Introduction ....................................................................................................................................................... 2

Section 1: Pre-1542–1860s .......................................................................................................................... 3

Gallery exhibits include:

- Before the Other People Came
- Spaniards Claim This Land
- Esto Es México (This Is Mexico)
- Coming for Gold

Standards:

4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.

Section 2: 1869–1920s ....................................................................................................................................... 12

Gallery exhibits include:

- Coming for Land
- The Railroad Brings People
- San Francisco—Glorious City of the West
- Seeking the Good Life

Standards:

4.4 Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s.

8.12 Students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution.

Section 2: 1929–1975 ....................................................................................................................................... 19

Gallery exhibits include:

- Trying to Escape the Great Depression
- Off to War
- Building Modern California
- Forces of Change

Standards:

11.6 Students analyze the different explanations for the Great Depression and how the New Deal fundamentally changed the role of the federal government.

11.7 Students analyze America’s participation in World War II.

11.8 Students analyze the economic boom and social transformation of post–World War II America.
Welcome to the Gallery of California History!

The story of our reinstallation of the gallery goes back a long way, before I started as chief curator. When it was new, the original gallery displayed the richness of the collection, and offered an immersion in the material world of the past. But visitors said they missed personal stories, and the ability to see themselves in California history. So one of our primary goals was to bring both first-person historical voices and the voices of our visitors into the gallery.

Our overall theme is “Coming to California,” and this allows us to explore both the stories of people who have come in waves to the state, and also the voices of those whose lives were changed by these newcomers. In some areas, such as Before the Other People Came, and Forces of Change, we worked directly with community members to help them curate and tell their own histories, in their own voices, in the gallery. In other places, such as the section on the Great Depression, we ask visitors to contribute their own insights and opinions, reflecting on how issues of the past have relevance in their lives today. We hope that this gallery offers visitors the chance to explore, learn, and above all, to make a personal connection with our collective past.

Louise Pubols
Chief Curator of History
Oakland Museum of California
Gallery Theme
The overarching theme of the Gallery is **Coming to California**. Here your students will discover the influx of people to California throughout human history—and their interactions with those already here and the environment. Your class can also explore why California was a place that both attracted new arrivals and at the same time forced others out. Finally, your students can consider the influence of California on our individual and collective identities.

The exhibits are designed to be like stage sets in a theater. The plywood walls and stage-like platforms are meant to both display the objects on “center stage” and leave a lot of room for imagination, by creating an environment where visitor can envision themselves exploring different time periods. Interpretation takes many forms in the new Gallery, with a particular emphasis on exploring multiple stories of the diverse human experience in the region. The objects are set in context to help recount the stories. Likewise, multiple, sometimes conflicting, viewpoints of historical events to give visitor a more holistic view of the time periods. Wherever possible, commentary—from historic figures to contemporary scholars—is in the first person, whether it is presented in text, audio, or other media.

Organization
The Gallery is organized chronologically, from the 1500s to contemporary times. This Gallery Resource Guide is into three time periods, each of which contains a variety of themes, historical events, and personal stories:

- Pre-1540–1860s
- 1869–1920s
- 1929–1970s

Located throughout the Gallery are date indicators in the form of yellow signs hanging from the ceiling. They will help your students determine where they are chronologically in the Gallery. Also, look for the artifact lists in each section that will assist students in identifying artifacts that are not labeled.
Gallery sections include:

- Before the Other People Came
- Spaniards Claim This Land
- *Esto Es México* (This Is Mexico)
- Coming for Gold

**Background**

This first section of the Gallery focuses on the history of California from the time before contact between European explorers and Native people, through the periods of exploration, colonization, and independence from Spain. Finally, this area of the Gallery covers annexation of California by the United States and the experience and impact of the California Gold Rush.

Here exhibits relate to the traditional ways of life of California Indians, the exploration of California, the moment of first contact between European explorers and Native people, the Spanish missions, the period of time when California was part of a newly independent Mexico, and the wave of immigration and subsequent effects of the Gold Rush.

> Know that, on the right hand of the Indies, there is an island called California, very near to the Terrestrial Paradise, which was peopled with black women, without any men among them.... Their arms were all of gold...for in all the island there is no other metal.

—The Labors of the Very Brave Knight Esplandián, Garcia Rodríguez de Montalvo, 1510

**Before the Other People Came**

This section concentrates on the history of California’s Native people before first contact with European explorers and is organized into seven geographical areas. Each area represents a different environmental region of California, each with its own set of resources and unique opportunities for survival. In each distinct geographic area, Native people tell (in video displays) stories of what their specific home place was like and what their lives were like within it. These videos help show students that California Indians are not confined to the past but are living today, continuing their culture in the modern world.
This section was co-curated with the Museum’s Native Advisory Council, which means that council members collaborated with Museum curators to decide the content and select artifacts for this section of the Gallery. Co-curation provides a greater opportunity for members of the Native community to have their voices heard, which is a departure from the traditional method of creating exhibits in which a museum’s curator is the sole authority.

At the entrance to this exhibit, your students will encounter a map of western North America depicting the tribal groups found in pre-contact California. Displayed next to the map is a tule boat, the type of watercraft traditionally used in the San Francisco Bay Area, made by one of the Museum’s council members, an Ohlone descendant. Upon entering the exhibit, your students will find the following sections:

**Coastal Rainforest**
Exhibit content on the northwestern part of California with material related to resources from the region’s many rivers and ceremonial regalia.

**Rocky Coast**
Exhibit content on the central coast of California with material related to the variety of forms and functions of baskets and resources from the sea.

**Sandy Beach Coast**
Exhibit content on the southern coast of California with material related to the marine resources and deer hunting.

