CALIFORNIA’S AFRICAN AMERICAN PIONEERS

African Americans have been an important part of the California story since the time of the first Spanish settlements. For many, California represented a chance to break free from the chains of slavery and become self-supporting citizens. Within the regions of many present-day state parks, African Americans took on a variety of occupations, including those of hunters, farmers, teachers, cowboys, railroad workers, landowners, and even governor. In spite of racial prejudice and discriminatory laws and practices, black Californians have claimed their place in the society and history of the Golden State.