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Reconstructing the Past:
Historical Interpretations and Native Experiences at Contemporary California Missions

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Michelle Marie Lorimer

August 2013

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Clifford Trafzer, Chairperson
Dr. Rebecca Kugel
Dr. Larry Burgess

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The Dissertation of Michelle Marie Lorimer is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Reconstructing the Past:
Historical Interpretations and Native Experiences at Contemporary California Missions

by

Michelle Marie Lorimer

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in History
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Dr. Clifford Trafzer, Chairperson

Spanish missions that dot the landscape in California today exist as centers of historical interpretation. Visitors to California, residents of the state, and school children often turn to these sites to learn about the early history of the region. Unbeknownst to many visitors, the history presented at many contemporary California mission sites reflects an incomplete, skewed, and biased perspective of the past created in the early-twentieth century by local promoters such as Charles Fletcher Lummis and John Steven McGroarty. This "revisionist" history focused on a romantic and idyllic representation of the mission era – centered on the benevolent work of Spanish priests and celebration of mission ruins. Revisionists pushed Native Californians into the periphery of this manufactured narrative, despite the central role of indigenous people in building, populating, sustaining, and expanding the missions. Following in this tradition, contemporary mission museums continue to present an unhistorical version of the past.

Interpreters at these sites frequently ignore such themes as Native labor, Indian resistance, contagious diseases, malnutrition, infant mortality, violence, death, and Spanish-inflicted punishments. They glorify the Spanish priests, deemphasize the role of Native people, and minimize the negative impact of Spanish colonization on California Indian populations. Scholars writing in the late twentieth century provide more accurate and detailed analyses of early California history and the Spanish mission system. However, popular representations of mission history do not reflect scholarly knowledge offered during the past fifty years about the role of Native Californians within the mission system. Interpreters at mission sites today continue to situate colonial California within idyllic depictions consistent with the mission myth. While some contemporary sites attempt to present more balanced and honest representations of the past, sanitized and romanticized narratives remain the most prominent presentation of Spanish missions in California found in popular culture today.

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Introduction

Touring through the Spanish California missions today, many visitors learn about the early history of the state. These contemporary mission sites contain beautifully manicured gardens with tiled courtyards, fountains, large stone sculptures, and covered alcoves for patrons to enjoy the relaxing environment created by mission stewards. The narratives within mission museums highlight the lives and accomplishments of Spanish Franciscan missionaries, especially Father President Junípero Serra, who pioneered these "civilizing" institutions. Exhibits display relics that reflect the religious work of the missions including oversized bibles and hymnals, the vestments worn by Spanish priests, and crucifixes, rosaries, clocks, and candle holders. Conversely, mission exhibitions tend to hide or ignore the roles and accomplishments of Native Californians who overwhelmingly populated and labored at mission sites in the late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth centuries. Many presentations at missions today neglect to acknowledge such vital components of Native life at the Spanish California missions including, labor, resistance, nutrition, disease, punishment, and death. At the same time, they generalize or oversimplify Native histories in the region and their connection to the land. Thus, underneath the charming façade maintained at contemporary mission sites lays a more

tumultuous history that, if told, would reflect poorly on the constructed "Spanish fantasy past" and mission mythology in California.[1]

Representations at many of these sites follow the tradition established in the early twentieth century by regional promoters and local boosters in southern California, such as Charles Fletcher Lummis and John Steven McGroarty. The publications of these writers and many others like them commemorated the Spanish legacy in the region. They ignored the historical perspectives of Native Californians and masked their contributions in the region. Encouraged further by the idyllic description of the Spanish California landscape found in Helen Hunt Jackson's popular novel *Ramona* (1884), promoters used the ruins of the missions as symbols of a dramatized early California history to attract the money that accompanied tourists and new residents to the state. Regional boosters and scholars in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries commonly overshadowed Native American history in place of romanticized depictions of European colonization. These popular portrayals became so engrained in the minds of Americans that, for many, California history first began with Spanish contact. Stereotypical representations of Native Californians as "barbarous, ferocious, and ignorant," found in the historical writings of both Europeans and Americans helped silence Native voices in popular culture well into the twentieth century.[2]

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[1] Cary McWilliams first coined the phrase "Spanish Fantasy Past" in *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1948).

[2] Clifford E. Trafzer, *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow and Rivers Flow: A History of Native Americans* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), 54.

Few popular writers or scholars in the early twentieth century included the rich histories and cultures of Native Californians in their descriptions of the history of the region. On the other hand, many scholars have examined the impact and contributions of the Spanish in North America, beginning with Hubert Howe Bancroft and Herbert Eugene Bolton.[3] Bancroft and a number of his contemporaries argued that the Spanish era was a "Golden Age" in the history of California.[4] These scholars applauded the establishment of Spanish mission institutions and venerated the Franciscan padres for "civilizing" California Indians. This perspective lasted well into the twentieth century until pioneering scholars such as Francis Jennings and Gary Nash reoriented the historical lens to view European settlement from a distinctly *Native* perspective. They countered the European "civility" versus Native "savagery" dichotomy that permeated academia in the early twentieth century, especially as it concerned American expansion west. New generations of scholars in the late twentieth century increasingly used archeological evidence and Native sources to demonstrate that American Indian people had

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[3] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, 6 vols., (San Francisco: The History Company, 1884-1890); Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921); David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); John L. Kessell, *Spain in the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002).

[4] Albert L. Hurtado, "Fantasy Heritage: California's Historical Identities and the Professional Empire of Herbert E. Bolton," in *Alta California: Peoples in Motion, Identities in Formation, 1769-1850,* Steven W. Hackel, ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, published for the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, 2010), 197-214; 201-203.

sophisticated societies, cultures, and economies for countless years before Euro-American settlement began.[5]

Within the last few decades, scholars in California have also begun to use California Indian sources to reexamine the impacts of Euro-American contact and settlement from Native perspectives. These scholars have illustrated that Euro-American settlement devastated California Indian people. Foreigners introduced deadly diseases, invasive plant and animal species, violent settler populations, and culturally destructive social institutions, such as the Spanish missions, to the California landscape. Unlike reports of "vanishing" or increasingly "extinct" Native communities popularized in books and newspapers in the early twentieth century, scholars today demonstrate that California Indians both adapted to and resisted a variety of the changes brought by foreigners.[6] Although California Indians witnessed a demographic collapse that saw their numbers sharply decrease from 310,000 in the 1770s to less than 30,000 by 1870, California Indian communities still survived. By mitigating the impact of changes brought by Euro-

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[5] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975); Gary B. Nash, *Red, White, and Black: The People of Early North America* (Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974); Edward H. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962).

[6] Richard L. Carrico, *Strangers in a Stolen Land: Indians of San Diego County from Prehistory to the New Deal* (San Diego: Sunbelt Publications, 2008), 1-49; Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1-123; James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 1-65, 240-271; James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 1-68, 154-184.

American influences, many Native communities safeguarded the survival of their communities.[7]

In recent years, popular venues such as the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) have worked tirelessly to demonstrate that Native communities continue to exist and thrive throughout the Americas.[8] The Native perspectives provided at cutting-edge facilities such as the NMAI offer different insight into the effects of European contact and colonization than the Eurocentric narratives common in popular culture. In California, the counter-narratives provided by Native communities and new generations of scholars informed by Indian perspectives demonstrate that Native people did not passively submit to the Spanish. Rather, California Indians strove to find ways to preserve their lives and cultures in the face of extremely destructive foreign forces.[9] Unfortunately, many California mission sites do not include Native perspectives. They continue to promote inaccurate, sanitized, and

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[7] Native Californians contribute their stories and histories to publications that emphasize cultural continuity. Malcolm Margolin, ed., *The Way We Lived: California Indian Stories, Songs, and Reminiscences* (Berkeley: Heyday Books and the California Historical Society, 1993), 6-9; Rawls, *Indians of California*, 171.

[8] The National Museum of the American Indian opened its doors to the public in September, 2004, after over a decade of planning and construction. Nearly all aspects of this museum, including its structural appearance, layout of the exhibition space, and style of the displays echo input from Native American leaders and community members. Furthermore, Native people such as W. Richard West, Jr. (Cheyenne), the founding director of the NMAI, hold vital positions in the administration of the NMAI. Duane Blue Spruce, ed., *Spirit of a Native Place: Building the National Museum of the American Indian* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution in association with National Geographic, 2004).

[9] Margolin, ed., *The Way We Lived*, 139-211.

romanticized presentations of Spanish missions that paint the Spanish as benevolent forces in the lives of Native Californians.

Despite the changing trend in scholarship, a majority of contemporary mission sites owned and operated by the Catholic Church echo the perspectives of outdated historical narratives popular in the early twentieth century. Many of these current presentations neglect to include discussions of such important factors as the secular and religious roles of Native people at the missions, the paramount need for the Spanish to use Indian people as laborers, the negative impact of Spanish soldiers' abuses toward California Indians, punishment at the hands of Franciscan priests, and Native resistance and adaptations to these forces. More importantly, contemporary representations at California mission sites neglect to include glimpses into the lives of the thousands of California Indians who lived and died at the missions. Visitors to these historical sites encounter skewed and bias representations of California history that ignore Native perspectives and the negative components of Spanish colonization that directly contributed to the deaths of tens of thousands of Native Californians.

Publications sold at mission sites today argue that "it is difficult to picture early California more than 200 years ago when the wild, uninhabited miles of our Western land knew only the occasional footsteps of … Indian tribes."[10] Realistically, Native people made the California landscape their home for thousands of years before the Kumeyaay in

[10] Val Ramon, *Mission San Gabriel Arcángel: Commemorative Edition*, (Yucaipa, CA: Photografx Worldwide Inc., 2008),, 4.

southern San Diego County first came into contact with Spanish sailors under Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542. Native people in California significantly outnumbered these new comers. Foreigners did not outnumber California Indians until 1849 when a flood of American settlers rushed into California during the gold rush. Before Euro-American contact, Indian populations flourished with the natural diversity provided by the California landscape. Scholars estimate that at the beginning of Spanish settlement in the late 1700s, Native Californian populations numbered approximately 310,000.[11]

Indian communities such as the Salinan, Ohlone, Yokuts, Miwok, Maidu, and Yurok populated (and continue to live in) the areas that surround the great redwood forests of Northern California and along the rocky coastline. In Southern California, indigenous communities such as the Chumash, Gabrielino-Tongva, Ajachemen, and Kumeyaay thrived along the Pacific coastline that supplied abundant food for hundreds of coastal Indian villages. Moreover, the Chumash and coastal Gabrielino-Tongva traveled miles across the ocean in plank canoes to reach villages and trade sites they established on the Channel Islands. The Gabrielino-Tongva and Serrano in the Los Angeles basin

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[11] Sherburne F. Cook used mission records and anthropological sources to conservatively estimate the California Indian population at approximately 135,000. Cook focused his study on the decline of the California Indian populations after contact. He calculated the pre-contact population to provide a baseline for his study of population decline. Cook revised his calculations of California Indian populations several times, and eventually concluded that California Indians approximately numbered 310,000 by the late 1770s. Scholars today commonly agree with Cooks final calculation – that California Indians numbered nearly 310,000 people. Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization* (1943; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 3-194; 399-445; Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 1-22; Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 2-3; Rawls, *Indians of California*, 6.

and San Bernardino Valley, respectively, built intricate trade networks that helped transport valuable goods to distant villages. And the desert Cahuilla, Chemehuevi, Mohave, Halchidhoma, and Quechan populated the vast deserts that stretched out to the Colorado River. For thousands of years, California Indians developed complex societies that transformed the cultural heritage of the region and enshrined the landscape with intrinsic meaning.[12]

The largest number of Native American people north of the Rio Grande lived in area people now commonly refer to as "California." These people did not view themselves as "California Indians," nor did they share a common culture, language, or religion. In reality, Native Californians lived in communities that reflected the extreme diversity of the California landscape. The various groups that made their homes on the California landscape spoke over one hundred different language dialects. And the cultures, religions, traditions, and subsistence strategies of California Indian communities specifically reflected the climates and resources available in particular regions. For example, the ocean and its resources played important roles in the lives of Chumash people in the Santa Barbara area, but were of little importance to the desert Cahuilla. The Chumash benefited from a balanced coastal climate and rich natural environment that helped them develop into one of the largest Native communities in California. While California Indians more sparsely settled the deserts and high mountains, populations boomed among the Chumash, the Yokuts in the San Joaquin Valley, and the Tongva-

[12] See the discussion of Native understandings of the landscape in Chapter Three of this study.

Gabrielino in the greater Los Angeles region. Extended communities of these large groups sometimes contained over 100,000 people.[13]

The experiences Native Californians had (and continue to have) with the landscape shaped and informed much of their sociocultural interactions. The beliefs and traditions of California Indian communities reflect the diversity of the California landscape. The extremely diverse Native communities in California map their histories back to the time of creation – the beginning of existence. Tribal songs, stories, and histories include common themes about the unity of the natural and supernatural worlds, the power of the creator and animal spirits, and the interdependence between humans and nature. These themes are also seen in cave and rock art throughout California. For instance, scholars believe that Chumash shaman painted cave walls to influence supernatural forces to intervene in human affairs. Creation stories communicated orally through countless generations of Native Californians tell of the formation of the earth by the Creator. These narratives document the trials of the first people and they imbue the landscape with meaning through the lessons learned by early ancestors at the site of important events.[14]

The Serrano in Southern California, like many other Native Americans, passed their tribal histories down through generations orally in stories and songs. They chart their presence in the San Bernardino Mountains region to the beginning of time when the

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[13] Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough, and Richard J. Orsi, *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 30-35; Rawls, *Indians of California*, 6-10.

[14] Rice, et al., The *Elusive Eden*, 39-44.

creator, *Kokiitach*, lived and died in the pine tree forest that surrounds modern-day Big Bear Lake. Kokiitach died just east of the lake and the first people buried his remains at *A'atsava*, in Bear Valley. The Serrano refer to the area as *Kutainan*. An abundance of food emerged out of Kokiiach's remains that nourished descendants of Serrano people. They believe that the people grieved for a long time following Kokiiach's death, "so long in fact that they 'turned into pines' and their bones became scattered as pine nuts" in the valley. The Serrano believe that the land where Kokiitach lived, died, and was buried is very important, as well as the surrounding pine trees.[15] The Serrano did not alter the landscape to imbue it with deep meaning, yet Bear Valley and the Big Bear Lake area are considered extremely significant sites in their tribal history.

Creation stories reflect the diversity of California Indian communities. While the Serrano look to Big Bear as the site of their creation, other California Indians point to sites in their local landscape as the beginning of their tribal history. For instance, the Chumash creation story includes a rainbow bridge that brought the first people from their place of creation on the Channel Islands to the mainland of California. Religious and cultural traditions influenced the interactions Native Californians had with people, the land, and helped them frame their experiences with foreigners. Foreigners such as the Spanish and Americans did not value the religious and cultural traditions of California Indians. They viewed indigenous people as inferior and animal-like subhumans.[16] In reducing Native communities to life at the Spanish missions and in reservations during

[15] Clifford E. Trafzer, *The People of San Manuel* (Patton, CA: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, 2002), 16-20.

[16] Rawls, *Indians of California*, 26-65.

the American era, foreigners failed to recognize the political and social organization of California Indian communities.

Native Californians organized themselves locally in small political family-based villages, termed "tribelets" by anthropologists. While people held connections to their larger community through shared language, culture, and territory, most daily activity occurred on a village level. Defined boundaries separated the larger cultural groups from one another. The territory of a single group could span anywhere between fifty to several hundred square miles, depending on their location and available resources. Groups located on some of the most naturally rich land often had larger populations. For instance, the Gabrielino-Tongva occupied 1500 square miles, including the San Gabriel Valley, the Los Angeles basin, the Santa Ana plain and mountains, as well as the western portions of the San Bernardino Valley. Scholars estimate that the Gabrielino-Tongva exceeded 5000 people divided into more than twenty-eight individual tribelets. In such prosperous regions, local indigenous people developed complex religions, cultures, and trade connections with other tribes.[17]

Most of the California landscape provided Native people with abundant amounts of wild plants, grains, and game. California Indians had extensive knowledge of the natural world around them and they used this knowledge to develop successful hunter-gather cultures. Because of this natural abundance, Native people throughout most of California did not need to develop complex or organized agriculture. However, Native

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[17] Rice, et al., *The Elusive Eden*, 30-35; William McCawley, *The First Angelinos: The Gabrielino Indians of Los Angeles* (Banning, Cali.,: Malki Museum Press, 1996), 23-27.

people expertly harvested the land and managed the natural landscape. For example, some people planted small gardens, burned local vegetation to encourage new growth, and spread seeds near their village sites. Many groups, especially in coastal, valley, and foothill areas also harvested acorns. This nutrient rich food was relatively non-perishable when stored in its shell. Entire communities assembled to harvest acorns, and Native women worked to process the acorns into a meal.[18] Because of the abundance of resources in many areas of California, many tribal groups had surplus food and raw materials that they traded to other communities. Trade linked together tribes from many of the different regions in California. Despite territorial boundaries between groups, inland people were able to acquire shells, soapstone, and other goods from the coast. At the same time, coastal people accessed antelope-skin shirts, red ochre, bighorn pelts, and other goods from inland and desert groups.[19]

Beginning in the late 1700s, Spanish and American settlers who highly valued sedentary farming viewed California Indians as "less civilized" than agriculturalists such as the Pueblo people. These newcomers frequently discriminated against California Indians, and referred to them as "primitive" and dirty "diggers." They discounted Native land ownership and land management techniques – noting that California Indians "appeared the most miserable of the human race having nothing to subsit [*sic*] on (nor

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[18] They ground the acorn meat into a fine powder then leached out the bitter tannins, by soaking the powder in water. Native people used remaining acorn meal to make a variety of foods. Helen McCarthy, "Managing Oaks and the Acorn Crop," in *Before the Wilderness: Environmental Management by Native Californians*, Thomas C. Blackburn and Kat Anderson, eds., (Menlo Park: Ballena Press, 1993), 213-228.

[19] McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 115-140.

any clothing) except grass seeds, grasshoppers, etc."[20] Foreign travelers and explorers inaccurately concluded that California Indians did not develop the landscape because they were "stupid" and "ignorant." Euro-Americans unfamiliar with California Indians mistook erroneous and degrading statements such as these as facts that they perpetuated into the twentieth century.[21]

Euro-Americans also misunderstood Native labor strategies. Labor roles among California Indian communities were generally very structured, but did not follow strict daily routines common in Euro-American cultures. Native men and women each performed different tasks and served particular functions in society. Women typically remained near villages to gather plants and hunt small animals. They prepared the food, watched over the children, and made clothing, among other things. Men hunted and played active roles as political and religious leaders. They also interacted with other tribal leaders during intertribal trade and diplomacy. Occasionally women crossed into male spheres. For example, some women, such as Toypurina among the Gabrielino-Tongva, became shaman and political leaders in their own right. This gendered-division became problematic after Spanish colonization.[22]

The Spanish compelled Indian men at the missions to farm and harvest crops – work that traditionally fell within a woman's sphere. Cultural misunderstandings and conflicting beliefs about the structure of daily labor routines caused tension between

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[20] Jedediah Smith as quoted in Rawls, *Indians of California*, 49.

[21] Rawls, *Indians of California*, 48-52.

[22] Lowell J. Bean and Thomas F. King, eds., *'Antap: California Indian Political and Economic Organization¸* (Ramona: Ballena Press, 1974), 26; McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 143-185.

California Indians and the Spanish. Europeans and Americans did not acknowledge the developed trade network and seasonal work routine of Native Californians. They deemed California Indians as stupid and "lazy" because the land was not "improved" with permanent buildings common in Europe and America in the nineteenth century.[23]

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, newcomers built their perception of California over the lived experiences of California Indians. Unfortunately, popular histories of California often exclude Native perspectives in preference of describing events and stories deemed important to the Euro-American dominate culture. Native perspectives are equally as important and valid to understanding the development of California. Jennings argued in his seminal work *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (1975), "in examining the American past, an ethnohistorian finds, not the triumph of civilization over savagery, but an acculturation of Europeans and Indians that was marked by the interchange or diffusion of cultural traits" in a society now dominated by Euro-Americans.[24] Thus, the contemporary embodiment of California history includes contributions from diverse populations, *including* Native people.

Frequently Native people in the region witnessed foreigners usurp the figurative and literal landscape from Native control for personal gain. While some California Indians maintained access to their lands, discrimination and bias laws instituted under American controls restricted many others from remaining on their tribal homelands. As

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[23] Rawls, *Indians of California*, 28-60; Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 280-281.
[24] Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 13.

Euro-Americans staked claim to Native lands, newcomers also painted American Indians as barriers to social and cultural progress. Historical writings depicted Indian people in a separate space, as outsiders, who must change or give way to the wave of "civilization" that spread north from New Spain in the early 1800s and west from the United States after the 1840s. Notions that Indian people and their cultures teetered on the verge of extinction permeated throughout popular writings in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[25] Historian James J. Rawls observed that many Americans viewed Native extinction as inevitable in the progression of time, and many Americans in California helped speed the process along by engaging in extermination campaigns. Extreme discrimination and violence against California Indians further helped silence their voices in popular culture.

Similarly, museums and public interpretive sites reflected the preconceived notions Euro-Americans had of indigenous people in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Exhibitions and public presentations focused on romanticized or nostalgic depictions of Native people. Museums in the early and mid-twentieth century exhibited Native material objects as "exotic" curiosities, outside of their cultural context. Museums also displayed images of indigenous people in diorama scenes in natural history museums that illustrated "extinct" Native American cultures. Curators and site stewards sought to preserve components of "vanishing" Native cultures rather than acknowledge Native

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[25] Clifford E. Trafzer and Joel Hyer, eds., *"Exterminate Them!": Written Accounts of the Murder, Rape, and Enslavement of Native Americans during the California Gold Rush* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999), 14-30; Rawls, *Indians of California,* 171-201.

perseverance and cultural adaptation.[26] They perpetuated the myth of the vanishing Indian to their patrons and audiences who later applied this knowledge to the world around them. As a "vanishing" population, the realistic role Native Californians played in the mission system did not fit into the romantic and idyllic representation of Spanish America that regional promoters and local boosters promoted.

The "revisionist" history promoted by boosters such as Lummis and McGroarty in the early twentieth century focused on dramatic representations of the mission era – centered on the benevolent work of Spanish priests and celebration of mission ruins. Revisionists pushed Native Californians into the periphery of this manufactured narrative, despite the central role of indigenous people in building, populating, sustaining, and expanding the missions. Following in this tradition, many contemporary mission museums continue to present unhistorical representations of the past. Interpreters at these sites frequently overlook such themes as Native labor, resistance, disease, Spanish-inflicted punishments, violence, and death. They glorify the Spanish priests, deemphasize Native people, and minimize the impact of Spanish colonization on California Indian populations. Scholars in the late twentieth century provided more accurate and detailed analyses of early California history. However, popular representations of mission history do not adequately reflect scholarly knowledge about the role of Native Californians within the mission system. Interpreters continue to situate colonial California within idyllic depictions consistent with the mission myth. While

[26] Moira G. Simpson, *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 35-36.

some contemporary sites work to present more balanced and honest representations of the past, sanitized and romanticized narratives remain the most prominent in popular culture today.

The central focus of this study is the representation of California Indians at contemporary California mission sites. Within this context, Part One of this study examines depictions and the exclusion of California Indians in mission mythology, through the writings of Lummis, McGroarty, Jackson, and others in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chapter One contextualizes this study within the commonly accepted history of the missions supported by prominent scholars in the field. An examination of historical scholarship on Spanish colonization and the role of mission institutions will provide much needed background for understanding a more accurate history of the California missions and their lasting legacy on Native communities.

