

The CALIFORNIOS



The Californios were settlers who came from Mexico or Spain to live in California. In 1769, Alta California, which included present-day California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming, became the property of Spain.

The first Spanish-speakers to come to California were the missionaries, who began building missions, or churches with large areas of land. Missionaries used the land to grow crops and raise livestock. Soon after, more settlers came and started pueblos, small towns near the missions, and presidios, military forts so Spain could fend off anyone who tried to take California.

Mexico claimed the missions in the 1830s. They established the rancho system to populate the new land: Mexican citizens could ask the government for a large plot of land to use for farming and industry. The people who moved onto these tracts of land became known as Californios. In 1846, the U.S. went to war with Mexico. When the war was over, California was given to the U.S., making Californios legal U.S. citizens. Soon after, gold was discovered, and as strangers flooded in, Californios became a minority. Though they were legal citizens, they were seen as foreigners by the new settlers and were treated with discrimination.

They soon became subject to a law called the Foreign Miner's Tax, which said that they must pay \$20 to mine in California. In addition, miners often stole their land and property when mining didn't work out for them. Even worse, the Land Law of 1851 started a panel of people—all new settlers—to make rulings in court when a Californio's land was stolen. The original owners of the land could take their cases to court, but often ended up spending all their money on legal fees, forcing them to sell the land to the person who stole it in the end.

WORD SCRAMBLE: Unscramble the vocabulary words, then match them with their definitions.

OALIIFRNCOS

LAAT AILCFNOIAR

MANISSIOERIS

NRCASHO

PDERSIIOS

PBUSOEL

RNOFEIG MISNER' XTA

- ▣ Settlers who came from Mexico and Spain to live in California.
- ▣ Large plots of land given out by the Mexican government.
- ▣ Military forts to keep California secure.
- ▣ People who came to California to start churches.
- ▣ Small towns near missions.
- ▣ A law that forced Californios to pay a tax in order to mine.
- ▣ Spanish territory that included present-day California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and some of Colorado and Wyoming.