



History: California

These nonfiction books cover a wide-range of Californian history, from early settlers, the Gold Rush, the rise of Hollywood and L.A., to the riotous 1960's and beyond. To order any of these titles, contact the library by email, phone, mail, in person, or order through our [online catalog](#). Select titles can be [downloaded from BARD](#).

The Land of Little Rain By Mary Hunter Austin

Read by Jill Ferris

Reading time 4 hours, 17 minutes

Early environmentalist and author Mary Austin, portrayed in *Mary Austin and the American West* (DB 72474), describes the landscape between the high Sierras and the Mojave Desert in this 1903 work about the flora, fauna, and people of the California desert. 1903.

[Download from BARD: The Land of Little Rain](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB073448

The Star Machine By Jeanine Basinger

Read by Kristin Allison

Reading time 24 hours, 51 minutes

Film historian researches the studio system used in Hollywood from the 1930s to the 1950s. Describes the process of selecting and grooming performers to elevate into commodities--provided they surrendered their individuality. Discusses the reactions of actors Deanna Durbin, Ann Sheridan, and Dennis Morgan to such business deals. 2007.

[Download from BARD: The Star Machine](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB067283

Inventing L.A. The Chandlers and Their Times By Bill Boyarsky

Read by Barry Bernson

Reading time 4 hours, 59 minutes

A veteran Los Angeles Times reporter chronicles the history of the paper and its founding family, the Chandlers. Discusses the politics, fortunes, and feuds of multiple Chandler generations and explores their influence on Southern California since the arrival of patriarch Harrison Gray Otis in 1882. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Inventing L.A. The Chandlers and Their Times](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB070724

Black Against Empire the History and Politics of the Black Panther Party

By Joshua Bloom

Read by Julian Thompson

Reading time 19 hours, 58 minutes

Comprehensive history of the Black Panther Party emphasizing its political ideology. Chronicles the transformation of a local group--organized in 1966 Oakland, California, by community college students Bobby Seale and Huey Newton to prevent police brutality--into an international entity. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Black Against Empire the History and Politics...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB076438

L.A. Noir the Struggle for the Soul of America's Most Seductive City By

John Buntin

Read by Jim Zeiger

Reading time 21 hours, 39 minutes

True Los Angeles crime legends from the 1930s to the 1960s. Features accounts of gangster Mickey Cohen and LA police chief Bill Parker amid the glitter of Hollywood and organized crime operations that included brothels, gambling circuits, drug dens, and bribery rings. Violence and some strong language. Bestseller. 2009.

[Download from BARD: L.A. Noir the Struggle for the Soul of America's...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB069647

Rebels in Paradise: the Los Angeles Art Scene and the 1960s By Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

Read by Kristin Allison

Reading time 8 hours, 31 minutes

Art critic credits museum director Walter Hopps, who staged Andy Warhol's show of soup can paintings in 1963, for establishing Los Angeles as the center of modern art. Links the 1960s art movement with news events and cultural milestones and provides profiles of various artists. Bestseller. 2011.

[Download from BARD: Rebels in Paradise: the Los Angeles Art Scene...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB073770

Junípero Serra California's Founding Father By Steven W. Hackel

Read by Mark Ashby

Reading time 12 hours

Biography of Franciscan priest Junípero Serra (1713-1784), born on the Spanish-owned island of Mallorca. Traces Serra's career as an educator and his migration to Mexico, where he enforced the Inquisition. Chronicles his efforts to build missions in California and convert the natives to Catholicism. 2013.

[Download from BARD: Junipero Serra California's Founding Father](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB077478

Download from BARD as Electronic Braille

Farewell to Manzanar a True Story of Japanese American Experience

During and After the World War II Internment By Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston

Read by Catherine Byers

Reading time 4 hours, 24 minutes

An intimate look at the painful years during World War II when the Wakatsuki family was imprisoned in a California internment camp for Japanese Americans.

[Download from BARD: Farewell to Manzanar a True Story of Japanese...](#)

Also available on cassette RC043194

Disaster! The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906 By Dan Kurzman

Read by Chuck Young

Reading time 10 hours, 39 minutes

Recreates the historic California catastrophe by recounting personal tragedies that occurred during the destruction of San Francisco. Describes the social scene the night before the earthquake and the reactions of citizens, government officials, and soldiers during the following three days of fire and chaos. 2001. 2001.

[Download from BARD: Disaster! The Great San Francisco Earthquake...](#)

Also available on cassette RC053784

They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush By Joann Levy

Read by Joann Levy

This book chronicles the active part women played in the history of California's gold rush. Women, as well as men, had adventures as they migrated west and experienced every aspect of life at that time.

