small businesses. In the early 1900s, a new way of thinking called **progressivism** took hold. Progressivism was a movement to change politics and business to benefit regular people.

### Vocabulary

**progressivism**, n. a political philosophy of social and political activism aimed at improving people's lives through government action

One of California's strongest progressive leaders was Hiram Johnson. He was an attorney who had a reputation for

fighting **corruption**. He was elected as California's governor in 1910. He said in his first inaugural address, "I take it, therefore, that the first duty that is mine to perform is to eliminate every private interest from the government, and to make the public service of the State responsive solely to the people." He later helped create the national Progressive Party. His reforms increased direct democracy in the state government, including the referendum process. A referendum is when citizens vote on a political question or proposed bill. The recall process, introduced in 1911, enabled voters to remove elected officials by popular vote. Johnson also advocated for a railroad commission to oversee the new Southern

### Vocabulary

**corruption**, n.  
illegal or dishonest behavior, often by people in a position of power

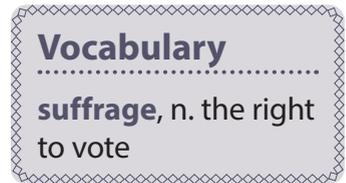


Largely due to women campaigning, California granted women the right to vote in 1911, nine years before the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteed the right federally in 1920.

Pacific Railroad. At the time, the Southern Pacific controlled a huge portion of California's economy. Without any competition, it could set whatever prices it wanted for passengers and cargo. The Railroad Commission created limits so that the railroads couldn't overcharge.

Progressivism also brought other changes.

In the 1800s, women's struggle for **suffrage**, or the right to vote, became more visible and more forceful. The California



Constitution stated that "every white male" had the right to vote. Petitions supporting women's suffrage got thousands of signatures. Finally, advocates convinced the legislature to add the question "Should women be allowed to vote?" on the 1911 ballot. Women campaigned hard, making posters, pins, and signs to deliver their message across the state. On election day, the equal suffrage measure passed with a very narrow majority. California then became the sixth state to give men and women equal voting rights.

As California's population and economy grew, the state became a cultural leader. One example was environmentalism. In the early 1900s, natural spaces in California and all over the country were threatened by rapid industrial expansion. John Muir feared the loss of nature. He founded the Sierra Club to help protect forests and nature and became a well-known advocate for wilderness preservation and protection. Through his writing, Muir brought public awareness to environmental problems. He also became influential with politicians such as Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt

advocated for **conservation**. Muir played an important role in getting Yosemite, Sequoia, the Grand Canyon, and other areas designated as national parks. National parks are natural spaces that are set aside by the government to protect the land.

### Vocabulary

**conservation**, n.  
the attempt to stop human actions that are harmful to wild or natural spaces

They include natural areas as well as historical landmarks. The Lava Beds National Monument in northeastern California is an example of a national park that is both a natural preserved area and a historical landmark.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, Californian culture began to take shape into what we recognize today. In addition to film and television, other arts were flourishing. Dorothea



The Muir Woods National Monument is home to redwood trees up to one thousand years old and up to 250 feet (76 m) tall.

Lange was a photographer. She moved to San Francisco in 1918. She was inspired to take photos of people during the Great Depression. Her photos brought the struggles and humanity of migrant workers into the public eye. Ansel Adams was also a photographer in California in the early 1900s. He photographed landscapes and focused on untouched nature. He is considered one of the country's most beloved photographers to this day. Another artist was writer John Steinbeck, born in Salinas. He wrote novels and short stories that were often about social and economic issues. Steinbeck is best known for his 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. The novel centers around migrant workers of the Great Depression. He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1962.



Dorothea Lange (1895–1965) was an influential American documentary photographer and photojournalist.

## California and World War I

Across the Atlantic Ocean, conflicts were rising in Europe. On June 28, 1914, tensions between Austria-Hungary and Serbia sparked a war that quickly involved the whole world. On one side were the Allies, including countries like France, Russia, and Great Britain. On the other side were the Central Powers, including Germany, Austria-

Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire (Turkey).

The United States wanted to stay **neutral** at first. Germany, however, was trying to convince Mexico to join the war. Germany promised to return Texas, New Mexico,

and Arizona to Mexico if Mexico would invade the United States.

California governor Hiram Johnson responded by sending California National Guard troops to defend the state's Mexican border. The United States finally declared war in April 1917. After a little more than a year, German forces in Europe were defeated. The war ended in victory for the United States and the Allies. On November 11, 1918, the fighting stopped when the countries signed a ceasefire agreement. This day became known as Armistice Day, celebrating the end of what people hoped would be the "War to End All Wars." Today, we celebrate this anniversary as Veterans Day.

More than 112,000 young men from California fought in Europe. The First World War affected California in other ways, too. Many of California's industries grew because of the war. For example, agricultural companies supplied a lot of food to the war effort overseas. California also hosted training facilities to support the war effort.

Women in California played a crucial role in supporting the war. Many worked in factories,

### Vocabulary

**neutral**, adj.  
not helping or supporting either side in a conflict



At Camp Kearny, north of San Diego, soldiers learned many things, including how to use a trench fan to clear poisonous gases.

shipyards, and aircraft production, helping to build supplies for troops. Others took jobs as nurses, caring for wounded soldiers at home and abroad. In addition, women participated in fundraising drives and volunteered for organizations like the American Red Cross, making bandages and assembling care packages for soldiers. Their contributions helped keep industries running and provided essential aid to those fighting overseas.

## **The Transformation of Agriculture and Industry**

In the late 1800s, grains were the primary crops grown on California farms. Wheat and barley supported the economy and the growing population. After a while, too many farms grew wheat. At the time, the price of wheat was quite high compared to the prices of other crops. Farmers could make more money by focusing on growing wheat. Trade connected California's economy to other countries across the Pacific Ocean and beyond. For years, California farms produced large amounts of wheat to sell to countries like Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

Over time, wheat farming used up certain nutrients in the soil, like nitrogen. The amount of wheat that could be produced started to decline. Then, in the early 1900s, wheat prices began to drop, until it was no longer profitable to grow wheat. Many California wheat farmers changed plans. Instead of growing wheat season after season, they rotated their crops. They cycled through fruits and vegetables as well as wheat. This is because different crops use and add different nutrients to the soil. Instead of only taking nutrients from the soil, crop rotation let farmers replace them. As

a result of this more **sustainable** process, the agriculture industry in California grew tremendously.

### Vocabulary

**sustainable**, adj. able to be maintained

Water is an important resource for all living things. In California, water has sometimes been in short supply. Throughout its history, the Central Valley has experienced several droughts. In response to the unpredictable water supply, the state began to find ways to irrigate land far from water. The government also began to build dams, aqueducts, and reservoirs to control the flow of water into more areas. In the 1900s, more farmers were building irrigation systems to make the arid lands better for growing crops. A lot of these systems involved extracting groundwater. This was possible because of new technologies and cheaper energy. By 1950, private irrigation supplied half of the state's water. Now more than ever, California's farms were able to



The Shasta Dam was completed in 1945. At the time of its construction, it was the second-tallest dam in the United States at 602 feet (183 m).

produce large amounts of a variety of crops.

Other industries were growing along with agriculture at the turn of the twentieth century. Petroleum extraction began in California in 1865.

Very quickly, engines that had been powered by steam were converted to run on oil. Trains, ships, automobiles, and industrial machinery became dependent on petroleum fuels, and the oil industry

boomed. California's oil industry started in 1876. At its peak in 1920, the state's oil industry produced over 206 million barrels.

The auto industry took off as well. Between 1909 and 1919, millions of dollars were raised by the state government to fund a road system. As cars became more affordable for the middle class, more people than ever owned them. The state passed legislation to organize vehicle registrations in 1913 and imposed a gas tax in 1923.

Airplanes were another machine that used oil. California's aerospace industry grew when Mines Field (later renamed Los Angeles Municipal Airport) was built in the late 1920s. Aircraft manufacturers saw Southern California as a good place to establish business due to the temperate climate and abundance of skilled labor.