**High Desert**
Exhibit content on the northeastern part of California with material related to hunting tools, containers for storing water, and resources of lakes.

**Central Valley and Foothills**
Exhibit content on California’s Central Valley with material related to processing acorns and use of fire.

**Low Desert**
Exhibit content on the southeastern deserts of California with material related to the unique resources of the desert and seasonal migrations.

**Colorado River Valley**
Exhibit content on California’s Colorado River Valley with material related to the use of pottery, game hunting, housing, and rain.
After exploring this area of the Gallery, have your students search for the types of resources they can find in each region. How would life be different in each region (the desert versus the coastal rainforest)? What would be some of the unique challenges for survival in different areas?

**SPANIARDS CLAIM THIS LAND**

**Distant Travelers Arrive**

This section depicts the European explorers of the time and their efforts to find gold and a direct water route back to Asia. While the Spanish presence dominated the Pacific at this time, explorers from other countries, such as Sir Francis Drake of England, were actively pursuing the interests of their own nations, at the expense of the Spanish. Here, embedded into the theatrical facade of a wooden ship, students can explore discovery drawers, large flip doors, and niches in which the maps, images, and objects are displayed.

**Cultures Meet**

This immersive audio experience invites students to put themselves into the imaginations of both the explorers and Native people at the moment of first contact. What must the Native people have thought of these pale, often unhealthy, and smelly visitors, who sailed in from over the horizon? What did the explorers think about the Native people they found who wore strange clothing and spoke what seemed to be confusing languages? Inside the exhibit your students will find two objects: a Spanish infantry helmet and a topknot, a ceremonial piece traditionally worn by the Indians of central California.

Have your students compare and contrast the two objects. What was the intended purpose of each type of head gear? After listening to the audio of English, Spanish, and Native languages inside the enclosure, ask the students if they understood what was happening between the two groups. Talk with them about what they would be thinking if they encountered a group of people they had never seen before, speaking a language they had never heard. What questions would be running through their minds?

**Voyages of Discovery Ship**

This immersive exhibit is meant to evoke an 18th century sailing ship, the type that European powers used on expeditions of discovery. Here your students will find the tools of exploration including maps, navigational equipment, and scientific specimens.
Have your students enter the ship and imagine sailing the vast ocean in search of new lands. Have them explore the artifacts collected from the far reaches of the Pacific. Talk about the different types of jobs there would be on a ship, such as a navigator, a scientist, an artist, etc. What would be the responsibilities for each job? For example, the job of a navigator is to plot the course of the ship and the job of the scientist is to collect specimens for research. Have your students find one object related to each job, such as maps, a compass, a sexton, illustrations, animal specimens, etc.

Cross in the Ground

This display is designed to represent a cross that was erected by the first Spanish visitors to Monterey in 1769. When the Spanish returned to the site later, they found the local Ohlone Indians had decorated the cross with offerings of sardines and feathers. See if your students can identify the objects that adorn the cross. Are they reminded of any other objects they have seen in the Gallery so far? Why do they think someone would have left them there? Below is an excerpt of how the Spanish explained the event:

Father Junipero Sera asked Juan Evangelista, a Rumsien Ohlone boy, ‘Why is it that when we first came to these parts, and had set up two crosses near Monterey, on our return here, we found that the [Indians] had hung on the arms strings of sardines and pieces of deer meat and at the foot of the cross had shot many broken arrows?’ And he replied that they had done so, that the cross might not be angry with them. And to explain why they were afraid, he said that the sorcerers and priest-dancers who roam through the night saw the cross, each night, going up high in the heavens—not of dark material as wood is but resplendent with light, and beautiful to behold; and for that reason they regarded it with great respect, and made presents to it of all they had.

—Junípero Serra’s Memorandum, June 22, 1774

One historian notes that the Ohlone might have connected the newly erected cross with stories of conquest related to Spanish activities farther south and perhaps wanted to make offerings as a way of avoiding the same fate.
Making This a Spanish Place / What The Colonists Brought With Them

Here you will find how the first permanent Spanish settlement of California was established when the Spanish empire expanded north out of central Mexico. King Carlos III of Spain (1759–1788) approved the expansion of the vast empire north to Alta California with three institutions: Franciscan missions, intended to transform Native peoples into subjects of Spain; military forts, or presidios, to defend against foreign invasion; and civilian settlements, or pueblos. The ultimate goal of this colonization process was to transform many Native places into one Spanish place.

Here your students will find the kinds of things the Spanish brought with them in their “luggage,” things intended to transform the Native land and people into a Spanish place of Spanish customs. What the Spanish brought is grouped into six clusters, each of which had its own unique impact on Native ways of life:

**Spanish monetary system**
Native people used shell beads for money. Spaniards introduced glass beads as a substitute for shell. The Spaniards used them to buy Indian trade goods and gave beads away as diplomatic gifts to powerful Indian leaders. Once Spaniards had flooded the economy with glass beads, Native people stopped making shell beads and became dependent on the newcomers.

**Spanish governing system**
California’s Native peoples had no single king. Every village had its own religious and civilian leaders. When the Spanish arrived, they imposed a different system. In the missions, Indian officials served Spanish missionaries and military leaders but also protected the interests of their own communities.

**Agricultural plants, animals, and disease**
Spaniards brought with them crops and livestock so they could farm in familiar ways. They also accidentally brought European diseases, weeds, and rats. This ecological invasion undermined Native culture and autonomy. Sheep and cattle hooves caused soil to break up and wash away. Rats consumed acorns stored for food. Weeds replaced native plant species used for medicine and basket-making.

Because the native plants and animals that Indians relied on were being driven out by the new European species, most Indians living on the coast chose to move to missions to keep from starving.

