

# CALIFORNIA

## **The Gold Rush**

American made California an American state in 1850, two years after winning it from Mexico in the Mexican-American War. Something which sent men hurrying across wild and dangerous country, or on long journeys by sea, to get there. On March 15th, a San Francisco newspaper, The Californian, told the story of Marshall's discovery. The news travelled across the world, and soon men from Australia, France, Britain, Germany, China, Mexico, Peru and Hawaii, as well as the rest of America, started the long journey to California. They all wanted to find gold, and to become rich. They were often called 'Forty-niners', because most of them arrived in 1849. This was the start of the Gold Rush. Gold mining villages grew on the lower western sides of the Sierra Nevada mountains-the 'Gold Country'. Sailing ships arrived and their sailors ran off to the Gold Country to look for gold in the rivers, or to work in the mines. California was soon a dangerous place to live. There were more than a thousand killings in San Francisco during the early 1850s.

## **Big earthquake in San Francisco**

At 5.13 a.m. on April 18, 1906, there was a terrible earthquake in San Francisco. The earthquake destroyed about 5,000 buildings immediately. Most of the other buildings in the city burned down in the great fire that followed it. 3,000 people died and 300,000 people lost their homes in the fire and the earthquake. Today, the buildings in San Francisco are much stronger. San Francisco sits on a hill between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The famous Golden Gate Bridge opened to traffic in May, 1937.

## **Parks**

California is home of some of the oldest and biggest trees in the world.

The famous giant redwood trees can be seen in a number of state parks.

**Humboldt Redwoods State Park** is a twenty million year-old forest. Visitors drive through its fifty-two kilometers Avenue of the Giants to see some of the world's tallest redwood trees. East of San Francisco are three of America's wonderful National Parks.

**Yosemite National Park** covers more than 1,600 square kilometers of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Three million tourists visit the park every year. Most of them come to see the beautiful waterfalls and rocky cliffs of the eleven kilometer Yosemite Valley at its centre. You can take a tour bus or drive into the valley.

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South of Yosemite are the **Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks**. These are next to each other and they are usually visited together.

The sequoia tree is another kind of redwood, not quite as tall as those in the redwoods parks, but very much fatter. The General Sherman Tree in Sequoia Parks' Giant Forest is 31 meters round and 84 meters tall. On the eastern side of Sequoia Park is Mount Whitney, 4,418 meters high, and the highest place in California.

North of Yosemite is **Lake Tahoe**. Most of the land around the lake is private, but there are public parks where visitors can enjoy California's most beautiful lake. Lake Tahoe is 35 kilometers long and 19 kilometers across, and it is a favorite place for water sports.

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vocabulary/ słownictwo:

Mexican-American War – wojna meksykańsko-amerykańska

hurry - spieszyć się

arrive - przybyć

Gold Rush – Gorączka Złota

grow – rosnąć

earthquake – trzęsienie ziemi

immediately – natychmiast

traffic – ruch uliczny

avenue - aleja