Between 1914 and 1922, the number of cars registered in Los Angeles doubled to more than 172,000.

# The Great Depression and the Dust Bowl Migration

After World War I, farmers in the Great Plains were struggling. A **recession** led to lower prices of crops. Many farmers in the Great Plains had to increase their production to make the same amount of money. Farmers spent a lot of money to cultivate more land. Some took loans from banks.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, people were investing in the **stock market**.

Many people borrowed money to pay for their investments. In other words, they bought stocks and planned to pay for their purchases later, when their investments made money. But the stock market could not handle all of this activity. In 1929, the stock market crashed. People's investments were suddenly worth almost nothing. In a panic, people tried to take their money out of banks, but the banks did not have enough cash to give everyone what they wanted. Many banks closed. Some tried to get money by collecting on loans. When farmers couldn't pay back what they owed, the banks took their land instead.

The era that followed was called the Great Depression. Farm income dropped by half. Unemployment reached 28 percent in 1932. Many people became homeless. By 1937, one in five Californians were receiving assistance from the government. The country's economic struggles spread to the rest of the world.

In response, President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced the New Deal, a series of government programs aimed at economic

## Vocabulary

**recession**, n. a period of reduced economic activity in which employment and production fall

**stock market**, n. a market where pieces of a company are sold to the public

recovery. In California, New Deal programs provided relief and job opportunities. The Farm Security Administration helped struggling migrant workers. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded public projects such as roads, schools, and murals, employing thousands of Californians. The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created jobs preserving forests and parks. These programs helped ease the hardships of the Great Depression and left a lasting impact on the state's infrastructure and workforce.

Farmers of the Great Plains faced another problem in the 1930s. The Great Plains was originally covered with tall, tough grasses with sturdy root systems. Over time, farmers plowed up the prairie grasses to plant wheat and corn. However, without the native grasses, the soil couldn't hold water as well. Then a drought struck the region in 1931 and continued for seven years. Crops died while the soil dried up and turned to dust. When the winds came, they created dust storms. Areas that were greatly affected included Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri. This phenomenon was called the Dust Bowl. Dust and sand darkened the sky and covered everything from crops to homes and livestock. It buried some areas and left others barren.

While the Dust Bowl did not spread to California, the state was still affected by it. Hundreds of thousands of people left their farms and migrated to California. It was



The Dust Bowl brought storms of sand and dirt so thick they blocked out the sun.

the largest surge in California's population since the Gold Rush. These people became known as "Okies," though most did not come from Oklahoma. The new arrivals were not always warmly welcomed. They were criticized by Californians who thought they were uneducated or strange. Some migrants were able to find work and housing on California farms. Many were given only a tent to live in. With unsanitary living arrangements, diseases spread. During the peak of migration in 1936 and 1937, diseases like smallpox, tuberculosis, and malaria were common. The Farm Security Administration built ten federal camps in 1937 for migrant workers. However, this was not enough to shelter the growing migrant population.



A woman named Florence Owens Thompson and her children in Nipomo, California, were among the migrant workers struggling through the Great Depression.

During the Great Depression, many American citizens blamed Mexicans and immigrants from other countries for high unemployment. They claimed that immigrants took jobs that Americans needed. As a result, the government began **repatriation** campaigns. Some state relief agencies also responded by requiring proof of citizenship. The immigration laws at the time authorized the **deportation** of anyone

### Vocabulary

**repatriation**, n. the process of returning or being returned to one's country of origin

**deportation**, n. the process of removing a person from a country whose presence is unlawful

who was not a citizen. Because of this, many Mexican immigrants were not able to request relief, or government help. Nationwide, the government at all levels targeted people based on race as well as nationality. In consequence, unemployment and poverty forced perhaps one to two million people to leave the United States for Mexico. An estimated 60 percent of these were American citizens of Mexican descent. Of the people affected by the Mexican repatriation efforts, around 400,000 were from California.

## **World War II**

In 1939, another war started in Europe. World War II began when Japan, Italy, and Germany took aggressive actions in the 1930s. In Europe, Germany invaded country after country, eventually provoking Britain and France to declare war.

Meanwhile, Japan was invading its neighbors, too. In 1937, Japan invaded China. In protest, the United States stopped selling certain goods to Japan and took control of Japan's investments in the United States.

For the first few years of World War II, the United States remained neutral and was not directly involved in combat, but it supported the Allies by sending supplies and military aid. This changed when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, a U.S. naval base in Hawaii, on December 7, 1941. In response, President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for a declaration of war, officially bringing the United States into the conflict.

After Pearl Harbor, widespread fear and anti-Japanese feelings increased. The U.S. government targeted Japanese Americans,

wrongly suspecting them of disloyalty. They were accused of secretly being loyal to Japan, instead of the United States. There was never any proof of this. Most Japanese Americans were American citizens who had been born in the United States and had never lived in Japan. In February 1942, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which led to the forced removal of people of Japanese heritage from their homes, most of them U.S. citizens. Given only days to pack, many were forced to abandon or sell their homes and businesses at a loss. They were sent to **internment** camps in remote areas, where they lived under harsh conditions for years, despite never being charged with any crime.

### Vocabulary

**internment**, n. the act of confining or imprisoning someone during a war for political reasons

Over the next several months, more than 112,000 Japanese Americans were sent to assembly centers and then to the internment camps. There were ten camps across the country in remote desert locations surrounded by barbed wire and patrolled by military guards. Two of these camps were built in California, including one at Manzanar. At these camps, multiple families had to share living quarters. The prisoners tried to make the

**California Internment Camps and Assembly Centers During World War II**



California had twelve assembly centers and two internment camps.

best lives they could in the camps. They organized church services, sports, and community gardens. However, they had to stay there until the end of the war in 1945. Some young Japanese American men were able to leave the camps if they joined the military. Some of those who did formed one of the most decorated regiments in the war.

Meanwhile, Americans across the nation were encouraged to participate in the war effort. Government programs carefully **rationed** important goods like food and gasoline. People were expected to not consume more than they needed so there were enough resources for the soldiers. Another way people contributed was by purchasing war bonds. These were loans to the government in the form of an investment. After a given number of years, the government would cash out the bonds by repaying the purchase amount plus a certain amount of interest.

### Vocabulary

**ration**, v. to control the amount of something

American society changed after the war began. Everyone was expected to contribute in some way. More than 800,000 Californians joined the U.S. military. Women were encouraged to enter the workforce to fill the men's jobs. They became skilled factory workers, engineers, welders, and more. Some women did join the military, too, in noncombat jobs. In Southern California, major airplane factories supplied bomber planes for the military. Northern California had shipbuilding plants that supplied parts for cargo ships and warships.

The availability of wartime jobs contributed to another significant movement of people called the Great Migration. During World



The Douglas Aircraft Company in Long Beach, California, employed both men and women during the war. One aircraft the company produced was the B-17 bomber, also known as the Flying Fortress.

War II, thousands of Black Americans migrated from southern states to the West. They were looking to make better lives for themselves and their families. Between 1942 and 1945, more than 340,000 Black people moved to California. Many sought jobs in the automobile, rubber, and steel industries. The Great Migration contributed to California's urban growth.

The United States also made an agreement with Mexico to allow workers to temporarily come to the United States to work on farms and railroads. Called the Bracero Program, this led to an increase in Mexican workers in California.

The war intensified racial tensions in California. The combination of the Mexican repatriation efforts, the growing number of

migrants in the area, and strict rationing of essential goods created pressure and worry. In 1943, race-based attacks called the Zoot Suit Riots broke out. Zoot suits were outfits that included long coats with wide lapels and high-waisted pants. They were often worn by young Mexican American and Filipino American men. To some people, the zoot suits were unpatriotic because they used so much fabric at a time when goods were scarce.