Popular stories of the Spanish era in California reflected an idealized mission period that minimized the presence of Native people – a legacy still present in popular culture today. Chapter Two examines the development and popularization of mission mythology by regional promoters and *Ramona* enthusiasts in southern California. To claim California history as their own, American migrants in southern California in the late 1880s took hold of the Spanish legacy and created an idealized narrative that built connections between the mission ruins and a shared European past. Exclusion and misrepresentation of Native people became a common facet of historical narratives in California in the early twentieth century. Chapter Three tackles the misrepresentation of Native people in museums in the early twentieth century and the exclusion of Native

experiences during the movement to preserve the California missions. Through the preservation of Spanish sites in California, many people began to understand Spanish colonization as the beginning of *any* history in the region. Americans did not recognize Native historical sites on the landscape as important, if they even recognized their existences at all.

The creation of unhistorical and biased interpretations of California's early history is important background that contributed to the continued misrepresentation of California Indians at contemporary mission sites in the state. Part Two of this study turns to specific examples of the ways mission museums, owned and operated overwhelmingly by local Catholic dioceses, continue to misrepresent Native experiences within the dramatized histories of the California missions. Through examinations of unglamorous but realistic components of mission life including labor, resistance, death, disease, and punishment, Chapters Four, Five, and Six demonstrate that many mission sites continue to promote distorted perspectives of the past.

Scholars in the twenty-first century use historical records and Native testimonies to extract more accurate historical narratives. However, many California missions continue in the footsteps of *Ramona* enthusiasts and regional boosters that viewed Spanish California as an idyllic period and the mission as symbols of that bygone time. Some mission sites, especially a small few operated by the State of California, work to mend the unrealistic depiction of Spanish history common in popular venues. Chapter Seven examines the interpretations at these sites that focus more heavily on Native perspectives. Their presentation of history displays a balanced portrait of early California

that emphasizes the lived experiences of indigenous populations. Rather than emphasize aspects of mission history that evoke Native existence, mission sites more often celebrate the lives and labors of Franciscan priests and Spanish explorers – a trend popularized by local boosters and preservationists in the early twentieth century. We can better understand the experienced reality of Native people at the California missions by reexamining mission mythology and incorporating indigenous perspectives. Once learned, such accounts add rich texture to the sanitized mission history displayed at many contemporary mission sites.

Chapter 1

Understanding the California Missions through Spanish Colonization

> It was then [in that fateful year of 1769] that Destiny marked Southern California for its own, ordaining the fig and the vine to make soft the desert wastes, lemon and orange bloom for the upland slopes, herds on a thousand hills, living waters to make green the sun-browned land; and at last... the tangible, bright reality of thrice seven times seven golden cities that now throb with the tides of commerce and the tread of countless feet.... Glamorous as Southern California is to him who looks back upon its history and traditions through the glow of Time's white mist.[1]

Contemporary mission institutions remain in a suspended state in popular culture and California history. As symbols of a constructed "Spanish Fantasy Past," popular representations of contemporary mission sites sensationalize depictions of Spanish colonization, including the mission system, Spanish culture, and Mediterranean architecture. Throughout the twentieth century, promoters, or regional boosters, in southern California have sanitized and rewritten the history of Spanish California to make it more appealing and relatable to a wider American audience who wished to imagine better times long-gone. These romanticized interpretations focused on venerating the lives of Spanish missionaries and exalting the missions as benevolent "civilizing" institutions. At the same time, they ignored the utilitarian goal of missions as components of larger Spanish colonial interests in Alta California and the Spanish borderlands from

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[1] John Steven McGroarty, *History of Southern California,* (1914; reprint, Fresno: California History Books, 1979), 10-11.

the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.[2] Early promoters in southern California created a mythical California history for Anglo-Americans based on the physical ruins of old missions and illusory history torn from the pages of Helen Hunt Jackson's landmark novel *Ramona* (1884).[3] This mythic past has overshadowed the true history of Spanish California and the crucial role missions played as colonizing forces for Spain. The mission myth also masked the overwhelmingly negative impact Spanish colonization had on Native Californians. An examination of historical scholarship on Spanish colonization and the role of mission institutions will provide much needed background for understanding a more accurate history of the California missions and their lasting legacy on Native communities.

Native Californians, especially those in coastal areas, experienced the beginning of dramatic changes to their ways of life when Spanish foreigners first stepped foot in the region in the sixteenth century. Spanish explorers who arrived in the Americas in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries brought with them notions of militant Christianity influenced by the *Reconquista*, the Catholic re-conquest of Spain from the Islamic Moors.

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[2] The Spanish borderlands in the Americas include the Caribbean Islands, Florida, and the American Southwest. Herbert Eugene Bolton first coined the term "Spanish Borderlands" in *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921); David J. Weber, "The Idea of the Spanish Borderlands," in *Columbian Consequences*, III, *The Spanish Borderlands in Pan-American Perspective*, ed. by David Hurst Thomas, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 3-20.

[3] David Hurst Thomas, "Harvesting Ramona's Garden: Life in California's Mythical Mission Past," in *Columbian Consequences*, III, 119-157; Dydia DeLyser, "Ramona Memories: Fiction, Tourist Practices, and Placing the Past in Southern California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93 (December 2003), 886-908.

Explorers such as Juan Ponce de León, who led the first European expedition to Florida in the early sixteenth century, came to the Americas with personal experiences gained during the Reconquista.[4] Many of the predacious young soldiers that accompanied these expeditions, known as *conquistadores*, became renowned for their brutality. The battle to reconquer Spain from the Moors developed over a seven-hundred year period, during which time soldiers achieved high status in Spanish society. The combined effort of the Catholic Church and Spanish state to conquer the Moors and expand beyond the Iberian Peninsula informed Spanish policy later used to colonize the Americas. Historian of the American Southwest, David J. Weber argued in *The Spanish Frontier in North America* that "Spaniards had evoked the values of the reconquest and gained valuable experience in conquering infidels and colonizing overseas territory."[5] To this end, the Spanish "refined their fighting skills" and altered their modes of conquest to best suit the conditions and peoples they encountered in the Caribbean as well as in South, Central, and North America.[6] While the Catholic Spanish worked to reconquer the Iberian peninsula, indigenous people in the Americans were living complex lives with developed

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[4] John L. Kessell, *Spain in the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 3-5.

[5] The Spanish Inquisition of 1481 had been a military and religious movement led by Queen Isabel of Castile and King Fernando of Aragón, deemed the "Catholic Monarchs." This movement, along with the Reconquista, created a sense of unity among many of the diverse territories of the Iberian Peninsula that formed Spain. David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 20; Clifford E. Trafzer, *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow and Rivers Flow: A History of Native Americans* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), 20-39.

[6] Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 19-21.

societies, cultures, economies, and religions. They were unprepared for the disease and violence brought by ethnocentric Spanish parties that engaged Native people in the Americas fresh from battling the Moors.

Weber regarded the actions of Spaniards in the Americas as an "extension of the Reconquista – a moral crusade to spread Spanish culture and Catholicism to pagans."[7] The Spanish viewed the simultaneous founding of the Americas and the end of the Reconquista in 1492 as a divine sign that proved that God supported their "righteous" efforts to spread Spanish culture and Catholicism around the world. Spaniards utilized this divine recognition to justify colonization and domination over other people, especially non-Christians. Early on, the Spanish applied this ideology to the Islamic Moors. But as the Spanish expanded their empire across the globe, they also used it to justify their treatment of Native people in the Caribbean and the Americas. To this end, the Spanish Pope, Alexander VI, granted Spain dominion over the New World in 1493 to convert the pagan inhabitants.[8] This decree meant nothing to Native Americans at the time, but foretold centuries of Spanish settlement efforts and forced conversion policies that threatened the lives and cultures of thousands of indigenous people in the Americas.

Accordingly, the Spanish developed the *requerimiento* in 1513 that commanded Natives to "acknowledge the [Catholic] Church as the ruler and superior of the whole world," led by the Pope, with power provided to the Spanish monarchs.[9] The

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[7] Ibid., 20.

[8] Ibid., 21.

[9] Ibid., 21-22.

requerimiento stipulated that the Spanish would treat Native people well so long as they agreed to its stipulations. However, it declared war against those who did not comply – threatening to turn children and women into slaves, and made clear that the Spanish had the right to "do to [Native people] all the harm and damage that we can."[10] For instance, under Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, the Spanish invaded Zuni Pueblo as well as other communities noncompliant with the requerimiento. They destroyed Zuni villages, Spanish animals feasted on indigenous crops, and the conquistadors stole all they wanted from the Zuni.[11] Coronado's expedition continued traveling to present-day Kansas, engaging Native Americans along the way and claiming the vast domain for Spain.

Along with the spread of religion and territorial gain, a main goal of Spanish colonization was to enrich the crown through productive ventures in the Caribbean and Americas, especially silver and gold mines. The Spanish crown encouraged militant entrepreneurs, known as *adelantados*, to risk their personal fortunes to expand the borders of the Catholic Spanish Empire. Adelantados operated under the knowledge that the Spanish crown would provide them with titles of nobility, land, wealth, and power over conquered territory if their endeavors succeeded. These conquerors amassed small armies to man expeditions to the new world – soldiers who looked to "serve God, country, and themselves at the same time."[12] This emphasis on wealth achieved through religious and territorial conquest also harkened backed to conquest-oriented ideologies of

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[10] Ibid., 22.

[11]Ibid., 22-23.

[12] Ibid., 23.

the Reconquista, first expressed in the Americas with the brutal subjugation of the peoples of the Caribbean Islands and those in Central and South America.[13] Tens of thousands of Native Americans lost their lives to relentless labor regimens under Spanish overseers. Centuries later, Spanish soldiers in the Americas continued to maintain a similar sense of conquest entwined with motivations of personal gain, as demonstrated in accounts provided by Spanish missionaries and explorers.[14] Native people in California encountered this under the Franciscan mission system.

The voyage of Christopher Columbus in 1492 marked a watershed historical point that began both the period of European exploration and resettlement in the Americas. It also delineated the beginning of large scale social, political, economic, and demographic devastation of Native American communities. Scholars have analyzed the varied impact of first contact and settlement that they termed "Columbian encounters."[15] Native people faced some of the most devastating changes brought by the Spanish, including illness, violence, and Indian subjugation in these first Columbian encounters

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[13] Kathleen A. Deagan, "Sixteenth-Century Spanish-American Colonization in the Southeastern United States and the Caribbean," in *Columbian Consequences*, Vol. II, *Archeological and Historical Perspectives on the Spanish Borderlands East*, ed. by David Hurst Thomas, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), 225-250.

[14] Iris H.W. Engstrand, "Seekers of the 'Northern Mystery': European Exploration of California and the Pacific," in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush,* ed. by Ramon A. Gutierrez and Richard J. Orsi, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 78-110.

[15] David Hurst Thomas, ed., *Columbian Consequences*, 3 vols., (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989-1991); Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003).

from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The Spanish commonly used the power of the requerimiento to abuse Native people in many of the first colonized territories.[16]

As historical archeologist Kathleen Deagan observed, the Spanish ideally sought to settle in regions that "contained land and resources with a high and profitable yield, preferably of gold or silver, and a sizable stable population" to use as a controlled and enslaved labor force.[17] This process of exploiting Native populations for their labor, along with violence and the introduction of European diseases, quickly decimated indigenous populations in the Caribbean by 1520.[18] Diseases, strict labor regimens, and physical abuses from Spanish soldiers wiped-out Native laborers and forced the foreigners to revise their treatment of indigenous people in future encounters.

These failed labor practices early-on weighed heavily on Spanish polices in the Americas and pressured the Spanish crown to reconsider its treatment of indigenous populations. Revised policies proclaimed that Indians had souls, and therefore, could not be enslaved. To moderate Indian labor, the Spanish government established the *encomienda* system in 1503. As a part of the encomienda, the Spanish attempted to relocate indigenous people to consolidated regions to Christianize them and utilize Indian labor more effectively – a process known as *reducción*. Under the encomienda system, the Spanish government required Indians to "exchange" labor for instruction in

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[16] Deagan, "Sixteenth-Century Spanish-American Colonization," 225-250.

[17] Ibid., 228.

[18] Ibid., 229.

Christianity. The system failed in many regions as Native resistance made enforcement of encomienda difficult. The Spanish discontinued the policy in 1549.[19] Native people frequently resisted Spanish forces, yet Spanish physical force coupled with the ravages of foreign diseases on Indian communities hindered the strength of their resistance. A form of encomienda emerged again in New Spain (Mexico) and in Spanish borderland institutions such as the California missions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Spanish soldiers utilized Indian convict labor to construct buildings and missionaries contracted out Native laborers to military garrisons.[20] As members of the mission community, the Spanish also compelled Native people to "trade" instruction in Catholicism for their labor. Contemporary mission sites neglect to address the brutality of early Spanish exploration and their exploitation of Native laborers.

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[19] Ibid., 228-229.

[20] Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 296-297.

Figure 1 New Spain, or Mexico, and the Caribbean. Source: The Bancroft Library.

Spanish settlements in the geographically, ecologically, and culturally diverse regions of Central and South America took similar form to their colonies in the Caribbean.[21] Scholars point to Columbus's fourth voyage in 1502 as the beginning of sustained Spanish contact with Native people in Central America. However, the conquest of the Yucatán Peninsula and greater regions of Mesoamerica faced strong armed resistance by groups such as the Maya. The Spanish eventually claimed control over much of Central America after decades of violence and as European diseases weakened the ability of Native people to effectively revolt against the militarily-powerful Spanish. The Spanish instituted the encomienda system in Central America, especially along its

[21] Grant D. Jones and David M. Pendergast, "The Native Context of Colonialism in Southern Mesoamerica and Central America: An Overview," in *Columbian Consequences*, III, 161-185.

densely-populated Pacific rim that also contained more fertile land and natural resources. They exploited indigenous people, whom they forced to mine for gold until they depleted resources. After, the Spanish exacted tributary payments of material goods. The Spanish also participated in a lucrative Indian slave trade that exported human chattel to less populated but naturally rich regions in eastern Central America, such as the mines in Zacatecas, Mexico.[22]

Historians of Spanish America, starting with Herbert Eugene Bolton in the 1920s, have traced Spanish exploration and colonization in the Americas, beginning in the West Indies where Spain established a viable base for colonization in the 1520s. Thereafter, the Spanish developed settlements in South America, in places such as modern-day Peru and Bolivia. Mining centers in these territories brought great wealth to explorers and the Spanish crown in the late sixteenth century, but overwhelming labor regimens, disease, and Spanish violence devastated Native populations. The Spanish also created settlements in Central America during the mid to late sixteenth century in present-day Mexico City. Mexico City, built directly on top of the Aztec capitol of Tenochtitlan, became the "metropolis of European life and culture in all North America," a distinction it maintained until the late 1700s.[23] Bolton observed that the Spanish exploited Native people for labor as Spaniards created large and extremely profitable mining operations

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[22] Jones and Pendergast, "The Native Context of Colonialism," 167-173; Peter Gerhard, *The Northern Frontier of New Spain*, Revised Edition (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 10-11.

[23] Herbert Eugene Bolton, "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands," in *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands*, ed. by John Francis Bannon (1930; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 32-64, 37.

for gold and, especially, silver in Central and South America. Bolton noted that mining towns such as Zacatecas, Durango, and Monterey grew to become some of the largest provinces in Mexico, when mining, commerce, and Spanish populations expanded extensively in the region into the eighteenth century.[24] Again, Native people suffered greatly.

The Spanish also established political and religious institutions in Central America as early as 1520. During the course of the sixteenth century, missionaries and Spanish explorers expanded the territory of New Spain northward and established lucrative silver and gold mines on the backs of indigenous laborers. Many Native people fled the intruding Spanish, but others grudgingly submitted to hopefully find protection from the foreign diseases that ravaged Indian communities and Spanish soldiers that violently attacked Indian communities. Exploratory voyages under Francis Drake (1578-1579), Francisco Gali (1584), and Sebastian Vizcaino (1602) continued into the early seventeenth century.[25] Through these voyages, explorers created maps that detailed the geography of much of the Pacific coastline of North America. Explorers did not find large amounts of silver or gold in North America similar to that found in Central America, nor did they discover the mythic interoceanic Strait of Anian that many believed bisected the American continent and connected the Pacific to the Atlantic

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[24] Ibid., 37-39.

[25] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California,*. I, in *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, XVIII, (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), 81-97.

Ocean.[26] Native people along the Pacific Coast of North America had intermittent contact with the Spanish during these voyages when sailors came ashore to explore or were in desperate need of food.

As time progressed, the Spanish ventured further north into Baja California, Sonora, Alta California, and modern-day New Mexico.[27] Exploratory expeditions along the Pacific Coast continued for a time, but the Spanish paid few visits to the region until nearly two centuries later when international events spurred increased interest in the region that became the American West. Native people on the Pacific Coast of the American continent scarcely encountered Spaniards, usually only in emergencies when sailors became ill or when Spanish explorers desperately needed provisions.[28] In parts of Central America and the American Southwest, such as New Mexico, the Spanish established each new settlement again using indigenous laborers. Spanish conquistadors became infamous in European society for their abusive behavior and excessive cruelty towards Native people, documented by Dominican friar Bartolome de las Casas in *Brevisima relación de la destruccíón de las Indias* (1552).[29] Spanish leaders with

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[26] Bancroft describes this straight as the "straight separating the Mexican regions from Asia. This straight at first was between South America and the Asiatic main; but was pushed constantly northward by exploration, and was to be found always just beyond the highest latitude visited." Many myths existed as explorers and cartographers distorted the location of California. They depicted it close to the North Pole, as an island, or as an exaggerated peninsula. Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 97, 107.

[27] Gerhard, *The Northern Frontier of New Spain*, 10-26.

[28] Engstrand, "Seekers of the 'Northern Mystery,'" 86-92.

[29] The full title of the work by Las Casas: *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies Or, a faithful Narrative of the Horrid and Unexampled Massacres, Butcheries, and all*

enlightenment ideologies of the eighteenth century called for more humane treatment of Native peoples. They were determined to dispel the "Black Legend" of Spanish brutality that tarnished the integrity of the nation's colonizers in popular European culture.[30]

Figure 2 An illustration from Las Casas' *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies* showing Spanish soldiers torturing, beating, and burning indigenous men, women, and children.

Despite the ideals of reformers in Europe, some Spanish colonies far removed from centers of Spanish society continued to use Native people as forced laborers and subjected them to violent punishments for not conforming to Hispanic customs.[31]

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manner of Cruelties, that Hell and Malice could invent, committed by the Popish Spanish Party on the inhabitants of West-India, Together With the Devastations of several Kingdoms in America by Fire and Sword, for the space of Forty and Two Years, from the time of its first Discovery by them.

[30] David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 47-51.

[31] Weber argued that some Spanish, especially in the eighteenth century, prided themselves on their proper treatment of indigenous people. Weber, *Bárbaros*, 49-51.

Historians in the late nineteenth century were often not kind to the Spanish for their mistreatment of Native people – documented and graphically illustrated in historical records such as Las Casas' *A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies*. Writing in the late nineteenth century, distinguished pioneer of California history Hubert Howe Bancroft was very critical of Spanish soldiers in his multivolume tomes, *History of California*. While he criticized soldiers, Bancroft was more generous in his descriptions of the missionaries that accompanied many expeditions, especially those in Alta California. Bancroft and some of his contemporaries argued that the Spanish era was actually a "Golden Age" of California history.[32] Promoters of California, including Bancroft and popular writer Charles Fletcher Lummis, revised the prevalent "Black Legend" of Spanish history – replacing brutal Spanish conquistadors with more benign Franciscan missionaries who worked to bring "civilization" to a "wild" land.[33] Native people faded into the periphery in these histories.

Working to promote California history, Bancroft compiled and documented the stories of countless people who contributed to the history of the region, including many Spanish explorers. Bancroft described that, after nearly two centuries of naval voyages to Alta California, the Spanish began exploring the region again in the late eighteenth century when Spanish officials learned of increasing Russian forces in the Pacific

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[32] Albert L. Hurtado, "Fantasy Heritage: California's Historical Identities and the Professional Empire of Herbert E. Bolton, in *Alta California: Peoples in Motion, Identities in Formation, 1769-1850,* ed. by Steven W. Hackel, (Berkeley: University of California Press, published for the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, 2010), 197-214; 201-203.

[33] Ibid., 197-214.

Northwest. Russians also forced Native people to work for them trapping beavers. Inspector General of New Spain José de Gálvez decided to utilize California as a strategic buffer zone between New Spain and the growing interests of other imperial nations – utilizing a "defensive expansionism" approach. Gálvez proposed to establish a chain of *presidios*, or military forts, throughout the northern-most region of New Spain to embed a military presence throughout the area. Along with presidios, Spanish officials also sent Franciscan missionaries to assist in the expansion of the Spanish domain and subjugation of Native people. Under Father President Junípero Serra in 1769, the Spanish established a series of missions in Alta California.[34] Similar to the narratives constructed by Bancroft and Lummis, many contemporary interpreters of Spanish history in California begin their discussion of California with Serra's arrival. They ignore the centuries of Native and Spanish history that preceded the creation of mission institutions – removing them from their historical perspective. A thorough understanding of the social, economic, and political goals of Spanish officials in eighteenth century California helps accurately place the Alta California missions in their historical context.

Scholars in the twentieth century increasingly focused on the influence of Spanish, Mexican, and American interactions with Indians in the American Southwest. For instance, Edward H. Spicer in *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960,* detailed the long history of "conquest" on specific Indian communities in the Spanish borderlands and American

[34] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 40-42.

Southwest. Spicer examined the ways in which Spanish, Mexican, and American officials and institutions labored to "civilize" Native people in the region through the context of cultural change. Spicer looked past contemporary national boundaries, as Bolton did, to examine the cultural impact of foreigners who "worked in accordance with plans concerning what they wanted the Indians to become as well as in fulfillment of their own special interests." Spicer specifically examined the "Spanish Program" beginning with pre-contact notions the Spanish had about Native people, learned from the European concept of the "barbarian."[35] The Spanish did not recognize the highly developed cultures, religions, and traditions of Native Americans.

Spanish understandings of the contrast between European "civility" and indigenous "barbarism" influenced successive policies established by the Spanish in the Americas. These policies sought to construct components of civilized life that the Spanish believed Native people lacked, such as proper Christian religion, sociopolitical organizations, and the "civilized decencies" of European cultures.[36] Thus, civil and religious officials embarked to "civilize" many of the Native communities they encountered in the Americas. Native communities already had their own religions and developed cultures. Because they were not Christians, the Spanish did not value Native belief systems. The administrative government in New Spain did not mold regulations for the creation of "civilized" Indian towns from the old Spanish labor model discussed

[35] Edward H. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), 279.

[36] Ibid., 282.

previously. Rather, they looked to plans of Roman colonies and idealized notions of Church communities to create centers for Native people.[37]

The Spanish used two distinct approaches during their "Conquest of Culture" in New Spain. Native people fled in resistance or attempted to fight the heavily armed Spanish. The Spanish compelled Indians to either join religious mission complexes or forced ingenious people to become residents and laborers at mining towns. These two systems conflicted with one another as Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth century structured Native populations into a cohesive political and socioeconomic unit around the church. On the other hand, indigenous people who worked in mines for wages under Spanish employers existed outside of these religious communities.[38] These two systems eventually merged together in the California missions wherein priests theoretically held complete temporal control over Native people as child-like wards – leading indigenous converts both spiritually and in secular labor duties.

Some early mission communities allowed Indian people to maintain certain aspects of their traditional ways of life. According to Spicer, missionaries introduced new concepts and behaviors over time. Generally, missionaries structured their religious communities into social units that attempted to create an atmosphere best suitable for "intensive efforts to change features of Indian behavior."[39] These regulations varied

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[37] Ibid.¸ 282-285; Dora P. Crouch, "Roman Models for Spanish Colonization," in *Columbian Consequences*, III, 21-35.

