

# THE SOURCE



TEACH CALIFORNIA

A Publication of the California History-Social Science Project - Winter 2016



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*A Publication of The California History-  
Social Science Project*

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## Teach California

### 3 The Great State of California

*A look at the land, people, places, and industries that define the state, as conversations starters for the classroom.*

### 8 California's New History-Social Science Framework

*Learn about the latest draft of the new History-Social Science Framework, and see 4th & 11th grade examples.*

### 11 Debating the L.A. River

*How a structured academic controversy can promote civic engagement and teach students about the L.A. River.*

### 14 A Thirsty Land, California

*A brief look at the status of the drought, and historic water use in the state.*

### 17 Studying History Through Objects

*A lesson on the Civil War and the West, as told through objects from the time.*

### 20 California and the Nation

*A lesson on WWII and national race relations, through a California lens.*

### 23 Environmental Literacy for all California Students

*An update on the new state Blueprint for Environmental Literacy.*

### 24 California State of Mind: The Legacy of Pat Brown

*A new teaching resource.*



**CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC**

## *The Great State of California*

*A look at the land, people, places, and industries that define the state*

*There is science, logic, reason; there is thought verified by experience. And then there is California.*

-Edward Abbey

*The mind is troubled by some buried but ineradicable suspicion that things had better work here, because here, beneath that immense bleached sky, is where we run out of continent.*

-Joan Didion

*Californians are more like the Americans than the Americans themselves...For California has always occupied, in relation to other regions, much the same relation that American has occupied toward Europe: it is the great catch-all, the vortex at the continent's end into which elements of America's diverse population have been drawn, whirled around.*

-Carey McWilliams

*Whatever starts in California unfortunately has an inclination to spread.*

-Jimmy Carter

*From the beginning, California promised much. While yet barely a name on a map, it entered American awareness as a symbol of renewal. It was a final frontier: of geography and of expectation.*

-Kevin Starr



As these quotes suggest, California is seen as a unique and even exceptional part of the American experience. And indeed, the state has a remarkable list of superlatives to its name. The following is a brief overview of some notable aspects of the state that may give you jumping off points for classroom discussions.

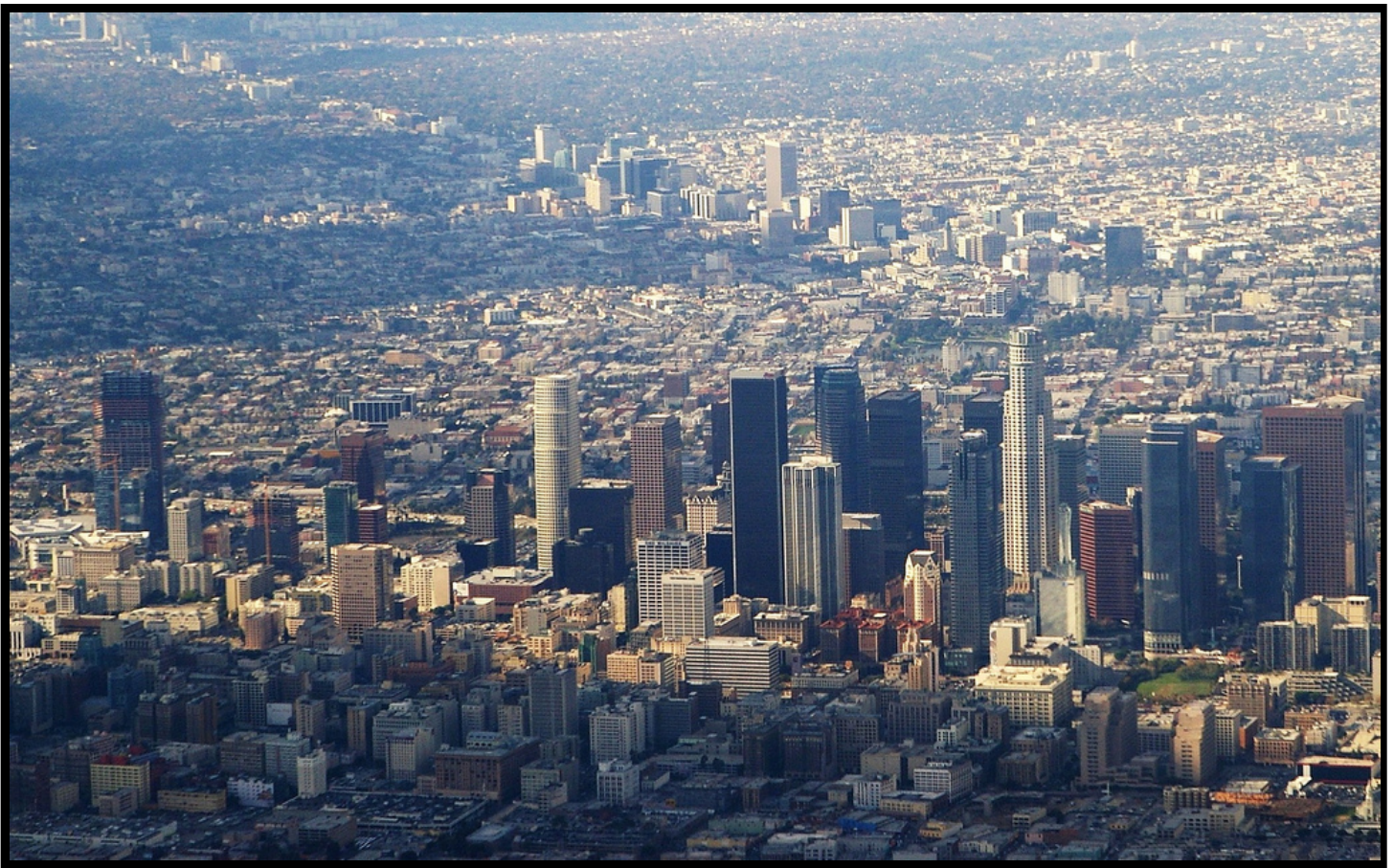


### *The People*

You probably know that California is the most populous state in the nation. Mobilization for WWII jumpstarted the phenomenal growth, and California's post-war jobs, life styles, culture, climate, and beauty put it on track to overtake New York's 17 million residents in 1962. Today there are more than 38 million Californians, which means that 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the nation's population lives in just 163,000 square miles. This creates a population density of approximately 240 people per square mile, compared with the national average of 87. Of course, Californians are not evenly distributed around the state, but like most Americans, live concentrated near the coast, where, in the city of Los Angeles for example, the population density is approximately 8,000 people per square mile.