On May 31, 1943, a racially motivated fight broke out in downtown Los Angeles between Mexican American teenagers and U.S. Navy sailors. When other sailors heard about it, they gathered in a group of fifty and went into the city. The violence lasted for days. The sailors searched for Mexican Americans dressed in zoot suits and beat them severely. The police department did not stop the violence. The riots finally ended on June 8, when the U.S. Army stepped in. These riots inspired similar attacks in several other cities across the country over the next few years.



A young man wearing a zoot suit is arrested during the Zoot Suit Riots in June 1943.

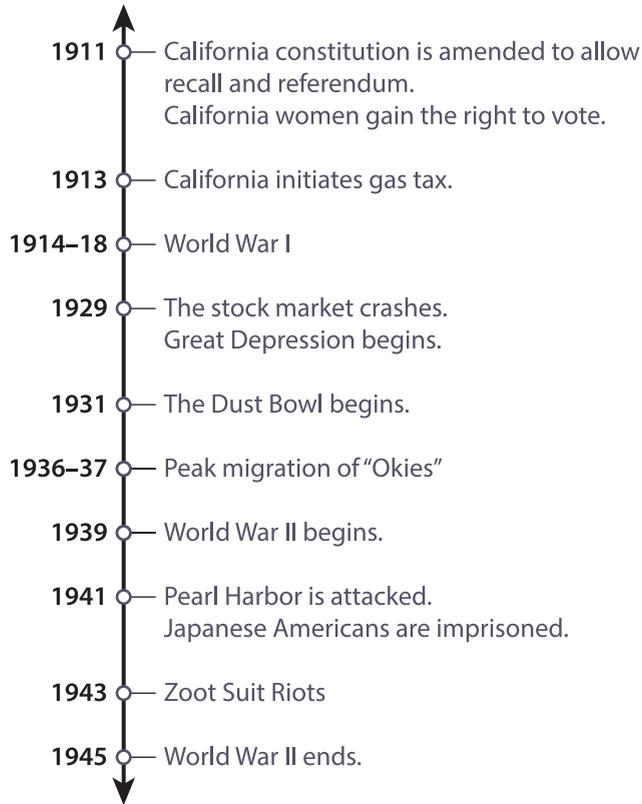


The seven-part documentary *Why We Fight* debuted in 1942. The documentary showed American citizens footage from the war to inspire and educate them.

During World War II, one industry had a surprising effect on Californian and American culture. The major motion picture studios in Hollywood responded to the war by making movies with anti-Nazi messages. Movies became a source of patriotism. They increased morale with stories about soldiers overcoming threats. Hollywood stars spent time campaigning for war bonds and recruiting new soldiers. Movie studios also produced documentaries to inform civilians about the war.

In May 1945, Germany surrendered. Japan surrendered in September, after the United States dropped two atomic bombs. The war was over.

## California and the United States in the Early 1900s



In a little over thirty years, California experienced increased migration, two world wars, and major changes to civil rights.

## California’s Emerging Film Culture

In addition to war-based films, Hollywood bustled with new movies that featured talented new stars. A notable person in the movie industry at the time was Louis B. Mayer. Born in Russia, he eventually ended up in Los Angeles. There, in 1924, he opened a successful movie studio called Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, or MGM. Their slogan used to be that they had “more stars than there are in heaven.” One of MGM’s most popular actors was John Wayne. He was said to embody American values. He played parts in many western, action, and dramatic movies.

The roles that actors of color received were often limited to portrayals of racial **stereotypes**. But that didn't stop them. Hattie McDaniel was a Black actor in the 1930s. She was the first Black woman to be nominated for an Oscar. She won "Best Supporting Actress" in 1940 for her role in *Gone with the Wind*. She was able to attend the award ceremony, but it was **segregated**. Instead of sitting with her fellow actors, she had to sit in a separate section. Another notable actress was Anna May Wong. As a Chinese American actor, Wong struggled with discrimination in the film industry for years. She had to move to Germany to get acting work. Eventually, she became the first Asian American to star in a television show.

For California, the first half of the twentieth century was packed with both struggle and progress. Things were beginning to change as minorities fought and advocated for their rights. But this was only the beginning. There were many more changes to come.

### Vocabulary

**stereotype**, n. an unfair and untrue representation of a group of people based on a belief that everyone in the group is the same

**segregate**, v. to keep people separate, usually on the basis of race

# Chapter 8

## California in the Postwar Era

### A Magic Kingdom Opens

July 15, 1955, was a hot summer day in Anaheim. The temperatures were over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit (37.8°C). Walt Disney and his crew had worked hard until the last minute before opening Disneyland to the public. They were still adding the finishing touches when the gates opened at 10:00 a.m. When the long-awaited moment finally arrived, Walt Disney delivered a heartfelt speech: “To all who come to this happy place, welcome. Disneyland is your land. Here age relives fond memories of the past . . . and here you may savor the challenge and promise of the future. Disneyland is dedicated to the ideals, the dreams, and the hard facts that have created America . . . with the hope that it will be a source of joy and inspiration to all the world.”

### Big Question

How did California change in the second half of the twentieth century?



**"PARTNERS"**  
"I THINK MOST OF ALL, WHAT I WANT DISNEYLAND TO BE  
IS A HAPPY PLACE... WHERE PARENTS AND CHILDREN  
CAN HAVE FUN, TOGETHER."  
Walt Disney

In 1993, sculptor Blaine Gibson created a statue of Walt Disney and Mickey Mouse holding hands. The statue, titled *Partners*, looks out over Main Street in Disneyland. Duplicates of this statue were later made for other Disney properties.

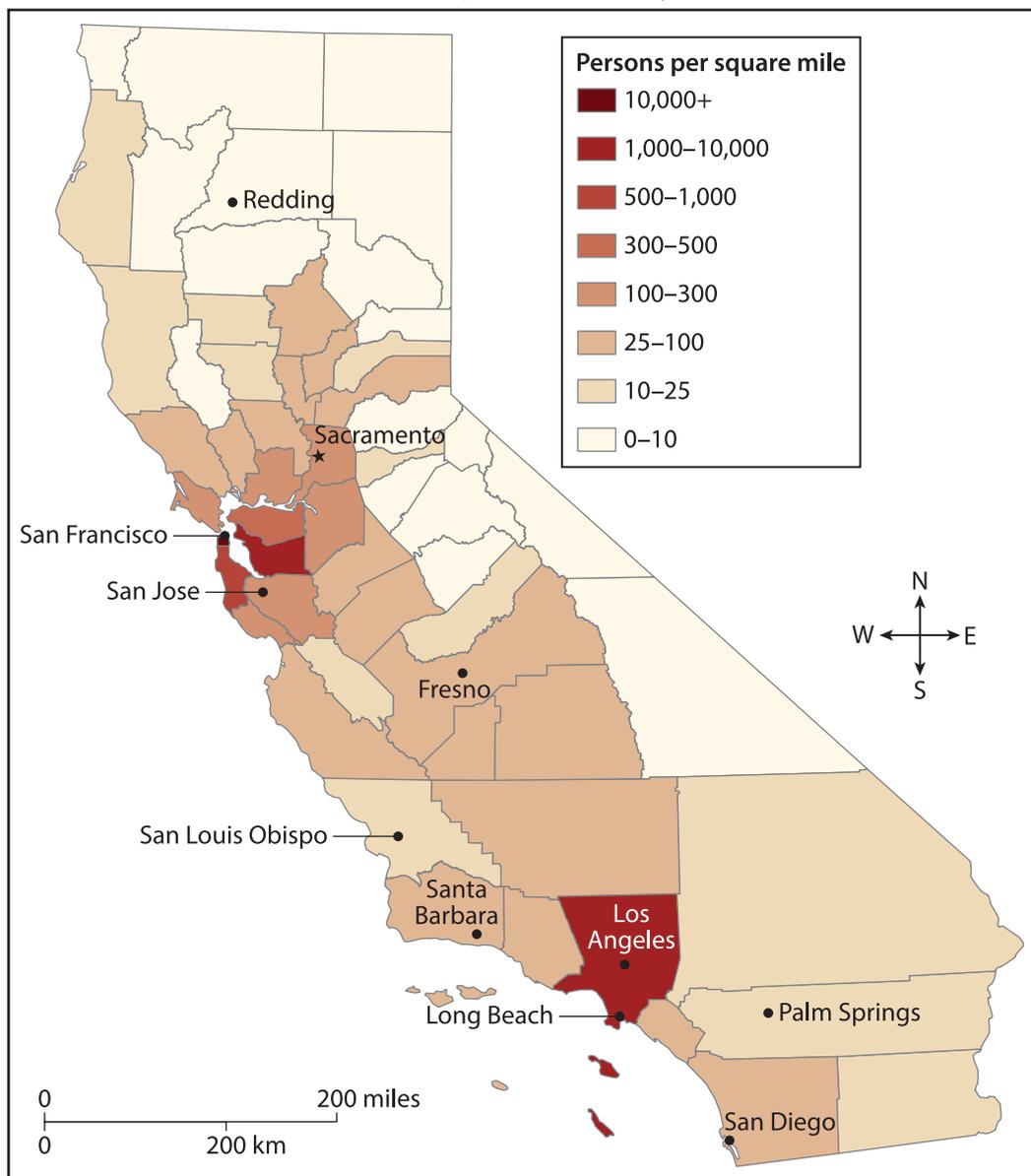
Opening day didn't exactly go according to plan. People's shoes sank into the asphalt, which hadn't fully hardened yet. Rides broke down, and the park ran out of food and drinks. But even after all the problems that Disneyland experienced, visitors still felt the magic. Disneyland quickly became a beacon of American culture. Today, as you enter the park, you may hear a steady beeping noise coming from the train station. That sound is Walt Disney's opening-day speech in Morse code. His message of growth and imagination has carried on through the decades.