[38] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest¸* 285-287.

[39] Ibid.¸ 294.

throughout New Spain as mission officials tailored communities to the lifestyle and customs of local indigenous populations. For instance, mission officials altered their tactics when they worked among nomadic and sedentary groups, a dilemma found in New Mexico among the sedentary Pueblo and mobile Apache. In the case of more nomadic groups, mission officials had to work to completely re-orientate the lives of these people. Missionaries looked to create compact and sedentary Native communities around the Spanish Catholic Church. They thought it was necessary to create compact villages, or *reduccións*, to localize congregations that the missionaries could control and "civilize." This was a dramatic change for Native communities that moved seasonally to access different food resources. The Spanish struggled to force nomadic groups into the missions in the Southwest, and many managed to avoid reduccións, especially after gaining access to horses from the Spanish in the late 1600s. Sedentary indigenous communities did not require reduccións. Both Jesuit and Franciscan padres constructed churches as the first component of a newly developed mission site. Churches acted as a place of worship and instruction of proper "civilized" Christian and Spanish customs.[40] Native people in sedentary villages also did not fully shed their religious beliefs and customs to accept Spanish Catholicism. For example, many Pueblo people fought Spanish domination and incorporated underground religious sites, known as kivas, within the missions established by the Spanish.[41]

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[40] Ibid., 288-290.

[41] John L. Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 29-229.

As key components of Spanish expansion in the Americas, mission settlements also developed ranches, farms, aqueducts, and other important facilities that allowed these sites to contribute economically to the New Spain. Spanish missionaries introduced cattle, sheep, horses, and other foreign animals, as well as European crops into mission complexes. Indians conducted an overwhelming majority of the labor required at mission institutions. Extremely structured work regimens became a daily part of Native life for baptized Native people, known as *neophytes*, within the missions.[42] As previously mentioned, this shift was often difficult for Native people, coupled with conflicting cultural beliefs tension developed between indigenous people and the Spanish foreigners. Many Native people fled from the coastal region of California to the interior to escape Spanish attempts to control their bodies and minds.

Along with constructing the mission and presidio buildings, neophytes also tended the fields and livestock. The padres and other skilled instructors introduced the indigenous converts to new crafts, such as blacksmithing, masonry, carpentry, and weaving as a part of their labor regimens. Introducing daily work regimens into the lives of converts restructured the daily routine of Indian people. Along with reducciόns, structured labor routines helped missionaries remove Indian people from daily access to their cultures.[43]

Mission complexes, especially those in Alta California in the late 1700s, became economically independent units through the creation of localized settlements around the

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[42] Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 290-295.

[43] Ibid.¸ 294-295.

church. To maintain a self-sufficient economy, mission officials strictly supervised Native people and enforced regimented daily routines under the threat of physical punishments, such as whippings. Scholars debate the amount of force padres and soldiers used to keep Indians at the missions and further disagree over whether Indian people were slaves to the mission system.[44] For instance, mission historian Steven Hackel noted that neophytes worked at the missions as a "semicaptive labor force" compelled to stay based on a need for food and community, not as slaves or indentured servants.[45] Similarly, James Sandos observed that scholars who relate the Indian condition under the mission system to that of slaves in the American South are "unfair." He argued that the purpose of the mission system was to create a self-sufficient religious society, not a high performing, "socially insensitive, [and] profit-driven" labor system. Sandos supported a "peonage" model of Indian labor in the mission system, where Indian laborers bound themselves to the mission and missionaries though baptism. He argued that baptism symbolized a neophyte's commitment to the rules and regulations of mission life – including a strict labor routine and regulated movement away from the grounds of the mission.[46] Alternatively, Native testimonials in *The Missions of California: A Legacy of*

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[44] James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 1-13; Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 272-320; Robert H. Jackson and Edward D. Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on the California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 73-140; Rupert Costo and Jeannette Henry Costo, eds., *The Mission of California: A Legacy of Genocide* (San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, 1987), 1-28.

[45]Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 281.

[46] Sandos, *Converting California*, 107-108.

Genocide depicted a history of forced conversion and slavery wherein missionaries and soldiers abused and killed many Native people.[47] While contemporary scholars and Native communities debate the role and impact of missions on Indian people, more Native voice has emerged in scholarly discussions of the Spanish in America.

The polemic debate over the impact of missionization in California began early in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Scholars such as Bancroft and Sherburne F. Cook argued that the Spanish excessively mistreated Native Americans. Moreover, scholars proved that contact with the Spanish exposed indigenous people to European diseases that caused significant declines in Native populations. Franciscan scholars such as Zephyrin Engelhardt responded to these allegations to paint a more positive portrait of the missions. However, Engelhardt focused heavily on the institutional history of the missions and missionaries in Alta California rather than their impact on Native people. This debate gained momentum into the 1980s with growing calls to canonize Serra. Scholars in the late twentieth century increasingly readdressed Spanish mission history to extract more varied perspectives than those provided by Engelhardt and his successor Francis Guest.[48]

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[47] Costo and Costo, eds., *The Missions of California,* 136, 139, 141-142, 145-146, 154-155.

[48] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, 4 vols., (San Francisco: James H. Berry Company, 1908-1915); Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, 6 vols., (San Francisco: The History Company, 1884-1890); Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization* (1943; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Francis F. Guest, "An Examination of the Thesis of S.F. Cook on the Forced Conversion of Indians in the California Missions,"

Regardless of their position, scholars agree that establishing the first two mission settlements in Alta California, one in the north in Monterey and the other in San Diego, proved to be a difficult task for the Spanish. Gálvez planned two land expeditions and three sea expeditions to travel from Baja California to Alta California. He intended for the five expeditions to meet in San Diego, where they would reorganize and divide. This plan called for one group to stay in San Diego and the other to continue north to Monterey. The *San Carlos, San Antonio,* and *San José* set sail on three separate sea expeditions to San Diego from La Paz, in Baja California. Poor weather and strong winds delayed many Spanish ships and contributed to significant onboard illness for sailors traveling to Alta California.[49] Native people encountered sick and weak sailors after they arrived in San Diego. They watched the foreigners cautiously, but also provided them with some food and supplies while the Spanish initially reciprocated with trade goods and beads.[50]

The Spanish land expedition, made up of twenty-five soldiers, a priest, and forty-two converted Indians used as peons, encountered the weary sailors on May 14, 1769. The overland expedition, led by Captain Fernando Rivera y Moncada and accompanied by Father Juan Crespi, arrived in San Diego shortly before the arrival of the second

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Southern California Quarterly 61 (1979), 1-77; David J. Weber, "Blood of Martyrs, Blood of Indians: Toward a More Balanced View of Spanish Missions in Seventeenth-Century North America," in *Columbian Consequences,* II*,* 429-48.

[49] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 42-45.

[50] Junípero Serra to Francisco Palou, San Diego, July 3, 1769, in *Writings of Junípero Serra*, I, ed. by Antonine Tibesar, (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 141-147.

expedition in late June to early July of the same year. Several Native communities witness the expeditions as it crossed through their territories. Because the foreigners continued to move, and did not settle, they met little active resistance before reaching San Diego. Serra, a number of soldiers, and several neophytes accompanied this second expedition, led by Gaspar de Portolá, governor of Baja California.[51]

Many members of the overland party arrived in San Diego comparatively healthy, despite food and water shortages on the journey.[52] Portolá, Crespi, Father Francisco Gomez, and a majority of the party soon disembarked for Monterey. Serra and nearly a dozen others remained in San Diego to establish the presidio and Mission San Diego, originally located near the Kumeyaay village of *Cosoy* – contemporarily located at Presidio Hill in San Diego.[53] They Kumeyaay did not openly accept the Spanish settlements in their territory. More explicitly, they attacked the Spanish several times and refused to join the mission for many years. Even after many Kumeyaay joined the

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[51] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 42-45.

[52] Francisco Palóu, "Juan Crespi to Francisco Palóu, San Diego, June 9, 1769," in *Historical Memoirs of New California*, IV, ed. and trans. by Herbert Eugene Bolton, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926), 253-265. Hereafter referred to as Crespí to Palóu, San Diego, June 9, 1769.

[53] Bancroft's discussion of Spanish exploration and colonization highlighted key points in the history of the Spanish in Alta California, but generally ignores Spanish involvement in the larger borderlands region. Bancroft also does not provide a detailed discussion of the political and economic motives of the Spanish crown – a task outside the scope of Bancroft's main focus in *History of California*, I, 137.

mission fold, a large number of Kumeyaay that were dissatisfaction with the Spanish staged a large-scale revolt that destroyed Mission San Diego in 1775.[54]

The diverse motivations for Spanish exploration and colonization in the Americas changed over time, as European imperialist interests in the Americas grew. While the Spanish originally launched explorations into the Americas during the late sixteenth century in search of wealth, their motives shifted to settlement over the next two centuries. As European powers vied for control of the American continent in the eighteenth century, the Spanish began to utilize defensive expansion techniques to secure more territories and protect their northern borders. Scholars, such as Herbert E. Bolton, analyzed the use of defensive expansion in the "Spanish Borderlands," a termed coined by Bolton.[55] The borderlands existed as a buffer region between the vast empire constructed by Spain in Central and South America, "between the Rio Grande and Buenos Aries," and the remainder of the American continent that France, Great Britain, and Russia labored to colonize.[56]

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[54] Sandos, *Converting California*, 55-68.

[55] Bolton, "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands," 1-42.

[56] Ibid., 32.

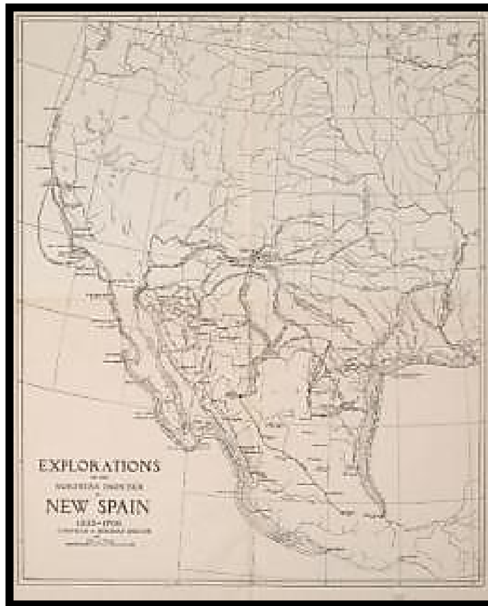

Figure 3 Map compiled by Herbert E. Bolton, entitled "Explorations on the Northern Frontier of New Spain 1535-1706." Source: Bancroft Library.

Bolton, who published "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands" in 1930, argued that his contemporaries analyzed history of the United States from a perspective that did not venture below the United States-Mexico border. Because of this limited perspective, scholars concluded that the Spanish failed in their colonization of the American Southwest. According to Bolton, these scholars neglected to recognize the role of the Spanish borderlands within the context of the larger Spanish empire in Central and South America. Bolton contended that, in actuality, Spain succeeded in its colonization plans. The Spanish effectively established settlements in the borderlands region that created a buffer-zone between the greater empire of New Spain in Latin America and growing imperial interest of other European nations.[57]

[57] Bolton, "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands," 32-33.

According to Bolton, this misunderstanding existed because most American historians viewed history of the continent from a Turnarian frontier perspective, wherein "civilization" moved westward from the English colonies.[58] Throughout his career, Bolton labored to revise the common narrative of Anglo-centric American history. He worked to help scholars and the general public understand the important role the Spanish played in American history by training junior scholars and publishing textbooks for Californian students of all ages. In doing this though, Bolton nurtured romanticized depictions of Spanish America first fostered by writers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Bancroft and Lummis.[59] At the same time, he frequently ignored the experiences of Native communities and the impacts of the Spanish on their ways of life.

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[58] Beginning in 1893 with Fredrick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," historians have debated the qualities imbued in the United States as a nation produced by its frontier experiences. They have increasingly emphasized the importance of the "frontier," or borderlands, in American history. Turner argued that the movement of frontiersmen westward into "wilderness" was a process that created the American spirit and a national identity. Analyses of the American West that followed Turner generally ignored ethnic minorities such as African Americans and Hispanics. They only referenced Native Americans in discussions of Indians' "primitive" nature or frontier violence. Turner's "frontier thesis" spawned a movement of idealized histories of the American West, but was also highly criticized for its imprecise, overly simplistic, and exclusionist portrayal of the region. Fredrick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Frontier in American History* (1920; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1996), 1-38; Stephen Aron, "Lessons in Conquest: Towards a Greater Western History" *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (May 1994), 125-147.

[59] Hurtado, "Fantasy Heritage," 197-214.

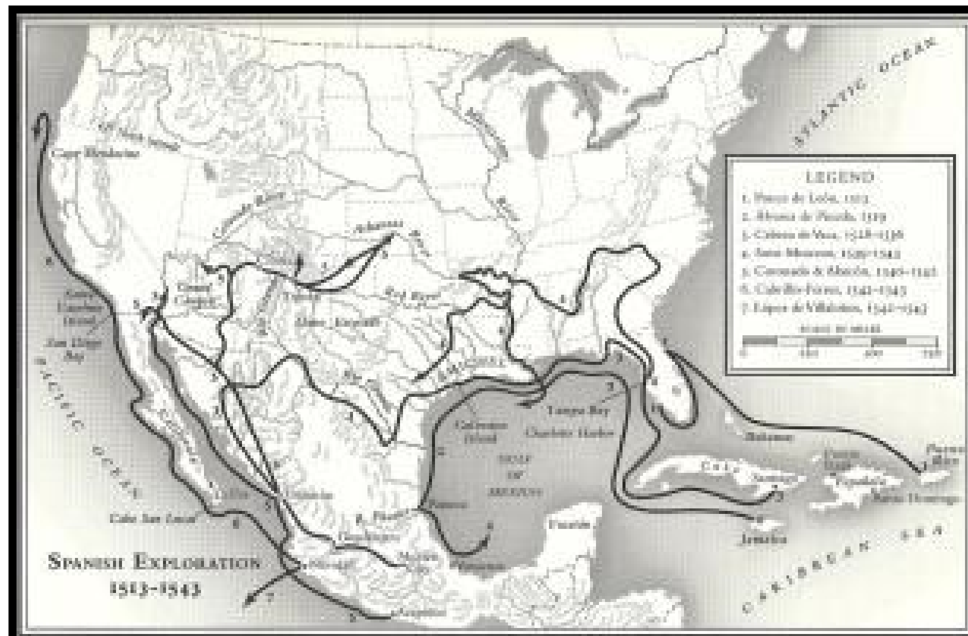

Figure 4 Spanish explorations in the Americas. Source: Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America.*

The expedition, commanded by Portolá and accompanied by Serra, as discussed previously, established the first mission in Alta California under Serra and marked the beginning of Spanish military occupation at Monterey under Portolá. Life changed drastically for Native people who remained in these areas. Many coastal Indian communities felt the pressure of the Spanish cross and crown, yet Native people living in the interior of California maintained their ways of life for many more generations. Spanish officials created a chain of mission complexes between Monterey and San Diego to claim Alta California for Spain. Furthermore, in 1774, Juan Bautista de Anza led an expedition that established a land route from Sonora to California. For a time, this land route connected outposts of northern New Spain in New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado

with Alta California as a defensive strategy against other Europe powers and Indian raiders, such as the Apache and Comanche. [60]

Bolton argued that presidios and missions developed as key institutions in the Spanish plan to create "defensive outposts" along its northern border. The fortification and population of presidios varied greatly depending on the concentration of Spaniards, indigenous people, and other Europeans in the region. Generally, presidios protected surrounding settlements, sent scouts and detachments on expeditions, engaged hostile indigenous people in skirmishes, and protected the region from foreign trespassers. Bolton also highlighted the important role of missions – that he described as "*par excellence* [as] a frontier institution."[61] He saw missions as a civilizing influence in Native communities that the Spanish created to "save souls and spread Spanish civilization among the heathen."[62] Of course many California Indians viewed the missions as oppressive spaces that restricted their movement and attempted to quash their traditions, cultures, and languages. The Spanish crown created mission institutions to be self-sufficient and provided minimal funding for Alta California outposts after their establishment. This forced the missions to heavily recruit Native people for free labor. Similar to the plight of presidios, missions in parts of the Spanish borderlands that faced the highest risk of foreign intrusion received the most financial support and resources from the crown. Spanish padres, constantly in need of more financial support, recognized

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[60]Bolton, "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands," 46-48.

[61] Ibid., 49.

[62] Ibid.

this fact and sometimes spread rumors of looming imperial aggression to secure future financial support for their missions, in response to earlier rejected requests for funds. Native people at less prosperous missions frequently suffered the shortfalls of poor harvests and low material products, while soldiers and priests usually took the same shares year after year. Along with missions and presidios, the Spanish established civil settlements near mission complexes in the borderlands to demonstrate their "control," however futile, over the region.[63]

Spanish control over the borderlands region did not last long into the nineteenth century. After British expanded into the Caribbean, the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), the American Revolution, and American expansion west, Spain eventually lost control over territory in the Caribbean, Florida, Texas, Georgia, and Louisiana. Following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, the United States further threatened Spanish settlements in portions of Florida and Texas. At the same time, wars for independence against Spain developed in many Spanish-American colonies, including Mexico, from 1808 to 1829. Powerful Native nations in the Southwest, such as the Comanche, also weakened Spanish control of the region.[64] The United States took advantage of Spain's weakened status and pushed for further control over Florida and Texas.[65]

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[63] Ibid., 49-51.

[64] Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, in association with The William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University, 2008), 141-291; Brian Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1-60.

[65] Bolton, "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands," 53-55.

Also during this time, French-Canadian and Anglo-American explorers became increasingly intrigued with the Spanish Borderlands as an "abiding place of Romance." Bolton noted that efforts by the Spanish to create a buffer zone between northern New Spain and the remainder of North America sparked the interest of people to explore the region – to discover the mythical land Spain wanted to protect from the rest of the world. Foreign traders, including Americans, also helped supplement the Alta California Spanish colonies with goods while New Spain ignored the outposts during wars for independent. The products of Indian labor became more important with these new trade outlets. Increasing numbers of foreigners supplied a reliable source of goods, but also settled in the area and slowly eroded Hispanic control of the region.[66]

At the same time, romanticized stories of "dark-eyed señoritas" emerged in popular culture and lured adventurous young American men west.[67] Americans pushed into "uninhabited" regions between American and Spanish territories, however, trappers and traders also quickly settled *within* Spanish borderlands and other territories in Florida, New Mexico, Texas, and Alta California. Foreigners increasingly settled on Native lands. This caused tensions and war between Euro-Americans and indigenous communities struggling to protect their lifeways and access to their tribal homelands. American migrants who traveled to Texas in the 1820s and California in the 1840s found developed Anglo-American towns already established within Spanish territory.[68] They

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[66] Ibid., 56.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., 57-59.

too used indigenous people as inexpensive laborers. Native people accepted these roles as a way to make a living in a quickly changing world wherein Euro-Americans undermined their traditional economies and left them largely unsustainable.

After Mexican independence, the new liberal government sought to dispel symbols of conservative Spanish control. As a part of this project, civil officials emancipated Hispanicized Indians from the missions and whittled away the missions' control over vast tracts of land. Many Native people left the missions. The new state removed much of the power from the Franciscan padres in the late 1820s and eventually confiscated livestock and resources from the mission stores. The Mexican government also legislated for the dismemberment of the entire mission system in 1833, a process known as secularization. The mission building became a parish church and most of the mission lands moved into private hands. Many Native people took the skills they learned at the missions and applied them to new jobs on private ranchos. Some neophytes received small plots while hundreds of thousands of acres became available to the public and quickly transferred to a relatively small number of elite families.[69]

These Spanish speaking families in California, known as *californios*, created large ranches using livestock primarily from the disbanded missions. Largely, Native people from the missions became the low-wage laborers for *ranchos,* or moved to growing towns such as Los Angeles to find work. Similar to early Spanish settlements, Native people again became the main labor force, but religious instruction was no longer a priority in a secularized California. Americans that moved into California in the 1840s

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[69] Sandos, *Converting California*, 109-110.

and 1850s viewed many Indians as sad victims of californio abuses and denigrated equally Spanish and Mexican control of the region. Americans disparaged the "lazy" Mexicans for forcing Native people to maintain the land and used this as partial justification for settling California for the United States. Within a generation, Spain lost control of its American colonies, the Alta California missions deteriorated into ruins, and American migrants increasingly settled in the region. California was a distinctly American state by the late 1800s. Incoming settlers that once looked down on the Hispanic period of the region began to reimagine it as a simpler time. According to David J. Weber, the preeminent historian of Spanish America in the late twentieth century, "in the 1880s, Anglo Americans began to appreciate and exaggerate what they had previously disdained."[70] The mission ruins became symbols of California's newly-celebrated Spanish legacy, and American interpretations of the past silenced Native experiences at the sites.

Even though Spain lost control of its American territories in the early nineteenth century, historians and writers who romanticized Spanish heritage in the Americas often pointed to the undeniable marks the Spanish left on the landscapes of their former colonies.[71] For example, Bolton looked to Spanish names of states such as Florida, Nevada, Colorado, and California, as well as several towns and rivers with Spanish names that harken back to a time when Spain controlled the region. Architecture "from Georgia to San Francisco" also reflected a common Spanish past in the modern American

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[70] Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 343.

[71] Ibid., 341-343.

south and west, as seen at cathedrals in New Orleans and mission ruins across California. Popular mission and pueblo architecture in the American Southwest embody a physical continuation of the Spanish past – just as contemporary adoptions of Spanish history, culture, and folklore represents the "old Spanish days."[72] Conversely, Americans unaware of Native history have to look much deeper at the landscape to see indigenous sites that have not been publicized by regional promoters. These local boosters chose to focus heavily on dramatizing the Spanish past in the region.

Lummis, whose work epitomized regional boosterism, wrote about "The Spanish–American Face" in the flagship article that ushered in his editorship at *The Land of Sunshine*.[73] He proclaimed that the Spanish-American face, or the skin of the "*moreno*," was the most beautiful. Travelers could see this face in any location that the Spanish colonized, as, unlike Anglos, "there is no land in which he [the Spanish] ever sat down which does not to this day bear in its very marrow the heritage of his religion, his language and his social creed. His *marca* is upon the faces, the laws, the very landscape."[74] In essence, Lummis' first article as editor of *The Land of Sunshine* argued that Spanish colonization efforts achieved much more than the English because the Spanish left indelible marks on both the landscape and on the people they encountered.

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[72] Bolton, "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands," 59-63.

[73] The *Land of Sunshine* was renamed *Out West* magazine in 1901.

[74] Charles F. Lummis, "The Spanish-American Face," *The Land of Sunshine* 2 (January 1895), 21.

He does not address the forces of changes the Spanish brought upon Native populations. Rather, Lummis dealt superficially with changes in appearance.

Lummis, Bolton, and Bancroft supported the romanticized depiction of Spanish California found in their writings.[75] While Bolton formed his argument from a Spanish perspective to demonstrate the *success* of the Spanish in the Americas, he did not delve deeper into other aspects of Spanish colonization in the region. Bolton also generally ignored the important roles Native people played in the Spanish borderlands. However, other contemporary scholars such as George Harwood Phillips, Jack Forbes, Pekka Hämäläinen, and Juliana Barr conducted studies of these indigenous people in the Southwest to demonstrate that Native people played a crucial role, through raids and attacks, in maintaining the American southwest as borderlands.[76] For instance, Hämäläinen argued that the Spanish and Americans had to confront the powerful Comanche "Empire" in order to settle within the Spanish borderlands – a task the Spanish failed at and left the Americans to tackle.[77]

Contemporary scholars have taken up Bolton's early focus, initiated in the 1920s, of a Spanish perspective in American historiography. These scholars are more interested

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[75] John Francis Bannon, ed., *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 3-64; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 341-342.