It is more than sheer numbers alone that makes California's population remarkable. There is greater ethnic and racial diversity in California than in any other state, with more than 100 different native languages in California's public schools. Much of this diversity is centered in urban areas, but every single county in the state contains students who are English Learners, with some counties containing more than 50% of non-native English speakers. (Monterey County has the highest number of English Learners: 62%) In addition to Spanish (which is the language spoken by 90% or so of the English Learners), the other top ten native languages include Vietnamese, Filipino, Cantonese, Mandarin, Arabic, Hmong, Korean, Punjabi, and Russian.

California is a plurality state, with each ethnic group making up less than fifty percent of the population. The 2014 census reveals that there are 38.6% Hispanic, 38.5% white/non-Hispanic, 14.4% Asian, and 6.5% African American. The remaining portion of the population is made up of just about every other nationality. Adding to the complexity of such statistics, a growing number of people describe themselves as made up of two or more races. To give a sense of where the population trends are heading, for the past ten years the Asian migration has been the greatest, with Latino/a migration close behind.



Los Angeles Skyline. Photo by Ron Reiring, found on flickr: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/84263554@N00/3120512033>

***The Land***

California's landscapes, like its population, are remarkably diverse. The state encompasses 1,100 miles of coast line, numerous rugged mountain ranges, including the highest and lowest points in the continental U.S.: Mt. Whitney, which rises to 14,494 feet, and Death Valley, which is 282 feet below seal level. Mt. Whitney is situated just 80 miles from Death Valley.

California's "heartland" - the Central Valley - is surrounded by the Sierra, Coastal Range, Cascade and Transverse mountain ranges. The Central Valley is 500 miles long and 60 miles wide. Once an inland extension of the Pacific Ocean, the Central Valley slowly filled with thousands of feet of sediments washed from the Sierras, creating one of the richest agricultural centers in the world. This valley receives the drainage from the state's two major river systems, the Sacramento and the San Joaquin, which converge to form an extensive delta.

California is home to three distinct desert regions, including Death Valley. In all, there is more climatic and topographic variation in California than in any other area of comparable size in the United States. There are 24 different climatic zones within California, while most states have only one, maybe as many as 4 different zones. To illustrate this, consider that the annual precipitation is over 120 inches, or ten feet of rain in the NW part of state, while other parts of the state can have no measurable precipitation in a year. The average low in the Sierras during winter is below freezing, while Death Valley is on record with the highest official air temperature recorded in the western hemisphere - 134 degrees.

There are more endemic species, that is, species native to or confined to, California than in any other area of equivalent size in North America. Due to this incredible natural diversity and richness, California is home to the greatest number of national and state parks in the United States.



Death Valley. Photo by Edward Dickinson.



### *The Places*

Physical descriptions such as these provide the relief for understanding the built environment of California. First and foremost, California is an urban state, made up of enormous metropolises. These cities often developed to process and manage the resources harvested from the valleys and mountains (San Francisco and Sacramento due to the gold rush, for instance). San Francisco was the first true city in California, and it grew virtually overnight with the opening of the gold rush. Just before the discovery of gold in 1848, there were fewer than 1000 people living in San Francisco (which had recently switched names from Yerba Buena); just one year later, by the end of 1849, there were 25,000 people. San Francisco remained the state's largest and most important city until the 1920s, when L.A. eclipsed it. Today there are 3.8 million living in L.A., making it the second largest city in the U.S. behind NYC (8.1 million). San Diego follows in size, then San Jose and San Francisco. These four are in the nation's top 15 largest metropolitan areas.

### *The Economy and its Influence*

If California were its own separate country it would rank among the eight largest economies of the world, with a GDP similar to that of Italy's. The Gross State Product for California is more than \$2 trillion, and the state is responsible for more than 10% of the entire United States' GDP. California has several major economic sectors, all of which lead the nation, including high tech, biotech, agriculture, entertainment, manufacturing, and tourism.

Its strong economy has of course contributed to its large population and, not coincidentally, its high real estate prices. The average price of a home in California is more than twice that of the national average, and there are many places in California, most notably along the coast, where the average price of a home is ten times or more that of the national average. As a result, the home ownership rate in California is about 10% below the national average.

Compared to the nation as a whole, the state has both above average wealth – think of the wealthy suburbs of the Bay Area and Los Angeles – as well as above average poverty. Migrant workers in the San Joaquin Valley have living conditions similar to that of inhabitants of Appalachia, usually considered the most impoverished region of the country. California has the highest effective poverty rate of any state in the U.S., with the high cost of living leading to nearly one quarter of the state's population living below the poverty line.

Such wealth disparity, when coupled with the state's great racial diversity, have helped spur some of the country's most extended riots, such as the 1942 Zoot Suit Riots, the 1965 Watts Riots, and the 1992 Rodney



Sierra Nevada Mountains. Photo by Edward Dickinson.

King Riots. But California also has a rich civil rights history, and the state has made strides toward embracing its diversity by incorporating ethnic studies courses and public programs that educate residents about the stories, challenges, and opportunities inherent with its global population.

Perhaps above all else, California is, and always has been, a place of innovation; hydraulic mining, Hollywood, and the high tech industry are all synonymous with the state, and reflect the tremendous human and natural resources that have defined the state from its earliest days.

Teaching California history provides the context for understanding how and why California has become one of the most dynamic places in the world. Read on to learn about the instructional shifts and new content of the new History Social-Science Framework that CHSSP authored, and how this pertains specifically to teaching students about the history of their state. You will also find lessons on the Los Angeles River; teaching the connections between California and the nation during the nineteenth century through the use of historical objects; and the ramifications of the Port Chicago explosion at the shipyards during World War II. Also included in this issue is an update on the California drought and ideas for teaching students about this always-timely topic. Finally, we've included a brief introduction to the *Blueprint for Environmental Literacy* released by the CDE in 2015 to guide the implementation of environmental education for all California students. We hope you will discover material inside this *Source* issue that you are eager to share with your California students.

-Shelley Brooks, Editor



Farm in Macdoel, California, by Carol Highsmith, 2012. Image from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/item/2013633250/>



## *An Update on the History-Social Science Framework*



*2014 Instructional Quality Commission and State Board Members*

California's *Framework for History-Social Science*, which is the state-adopted document that guides instruction and textbook adoption, is in the midst of a long-overdue update. The CHSSP has served as the lead author of the revised *Framework*, working closely with the state to ensure that the latest research, legislation, and public feedback are incorporated. Nancy McTygue, our executive director, along with former Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bill Honig, chaired the History-Social Science Subject Matter Committee, which is part of the Instructional Quality Commission (IQC). While the draft is currently being revised, educators across the state are encouraged to read and provide comments on it (it is in the midst of a second field review until February 29, 2016). The draft of each chapter can be accessed on the [CDE's website](#). The current timeline projects State Board review and adoption for May, 2016; *Framework* roll-out and implementation will follow.