## **California After World War II**

At the end of World War II, California's culture and economy experienced some growing pains. Many soldiers came home to a state that had changed. California's population increased from around 6,785,000 in 1939 to 9,344,000 in 1945. More people were living in California than ever before. With the war over, wartime industries shrank. Over the next few years, thousands of people lost their jobs. California experienced an unemployment rate much higher than the country's average.

The U.S. government was aware of this problem. Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act in 1944 to help veterans after the war. It provided veterans with home and farm loans, medical assistance, and education. It was nicknamed the GI Bill. The GI Bill gave money to veterans to pay for college education. In many cases, it was free. In California, community colleges and universities grew with the new student demand. Between 1940 and 1950, the number of higher education degrees obtained in California doubled. The University of

## California Population Density, 1950



In 1950, San Francisco was California's most densely populated county with more than 17,000 persons per square mile.

California built branches in Los Angeles and Long Beach in the late 1940s.

A baby boom after the war contributed a housing shortage. The growing families and returning veterans needed homes. Over the next three decades, six million homes were built. Many were

single-family homes. These homes used more land than tall apartment buildings that housed several families. Cities expanded into suburbs. This was called **urban sprawl**.

### Vocabulary

**urban sprawl**, n.  
the spreading of developments into undeveloped land around a city

President Dwight Eisenhower felt it was important to connect the spreading suburbs. He called for a better highway network across the nation. As a result of his efforts, the interstate highway system began construction in 1956. These highways connected cities and suburbs across the country.

One consequence of this expansion was the destruction of communities like Chavez Ravine in Los Angeles, where Mexican American residents were displaced to make way for development projects. Chavez

Ravine was a shallow canyon in Los Angeles. The independent, rural community relied on farming for income. The residents of Chavez Ravine were forced out so that the

Los Angeles Dodgers' baseball stadium could be built. The story

highlights how new highways and suburban development often damaged working-class and minority neighborhoods.



In the 1950s, many of the new suburbs of Los Angeles were built using mass-produced houses. This new technique of building houses part by part in factories allowed many new homes to be built very fast.

As the war was ending, another conflict was beginning. Tensions between democratic and **communist** countries were rising. The conflict was driven by the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union wanted to spread communism, and the United States wanted to stop it. This conflict was called the Cold War because there was no direct warfare between the United States and the Soviet Union. Instead, the two countries competed for influence over other countries. Often, they supported opposite sides in conflicts in other countries, such as Cuba, Poland, Korea, and Vietnam.

### Vocabulary

**communist**,  
adj. relating to communism, an economic system based on community ownership of property and industry

Californians contributed to the U.S. Cold War effort by researching and developing new technologies. Aerospace companies in San Francisco and Orange County studied problems and attempted to solve them for the military. One example was San Francisco's anti-aircraft defense system. Twelve missile bases were built around the Bay Area. The missiles were supposed to defend the country's western borders from air attacks.



By its last mission, the space shuttle *Discovery* had traveled 149 million miles and spent a total of 365 days in space.

California's history of aerospace manufacturing and technology helped the United States reach new heights. In the 1980s, the Rockwell plant in Palmdale was hard at work. It was developing NASA's Space Transportation System (STS). Commonly known as the space shuttle, STS was designed as a reusable craft to carry humans into orbit. In 1983, the space shuttle *Discovery* was completed. *Discovery* flew thirty-nine missions over the next twenty-six years.

The California Department of Water Resources constructed a system of dams, reservoirs, power plants, and aqueducts in the 1960s and 1970s. The State Water Project provides water to more than twenty-seven million Californians and 750,000 acres (3,035 sq km) of farmland. The water storage and delivery system helps in times of drought. It also provides hydroelectric power. It spans 705 miles (120 km) across the state. However, there are ongoing disputes about how the water is used. Some areas, like Owens Valley, have had significantly less water. The tribes in the valley, as well as farmers, have been fighting for water rights since 1991.

Population growth and diversity also affected California's schools. In 1947, California started to end the separation of students based on race in schools. Then, in 1988, the public voted to set a minimum amount of money the state would spend on public education. By 1997, California established statewide standards for English language arts and math. Today, California has 339 colleges and universities. This includes ten University of California campuses, twenty-three California State University campuses, and 116 California community colleges. In the 1950s and 1960s,

many colleges and universities began to enroll women, leading to a big increase in the number of students. In 1960, there were about 234,000 students in higher education. That number grew significantly over the years, and by 2018, there were more than 1,746,000 students in higher education.

## The Civil Rights Era in California

In the 1950s and 1960s, the **civil rights** movement fought for equality and fair treatment for Black Americans. Other groups did the same.

### Vocabulary

**civil rights**, n. the rights that all citizens are supposed to have according to the Constitution and its amendments

One of the early drivers of social change in California was the signing of President Harry Truman’s Executive Order 9981 in July 1948. This order ended segregation in the U.S. armed forces. Truman had witnessed the unfair treatment of Black veterans when they returned home from World War II. Many Black veterans, who bravely fought for the United States, faced violence from racist mobs and were often denied benefits from the GI Bill. The U.S. Air Force was the first military branch to officially desegregate. This was just the beginning of many changes to come. In the following decades, more and more people stood up against racist policies and demanded equality.

Californians experienced segregation before and during World War II. Most public places had segregated spaces for minorities like Japanese and Mexican Americans. In 1944, Gonzalo Mendez wanted to enroll his daughter, Sylvia, and her brothers in a local school. However, they were rejected and told to go to a “Mexican



Protestors gathered at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles in 1960 in support of civil rights. It was the first time in history that protestors demonstrated outside of a political party's convention.

school." The Mendez family, along with four other Mexican American families, took legal action. In the lawsuit *Mendez v. Westminster*, they fought to desegregate schools in California. Two courts ruled in favor of the Mendez family. On June 14, 1947, Governor Earl Warren signed a law that made California the first state to desegregate its schools. It would be seven years before *Brown v. Board of Education* forced the desegregation of schools nationwide.