[76] Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 141-291; Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 1-25, 159-196; Jack D. Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971) 1-20.

[77] Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 1-17.

in questioning historical documents and less inclined "than were the Boltonians to allow documents to speak for themselves, or to let the document define the question."[78] Scholars such as Spicer, Weber, John Kessell, Robert H. Jackson, and others moved their analyses of Spanish conquest and the Spanish borderlands beyond the political boundaries delineated contemporarily by Mexico and the United States. They apply a transnational and continental approach. Furthermore, these historians attempted to include Native people as primary actors in the history of the Spanish borderlands, a void left by Bolton and his supporters.[79]

Scholars such as Jackson, Sandos, Hackel, Weber, and many others in the late twentieth century explored Spanish colonial history from more critical and complicated perspectives. They challenged traditional narratives of the Spanish fantasy past popularized in the late 1800s and early 1900s by scholars and writers including Bancroft, Lummis, and Bolton. Contemporary scholars also detailed the overwhelmingly negative impact of Spanish colonization on Native communities – including violence, disease, attacks on Native culture, and destruction of indigenous populations. Despite the work of many scholars today, popular narratives of the Spanish California missions continue to reflect the romanticized narratives created by regional promoters and boosters in the early twentieth century.

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[78] David J. Weber, "The Spanish Borderlands: Historiography Redux," *The History Teacher* 39 (November 2005), 43-56.

[79] Lisbeth Haas examines the Native perspective of Pablo Tac in *Pablo Tac, Indigenous Scholar: Writings on Luiseño Language and Colonial History, c. 1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 3-39.

Chapter 2

"Turn Back the Noisy Wheels of Progress": Regional Promoters and the California Mission Myth[1]

Contemporary scholars document the multifaceted components of Spanish colonization that left a lasting legacy on Native communities throughout the Americas. Many interpretations of American history in the nineteenth century demonized the Spanish based on longstanding antagonisms between protestant Anglos and Catholic Spanish cultures. To claim California history as their own, American migrants in southern California in the late 1880s took hold of the Spanish legacy and created an idealized narrative that built connections between the mission ruins and a shared European past. Regional boosters such as Charles Fletcher Lummis helped promote this history in magazines and travel journals circulated across the nation. Coupled with the romantic story and idyllic setting poetically depicted in Helen Hunt Jackson's watershed novel *Ramona* (1884), Americans increasingly traveled to the region to experience the drama of southern California firsthand. Developers, entrepreneurs, and local promoters, including John Steven McGroarty, successfully used the inherited Spanish mission

[1] Title taken in part from Katherine Lynch, "The Passing of Old Santa Barbara," *Out West* 20 (February 1904), 135. The full quotation reads: "But the Philistine – he of the shrieking auto club or the plethoric pocket-book – looked at the dashing coach, the type of California's early days, with but slight interest, and passed on to drop his golden coin in a musty curio shop, or to profane the sanctity of those majestic hills with the noisy snort of his motor car. And day by day the coach went on unfilled. No, you chosen few who are striving to turn back—even in sleepy Santa Barbara – the noisy wheels of progress, we bless you but your attempt is in vain. Give it up and yield to the spirit of the hour. As for you who love Santa Barbara and have felt the spell of the passing day, revisit it quickly before the charm that won you is a thing of the past."

history in southern California to market a constructed past to attentive visitors. In creating this past, regional boosters brushed over the harsh realities of life that reflected poorly on this mythical history. These constructed narratives rarely included Mexican *californios* and California Indians as central figures.[2] Popular stories of the Spanish era in California reflected an idealized mission period and excluded Native people – the legacy of which is still present in popular culture today.

The re-creation of a new narrative offered a "usable history" that supported a Golden Age of California that ignored Indians and glorified the accomplishments of the Spanish church without analyzing the devastation brought to Native Americans. Proponents and residents of southern California increasingly yearned for a history more applicable to their regional identity and one far removed from gold rush history dominant in northern California mythology. James Miller Guinn, co-founder of the Historical Society of Southern California (1883), argued that scholars of California and new residents should not focus solely on the gold rush as the origins of the new state's history. Rather, Guinn and some of his contemporaries argued that narratives of California must look further back to a more "relevant" and "noble" history.[3] Americans interested in

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[2] If these narratives did include Mexican or Native peoples, they often portrayed them in a negative light. William Deverell specifically addressed the erasure of Mexican people from southern California history in the early twentieth century. William Deverell, *White Washed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 11-48.

[3] James Miller Guinn, *A History of California and an Extended History of Los Angeles and Environs: Also Containing Biographies of Well-known Citizens of the Past and Present* (Los Angeles: Historic Records Company, 1915), v-vi, 33-66.

revising the origin story of California did not consider the Native past a usable or relatable history. At the time, many Americans viewed Native Californians as vanishing remnants of an arcane time that would soon pass into extinction. In southern California, the ruins of the Spanish missions, pueblos, presidios, and ranchos stood as keen markers on the landscape that encompassed some of the earliest visible symbols of European presence in the state.[4] Euro-Americans who moved to California from the east found a relatable history in the Spanish past, assisted by popular writings that further dramatized the California landscape.

[4]To revise history of the state, historian Glen Gendzel noted that scholars based in Los Angeles essentially launched a smear campaign against "pioneers" and gold rush history that many people in the north worshiped. Moreover, Guinn painted the argonauts as ignorant and greedy swindlers; noting that the "conglomerate elements of society found the Land of Gold practically without law, and the vicious among them were not long in making it a land without order." Despite his insistence that the gold fields lured some of the worst types of humans, Guinn still attempted to circumvent northern California mythology and its claim as the location of the first gold strike. He argued that "it may be regarded as a settled historical fact that the first authenticated discovery of gold in Alta California was made on the San Francisco Rancho in the San Feliciano Canon, Los Angeles County," on March 9. Although he is uncertain of the year, he speculates that it was most likely in or before 1842, after analyzing historical records that make reference to discovery of gold at this earlier date. Guinn, *A History of California*, 156, 185.

Figure 5 Views of the South Pacific Coast Railroad (Santa Cruz) c. 1882. Source: Bancroft Library.

The late 1800s was a turning point for Los Angeles and southern California history. Promoters and boosters of the area found significantly more success drawing tourists to the region as the railroad laid tracks across the landscape. At the same time, the influential writing of Jackson, an eastern activist and author, emerged as a key catalyst in the creation of the romantic Spanish heritage in southern California. Although Jackson intended *Ramona* to shed light on the deplorable conditions of Indian affairs in the United States, as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had done for African American slaves

in the late 1850s, the picturesque landscape and idyllic atmosphere of California's fading Spanish era painted by Jackson drew the bulk of readers' attention.[5]

Similar to many of her contemporaries, Jackson believed that mission secularization was the culprit behind displacement of indigenous people. They also blamed Mexican secularization policies for the high rates of malnutrition, disease, and death found in many Native communities in the mid-nineteenth century. She argued that Mexican governors and administrators of California stole all they could from the missions, even though the secularization law dictated that officials turn over mission lands to Native people. According to Jackson, Mexican landowners forced California Indians "to work far harder than before." They also treated indigenous people poorly and did not provide adequate food. Mexican leaders hired Native people "out in gangs to work in towns or on farms, under masters who regarded them simply as beasts of burden."[6] Jackson spent a great deal of time in California investigating the contemporary condition of Mission Indians. Following deceitful negotiations, the United States government forced many California Indians onto secluded reservations where they struggled to survive. The government frequently failed to provide adequate supplies and food and greedy Indian agents stole from reservation stores as well.[7]

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[5] Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 54-63.

[6] Helen Hunt Jackson, *Glimpses of California and the Missions* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1907), 76-77.

[7] Clifford E. Trafzer, *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow and Rivers Flow: A History of Native Americans* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000), 198-199.

In response to her visits to California, Jackson argued that "a more pitiable sight has not been seen on earth than the spectacle of this great body of helpless, dependent creatures, suddenly deprived of their teachers and protectors" following the end of the missions.[8] As is evident from this excerpt, Jackson viewed the missions as a protective force in the lives of Native people. She did not look further back to the beginning of Spanish colonization and the establishment of the mission system as the origins of the devastation she previously described. Rather, Jackson viewed the Franciscan priests with great revere. She recounted stories told to her about California Indians waiting each Sunday at the missions "in long procession, to get their weekly gifts. Each one received something, – a handkerchief, dress, trinket, or money."[9] Jackson visualized the missions as places of relief for Native people; contrasting the seemingly benign Spanish colonization with the brutality of American settlement that continued to threaten California Indian communities during her visits to the region in the late nineteenth century. [10]

Jackson viewed the Spanish and Mexican eras as the halcyon days for Native Californians, before American swindlers moved in to usurp Indian claims to the land. Americans that admired the Spanish past as respite for the problems of the present

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[8] Jackson, *Glimpses of California and the Missions*, 76-77.

[9] Jackson, *Glimpses of California and the Missions* as quoted in: Edna E. Kimbro and Julia G. Costello, *The California Missions: History, Art, and Preservation* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2009), 55.

[10] Dydia DeLyser, *Ramona Memories: Tourism and the Shaping of Southern California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 6-11.

assisted in the growing nostalgia of Spanish California history.[11] In her own words, Jackson described her ambitions to write *Ramona* as "a novel, in which will be set forth some Indian experiences in a way to move people's hearts." Unbeknownst to Jackson, her poetic description of California's landscape and the tragic love story central to the novel pulled on more heartstrings than the underlying call to improve the living conditions of Mission Indians.[12]

Americans adopted California's Spanish history for themselves through *Ramona* – marking the beginning of a relatable "American" history in the region that usually ignored Indians. Interestingly, the story of *Ramona* did not easily lend itself to American appropriation. In the novel, Ramona, a beautiful Scottish-Indian woman, falls in love with Alessandro, an Indian laborer and son of a village chief who led the sheep shearers for the Moreno rancho where Ramona lives. Ramona's guardian Señora Moreno, a member of the landed Mexican-California elite, disapproved of Ramona's relationship with an Indian. Despite Señora Moreno's objections, Ramona and Alessandro secretly marry and the two run away together. However, the waves of land-hungry and often violent American settlers force the couple to move, time and time again. Tragedy and poverty follows Ramona and Alessandro throughout their life together.

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[11] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 54-55.

[12] DeLyser, *Ramona Memories*, 10, 14-16.

Figure 6 Postcard depicting Ramona, Alessandro, and their infant child, c. 1930. Source: Agua Caliente Cultural Museum.

Jackson illustrated the brutal treatment Native people encountered in the face of discriminatory emigrants and an American legal system unsympathetic to the criminal acts perpetrated against Native people. In Jackson's novel, Alessandro and Ramona attempt to distance themselves from discrimination. They built a secluded and very modest home in the foothills of the local mountains. Like many other California Indians struggling to coexist in a hostile California in the 1800s, Alessandro traveled into town to find day-work for minimal wages. Despite their best efforts, Alessandro and Ramona fell victim to the violence brought by foreigners. Jackson illustrated the struggles many California Indians faced in her final chapters in the novel. In the end, an American settler accuses Alessandro of stealing his horse and murders him in front of Ramona –

just steps outside of their home. Because Alessandro was an Indian man accused of horse thievery and the only witness was Ramona, a half-Indian woman, the discriminatory California courts did not persecute Alessandro's murderer.[13]

Through *Ramona*, Jackson illustrated some of the many injustices Native people routinely faced in California and vilified the encroaching flood of Americans settlers in the region. Ironically, *Ramona* tourism encouraged some of the largest waves of American to travel to southern California. Combined with a housing boom, the population of southern California skyrocketed at the turn of the twentieth century. For example, Los Angeles grew by over 200,000 people from the late 1880s to 1910 – expanding the number of residents by six fold from only two decades previously. Also during that time, Los Angeles grew be a markedly American town.[14] Americans had pushed Native people largely into the periphery on reservations.

Jackson's *Ramona* drew tourists into Los Angeles and other destinations in southern California from the east coast and Midwest on newly completed railroad lines. In conjunction with a railroad fare-war that significantly dropped prices for travelers interested in visiting southern California, local entrepreneurs were quick to erect sites proclaiming to be the actual location of significant events torn from the pages of *Ramona.* Tourists came, with books in-hand, to see places such as Ramona's home, her marriage site, Alessandro's grave, and others even traveled to meet the "real"

[13] Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona: A Story*, (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1884), 1-490. Originally published in *The Christian Union* as a serial in the weekly paper between May and November, 1884. DeLyser, *Ramona Memories* 10-11, 225.

[14] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 62-65.

Ramona. Local residents willingly supplied tourists with sites to help them experience *Ramona* against the backdrop of the dramatic California landscape. Tourists visited California to connect with the landscape and encapsulate themselves in the romance of the region's history. They collected postcards, purchased souvenir spoons inscribed with Ramona's name, and those lucky enough to have a personal camera took photos in front of *Ramona* landmarks. Some visited ranchos and Indian villages to find tangible glimpses of the lives of Alessandro and Ramona, but comparatively few joined Jackson to advocate for improved Indian affairs. Many wealthy Americans from the East who sought a warmer place to retire moved to southern California and contributed to the growing population that understood the area through the eyes of Jackson's poetic language. To many tourists and future residents of California, the actual history of California became nearly lost in the romanticized stories presented by boosters and displayed in *Ramona*.[15]

[15] DeLyser, *Ramona Memories,* 31-58.

Figure 7 A man and woman in front of Ramona's "Marriage Place" in Old Town San Diego, c. 1925. Source: San Diego History Center.

The landscape and climate described by Jackson appealed to the curious minds of tourists looking to escape brutal Eastern winters. Jackson's descriptions of the climate and healing power of the air also drew retired businessmen who came to California as a purported haven of health and leisure. Jackson helped develop this trend through *Ramona* directly. For example, under Alessandro's recommendations, Ramona's sickly stepbrother Felipe recovered his health by resting outdoors day and night for two consecutive weeks.[16] Such descriptions of a healing landscape appealed to consumptives and others with respiratory maladies who suffered in the wet winters in other regions of the country. The railroads helped these people move to California more easily in hopes

[16] Alessandro also helped Felipe heal by singing to him. Jackson, *Ramona*, 3-100.

of finding solace from their ailments and rest in the dramatic and picturesque landscape.[17] Jackson was also swept up in the romanticism of Spanish California. She described rancho life as

> a picturesque life, with more of sentiment and gayety in it, more also that was truly dramatic, more romance, then will ever be seen again on those sunny shores. The aroma of it all lingers there still; industries and inventions have not yet slain it; it will last out its century,–in fact, it can never be quite lost, so long as there is left standing one such house as the Senora Moreno's.[18]

Americans hoped to find some of the drama, romance, and gayety Jackson imbued in the landscape. They hoped that, in California, they could find "spiritual foundations with which to upgrade the crass vacuity of the present," often correlated to life in modernizing Eastern cities.[19] The Spanish fantasy past developed through *Ramona* tourism excluded the labors of Native people. Californios built their "picturesque" life on the backs of Native Californians yet romanticized narratives of the Mexican period in the late 1800s excluded these important facts to maintain the reinvented image of the "jovial-spirited Mexican."[20]

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[17] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 54-55.

[18] Jackson, *Ramona*, 16.

[19] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 61.

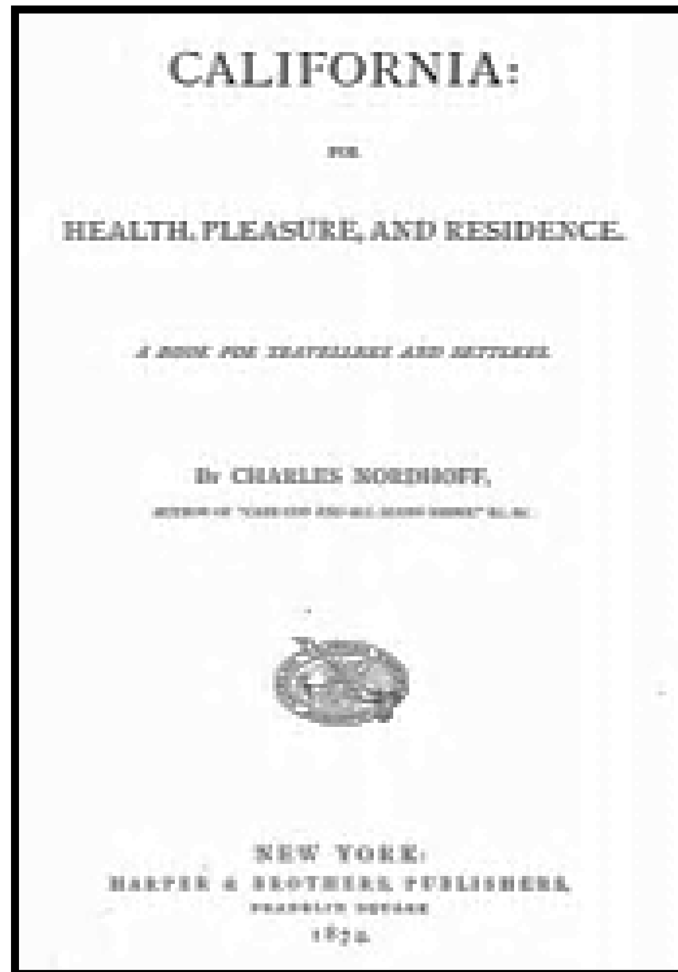
[20] Before the reinvention of Mexican California, many Americans considered the region to be a backwards and dilapidated state that suffered under the "lazy" hands of "dirty" Mexicans. James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 56-70. The phrase "jovial-spirited Mexican" is taken from a pamphlet about Mission San Gabriel History. Val Ramon, *Mission San*

In this atmosphere of historical myth-making and romance tied to the landscape walked Charles Fletcher Lummis, employed by the *Los Angeles Times*. Lummis was one of the most prominent and influential boosters in California history. Using the *Los Angeles Times* to promote booster perspectives of the region, Harrison Gray Otis advertised land developments and tourist attractions targeted to *Ramona* enthusiasts under the guise of "real" news bulletins. As Dydia DeLyser observed, Otis, Lummis, and others did not only promote a romanticized image of the Spanish past, they also "embraced this glowing new social memory."[21] Lummis adopted the Spanish heritage of the Southwest and became its biggest proponent in popular culture. His work as a civic leader, magazine editor, author, museum founder, and letter writer at the turn of the twentieth century helped reshape the image of Spanish America in the popular American mindset. [22]

Gabriel Arcángel: Commemorative Edition, (Yucaipa, CA: Photografx Worldwide Inc., 2008), 3.

[21] DeLyser, *Ramona Memories*, 44-45.

[22] Lummis embarked on extensive letter writing campaigns throughout his professional life, urging such prominent Californians as John Muir and Frank Miller to do things such as donate to the Landmarks Club or renew their subscriptions to his magazines. DeLyser, *Ramona Memories*, 45-48.


CALIFORNIA:

HEALTH, PLEASURE, AND RESIDENCE.

By CHARLES NORDHOFF,

NEW YORK:
HARPER & BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS,

Figure 8 The Railroad produced promotional books such as *California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence - A Book for Travellers* [sic] *and Settlers* (1874) to encourage people to travel to the region. Source: Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum.

Before scholars such as Herbert Bolton, Francis Bannon, and David Weber illustrated the importance of the Spanish influence in North America, academic histories of the United States focused on triumphalist Anglo-centric narratives. In the early twentieth century, many American historians viewed the Spanish as a peripheral influence – with much less importance and power in shaping the history of the American

continent than the English or French.[23] While not a trained historian, Lummis worked to reorient the general perspective of Spanish colonial history in popular American society. Fueled by a disregard for the New England sensibilities he was born into, Lummis moved to the Southwest and eventually made it his life's mission to remove the tarnish of the popular Spanish Black Legend still believed by many Anglo-Americans at the time.[24] Late in life Lummis articulated his feels, noting that he felt at home in the Southwest, or what he termed "Spanish America." Although Lummis was born a "Puritan," he argued that "my whole imagination and sympathy and feeling were Latin. That is, essentially Spanish." Growing up in the home of a strict Methodist preacher, Lummis escaped what he called "the repressive influence of my birthplace" to find in the Southwest that "the generous and bubbling boyish impulses which had been considerably frosted in New England were, after all, my birthright."[25] He romanticized the Southwest in his personal

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[23] As mentioned previously, Bolton countered this common narrative and developed the school of Spanish borderlands studies in the early twentieth century to promote his message. He argued that most scholars incorrectly believed that the Spanish failed in their conquest of North America. Bolton countered that other historians mistakenly took "the tail for the dog…." However, once scholars reoriented their understanding to a more hemispheric approach, they would see that the Spanish spread into North America to successfully defend their important colonies in Central and South America. For a more complete discussion of Bolton and the Spanish borderlands see, James A. Sandos, "From 'Boltonlands' to 'Weberlands': The Borderlands Enter American History," *American Quarterly* 46 (December 1994), 595-604; Herbert Eugene Bolton, "Defensive Spanish Exploration and the Significance of Borderlands," in *Bolton and the Spanish Borderlands*, ed. by John Francis Bannon, (1930; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 32-64.

[24] David J. Weber addressed American sentiments towards the Catholic Spanish in *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 335-343.

life and in his public writings. Lummis also dramatized contemporary Native Americans – recording songs, stories, taking photographs, and buying countless objects from the diverse communities he encountered.[26]

Lummis, a New Englander by birth, was an intelligent and eccentric character who pioneered cultural history of the American Southwest.[27] Lummis attended Harvard but never graduated. He enjoyed athletics more than attending class and failed to pass some of his final exams his senior year.[28] Rejection of Harvard, a bulwark among eastern institutions, provided Lummis the chance to explore opportunities on different shores.[29] He took several jobs working for newspapers as both a writer and editor, but eventually petitioned Otis for a contract job to document his trek across the continent for the *Los Angeles Times.*[30]

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[25] Charles Lummis as quoted in Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 32.

[26] These objects made up the founding collection for the Southwest Museum in Los Angeles, California.

[27] Lummis was also a man of extremes who exhausted himself on several occasions and had a stroke while in in twenties. Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 82-83.

[28] Mark Thompson, *American Character: The Curious Life of Charles Fletcher Lummis and the Rediscovery of the Southwest* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2001), 5-18.

[29] Sherry L. Smith, "Charles Lummis and the Fight for the Multicultural Southwest," in *Reimagining Indians: Native Americans through Anglo Eyes, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 121.

[30] Starr noted that Lummis left his job as editor of the *Scioto Gazette* in Cincinnati, Ohio, after contracting malaria. He was drawn to California for its health benefits and pursued a walking campaign, in part, to help regain his strength. Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 75-77.

Early in his career, Lummis observed, described, photographed, and collected objects from the people he met along his "tramp across the continent," including many Native communities in the Southwest. While Lummis chose to walk to California, Americans followed the railroads and moved West at ever increasing rates in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These settlers used violence, intimidation, and a biased California legal system to push indigenous people off of their land and into peripheral areas of society. Similar to Jackson, Lummis lamented over the mistreatment of Native communities by American migrants and worked to publicize these injustices.[31] However, Lummis' colorful early writings focused more exclusively on describing and romanticizing Native cultures than critically examining them and the impact of Spanish and American colonization. Lummis often failed to connect the impacts of Spanish colonization with the current plight of Native communities throughout his career.[32] In fact, the California mission ruins that stood as sites of repression for many California Indians played an important role in Lummis' promotion of a more romantic Spanish past.

The many negative realities of Spanish contact with American Indians did not fit into the "White Legend" of Spanish colonization that Lummis worked to promote. He did not reconcile the two in history. Instead, Lummis treated Spanish colonization and Native affairs as unrelated experiences. *Don Carlos*, as Lummis became known,

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[31] Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 94-95; DeLyser, *Ramona Memories*, 46-47.