Fortunate to have such an up-close view of the new *Framework*, we will be sharing updates through our social media accounts as well as on our [website](#) and teaching blog. In this issue, we will highlight a couple of different California-

specific examples from different grade levels that underscore the instructional shifts, new content, and the ways in which our efforts to blend history, discipline-specific skills, literacy development, and civics education come together. At the beginning of the year, the *Framework* suggests that teachers use open-ended framing questions to guide their instruction throughout the year. As students' studies move across space and time, they investigate a variety of documents and perspectives that help form their own interpretations about these framing questions.

In California history, which enters into nearly every grade-level, one key theme that is reinforced is the diversity of California's population. For example, students are encouraged to explore questions like: Why did different groups of immigrants decide to move to California? What were their experiences like when they settled? How were they treated when they arrived in California? Another new feature of the *Framework* is the inclusion of vignettes, or snapshots of classroom examples that explain how the content could be translated to a variety of classroom settings. Read below to preview some of the updates and be sure to share your feedback during the public review period.

## ***Missions, Ranchos, and the Mexican War for Independence***

**An excerpt from the 4th Grade Chapter of the 2015 HSS Framework Draft**

- *Why did Spain establish missions?*
- *How did the Spanish gain control?*
- *How were people's lives affected by missions?*
- *How did the region change because of the mission system?*

California's missions, presidios, haciendas, and pueblos should be taught as an investigation into the many groups of people that were affected by them. Sensitivity and careful planning are needed to bring the history of this period to life. A mission lesson should emphasize the daily lives of the native population, the Spanish military, the Spanish/Mexican settler population, and the missionaries. The teacher might begin the lesson by asking students: **"How were peoples' lives affected by missions?"** The teacher may wish to focus on a specific mission if it is nearby and can provide resources, or he/she can focus broadly on the impact of them throughout the region. Once students have learned that they will investigate the multiple perspectives of people who lived during the mission period, the teacher presents carefully-selected primary and secondary sources, as well as informational texts written for children that provide information and context about each of the groups of people. Teachers can use literature, journals, letters, and additional primary sources that can be drawn from the local community to provide information about the mission. These sources can be challenging for all reading levels, so it is important for teachers to excerpt and support students when reading dense primary-source texts by providing them with vocabulary support, and making the sources accessible to all learners with literacy strategies.

In selecting sources and directing students' investigations, attention should focus on the daily experience of missions rather than the building structures themselves. Building missions from sugar



cubes or popsicle sticks does not help students understand the period and is offensive to many. Instead, students should have access to multiple sources that identify and help children understand the lives of different groups of people who lived in and around missions, so that students can place them in a comparative context. Missions were sites of conflict, conquest, and forced labor. Students should consider cultural differences, such as gender roles and religious beliefs, in order to better understand the dynamics of Native and Spanish interaction. Students should analyze the impact of European diseases upon the indigenous population. And as much as possible, students should be encouraged to view sources that represent how missionaries viewed missions and how natives lived there, and the role of the Spanish/Mexican settler population in facilitating the system. In addition to examining the missions' impact on individuals, students should consider its impact on the natural environment. The arrival of the Spanish, along with their imported flora and fauna, catalyzed a change in the region's ecosystem as well as its economy. What had once been a landscape shaped by hunter-gatherer societies became an area devoted to agriculture and the distribution of goods throughout the Spanish empire. Students can analyze data about crop production and livestock in order to better understand how people used the land and intensified the use of its natural resources. (See EEI Unit, Cultivating California 4.2.6)

*Dance of Indians at Mission in San Jose, New California,*  
created between 1803-07. Image from Calisphere: <http://calisphere.cdlib.org/item/ark:/13030/tf8j49p5fc/>



## Immigration and California

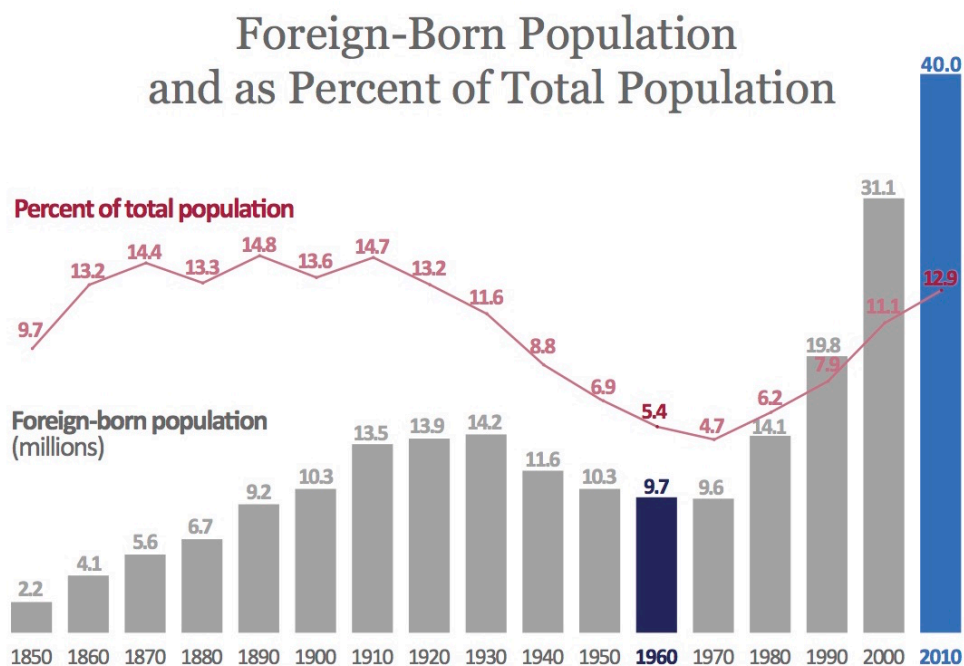
An excerpt from the 11th Grade Chapter of the 2015 HSS Framework Draft

- How did the federal government grow between the late nineteenth and twenty-first centuries?
- What does it mean to be an American in modern times?
- How did the United States become a superpower?
- How did the United States' population become more diverse over the twentieth century?

