

California History Day

How one and one-half centuries of change helped shape our county.

The students attending California History Day at the Kern County Museum will have the opportunity to step back in time to when the first European explorers and the settlers that followed them came to the southern San Joaquin Valley.

Students will:

- Learn the art of adobe brick making that was used to build the early missions, government buildings, forts, and homes.
- Explore the techniques needed to build a log cabin that will last for years.
- Learn what brought some of the first Basque, African-American, and Chinese-American settlers to the area.
- Experience, first-hand, some of the chores and tasks that were part of the every-day life of children in the first farming families to settle in this part of the valley.
- Experience the hard work of the '49ers as they pan for gold.
- Learn how "black gold" became a major economic force in the county.

For this museum trip, the learning of the students begins with preparation in the classroom in the weeks prior to the visit, is then highlighted by the special day event led by costumed docents, and continues in the classroom afterwards with the experiences shared by the students. This teacher's guide with pre and post visit activities is provided to assist the classroom teacher in preparing for the visit and extending the learning experiences in the weeks after the visit.

The California History Day has been designed to support the student's learning of our state's early history from the days of the first explorers to the early twentieth century. It is not intended to be a complete history, but to support the course of instruction set forth by the state framework and provide concrete learning experiences that students will remember for years to come.

Background Information

The early immigrants came to the land that is now California for many reasons. They came seeking a new life with better opportunities. They came to find good land to farm, raise cattle, and sheep. They came in search of gold and mineral wealth. They came to help build railroads. They came to become merchants, bankers, doctors, land agents, school teachers, and to fill all of the other jobs in a new and growing area.

They came to Kern County for the same reasons. Early farms raised peaches, alfalfa, cotton, and other crops to meet the needs of the growing community and to supply food for the big cities of Los Angeles and San Francisco. They raised cattle and sheep on the valley floor and into the mountains. They found gold and other precious minerals in the Greenhorn Mountains and on the desert east of the mountains. They came to bring the railroad lines down to the southern valley and later over the mountains to Mojave and then on to Los Angeles. They came to work in the oil fields. They came to build good lives in the new towns that grew and prospered in the county.

The first Europeans to visit what is now Kern County were the Spanish explorers, soldiers, and Padres that passed through the area in the 1770s, crossing the river they named Rio de San Felipe, now the Kern River, near the base of the bluffs. Later came explorers from the newly formed United States looking for trade and travel routes through the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

As more people came through the area they began to settle near the river where a ready supply of water was available. Early farms sprang up with small homes built of adobe or wattle and daub with thatched roofs of tules. Local cottonwood trees provided logs for some early log homes, but the wood was extremely soft and decayed quickly. As trails became available to the mountains, sawmills were built and homes became more as we know them today, though usually much smaller. Towns were laid out and surveyed, with areas for housing and for businesses. The towns became the centers for social life, and hotels, boarding houses, livery stables, schools, churches, stores, and offices were built.

Many of the new settlers had come to California to find gold. The Gold Rush 49ers had a long journey to get to California from the eastern states. There were three common ways to come to the goldfields. One was to sail on a boat from one of the seaports of the eastern coast around Cape Horn, the southern-most tip of South America, and then northward to San Francisco. This was a long and often dangerous voyage, with fierce storms along the way. Another option was to sail through the Caribbean to Panama, leave the ship and walk, travel by mule, and by boat to the Pacific side, then wait for passage on a ship to California. The third way was to travel to the Missouri and Mississippi rivers and set off across the rest of the continent with a wagon train, usually walking, but sometimes riding a horse across the plains, through the Rocky Mountains, across the deserts of the Great Basin, and over the steep Sierra Nevada Mountains. Often, after arriving in the gold fields and finding life extremely hard and gold scarce, they would strike out for other areas of the state to settle and farm or begin a business. Most often these settlers were more successful than the miners who continued to search for gold.

In the 1880s, the railroads came to Kern County, and with the trains came all of the fine goods that were available in the big cities to the north. Building materials, food staples, dry goods of all types, and visitors arrived on the trains. On the trains returning to the northern cities were area residents going to spend the summer in the cities around the San Francisco Bay, fresh local fruit and animals headed for the markets that fed the people of the cities, along with wool and cotton destined for the clothing factories of the nation. Oil and its products were shipped by rail to refineries making kerosene and wagon axle grease.

Roads were laid out as travel became more common, although it still took most rural families an entire day or two to go to town, trade, sell, and buy goods, and return home. Because even distances that seem short to us today, were long and often adventurous in less than perfect weather to the early settlers, small communities such as the Rosedale Colony were formed to take care of daily needs. The task of driving to town for supplies involved harnessing the horses, hitching them to the wagon or buggy, loading farm products to sell, food for the horses, and then driving at little more than a fast walking pace into town. When in town overnight, the horses and wagon or buggy would have to be taken to a livery stable for the night, and a hotel or boarding house room secured for the travelers.