Narrated by the author.

Available on cassette CBC00426

Dutch a Memoir of Ronald Reagan By Edmund Morris

Read by Michael Scherer Reading time 32 hours, 32 minutes

Biographer Morris interjects himself as a fictional contemporary of Ronald Reagan in this authorized account of the fortieth president of the United States. He covers Reagan's life from his birth in Tampico, Illinois, through his college days, his movie career, his governorship of California, his presidency, and final public appearance. Bestseller.

[Download from BARD: Dutch a Memoir of Ronald Reagan](#)

Also available on cassette RC048814

The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War By Leonard L.

Richards

Read by Jake Williams Reading time 10 hours, 47 minutes

History professor chronicles the fight for California between pro- and antislavery groups after the Mexican War. Describes the impact the discovery of gold had on the political climate, the rush for statehood, and an 1859 duel between senator David Broderick and state supreme court judge David S. Terry. 2007.

[Download from BARD: The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB066763

Also available on cassette RC066763

Subversives the FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power By Seth Rosenfeld

Read by Dan Bloom

Reading time 31 hour, 21 minutes

Journalist uses once-classified government documents to detail the FBI's efforts during the 1960s to undermine suspected radicals at the University of California, Berkeley, including Free Speech Movement leader Mario Savio. Describes covert operations authorized by J. Edgar Hoover at the request of then-governor Ronald Reagan. 2012.

[Download from BARD: Subversives the FBI's War on Student Radicals...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB077343

Total Recall My Unbelievably True Life Story By Arnold Schwarzenegger

Read by Jack Fox

Reading time 21 hours, 50 minutes

Austria-born Schwarzenegger describes winning six Mr. Olympia titles, starring in such movies as the Conan and Terminator series and Total Recall, marrying and raising children with Maria Shriver, and being the Republican governor of California. Discusses his return to acting and his marital woes. Strong language. Bestseller. 2012

[Download from BARD: Total Recall My Unbelievably True Life Story](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB075560

The Fools of 49: The California Gold Rush 1848-1856 By Laurence I. Seidman

Read by Roberta Gandy

Using the words of the 49ers, this account of the California gold rush describes the courage and heroism also cowardice and selfishness of the participants of this extraordinary episode in American history.

Also available on cassette CBC00027

California a History By Kevin Starr

Read by Ted Stoddard

Reading time 13 hours, 9 minutes

Portrait of California from its sixteenth-century colonization by Spain through 2005. USC historian Starr describes the megastate's growth and eventual distinction as "the fifth-ranked economy on the planet." Relates the role of California's entertainment industry and natural beauty in defining the state's image as a utopia. Bestseller. 2005.

[Download from BARD: California a History](#)

Also available on cassette RC061161

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR16426](#)

Also available in braille BR016426

Golden Dreams California in the Age of Abundance 1950-1963: Americans and the California Dream By Kevin Starr

Read by Kristin Allison

Reading time 33 hours, 11 minutes

Professor continues his series on the history of California. This volume focuses on social, psychological, and cultural aspects of post-WWII suburban growth, the transformation of cities including San Diego and Los Angeles, infrastructure initiatives, and the rise of what Starr deems a "culture of dissent" that influenced the 1960s. 2009.

[Download from BARD: Golden Dreams California in the Age of...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB069908

Golden Gate: The Life and Times of America's Greatest Bridge By Kevin Starr

Read by Barry Bernson

Reading time 4 hours, 45 minutes

Author of California: A History (DB/RC 61161) describes the creation and artistry of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge--completed in 1937. Highlights the personalities involved in building one of the Seven Wonders of the Modern World, including engineers, politicians, bankers, and architects. Bestseller. 2010.

[Download from BARD: Golden Gate: the Life and Times of America's...](#)

Also available on digital cartridge DB071731

[Download from BARD as Electronic Braille BR19130](#)

Bear Flag Rising: The Conquest of California 1846 By Dale L. Walker
Read by Jake Williams Reading time 10 hours, 49 minutes
History of California from its colonization by Spain to its annexation by the
United States. Relates how the concept of Manifest Destiny applied to the West
Coast and how three men--John Charles Frémont, Robert Field Stockton, and
Stephen Watts Kearny--led the takeover of the Bear Flag state. 1999.
[Download from BARD: Bear Flag Rising: The Conquest of California 1846](#)
Also available on cassette RC050629