A key topic that Americans wrestled with in recent decades has been immigration. Students can examine census data to identify basic demographic changes; how has the composition of the U.S. population shifted between 1950 -1980 and 1980 -today, for example? By exploring quantitative immigration information, students notice significant changes in the national origins of immigrants to the United States. As with their studies of immigration from the beginning of the twentieth century, students can analyze push and pull factors that contributed to shifting immigration patterns, but they should also learn about changes in immigration policy. Starting with the Immigration Act of 1965, laws have liberalized country-of-origin policies, emphasizing family reunification, and rejecting same-sex partners of American citizens. Students can explain how these policies have affected American society. In California,

Propositions 187, 209, and 227 attacked illegal immigration, affirmative action, and bilingual education. While all but one provision of Proposition 187 was blocked by federal courts, throughout the 1990s and even more so after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, Congress provided for increased border enforcement. By the 2000s the status of Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigration became a national political discussion. In California Latino/as became the largest

ethnic group in 2010, and Latino/a children comprised more than 51% of public schools. It was within this context that the Latino/a community became increasingly politically active. In addition, students analyze the impact and experience of refugees who fled Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War or Iranians after the Islamic Revolution. To synthesize these developments, students can address the question: **Why is the United States more diverse now than it was in the middle of the twentieth century?** Students can also explore how the immigrant experience has changed over time by considering the questions: **How does the life of a new immigrant to the United States today compare with what it was in 1900? How do policies from the second half of the twentieth century compare with those of the early twenty-first century?**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1850–2000 Decennial Census; 2010 American Community Survey.

# Debating the L.A. River

*by Dave Neumann and Nicole Gilbertson,  
Directors of the CSU Long Beach and UC Irvine  
History Projects*

Teaching students major history-social science issues in a local context connects them to personal experiences and makes tangible topics that may at first seem abstract and distant. Here in Southern California, a local case study approach seems natural. A distinctive region in many ways, Southern California has evoked bemused commentary for many years. Nearly 70 years ago, journalist Carey McWilliams pointed to the region's well-established reputation for uniqueness: "Not a neutral land, [Southern California] has long aroused emotional reactions ranging from intense admiration to profound disgust... Southern California is the land 'South of Tehachapi'—south, that is, of the transverse Tehachapi range which knifes across to the ocean just north of Santa Barbara. Once this range has been crossed...even the ocean, as well as the land structure, as well as the people, change noticeably."<sup>1</sup>

One of Southern California's most notable features is its fraught relationship with water. For over a century, the arid megalopolis has relied on imported

water from the Owens Valley, the Colorado River, and Northern California to support a population that has grown to nearly 23 million. This water dependency has sparked impassioned debates about who should bear the brunt of water rationing, especially during this current drought. Moreover, the region is susceptible to flash floods and mudslides during heavy rains. The looming possibility of a heavy El Nino system underscores water scientist John Andrews's point that while the "specter of California running out of water has spawned many a tome, ...too much water is actually a far greater danger."<sup>2</sup>

The present drought notwithstanding, average precipitation has remained essentially constant over the last century. But, as water scientist John T. Andrew points out, "when describing water in California, 'average' often means little." When it comes to precipitation, "form, location, timing, intensity, duration, and variability" are all important. Consequently, discussion can shift very quickly from concerns about inadequate water to worries about the possibility of flooding.

The lesson we propose deals with a local water source to get at broader issues regarding water use and its stakeholders. Whether California's drought continues after the predicted El Nino or not, residents and legislators will have to address sustainable water allocation measures. By framing this topic in its historical context, students will see the lasting consequences of previous government



Teachers engaging in a collaborative discussion.

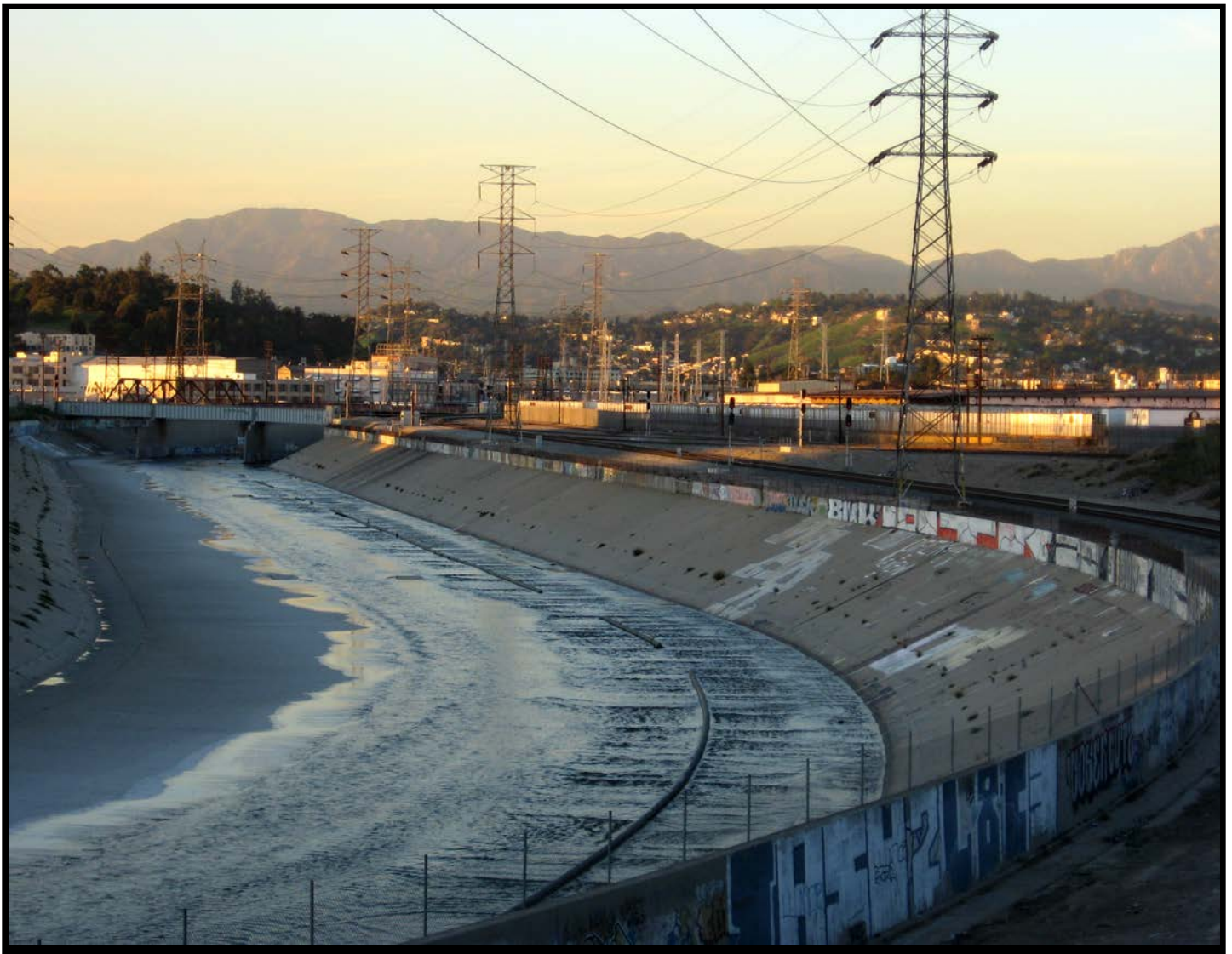


policies, and how these policies have impacted them personally. Ideally, students will recognize the importance of engaging in these public issues—and they may even learn how to debate these difficult issues in a thoughtful civil manner.

