

Exploration and Early Settlement

The Spaniards were the first European explorers to reach California. Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo arrived in San Diego Bay by ship in 1542. Spain did not begin to settle California until 1769, however, when four **expeditions** (two by land and two by sea) left Baja California and agreed to meet in San Diego. Gaspar de Portolá led one of the land expeditions and then continued north to establish an outpost at Monterey. Presidios were constructed in San Diego and Monterey to defend the Spanish claim to the territory. In the following years, Spanish missionaries and settlers came to convert Indians to Christianity, establish new towns, and access available land. In 1826, trappers searching for beaver belts arrived from the east, soon followed by American explorers, and prospectors looking for gold. California's reputation for excellent **climate** and soils spread quickly, and Europeans settled the fertile lower Sacramento Valley and the coastal **plains** from San Francisco to San Diego.

- Cabrillo 1542
- Drake 1579
- Anza 1774–1775
- Portola 1769–1770
- Smith 1826–1830
- Ogden 1826–1827
- Ogden 1829–1830
- Young 1829–1833
- Fremont 1843–1844
- Fremont 1845–1846
- California Trail
- Hudson Bay Co.
- Old Spanish Trail
- Area Settled 1850