Nationally, most of the civil rights movement during this period was focused on nonviolent forms of protest. People were inspired by leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. They demonstrated in the streets, **boycotted** businesses, and participated in **sit-ins**. In California, civil rights activists like Charlotta Bass fought against

police brutality and harassment. She also advocated for housing rights, voting rights, and labor rights. The nonviolent civil rights movement was responsible for sweeping civil rights gains for African Americans.

One example was the Voting Rights Act of 1965. However, some groups had a more direct approach.

In 1966, two young Black men from Oakland organized the Black Panther Party. Bobby Seale and Huey Newton had witnessed police brutality against Black protesters. The Black Panther Party wanted to protect the Black community. The party had a list of ten goals. They included the end of

police brutality, improved education, exemption from military service, and fair trials with Black juries. Panthers also participated in community service. Their Free Breakfast for School Children Program gathered food donations and offered healthy breakfasts for children. But the government and law enforcement, from local to federal, saw the Black Panthers as a threat.

### Vocabulary

**boycott**, v. to refuse to buy goods or have anything to do with a particular group or country

**sit-in**, n. a type of nonviolent protest in which people sit down in a place and refuse to move



The Black Panther Party used flyers, posters, and newspaper ads to spread its message.

## **Farmworkers Unite: The UFW and Labor Activism**

Farmworkers found inspiration in the fight for civil rights. They faced very difficult working conditions. Many employers provided no drinking water or bathrooms out in the fields. The workers were expected to work very quickly, often hunched over. This took a heavy toll on their bodies. Workers who challenged the terrible working conditions were often fired.

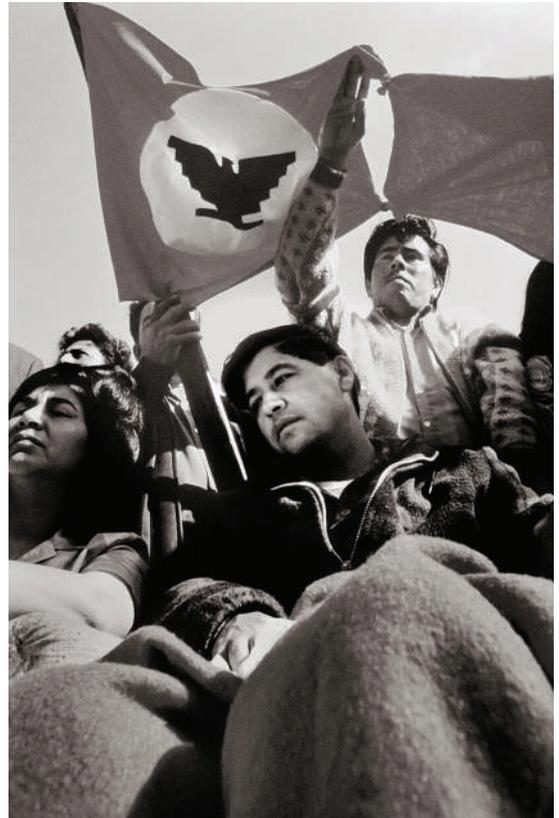
Cesar Chavez was a farmworker of Mexican descent. Throughout his life, he fought back against discrimination in nonviolent ways. In 1944, he was arrested for refusing to sit in the segregated section for Mexicans at a movie theater. In 1962, he gathered some other farmworkers to start a union, a group that represented the interests of workers. Dolores Huerta was one of these founding members. The union they created became the National Farm Workers Association.

Meanwhile in Delano, California, Filipino farmworkers were also gathering. Their union, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, was led by Larry Itliong. Itliong, a Filipino American farmworker, was organizing a strike against the grape farms around Delano. To make sure of their success, he convinced Chavez and his union of Mexican workers to join them. From 1965 to 1966, the farmworkers refused to harvest any grapes. They continued until the companies met their demands for safer working conditions and better pay. The striking workers called for a boycott of all grapes from Delano growers. The boycott meant that the grape farms would lose money and that owners would be forced to negotiate with the workers.

Chavez appealed to the public's sense of justice. He was dedicated to a nonviolent approach, so he set out on a journey to spread the word.

In March 1966, about a hundred farmworkers of Mexican and Filipino descent walked three hundred miles (482 km) from Delano to Sacramento. Supporters joined them as they traveled along highways and through towns. By the end of their march a month later, the group had grown to more than ten thousand people. A few days before they reached Sacramento, they achieved their first victory. A representative from one of the grape growers, Schenley Industries, agreed to a contract guaranteeing the rights of farmworkers.

In the following weeks, several more contracts were signed. In August 1966, Itliong's Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee merged with Chavez's National Farm Workers Association. They became the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFW). The UFW made history in winning rights for farmworkers. Companies signed agreements guaranteeing better pay, protection from pesticides, paid rest periods, and more.



In 1968, Cesar Chavez participated in his first hunger strike. For twenty-five days, he consumed nothing but water. He still attended protests despite how weak the lack of food made him.



Graffiti on a water tower in San Francisco that dates back to AIM's occupation of Alcatraz Island (1969–71)

Native American groups also fought for equal rights against discrimination and unfair government policies. The American Indian Movement (AIM), for example, was a group from Minnesota. The group fought for the rights of Native peoples all over the country. One famous protest took place on Alcatraz Island from 1969 to 1971. The protest group was made up of "Indians of All Tribes." They occupied the island in protest of what they said was the U.S. government's theft of tribal lands. The protest ended on June 10, 1971, when armed federal forces removed them from Alcatraz by force.

## **Vietnam, Counterculture, and Social Revolution**

One of the defining conflicts of the Cold War was the Vietnam War. The northern part of Vietnam was supported by communist

countries, the Soviet Union and China. The southern part was supported by the United States. The combined forces of the United States and South Vietnam struggled to gain ground. As the war progressed, more and more U.S. soldiers died, and victory seemed further and further away. Many people in the United States stopped supporting what they saw as an unjust war. For some, protesting against the war was an expression of **counterculture**.

**Vocabulary**  
.....  
**counterculture**, n.  
a culture that has different values from the established society or main culture

Many people in the United States opposed the Vietnam War. One group was very vocal about its anti-war beliefs. The group was called hippies. San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury neighborhood was one center of hippie counterculture. The counterculture opposed war and racism. The hippies promoted peace and love and believed in nonviolent activism. Most hippies were young, white, and middle class. They thought that people should have a relaxed and unstructured lifestyle. Fashion and music became common ways to express these opinions. Their fashion resisted the norms of their parents’ time. Hippies wore bright colors and grew their hair long. They played and listened to rock and folk music.

Hippies declared the summer of 1967 to be the Summer of Love. That summer, more than forty thousand people gathered in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco for an event called “Human Be-In” to share in community and hear music and speeches.

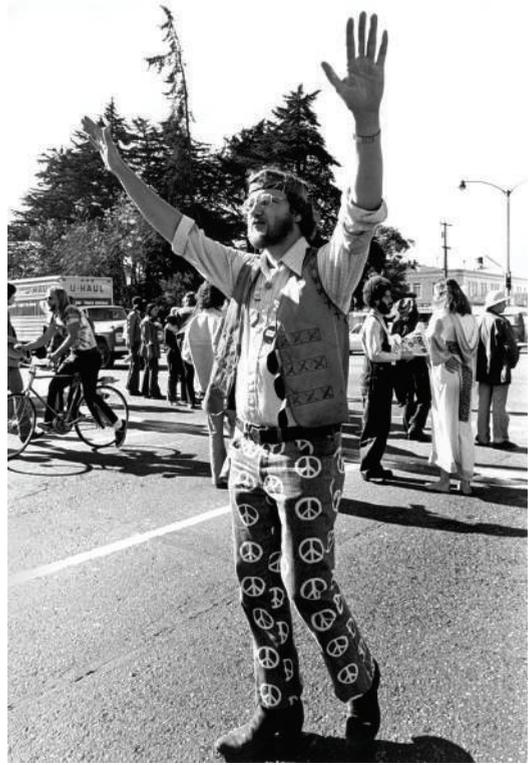
In 1969, a movement for LGBTQ rights emerged across the country. At the time, it was illegal to be in a same-sex relationship. On

June 28, New York City police raided an LGBTQ hangout called Stonewall Inn. This time, people fought back. The police later called it a riot, but the LGBTQ people involved called it a rebellion. Similar uprisings happened in California, too, at the Black Cat bar in Los Angeles and Compton's Cafeteria in San Francisco.