Along with plants and animals, the Spaniards brought new diseases such as influenza, measles, and smallpox to California. Without immunity, Native peoples were especially vulnerable. Less than a quarter of Indians born at the missions lived to age fifteen.
New forms of work
Indians did nearly all the work on the mission estates, in the presidios, and in civilian towns. From the perspective of missionaries, a regimented daily work schedule morally enriched and disciplined Indians and helped make them “civilized”. While by European standards labor at the missions was fairly modest, for Native people accustomed to different ways of sharing labor, the work routine and physical punishments at the mission could be brutal.

Hierarchies of race and gender
In Spanish society, all women came under the authority of men, either fathers or husbands, and respectable young women were never allowed to leave the house by themselves. Missionaries tried to get Native peoples to follow these rules too. Native people could no longer live where they liked or form families with whomever they chose. Missionaries tried to change the way Native peoples dressed, talked, and acted so that they would conform to Spanish standards. Although most of the soldiers and settlers were not pure Spanish but a mixture of European, African, and Indian ancestry, they considered themselves superior to California’s Native people.

Catholic religion
Franciscans believed that God had led them to California to save the souls of Indian peoples. They brought beautiful sacred art and staged pageants and spectacles to attract Indian converts and to give glory to God. Spanish priests thought of themselves like fathers, and Indian people like their children. While newly converted Indians adopted Christian symbols and stories, many kept their older worldview. Despite the Franciscans’ intentions, some Native religious ceremonies continued openly at the missions.

Nearby this area your students will find a hands-on trunk. Inside are boxes with representations of the things the new arrivals brought in their “luggage,” including Spanish religious beliefs, language, pastoral agriculture, and disease. Have your students look at the large graphic illustration above the trunk for visual clues of what the Spanish brought to California. Of the various items in the trunk, what do they think had the greatest impact on the Indians of California? A large map nearby on the exterior of the ship illustrates Spanish colonial holdings in the western hemisphere and can be used to facilitate discussion of where Alta California fit within the northwest frontier of the Spanish Empire.

By the end of the mission period in the 1830s, nearly one-third of California’s total Native population had been lost, while the population along the coast between San Francisco and San Diego, those with the most direct contact with the Spanish, suffered approximately 75% losses.
**ESTO ES MÉXICO (THIS IS MEXICO)**

Here your class will find how a newly independent Mexico lifted trade restrictions, opening California to trade from around the world. Californios, or Mexican Californians, traded cattle hides (known as “California Banknotes”) and tallow with European and American merchants for manufactured goods. Fine trade items are displayed near the products of the hide and tallow industry, showing how this global trade worked. At the same time, hunters and trappers were coming to California to exploit the wealth of beaver and sea otter pelts. The influx of outsiders culminated in the U.S. invasion and takeover of California during the Mexican-American War. Items related to the war along with a large painting of John C. Fremont are also displayed in this area.

Have your students imagine life on a rancho and describe the importance of cattle to the economy (not for food, but for their hides). Ask them if they think it was a good idea for the Californios to trade raw materials (hide and tallow) for manufactured goods, as opposed to making those goods at home. Have them explore the space for evidence of others coming to hunt animals from which to make a profit. Compare and contrast the life of the Californios with that of the overland hunters and trappers by examining the different tools and equipment. How were their lives different? Did they think of California as a home or a place from which to take wealth?

**COMING FOR GOLD**

**People Came from Around the World**

Have your students imagine hearing about the discovery of gold in California. If the students had decided to head out to the gold fields, what types of things would they bring? Compare and contrast two of the Four Corners Miners cases. What kinds of things did they bring and why? What do the students think was most important to them? Look at the carpet bag in the Miners from the States case. If the students only had one bag that size, what would they pack to take to the gold fields? Have your students imagine hearing about the
discovery of gold in California. If the students had decided to head out to the gold fields, what types of things would they bring? Compare and contrast two of the Four Corners Miners cases. What kinds of things did they bring and why? What do the students think was most important to them? Look at the carpet bag in the Miners from the States case. If the students only had one bag that size, what would they pack to take to the gold fields?

**Miners’ Store: Shovels, Pies, and Laundry**

This display is meant to evoke a general store where miners would get their supplies.

Have your students explore the various types of goods that were sold in Gold Country. At a simple interactive located in this exhibit, have them compare how much money they could have made from different business ventures during the Gold Rush, such as baking pies, taking photos, renting rooms, and mining for gold. Have your students imagine themselves newly arrived in Gold Country, looking for business opportunities. What would be one thing they would want to bring to California during the Gold Rush to sell? If they decided to look for gold instead, what kind of clues can they find among the objects and images as to what daily life was like?

At the nearby Daguerreian studio, ask your students to strike a pose that would make a good daguerreotype for showing the folks back home about life in the “diggings.” A daguerreotype is one of the earliest types of photography (1839) invented by Louis Jaques Mandé Daguerre. It is a photograph made on silver-plated copper. Early daguerreotypes (those from 1839 to 1845) took 60 to 90 seconds of sitting still to capture an image. People have hypothesized that this is why most of the people in daguerreotypes are frowning. In reality, the majority of daguerreotypes we see today are from post-1845, when new technology (the addition of bromine fumes to the process) reduced exposure times to an average of about 15 seconds. You can see more daguerreotypes in the Gold Rush section of the Art Gallery.

Next to the Daguerreian studio your students will find a “wheel of fortune” depicting the different types of fates that could befall a miner, including:

- Broke! Scrape together just enough to return home to Missouri.
- Strike a rich vein! Retire to San Francisco.
- Never find gold! Make a good living as a blacksmith.
• Die of cholera! Never reach California.
• Husband dies! Do very well managing a boarding house for miners.
• You’re rich! Find a 160-pound gold nugget.
• Success! Make a small fortune selling food & supplies to miners.
• Failure! Gamble away your earnings.