The Los Angeles River—yes, there is such a thing—runs for fifty miles before emptying into the Pacific, but it drops over 1000 vertical feet in that distance, roughly the same drop the Mississippi River takes 2350 miles to accomplish. Heavy rains falling on the local San Gabriel and San Bernardino ranges can lead to massive flooding in the Santa Ana and Los Angeles River basins. More than a dozen major floods led to several deaths and millions of dollars in damage before the US Army Corps of Engineers turned the

river into a concrete ditch during President Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal.

In the mid-twentieth century, many Southern California rivers, including the Los Angeles River and the Santa Ana River, were “channelized,” or lined with concrete. This development changed the region in several ways. On the one hand, channelizing reduced chances of catastrophic floods and allowed homes and businesses to be built right alongside the riverbank. On the other hand, channelization destroyed natural habitats, collected contaminated water, and depleted local water supplies by rapidly sending water downstream. For several decades, many environmentalists have advocated returning at least portions of each river to a more natural



L.A. River through downtown, from Wikimedia: [https://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/File:Los\\_Angeles\\_River\\_through\\_downtown\\_evening.jpg](https://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/File:Los_Angeles_River_through_downtown_evening.jpg)

condition to encourage wildlife to return and allow local inhabitants to enjoy the rivers as recreational opportunities. Opponents remain concerned about the possibilities of flooding. Both sides agree that fresh water is an important asset to the region.

To prepare our students for a deeper understanding of the complex nature of this debate, we propose that 12<sup>th</sup> grade teachers work with their students to use a structured academic controversy (SAC) to discuss the important roles that rivers and natural watersheds play in our state. An SAC promotes a classroom that stresses important skills for citizenship: using research to build knowledge, listening to evidence from a variety of perspectives, and discussing the issues with peers. “The goals of a SAC are for students to gain content knowledge about issues, appreciate and respect multiple viewpoints, and learn how to build consensus. SACs promote teaching about a controversy without requiring students to take a dualistic stance, straining classroom interactions between students with diverse views, or marginalizing students whose personal beliefs are different from those of the majority.”<sup>3</sup> This activity allows students to engage in Common Core State Standards for reading and speaking and listening, while delving into a policy debate.

Students work in pairs to read several sources that develop a specific stance on the question. (In a Government class: How can too much water be a problem for California? And what can we do about it? Or in Economics: What do we gain or lose when rivers are restored to their natural habitats?) Students identify evidence from the sources that supports their position. Then they join with another pair of students who have read sources that respond to the issue from an opposing viewpoint. To support students with low-literacy or English Learners, teachers may want to offer them with sources that have guiding questions and glossaries. During the discussion they can provide students sentence frames that guide them through discussion, such as “The evidence of this source is convincing because...” After each pair has shared their evidence, the other side repeats the claim and

evidence to the satisfaction of the initial pair. Then, the second group shares their position and supporting evidence, which is repeated by the first pair. As a conclusion, rather than deciding whose position is “best,” the students reach a consensus on how they would solve the issue using evidence from their readings.

Teachers who engaged in this activity developed specific plans that allowed them to come to a collaborative consensus on what would be best for the Los Angeles and Santa Ana river basins. These teachers, with students in courses that included AP Government to continuation high school and independent study, agreed that this activity would prepare their students to have a civil discourse with their peers and practice the listening and speaking skills so necessary for citizenship. David Feldman, a leading expert in California’s water policy and the Director of Water UCI, argues that water policy must be developed with the voices of all stakeholders in mind and that communities should work together to solve the problems associated with water consumption. He highlights the link between water policy and social justice, “[t]he need for fair, open, and transparent decision-making processes in which all groups affected by water decisions can equally participate, and where no relevant constituency is excluded.”<sup>4</sup> Water is an essential need for personal and economic well-being of all Californians and we hope that our students will be prepared to enter the discussion as informed citizens who have something to say about water use and conservation.

[Visit here](#) to learn more about this 12th grade lesson.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith, 1946), 4.

<sup>2</sup> John T. Andrew, “Adapting California’s Water Sector to a Changing Environment,” in Allison Lassiter, ed., *Sustainable Water: Challenges and Solutions from California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 11.

<sup>3</sup> From Pedagogy in Action <http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/sac/what.html>

<sup>4</sup> David Lewis Feldman, *Water*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012, p. 147.





# A Thirsty Land, California

*A brief history of  
drought and water use  
in an arid state*

After four consecutive dry years, over 40% of California is experiencing what is known as an exceptional drought. California, like most states west of the 100<sup>th</sup> meridian, is arid, with average annual rainfall around 30 inches or below. The term “average,” however, is misleading, as rainfall varies dramatically not only from the northwest corner of the state to the southeastern desert, but from one year to the next. And in years with little snowfall or rain, drought strikes hard against California, the state that supports the largest population and economy in the country. Water is the life source for California, and there is almost never enough of it. As the population increases, and climate change brings more unpredictable weather patterns, long-term drought becomes an even more likely scenario. The mega-drought is not unknown in this

Lake Hume, by Tim Keegan, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/suburbanbloke/381634787>

region; tree rings suggest that multiple dry periods lasting 10-20 years have occurred over the past 1000 years.

California's rich agricultural sector is deeply implicated in the drought's impact. The crops and animals grown for market consume a majority of California's developed water supply. With water allocations reduced or eliminated during the drought, farmers have faced difficult choices, sometimes deciding to lay fallow fields, plow under crops, and transition to less water-intensive crops. In recent years, with only a fraction of the average snowpack (which, through rivers, provides a significant portion of the state's water), farmers and cities are relying more heavily on groundwater. As groundwater pumping draws down the water table, some land has become unstable and simply sunk in, known as subsidence. It will take years of good rain to replenish the tapped aquifers. Ironically, dry fields are contributing to faster snowmelt by creating more dust that settles on the snow and absorbs the sun's energy. An additional challenge is felt in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, where low river flows can allow too much saltwater intrusion from the San Francisco Bay. The Delta, which provides drinking water for 25 million residents and irrigation water for the Central Valley, must deliver fresh, not salt water to its consumers.

Governor Jerry Brown, who also presided over the state during the memorable '76-'77 drought, declared a drought State of Emergency in January 2014, and asked Californians to voluntarily cut back on their water usage. In May 2015 the state took a historic step by mandating a 25% urban water use reduction. With some variation from month to month, Californians are currently meeting that target. Despite these dramatic developments, however, no one can claim surprise over California's predicament. California's aridity has long prompted extensive hydraulic engineering in an effort to overcome a limited and unpredictable water supply.

