FRES.

CALIFORNIA JOINED THE
UNION AS A FREE STATE,
BUT SLAVERY WAS STILL ALLOWED



THE VIRTUAL SLAVERY
OF CALIFORNIA INDIANS WAS
ONLY PART OF THE ASSAULT
ON NATIVE PEOPLE. THEY
COULD NOT CHALLENGE THIS
ABUSE IN COURT PARTLY
BECAUSE LAWS BARRED
INDIANS FROM TESTIFYING IN
TRIALS INVOLVING WHITES.
BUT INDIANS RESISTED
IN MANY OTHER WAYS.

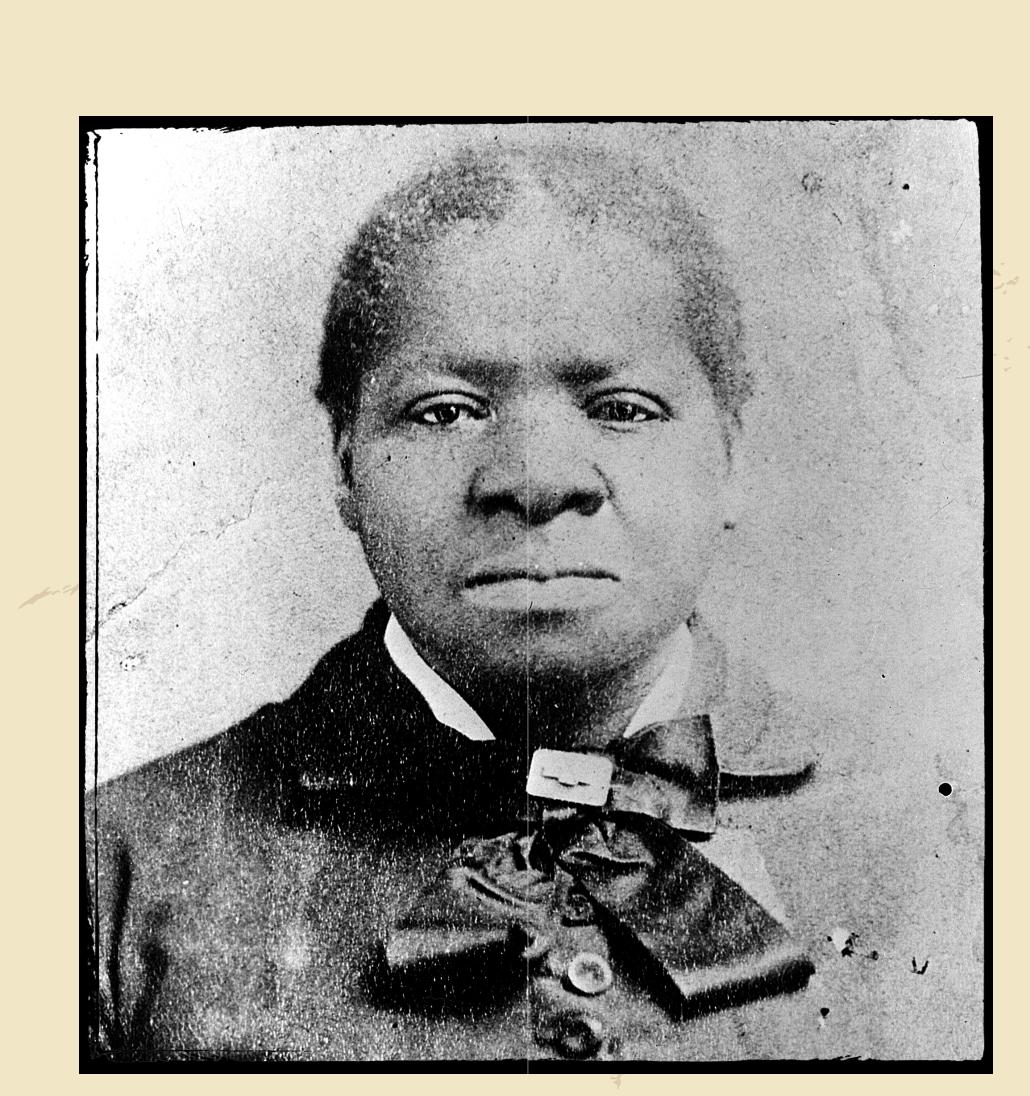
An 1850 law permitted judges to declare an unemployed Indian a "vagrant" to be sold as an indentured servant to the highest bidder. Native American children could be indentured until adulthood. Many were kidnapped and sold into such slavery. The state legislature repealed the law in 1863, prompted by President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.



Before the Civil War, slave
owners were allowed to keep
enslaved persons in California if
they were just passing through
the state. Others openly defied
California law and kept slaves.

Bridget "Biddy" Mason was a

slave brought to California in 1851. When her owner decided to leave for Texas, African Americans in Los Angeles organized to free Mason. In 1856, a judge granted Mason's freedom and ruled that her owner had given up the right to own slaves upon entering California.



FORMER SLAVE BIDDY MASON
BECAME A MIDWIFE, PROPERTY OWNER,
AND PHILANTHROPIST IN LOS ANGELES.



RAMON BRIONES, MESA, QUIERA, AND BERYESSA OF NAPA COUNTY, ARE IN THE HABIT OF **KIDNAPPING**INDIANS IN THE MOUNTAINS NEAR CLEAR LAKE, AND IN THEIR CAPTURE SEVERAL HAVE BEEN MURDERED IN

COLD BLOOD. THERE HAVE BEEN INDIANS TO THE NUMBER OF 136 THUS CAPTURED...AND HELD HERE IN SERVITUDE

ADVERSE TO THEIR WILL.

- CONTRA COSTA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY, 1853

Indian Boy: Courtesy of the Oakland Museum of California

Biddy Mason: Security Pacific National Bank Collection/Los Angeles Public Library