

# Monterey

## State Historic Park



### Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should **contact the park at (831) 649-7118**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, call (916) 654-2249 or contact **interp@parks.ca.gov**.

**CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

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**Discover the many states of California.™**

**Monterey State Historic Park**

**20 Custom House Plaza**

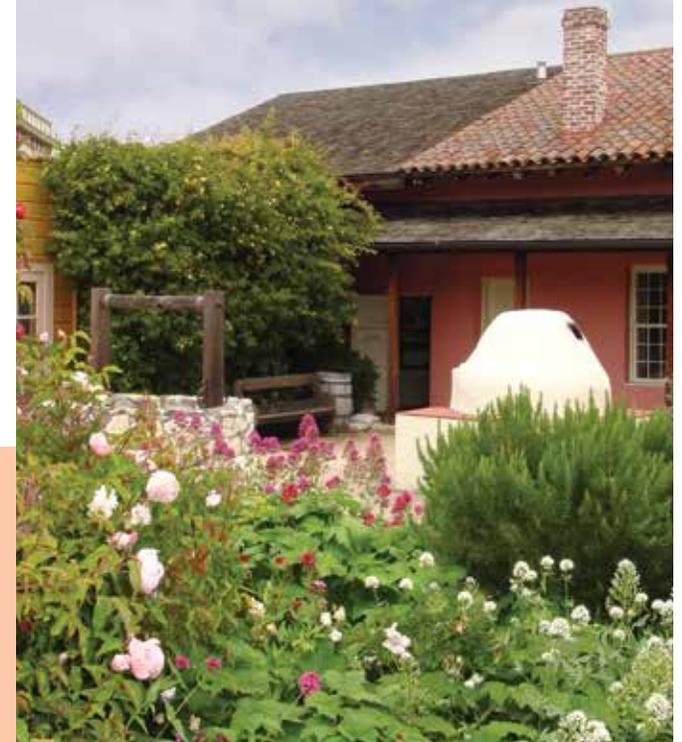
**Monterey, CA 93940**

**(831) 649-7118**

**[www.parks.ca.gov/mshp](http://www.parks.ca.gov/mshp)**

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*Walk the "Path of History" to experience the birthplace of Early California's capital and the beginnings of California's statehood.*



**O**n the ruggedly picturesque Monterey Peninsula sits Monterey State Historic Park—

California's earliest capital and the site of the state's first constitutional convention. A varied array of preserved buildings in Historic Monterey captures the cultural diversity that guided California's transition from a remote Spanish outpost to an agrarian Mexican province to U.S. statehood.

Known for its mild Mediterranean climate, the Monterey Peninsula has a year-round average temperature of 57 degrees. Coastal fog is common during the summer months, as is rain in the winter. Late fall offers the greatest number of sunny days.

### BRIEF HISTORY

#### Native People

Inhabited by the Rumsien Indians for thousands of years, the Monterey Peninsula's rich animal and plant life supplied all of their needs. The Rumsien people moved their villages seasonally throughout their territory to fish, hunt and collect plants. Skilled artisans crafted finely woven baskets, often decorated with abalone pendants, quail plumes and woodpecker feathers. The arrival of Europeans in California drastically changed the native lifestyle. Traditional food sources were depleted by livestock, and the two cultures clashed over native traditions and beliefs. Diseases to which the Rumsien people had no resistance wiped out entire



*Cowhides on display at Custom House*

villages, decimating the population.

#### Spanish Settlement

In 1542 Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, the first European explorer to chart the California coast, sailed past the

fog-shrouded entrance to Monterey Bay. This protected harbor on California's central coast remained hidden for another 60 years. On December 16, 1602, Sebastian Vizcaíno entered the bay, searching for a safe harbor for richly-laden Spanish galleons returning from the Philippines. Vizcaíno named Monterey Bay after the Viceroy of New Spain and reclaimed Alta (Upper) California for Spain.

Spain finally began colonizing Alta California in 1769, 167 years after Vizcaíno's landing. On June 3, 1770, Captain Gaspar de Portolá, with Franciscan Father Junípero Serra, arrived on the shores of Monterey Bay to establish the Presidio of Monterey and Mission de San Carlos Borromeo de Monterey, the second of the Spanish missions in Alta California. The mission was moved one

year later to its present site in Carmel. In 1775 Monterey became the capital of California, a title it would hold under both Spanish and Mexican rule.

