GEOGRAPHY OF THE UNITED STATES & CANADA

By Brett Lucas
THE CALIFORNIA REGION
Setting the Boundaries

- What states and provinces are part of the region?
  - Parts of CA and NV.

- What regions does it border?
  - N. Pacific Coast, Intermontane West, Mexico
Overview

- Diversity in both population and landscape
- Benign climate, but with natural hazards
- Rapid population slowing
Physical Geography
Physical Setting

- “Young” terrain
- Along the border of two major tectonic plates
- Three main areas
  - Sierra Nevada
  - Central Valley
  - Coastal Mountains
The Sierra Nevada Mountains

- Parallel California – Nevada border
- Sharp border especially on the east
- Spanish for "Snowy Range"
- Heavily glaciated
  - Yosemite, Hetch Hetchy Valleys
- Many Lakes
  - Lake Tahoe
Central Valley

- Made up of both the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys
- Flat
- Filled by vast quantities of sediment from the Sierras and Coastal Mountains
- Excellent agricultural area
Central Valley

- Virtually all non-tropical crops are grown in the Central Valley
  - Tomatoes, almonds, grapes, cotton, apricots, and asparagus.
Coastal Mountains

- Parallel to coast down to Santa Barbara
  - Very definite coastline
- Southern California less organized

Henry Coe State Park
Earthquakes

- Pacific plate moving transverse to the North American Plate
  - 1 mile per 100,000 yrs
Climate

- "Mediterranean" climate
- Only place in North America with dry summers
- Mild winters except mountains
- Relatively dry, except for west side of mountains
Average Annual Precipitation, 1971-2000
California

Precipitation (inches)
- Less than 5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- 15-20
- 20-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60-80
- 80-120
- More than 120

Map copyright (c) 2006 by the PRISM Group and Oregon Climate Service, Oregon State University.
Climograph – Sacramento, CA
Climograph – San Francisco, CA
Climograph – Fresno, CA
Climograph – Bakersfield, CA
Climograph – Los Angeles, CA
Climograph – San Diego, CA
# Climate Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spokane WA</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Fresno</th>
<th>San Diego</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan Temp (F)</td>
<td>33 / 21</td>
<td>57 / 44</td>
<td>54 / 37</td>
<td>65 / 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul Temp (F)</td>
<td>82 / 54</td>
<td>69 / 55</td>
<td>98 / 64</td>
<td>76 / 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainfall</td>
<td>16.5 in.</td>
<td>23 in.</td>
<td>10 in.</td>
<td>9 in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snowfall</td>
<td>49 in.</td>
<td>0 in.</td>
<td>0 in.</td>
<td>0 in.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Santa Ana Winds

- Occur when high pressure forms over the Great Basin
- Incredibly strong winds race from the desert to the coast
- Hot and dry
Smog

- Benevolent summer weather that stifles air circulation
- Significant problem in Los Angeles, Riverside, and other parts of the San Bernardino Valley
Natural Vegetation: Chaparral

- Shrubs that can withstand hot dry summer
Natural Vegetation: Forest & Grasslands

- Forest along windward side of Sierras
- Sequoia’s
- Grasslands in central valley
Population & Settlement
Native Settlement

- High density
- Mostly peaceful tribes
- Centered along coastline
- Small animal hunters, fishing, and agriculture
Spanish Settlement

- Explorations in 16th century
  - 1769-1823: Missions built mostly along coast
  - Convert natives
- Buffer against Russian advances down from Alaska
- After Mexican independence, settlements lapsed, few towns
American Annexation

- 1848: Mexico cedes California
- 1849: Gold rush
- 1850: Population increased 20-fold in 5 years
  - Became much more English, much less Spanish
- 1860: San Francisco increased from mission-sized to 50,000 in 15 years
Immigration

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Petroleum
- Entertainment Industry - Hollywood
- Hi-tech – “Silicon Valley”
Present Population

- Rapid growth
- High birth rate
  - Primarily immigrant community
- 90% of in-migrants foreign born
- More American-born people leaving than entering
- 95% urban/suburban
- Some parts of the state are becoming more ethnic/non-Caucasian
Less-homogeneous population

- 46% Caucasian (white-non-Hispanic)
  - Only behind Hawaii, New Mexico
- 32% Hispanic (11 million)
  - Percentage only behind New Mexico
- 11% Asian (4 million)
  - Percentage only behind Hawaii
- 25% of the population does not speak English at home
- Problems/issues ??

