



News Release

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Discover the state's colorful past

Walk through History in California State Parks

SACRAMENTO – California State Parks offer visitors the chance to walk through history in guided and self-guided tours in parks throughout the state.

Special living history events bring the past to life as volunteers, docents and staff in costume demonstrate what California life was like during its colorful past.

Here's what visitors can discover:

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Angel Island State Park (Marin/San Francisco Counties), located in San Francisco Bay, is accessible by private boat or public ferry from Tiburon and San Francisco. A five mile island perimeter road takes visitors past more than 100 historic military structures ranging in age from the Civil War to the Cold War as well as the site of a Marine Quarantine Station and a U.S. Immigration Station. Additional hiking trails cross the island and a spectacular 360 degree view of the entire Bay Area is available from the top of Mt. Livermore. A concession operated tram audio tour is available daily May through September and less often in March and April. Bicycles are welcome on the perimeter road. Foot traffic only on trails. Dogs are not permitted on Angel Island except for Service Animals. For ferry, tram, cafe, bicycle, and other information, check www.angelisland.com, www.angelislandferry.com, and www.blueandgoldfleet.com. General information can be found at www.angelisland.org and at www.parks.ca.gov. Detailed telephone information is available by calling the park at (415) 435-1915.

Bodie State Historic Park (Mono County), a ghost town in a state of "arrested decay" 13 miles east of Highway 395 on Bodie Road, was known to have "the wildest streets of any western mining town, the wickedest men, and the worst climate out of doors." The miners and mule team drivers, prostitutes and preachers, merchants, drunks and opium addicts all contributed to the colorful life of this once bustling mining camp. The boom years of 1877 to 1881 are long past and two disastrous fires have reduced Bodie to a fraction of its original size. But the whistling of the wind through the deserted streets, the sound of metal and loose board

rattling against the weather beaten buildings, the sight of a discarded bed or dress remind visitors of the “ghosts” that once lived in this high desert town. Visitors will not find tourist shops, restaurants, amusement rides or fake shoot-outs in Bodie. It is a place where visitors from around the world come to experience “life in the past lane.” Bodie in summertime offers guided tours of the Standard Stamp Mill, history talks, video presentations, a brochure (available in English, French or German) which guides visitors to each of the buildings in town and a fine museum. There are also special photographer’s workshops and events. Bodie in wintertime offers lots of snow. Times and schedules vary with the season and staffing levels. Please call the park at (760) 647-6445 for more information. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=509

The **California State Indian Museum** (Sacramento County), located in Sacramento at 2618 “K” Street on the same park grounds as Sutter’s Fort State Historic Park, contains exhibits and artifacts that tell the history and show the material cultures of the large and incredibly diverse indigenous population that occupied California before Euro-Americans. The museum has displays for the different geographic populations of California Indians from the desert, to the ocean, valley, and mountains. There are hands-on exhibits for school children and a video room that shows a 12 minute feature about the Indians of California. There are also special displays about “Ishi,” the last surviving member of the Yahi tribe; and the devastation the “Gold Rush” brought to the indigenous people of California. The museum works closely with continuing California Indian Cultures. The museum is open 362 days a year. For hours, fees, and information about special events, please call (916) 324-0971. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=486

Donner Memorial State Park (Nevada County), located at the east end of Donner Lake in Truckee, is designated as a National Historic Landmark. Central to the park is the Pioneer Monument, a memorial to the Donner Party tragedy. Twenty years in the making, it was finally dedicated in 1918 to all of the emigrants who made the westward trek. The site became a California State Park in 1928 when the Native Sons of the Golden West donated the Monument plus 15.1 acres of land. The park continues to grow with recent acquisitions of land in Coldstream Valley and Schallenberger Ridge. The Emigrant Trail Museum located in the park is open all year and features a video presentation depicting the tragic story of the Donner Party who were trapped at the site by an early winter in 1846-47 while trying to reach California. The exhibit hall displays articles used by the Donner Party, including a rifle used to shoot an 800-pound grizzly bear. Other displays include Washoe basketry, tales of the mountain men, and the story of the building of the trans-continental railroad through Donner Pass. The McGlashan Butterfly Collection is on display in the auditorium. During the summer, interpretive programs such as Junior Rangers, campfire programs and history walks are scheduled weekly. For more information call (530) 582-7892. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=503

Empire Mine State Historic Park (Nevada County), 10791 E. Empire Street in Grass Valley, offers visitors a chance to explore the site of California’s richest hard rock gold mine. Visitors can stroll through 106 years of hard rock mining operations at this 800 plus acre park. 13.5 acres of landscaped gardens and grounds surround the 1898 mansion "cottage" built by mine owner William Bourn using granite waste rock from the mine. Guests can peer into the

main Empire mine shaft and explore historic buildings that housed the day-to-day operations of the mine such as the machine shop, blacksmith shop, and mine manager's offices. A "Walking Trails" brochure is available for exploration of the scenic backcountry trails. The Visitor Center is open daily May through August, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and September through April, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tour times vary according to the time of year. Contact the park at (530) 273-8522 for tour times and information or check the Empire Mine Park Association website at: www.empiremine.org.