California's earliest inhabitants recognized the scarcity of fresh water, especially during the summer

growing season. Few California Native American groups practiced agriculture, but the Mojave and Yuma Indians employed basic irrigation techniques in order to grow crops in the dry Colorado Desert region. By the late nineteenth century, California farmers organized themselves into irrigation districts to try and finance the costly process of bringing water to their fields. Storing water and preventing floods during the winter rains, and channeling water during the long dry season, was too big of a task for individuals, municipalities, and even the state, thereby prompting the arrival of the federal Bureau of Reclamation in the early twentieth century. But it wasn't until the massive work projects of the Great Depression that headway was made, when the state and federal government joined forces to create the Central Valley Project (CVP) on the heels of a six year drought. California's rapid development during and after WWII meant that additional manipulation would be necessary to meet agricultural and municipal needs. With massive population and industrial growth in the South - the region with the lowest natural water supply - the state explored ways to bring water from the North to the thirsty South. In 1960, amidst great debate between northerners who feared loss of their local supply, and southerners who worried what the long term implications of this arrangement would be, California voters approved the State Water Project



The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. Image from Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacramento%E2%80%93San\\_Joaquin\\_River\\_Delta#/media/File:Islands,\\_Sacramento\\_River\\_Delta,\\_California.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacramento%E2%80%93San_Joaquin_River_Delta#/media/File:Islands,_Sacramento_River_Delta,_California.jpg)





Folsom Dam and Lake, one of more than 1,000 dams and reservoirs throughout the state.

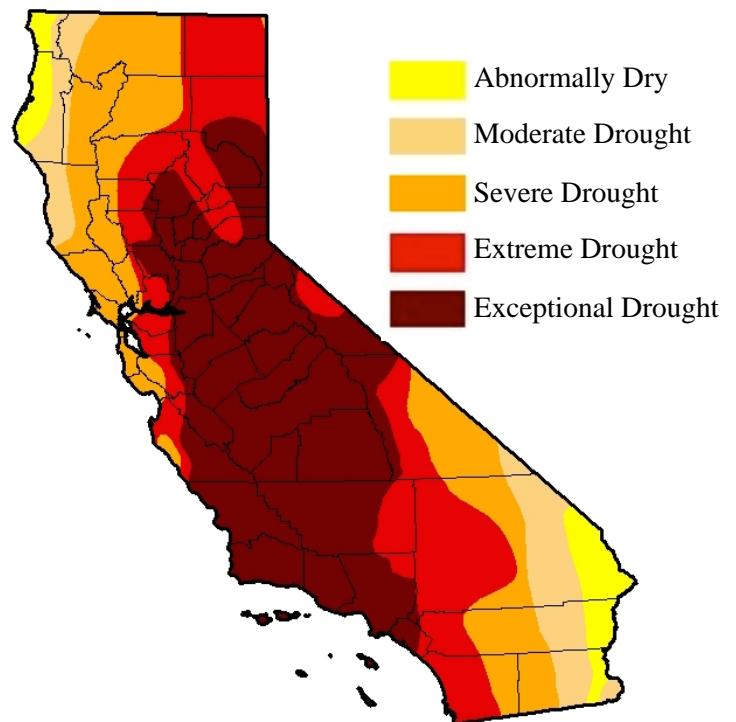
Image from Wikipedia: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folsom\\_Dam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folsom_Dam)

(SWP) to augment the CVP. With hundreds of miles of canals, numerous storage facilities and pumping stations, the SWP is the nation's largest state-built water and power development and distribution system.

In short, California's water resources have been continuously managed to accommodate a growing number of people and industries in areas that lack sufficient natural water supply. This is an impressive feat even during wet years; in dry years the challenge seems nearly insurmountable. Californians have always tapped the state's natural resources to create abundance and opportunity, but for all their innovation and adaptation, Californians cannot increase the quantity of the water. Instead, during this exceptional drought, Californians are challenged to adjust their expectations and decrease water demands, not just to lessen the impact for the rest of this year or next, but for the inevitable droughts of the future as well.

-Shelley Brooks, Editor

## U.S. Drought Monitor January 26, 2016



Visit the [CHSSP Blog](#) for a classroom activity on Sierra Nevada snowpack and local watersheds.

Mark Svoboda, National Drought Mitigation Center:  
<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Home/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CA>

# Studying History Through Objects



The settlement of the American West is rarely taught in the context of the Civil War era. Typically, US history textbooks and teachers follow a Manifest-Destiny, Civil War-Reconstruction, industrialization chronology that addresses the West in terms of the Mexican-American War and Gold Rush but then largely ignores the region until the completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869. Historians have recently challenged this traditional approach by pointing out the powerful ways in which the stories of US westward expansion and the Civil War intertwine. The debate over slavery in the West put the North and South on a collision course and, following the South's defeat, the Union war machine redirected its attention to consolidating US power in the West. The diverse people of the West also played important roles during the war itself, supporting the Union or Confederacy or taking advantage of the chaos of the conflict to shore-up their own autonomy.

The West was placed front and center in "Teaching the Civil War and the American West," hosted by the Huntington Library and co-managed by Daniel Diaz, the Associate Director of the UCLA History-Geography Project, and Daniel Lynch, the UCLA Public History Initiative K-12 Outreach Coordinator. Middle and high school social studies teachers who participated in this summer program were presented with eight core

Frémont expedition flag, c. 1841-42. Image courtesy of the Southwest Museum of the American Indian Collection, Autry National Center, Los Angeles, Photo 81.G.5A. [Click here](#) to watch institute co-manager Daniel Lynch describe the Frémont flag's links to the themes of empire and liberty.



objects featured in the Autry National Center's exhibit, "Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and the West." The list includes objects traditionally associated with the Civil War West, such as a breech-loading "Beecher's Bible" rifle used by free-soil fighters in Bleeding Kansas, to more unconventional objects that can help us understand the war's relevance to the diverse peoples of the West, like a US-flag textile woven by the wife of a Navajo chief who had endured forced relocation by Union forces. Participants toured the exhibit, experienced model curriculum, designed lessons that addressed Common Core and California content standards as well as the new AP US History framework, and interacted with historians who discussed the provenance and significance of the objects.

Yale Professor John Mack Faragher's, presentation on the Frémont expedition flag is an example of the type of content shared in the summer program. Jesse Benton Frémont hand-stitched this flag that her husband, John C. Frémont, took across the continental divide in the early 1840s. The eagle on the flag holds a peace pipe in one claw and a set of arrows in the other, a mixed message to western Native Americans that implied the possibility of liberty as well as the threat of empire. The Frémonts also embodied the contradictions of empire and liberty during the Civil War by pushing for the use of force to liberate southern slaves long before President Lincoln got behind the idea.