Every year since the Stonewall Uprising, San Francisco has held a Pride parade in June. The parade and speeches encourage LGBTQ people to feel proud of their identities.

One speaker in 1978 was Harvey Milk. He had just been elected as a county supervisor and was one of the first openly gay elected officials in the United States. He helped pass an ordinance in San Francisco that prohibited discrimination in housing and employment against LGBTQ people. He was assassinated months later in November by a former colleague.

Those involved in counterculture would continue their movement for generations. These movements also helped ease the way for other forms of subculture and social activism. For instance, subcultures like punks and goths arose in the 1980s.



Another name for hippies at the time was flower children. Flowers were often associated with the clothes and artwork of the hippies.

## Immigration and Diversity in the Postwar Era

By 1973, the United States began to withdraw its military from Vietnam. There were many reasons, including anti-war protests at home, high costs, and the large number of lives lost. In 1975, the capital of South Vietnam, Saigon, was captured by North Vietnam. Many people from Vietnam and neighboring Cambodia fled their homes. The United States had laws limiting the number of **refugees** that were allowed into the country. President Jimmy Carter was able to overturn these laws temporarily. More than 300,000 people came to the United States as refugees between 1975 and 1979. In response, the Refugee Act of 1980 was passed. It raised the number of refugees that were allowed to enter the United States.

### Vocabulary

**refugee**, n. a person who flees a country to avoid danger or persecution

California's location on the West Coast made it a natural entry point for eastward immigration from Asia. In the years following this rise in refugees, many more people came from Southeast Asia to California. In 1980, the number was around 50,000. The refugees arrived in California through military bases. Afterward, they often found communities of other Southeast Asian immigrants in major cities and settled there.

Americans felt the pressure of a sudden increase in the population. As a result, many people became unaccepting of migrants. The Refugee Act clarified that refugees had to have a "well-founded fear of persecution." This meant that to be a refugee, a person had to have life-and-death reasons to move to the United States. Anyone else was considered a "migrant." The difference between

the two soon became very important. Some people migrated without following the legal steps. These people are called **undocumented immigrants**. In the years that followed, some Americans became more and more frustrated with these undocumented immigrants.

As a result of anti-immigrant feelings, efforts were made to restrict immigration. In 1986, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act. This imposed penalties on employers who hired undocumented immigrants knowingly. However, the act also gave **amnesty** to undocumented immigrants who had

## Vocabulary

**undocumented immigrant**, n. a person who does not have legal documents proving their right to be or remain in the country

**amnesty**, n. a decision, usually by a government, not to punish a person or group who has committed a crime



One of the places where Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees arrived in the United States was Camp Pendleton, California. They often had to live in tents after they arrived before they could pass through into the country.

been in the country for four years. In the same year, California Proposition 63 passed with over 73 percent approval. This law made English the official language of California. It was criticized as a way to discriminate against immigrants who did not speak English. Later, in 1994, California's Proposition 187 was proposed. It intended to keep undocumented immigrants from participating in public services such as schools and health care. It also would have given power to teachers and medical professionals to report undocumented immigrants to the government. The law was stopped by courts, which found it violated the Constitution.

## California as a Technological Powerhouse

Silicon Valley has been the heart of the technology world since the late 1900s. Many of the largest technology companies had their start there. Its location near the San Francisco Bay Area's ports allows for easy trade with countries across the Pacific Ocean. From computer parts to personal computers, the area is responsible for a lot of the technology we use today.

For example, Apple is based in Silicon Valley. Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak were young computer engineers who spent their spare time tinkering with microcomputer kits. In 1976, Wozniak designed his own



The Apple II computer kickstarted the company of Apple, Inc. into the powerhouse it is today.

## California's Post-World War II Timeline



**While the Cold War was pressuring the United States to research and develop more technology, other changes were happening in the United States and California.**

microprocessor. It was much smaller than the other computers of its time. The two men founded Apple and created the Apple II computer. This was the first personal computer that received public attention. From there, the company took off and became the largest tech company in the world.

Nicknamed the “Mother of Silicon Valley,” Sandra Kurtzig was another early **entrepreneur** there. She got her start working for General Electric. In the 1960s, computers were very large, and most companies couldn’t afford their own. Kurtzig’s job was to rent the usage of General Electric’s computers. One day in 1971, one of her clients asked her to build a program to track his company’s inventory. Kurtzig saw the opportunity and launched her own business called ASK Computer Systems. She continued to improve and innovate her software. Eventually, she became the first woman to offer a technology business on the stock market.

**Vocabulary**  
.....  
**entrepreneur**, n. a person who starts a business

As computer technology was spreading worldwide, California’s Silicon Valley led the computer revolution. Sergey Brin helped create Google. Carol Shaw was one of the first female video game designers. People like Brin and Shaw continued the legacy of technological advancement in California into the twenty-first century.

## Modern California Culture

California has served as a cultural hub throughout its history. After World War II, movies and television continued to broadcast

California culture around the world. Developments in computer-generated graphics, better cameras, and editing software elevated movies and film in the 1980s.

Sports have helped shape California's culture, too. Surfing and snowboarding have been favorite sports of Californians for decades. Skateboarding was born in California. It was first invented by surfers in the 1950s. It became popular in the 1970s and is now a nationwide sport.

Meanwhile, the state's professional sports teams have made California a cultural landmark. They have passionate fan bases and championships, like the Dodgers and the Lakers. Since 1950, more Major League Baseball players have been born in California than in any other state. One of the three NFL football teams in the state, San Francisco's 49ers, is named for Gold Rush prospectors. Since 2022, California has had three teams in the NWSL, the top women's soccer league in North America. There is no shortage of sports in the Golden State.



A surfer catches a barrel wave, named after the shape of the wave, in Malibu, California.

## California Teams in Selected Top-Level Professional Sports Leagues

Sport	Team
Major League Baseball (MLB)	San Francisco Giants
	Los Angeles Dodgers
	Los Angeles Angels
	San Diego Padres
	Oakland Athletics
National Basketball Association (NBA)	Los Angeles Lakers
	Golden State Warriors
	Los Angeles Clippers
Major League Soccer (MLS)	Los Angeles Galaxy
	Los Angeles FC
	San Jose Earthquakes
	San Diego FC
National Woman's Soccer League (NWSL)	Angel City FC
	San Diego Wave FC
	Bay FC
National Football League (NFL)	Los Angeles Rams
	San Francisco 49ers
	Los Angeles Chargers
National Hockey League (NHL)	Los Angeles Kings
	Anaheim Ducks
	San Jose Sharks

Many teams have moved to California since the 1950s.

# Chapter 9

## California Enters the Twenty-First Century

### Climate and Natural Disasters

In recent decades, wildfires have become a serious threat to California. In 2020 alone, over 9,600 fires burned more than 4,397,800 acres (17,800 sq km). The six largest fires in recent history burned all at the same time. Together, they caused significant damage to the natural lands and communities across the state. These fires also polluted the air with toxic smoke.

#### Big Question

What challenges does California face today?



One way that firefighters control wildfires in California is by dropping water or other chemicals that reduce the heat of the flames.

Experts in California wanted to address this crisis. In 2021, they developed wildfire prevention and control plans. The first priority is to make forests healthier by restoring them with new trees. The second goal is to protect communities. The state plans to do this by creating safer infrastructure. Examples are improved utility lines and fire-safe roadways. Fire-safe roadways are roads that are wide enough for emergency vehicles to use. The third goal is to manage the state's forests and vegetation responsibly. This will make sure that industries don't remove too many trees. Over time, this will give larger trees the chance to grow stronger, and forests will become more resistant to fires. Lastly, experts plan to use scientific research to find better ways to control the fires.