Pre-visit Activities

The following activities are designed to help prepare the students for their visit to the “California History Day” program at the museum. Use of the activities is an important part of the experience. The activities will give students some background knowledge and help them connect with the activities at the museum. **It is expected that students will have participated in most of these activities prior to their visit.**

1. **Early Homes** Have the students measure a rectangle fifteen feet by twenty-five feet on the floor of the classroom or an outside play area. Mark the outline of the rectangle with chalk or masking tape. This rectangular area is the approximate size of some of the early adobe and log homes built by the first settlers. Homes built of willow branches and mud were usually smaller. Have the students mark off a three foot wide hearth and fireplace on one end wall. This would be where all of the cooking would be done, and where water would be heated for baths and clothes washing. Mark three foot wide doorways at the middle of the longer sides of the “house.” The rest of the space in the home would hold a table and benches for eating, and places for the family to sleep. Most of the families living in these homes would consist of parents and three to eight children. Have the students write about what they think life would have been like living in a home this size and share their thoughts with the class.
2. **Food** Bring in some supermarket food ads for the students. Have the students work in small groups to decide which foods they would like to purchase for a week long menu with three meals planned for each day. Make a shopping list using items found in the food ad, and list the amounts needed and the cost of each item. Discuss with the class the situation of the early settlers to the area: no refrigeration, supplies took from one to three weeks to arrive from the big cities, many families would only have farm products such as eggs, cream, butter, or fresh produce to trade and little cash for purchases. Processed foods such as frozen or packaged mixes were not available. How would this change the menu planning? What substitutions could be made? What would it be like to eat the same home grown foods day after day?
3. **Gold!** Most of the miners that came to California to strike it rich in the goldfields had no idea of how to look for gold, or what to expect other than what they had been told: That “nuggets as big as your fist” were lying all around just waiting to be picked up. Have students research gold and methods of mining. Make a class chart of the information that students find. Most of those who really became rich were not the gold miners. Have the students do research to find out which occupations might have had better results than panning for gold.
4. **Transportation** Before the railroads came to the valley, the only ways to travel from place to place were 1) on foot, 2) by ox team and wagon, 3) by horse team and buggy or wagon, 4) on horseback, 5) or by small boat. Copy the following information on a chart for the class:
 - a. **Walking** about 30 miles per day (3 to 4 miles per hour)
 - b. **Ox Team** about 14 miles per day (1 to 2 miles per hour)
 - c. **Horse Team** about 25 miles per day (2 to 3 miles per hour)
 - d. **Horseback** about 45 miles per day (4 to 5 miles per hour)
 - e. **Small Boat** about 25 miles per day (2 to 3 miles per hour)

- Using this information and maps of California, have the students figure the travel time for each of the methods to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Sacramento (note that boats would not have been used to travel to Los Angeles – can the students tell why?). For an extension of this activity, have the class figure the distance to a city on the Mississippi River and calculate the travel time needed to come from that city to Kern County by one of the methods on the chart.

5. **Wildlife** As the earliest settlers came to the San Joaquin Valley, they found many species of wildlife. There were Mule deer, pronghorn antelope, Tule elk, black bears, grizzly bears, mountain lions, bobcats, coyote, wolves, California condors, eagles, badgers, hares, rabbits, and more. Have the students pair up, and with a partner, select one species to research. Have the students write a report, draw or include pictures, and present the report to the class.

Post-Visit Activities

These activities are broadly designed to reinforce the learning that took place during the visit to the museum. Since each classroom experience will differ slightly from the other classes visiting on the "California History Day," some adjustments will probably need to be made so that the activity will truly fit the experience.

1. **Adobe Bricks** Have the students of the class review the materials needed to make adobe bricks. Have them write what the procedure is for making the bricks and work with a partner to edit, make corrections, and produce a final copy. Include illustrations with captions for each step of the process.
2. **Farm Chores** Children of the early settlers spent a large portion of their day helping with family chores, such as soap making, clothes washing, food preparation, and caring for animals. Brainstorm with the class which activities they experienced that would have been one of those chores. Ask each student to select one that they might have had assigned to them as an early settler, and write about how to perform the chore. Include comparison information as to what, if any, task would be the modern equivalent, and whether or not they would have liked doing the chore day after day.
3. **Letter Writing** Letter writing was about the only way that early settlers could communicate with family that lived in other parts of the country. Have the students write a letter to a fictitious cousin in another state, telling what a typical day in the new county might have been like. Before beginning, discuss activities that might be included, and ask the students to make an organizational plan before writing.
4. **Compare/Contrast** The coming of the railroads to Kern County opened new opportunities for trade and supplies. As a class, construct a chart or Venn diagram showing what items might have been available for purchase before the railroads came, what they could have grown, and what would have been available by rail from the large cities to the north after the railroads arrived.
5. **Black Gold!** The discovery of oil in Kern County and the invention of the automobile brought about great change to the state. Work with the students to have them list some changes that might have occurred. Think about jobs, housing, travel, machinery, and the effect oil and automobiles had on the towns. Write a class story about some of the changes and illustrate the story.