While planning this program, we grappled with a pedagogical question: How do we encourage students to analyze objects in ways that will enhance their understanding of the past? While political cartoons and other more traditional visual sources are often created with clear messages in mind, objects such as a slave receipt or a saber need to be contextualized in order for students to begin to grasp their significance. In an effort to support the use of objects as sources in the classroom, we developed a tool that we called "[Analyzing Historical Objects](#)" As with traditional approaches to textual analysis, our analysis tool first asks when and by whom was the object created. It then asks students to consider the object's historical context, what purpose the object most likely served, and finally, how was the object made. By exploring objects in this way, students can gain a nuanced understanding of a particular subject, such as the intertwined histories of the Civil War and the West.

To support teachers' lesson development, Teacher Leader Margie Billings of Rosemont Middle School, modeled a [lesson](#) that focused on objects related to the experiences of Chinese immigrants who helped build the first transcontinental railroad. One of our participants, Monique Garcia from El Sereno Middle

### Analyzing Historical Objects

#### Sourcing

- Object name?
- Who made the object?
- Where and when was the object made?
- What important historical events were going on when the object was made?
- How was the object made?
- What material(s) is the object made from?

#### Analysis

- *Evaluate the Object* Describe the Object's appearance. What stands out to you in terms of style, design, decoration, symbols, etc.? How do you think the object would compare to similar objects from the same time period?
- *Consider the Purpose* Who might have used the object? In what ways could they have used it?
- *Assess the Significance* How does the object help us better understand the history of the time? Why should we care about this object? Can you name an item that serves a similar purpose today?



American Progress, John Gast. Image from Library of Congress:  
<http://cdn.loc.gov/service/ppp/ppmsca/09800/09855v.jpg>

School, developed a lesson that asks “Why did Native Americans choose to fight in the Civil War?” Students analyze the Bowie Knife of the Cherokee Confederate Stand Watie (one of the eight core objects) alongside more traditional sources such as letters written by the pro-Union Cherokee leader John Ross.

Unfortunately, the exhibit at the Autry has already closed; however, you can pick up the exhibit catalog *Empire and Liberty: The Civil War and West* to learn more about this important period in the history of the United States. The stories behind these core objects are truly fascinating and would be of high interest to students.

- Daniel Lynch, Daniel Diaz, and Emma Hipolito,  
 UCLA Public History Initiative &  
 History-Geography Project

### Core Objects from “Teaching the Civil War and the American West”

- ∞ “Beecher’s Bible” (a breech-loading rifle)
- ∞ A Texas slave receipt
- ∞ “The Frémont expedition Flag”
- ∞ Stand Watie’s Bowie Knife
- ∞ A saber belonging to Juan de la Guerra of the Union Native California Cavalry
- ∞ US-flag textile woven by Juanita Manuelito, the wife of a Navajo chief
- ∞ Electric steer horn lamp engraved with images of US troops fighting Confederates as well as western Indians
- ∞ *American Progress*, by John Gast



## California and the Nation

by Emily Richards, Program Coordinator,  
UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project

When talking with 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade US history teachers, they often comment that students regularly ask, “But what was happening in California?” With the exception of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade standards; California’s United States History standards, taught in 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, are heavily focused on a traditional narrative that originates on the eastern seaboard of what became the United States and moved west as the nation gained control of new territories. Reorienting this narrative to emphasize more of what was occurring in the West all along requires teachers to go beyond what they can find in their textbooks.

The UC Berkeley History-Social Science Project has sought to assist teachers develop resources for teaching about the West with two distinct programs; a one week NEH Landmarks institute that explored the WWII Home Front from a western lens, and a one day program developed in partnership with UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library. [\*Migration, Mobilization, and Militarization: The Bay Area and the World War II Home Front\*](#) brought 76 teachers from across the nation to explore the Bay Area’s significance within larger historical narratives. Teachers who had never heard of Richmond, California came to understand its outsized significance to the war effort through the construction of supply ships in the Kaiser yards. The significance of a more personal experience of internment was revealed through the stories Karen Korematsu shared of her dad and through a documentary on the history of nursery owners of Japanese descent who were forced to abandon their small businesses during the war. For the few local teachers who were invited to attend, the experience was just as powerful, because it helped them deepen their understanding of answers to the “What was happening in California?” question. As a result of his own learning experience, [one local teacher](#) organized a field trip for his students, who left the day better



US Navy 1944. Courtesy of the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial.

<http://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=F43C40BA-155D-4519-3E65DCCAA9DF3210>

informed and, even, proud. We are excited to reprise this effort during the summer of 2016.

Inspired by this learning experience, and strengthened through a growing partnership with the archivists at The Bancroft Library, we hosted fifteen area teachers for a one day workshop – “California and the Nation.” The teachers were introduced to the archival resources of the university and the digitized sources housed on [Calisphere](#) and charged with developing a lesson that used a moment in California history as a means of exploring either the nation-wide implications of that event or revealing or reorienting larger national trends. To model this process, we charged one of our teacher leaders with developing a lesson on the Port Chicago Mutiny. We saw this moment as a piece of local history, which would allow students to understand the broader notion of the Double Victory campaign during World War II that advocated for increased protection of the rights of African Americans. The teachers who participated in our pilot workshop used this lesson as an exemplar to reference in the creation of their own lesson focusing on the question, “What is happening in California?”

## Exploring Double Victory through the Explosion at Port Chicago

### H-SS Standards

**11.7** Students Analyze America's participation in World War II

**11.7.5** Discuss the constitutional issues and impact of events on the U.S. home front, including . . . the roles and growing political demands of African Americans.

### Curricular Context:

In most high school history classrooms, teachers discuss the Double Victory campaign in order to explore the experience of African Americans during World War II. The publicity campaign, which was launched by the *Pittsburgh Courier*, highlighted the contradiction that existed between fighting for democracy abroad while experiencing Jim Crow at home. The explosion at Port Chicago and subsequent work stoppage at Mare Island, provides a California example in which students can explore discriminatory practices within the armed forces and the actions African Americans took to challenge them.

**Focus Question:** *Why did so many African American sailors die in the Port Chicago explosion?*

### Materials:

- Photographs from Port Chicago (Primary Source)
- Excerpts from sailors assigned to Port Chicago (Primary Source)
- Robert Allen, *The Port Chicago Mutiny* (Secondary Source)
- Steve Sheinken, *The Port Chicago Mutiny* (Young Adult Non-Fiction)

### Lesson Overview:

While many people in the Bay Area have heard of the Port Chicago explosion, few can explain the circumstances surrounding the explosion and subsequent work refusal by sailors. Most people fail to remember who died and what happened after the explosion.