Both the frequency and intensity of wildfires have increased as Earth's atmosphere has continued warming. Carbon dioxide is one of the greenhouse gas emissions that trap the sun's warmth inside our atmosphere. Since industrialization in the 1800s, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased by 50 percent. As a result, there have been significant changes in the world's climate.

California, like every other place in the world, is impacted by climate change. As a coastal state, it is directly impacted. As temperatures rise, glaciers and polar ice melt. This makes the sea level rise. In the last century, California's sea level has risen around eight inches (20 cm). As this continues, homes and communities along the coast will experience erosion and flooding. Because California has 840 miles (1,352 km) of coastline, this affects a lot of people.

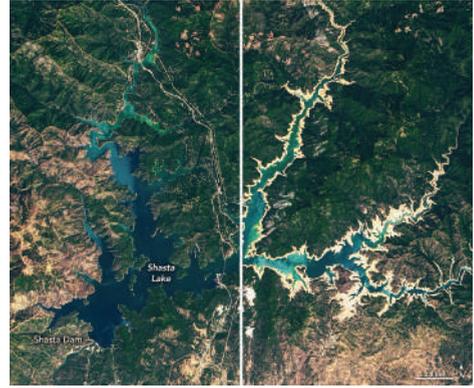


The Oroville Dam failure in 2017 caused the evacuation of more than 188,000 people.

Another climate issue relates to the snow from California's Sierra Nevada mountain range. Snow begins in autumn and stays up in the mountains until the weather warms again in the spring. As the snow melts, it supplies California's rivers, aqueducts, and reservoirs with water. However, with increasingly higher temperatures, the snow melts all at once and much earlier in the year. This melted water can flood and damage infrastructure. This happened in 2017 at the Oroville Dam on the Feather River, north of Sacramento. When the dam began to overflow, the dam's emergency water spillway broke. The rushing water caused flooding that destroyed forests and property. It put many lives in danger. The damage was caused by a weakness in the spillway's construction. Experts claim that it did not receive enough maintenance or attention. It took about a year for repairs to be completed on the dam.

One of California's biggest climate-related problems is drought.

California sees less rain during its dry season because of climate change. Droughts reduce the amount of water in California's rivers, streams, wetlands, and reservoirs. Between 2019 and 2021, the water level at Lake Shasta in Northern California fell by 106 feet (32 m). Lower water



The light-colored areas around the water are sometimes called a “bathtub ring.” They are areas of former lakebed—a result of the receding waters.

levels mean that there is less water that people can use later.

Hydroelectric power plants might have to shut down if there isn't enough flow in the rivers. Wildlife is also greatly affected because their habitat warms up or becomes more salty.

When there is no rain for a long time, plants dry up. Dry plants can catch fire easily. This can lead to sudden and uncontrollable wildfires. Wildfires burn through forests and other natural areas. They can be started by natural causes, such as a lightning strike. However, human activity causes over 80 percent of the wildfires in the United States. The most common causes are campfires and faulty power lines.

The wildfire problem is getting worse. California has experienced fires throughout its history, but the fires are getting larger.

Eighteen of the twenty most destructive wildfires have occurred since the year 2000. In January 2025, the Palisades Fire in the hills of Los Angeles destroyed almost seven thousand buildings and structures. Fast winds quickly spread the fire over

23,000 acres (93 sq km). At the same time, the Altadena Fire burned on the other side of the city. Los Angeles was trapped between two large and destructive fires.

People in California recognize the dangers of climate change. The majority of Californians support state action to slow climate change. In 2022, California’s governor helped create a plan to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases by 85 percent. There is also a plan to reduce oil use by 94 percent. Using oil for cars, airplanes, and home heating gradually pollutes the air and water.

Drilling into the ground to retrieve the oil damages the land. Moving the state toward **renewable** energy sources will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help slow the effects of climate change. There’s even a plan from the California Air Resources Board to ban fossil fuel–powered cars. Adults and children are pitching in to raise awareness in public and political spaces. Organizations like 350 Bay Area help organize youth activists, parents, and other concerned Californians. People can help by recycling, reducing the amount of electricity they use, and conserving water.

**Vocabulary**  
.....  
**renewable**, adj.  
capable of being  
replenished  
relatively quickly by  
natural processes

## Population and Diversity

California has a long history of rapid growth starting with the Gold Rush in the mid-nineteenth century. Migration to California has led to a very diverse and densely populated state. But California’s population growth has slowed since the year 2000. This is a result of many factors, including a slowing birth rate and a decline in international immigration.

The flow of immigration has varied over the years. One major factor that has impacted immigration was the 2020 COVID-19 **pandemic** lockdown. During the lockdown, there were rules that limited people’s movements. In the name of public safety, people were initially prevented from gathering in public places.

**Vocabulary**  
.....  
**pandemic, n.**  
a disease that suddenly strikes multiple countries or continents

Many people have also been moving to other states. However, since 2023, the population increase has bounced back. California still takes in more immigrants each year than any other state. It has done so every year since it became a state in 1850. Almost half of California’s children have at least one parent who was born in another country.

Diversity is a large part of what makes California unique. As of the beginning of 2025, California was one of seven states that had no majority group. This means that most of the population were people of minority races and ethnicities.



In the first years of the COVID-19 pandemic, California experienced negative population growth—that is, population decline.

California's schools have had to quickly and constantly adapt to population changes. With such a diverse population of students, the state has been making efforts to further diversify the teachers, too. In 2011, the California DREAM Act was passed. This act made a path for undocumented students to apply for federal aid for college. It also allowed them to pay in-state tuition. This let them pay tuition prices that other students living in California paid. This has increased the number of Californians who could afford to attend college. As a result, the number of bachelor's degrees awarded to Latino students by the University of California nearly doubled between 2012 and 2022.

## **California's Post-2000 Economy**

California's economy is not just the largest among the fifty states. Only three countries in the world have a larger economy. In 2023, California workers and businesses produced \$3.9 trillion worth of goods and services. That was 14 percent of the goods and services sold in the entire United States. California's coastal location makes it the best entry point for goods shipped across the Pacific Ocean. In this same year, California produced and exported over \$178 billion worth of goods and services. Some of the largest importers of goods and services from California were Mexico, Canada, and China.

Technology remains one of California's greatest strengths. Countless innovations have come from California since 2000. Many of the world's social media companies had their start here. In recent years, California has also become a leader in artificial intelligence (AI).



The Palm Springs windmills generate 600 million kilowatt-hours of electric power every year.

California is a leader in researching and developing **clean energy**. Examples of clean energy include geothermal, solar, wind, and water generated power. In 2012, researchers from UC Berkeley came up with a new plan. Their company, called CalWave, uses the motion of ocean waves to generate electricity.

### Vocabulary

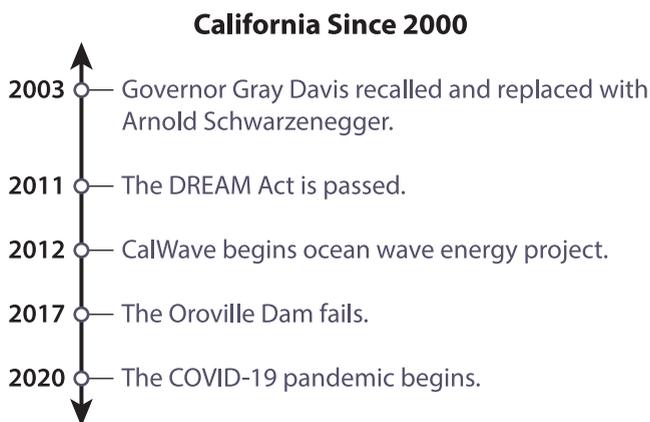
**clean energy**, n.  
energy that does not emit greenhouse gases, often made using renewable resources

California's film and entertainment industry is still a driving force in the state's economy. It is responsible for hundreds of thousands of jobs. It also supports many smaller industries, like advertising, costuming, and small theaters. In 2021, the entertainment industry did over \$261 billion of business. It was more than double the amount measured in 2001.