[32] Lummis especially viewed the Pueblo as the most "civilized" and prolific Native culture of North America – pointing to their cliff-side housing, farming, and cultural stories as evidence.

developed a new appreciation for the cultures he observed during his journey through the Southwest. For instance, he spent several years in New Mexico recuperating from paralytic strokes brought on by his self-imposed heavy workload as well as extreme smoking, drinking, and lack of sleep.[33] Lummis, as a writer, observer, collector, and appreciator of Native cultures increasingly viewed the role of the American government in Indian affairs with hostility – especially when it concerned issues such as off-reservation boarding schools and land rights disputes.[34] He stood as a complicated figure that advocated for Indian rights, but continued to promote a greatly romanticized and exaggerated history of Spanish California and the Southwest. This constructed history overshadowed the lived experiences of countless indigenous people following the Spanish invasion. Lummis wanted to lure tourists to California with his promotional

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[33] Born into an era that supported the reservation system, assimilation, land allotments under the Dawes Act (General Allotment Act of 1887), and forced acculturation in Indian boarding schools, Lummis at first incorporated many of the Eurocentric notions of civilization versus savagery that were popular during the late nineteenth century. At the same time, many American citizens began to believe that Native Americans would eventually become "extinct," either physically or culturally, under assimilation campaigns. Frederick E. Hoxie addresses assimilation practices in *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 1-145 .

[34] Lummis first became active in the debate over compulsory education for Native students, specifically Pueblo people, in off-reservation boarding schools. He specifically voiced concern over the destruction of Native cultures and familial ties following removal to boarding schools. Lummis aimed much of his condemnation at Richard Pratt, the founder of Carlisle Indian School, the first off-reservation boarding school for Native children, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Lummis spoke out against the federal government's policy to remove Indian children from their families. He argued that the government should locate schools within Indian communities. Like much of his writing, Lummis' gut response to the problems he observed in the boarding school system included more criticism than it did any active policy. Smith, "Charles Lummis and the Fight for the Multicultural Southwest," 134-135.

writings, yet he and other philanthropists also worked as advocates for groups labeled "Mission Indians" who often encountered underhanded Americans that intruded on Indian lands. Lummis used his relationship with President Theodore Roosevelt to help reform Indian rights policies through the newly formed Sequoya League.[35] At the same time Lummis increasingly grasped on to the California missions as symbols of the Spanish America he adored.[36] The California missions, in ruins in the early twentieth century, stood as symbols of the leisurely life that Lummis and other easterners began to yearn for in the face of quickly-spreading urbanization. The Spanish past and the seemingly unchanging lives of Native people reminded Americans of a simpler time filled with ever fleeting glimpses of leisure. Boosters promoted this historically false perspective but many Americans nonetheless consumed the dramatic tales.[37]

Lummis constantly worked to promote southern California as a desirable destination to people across the country. Mirrored by the efforts of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "based on the proposition that what the country most needs to insure its material prosperity is more people to develop its resources," regional boosters sought to bring people, especially new residents, into southern California. They hoped

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[35] Thompson, *American Character*, 213-243.

[36] Lummis failed to recognize that, just as American Indian boarding schools did, the Spanish missions often broke down Native families and removed children from their parents. Lummis and other boosters ignored Native perspectives of life in Spanish California. When analyzed critically, Lummis' criticism of contemporary American treatment of Native people and simultaneous praise of the Spanish past was intrinsically contradictory.

[37] Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*, 33-35.

that new residents would help bring in more businesses to help the region develop and modernize.[38] They ignored the toll the stress of new residents took on already strained California Indian populations. To Lummis, the development of southern California could not be done without paying tribute to the labors of the Spanish – observing that "Southern California is not only the new Eden of the Saxon home-seeker, but part, and type, of Spanish America; the scene where American energy has wrought miracles…."[39] To help draw people into southern California, Lummis stepped up his promotional efforts. He became a magazine editor and main contributor who continually depicted the Southwest as a dramatic haven for Easterners (and Midwesterners) in need of refuge.[40] Again, he ignored the negative impact of increasing waves of foreigners in California on Native people.

Charles Lummis, at 36 years old, was introduced as the new editor of *The Land of Sunshine* in December, 1894. The introductory article listed Lummis' achievements and publications to date. Included was *The Spanish Pioneers*, "which presents for the first time, in popular form, the conclusions of modern science concerning the conquest and

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[38] The Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce did not act alone. San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego, and Ventura counties all contributed to the exhibits and promotional efforts undertaken by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in efforts to lure more residents to southern California. For more see: D. Fellman, "A Unique Institution," *Land of Sunshine* 2 (January 1895), 31-33.

[39] Charles Lummis, "Land of Sunshine," *Land of Sunshine* 2 (January1895), 34.

[40] Edwin R. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis: Editor of the Southwest* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Publications, 1955), 134-186.

colonization of North and South America."[41] Lummis' writings were so complementary of the Spanish that the Royal Academy of Spain gave him a formal compliment and notice of gratitude. The first article published under Lummis' editorship plays to this theme of "modern science" as applied to Spanish conquest and colonization, entitled "The Spanish-American Face."[42] It also displayed his bias for Spanish culture, religion, and aesthetics while ignoring the negative impact of Spanish colonization on Native people.

Lummis' inaugural article follows in-step with his positive promotion of Spanish colonization in the Americas. He argued that, "to the thoughtful student few side-lights in history are more striking than this vital individuality of the Spanish."[43] He proclaimed that the Spanish-American face was the most beautiful. Travelers could see this face in any location that the Spanish colonized, as, unlike the English, "there is no land in which he ever sat down which does not to this day bear in its very marrow the heritage of his religion, his language and his social creed. His *marca* is upon the faces, the laws, the very landscape."[44] As previously noted, Lummis' first article as editor of *The Land of Sunshine* argued that Spanish colonization efforts achieved much more than English colonizers because the Spanish left indelible marks on both the landscape and on the

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[41] C.D. Willard, "The New Editor," *The Land of Sunshine* 2 (December 1894), 12.

[42] Charles F. Lummis, "The Spanish-American Face," *The Land of Sunshine* 2 (January 1895), 21-22.

[43] Ibid., 21.

[44] Ibid.

people they encountered. He noted that Indians of the Americas commonly spoke Spanish, learned Catholicism, and intermarried with the Spanish – as opposed to the English who "has never impressed his language or his religion upon the peoples he has over-run." Lummis observed that "something of his [the Englishman's] face goes into the half-breeds he begets but will not father; but even his physical impress is much less marked than in the case of his Latin predecessor."[45] In each instance, Lummis essentially argued that Spanish colonization efforts were more effective and benevolent than the English because Spanish colonizers, after generations in the Americas, left a more permanent mark on the people and the landscape.

Figure 9 Photo of Virginia Del Valle c. 1920, member of a prominent californio family, inscribed to "Uncle Charles" (Lummis). Source: Southwest Museum of the American Indian.

[45] Ibid.

Lummis used such poetic language to describe the Spanish imprint that readers almost fall in love with the Spanish-American face as a symbol of Spanish colonization. Lummis does not remove Spanish colonization from its religious roots, but uses religion as a catalyst to revere the virtue of Spanish heritage. He argued that "to no woman on earth is religion a more vital, ever-present, all-pervading actuality…. Even when outcast, no woman of Spanish blood falls or can fall to the outer vileness which haunts the purlieus of every English-speaking great city." Because Spanish women are so devote to their religion and "social conservatism," they "contribute fewer recruits to the outcast ranks than any other civilized woman."[46] In this piece, Lummis openly promoted Spanish America as exceedingly moral, culturally rich, and idyllic. He contested the notion that former Spanish territories were somehow backwards outposts or less-civilized than regions colonized by the English – a common sentiment held by many Americans in the East.[47] Lummis emphasized the centuries-old culture and religious traditions visible on the landscape and on the faces of people in Spanish-America. In doing so, Lummis set the stage for years of promoting the romance and gallantry of Spanish colonization in the Southwest in his publications, while minimizing discussions of the negative effects of Spanish colonization on Native people.

Lummis' writings suggest that he targeted the well-traveled and sophisticated – the "intelligent homes of Southern California."[48] He argued that southern Californians

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[46] Lummis, "The Spanish-American Face," 22.

[47] Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 11-48.

[48] Lummis, "Land of Sunshine," 34-35.

loved their new homes in the region so much because they *had* already seen so much of the United States "and found this [southern California] better."[49] Lummis continued to sell the region to his readers by observing that "romance and poetry have here a fascinating and – broadly speaking – a virgin field." The California climates "are in themselves a stir of inspiration to which the dullest is not insensible; and beyond all that is the human touch – the romance of the aborigine and of New Spain, haunting every vista." He argued that the "history and archeology are equally attractive ground, as yet almost untouched" by people in California. The landscape held inescapable beauty for Lummis, as he observed that "the artist are such types and such landscapes as nowhere else in the Union – and under such light as never shone in the humid skies of the East and of Europe."[50] Yet again, Lummis painted California as a romantic refuge for the sophisticated to escape – to begin, develop, and expand their business interests, while at the same time, enjoy the picturesque landscape unknown to most Americans. Lummis referred to Native people as "romantic aborigines" – as almost a ghostly component of the landscape. He provided examples of New Englanders who had come to California and found success in business and enjoyed the recreation offered in the region.[51] Lummis used his magazine as the pulpit from which he promoted Spanish America to people in

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[49] Ibid., 34.

[50] Ibid., 35.

[51] W.C. Patterson, "Why Am I Here?" *Land of Sunshine* 2 (January 1895), 38; E.P. Johnson, "The Out Look," *Land of Sunshine* 2 (January 1895), 38.

the Northeast and Midwest, where the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce distributed thousands of copies of Lummis' publications.[52]

The incoming American migrants drawn into California by glorified depictions of the region increasingly infringed on the rights of Native Californians. Lummis considered Native people, especially Mission Indians, to be an important yet disconnected part of the legacy of Spanish-mission history that he worked to save and popularize. Recognizing the inevitability of American settlement, Lummis spearheaded the development of the Sequoya League under the headline "To Make Better Indians."[53] Similar to Jackson, members of the league wanted to help improve the lives of Native people saw economics as the primary source of change, arguing that "The Sequoya League stands for a revival of the honest old work, and for giving the maker of a $50 basket (for instance) something of the $40 profit that now goes to the middle-man – but without raising the price."[54] In this way they sought to improve the living conditions of Indian people in California by making transactions more equitable for Native people. Members of the league also criticized the Indian education system established by the United States government that promoted training in generally low-paying industrial fields such as blacksmithing, carpentry, and as laundresses. Rather, many leaders of the league argued that Native people could make a better living if they participated in the local

[52] Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure*, 36-37.

[53] Charles Lummis, "Foundation of the Los Angeles Council," *Out West* 20 (June 1904), 549-557; 550.

[54] Lummis, "Foundation of the Los Angeles Council," 557.

economy, stayed with their families on reservations, learned traditional crafts, and sold collectible items to American tourists. Lummis, for his part, supported Native economies by purchasing (and collecting as an amateur archeologist) countless objects from indigenous communities throughout the Americas.[55]

As the mouthpiece of the Sequoya League, Lummis further criticized the Department of Indian Affairs for maintaining poor conditions on Indian reservations. Writing in 1905, Lummis argued that the condition of former Mission Indians declined over the last forty years under American supervision.[56] Despite departmental failures, he praised California residents for stepping in to supply food, grain for planting, and clothing for the six hundred mission Indians of the Campo reservations while they waited for the federal government to improve conditions. He criticized the Indian Office for "squandering" the nearly $25,000 provided after the Warner's Ranch settlement and failing to supply local Native people with the resources to support themselves.[57] The league focused on improving the contemporary conditions of the Mission Indians that the federal government neglected. Lummis observed that these people had been "driven

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[55] Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis,* 116-118.

[56] The end of the *Sequoia League Bulletin* listed excerpts from Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Agent of the Mission Indians, dating back to 1880. These excerpts illustrate that the agents and commissioner were well aware of the deplorable conditions of the mission Indians in San Diego County, but continuously neglected to improve their situation. Charles Lummis, "Sequoya League – Second Bulletin, 'The Relief of Campo (1905),'" 9-12, Charles F. Lummis Manuscript Collection, Sequoya League Series, Campo Indian Relief Subseries, Braun Research Library, Autry National Center, Los Angeles, California. Hereafter referred to as, Lummis, "Relief of Campo."

[57] Lummis, "Relief of Campo," 3-7.

from their fertile valleys to worthless desert camping grounds which have been made into 'Reservations.'"[58]

Lummis' criticisms of the circumstances of the mission Indians in the early 1900s placed full blame on the negligence of the United States government. While much blame did rest with the federal government, Lummis did not extend his critical gaze further back to find the genesis of the struggles of the Mission Indians. In his quest to dispel the Black Legend of Spanish colonization, Lummis and many of his contemporaries often painted the Spanish as benevolent colonizers that worked to uplift American Indians.[59] He did not recognize the stringent labor regimens, violence, punishment, death, or diseases experienced by Native people, nor did he acknowledge resistance efforts California Indians led against the oppressive Spanish systems. Again, Lummis' condemnations of harmful paternalist systems did not extend into the mission era – a time exalted in his writings and other professional pursuits.

Working to promote Spanish California, Lummis spearheaded a campaign to help preserve the crumbling mission ruins. Through creating the Landmarks Club, Lummis and other philanthropists raised thousands of dollars to help make repairs to

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[58] Charles Lummis, "Sequoya League, Third Bulletin, 'Getting Results,'" 2, Charles F. Lummis Manuscript Collection, Sequoya League Series, Campo Indian Relief Subseries, Braun Research Library, Autry National Center. Hereafter referred to as, Lummis, "Getting Results." For more on the Sequoya League and Warner's Ranch see, Thompson, *American Character*, 220-243; Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis,*118-133.

[59] The "Black Legend" of Spanish colonization demonized Spanish colonizers as extremely cruel towards American Indians specifically, and non-Catholics in general. Lummis took a "White Legend" perspective that focused on the positive aspects of Spanish colonization.

disintegrating structures at places such as Mission San Juan Capistrano and Mission San Fernando. They also focused on restoring *El Camino Real* – the road that connected the missions.[60] To combat protestant American disinterest in the Catholic structures, Lummis promoted the missions as relics of California's European past. He asked readers to help save the missions "not for the Church but for Humanity."[61] Lummis' work to elevate the missions as landmarks of California's earliest history ultimately succeeded in attracting the hearts and minds of travelers to the region. Other regional boosters also grabbed ahold of mission history as a catalyst for encouraging travel to California and entertaining tourists once they arrived.

Figure 10 El Camino Real bells at Mission San Diego. Source: Author's personal collection.

[60] Today the State of California landmarks El Camino Real with mission bell markers along Highway 101. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis*,103-111.

[61] Thompson, *American Character*, 184-186.

A contemporary of Lummis, playwright, author, and poet John McGroarty, equally idolized and promoted the Spanish past in California. He worked as a writer for the *Los Angeles Times* and, in 1911, published a comprehensive history of California entitled *California: Its History and Romance*. Just as many other boosters of early California, McGroarty's history of the state began with the first presence of Europeans in the region and ignored centuries of Native history in the process. He pointed to San Diego's long history where "she [San Diego] looks back on a past that stretches nearly four hundred years into the now dim and misty pathways of civilization," as if the land San Diego rests on had just emerged from the ocean centuries before American colonization. Similar to Bolton and Lummis, McGroarty built connections between Spanish America and the English colonies, finding the Spanish heritage richer and more appealing. McGroarty compared Spanish culture in the Southwest to the romance of the founding of the United States, noting that "her tiled rooftrees and Christian shrines received the salutes of the booming tides before the Declaration of Independence was signed and before Betsy Ross wove from summer rainbows and wintery stars the miracle of 'Old Glory.'"[62] Boosters, including McGroarty, Lummis, and Frank A. Miller of the infamous Mission Inn hotel in Riverside, California, utilized newspapers, literature, poetry, theater arts, and architecture as venues to popularize early California history on

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[62] John S. McGroarty, *California: Its History and Romance* (Los Angeles: Grafton Publishing Company, 1911), 8.

local and national levels.[63] And they continued to minimize the historical experiences of California Indians in their popular narratives.

McGroarty, described by Kevin Starr as a "genial journalist and a dreamy poet," spent four decades working as a regional writer for the *Los Angeles Times*.[64] He is most well-known for writing and producing the *Mission Play*. McGroarty's work in promoting manufactured histories of the West was recognized far and wide. For example, President Herbert Hoover sent McGroarty a telegram congratulating him on the three thousandth performance of the *Mission Play*, commenting on the productions ability to "so vividly [recreate] the atmosphere of California's romantic early history."[65]

As a part of his California boosterist pursuits, McGroarty wrote and produced the *Mission Play* that depicted the romanticized founding of California by Spanish missionaries. The *Mission Play* helped develop a sense of shared history for southern

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[63] Miller, an active supporter of the southern California tourist industry, advocated for the restoration of California mission sites along with other notable boosters of his time including Lummis. Miller also actively pushed for the preservation of the romanticized Spanish past in California through his renowned Mission Inn hotel, located in Riverside, California. Inspired by his relationship with local Native people and his fascination with old mission bells, Miller constructed the Mission Inn as a place that represented the "romance and ideals and charm of the mission period." Riverside Daily Press, "Vision of Frank A. Miller Became Reality in World' Famed Mission Inn; Long Cherished Dream Came True," *Riverside Daily Press*, June 15, 1935. For more on Miller and Sherman Institute see, Nathan Gonzales, "Riverside, Tourism, and the Indian: Frank A. Miller and the Creation of Sherman Institute," *Southern California Quarterly* 84 (2002), 194-221.

[64] Starr, *Inventing the Dream,* 87.

[65] President Herbert Hoover, "56 Message on the 3,000th Performance of the Mission Play. February 18, 1930," *American Reference Library - Primary Source Documents* (January 2001), accessed February 22, 2013, MasterFILE Premier, EBSCOhost .

Californians in the early twentieth century. Overwhelmed by demand, the *Mission Play* exceeded nine weeks beyond its anticipated run (of only one week) and set national records for consecutive shows performed.[66] Between 1912 and the early 1930s, nearly two and a half million people witnessed California's dramatic history through McGroarty's eyes.[67] This four-and-a-half hour production cost over one and a half million dollars and was performed over three thousand times total. McGroarty promoted the play as a historical dramatization of California's history, but he excluded the narratives of Native Californians and Mexican residents of the region – essentially "whitewashing" California's history to fit the narratives of wealthy Anglo-American playgoers and tourists.[68]

Historian William Deverell argued that, over time, the *Mission Play* became a mainstay of southern California history, wherein "regional culture would canonize the play as Southern California history itself, come back to life exactly where all assumed it had begun, under the stars at the San Gabriel Mission, that ancient engine of civilization."[69] Just as Jackson's *Ramona* and the writings of Lummis in *The Land of Sunshine*/*Out West* magazine, the *Mission Play* blurred the lines between history and romantic dramatization. Tourists and new residents in California looked to these manufactured or dramatized histories as the "true" historical narratives of the region,

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[66] Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 215-217.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid., 209.

while Native people faded into the background as "vanishing" people whose existence passed into history.

The millions of patrons eager to see the *Mission Play* mistook the spectacle McGroarty produced for the stage as a true portrayal of regional history. For instance, Gracia L. Fernández, a teacher and leader of the Spanish Club at New Utrecht High School in Brooklyn New York, took a school group to visit Mission San Gabriel. They viewed the *Mission Play* in 1918 as a part of the cultural component of their curriculum, in an attempt to awaken in the students "a genuine interest in the literature and institutions of the peoples of Spain and Spanish America with whom destiny has linked the United States for future cooperation."[70] She noted that:

> In Southern California the traditions of Spanish life richly exist. One afternoon we visited the mission of San Gabriel near Los Angeles and witnessed a performance of the Mission Play of California, the dramatic portrayal of the early history of California by the poet McGroarty. Between acts the audience promenades in an enclosed circular walk outside the theater…. The chapel bell brings the audience back to the next act.[71]

Like many others, this Spanish club received its history of California through the eyes of McGroarty and his romanticized portrayals of the period. Their "genuine" experience with Spanish California history was mediated through the lenses of promoters and regional boosters interested in creating a more idyllic presentation of the past.

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[70] Gracia L. Fernández, "Club Work in the Elementary Year in High School," *Hispania* 1 (December 1918), 239.

[71] Fernández, "Club Work in the Elementary Year in High School," 235-239.

Both the content of the play and the physical atmosphere created by McGroarty harkened back to a more romantic Spanish past in "the shadow of mission walls." The play provided people with what they believed was an authentic experience with history, but in reality was merely a skewed perspective of the past. It misrepresented Native experiences with the California missions and downplayed their contributions. As a significant commodity in southern California's tourist trade, promoters and boosters polished the region's history to reflect the drama, pageantry, and colorful atmosphere that characterized the Spanish mission past in the American mindset.

Due to the overwhelming success of the *Mission Play*, McGroarty successfully advocated for a new building to house the audiences that quickly outgrew the original structure built for the play. McGroarty, underwritten by wealthy railroad magnet Henry E. Huntington and the overarching Mission Playhouse Association, oversaw the construction of the Mission Playhouse designed by popular architect Arthur Benton – the original designer of Miller's world renowned Mission Inn.[72] Located within short walking distance to Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, the Mission Playhouse cost the consortium $750,000 and provided enough space for 1,450 patrons and the three hundred cast and staff members required for the production.[73]

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[72] Miller played a significant role in the creation of *The Mission Play.* He advocated for a drama, similar to the *Passion Play* that could document California's early romantic history. A friend recommended McGroarty to Miller, who gave McGroarty a desk at the Mission Inn to write the drama. Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 209-211.

[73] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 88.

Figure 11 Artistic rendering of The Mission Playhouse c. 1940s. Source: The City of San Gabriel.

Fittingly, the Mission Playhouse Association had builders construct the playhouse in the Mission Revival style, creating the impression that the patrons viewed the *Mission Play* within the walls of an actual mission.[74] McGroarty fashioned the façade of the playhouse after his favorite mission – Mission San Antonio de Padua, "one of the most beautiful and important of the Mission establishments… that has been sadly neglected and is only infrequently visited."[75] The new Mission Playhouse opened on March 5, 1927, to a gala that cost $100 per ticket, nearly $1,350 today, with numerous wealthy Los Angeles boosters and leaders in attendance.[76]

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[74] Mission Revival architecture boomed in southern California in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Local boosters helped popularize the architectural style in romanticized portrayals of the mission era. Designed by Benson, the physical construction of the Mission Playhouse claimed to embody the "almost organic connection between the old Spanish land and the American people who now possessed it." Kropp, *California Vieja*, 167-168.

[75] John S. McGroarty, *Mission Memories* (Los Angeles: Neuner Corporation, 1929), 20.

[76] Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe,* 245.

With this reception, the Mission Playhouse became known as a place to see and "a place to be seen." Local leaders, socialites, and clergy members gathered to witness the dramatic *Mission Play* in a building that also included interior amenities such as luxurious seats and large chandeliers replicated after those found on Spanish galleons.[77] Patrons paid between one and two dollars for tickets to see how "the story of race, the story of ethnicity, the story of California: all could be played out on stage in San Gabriel in perfect adherence to truth," where playgoers displayed a "willingness to suspend disbelief, to mis-remember everything about the dark ground of the region's even recent past."[78] Deverell noted that "Los Angeles matured, at least in part, by covering up places, people, and histories that those in power found unsettling."[79] Thus, Anglo-American boosters and playgoers participated in the construction of California's history that focused on European and American domination while consigning Native people and Mexicans to the historical periphery.