Through this case study, students have the opportunity to explore the:

- 1) Racially-influenced assignment of work duties in the armed forces
- 2) Dangerous nature of racially-assigned work assignments as exemplified by the munitions explosion at Port Chicago in Concord
- 3) Organized resistance by black Americans illustrated through the decision by large numbers of black servicemen to refuse to load munitions following the explosion
- 4) Difficulty in attaining official redress demonstrated through the subsequent trial, where the men who refused to work, when reassigned to Mare Island, were convicted of mutiny.

Each segment of the lesson, from exploring unequal working conditions to the mutiny conviction, incorporates compelling source material as evidence for students to use in their investigation of the events. Additionally, in each lesson, a graphic organizer and literacy strategy help to maximize understanding of the excerpted source and provide a structured connection to the larger unit question and theme (see concept map).



## Port Chicago Unit Map

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Bigger Picture: America during World War II

Last Unit  
Home Front

**Current Unit** - African American experience  
during World War II

Next Unit  
Victory Abroad; Victory at Home

### Experiences at Port Chicago

#### Topics:

- Unequal treatment
- Unsafe Working Conditions

#### Sources Used:

- Photographs of AA weapons loaders (Art Analysis)
- Youtube video: Great Port Chicago Explosion (Notetaking Guide)

#### Writing Prompt:

*How did the experiences of the weapons loaders and officers differ at Port Chicago?*

### Mutiny

#### Topics:

- Why charged
- Trial
- Thurgood Marshall Press Conference, investigation and Brief
- Outcome

#### Sources Used:

- Trial Transcripts
- Marshall primary sources

#### Writing Prompt:

*Should the African American sailors have been convicted of mutiny by the United States Navy?*

is about  
how the events surrounding the Port Chicago explosion are a case study  
for understanding the African Americans experience during WWII

### Port Chicago Explosions

#### Topics:

- Events
- Consequences
- Different experiences (Officers, Weapons Loaders, Community)
- Safety

#### Sources Used:

- Primary source accounts (Thesis/Evidence)
- Steve Sheinkin, *The Port Chicago 50: Disaster, Mutiny, and the fight for Civil Rights*

**Writing Prompt:** *Why did so many African American men die in the explosion?*

### Refusal to Work at Mare Island

#### Topics:

- Sailor Mental state after explosion and no leave granted
- Why weapons loading was moved to Mare Island
- Work conditions at the Mare Island Loading pier
- Work Stoppage
- Barge Imprisonment

#### Sources Used:

- Robert L. Allen, "From Disaster to Desegregation," *Naval History*, February 2015.

**Writing Prompt:** *When moved to Mare Island, why did so many African American sailors refuse to load the **San Gay**?*

**Focus Question:** How do the events at and around the Port Chicago explosion reveal the African American experience during World War II?

**Unit Teaching Thesis:** The Port Chicago explosion reveals both the institutional racism of the United States Navy and how it was individuals, not institutions that caused changes in equal treatment. The inequality of worker opportunities at the Port Chicago Naval Weapons station was common throughout the Armed Forces and the nation as a whole during World War II.

### Thinking Skills

Significance  
Cause and  
Consequence  
Historical  
Perspectives  
Ethical Dimension



## *Environmental Literacy for All California Students*

An important part of understanding California history is knowing how residents have long harnessed natural resources to develop the state - from the Gold Rush, to the Southern California oil boom, to Hetch Hetchy, to the State Water Project, to the expansive orchards and farms - and how Californians' opportunities, and challenges, have always been closely tied to the quantity and quality of the state's water supply, soil, and more. Looking ahead, it is clear these resources will continue to shape the state's economy and the quality of life in California.

In 2014, State Superintendent Tom Torlakson convened a task force to develop a report on environmental education in California's K-12 schools. The result was the [\*Blueprint for Environmental Literacy: Educating Every California Student In, About, and For the Environment\*](#) (BEL) This report is premised on the idea that California faces serious environmental challenges that affect everyone's well being, such as climate change, drought, and air quality, and that the only way to adequately address these issues, and prevent additional ones, is to have an environmentally literate population. To this end, the BEL calls for a more robust, accessible, and culturally relevant environmental education for all California students, infused throughout the curriculum, from science to history-social science. Stay tuned for more information about how environmental programs will expand throughout the state. If you would like to provide feedback, or have questions regarding the BEL, contact [Shelley Brooks](#).



Of the 520 California public school principals who chose to participate in a recent survey:

*Only 13% indicated that their schools had successfully integrated environmental education into their curricula; and*

*77% replied that they spend \$5,000 or less on field trips, professional development, and curricular materials for environmental education.*

According to a 2015 PPIC survey:

*89% of Californians think that it is very important or somewhat important that local K-12 schools include environmental education.*



"This Blueprint must become a plan of action, unifying us with focus and purpose as well as concrete next steps. We must invest our very best thinking, our very best efforts, and – above all – our very best people in improving the quality and reach of student education for environmental literacy in California.

We must do so for the future of our students and for California's prosperity, equity, and resource sustainability."

*-Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction*



## California State of Mind: The Legacy of Pat Brown

### A Teaching Resource

A new documentary about California history is now available to history and social studies teachers. *California State of Mind* is the story of Governor Pat Brown, told by his granddaughter. Students get an inside look at this California political family, and the turbulent 1960s when Pat Brown's two-term governorship laid an important foundation for modern California.

Brown's granddaughter, Sascha Rice, investigates her grandfather's legacy through the film, inviting viewers to assess Brown's policies through a critical look at issues of government, leadership, civil rights, growth, and the clash between environment and economic development. Brown's career intersected with such figures such as JFK, Nixon, Reagan, Cesar Chavez, and Martin Luther King. Archival footage is interwoven with commentaries from former Governors Arnold Schwarzenegger, Pete Wilson, Gray Davis and current Governor Jerry Brown as well as Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Congresswoman Karen Bass, and Senator Dianne Feinstein.



Rice envisioned this film as encouraging young people to engage in their communities and to think optimistically about the future of our democracy. Additionally, she wanted to spark a curiosity in students about



their own family histories. For students who might be interested in entering politics, Rice counsels: "Study history. We learn when we study how leaders like Pat Brown handled problems and how they overcame challenges."

*"[the curriculum] helps students better understand the need for insightful and demonstrative leadership, civic engagement and vision in our government and leaders."*

-12th Grade Government Teacher

*California State of Mind* has a 150- page companion curriculum guided by state standards. Sections include Fair Housing, Fair Employment, Free Speech Movement, Water & Growth, Government & Ideology, Civil Rights as well as Storytelling and Leadership and Civic Engagement. One-day activities, or the longer unit, are based off primary sources, film comprehension questions, key concepts and terms, a timeline, and writing, discussion and activity suggestions. The curriculum is available for free download from [www.MyCaliforniaNow.com](http://www.MyCaliforniaNow.com). Filmmaker Sascha Rice is also available to speak to students.