## Political Changes

Californians have used their right to vote to enact many changes in the state. The ability to recall officials has given Californians more power over who represents them and makes decisions for the state. Six times since 1900, elected officials have been recalled by voters before their terms expired. These officials were mostly senators and members of the assembly. However, in 2003, the first recall of a California governor occurred. Californians voted to remove Governor Gray Davis from office and replace him with Arnold Schwarzenegger. In 2020, there was an attempt to remove Governor Gavin Newsom, but it did not succeed.

California schools face change, too, in the twenty-first century. In 2023 and 2024, for example, new laws set limits on homework, prohibited book bans in school libraries, and required schools to teach Native American history.



**California has been building toward a better and safer future through technology and civic action.**

## Looking Into the Future

California's future is bright, but there is work to be done. In 2024, the total population was calculated at more than 39,128,000 people. That number is expected to approach forty-one million people by the year 2040. More people means that more cars, homes, jobs, food, water, electricity, and schools will be needed. These people will be affected by climate change in California, too.

Ideas about improving the state's public transit systems are always being considered. As of 2023, the state gave an additional \$5.1 billion to transportation agencies across the state for improvements. The hope is that increasing the number of buses and other public transit vehicles will reduce the number of cars. The buses themselves will also see changes as new zero-emission engines are introduced. This will hopefully have a positive impact on greenhouse gas emissions. Encouraging people to use public transit instead of personal-use cars will hopefully have positive effects. City planners expect reduced traffic and travel times. And even better, this change will also reduce the effects of climate change. Another exciting goal is the creation of a high-speed railway. The California High-Speed Rail Authority plans an eight-hundred-mile (1,300 km) system. It will connect San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento. The train will travel up to two hundred miles per hour (320 kph). This would cut the trip from Los Angeles to San Francisco from about ten hours to less than three hours.

Looking back through the history of California makes a few things clear. The people, the land, and everything in between are



San Francisco has begun to replace its buses with electric battery-powered ones to reduce emissions.

always changing. As historians, we learn about the challenges and struggles of our past. But we also learn about stories of hope and overcoming adversity. Californians have always been future-driven. The civil rights activists fought for equality and fairness. Refugees and immigrants searched for opportunity and safety. For centuries, Californians from all walks of life have dreamt of a better future. We can even look back to the stories told around campfires by the first Californians. They were often stories of perseverance and overcoming obstacles. This message has echoed across California's vast and varied landscape for generations.

# Glossary

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## A

**adobe, n.** a type of brick made from sun-dried clay [52]

**amnesty, n.** a decision, usually by a government, not to punish a person or group who has committed a crime [130]

**arid, adj.** having little or no rain [8]

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## B

**boomtown, n.** a town that grows quickly in size and wealth [71]

**boycott, v.** to refuse to buy goods or have anything to do with a particular group or country [123]

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## C

**cede, v.** to grant or transfer [64]

**chaparral, n.** a group of plants native to California, consisting of shrubs and plants with thick leaves [6]

**civil rights, n.** the rights that all citizens are supposed to have according to the Constitution and its amendments [121]

**clean energy, n.** energy that does not emit greenhouse gases, often made using renewable resources [144]

**climate change, n.** a long-term change in global climate and weather patterns [23]

**colony, n.** an area, region, or country that is controlled and settled by people from another country [42]

**communist, adj.** relating to communism, an economic system based on community ownership of property and industry [119]

**conservation, n.** the attempt to stop human actions that are harmful to wild or natural spaces [97]

**contiguous, adj.** touching along a boundary [4]

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**corruption, n.** illegal or dishonest behavior, often by people in a position of power [95]

**counterculture, n.** a culture that has different values from the established society or main culture [127]

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## D

**deplete, v.** to use up the supply or resources of [74]

**deportation, n.** the process of removing a person from a country whose presence is unlawful [105]

**diverse, adj.** having many different types or parts [4]

**drought, n.** a long period of time with little to no rain [9]

**dwelling, n.** a structure in which people live [31]

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## E

**elite, n.** a member of a group of people who have more talent, wealth, power, or privilege than everyone else [60]

**endangered, adj.** having few numbers and at risk of becoming extinct, or dying out completely [16]

**entrepreneur, n.** a person who starts a business [133]

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## F

**fandango, n.** a ball or party with dancing [61]

**fault, n.** a crack or split in Earth's crust along which movement takes place [9]

**federalism, n.** a system of government in which the national government shares power with other levels of government, such as the states [18]

---

## I

**immigrant, n.** a person from one country who moves to another country to live [2]

**inalienable, adj.** cannot be taken away or denied [20]

**industrialization, n.** a shift to the widespread use of machines and factories to produce goods [87]

**internment, n.** the act of confining or imprisoning someone during a war for political reasons [107]

**irrigation, n.** the watering of crops by moving water from a well, a river, or a lake to a place where it does not rain enough to grow crops [49]

**isthmus, n.** a narrow piece of land that connects two larger landmasses [68]

---

## J

**jury, n.** a group of people who listen to information presented during a trial in a court and make decisions about whether someone is guilty or innocent [25]

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## M

**mission, n.** a settlement built for the purpose of converting Native Americans to Christianity [40]

---

## N

**native, adj.** living in or originally from a particular area [8]

**neutral, adj.** not helping or supporting either side in a conflict [99]

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## P

**pandemic, n.** a disease that suddenly strikes multiple countries or continents [142]

**plantation, n.** a large farm where cash crops are grown on behalf of the person who owns the land [88]

**precedent, n.** an example for future actions or decisions [76]

**prejudice, n.** hostility towards a person, race, or group, often without basis in fact [82]

**presidio, n.** a fort [45]

**progressivism, n.** a political philosophy of social and political activism aimed

at improving people's lives through government action [94]

**prospector, n.** a person who searches an area for gold, minerals, or oil [68]

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## R

**rain shadow, n.** an area that gets less rain because it is on the protected side of a mountain [7]

**rancheria, n.** a plot of land, typically small, reserved for Indigenous people, where they can practice their traditional ways of life [13]

**rancho, n.** a plot of land given to someone who was loyal to the government [52]

**ration, v.** to control the amount of something [108]

**recession, n.** a period of reduced economic activity in which employment and production fall [103]

**refugee, n.** a person who flees a country to avoid danger or persecution [129]

**renewable, adj.** capable of being replenished relatively quickly by natural processes [141]

**repatriation, n.** the process of returning or being returned to one's country of origin [105]

---

## S

**secede, v.** to formally withdraw membership [89]

**secularize, v.** to take religion out of something [56]

**segregate, v.** to keep people separate, usually on the basis of race [113]

**self-reliant, adj.** needing no help from other people [55]

**shaman, n.** a Native American spiritual leader who is believed to have special powers [35]

**sit-in, n.** a type of nonviolent protest in which people sit down in a place and refuse to move [123]

**sovereignty, n.** the right to govern oneself [21]

**stereotype, n.** an unfair and untrue representation of a group of people based on a belief that everyone in the group is the same [113]

**stock market, n.** a market where pieces of a company are sold to the public [103]

**suburb, n.** a town or small city within commuting, or easy traveling, distance of a large city [12]

**suffrage, n.** the right to vote [96]

**sustainable, adj.** able to be maintained [101]

---

## T

**telegraph, n.** a machine that relays messages over long distances by sending signals through wires [84]

**transcontinental, adj.** across a continent [85]

---

## U

**undocumented immigrant, n.** a person who does not have legal documents proving their right to be or remain in the country [130]

**urban sprawl, n.** the spreading of developments into undeveloped land around a city [118]

**urban, adj.** relating to a city [11]

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## V

**vaquero, n.** a person who tends and manages livestock; a cowhand [61]



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