After your students have tried their luck spinning the wheel, discuss their ideas about the odds of striking it rich during the Gold Rush and the role that luck played in the matter.

**Clash of Cultures**

This digital multimedia piece presents specific examples of cultural interaction and conflict during the California Gold Rush and reveals the way greed and underlying notions of superiority intensified clashes. Textual information found at this station includes:

• The State Constitution of 1849 declared Native Californians were non-citizens, and explicitly excluded them from voting. A year later, the “Act for the Government and Protection of Indians” further denied rights and liberties to Indians.

• In the early 1850s some 200 to 300 African American slaves are estimated to have worked in the gold fields. By 1852, 2,200 African Americans, mostly free citizens, lived in California. While still only one percent of the non-native population, black miners were common enough in the gold regions that towns sprang up with names like Negro Bar, Negro Flat, and Timbuktu.

• In 1848, when gold was first discovered, about 1300 Californios headed for the mines. Because they already lived in California, they got to the gold fields early, and most did very well. But soon they were overwhelmed by hordes of gold seekers rushing in from around the world. The Californios, who had spent generations building families and communities in the state, were pushed aside.

• In 1852, California governor John Bigler issued the first of many calls for ending Chinese immigration. He argued that the Chinese were robbing California of its valuable resources. At the same time, the Foreign Miners’ Tax, paid mostly by Chinese workers, was raking in $5 million a year, about 25% of the state’s revenues.

Here your students can attach titles to portraits of a diversity of miners, such as “typical miner” or “foreign miner.” Each label will display new information. Have your students compare and contrast how the Gold Rush affected people from different cultural backgrounds.
Instant San Francisco

This display depicts how San Francisco grew up practically overnight during the Gold Rush. The rapid growth, coupled with quick and unsafe building techniques, meant that fires were a common occurrence. Lack of building materials meant that ships arriving in San Francisco harbor were often dismantled and used as temporary housing or stores. The growth of the city was so intense that people plotted out lots in the mudflats, and landfill helped extend the city boundaries.

Have your students find evidence of the constant construction and the fires that plagued the city. What clues can they find that indicate how residents dealt with the problem of fire? Another problem caused by rapid growth was crime, leading to the rise of the Vigilante Committee. What evidence is there as to how law and order was maintained in early San Francisco?

People Stayed and Made a Home

This section displays a kitchen that is an example of a post-Gold Rush, permanent settlement representing a time when people decided to stay in California. Simon Dikeman, who built this cabin in the 1850s, worked for a ditch company that brought water to hydraulic mining operations. He worked for wages, so he had a steady income and could afford to settle in one place. He sent for his family to join him in California.

Inside the kitchen, students will see a projection of a woman in period clothing sharing stories about life during the time (that students can listen to on a handheld device). While examining the kitchen, ask your students if they can find what is missing that they have in their kitchens at home. Some examples include:

- **Refrigerator**
  - They would have to store things in a cellar, can them, or get them fresh.

- **Dishwasher**
  - Children would help with the dishwashing.

- **Sink and Running Water**
  - They had to get water in the wooden bucket from a well or a nearby stream.
Oven
• There is a wood-burning stove for cooking.

Electricity
• They used candles or lanterns for light.

Ask your students if this display feels like a permanent home or just a temporary place to stay? Does the presence of women and children affect their opinion?

1869-1920s

Gallery sections include:
• Coming for Land
• The Railroad Brings People
• San Francisco—Glorious City of the West
• Seeking the Good Life

Background
This section focuses on issues of land ownership and the effects of agricultural practices, the foundations of the agricultural industry in California, the impact of the early railroads, and the cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles at the dawn of the 20th century.

Here your students will find material related to a variety of late 19th century agricultural communities; tools used to divide the land; and displays depicting the building of the transcontinental railroad, the impact of the railroad on the lives of people (both positive and negative), the abundance of agriculture in 20th century California, and the rise of both San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Wise men buy land. Fools sell.
—Henry Miller, owner of 700,000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley

Coming for Land

Mud Wagon

The central artifact of this section, the Mud Wagon, was built in the 1880s and owned by the Moore family of the San Francisco Bay Area. The Moore family lived in East Oakland and maintained Mission Peak Ranch near Mission San Jose (now Fremont) as a rural getaway. The Mud Wagon carried the family from the train station in Irvington up the muddy road to the ranch.
Have your students walk around the wagon and ask what they think it was used for. Do they think it had more than one use (for example, farm work or family transportation)? Can they find any evidence for its use, (such as the moveable sidewalls and seats)? Have your students look at the suspension underneath the wagon. Do they think the ride was bumpy or smooth? Can they find how the wagon was stopped? Have them look for the brakes that would make the wheels stop. Would they operate these brakes the same way they would use car brakes today?

**New Agricultural Communities**

As people from around the world settled in California, they brought their traditions, their values, and their skills. Some brought new farming techniques and new crops to cultivate. This series of cases focuses on five examples of agricultural communities that developed in California and the crops they brought with them. In the years following the Gold Rush, the use and value of land in California was changing from that of something to be torn up for extraction to that of something to be cultivated.

The Germans in Anaheim—Reaping Profit from the Vines in an Ethnic-based Cooperative

- Uniting as the Los Angeles Vineyard Society in 1857, German immigrants bought land near Santa Ana and sold 20-acre shares for families to cultivate. They hired California Indian, Mexican, and Chinese laborers to work the vineyards. The vintners sold their products under labels such as Fisher Wine Company until a catastrophic vine disease put an end to the industry in the 1880s.

