

CALIFORNIA NOTES

Kevin Starr is famous for his 8 volume 'Americans and the California Dream' series (I have some of these, though probably most in my attic, harder to find, to some extent) - the titles suggest themes that might be useful for our discussion of CA history.

The 8 Volumes (Some go past 1960 ...)

- (1) Americans and the California Dream 1850-1915
- (2) Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era
- (3) Material Dreams: Southern California Through the 1920's
- (4) Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California
- (5) The Dream Endures: California Enters the 1940's
- (6) Embattled Dream: California in War and Peace, 1940-1950
- (7) Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-1963
- (8) Coast of Dreams: California on the Edge, 1990-2003

Kevin Starr's shorter (365 pages) 'California: A History' (Modern Library Chronicles Series Book 23) costs only \$9.99 in Kindle form. Naturally am not suggesting everyone get this book.

Pages 9-23 are a timeline with perhaps 200 entries. I suppose an online one will be natural for our group meeting. Selective highlights I grab from Kevin Starr's version:

- 1519:** Hernan Cortes commences the conquest of Mexico.
- 1532:** Fortun Jiminez uses the name California to describe the isthmus west of Mexico.
- 1539:** Francisco de Ulloa discovers Baja California is a peninsula, not an island.
- 1697:** Jesuits establish first of 18 missions in Baja California
- 1768:** Jesuits expelled from the Spanish Empire and replaced in Baja by Franciscans
- 1775:** Spaniard discover the Golden Gate and San Francisco Bay.
- 1786:** First non-Spanish expedition to reach Alta California - 2 French frigates to Monterey Bay.
- 1792-1816:** English, American, Russian visits. Russian American Fur Company establishes Fort Ross 100 miles north of SF Bay.
- 1824:** California designated a territory of the (new) Federal Republic of Mexico.

- 1826:** American trappers led by Jedediah Smith make first overland penetration of California, from the East.
- 1836:** Californios revolt against Mexico and declare California a republic. Mexico co-ops the movement by appointing the movement leader, Juan Bautista Alvarado, as the new governor.
- 1839:** Governor Alvarado makes a 48000 acre land grant to Swiss emigre John Sutter, to create a buffer against incursions from the Northeast.
- 1840:** In *em* *Two Years Before the Mast*, Richard Henry Dan, Jr. calls for the Americanization of California.
- 1842:** American Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones apologizes for raising the Stars and Stripes over Monterey.
- 1846:** Army Captain John Charles Fremont raises the American Flag in January near Monterey. In May, American settlers in Sonoma declare the California Republic. Some battles, including American losses.
- 1847:** Battle of La Mesa finalizes the conquest of California.
- 1848:** In Jan., gold discovered on the South Fork of the American River. In Feb., Mexico cedes all their lands north of the Rio Grande to the US. In Dec., President Polk confirms gold has been found in California.
- 1850:** After 9 month debate, California enters the union as the 31st state.
- 1853:** California Academy of Sciences is founded in San Francisco.
- 1855:** A railroad is completed across the Isthmus of Panama.
- 1859:** A State sponsored convention meets in San Francisco and calls for the construction of a transcontinental railroad.
- 1861:** Napa winemaker Agoston Haraszthy acquires 200,000 grapevine cuttings in Europe for shipment to California.
- 1863:** Governor Leland Stanford breaks ground on the construction of the transcontinental railroad.
- 1864:** The second Pacific Railway Act increases land grant and financial incentives. President Lincoln signs bill protecting Yosemite.
- 1868:** University of California established.
- 1869:** Union Pacific and Central Pacific meet at Promontory Summit, Utah.
- 1871:** 18 Chinese men, including a boy of 14 are lynched in Los Angeles.
- 1875:** Failure of the Bank of California (private) precipitates a financial panic.
- 1877:** Unemployed workingmen hold nighttime rallies in San Francisco sandlots. Young hoodlums sack Chinatown.
- 1878:** Legislature passes the drainage Act, calling for a comprehensive study of water resources.

- 1879:** Agriculture replaces mining as chief element in the California economy.
- 1883:** John Montgomery makes first heavier than air glider flight.
- 1887:** Lick observatory opens atop Mount Hamilton. Wright act authorizes irrigation districts.
- 1891:** Leland Stanford Junior University admits its first students.
- 1892:** John Muir elected first president of the Sierra club.
- 1901:** Teamsters Union lead a citywide general strike in San Francisco. Water from the Colorado River reaches the Imperial Valley via aqueduct.
- 1904:** Fresno wagoneer Benjamin Holt invents the tractor.
- 1905:** California Fruit Growers Exchange markets oranges under the sun-kist label. Water from the Colorado river floods Imperial Valley.
- 1906:** San Francisco earthquake.
- 1907:** Southern Pacific contains Colorado River flooding in newly created Salton Sink. Movie industry arrives in Los Angeles.
- 1911:** The Lockheed brothers design, produce, and fly a passenger carrying seaplane.
- 1913:** Owens River water arrives via the Los Angeles Aqueduct.
- 1914:** US Pacific Fleet created.
- 1915:** Panama Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and Panama California International Exposition in San Diego.
- 1917:** Hooker 100 inch telescope on Mount Wilson multiplies the observable universe by a factor of 4.
- 1919:** United Artists is organized.
- 1920:** Caltech is named. Donald Douglas opens an aviation company in Santa Monica.
- 1924:** Immigration Act prohibits Japanese emigration to the US. Los Angeles Basin is producing 230 million barrels of crude oil and 300 million cubic feet of natural gas.
- 1927:** T. Claude Ryan builds *Spirit of St. Louis* in San Diego. The *Jazz Singer* introduces sound in film.
- 1928:** Philo T. Farnsworth makes first television transmission from a San Francisco laboratory.
- 1929:** Western Airlines announces service to New York via Kansas City.
- 1930:** Eight thousand field workers strike in Imperial Valley. Many more strikes in next few years including a 1934 coastwide longshoremen's strike.
- 1931:** Ernest Lawrence develops the cyclotron.
- 1935:** Boulder (later Hoover) Dam on the Colorado River starts operation. Douglas announces the DC-3.
- 1936-7:** San Francisco - Oakland Bay Bridge and Golden Gate Bridge.
- 1939:** Publication of *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck and lots of other major literature.

- 1940:** California's first freeway, the Arroyo Seco Parkway is dedicated. Walt Disney productions uses audio oscillator from newly established Hewlett-Packard Company to enhance music for *Fanatasia*.
- 1941:** America First rallies in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor.
- 1942:** Lots. In March, the removal of all Japanese, including American citizens is ordered.
- 1945:** Bank of America employs ENIAC computer.
- 1947:** House Un-American Activities Committee holds hearings on the film industry. Chuck Yeager breaks the sound barrier.
- 1954:** L. Ron Hubbard founds the Church of Scientology in Los Angeles.
- 1955:** Disneyland opens.
- 1958:** NASA establishes the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.
- 1959:** Fairchild Semiconductor announces integrated circuit chip.
- 1960:** Master Plan for Higher Education envisions California as higher education utopia.
- 1964:** Free Speech Movement erupts at UC Berkeley.
- 1965:** Rioting breaks out in Watts district of Los Angeles.
- 1966:** United Farm Workers under Cesar Chavez launch strike and nationwide boycott.