The *Mission Play* depicted an extremely romanticized version of California history. It began with the founding of the Franciscan mission system and concluded in the American era. The play virtually ignored the violence and abuse of Native people at the hands of Spanish soldiers and missionaries. The *Mission Play* also bypassed the Mexican period nearly completely. It ends with the missions in ruins during the late 1800s, and points to the Mexican government as the culprit for their downfall. As

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[77] Ibid., 244-245.

[78] Ibid., 217.

[79] Ibid,, 7.

patrons enveloped themselves in the idealized "Spanish fantasy past" they assisted McGroarty and the Mission Playhouse Association in furthering the construction of a sanitized regional history and mission mythology that called for the preservation of mission ruins.[80]

Indeed, in the final scenes of the play Ubaldo, an old Indian *vaquero*, and Señora Yorba discuss the future of the California missions as they bid farewell to Mission San Juan Capistrano. The Señora suggests that, as Americans build cities in California and make the state "the wonder of the world, so also will they think, sometime, of these holy places where the padres toiled and builded [*sic*] too…. Though we may not see it, Ubaldo… maybe in God's good time the Mission bells will ring again their old, sweet music."[81] While the Mission Playhouse stands as a physical reminder of a decisively constructed past, the *Mission Play* also utilized the mission ruins and their potential for restoration as vehicles to promote a romanticized vision of California history.

McGroarty argued that during the mission era California was a "sheer Utopia."[82] He dramatized many aspects of the Spanish past but ignored the trials and tribulations of California Indians. Exemplifying this, McGroarty noted that "the very soul of romance was woven into the great adventure which brought the white man's civilization to the

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[80] Ibid., 219-222.

[81] "Program of the Mission Play" as quoted in Chelsea K. Vaughn, "The Joining of Historical Pageantry and the Spanish Fantasy Past: The Meeting of Señora Josefa Yorba and Lucretia del Valle," *The Journal of San Diego History* 57 (2011), 213-235, 218; Kimbro and Costello, *The California Missions*, 60.

[82]McGroarty, *Mission Memories*, 8.

Western shores of America."[83] McGroarty idolized the Franciscan missionaries whose "magical hands" labored to "take an idle race and put it to work—a useless race that they made useful in the world, a naked race and they clothed it, a hungry race and they fed it, a heathen race that they lifted up into the great white glory of God."[84] The playwright presented Spanish missionaries as the founders and saviors of California – a land "wasted" by "idle" Indians. He misrepresented Native cultures that were complex and thriving before Spanish colonization as "idle," "naked," and "hungry." He portrayed the mission era as a time of plenty, when missionaries taught Indians to speak Spanish so they could "finally" communicate with other Native communities as well as the Spanish priests. According to McGroarty, the Spanish also taught Native people how to make the land useful. Thus, the Spanish "civilized" both the landscape and Native people in California.

McGroarty observed that "there is a great deal of mis-information concerning the collapse of this great [Spanish] dream."[85] Publications by boosters, including McGroarty's *Mission Memories*, supported an independent understanding of California's development apart from the Anglo-centric founding of the American colonies in the East.[86] Like Jackson, he ignored the California gold rush and pointed to the Mexican period and secularization as the downfall of the Spanish mission system. While his

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[83] Ibid., 7.

[84] Ibid., 7-8.

[85] Ibid., 11.

[86] Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 1-15.

interpretation is correct in the most basic sense, he overly simplified the political construction of the mission system. McGroarty ignored the structural foundation of the missions established by the Spanish crown, which stipulated that the priests would turn the land over to Indians after ten years. McGroarty was also partially correct in his assessment that the Indians lost control of the landscape with the partition of mission lands by the Mexican government.[87] McGroarty's writings in 1929 were not in-depth studies of California's history; rather, he wrote as a regional booster who mythologized the past to bring more tourism to the region and create a larger audience for *The Mission Play*.

McGroarty argued that the Mexican government's "black deed" of secularizing the missions occurred because Mexicans envied the wealth Indians accumulated from the prosperous mission system. The Mexican government wanted the rich land for itself, so it "drove the Indians away, took the missions into its own hands without warrant or the slightest semblance of justice," sold the land to the highest bidders, and "pocketed the spoils."[88] McGroarty abridged secularization policies. He correlated the ruinous vestiges of the California missions with the visibly poor condition of Native Californian populations in the late nineteenth century.

Just as dreamt by Señora Yorba, promoters and local developers turned their gaze on the California missions as sites in need of salvation. Overwhelming wealthy Anglo-American tourists enjoyed visiting mission sites in the early twentieth century that stood

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[87] Ibid., 11-12.

[88] McGroarty, *Mission Memories,* 12.

as relics of the mythical Spanish past. Conversely, these same people were not interested in incorporating Native history, Mexican history, or Spanish-speaking residents into developing regional narratives. Anglo-Americans felt comfortable proliferating California's Spanish history that harkened back to familiar European origins but minimized the role of Native people and Mexicans in developing the region.[89] Hence, McGroarty's ignorance of the Mexican period in the *Mission Play* illustrated the developing racial hierarchies in popular culture that placed Anglo-Americans at the top. This cultural bias amplified European components of California's early history in popular depictions of the period and contributed to unhistorical representation of the past in California.

Figure 12 A corner of crumbling mission ruins. Source: Charles Fuller Gates, "With Cycle and Camera," *Land of Sunshine* 5 (September 1896), 218.

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[89] Kropp, *California Vieja,* 25-30.

Many boosters in the early twentieth century correlated southern California to Italy and the Mediterranean. McGroarty pointed to ancient Rome and Greece and noted that "every civilization is builded [*sic*.] on the ruins of the civilization that preceded it."[90] These popular writers attempted to draw tourist to a place that "tree for tree, bush for bush, and flower for flower, [has] all that Italy has; subtract the stonepipe and the laurel… and for these count up a score of things which Italy has not. And we have it all [in California], incomparably *more*—larger, richer, and more riotously."[91] Local promoters used rhetoric that appealed to a European past to intertwine images of California with a "flowering of civilization" visible in the history of both regions.[92] Similarly, McGroarty argued that the "civilization" built by Anglo-Americans in California in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emerged from the foundation established by Spanish missionaries one century earlier. Again, ignoring Native labors to build the region into what it had become. He viewed mission tourism as an important expansion of civilization in California. To McGroarty, the missions were places where visitors could see the "glamorous tale, full of beauty and color and the grace of God." He argued that California still maintained its beauty and romance – although "the Missions are in ruin, one can still sense what glory and splendor once was theirs."[93]

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[90] McGroarty, *Mission Memories*, 14.

[91] Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis*, 174-175.

[92] Ibid.

[93] McGroarty, *Mission Memories*, 15.

As booster narratives that dramatized the Spanish period grew in popularity, new generations of writers in the early twentieth century romanticized the Spanish and Mexican eras further "by sentimentalizing them on the one hand, and sanitizing their accounts on the other hand."[94] The Spanish influence in California and the broader Southwest set the region as an exceptional location removed from the Anglo-centric narratives of the founding of the United States.[95] By revising the past, Anglo-American boosters and residents were able to promote southern California as "a 'whiter' alternative to the polyglot congestion of the modern [early twentieth century] city."[96] While Deverell focused on the "whitewashing" of California's Mexican past, however, the same concept can be applied to the silencing of Native Californians.[97] Discrimination and racism influenced scholars and popular writers to sanitize history and virtually exclude both of these populations from their narratives.[98] McGroarty credited Spanish missionaries with providing California Indians with necessary tools for continued survival. He ignored the fact that Native people successfully survived in California for thousands of years before the Spanish arrived. And realistically, Spanish contact caused

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[94] Sucheng Chan, "A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the California Gold Rush," *California History* 79 (2000), Special Issue, *Rooted in Barbarous Soil: People, Culture, and Community in Gold Rush California*, 44-85.

[95] Alice H. Bushee, "Spanish Influence in the Southwest," *Hispania* 6 (May 1923), 148-157.

[96] Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 23.

[97] Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 1-10, 207-249.

[98] James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 205-217; Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 12-14.

the death of tens of thousands of California Indians. McGroarty began the *Mission Play* with Native people simply falling into the background as the Spanish took center-stage.

Some truth did exist in the distortion of history presented by McGroarty. For instance, European-imported animals grazed on indigenous California plants and decimated Native foods. Furthermore, Spanish soldiers and missionaries introduced European diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, smallpox, and cholera to the region. These types of diseases caused extremely low-birth rates and death among Native people.[99] McGroarty never suggested in the *Mission Play* that Native people fell out of the historical narrative because of starvation, diseases, violence, and death. Relatedly, American abuse of California Indians is a central theme in Jackson's *Ramona.* However, Jackson placed blame on the greed and violence brought by American emigrants and ignored the negative legacy of Spanish colonization on the socioeconomic wellbeing of Native populations. Time and time again, the dramatic and romantic depictions of California's Spanish mission heritage by Jackson, Lummis, McGroarty, and others silenced Native experiences in popular narratives.[100]

McGroarty pointed romantically to San Diego as the birthplace of the California missions, where "there is no brighter estuary on any shore than the Bay of San Diego."

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[99] Robert H. Jackson and Edward D. Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on the California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 31-72.

[100] Lummis did not see eye-to-eye with McGroarty's depiction of Native people and misrepresentation of some events. For instance, in a letter to McGroarty, Lummis chastised the playwright for including "frightful anachronisms," specifically pointing out that "Father Serra didn't teach the California Indians to weave dam [*sic*] bad Navajo blankets!" Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe,* 229.

He further noted that "over vast sunlit passes and down through a thousand winding trails of glory these marvelous vales lie in wait for the traveler with an endless and kaleidoscopic delight."[101] McGroarty imagined that Franciscan missionaries encountered an idyllic landscape void of any human conflict in California in the late eighteenth century. McGroarty later acknowledged the presence of indigenous people but he does not attempt to understand Native people at or before Spanish contact. He provided simplistic and patronizing vignettes of the lives and living conditions of California Indians. For instance, McGroarty claimed that Native people "had no houses or tepees and were accustomed in the severe weather of winter to cover their bodies with mud in order to keep out the cold." He further argued that "very few of the California Indians occupied a plane of civilization higher than that of beasts when the white men first found them."[102] By publicizing these types of stereotypes, McGroarty established Spanish missionaries as saviors who introduced humanity into the lives of archaic indigenous people in California.

Moreover, McGroarty's decision to begin the *Mission Play* with the Spanish arrival in California seems fitting as he argued that indigenous people before Spanish contact were "lazy and indolent" beings who "had no names for themselves, no traditions, and no religion."[103] According to McGroarty, Native people were essentially a *tabula rasa* for the missionaries, who transformed Indians from "beasts" into "skilled

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[101] McGroarty, *California*, 8-9.

[102] Ibid., 42.

[103] Ibid., 42-43.

artisans, husbandmen, painters, craftsmen and musicians."[104] McGroarty degraded Native people to glorify the actions of the Spanish missionaries. His unhistorical narrative ignored the labors and sacrifices of thousands of Indians at the California missions.

The Mission Playhouse still stands as a physical reminder of this decisively constructed past. The Playhouse, a place once supported by some of California's most wealthy investors and known for its popularization of a romanticized mission past, now is equally known as the San Gabriel Civic Auditorium.[105] While wealthy Californians no longer flock to the playhouse week after week to witness the "splendor" of the *Mission Play*, the Mission Playhouse continues to maintain a role in local boosterism that gazes fondly back to an idealized Spanish mission past, nearly void of Native and Mexican influences.[106]

Dramatic and romantic depictions of California's Spanish mission heritage by Jackson, Lummis, McGroarty and others frequently silenced or misrepresented Native experiences in the stories told in popular venues. The long legacy of boosterism in

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[104] Ibid., 45.

[105] The City of San Gabriel continues to include information about *The Mission Play* in brochures for the walking tour of the Historic Mission District. The city has found creative and productive ways to reuse the Mission Playhouse and its gift shop to preserve the structure that poignantly displays boosterism of the Spanish past and Mission Revival architecture at its finest. The City of San Gabriel now uses the building to host productions as well as civic events. It utilizes the old gift shop as a space for city meetings, independent gatherings, and senior center activities.

[106] In the spring of 2013, the Mission Playhouse hosted a "reimagined" production of *The Mission Play* in celebration of its 100th anniversary. Chapter seven includes an examination of this performance.

California is still present on the landscape, where conserved and preserved mission sites overwhelmingly maintain the narratives established by boosters in the early twentieth century. The California missions continue to stand as symbols of the unhistorical narratives of the Spanish past created by regional boosters. These preserved and rebuilt structures attract visitors that learn history of California from the misleading presentations at these sites. Native people remain misunderstood and push into the periphery at many contemporary missions. Because of their popularity and the absence of a counter-narrative, romanticized booster histories persist as the prevalent narrative of California history into the twenty-first century.

Chapter 3

(Mis)Representations of California Indians in Popular Culture

"It is in the Mission ruins that we must delve to find the beginning of Southern California's greatness"[1]

When Helen Hunt Jackson published *Ramona* in the late nineteenth century, she hoped to shed light on the abysmal treatment of Native Californians, specifically Mission Indians, by American migrants. Rather than awaken the advocate spirit in readers, Jackson's idyllic description of the California landscape and dramatic prose enshrined the Spanish heritage into an unrealistic and romantic vision of the region's history. The social memory constructed both physically and figuratively around the Spanish California missions constituted "the only sizable and concrete examples of California's claim to antiquity," that elevated the history of the structures to match the legend of Spanish California romanticized in Jackson's novel.[2] Many Americans in the late 1800s and early 1900s did not separate fictitious elements of history constructed in Jackson's novel, McGroarty's play, or Lummis' over-the-top writings with the lived experiences of people during the Spanish period – accounts of which were accessible in Spanish documents and

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[1] John Steven McGroarty, *History of Southern California* (1914; reprint, Fresno: California History Books, 1979), 16.

[2] Dydia DeLyser, *Ramona Memories: Tourism and the Shaping of Southern California* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 179.

in Native narratives that scholars use today.[3] The preservation of Spanish sites in California by civic groups such as the Landmarks Club led many American promoters, regional boosters, tourists, amateur anthropologists, and wealthy collectors to understand Spanish colonization as the beginning of *any* history in the region. Americans did not recognize Native history sites on the landscape as important, if they even recognized their existences at all. In many cases, American collectors and tourists who did know about Native sites desecrated these places by removing objects and even human remains as souvenirs of their adventures in the West. Many Americans in California understood basically that Native people existed as a part of the Spanish missions but viewed them in a separate context reserved for the "vanishing race" that gave way in the face of advancing "civilization."[4]

Absent Native voices in popular culture relates back to a complex relationship between Americans and Native people that was ultimately fueled by a significant amount of discrimination against California Indians. Early American settlers in California viewed Mission Indians as victims. They believed that "lazy" californios exploited indigenous people as an inexpensive labor force. Once tens of thousands of Americans

[3] For examples, Finbar Kenneally, ed. and trans., *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén* (San Francisco: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965); Antonine Tibesar, ed., *Writings of Junípero Serra* (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955); Juan Crespi, *A Description of Distant Roads*: *Original Journals of the First Expedition into California, 1769-1770*, ed. and trans. by Alan K. Brown (San Diego: San Diego State University Press, 2001); Francisco Palou, *Historical Memoirs of New California*, ed. and trans. by Herbert Eugene Bolton (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926).

[4] Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 102-117.

rushed into the state during the gold rush, whites and Indians increasingly clashed. Americans who sought to "strike it rich" in California came to see indigenous people who occupied some of the most mineral-rich land and productive pastures as barriers to settlement. As James Rawls observed, "needing to gain unimpeded access to the resources of the Golden State, [Americans] regarded the Indians as obstacles to be *eliminated*."[5] Thus, the dominate image of the California Indian in popular culture during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries reflected the roles Americans needed Indians to play. As a supposedly vanishing group, Americans justified removing Indian people to reservations for "protection," so the newcomers could settle on lands that formerly belonged to indigenous groups. Americans applauded themselves for "defending" Native people but ignored the wants and needs of those they "saved." Moreover, they disregarded the important ties Native people have with their ancestral homelands.[6]

While Americans in southern California worked to preserve California mission ruins as symbols of a European antiquity, they ignored and attempted to erase indigenous

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[5] Not all Americans moving to California wanted to "exterminate" the Indian population. Many philanthropic/humanitarian groups such as the Sequoya League, emerged in the early twentieth century to help improve conditions for indigenous people in California and throughout the United States. While these organizations sought to improve the contemporary plight of Native Americans, especially those on reservations, they rarely viewed preserving Indian cultures as a part of their crusade. More often, these Americans sought to improve the lives of Indian people by giving them tools to help acculturate them into American ways of life. James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), xiii-xiv, 205-215. Emphasis in quotation is my own.

[6] Clifford E. Trafzer and Joel Hyer, *"Exterminate Them!": Written Accounts of Murder, Rape, and Enslavement of Native Americans during the California Gold Rush* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999), 14-30.

ties to the landscape. In part, Americans administered this erasure more easily because Native Californians did not have brick-and-mortar ruins on the landscape to prove their historic claims to the land. Americans moving West viewed the land as "wild," "untamed," and unoccupied. Many significant sites for indigenous people consisted of natural earth formations tied to important cultural stories. Native people often restricted access and knowledge of these natural places to preserve and honor them. Growing numbers of collectors and amateur anthropologists in the early twentieth century interested in accumulating "curiosities" from vanishing indigenous cultures made it even more important for Native people to protect their important sites.

California Indians viewed themselves and their environment in stark contrast to the constructed history promoted by boosters. For example, Americans such as Lummis looked to save local sites by bringing in tourists and, more importantly, the money that accompanied these visitors. On the other hand, many Native communities in southern California sought to preserve important sites by limiting access and restricting knowledge of the areas, even among members of their own communities.[7] Many Native people also

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[7] Oral traditions told through generations informed Native people about the power of locations – allowing only people with a certain level of spiritual power or tribal knowledge to visit some sites without facing risk of harm. For example, Flora Jones, a Wintu shaman, claimed that the spirits had informed her that she must call on the Wintu people and other Native Americans from diverse tribes to join together to "wake up" their sacred places. The United States Forest Service controlled thousands of acres in northern California that included Wintu sacred sites, such as the slopes of Mount Shasta. Jones contacted the Forrest Service in 1973, and asked permission to use traditional Wintu lands so that she could conduct doctoring ceremonies in appropriate traditional power sites. The Shasta volcano is a sacred mountain to the Wintu and numerous other tribes of the region. Most Native Americans of the region do not use the upper slopes of Mountain Shasta due to the sacred nature of the mountain. Peter M. Knudtson, *Wintun*

viewed the mission ruins, then and today, as physical reminders of Spanish-imposed efforts destroy their communities.[8] Thus, Native people concealed sites to protect their communities, and others shunned the missions. Americans and Native people preserved important places in drastically different ways – this may account for some of the silencing of Native voices found at modern mission sites. Americans promoted unhistorical narratives and took ownership of California's early history through the preservation of Spanish sites. They relegated Native people to the periphery of society as exotic remnants from a more romantic past. This led to a removal of California Indians as central figures in early California history, especially mission narratives.

Figure 13 American women wearing feathered headdresses in a photo titled "A View from San Gabriel Mission," c. 1930. Source: Pomona Public Library.

Indians of California and their Neighbors (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph Publishers, 1977), 61-67.

[8] Interpreters who met with Native people at contemporary mission sites including Mission La Purisima and San Francisco de Solano expressed this sentiment that many Native people avoided missions.

At the turn of the century, reformers and the general public looked down on Native Californians. Americans visiting and relocating to California brought with them notions of Native inferiority. They referred to California Indians derogatorily as "diggers" – a word that provoked images of primitive and ignorant people who aimlessly wandered the landscape and used sticks to dig for roots as food.[9] Many Americans did not view Native history as worthwhile and thought that indigenous cultures and even Native people would soon vanish into extinction.[10] However, Native people did not disappear as easily as many Americans had dismissed them. They persevered and many of their cultures continue into the present. Under the shadow cast by romanticized portrayals of the past are the more accurate origins of the region passed on in the narratives told by Native Californians. Contemporary efforts by Native communities to prove that "we are still here," in conjunction with vigorous scholarship that focuses on Native experiences in historical encounters with European colonizers, has contributed to revisions of some of the fictionalized narratives preserved during the twentieth century. More and more, Native people in contemporary society exercise their united voices to force changes in popular representations of their communities.

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[9] For more on the term "Digger" see, Rawls, *Indians of California*, 49-52; Trafzer and Hyer, eds., *Exterminate Them!,* 30.

[10] Violence brought by many American migrants lured by lucrative dreams of striking it rich during the gold rush in the mid to late 1800s almost made this a reality. To hide from these violent offenders, many Native people disassociated from their cultures in public view and, instead, identified as Mexican to protect their families from violent Indian hunters. Rawls examines the exploitation and extermination campaigns against Native Californians in *Indians of California*, 116-201.

Common notions of the "vanishing Indian" at the turn of the twentieth century allowed many Americans to usurp Spanish mission history and remove Native people as prominent actors at these historic sites that indigenous people labored to build. Many promoters at this time were far more interested in reaching into tourists' pockets than they were concerned with a realistic presentation of the missions based on historical research. With roots in popular stories from the early twentieth century, such as *Ramona*, the *Mission Play*, and writings in promotional magazine, the current false representations of mission history and Native Californian cultures are a result of the long legacy of popular dramatizations of California's past. They also reflect common national trends in museums that failed to accurately represent Native Americans throughout the past two centuries.

Contemporary museums occupy an important niche in society as spaces reserved for exhibition, education, commemoration, recreation, and discussion. While the specific mission statement for every museum differs, the current notion that museums are spaces used to educate the public permeates throughout public understanding of these sites. Many museums accept this task and attempt to provide well-rounded information to their patrons to fulfill the expectations of visitors. Occasionally, museums with inherent agendas misrepresent history to the communities they serve by either omitting historical information or sculpting their presentations to fit their social, religious, or political views. Michael Kelleher argued that people today visit historic sites more than ever before. But a lack of serious conversations about the sites lends to the creation of "synthetic" spaces

that visitors mistakenly assume are authentic and accurate representations of the past.[11] Privately owned but publically patroned institutions, such as the contemporary California missions, overwhelming present revised narratives and reconstructed histories to mask the complex impact of Spanish colonization on Native populations. Instead, many of these sites owned by the Catholic Church focus on sanitized discussions of Spanish priests and mission landscapes.[12]

The California missions are not alone in their misrepresentation of indigenous people. They follow in a long line of national public history sites that distorted the historical experience of Native Americans for generations. In addressing issues of representation at modern California mission sites, it is important to understand the history of Native American representation in popular culture at American museums. This illustrates that mission museums hailed from a long tradition in American museum practices of misrepresenting Native people. While other institutions greatly worked to remedy this problem, many contemporary mission sites continue to provide an overwhelmingly one-sided historical perspective.[13]

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[11] Michael Kelleher, "Images of the Past: Historical Authenticity and Inauthenticity from Disney to Times Square" *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 1 (Summer 2004), 6-19.

[12] Information about the California missions was collected through tours and site visits from early 2009 to mid-2013.

[13] Karen Coody Cooper addresses sites that worked to remedy issues of representation in *Spirited Encounters: American Indians Protest Museum Policies and Practices* (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2008).

Throughout the long-twentieth century, museums and interpretation centers across the country commonly ignored or misrepresented indigenous people. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the federal government legislated for Indian removal and established the reservation system – moving Native Americans away from expanding Euro-American populations. These federal policies helped shape the minds of many people throughout the United States by placing Native people outside of the national narrative. Many Americans disregarded the cultural traditions of Native people and violated their trust to acquire material objects that symbolized the "vanishing" cultures. At the same time, reformers worked to eradicate indigenous cultures to "civilize" Indian people and stop what many people perceived to be their pending extinction. Many believed that Indians were on the precipice of existence; they either must abandon their cultures, assimilate into American society, or Native people would die out completely.[14] In any case, Native American cultural practices would become extinct.