#### The Mexican Period

Mexico obtained independence from Spain in 1821; for nearly 25 years, the Mexican flag flew over Monterey. Under Mexican rule, trade restrictions were lifted. Coastal ports were opened to foreign trade, drawing British, American and South American traders. To collect custom duties—a principal revenue source for Alta California—from the burgeoning foreign shipping trade, the Mexican government built the Custom House, the oldest government building in California and California's first State Historical Landmark.

*Image courtesy of the California Historical Society*



*Inset: Father Junípero Serra. Bottom: Dedication of the second mission in Alta California at Monterey, by L. Trousset, 1870*



*Mission San Carlos Borromeo, by Edwin Deakin, ca. 1900*

The opening of Monterey's port quickly drew seafaring men, such as American sea captain John Rogers Cooper. He arrived in California in 1823, built what is now the Cooper-Molera Adobe (a National Trust Historic Site), and became a merchant and a prominent landowner. In 1832 he convinced his half-brother Thomas O. Larkin to join him in business. Larkin soon became the most influential American in Monterey, serving as the first and only United States consul to Mexico in Monterey. Many foreigners, drawn by trade, settled in California, married into leading local families, and worked closely with the upper class of native-born Californios—men like Mariano Vallejo, Juan Bautista Alvarado and José Castro.

Monterey soon expanded beyond the old Spanish presidio walls. Pristine, whitewashed adobe buildings lined the streets and dotted the hillsides. Many leading citizens erected substantial residences using sun-dried adobe bricks, a traditional and abundant

building material. The Larkin House, home of Thomas O. Larkin and his family, combined Spanish building methods with New England architectural features, creating a pattern for the popular "Monterey Colonial" style of architecture. In 1847 California's First Brick House was built by Gallant Duncan Dickenson,

who produced his own kiln-fired bricks and introduced American brick-building techniques to Monterey's architectural mix.

#### **American Period**

On July 7, 1846, during the Mexican-American War, U.S. naval forces, under Commodore John Drake Sloat, landed in Monterey to take formal possession of Alta California for the United States. The American flag was soon flying from the Custom House flagpole, realizing the American government's goal of creating a nation that stretched "from sea to shining sea."

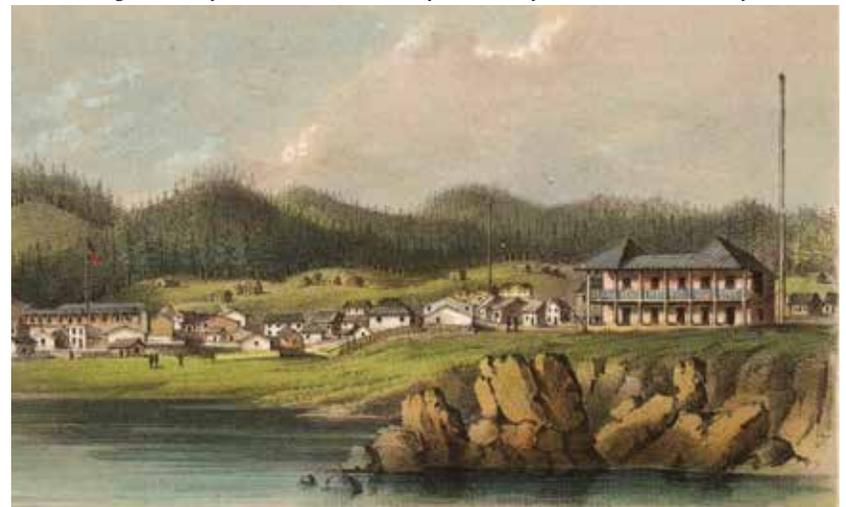
News of the discovery of gold on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada on January 24, 1848, motivated California's

leading citizens to push for statehood. In 1849 a new state constitution was drafted at Colton Hall, and in 1850 California became the thirty-first state. San Jose was chosen as the first permanent seat of California state government, ending Monterey's years as California's capital.

As the center of commerce and politics moved north to San Francisco and Sacramento during the gold rush, Monterey became isolated socially and economically. The Old Monterey Whaling Company began shore whaling operations in 1855, using the Old Whaling Station as headquarters and whalers' residence. Made of whale vertebrae, the front walkway reminds visitors of this unique economic activity in California's history. In the early 1900s, Monterey became the center of a thriving fishing and canning industry.



