

Junìpero Serra Encyclopedia Article

Junìpero Serra

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Junìpero Serra

1713-1784

Spanish missionary who founded a string of missions in California. Born Miguel José Serra, he entered the Franciscan order at Palma in 1730, and went with other missionaries to Mexico in 1749 to preach to the native people. In 1767 he went on to California (then known as Alta California) where he gained such monikers as "Apostle of California" and "walking friar" as he traveled on foot—despite an ulcerated leg—to establish nine missions from 1769 to 1782. They included missions in San Diego, San Luis Obispo, and San Juan Capistrano.