Feedback

All programs benefit from constructive feedback. We would like to hear from you and your students. Let us know what worked well and was enjoyed by the class. Also let us know if there was something that we could change to make the day better (be sure to give us some suggestions). Send feedback and/or letters to: Jackie Brouillette, Education and Volunteer Services Manager, Kern County Museum, 3801 Chester Ave., Bakersfield, CA 93301

Kern County and California Historic Events Timeline 1579 - 1927

Year	California Event	Kern County Event
1579	Sir Francis Drake sailed along the coast of California	
1769	Gaspar de Portola began expedition up the coast from Mexico and Mission building began at San Diego. Mission period encompassed the years between 1769 and 1823.	
1770	Presidio established at Monterey.	
1772		Commander Fages became the first European to enter the San Joaquin Valley through Grapevine Pass
1776	Spanish settlers reached the site of San Francisco	Father Garces came through what is now Kern County and named the river Rio de San Felipe
1812	Russian fur traders built Ft. Ross on the northern coast.	
1822		Area came under the flag of Mexico
1827		Jedediah Smith became the first American to enter the area
1834		Walker Pass discovered by Joseph Reddeford Walker
1841	First American settlers came to California by land (the Bidwell-Bartleson party).	
1842		San Emigdio land grant established
1843-46	1846- Bear Flag Revolt took place with California becoming an independent country for a few days, before becoming part of the United States.	Two Fremont expeditions passed through the area. Rio de San Felipe was renamed Kern River after Edward M. Kern, topographer of the party.
1848	Area became part of the United States with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo	
1849	California Gold Rush begins	Gold seekers traveled through eastern Kern
1850	California became the 31 st state	Kern area was included as part of Mariposa County
1852	Tulare County was created and contained the area of Kern. Edward F Beale became the Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California and Nevada	Alexander McCray brings the first purebred cattle to Kern.
1853		Gold discovered in Greenhorn Gulch. Sebastian Indian Reservation established by General Edward Beale. First sheep raised in Kern. Gordon's Ferry began operations across the river at the foot of the bluffs.
1854	The last Fremont expedition entered the San Joaquin Valley along a fork of the Kern River and then traveled north to San Francisco, exploring a southern route for a railroad line.	Gold miners came to Greenhorn Mountains. Fort Tejon was established near the Sebastian Indian Reservation. First stage service between Ft. Tejon and Los Angeles.
1857		Fort Tejon Earthquake. First post office

		established at Keyesville.
1858		Telegraph lines extended from Los Angeles to Ft. Tejon
1860	Telegraph service from Los Angeles to San Francisco through Kern County.	Gold discovered near Whiskey Flat (Kernville).
1861		The first settlers came to Kern Island (Bakersfield).
1862		Colonel Thomas Baker bought land at Kern Island and began reclaiming swampland.
1864		Gold discovered at Havilah. Thomas Barnes planted the first alfalfa crop near what is now Panama. Fort Tejon abandoned
1865	Central Pacific began building eastward as part of the first transcontinental railroad.	
1866	State Legislature establishes Kern County with Havilah as county seat.	Havilah Courier, the county's first newspaper began publication.
1869	Transcontinental railroad completed bringing rail service to California from the eastern states.	Kern Island becomes Bakersfield
1873		Bakersfield first incorporated. Becomes county seat the next year. First hospital built in Bakersfield. Southern Pacific Railroad line enters Kern County at Delano.
1874		Town of Sumner founded by Southern Pacific (later Kern City, then East Bakersfield).
1889		Great Bakersfield fire burned most of the city's buildings. Rosedale Colony Founded.
1890		First electric lighting in Bakersfield.
1895		Town of Randsburg founded. Yellow Aster gold mine discovered.
1898		Santa Fe Railroad comes to Bakersfield.
1899		Discovery of oil in Kern River Field.
1904		Beale Clock Tower built at Chester Ave. and 17 th Streets.
1906	San Francisco earthquake and fire.	
1910		Lakeview oil gusher begins, producing about 68,000 barrels of oil a day for over a year.
1927		First county-owned airport established near Bakersfield (now Meadows Field)

California Content Standards Correlation Chart for grade 4

All or a portion of the standards listed are supported, based on the use of Content Information, Pre-visit Activities, Docent Presentations, Post-visit Activities, and Teacher Background Information.

English-Language Arts	History-Social Science	Science	Mathematics
<u>Grade 4</u>			
Reading: 2.2 Writing: 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3 Written & Oral Conventions: 1.1, 1.2 Listening & Speaking: 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2	California: A Changing State: 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4	Life: 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, Earth: 5a, 5c Investigation and Experimentation: 6b	Number Sense: 1.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3 Measurement and Geometry: 1.1, 1.2, 3.1 Mathematical Reasoning: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.4

(Standards in place August 2005)

Further correlations may be obtained through modification of pre and post-visit activities to fit specific grade-level standards.