*Thomas O. Larkin*



*View of Monterey looking inland, by Bayard Taylor, ca. 1850*

Monterey has continued to appeal to those seeking a pastoral retreat. Over the years, Monterey's beautiful coastal setting has inspired artists and writers like Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson. Staying in the French Hotel, now known as the Stevenson House, he wrote articles for the local Monterey newspaper that captured the essence of the "Old Pacific Capital."

### **MONTEREY STATE HISTORIC PARK TODAY**

Today the historic buildings of Monterey State Historic Park retain their rich heritage, preserving an often-forgotten part of Californian and American history. Explore the park's interpretive center at the Pacific House Museum. Take a guided tour through sturdy adobe residences, such as Casa Soberanes and the Cooper-Molera Adobe (a National Trust Historic Site) for a taste of this rich history. Let the tantalizing fragrances of the many heritage gardens transport you back to early California as you experience the birthplace of California's government.

### **ACCESSIBLE FEATURES**

The Pacific House Museum, the Stevenson House, the Custom House, and the First Brick House are generally accessible. However, some accessible structures are only open to guided tours at specific times.



*The Pacific House's  
Sensory and Memory Gardens*

Guided and self-guided tour material is available on request. The self-guided Path of History and the first floors of its marked buildings are accessible.

Accessible restrooms are behind the Pacific House Museum in the Casa del Oro Garden and at the Cooper-Molera Adobe.

Accessibility is continually improving in state parks.

For updates, visit

<http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

### **NEARBY STATE PARKS**

- Monterey State Beach  
Del Monte Ave. at Park Ave., Monterey  
93940 (831) 649-2836
- Asilomar State Beach & Conference  
Grounds, 800 Asilomar Ave., Pacific Grove  
93950 (831) 646-6440
- Point Lobos State Natural Reserve  
3 miles south of Carmel on Hwy. 1  
93923 (831) 624-4909

### **NEARBY HISTORY MUSEUMS**

- Colton Hall Museum, City of Monterey,  
Pacific Street (between Jefferson and  
Madison Streets) (831) 646-5640
- Museum of Monterey  
5 Custom House Plaza (831) 372-2608

### **PLEASE REMEMBER**

- Start your visit to Monterey State Historic Park at the Pacific House Museum to receive park information and view displays covering the changing periods of history in Monterey.
- Parking is available on the street and in public and private parking lots.
- The law prohibits removal of any natural, cultural or historical object.
- Except for service animals, dogs and other pets are not permitted in park buildings or on park grounds.
- The park provides tours of the historic houses and museums for a fee. Contact the park office for more information on available tours at (831) 649-7118. Check the current schedule of special events and programs at [www.parks.ca.gov/mshp](http://www.parks.ca.gov/mshp).
- The park provides State Content Standards-based programming for third grade (Native American history) and fourth grade (Mexican California history) for a fee. Programs range from three to four hours. Shorter, walk-through tours for kindergarten through twelfth grade classes at the Custom House and Pacific House Museum are also available for a fee. For reservations, contact the park office at (831) 649-7118.
- The park is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days.



*Custom House*



*First Brick House*



*Old Whaling Station*



*Stevenson House*



*Pacific House Museum*



*Casa del Oro*



*Casa Soberanes*



*Larkin House*



*Colton Hall (City of Monterey)*



*First Theater*

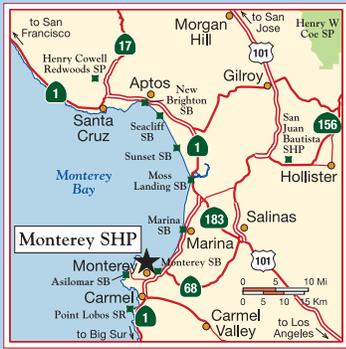


*Cooper-Molera Adobe, a National Trust Historic Site*



# Monterey

State Historic Park



- Legend**
- Paved road
  - Path of History
  - City of Monterey
  - City Park
  - Military Property
  - Accessible Feature
  - Footbridge
  - Marina
  - Park Building
  - Parking
  - Restrooms



This park is supported in part by a nonprofit organization.  
 For more information, contact  
**Monterey State Historic Park Association**  
 525 Polk Street, Monterey, CA 93940 • (831) 649-7111 • [www.mshpa.org](http://www.mshpa.org)



Follow the markers for a self-guided walking history tour.

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