The **Governor's Mansion State Historic Park** (Sacramento County), at 16th and H Streets in downtown Sacramento, offers a unique and personal history of California. Thirteen of the state's chief executives and their families lived in the mansion. Governor George Pardee moved into the mansion in 1903 and twelve Governors would occupy the mansion with the last being Ronald Reagan. The mansion was built in 1877 for Albert Gallatin, a partner in Sacramento's Huntington-Hopkins hardware store. The state bought the house in 1903 from Joseph Steffens, a private citizen, for \$32,000. Not only is the structure the place where California governors and their families lived but also a place where history was made. One of the most unusual aspects of the museum is that it is not a replica or a restoration. It stands as it did when it was vacated by the Reagans in 1967. Visitors can see furnishings and personal items purchased by each family during their stay. The interior design and furnishings feature marble fireplaces from Italy, handcrafted hinges and doorknobs from the Victorian era, elaborate moldings and gold-framed mirrors from Europe. The Governor's Mansion State Historic Park is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. Guided tours are offered every hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To arrange guided tours of the mansion, please call Reserve America toll free (866) 240-4655. For hours, fees, and information about special events, please call (916) 323-3047. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=498

Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park (Santa Cruz County), near downtown Santa Cruz on School Street, gives visitors the opportunity to stroll through the only original building left of the Santa Cruz Mission, and the only original Indian worker housing left for any of the California Missions. This remarkable adobe was a private family home until 1983, and was then fully restored to the original outside appearance. The inside of this seven-room treasure is a museum chronicling the lives of the original California Indian inhabitants, and is just down the street from the replica church commemorating Santa Cruz Mission. Two picnic areas and full accessibility make this a great place to visit. Open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Guided tours are available on Sunday at 1 p.m. or by appointment. Call (831) 425-5849 for more information. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=548

Shasta State Historic Park (Shasta County), six miles west of Redding on Highway 299, offers the remnants of a once bustling Gold Rush town from the 1800's. Visitors can pick up a self-guided tour map and at their own pace, explore the remaining brick buildings, 1870's merchandise store, bakery with wood-fired oven, cemeteries, a stagecoach and farm equipment and a pioneer barn from the era. A picnic area that includes California's first rest stop provides a break for the travel weary. For those interested in a more formal presentation, the Courthouse Museum – a restored Shasta County Seat of Government building from 1862 – displays artifacts representing Shasta's history. Included inside the museum are the popular gallows and

old jail cells, as well as a fine collection of California paintings dating from 1850 to 1950. Although the public is invited to walk the outside trails daily, the formal exhibits are open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call the park at (530) 243-8194. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=456

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park (Sacramento County), 2701 "L" Street in downtown Sacramento (approximately one mile east of the State Capitol), features Captain John A. Sutter's restored 1839 fort. As visitors stroll through the landscaped park grounds, ominous cannon stare down from tall bastions and more cannon poke their muzzles from behind embrasures in the whitewashed walls. Imposing oak gates topped by sharpened spikes guard the entrance to Sutter's Fort, "the Citadel on the Sacramento." Through the gates visitors go back through time, back to a California before the Gold Rush and Statehood; when John Sutter's Fort stood between the ebbing Spanish mission/rancho culture on the west, and the rising wave of ambitious American emigrants coming from the east. John Sutter and his Fort were at a crossroads of colliding cultures and politics. His fort was a stronghold on the frontier, a foothold for American expansion, and became the name most associated with the "Gold Rush." The Fort is now preserved as a State Historical Park and museum open to the public 362 days a year. The California State Indian Museum is on the same park grounds as Sutter's Fort. For hours of operation, fees, and special event information please call (916) 445-4422. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=485