The Chinese in Locke—Tenant Farmers Build a Refuge and an Asparagus Capital

- Chinese immigrants worked the farmland surrounding the Sacramento River Delta community of Locke. There they were able to escape from the anti-Chinese violence they faced in cities. Many Chinese, who were prohibited from owning land, leased land from white landowners such as George Locke. Others worked as farm hands, picking asparagus, trimming pear trees, or tending to Chinese vegetables such as bok choy.

Spreckels—A Sugar King and His Workers Create an Agricultural Empire

- Claus Spreckels’s workers built a sugar refinery near Salinas in 1896. Spreckels organized a network of beet farmers who produced the raw materials for sugar. Field hands worked in “gangs” based on ethnicities such as Japanese or Sikh. Together, the “sugar king” and his workers created an agricultural empire.

African Americans in Allensworth—Land Ownership as Racial Uplift

- People who moved to the town of Allensworth hoped to prosper and to prove the abilities of
African Americans. They followed the philosophy of Booker T. Washington. Allensworth’s founder, former military officer Allen Allensworth, along with a group of home builders, began inviting people to the town in 1908.

Californios—Changes in Agricultural Life on the Ranchos

- In the 1860s, Californio ranch owners like Ysidora Couts were faced with drought and declining cattle prices. Like many ranchers, Couts turned to fruit and vegetable cultivation. Their workers used fruit presses and reused glass water bottles to sell apple cider.

Discuss with your students some of the foods that are important in their families’ traditions. Can they think of any foods that were brought to California from other places in the world?

### Dividing Up the Land

In this immersive environment, your students will enter a space papered with documents—deeds, maps, water rights, land claims, government acts, lawsuits—that illustrate the diversity and complexity of issues surrounding land ownership, land use, and access. Wall cases with surveyors’ tools and guns reinforce the notion of mapping and dividing up the land (sometimes by force). In the center of this space, The Land Grab Interactive exhibit will further illustrate for students the multitude of land uses in California.

While exploring this space, discuss with your students all the various uses of land in California (agriculture, ranching, mining, factories, settlement, recreation, etc.). How has the use of land in California changed over time? How do people come to “own” the land? How did Native American land use differ from that of later settlers? Can they find any evidence of how California Indians were forced to give up their land? Below is information on a painting by Dalbert Castro displayed in this section that relates to the issue of taking Native land.

**Maidu Walk by Dalbert Castro (Maidu), 1980**

In 1862, the Konkow Maidu people of Chico and the Atsugewi people of Shasta County were forced by the U.S. government to move to the Round Valley Reservation. At the reservation, American settlers attacked and killed 45 Native people. Survivors fled in terror back to Chico but were forced by the government to return to Round Valley. This painting tells the story of the second trek back to the reservation over the hot, rugged landscape. Dozens of people died or were left sick along the way. In the painting, the people march westward within sight of the Sutter Buttes, a place of power for them.
**The Modoc War**

As more and more settlers moved into California lands during the Gold Rush, the U.S. government was under increasing pressure to move Native Californians off their homelands and onto reservations. The objects and images in this exhibit case tell the story of the Modoc War (1872–1873), one instance in which California Indians fought to retain their lands. This small installation was co-curated with members of the Museum’s Native Advisory Council.

**Ranching and Food for Market**

The flood of people into California during the Gold Rush required huge amounts of food, and ranchers quickly shifted from the tallow and hide industry to raising cattle for beef. The treaty ending the Mexican-American War had agreed to honor existing Spanish and Mexican land grants. With the Land Act of 1851, however, the state government required all Californio landowners to produce detailed documentation proving ownership. While claims were in dispute, American settlers could continue to occupy the land. These contested land claims took an average of seventeen years to settle and ended up costing the Californios much of their land.

This exhibit depicts the shift from tallow and hides to cattle for beef and the expansion of wheat farming. It also shows how California agriculture, unlike that in the rest of the United States, started as an industry. The first farms were created, not primarily as family homesteads, but to feed the increasing numbers of people coming into the region.

**Refrigerated Railroad Car**

Between 1880 and 1920, California’s farms were transformed by irrigation. Fruits, vegetables, and nuts replaced cattle, sheep, and wheat as the state’s biggest industry. In 1888, the first refrigerated cars were packed with fresh fruit in California, destined for New York. By 1892, California fruit was shipped all the way to London. In this exhibit, located on the other side of the Gallery, your students will be able to walk into a boxcar-like recreation of a refrigerated railroad car stacked with crates of produce loaded for market. Inside your students will hear the voices of those foreign-born laborers upon which Californian agriculture has relied almost exclusively. Waves of workers of different ethnicities (for example, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino) who have worked in different parts of California over time are represented in audio and projected images inside the boxcar.

Have your students search for evidence of people with diverse agricultural traditions working in California agriculture. Outside the boxcar, students will find how California was transformed into a cornucopia of fruits, vegetables, and nuts in the late 1800s and how word of that abundance was spread. Discuss why the train (and refrigerated car) were so important to agriculture in California. Point out the title on the boxcar “California Feeds the World” and discuss its meaning with your students.

**THE RAILROAD BRINGS PEOPLE**

**Dreams of Connecting the Continent and Building the Railroad**

Long before the tracks were laid, Californians dreamed of a railroad that would connect the West with the East and turn an isolated state into a center for commerce and settlement. Californians lobbied
the federal government to build the railroad, but conflict between Northern and Southern states stalled plans until the Civil War in 1861, when Southern representatives left Congress.

Upon entering this section, your students will see how the transcontinental railroad was conceived and the financial backers who supported its construction. A small exhibit case contains several objects that embody that dream, including a silver urn with railroad imagery. The urn was given by San Francisco civic leaders to Oregon Senator Edward D. Baker in 1860 to enlist his support in Congress for the transcontinental railroad. Beyond this your students will encounter the workers who had the dangerous job of building the railroad. A theatrical version of a hand cart on rails displays tools and images that speak to that work.

