

CALIFORNIA

HISTORY

California has been home to Native nations, Spanish priests, Mexican ranchers and gold seekers from around the world.

The First Peoples

People have lived in California for at least 13,000 years. More than 100 Native nations lived here. The Chumash built plank canoes and paddled to the Channel Islands. The Miwok, Yokuts and Pomo gathered acorns and ground them into flour. The Hupa and Yurok fished for salmon. Nations traded shell beads, and at times they fought each other.



Spain and the Missions

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo sailed into San Diego Bay for Spain in 1542. In 1769, Spain sent soldiers and priests to settle the coast. Father Junípero Serra started the first **mission** at San Diego. By 1823 there were 21. Native people at the missions grew wheat, herded cattle and made adobe bricks. Soldiers kept them from leaving, and many died of diseases from Europe. In 1775, Kumeyaay fighters burned the San Diego mission and killed three men. The Spanish rebuilt it.

Mexican California

Mexico won its freedom from Spain in 1821, and California became part of Mexico. In the 1830s, Mexico closed the missions and gave out the land as **ranchos**. Ranch families called Californios raised cattle, and Native cowboys did much of the work. Ships came to trade for hides and tallow, the fat used for candles and soap.



War, Gold and Statehood

The United States and Mexico went to war in 1846. American settlers at Sonoma raised a Bear Flag. Californio lancers fought U.S. soldiers at San Pasqual, but the United States won the war. In 1848, Mexico signed a **treaty** giving California to the United States. Gold had been found nine days earlier. Some miners from the South brought enslaved people to dig. California became a **free state** in 1850, and its constitution banned slavery.

Wars and Treaties

Miners and settlers spread over Native land. Native fighters raided mining camps and ranches, and miners and soldiers attacked Native villages. In 1851 and 1852, tribes signed 18 treaties that promised them reservations. The U.S. Senate did not approve them. In the Modoc War of 1872 and 1873, Modoc fighters held off the army for months. The army won, and about 150 Modoc were moved to Oklahoma. More than 100 tribes have their governments in California today.

Building California

In 1869, a railroad joined California to the East. Chinese workers laid most of its track across the Sierra Nevada. Farmers dug canals and planted orange groves. San Francisco was rebuilt after the earthquake and fire of 1906. Movie makers came to Hollywood. In World War II, California shipyards and factories built ships and planes.

CALIFORNIA THROUGH TIME

1542	1769	1821	1848	1850	1869	1906	1913	1937
Cabrillo sails into San Diego Bay	The first mission is founded	Mexico wins its freedom from Spain	Gold is found. Mexico gives up California	California becomes the 31st state	A railroad links California to the East	The San Francisco earthquake	Los Angeles gets an aqueduct	The Golden Gate Bridge opens

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Mariano Vallejo	Californio general and rancho owner.
Biddy Mason	Born enslaved. Won her freedom in 1856.
Levi Strauss	Began selling riveted blue jeans in 1873.
John Muir	Worked to make Yosemite a national park.
Sally Ride	Los Angeles-born. First U.S. woman in space.

WORDS TO KNOW

mission	a church settlement with farms
rancho	a very large cattle ranch
treaty	a written agreement between nations
free state	a state that did not allow slavery