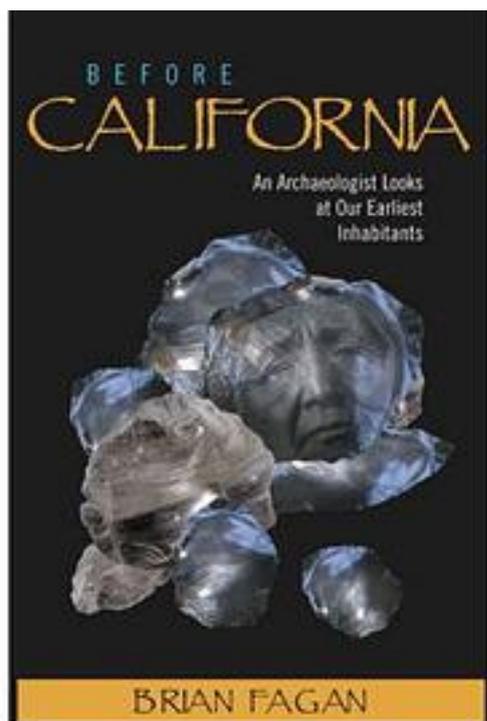


Before California



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Before California is the first comprehensive look at the history of the Golden State prior to the arrival of European settlers. Written by America's best known archaeological trade and textbook author, the book describes the process of settlement of the Pacific Coast by Paleo-Indians and the environmental and human transformations of the next 13,000 years, emphasizing themes of adaptation, interconnectedness, and spirituality. More than a rehashing of received wisdom, Fagan explores the controversies surrounding the first human settlement, then describes the first peoples to colonize

the Pacific coast and offshore islands, their watercraft and fishing practices. The transformation from a gathering economy to acorn processing and hunting is highlighted, as is the increasing social complexity, gender differentiation, and intensification of intergroup conflict and trade. Individual chapters describe distinctive societies in widely contrasting environments-northwest salmon fishers, Bay area shell mound communities, Central Valley wetland villagers, desert foragers, and the sophisticated coastal societies of the Channel Islands region. Fagan also devotes a chapter to California's rock art, melding his description with wider cultural events. Calling upon a century of archaeological research, Fagan provides an jargon-free, well-illustrated account accessible to the general public interested in the early history and indigenous peoples of the state. Before California also makes an ideal textbook for courses in California history, archaeology, and native peoples.

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