Have your students examine the image, American Progress. What symbols of “progress” can they find? Did everyone benefit from this progress? In the area that addresses the building of the railroad, your students can view an animated map that shows the expansion of the railroad across the continent between 1879 and 1910. What clues can they find about the challenges faced by the Chinese as they built the railroad through the mountains, (such as the images of the mountains through which the railroad had to be built and the difficulty of digging tunnels through thick granite of the Sierra Nevada). Have your students find what tools were available in the 1860s for doing this work, such as a Powderhorn for holding black powder. Have them lift a section of rail and imagine how hard it would be to lift a whole rail.

A Bustling Center

In this immersive environment—a railroad station platform—your students can learn about the comings and goings of people and commerce to and from California. Maps, brochures, and promotional literature emphasize the notion of California as a destination. Stacked luggage is used to convey individual stories. Maps show the network of railroads that crisscrossed California, bringing people and trade to all regions of the state.

In a series of lockers in this area, students will find evidence of those employed by the railroad, including porters, brakemen, conductors, and cooks. Here your students can open individual lockers and examine the tools and materials related to those whose work made the railroad run. One example of railroad workers is the Pullman Porters. The Pullman Company of Chicago was at one time the largest employer of African American men in the country. Oakland, the western end of the railroad line, was home base for many porters who organized into the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925.
**Power and Politics**

In the late 19th century, the Central and Southern Pacific Railroad was California’s largest business and landowner, controlling land, the wheat trade, and transportation. The railroad brought great benefits to the state but was increasingly blamed for many of the economic and social problems of the times. One story highlighted in this section is that of Modesta Avila. In 1889, the twenty-two-year-old Avila was put on trial for placing an obstruction on the tracks of the Santa Fe railroad, which had been laid just feet from her front door. The “obstruction” was a sign with the words, “this land belongs to me, if the railroad wants to run here they will have to pay me ten thousand dollars.” After an initial hung jury, Avila was retried and found guilty, convicted of a felony, and sentenced to three years at San Quentin, where she became ill and died after two years.

Along with exploring the display depicting Avila’s story, your students can search for examples of anti-railroad propaganda. What were the arguments made against the railroad?

**SAN FRANCISCO: GLORIOUS CITY OF THE WEST**

**1906 Earthquake and Fire**

The 1906 earthquake and fire was a seminal event in Northern California history (it was 32 times more powerful than the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake). In San Francisco, the 74-hour fire that followed the earthquake caused the most destruction. This uncontrollable inferno displaced approximately 225,000 people and nearly ruined the sixth largest city in the United States. The extent of the devastation is illustrated in this exhibit with images and pieces of charred material.

**Paper Sons—An Unexpected Opportunity**

Because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, unskilled Chinese laborers could not come to settle in California in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With the destruction of most of San Francisco’s legal records during the earthquake and fire, members of the Chinese community had an opportunity to claim that they were born in the United States. As U.S. citizens, they could bring individuals from China that they claimed as their children. The documentation to prove these claims were sold in China and purchased by those who became “paper sons,” or “sons” of U.S. citizens on paper only. Through photos and reproductions of documents, this exhibit explores the process of post-earthquake immigration from China, through Angel Island to San Francisco.

Discuss with your students how it wasn’t easy for everyone to come to California. Some could come whenever they wanted, but others had difficulty because of laws designed to keep them out. Explain the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a law that barred immigration from China for ten years. The law was renewed in 1892 and again in 1902, this time with no termination date set. Not until 1943, during World War II, was the law repealed. Can your students find any artifacts that illustrate the policies and attitudes of the time? Discuss how a chain of unforeseen events can provide an unexpected opportunity (such as the example of paper sons).
Promoting the Good Life

From 1880 to 1930, railroad and tourist promoters put forth an image of Southern California that they hoped would attract migrants and travelers. They emphasized the region’s sunny climate and natural beauty. Most of all, however, they used images that looked back to an invented “Spanish” past, imagery that emphasized the Spanish and ignored the Mexican heritage of the region. Students can examine images of orange groves, missions, and sun-drenched beaches on a wall of ephemera ranging from fruit crate labels to book jackets, postcards, programs, posters, sheet music, and magazines.

Have your students explore all the advertisements and promotional pieces on display. Have them imagine living in a cold Midwestern town during a long winter. Ask them what types of images would make them want to come to California.

Mobility and Touring

In the 1910s, California led the nation in cars-per-capita and became a mecca for automobile tourists, some of whom drove to California each winter from the Midwest. By 1925, the city of Los Angeles had one automobile for every three persons—more than twice the national average. In these years, the Automobile Club of Southern California promoted auto touring and fought for good roads. These good-roads advocates worked alongside women’s clubs and preservationists to create a state highway out of El Camino Real, linking the historic missions from north to south. Here students can examine a luxury touring car (a 1913 Cadillac) with an open top and outfitted with an elaborate picnic case, perfect for a road trip excursion. Next to the car they’ll find an El Camino Real bell signpost, evidence of the early tourism industry in California.

Have your students discuss the pros and cons of car culture, contrasting it with using public transportation. Which do they think is a better way of moving people around in today’s world? Why?