Accordingly, museums and public interpretive sites in the twentieth century represented Native cultures as static – rooted solidly the past. Moira G. Simpson in *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era* argued that presumptions that Native cultures teetered on the verge of extinction influenced false representations of Indians in museums. Many times, interpretative centers contributed to this false belief by depicting indigenous peoples or cultures as either nearly extinct or completely unchanged

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[14] White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 102-117; Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 64-67.

over the last century. Simpson noted that the nature of curation – to display an object in its "pure form with an emphasis upon traditional values and styles, and authentic artefacts [*sic*] and practices" inherently excluded a discussion of cultural continuity and change among Native communities. The European and American influences that infiltrated American Indian communities did not translate into the narrative displayed at many museums.[15]

Scholars in the emerging field of anthropology in the early 1900s also influenced the false belief that Native people vanished because scholars emphasized "traditional" Native cultures. For instance, renowned cultural anthropologist Alfred Kroeber believed that only Indian cultures untouched by American civilization could be "authentic." Anthropologists did not recognize the centuries of organic cultural change that occurred in seemingly-untouched Native communities since Europeans first stepped foot on the American continent.[16] Just as many of the articles in booster publications, exhibitions and public presentations focused on romanticized or nostalgic depictions of Native people that underscored their ability to "live in harmony with nature." Hence, museums displayed "exotic" ethnographic material in purely *historical* contexts without any further

[15] Moira G. Simpson, *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 35.

[16] *Ishi: The Last Yahi*, directed by Jed Riffe and Pamela Roberts (1992; New York: Shanachie Entertainment), DVD.

inclusion of contemporary indigenous objects that demonstrated cultural endurance, adaptation, and survival.[17]

Collectors and non-Native curators greatly controlled public understanding of indigenous people during the turn of the twentieth century. Collectors in the late nineteenth century had a variety of motives for acquiring Native American objects, few of which included the interests of indigenous communities. For instance, the federal government mandated the collection of Indian human remains for scientific study – typifying the lack of consideration shown to Native Americans during this period. Skull collectors desecrated Indian gravesites throughout the United States and took remains from recent battlefields. At the same time, museums accumulated and exhibited the overwhelming surplus of Indian skeletons that government officials acquired. They converted these collections into curiosities and tourist attractions.[18]

A majority of the major collectors of Native American material culture in the early to mid-twentieth century demonstrated general ignorance of their contemporary indigenous cultures. Collectors sought to preserve components of "vanishing" Native cultures rather than acknowledge Native perseverance and cultural adaptation.

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[17] Simpson, *Making Representations*, 35-36. Current exhibits at the California State Indian Museum buck this trend by using photographs and material objects to help visitors understand the historical uses of objects. They also include narratives from contemporary indigenous people to address the ways California Indians continue to incorporate traditional practices in their modern lives.

[18] David Hurst Thomas, *Skull Wars: Kennewick Man, Archaeology, and the Battle for Native American Identity* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 53-63.

Furthermore, many early collectors clearly focused on representing idealized and romanticized portrayals of Native Americans, and perpetuated the myth of the vanishing Indian to their patrons and audiences who then shared and applied this knowledge to the world around them.

Collecting Indian remains became a profitable venture due to high demand from researchers and museums. For example, physical anthropologists at the Smithsonian, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History studied American Indian remains, but also displayed skeletons as curiosities to attract tourists.[19] These displays continued for generations with little change to the ways they represented Native peoples. Not until Vine Deloria, Jr. wrote *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* in 1969 did large scale conversations develop among anthropologists regarding proper treatment of Native American communities. The late 1960s also marked the beginning of Indian activism in the academy.[20]

Historically, anthropologists came in to contact with Native Americans under colonialist controls. Within this skewed perspective, these scholars deemed indigenous cultures and people as "primitive." Murray L. Wax in "Educating the Anthro: The Influence of Vine Deloria, Jr.," noted that anthropologists, similar to many American collectors in the early twentieth century, felt the need to teach society as a whole about

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[19] Simpson, *Making Representations*, 119-128.

[20] Thomas Biolsi and Larry J. Zimmerman, eds., *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria Jr. and the Critique of Anthropology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997); Vine Deloria, Jr., "Indians, Archaeologists, and the Future," *American Antiquity* 57 (October 1992), 595-598.

the existence of Indian communities. They looked to *preserve* Native American cultures.[21] According to these scholars, the only truly "authentic" American Indian cultures that existed in modern times were those that had no contact with Euro-American people. Americans viewed contemporary Native people who had acculturated to any degree to be detached from their cultural heritage. On the other hand, Americans also perceived those who refused to assimilate as "primitive" relics of the past. It is in this context that regional promoters popularized mission history in American culture and launched preservation initiatives of the Spanish ruins on the landscape.

Figure 14 Opening celebration of C.E. Rumsey Indian Museum, in Riverside, California. December 12, 1924. Note the human skulls on the bottom shelf in the glass case. Source: Riverside Metropolitan Museum.

[21] Murray L. Wax, "Educating the Anthro: The Influence of Vine Deloria, Jr.," in *Indians and Anthropologists: Vine Deloria Jr. and the Critique of Anthropology,* ed. by Thomas Biolsi and Larry J. Zimmerman, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997), 50-60.

Museums in the early and mid-twentieth century exhibited Native material objects as curiosities, outside of their cultural context. Furthermore, museums displayed Native people in dioramas and in natural history museums in a way to illustrate "extinct" Native American cultures. At the same time, Kroeber at the University of California, Berkeley, introduced the world to Ishi "the Last Yahi," a Native Californian who anthropologists studied and exhibited both in life and after his death.[22] Historically, the public accepted academics as the authority on Native Americans, even over accounts given by Indian people directly. The "vanishing" Indian, perceived as such under federally forced assimilation practices, prompted anthropologists and archeologists to collect objects from these "disappearing" groups into the mid-twentieth century as a way of preserving components of Native cultures for future generations.[23]

By ignoring Americanization and transformation of Native cultures, museum staff and archeologists focused on depictions of indigenous people from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that illustrated the decline of Native cultures and populations. Native American protestors in the 1970s took a stand against stereotypical forms of exhibition after being portrayed for decades in natural history museums alongside extinct dinosaur skeletons, taxidermy animals, and wax cavemen. To combat stereotypical

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[22] Ishi's brain was removed from his body during his autopsy, after his death in 1916. Physical anthropology curator Aleš Hrdlička at Washington's National Museum, a subsidiary of the Smithsonian Institution, received Ishi's brain in 1917. Consultations for repatriation of Ishi's brain began in 1998 after this information became public knowledge. Nancy Rockafellar and Orin Starn, "Ishi's Brain," *Current Anthropologist* 40 (1999), 413-415.

[23] Randall H. McGuire, "Why Have Archeologists Thought the Real Indians Were Dead and What Can We Do about It," in *Indians and Anthropologists*, 63-91.

representations of stagnant or disappearing Native cultures, contemporary interpretative centers specifically presented exhibitions that highlighted the continuity of Native people within American society.[24]

Public protests and continued outcries against Native American misrepresentation in popular culture venues continue to the present. Controversial celebrations, such as the four-hundredth anniversary of Christopher Columbus's "founding" of the Americas in 1992, spurred heated protests of museum exhibits around the nation. Groups such as the American Indian Movement (AIM) argued that many exhibits failed to use language that accurately represented the extreme destruction done to Native populations by European invasion.[25] Native scholars such as Edward D. Castillo and Rupert and Jeanette Costo also published treatises documenting the abuses done to indigenous people by foreign invaders.[26]

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[24] Currently, Native Americans possess greater control over the way museums portray their cultures, through active museum involvement as curators, consultants, and board members in places such as the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Whereas museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries exhibited the "vanishing" Indian, many twenty-first century museums such as the NMAI incorporate contemporary discussions of Native Americans in exhibits. Cooper, *Spirited Encounters*, 1-13; Simpson, *Making Representations*, 38.

[25] The polarized responses to the celebration marked the divide between historical understanding of the founding of America from Native and non-Native perspectives, despite the curator's efforts to include negative aspects of the Columbian exchange along with positive results. Simpson, *Making Representations*, 39-42.

[26] Rupert Costo and Jeannette Henry Costo, eds., *The Mission of California: A Legacy of Genocide* (San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, 1987); Edward D. Castillo, ed., *Native American Perspectives on the Hispanic Colonization of Alta California* (New York: Garland Press, 1992); Darryl Wilson and Barry Joyce, eds., *Dear Christopher: Letters to Christopher Columbus by Contemporary Native Americans* (Riverside: University of California Publications in American Indian Studies, 1992).

Increasingly, Native people throughout the late twentieth century published books and articles pertaining to their fight for proper cultural representation and presentation in museums. For instance, James Riding In argued that archeologists and anthropologists who "masqueraded as the bearers of universal truth and wisdom about Indian cultures and people," spread a notion of the "inferior" Indian that allowed intellectuals to continue studying Native groups just as they had in the past – without acknowledging the views and feelings of contemporary Native people.[27] The changing presentation of Native Americans in museum exhibits is still evolving. Examinations of the presentation at the National Museum of the American Indian compared to Native representation found at other important institutions, such as California mission sites, exemplifies the contemporary spectrum that museums display Native American cultures at different institutional levels.

Many of the museums at contemporary California mission sites overwhelming highlight the contributions of Euro-Americans in a romanticized California past. At the same time, they ignore the intrinsically central role of Native people in nearly every aspect of mission life. As is apparent through discussions of collectors and museums, people who control exhibitions and objects have the ability to regulate access and have power over how they displayed and discussed these material objects. Thus, museum staff, site stewards, and curators mold history and historical discussions to fit their

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[27] James Riding In, "Repatriation: A Pawnee's Perspective," *Repatriation Reader: Who Owns American Indian Remains?* ed. by Devon A. Mihesuah, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 114.

personal interests and those of the institutions that employ them. For example, the Catholic Church owns and operates nearly all of the twenty-one contemporary California mission sites. These Church-owned sites generally focus on venerating missionaries who founded the mission system rather than discussions of the lives and influences of Native people to any detailed extent. Despite the presence of a polarized academic debate focusing on the California mission system, mission interpreters provide little information about the controversial roles of the Spanish padres, soldiers, and mistreatment of Native people – topics that would not flatter the mission institutions. As California Indian historian James J. Rawls observed, "the popular image of the mission remains generally—if unthinkably—romantic."[28]

Just as museums in the early twentieth century focused on aspects of history that best fit their personal interests and professional goals, so to do exhibits at contemporary mission sites. Despite the changing culture in modern museums, such as the National Museum of the American Indian, to demonstrate a clear understanding of Native people within American society, many mission sites have not adapted to this shift in the museum world. They exist in a limbo as generally private religious institutions that serve overwhelmingly public audiences, especially fourth grade school children and their families that visit the missions as a component of their California history curriculum. Exhibits and mission presentations sometimes misguide their patrons by excluding information about Native labor practices, death, diseases, and punishments, or by

[28] James J. Rawls, "The California Missions as Symbol and Myth," *California History* 71 (Fall 1992), 347-352; Rawls, *Indians of California*, 357.

providing misleading information about indigenous resistance efforts against the Spanish. These erroneous presentations continue the cycle of misinformation and poor Native representation at important interpretive centers in California.

The legacy of misinformation traces back to the early mission revival period. Rawls noted that during the mission revival of the early twentieth century, boosters portrayed missions as "havens of happiness and the Indians as beneficiaries of a superior civilization."[29] Californians latched on to these mythic values of "stability and antiquity, harmony and hierarchy" in Spanish California during a time of extraordinary social and economic change.[30] Because romanticized portrayals of mission history emerged during the mission revival trend of the early 1900s, contemporary mission representations generally reflect this established history as beneficiaries of this work.[31]

To the contrary of romanticized presentations, American visitors to California during the Spanish period observed the poor conditions Franciscan fathers enforced on Native people. Travelers such as author Richard Henry Dana (1815-1882), wrote accounts of overflowing graveyards, Franciscan padres that whipped Native people, and forced labor regimens that resembled slavery. Rawls argued that Americans in the mid-

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[29] Rawls, "The California Missions as Symbols and Myth," 360.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Many of these sites are staffed and maintained by volunteers. Volunteer curators and interpreters donate their time to contemporary missions for many reasons, but in many cases, they have close ties to the Catholic Church. Volunteer curators, mostly seniors, may also account for the old-museum paradigm present at many contemporary mission locations.

nineteenth century perpetuated these depictions of "licentious priests," exploited Indians, and brutal Spanish soldiers to rationalize American expansion West into California.[32] This is precisely the narrative Lummis sought to dispel in the late 1880s in his promotion of the Spanish "White Legend" that supported more benign representations of Spanish colonization.[33]

After mission secularization and American expansion to the Pacific, defunct mission sites fell into decay. In the 1880s, following forty years of neglect, southern California boosters, such as Lummis, and civic groups influenced by *Ramona* enthusiasts, advocated for a romantic revival of the historic sites on the landscape. Promoters of regional history used *Ramona* mythology and a nonthreatening depiction of Spanish colonizers to draw tourists and settlers into California. Native people were nearly non-existent in these representations. Moreover, popular understanding of Native people and their interaction with the landscape became increasingly obscure as Americans continued to disposes indigenous people of their lands.[34] As symbols of the dramatic Spanish past, mission preservation and restoration efforts claimed the California landscape for Euro-Americans and continued to relegate indigenous history to the periphery. Contemporary

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[32] Rawls, "The California Missions as Symbol and Myth," 347.

[33] Lummis aimed his writings to a broad audience in popular culture magazines that promoted the West and countered the Spanish "Black Legend." John M. Nieto-Phillips addressed Lummis' work to revise popular understandings of Spanish colonization in *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 145-159.

[34] Rawls, *Indians of California*, 112-113.

mission sites exist as a legacy of this work – highlighting benevolent Spanish missionaries and a romanticized past.[35]

In the face of a "vanishing" frontier, Americans sought to preserve not only mission buildings, but also the all-encompassing wilderness that they viewed as "The West."[36] Mark David Spence observed that Native people existed as a part of the "wild" in the minds of many Americans in the late nineteenth century. But preservationists increasingly viewed Native peoples' interactions with and mediation of the landscape as nuisances to maintaining their Eastern images of pristine wilderness. Spence pointed out that Americans frequently forced Indian people off the land to preserve the landscape in the "wild" West. Americans also required Native people to settle on reservations – separating indigenous people from the wild landscape. The United States government removed Native people from desirable land in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also created the illusion that these environments existed uninhabited, waiting to be discovered by Euro-Americans. Most poignantly, Spence noted that land preservation in the United States has "contributed to a sort of widespread cultural myopia that allows late-twentieth-century Americans to ignore the fact that national parks enshrine recently dispossessed landscapes." In preserved areas where "humans are visitors who do not remain," the federal government forced Native people out of their

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[35] Rawls, "The California Missions as Symbol and Myth," 347-352; Rawls, *Indians of California*¸ 205-209.

[36] Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4.

homelands and created a false history of a wild and unoccupied landscape to attract tourists.[37]

On the other hand, many Americans believed that Native people must be removed from centers of growing American development – to defend the "Noble Indians" from hostile Americans or to protect settler populations from the "savage" Indian threat.[38] Americans created myths about Native people while also subscribing to the notion that the "West" was a wild and unoccupied land to justify colonizing the region. They did not consider Native people to be rational human beings whose perspective deserved understanding. This absent viewpoint allowed Americans to ignore the generations of disease, warfare, and death that Native people encountered as a result of European settlement. Bernard Sheehan argued that the "grand myth" of an unoccupied American frontier did not truly exist. What Americans perceived as a wilderness was actually a "*widowed* land" left destitute when thousands of indigenous people lost their lives in the wake of "Columbian discovery."[39] The same reconstruction of the historical landscape is visible at the Spanish California missions, although this creation focused on the built environment rather than the wilderness.

Because the Spanish constructed many of their mission sites along the California coast and in fertile areas slightly inland, American settlers also flocked to many of the

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[37] Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, 5.

[39] Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1973), 8-31.

same regions. Over the course of the twentieth century, bustling towns and cities became the dominate feature on the California landscape – spreading along the coast, from the Los Angeles basin to the San Francisco Bay area. In many instances, these growing towns overwhelmed the once-dominate missions on the landscape – making the early Spanish settlements one aspect of the historical beginnings of popular tourist cities such as San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Santa Barbara. Unlike the national parks where officials worked to maintain an unoccupied wilderness, the commerce and crowd of local city businesses encircled the old Spanish missions. Most mission landscapes no longer resembled their rural beginnings by the early twentieth century. Moreover, efforts to preserve the Spanish sites focused heavily on attracting tourist dollars.[40] Many mission preservationists viewed the mission era as a time of California antiquity; they constructed tiled walkways, manicured gardens, beautiful fountains, artistically-conceived murals, and romantic descriptions of life at Spanish California missions to lure tourists.

Comparable to Spence's assessment of the national parks, the California missions existed as veiled markers of Native dispossession. Boosters and mission interpreters in the twentieth century hailed the sites as the first markers of "civilization" on the "wild" California landscape. For instance, the author of a short book about Mission San Diego created for school children noted that "on the west coast of our continent… there could

[40] Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 47-52.

be found only untamed land inhabited by Native Americans, or Indians. Although European explorers had sailed up and down the coast in their ships, no one but American Indians had explored the length of this land on foot."[41] In this context, Native people were but explorers on the landscape, presumably because they did not use and claim the land with permanent structures in a way that many Europeans thought acceptable. However, with the Serra-Portolá expedition of 1769, "to this wild land came a group of adventurous men from New Spain" who tamed the wilderness.[42] It is this romantic ideal of the first vestiges of civilization in a wild land that early promoters sought to preserve at Spanish mission sites. Focusing on the hardships the Spanish missionaries, soldiers, and settlers endured in settling the untamed wilderness, the narrative highlighted the noblest intentions of the early Spanish explorers. This focus transformed the California landscape from what many in the late nineteenth century saw as a backwards Mexican territory to a western Plymouth Rock – a place where the people of the region emerged out of darkness and were guided into the light of civilization by Spanish priests.

Efforts to save vestiges of this dramatic beginning emerged in preservation campaigns for the crumbling California mission ruins in the 1890s. A secular group led by Los Angeles City librarian Tessa L. Kelso spearheaded the campaign to preserve the sites under the Association for the Preservation of the Missions. Kelso promoted her cause through displays of the crumbling Spanish ruins at the library, organized trips to

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[41] Mary Null Boulé, *The Missions: California's Heritage – Mission San Diego de Alcalá* (Vashon, WA: Marryant Publishing, 1992), 5.

[42] Ibid.

the missions, and in popular magazine articles.[43] Other local associations similarly advocated for mission preservation, including the Pasadena Loan Association, which sought the "preservation of the Spanish past in the American Present… [and] reviving, for practical travel, the old Spanish King's Highway."[44] The movement to preserve the missions did not draw mass attention until Lummis took up the cause "to conserve the missions and other historic landmarks of southern California" with the founding of the Landmarks Club in 1895.[45] Kelso became a board member for the club and provided the $100 coffers from her defunct association to the new club. However, Lummis stepped forward as the central spokesperson for California mission preservation. He persistently fundraised and promoted the ambitious goals of the Landmarks Club.[46]

Lummis used *The Land of Sunshine* magazine, which became *Out West* in 1901, to increase the number of paying club members, with an annual subscriptions fee of one dollar. He also utilized a stringent letter writing campaign to promote mission

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[43] George Wharton James, *In and Out of the Old Missions of California* (Boston: Little Brown, and Company, 1916), 383-386.

[44] The Pasadena Loan Association also planned to trace genealogies back to "the *Conquistadores* themselves." Anonymous, "The Pasadena Loan Association," *Land of Sunshine* 2 (February 1895), 54. The Native Sons of the Golden West and the Historic Landmarks Committee also established goals to identify and preserve historic sites such as the California missions. Edna E. Kimbro and Julia G. Costello, *The California Missions: History, Art, and Preservation* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2009), 62.

[45] "To conserve the missions and other historic landmarks of southern California" was the slogan of the Landmarks Club. It can be found in blurbs about the Club in *Out West* magazine.

[46] Kimbro and Costello, *The California Missions,* 58-59.

conservation to donors including renowned California conservationist John Muir and wealthy philanthropist Phoebe Apperson Hearst.[47] Preservationists did not address of appeal to Native people in their preservation projects. Lummis appealed to readers to become due-paying members, arguing that "no man or woman who cares a dollar's worth to keep the United States from being the only civilized country in the world which lets its only ruins disappear, is barred from membership."[48] Lummis succeeded in raising enough funds to start work at the missions – choosing San Juan Capistrano as the first site to receive the club's attention as "one of the choicest architectural bits among all the Missions."[49]

According to Lummis, "the only ruins worthy of name [in the United States] are all in the Southwest. The missions of Southern California, though least ancient of these monuments of the past, are architecturally the finest and the only practically accessible to the average traveler." He argued that, "after two generations of average neglect," the missions were in such dire need of preservation that they would cease to exist if local residents did not undertake preservation efforts immediately.[50] Today, the State of California's Office of Historic Preservation salutes the Landmarks Club as the first organization in California to officially recognize historic sites. Beginning with Mission

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[47] Kimbro and Costello, *The California Missions,* 58-65; Kropp, *California Vieja*, 52-54.

[48]Charles F. Lummis, "The Landmarks Club," *Land of Sunshine* 4 (December 1895), 85.

[49] Specifically Lummis refereed to the kitchen at Mission San Juan Capistrano.

[50] Charles Lummis, "Our Historic Treasure," *Land of Sunshine* 4 (December 1895), 117-120.

San Juan Capistrano, the Landmarks Club worked to replace the roofs and stabilize the adobe structures of deteriorating missions, costing between $1,500 and $2,000 at each site. While Lummis and the Landmarks Club encouraged tourists to visit mission ruins, he also condemned the vandalism of "boys or tourists of little shame," who took roof tiles and bricks from the sites.[51]

Just as at many important Native sites, tourists and collectors removed relics from the mission ruins. But unlike at Native burial sites, gravediggers rarely scavenged and wrought havoc on mission cemeteries.[52] Still, not all mission cemeteries have been left untouched, as several mission preservation and restoration projects disturbed the cemeteries. For example, Angelo Cassanova, who became parish priest at Mission San Carlos Borroméo de Carmelo in 1862, undertook restoration efforts at the Monterey mission. Part of the restoration included uncovering the graves of prominent missionaries including Father President Junípero Serra and his successor Francisco de Lasuén, as well as Juan Crespi. Because the mission church had fallen into disuse for roughly twenty years and the roof had collapsed, Cassanova felt compelled to assess the burial sites and evaluate the remains of the priests. Hundreds of tourists from nearby towns flocked to the mission on July 3, 1882, to see the tombs of the padres. Cassanova and his crew documented the condition of the graves and reburied the tombs with more

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[51] Ibid., 120.

[52] Lummis, nor any other contributor in *The Land of Sunshine/Out West* magazine, mention vandals attacking mission cemeteries. Although, in *The Mission Play* Señora Yorba instructs Mission Indians to not bury a jewel-encrusted golden chalice with the deceased padre "for sacrilegious thieves to dig up."

secure stone slabs. According to Franciscan scholar Zephyrin Engelhardt, Mission San Carlos owed its initial restoration to Cassanova's "untiring zeal and the sympathy of many benefactors."[53]

Figure 15 Photograph of San Carlos Borroméo de Carmelo Mission Serra Chapel, c. 1931. Source: Monterey County Free Libraries.