Information based on 2000 Census
## Population Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Metro area</th>
<th>2000 (1,000’s)</th>
<th>1990 (1,000’s)</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California State</td>
<td>33,871</td>
<td>29,760</td>
<td>+14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles - Riverside</td>
<td>16,373</td>
<td>14,531</td>
<td>+13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>2,813</td>
<td>2,498</td>
<td>+13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco Bay Area</td>
<td>7,039</td>
<td>6,253</td>
<td>+13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>1,796</td>
<td>1,481</td>
<td>+21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresno</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>+20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US &amp; Canada</td>
<td>312,600</td>
<td>276,700</td>
<td>+13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Population Density – CA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Census 2000 Summary File 1
population by census tract.
California's Economy

- California is responsible for 13% of the United States' gross domestic product (GDP).
- The state's GDP is at about $1.7 trillion (as of 2006).
Defense & High Tech Industry

- Aerospace defense industry declined as cold war ended
- Hi-tech employment skyrocketed in 1990’s
- 1,000,000 Californians; 1/3rd of San Jose workers
- 98B in wages
- Growth stopped
Manufacturing

- 2 million Californians employed
- Significant garment industry growth, especially Los Angeles
  - High-end: proximity to center of entertainment industry
  - Low-end: cheap labor
Agriculture

- Crops not grown elsewhere in the US
  - Lemons, Oranges, other citrus
  - Avocados, Pistachios, Olives, Nuts
- Grapes
  - Wine industry
- Winter crops
  - Tomatoes in the Central Valley
- Rice production in the Central Valley
Tourism

- Hollywood and the entertainment industry
- Amusement Parks
  - Disneyland, Knott’s Berry Farm, Six Flags, Universal Studios, Legoland, Sea World, etc.
- San Francisco
- National Parks
- Skiing in the Sierras
Amusement Parks
National Parks / Seashores
Cities

- Difficult to describe
- Vast urban sprawl
- “Grew up” after the advent of the automobile
Los Angeles

- 3.5 million people
- County over 10M
  - Very spread out
  - Downtown area developing, not as central to city’s function
  - Major tourist hub
The “Valley”

- Endless sprawl on a grid system
- Only broken by mountains
- Some parts of Los Angeles dozens of miles from City Hall
- Secessionist desires in The San Fernando Valley, Hollywood
San Diego

- 2.8 million people
- Largest city on the US side of the US-Mexico border
  - Large hi-tech, telecommunication employment, navy
- San Diego Zoo
San Francisco Bay Area

- San Francisco
  - Largest western city until after WWI
  - Best natural harbor
  - No population growth
  - Very densely populated
- Oakland/East Bay
  - More blue collar
  - Main shipping area of the region
- San Jose
  - “Silicon Valley”
  - Rapid transformation from agriculture to hi-tech economy
Central Valley Cities

- Sacramento
  - Aerospace, hi-tech, government
- Fresno, Bakersfield, Stockton, Redding
  - Diversifying from original agricultural base
  - Smaller populations than coastal cities, but growing (and sprawling) faster than coast
Central Valley Cities
Outlook

- Boom near end
  - Crises
  - Water shortages
  - Electric shortages
  - Budget shortfall ($36.5 billion)
    - Lack of hi-tech growth
    - Decline in tourism
  - Cities with high cost of living