Sketching Out the Suburbs

Los Angeles was the first American metropolis whose period of expansion occurred during the automobile era. Freed from the necessity of living within walking distance of work or streetcar lines, Angelenos spread out and bought houses with lawns, flowers, and shrubbery. In the 1920s, Los Angeles had the largest ratio of single-family residences in the United States; over half the residents lived in detached single family homes by 1930. In this exhibit your students will find a theatrical version of a home in Rancho Santa Fe, a subdivision north of San Diego.
Gallery sections include:

- Trying to Escape the Great Depression
- Off to War
- Building Modern California
- Forces of Change

Background

This section begins by exploring the impact on California of the huge numbers of migrants who came in search of work and opportunity first during the Depression and then during World War II. Continuing on into the postwar years, this part of the Gallery looks at the modern state of California and the forces that have shaped it.

Here your students will find materials related to objects people brought with them to California during the Depression and the desperate living conditions some were forced to endure. They’ll also find evidence of the waves of newcomers arriving during the Second World War and how the postwar years, with opportunities for some and restrictions for others, have shaped the California we know today.

And then the dispossessed were drawn west—from Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico; from Nevada and Arkansas, families, tribes, dusted out, tractored out. Carloads, caravans, homeless and hungry; twenty thousand and fifty thousand and a hundred thousand and two hundred thousand. They streamed over the mountains, hungry and restless—restless as ants, scurrying to find work to do—to lift, to push, to pick, to cut—anything, any burden to bear, for food. The kids are hungry. We got no place to live ....

—John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath, 1939

Trying to Escape the Great Depression

On October 24, 1929, prices on the New York Stock Exchange plummeted, and the world economy fell apart. People lost their businesses and jobs, their farms, and their homes. By June of 1934, about 1,225,000 Californians—20% of the whole population of the state—were dependent on public assistance. Unemployment in San Francisco and Los Angeles hit as high as 30%.
**Depression Truck**

Migrants from the Dust Bowl—tenant farmers from the Great Plains, hit hard by drought—eventually made up almost 20% of the state’s population. They brought a musical tradition based on Anglo-Celtic ballads and popular Country-and-Western music. These styles would eventually develop into the “Bakersfield Sound.” Meanwhile, popular religious crusaders such as Aimee Semple McPherson reached out by radio, while migrant preachers built congregations in private homes, storefronts, and camps in the Central Valley, providing a familiar sense of home for the newly arrived.

This exhibit, embedded in a Ford Model T of the era, depicts how people came with as many of their belongings as they could carry. On the windshield, your students will see projections of photographs taken by Dorothea Lange depicting daily life during the era as well as newsreel footage of the flood of people coming to California. A radio embedded in the truck will provide students with a variety of examples of music, radio preachers, and oral histories from the period, while material found in pullout drawers at the back of the truck will provide further evidence of the types of objects of personal significance people brought with them.

Have your students explore the variety of objects that migrants brought with them to California. Have them imagine leaving their home for new lands and new opportunities. What would they take with them? What would be most important? What would they hope to find in California? Have them compare and contrast this period with another time when large waves of people came to California.

**Pipe City**

At the foot of 19th Avenue in Oakland, nearly 200 people lived in leftover concrete sewer pipes, scavenging vegetables from nearby grocery wholesalers. They called their village “Miseryville,” but the press dubbed it “Pipe City.”

One at a time, students can climb inside a section of a large pipe with a mattress in it and listen to an audio clip describing the people forced to live there. The pipe is set against a backdrop of images of
government relief camps or “tent cities.” Have students imagine what it would be like to spend a night in a pipe like this. Who would come to live in a place like this? Below is the text on an audio clip that can be heard inside the pipe:

_to qualify for citizenship in Pipe City you must be jobless, homeless, hungry, and preferably shoeless, coatless, and hatless. If one also is discouraged, lonely, filled with a terrible feeling of hopelessness and helplessness, one’s qualifications are that much stronger. One belongs._

—Oakland Post-Enquirer, December 3, 1932

Next to the pipe is a painting of Pipe City. Take a moment to have your students look closely at the painting and talk with them about what they think life was like in Pipe City.

On the wall opposite the truck, your students will find a visitor response station where they can give their opinion on opposing points of view for solving issues such as:

Yes! Unionize!
No! Unions will ruin us!

Yes! Give farms and factories to the poor!
No! We don’t want Socialism!

Yes! We need government jobs!
No! Keep out the bums!

Yes! Have compassion for the poor!
No! These people don’t deserve our help!

OFF TO WAR

Coming for Work

California was a major center for wartime industries, particularly shipbuilding and aviation. In Northern California, Henry J. Kaiser established the largest shipbuilding facilities in the country and advertised his jobs among African American communities in the southeast, particularly Texas and Louisiana. As a result, thousands came to California, boosting the African American population nearly 400%, to 460,000 people.
Overall, the defense boom attracted more than 1.5 million newcomers, making California the fastest-growing state in the nation. In Southern California, the aviation industry created thousands of new jobs, building nearly 100,000 planes in 1943 alone. The War Department spent about $10 billion at companies like Lockheed, Douglas, and Northrop. During the war, building airplanes became the biggest industry in the United States, employing 280,000 people by 1944. Women aircraft workers—idealized as Rosie the Riveter—filled a labor shortage, making up about 40% of the total aviation workforce.

In this area, your students will find images and tools of those who came to work in California during the war years, including Braceros, laborers brought from Mexico to work in railroad construction and agricultural jobs, as well as materials related to the thousands of women who took on factory jobs to supply the war effort.

Have your students explore the various types of work available in wartime California. Can they find examples of new employment opportunities for women and African American during this period? Have them compare and contrast the Braceros display in this area with that of the “No Longer Wanted” display in the Depression section of the Gallery. How did the war affect Mexican migration during this period?

**War Housing**

Housing was in short supply for the thousands of workers flooding into California to work in the war industries. Some people were fortunate to be assigned government workers’ housing, quickly built near shipyards and aviation plants. Here, students are able to walk into the small living room of such a home, sit down on the replica of a government-issue couch, and read stories in a scrapbook about working in the shipyards and aviation industry. They will also be able to look inside an actual kitchen taken from Hunter’s Point in San Francisco and reassembled in the Museum.