Weaverville Joss House State Historic Park (Trinity County), 50 miles west of Redding on Highway 299 in the town of Weaverville, is the oldest continually-used Chinese temple in California. The original temple, built in 1874, was destroyed by fire and was replaced by gold miners with the present one. Inside the building are ornately carved wooden canopies containing colorful images of gods along the back wall, and in front of them is an altar holding candles, incense sticks, oracle fortune sticks, and brilliant tapestries. Guided tours are held on the hour Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Entrance to the beautifully landscaped grounds, complete with fish pond, and visitor center are free. For more information call (530) 623-5284. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=457

Wilder Ranch State Park (Santa Cruz County), two miles north of Santa Cruz off Highway One, features a self-guided tour and weekend guided tours of the historic dairy ranch complex. The tour includes the restored 1897 Melvin and Letty Wilder Queen Anne Victorian home, an equally ornate 1891 carriage horse barn, the c. 1860 dairy barn with hand-hewn post-and-beam construction, and – best of all – the restored and operable 1896 machine shop driven by a pelton water wheel. The Wilders were a very modern, innovative family who adopted many of the new inventions developed in the late 19th and early 20th century. For more information, call the park at (831) 423-0505. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=549

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Monterey State Historic Park (Monterey County) features historic buildings and exhibits scattered throughout downtown Monterey recalling the time when the town was the old capital of Spanish and Mexican "Alta California". State Park guides lead a 45-minute walking tour

focusing on California history during the Spanish, Mexican, and American eras. The tour includes California's oldest government building, the Custom House, as well as the Old Whaling Station, California's "first" brick house and "first" theatre, as well as other buildings that reflect some of the economic, cultural and political changes taking place in California during the years of 1821 to 1850. Tour times and days are Monday, Friday, and Saturday at 10:30 a.m. and Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. Visitors should meet at the Pacific House Museum (also a part of Monterey State Historic Park.) The tour is free, but limited to 15 people on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information call (831) 649-7118. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=575

Old Town San Diego State Historic Park (San Diego County) interprets early San Diego History between the years of 1821 to 1872. Historically, opportunity brought two distinctive cultures into San Diego, both adopting a boom or bust mentality. First, the Californios, deeply religious, economically dependent on the hide and tallow trade, transformed this Spanish frontier community into a recognized Mexican Pueblo. Later, U.S. Settlers from the Eastern part of the United States transferred their cultural norms and created a thriving Western American town. Today, restored and reconstructed buildings line a central plaza and are utilized as museums, shops or restaurants. The unique architecture along with active living history presentations offer visitors a glimpse into the historical events, people, and culture that help shape San Diego today. The park is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and has variety of special events, living history programs, and school tour opportunities. In addition free one-hour walking tours are presented on a daily basis and depart from the Robinson Rose House, the park's visitor center. For directions and information please call (619) 220-5422. Old Town San Diego State Historic Park is conveniently located next to the Old Town Transit Center with Coaster, Amtrak, Trolley, and MTS bus service. For more information, please visit the park's webpages at http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=663, or call (619) 220-5422.

Pio Pico State Historic Park (Los Angeles County), 6003 Pioneer Boulevard in Whittier, is home to the 19th Century Adobe Ranch House of Pio de Jesus Pico IV, twice governor of Alta California under Mexican rule. The five acre park is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Guided tours are given Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Tours are given on Saturdays and Sundays at 10, 11, 1, 2 & 3 o'clock. Pio Pico was one of the most fascinating persons in California history. He was a revolutionary, cattle rancher, part owner of 532,000 acres in southern California, politician, businessman and father. Learn how Pio Pico went from humble beginnings to become wealthy and influential. Pio Pico State Historic Park reopened in 2003 after an extensive landscape and building renovation. General information is available at www.piopico.org Detailed information is available by calling (562) 695-1217. Entrance to the park is free. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=621

Will Rogers State Historic Park (Los Angeles County) is located at 1501 Will Rogers State Park Road in Pacific Palisades. This is the ranch and home built by the great American humorist and cowboy philosopher, Will Rogers, and is where he lived with his wife and children. Today, this 186 acre unit is a jewel within California State Parks and is truly one of America's national treasures. A welcome oasis for visitors to Los Angeles, the Ranch House is

open for public tours Tuesday through Sunday at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. The Ranch House is closed to tours on Monday. The park is open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset. There is a \$7 parking fee. Will Rogers State Historic Park is 15 miles west of Los Angeles Civic Center. Take Sunset Boulevard west from the San Diego Freeway (I-405), six miles to Will Rogers State Historic Park and turn right on Will Rogers State Park Road. Continue one mile to the park entrance. Additional information is available by calling the park at (310) 454-8212. The park webpage is http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=626

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