Have your students look for evidence as to who would have lived in the house and what type of work they would have done (shipyard welder). Discuss rationing during wartime; why this would be enacted and how it would affect daily life. Can your students find any evidence in the kitchen that people during the war had to make do with less and recycle for the war effort (such as the can of imitation cinnamon above the sink and the ball of tin foil on top of the ice-box)?

**I Am an American**

During the war, doubts of national loyalty were leveled at those seen as not supporting the war effort. In this display students will find information about groups who had their patriotism questioned, including conscientious objectors, zoot suiters, and African American sailors involved in the Port Chicago incident.

Discuss with your students why these Americans would have had their allegiance questioned. Can they think of another example in history or today where groups were singled out as not being “real” Americans?
As thousands of people headed to California to work in the war industries, more than 110,000 Californians of Japanese ancestry were receiving notices to report to local government offices for deportation to “relocation centers” around the West. Allowed to bring only one suitcase per person, they left behind most of their possessions, their land, farms, businesses, and friends. In the San Francisco Bay Area, many people were sent to Tanforan Race Track—a holding station—before being sent to the relocation camps. Approximately 8,000 people were confined there. In this display students will be able to see what life was like at Tanforan through artifacts and artwork and be able to listen to oral histories of the people who were there.

Have your students enter and look for evidence that interment affected entire families, not just adult males.

During these years people worked hard and played hard. Nightclubs, lounges, and ballrooms were filled with locals, war workers, and military personnel, all commingling around dance and music. In this area, students can hear and select music from a 1930s–1940s jukebox exhibited next to a small dance floor.

GIIs returned from the war with the promise of a better life. This exhibit area features some of the visual elements of those promises, with advertisements for housing, colleges, and consumer goods, set against a backdrop of a “baby boomer density wall” with hundreds of snapshots of babies born during the late 1940s and early 1950s. An adjacent television set console from the period depicts silent moving images of atomic bomb explosions.

Not all Californians had access to the suburban ideal. Some veterans discovered when they returned from World War II that the promises of the G.I. Bill—particularly the housing benefits—would go unfulfilled. Non-white residents were frequently locked out of their dream of a home in the suburbs because of restrictive covenants, redlining, and other forms of discrimination. Freeway construction and urban renewal devastated minority neighborhoods. The civil rights movement in California organized around housing rights. In this theatrical environment depicting a working
class back alley, students can see where different groups could live (and where they couldn’t).

Have your students examine the image next to the maps. What do they think the sign “suburban defense league” means? Examine the timeline of events on the wall. What are some examples of discrimination they can find in California history?

**The Military-Industrial Complex**

Adjacent to the suburban home, a theatrical environment suggesting a California engineer’s office gives students a glimpse of the scope of the military-industrial complex in California. Maps of military bases, corporate think tanks, and universities are juxtaposed next to engineering drawings of the new freeway system and an early computer.

In this area, have your students look for evidence as to what became the dominant postwar industry in California. Compare and contrast this new economy with others in California history (gold, agriculture, and land).

**Nuclear Family, Nuclear Fears**

After a depression and a world war, Californians in the 1950s were eager to spend their money in suburban shopping centers, baseball stadiums, and amusement parks. They wanted the latest gadgets and safe, family fun. Under the surface of domestic cheer, Californians felt the anxiety of the Cold War. The Office of Civil Defense promoted home bomb shelters and trained Americans on what to do in case of nuclear attack.

What examples can your students find of postwar prosperity? How do they think TV has affected recreation? What clues are there for how the euphoria at the end of World War II turned to anxiety? What evidence can they find as to what people feared? Have them open the drawers for clues.

**Outsiders Find a Home**

In reaction to the conformity of suburban California life, a counterculture emerged in California that influenced the nation. Inspired by writers such as Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg, the beats dropped out of society to gather at places like the Vesuvio coffee house and City Lights bookstore in San Francisco, where they read poetry, listened to jazz, and celebrated a spontaneous, artistic lifestyle. Here students can see a recreation of Vesuvio filled with objects of the era and can create their own poetry at an interactive display. Students will also find evidence of LGBT communities of the era in a display about Jose Sarria, who in 1961 became the first openly gay person to run for public office when he ran for San Francisco supervisor.
This section focuses on California from 1960 through 1975, a period of increasing political turmoil, identity politics, conflict over U.S. policy in Vietnam and the growth of a significant counterculture populated by coming-of-age baby boomers. The presentation technique illustrates the notion of “collective memory” as a way of depicting history. In this enclosed environment students will be immersed in a sound and light show. The walls are filled with embedded wall cases or niches containing displays designed by twenty-four different people who lived through this period in California’s history and a visitor response station.

The Oakland Museum of California invited twenty-four Californians to transform their memories from 1960 to 1975 into displays. In this exhibit your students will see these individuals’ reflections on this time of change. Have your students look for examples of how different displays depict personal reflections about themes of the time such as civil rights, immigration, sexual identity, environmentalism, and the Vietnam War. Do the displays appear to be in agreement as to the meaning of the era? Have your students pick two displays at random and compare and contrast the main messages. What objects were used to convey those messages? Discuss with your students what they would include in a display they would create of their life and times.

The History Hangout is a place where your students can relax and take a closer look at the objects and what they can say about history. Bring your class in to play, explore, and investigate our wonderful History Things including:

- Tiny Things
- Weird Things
- Mystery Things
- A Really Big Thing
- Photography Things
- Sound of Things
- You Be the Thing
- What Thing Doesn’t Belong?