Franciscan priests embarked on preservation efforts at several other California missions including Mission San Luis Rey and Santa Barbara. Secular groups such as the Historic Landmarks League in conjunction with wealthy newspaperman William Randolph Hearst also worked to protect California missions in the early 1900s. The league purchased Mission San Francisco de Solano, in Sonoma, and eventually turned the property over to the State of California – forming what is now Sonoma State Park.[54]

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[53] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Franciscans in California* (Harbor Springs, MI: Holy Childhood Indian School, 1897), 252-255.

[54] Admission to this state park also includes entrance into General Mariano Vallejo's home nearby.

Native people did not get a voice in the preservation projects of the California missions, despite the central role of their ancestors in building the sites. Tourism to the mission grew dramatically in the early twentieth century with the popularization of mission conservation, preservation, and restoration efforts along with the increasing availability of automobiles. The myth of the California missions became ever more engrained in early history of the region as the missions developed as popular destinations for vacationing tourists to the golden state.[55] Soon mission bell markers lined Highway 101, what was once El Camino Real. The bells as well as the progressively preserved California mission ruins continued to claim the landscape with Hispanic symbols. Native people played minimal roles in mission history at the time, presented as romanticized benefactors of civilization programs. Most Americans remain ignorant or indifferent to knowledge that the true history of California's Spanish heritage had been usurped and

[55] Mission preservation efforts did not end in the early decades of the 1900s. Instead, restoration and especially reconstruction began in large part in the 1930s under President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives. Historic preservation legislation on the state and national levels also helped advocates register and preserve Spanish heritage sites in California. Workers for the Civilian Conservation Corps labored to reconstruct sites such as Mission La Purisima. They researched the historic layout of the structures and worked to rebuild the mission accurately – for educational purposes. At the same time, debates intensified between people who supported different treatments of the missions: conservation of mission ruins by simply mitigating further decay, preservation, or restoration/reconstruction of buildings at the sites. While reconstruction at mission La Purisima closely reflected evidence from the historical record, restoration at other missions including San Carlos and San Juan Capistrano focused more heavily on preserving the architectural style of the missions. Architects excluded some components of the original structures that interfered with the look sought by designers. By the 1960s, all of the twenty one mission ruins had experienced some restoration and were no longer "in ruins." Kimbro and Costello, *The California Missions*, 67-83.

refabricated into a dramatic and romanticized myth. They seemed to favor the idea of a visible tie to a European past over the accurate representation of the region.

Figure 16 Mission Bell Tower and El Camino Real Bell at Mission San Diego De Alcala. Source: Escondido Public Library, Pioneer Room.

The romantic interpretation of mission history inherently ignored the struggle of Native people to navigate the new Spanish institutions and indigenous perceptions of the landscape. For instance, the introduction to the contemporary educational series *The Missions: California's Heritage* noted that "it took a great deal of time for some Indian tribes to understand the new way of life a mission offered, even though the Native

Americans always had food and shelter when they became mission Indians."[56] In the briefest way possible, the author summarized the varied experiences of Native people in the mission system. She contended that California Indians struggled to accept the regimented way of life offered at the mission because it "was an enormous change from the less organized Indian life before the missions came."[57] This brief statement discounts the countless factors that brought Native people into the missions, including destruction of traditional food sources by European animals, malnutrition, starvation, diseases that ravaged Native communities, and violence – all introduced by the Spanish. It also discounts traditional Native lifeways. Further, she portrays the obstacles Native people faced as a difficulty accepting order, rather than the inherent complications of assimilating to a completely new way of life following the near destruction of their cultures and societies.

Once narratives of early California addressed Spanish colonization, prevalent perspectives quickly shifted control of the land away from California Indians and placed it squarely in the hands of the Spanish. At this point, a fundamental change to understanding the landscape for Americans in California began to develop. In the new narrative, the Spanish "civilized" the "wild" California landscape by establishing permanent settlements. In the eyes of Euro-Americans, the start of Spanish colonization and construction of buildings in California marked the beginning of history in the region. Thus, the missions became landmarks of the region's antiquity in the popular mindset,

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[56] Boulé, *The Missions: California's Heritage – Mission San Diego de Alcalá*, 7-8.

[57] Ibid., 8.

especially for *Ramona* enthusiasts.[58] Popular narratives throughout the twentieth century focused on the Spanish California past but often overlooked the layered history found on the landscape. Americans built their understanding of the Spanish past over the experiences of the Spanish, Mexican, and Native forbearers. Varying conceptions of land use and site preservation play a role in this layering.

The difference between Native and Euro-American conceptions of land use is important in understanding the divergent views of place, preservation, and a shared social history between the two groups in California. Euro-Americans continually failed to respect or recognize Native history, sites, and culture in California in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Beginning with some of the first European explorations in the Americas, foreigners documented Native people and components of their cultures, just as they mapped the landscape and catalogued the flora and fauna of "unexplored" areas.[59] Some explorers concluded that Native Californians were so primitive and close to nature that they were nearly animals.[60] New waves of foreigners worked to uplift Native people and replace their cultures, beginning with Spanish missionaries that labored to convert

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[58] The *Mission Play* also helped create a popular narrative wherein Native lifeways that symbolized the pre-history of California unceremoniously gave way to Spanish civilization.

[59] Rawls, *Indians of California*, 25-80.

[60] Rawls detailed some of these first encounters documented by Europeans. For example, Captain George Vancouver observed that the Indians at Mission San Fernando were "in the most abject state of uncivilization…. they are certainly a race of the most miserable beings, possessing the faculty of human reason, I ever saw." Rawls, *Indians of California*, 28.

indigenous people to Hispanicized Roman Catholicism. Some Americans in the nineteenth century similarly sought to convert indigenous people to Anglo Protestantism, while others led extermination campaigns against indigenous people, especially in northern California.[61] In either case, newcomers did not value Native cultures nor did they see them as enduring far into the twentieth century. As a result, scholars and anthropologists in the early 1900s increasingly documented "vanishing" Native cultures, focusing especially on languages and the material objects indigenous people produced.

Americans viewed Native cultures as primitive, on the pathway to extinction, yet sought to collect what they could from these groups. Collections amassed by wealthy Americans eventually found their way to prominent museums in the United States. Euro-American interpretations of Native material objects dominated in museum displays. American representations of indigenous people similarly dominated in "educational" articles in promotional magazines such as *The Land of Sunshine/Out West* magazine. Native people essentially became silent observers as "value judgments about the alleged superiority of the white race became interlocked with scientific thought, leading to the development of oppressive practices and policies" throughout American society.[62]

American writers portrayed Native people in popular culture under two distinct stereotypes. The "Noble Indian" conveyed images of peaceful, egalitarian, nature-loving,

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[61] Several scholars have addressed accounts of genocide in California during the gold rush, such as Trafzer and Hyer in *"Exterminate Them!"*; Jack Norton, *Genocide in Northwestern California: When Our Worlds Cried* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1979); Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).

[62] Riding In, "Repatriation: A Pawnee's Perspective," 109.

innocent, and simple communities.[63] Conversely, Americans vilified other groups of American Indians as "Ignoble Savages" – wild, bloodthirsty, and violent marauders that jumped at any opportunity to slaughter whites and each other.[64] Americans in the late nineteenth century used these categories to actively remove indigenous people from desirable land across the continent. In most instances, American settlers wanted Native lands for themselves – to build such things as homesteads, farms, ranches, mines, lay railroad tracks, and for many other uses. It was in the best interests of these settlers not to recognize Native claims or ties to the land. Native people resisted, but by the late 1800s Americans far outnumbered and outgunned California Indians. This intentional separation of Native people into pockets of land reserved solely for indigenous occupation greatly removed Native people from the "melting pot" of the developing American narrative.[65]

Europeans and Americans did not understand the cultural meaning the landscape had for many Native people that traditionally lived in semi-permanent villages, especially those outside the confines of the Spanish missions. Euro-Americans viewed land as

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[63] Americans commonly applied this stereotype to the Pueblo people in the southwest who were sedentary agriculturalists whose lifestyle complimented contemporary Jeffersonian ideals.

[64] Throughout the nineteenth century, western travelers wrote sensationalized narratives of Indians brutally attacking pioneer parties – killing any men, women, and children who crossed their paths. Travelers sent these tales back East to friends and family members who proliferated the perception of the bloodthirsty Indian without ever setting foot west of the Mississippi River. Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999), 16-17.

[65] Rawls, *Indians of California*, 139-141.

something to be used; made productive, fenced, and built upon. Americans who already regarded Native Californians as "shiftless," "ignorant," and an "extremely primitive people in a rich land," further justified confiscation of Native lands because indigenous people in California left no concrete "ruins" that told of a prehistoric antiquity. Euro-Americans viewed "California, the beautiful and abundant land," as a place that "required an enterprising population to develop it."[66] Unknowledgeable and indifferent to Native land use traditions, Americans saw themselves as the tamers of this wilderness since people under the Spanish and Mexican flags failed to complete the task.[67]

As exemplified by Keith Basso in *Wisdom Sits in Places*, the divorce between wilderness, culture, and the physical landscape is not universally applicable (or may not even be accurate), especially for many Native communities.[68] "Where does nature end and culture begin?" This question recently posed by historian Bonnie Stepenoff exposes the conflict that exists when people perceive the natural landscape as inherently disconnected from built structures appropriate for preservation, such as the California missions.[69] While Basso's examination focused specifically on the Western Apache it is

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[66] Rawls, *Indians of California*, 50-55.

[67] Some Americans even blamed the missions for creating the "heavy and dull" character of many California Indians. They contrasted mission Indians with gentile communities and found that non-mission Indians were more vibrant. Ibid., 34, 50-55.

[68] Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

[69] This question comes out of the theoretical struggle created by the Wilderness Act (1964). According to the Act, "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and

still applicable to many Native cultures as they share the historical and cultural ties to the landscape described in Basso's seminal work. Basso demonstrated the connectedness between natural landscapes, culture, and heritage that is essential to Native understandings of themselves and the world around them. Like many other indigenous groups, the Western Apache empower specific locations in the natural environment with histories, anecdotes, and stories that impart wisdom and lessons to their people. For generations, Native Californians created meaning in spaces. They intrinsically altered the landscape by interacting with their environment, but they did not physically change the appearance of the world around them. Thus, only people privy to knowledge about the meaning of specific places find the cultural meaning in the landscape.

Americans throughout the twentieth century, and many today, fail to recognize the important ties Native people have with their ancestral homeland. The core mythologies and creation stories of many Native communities solidly ground the history of these groups in the local landscape. Indigenous culture bearers can identify the specific mountain ranges, lakes, rivers, rock formations, and other landmarks that are central to their cultural heritage.

One such example of the threat to culturally significant sites is the development of the Big Bear area in southern California. Big Bear Lake is a very significant site for the

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his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Many Indian lands became protected as "wilderness" and the federal government restricted Native people from using the land. Bonnie Stepenoff, "Wild Lands and Wonders: Preserving Nature and Culture in National Parks," in *Cultural Landscapes: Balancing Nature and heritage in Preservation Practice,* ed. by Richard W. Longstreth, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 91.

Serrano of the San Bernardino region. According to their creation story, passed on through generations in stories and songs, the creator, *Kokiitach*, lived and died in the pine tree forest that surrounds Big Bear Lake. He died just east of the lake and the people buried Kokiitach's remains at *A'atsava*, in Bear Valley. They refer to the area as *Kutainan*.[70] The Serrano believe that the people grieved for a long time following Kokiiach's death, "so long in fact that they 'turned into pines' and their bones became scattered as pine nuts" in Bear Valley. Out of Kokiiach's remains emerged an abundance of food that nourished descendants of Serrano people. The Serrano believe that the land where Kokiitach lived, died, and was buried is very important, but so are the pine trees.[71] The Serrano did not alter the landscape to impart it with deep meaning, yet Bear Valley and the Big Bear Lake area are considered extremely significant sites in their tribal history.

This sacred space has been defiled as Americans constructed buildings, roads, and facilities for the local water district throughout the area. Other important Serrano cultural sites in the San Bernardino Mountains now exist on private property and similarly face

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[70] Clifford E. Trafzer, *The People of San Manuel* (Patton, CA: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, 2002), 16-20.

[71] The Serrano reservation does not encompass Bear Valley and Big Bear Lake. Regardless, the valley, lake, and the surrounding environment continues to be very important to the Serrano people. Trafzer, *The People of San Manuel*, 16-20.

the threat of damage.[72] Still many Native people attempt to protect their sacred sites by restricting knowledge of their locations to discourage theft or vandalism.[73]

Urbanization also poses a significant risk to many culturally significant sites for California Indians. In the case of urbanization, developers may be unaware of Native sites or might claim ignorance to proceed with their construction. For example, many significant locations to the Luiseño faced destruction in the early twenty-first century as housing developments, strip malls, quarries, and other commercial enterprises in the burgeoning Temecula area infringed on their sacred sites. The Luiseño of the Pechanga Tribe were able to save "the mountain [that] is [the Luiseño] people's place of creation… the Luiseño Garden of Eden," according to Tribal Chairman Mark Macarro. The tribe used their wealth to purchase 354 acres from Liberty Quarry in November, 2012.[74] Only a handful of California Indian communities have the financial resources to spend millions of dollars to protect their sacred sites as done by Pechanga. Because Native Californians have rich oral history traditions, many are still able to document their sacred locations and can mitigate damage to important cultural sites under the protection of recent state

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[72] Trafzer, *The People of San Manuel*, 16-20.

[73] According to the records of photographer Charley (Clayton) Howe, working for the Archaeological Survey Association of Southern California, people vandalized many southern California sites including rock art in the Mojave Desert in the mid-twentieth century. Vandals spray-painted some sites while others showed chisel marks where people tried to remove the art from the rock. People riddled other sites with bullet holes and paint stains where trespassers attempted to take rubbings of the rock art. The Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino houses the Charley (Clayton) Howe Collection that includes photographic evidence of the vandalism.

[74] Jeff Horseman, "Liberty Quarry: Pechanga tribe to buy site," *The Press Enterprise* November 15, 2012.

laws. Still some developers or private parties that own property containing important sites use deceitful tactics to skirt the checkpoints established by state and federal officials, especially when concerning the sensitive and contentious task of addressing indigenous gravesites.[75]

Many Americans in the late twentieth century, even those who are stewards of historic locations, fail to protect Native sites in the same fashion as they would defend their historic buildings or landmarks. This dichotomy has become evident at several California missions including Mission San Diego and San Juan Capistrano.[76] Plans to construct a multipurpose hall and parking lot at Mission San Diego originally took precedence over a Native graveyard. And San Juan Capistrano hastily constructed an unpermitted "Rectory Garden" on top of a known mission cemetery.[77] In both cases the construction caused outrage in the local community.

Working to improve the usable space at these missions, stewards at the sites disrespected Native sacred spaces for private benefit. For example, mission officials

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[75] In 1990 the United States government passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) that "provides a process for museums and Federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items – human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony – to lineal descendants, and culturally affiliated Indian tribes." It provided grants to tribes to fund investigations to document items and established a review committee to facilitate dispute resolutions.

[76] Furthermore, the City of Sonoma built streets and homes over the Indian graveyards that surrounded Mission San Francisco de Solano.

[77] Jennifer L. Trotoux, "Mission San Juan Capistrano Rectory Garden Site Plan Review Assessment*"* (San Juan Capistrano and San Francisco, April 16, 2008). To help protect gravesites, California also passed the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 2001.

failed to inform Native people of the construction and misrepresented or blatantly hid information about the history of the proposed sites to continue construction.[78] Prominent scholars of San Diego Indian history such as Florence Shipek and Kumeyaay elders from the local indigenous tribe understood that missionaries founded Mission San Diego on the Native village site of *Nipaguay*. They also knew that the mission buried many Indians nearby. For nearly two decades, officials at Mission San Diego distorted the results of archeological research at the site to continue using the land. Shipek argued that mission officials such as Monsignor I. Brent Egan ignored archeological and historical evidence, including maps that proved that an Indian cemetery existed under the proposed construction site.[79] Before construction Egan claimed that "contrary to some opinions, there is not an Indian cemetery underneath the site of the proposed building."[80]

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[78] Ibid.; Clifford E. Trafzer, "Serra's Legacy: The Desecration of American Indian Burials at Mission San Diego," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 16 (1992), 57-75.

[79] Historians Zephyrin Engelhardt and Norman Neuerburg both described Mission San Diego in detail. They located the Indian cemetery at the proposed construction site, near the original site of the mission church before it was destroyed and rebuilt in a different location on the same grounds. Ibid., 59-60.

[80] Ibid., 58.

Figure 17 Gated area at Mission San Diego marked by a large white cross. Source: Author's personal collection.

Under pressure from several local and state agencies, mission officials decided to build the hall on a raised structure to minimize disruption of the site. Mission officials hired Archeologist Richard Carrico to conduct a dig where the twenty caisson concrete pillars that support the structure would be anchored into the ground. Carrico and his crew discovered several human remains soon after excavations began. In all but one of the caisson holes they found human remains. All together, the archeological team found nearly seventy people whose burials were consistent with Christian funerals done at the missions.[81] The crew carefully removed the remains and temporarily stored them at the San Diego Museum of Man. Local leaders condemned mission officials' decision to continue construction at a proven cemetery site. Finally, in the face of widespread public

[81] Similar to many other southern California Indian communities, the Kumeyaay traditionally cremated their dead. Therefore, finding several human burial remains signified that the site was a Christian cemetery related to the mission. Trafzer, "Serra's Legacy," 63-64.

outcry and a proposed lawsuit brought by legal representation for the Kumeyaay, mission officials agreed to stop construction.[82] Mission interpreters do not address this controversy or the location of the grave yard in their contemporary presentations at the mission. The site now rests behind a gated fence with a large cross in the center (see image above). As a result of the public controversy and threat of lawsuit, mission officials allowed local Native community members to hold a ceremony and rebury the unearthed remains at the defunct construction site.

While public pressure and Native involvement helped stop the continued desecration of the graveyard at Mission San Diego, Mission San Juan Capistrano secretly and hastily constructed gardens and an outdoor kitchen for a retreat area on a portion of the mission cemetery in an attempt to avoid similar roadblocks.[83] Mission officials at San Juan Capistrano did not apply for building permits nor did they conduct archeological studies to determine the significance of their construction site. However, maps and photographs from the mid-1800s illustrated that the planned site for the retreat included the mission cemetery. Workers at the mission had to dig trenches and disturb the ground to construct the garden and barbeque area. According to site records, construction to build the rectory and earlier gardens in the 1930s and 1950s unearthed

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[82] Kumeyaay legal counsel proposed to launch a lawsuit that would question the Church's legal right to the land if the church did not agree to stop all construction and agree to Kumeyaay demands. Trafzer addresses the legal battle and public outcry against the construction at Mission San Diego in "Serra's Legacy," 57-75.

[83] The Rectory Garden served as a gathering place for guest for the celebration of the San Juan Capistrano Mission Basilica retablo. A cardinal from the Vatican visited the mission in commemoration in 2007.

human remains.[84] This led researchers to believe that workers would have found similar remains during construction in 2007.

Once local Native Juaneño community members discovered the this unpermitted and unresearched construction, they petitioned the City of San Juan Capistrano to issue a stop work order to examine disturbances to the site. Because construction was nearly complete, monitors merely supervised the site to mitigate future disturbances. Mission officials claimed that they did not know the location was part of the old graveyard, yet Juaneño leaders had knowledge of the site and were appalled at the desecration of the sacred ground. Vice chairwoman of a Juaneño faction, Sonia Johnston, argued that the mission acted irresponsibly. She questioned the intentions of mission officials in an interview with the *Orange County Register*, asking "How can you have parties and barbecues on the cemetery? I'd never go on my ancestral burial grounds and party on it. I don't understand."[85] Unlike the San Diego controversy, mission officials at San Juan Capistrano failed to notify the local community and nearly completed their construction project before concerned citizens intervened.[86] As is evident at Mission San Diego, San

[84] Trotoux, *Mission San Juan Capistrano*.

[85] Vik Jolly, "Mission Garden Center of Dispute," *Orange County Register,* October 8, 2007. David Belardes, a leader of another Juaneño faction argued that the church intentionally acted "with malice" in failing to follow proper channels to build the gardens. He argued that mission officials knew they would need Native monitors because the site was over a cemetery. Mission representatives scoffed at Belardes' claim. They argued that he was only trying to gain publicity in making such accusations. Matt Coker, "Native American Battle Over a Mission San Juan Capistrano Garden Gets Ugly," *Orange County Register,* December 24, 2008.

[86] Some indigenous communities have been successful in mitigating damage to cemeteries and other important sites. For instance, Ohlone leaders in the San Francisco

Juan Capistrano, and the problems that the Serrano and Luiseno communities face in protecting their sacred land, many Americans continue to discount Native perspectives and disrespect sites important to Native people. In some cases, stewards at sites find ways to circumvent laws created to prevent such desecration. Control of the land where Native sites remain provides power to groups to remove, cover, or misrepresent the sites and their history. The local Catholic dioceses control the missions and thus control the representation of history – both in the physical landscape and in their mission museums.

Stewards at contemporary historic sites still greatly control the representation of Native people and their sites, just as collectors and writers in the early twentieth century heavily influenced the perception of indigenous people in popular culture. Unfortunately, officials at some mission sites continued to disrespect Native ties to the mission landscape into the twenty-first century. Because Native Californians conceived of land use differently than Euro-Americans and left few permanent brick-and-mortar markers, the dramatized Spanish historical footprint overwhelmingly overshadowed Native history in the state. Promoters preserved, conserved, and restored the California missions for the enjoyment of American audiences without paying heed to the perspectives of California Indians.

Not concerned with indigenous perspectives, Americans settlers, collectors, writers, and preservationists in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries frequently ignored or disrespected Native communities in popular culture. In the absence of public

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Bay area successfully petitioned the city to reroute new construction of Highway 680 that would have run directly through a cemetery related Mission San Jose.

knowledge of Native sites the Spanish missions have become the symbols of California's earliest history. On the other hand, the popularity of the mission myth also played into the silencing of Native Californian experiences. As eluded to in *The Missions: California's Heritage*, the missions supposedly developed as sites for Native people to learn "civilized" ways of life, therefore, any other history before this point was irrelevant.[87] According to this perspective, Native people made no contributions to a "civilized" society. Pulling from the writings of early Spanish explorers and priests, some people assumed that Native Californians practiced heathenish religions, dressed in little to no clothing, and had loose morals before the Spanish introduced indigenous people to Christianity.[88] Interpreters of these constructed narratives preach history from a Catholic Spanish perspective. Their representations often ignore the hostility and violence between indigenous people and the flood of foreigners that transformed California from the late eighteenth to early twentieth centuries. Native people and Spanish colonizers often conflicted over cultural differences and acceptable behavior, yet mission representations display the mission era as an idyllic time.

Inherit in both the educational texts on the missions and the arguments by newcomers to California is an understanding that Native people did not or could not use the land in an effective and productive manner, and, therefore, did not deserve to own the land. According to some educational texts, "since the Indians did not wish to continue

[87] Boulé, *The Missions: California's Heritage.*

[88] According to the diaries and letters of Spanish priests including Father Serra and Francisco Palóu.

the missions [following secularization], the buildings and land were sold, the Indians not even waiting for money or, in some cases, receiving money for the sale."[89] At this point, Native people frequently exit the mission narrative. The focus shifts to what became of the mission buildings themselves – re-appropriated as stores, barns, barracks during war, or even reused as saloons.

Unlike the history presented in misguided mission texts, Native people did not simply fade into the past as Europeans and Americans increasingly encroached on their lands. Rather, Native communities adapted to change. Groups devastated by diseases merged together, they resettled lands, and formed new bonds. While Euro-Americans formed notions of the vanishing Indian in popular culture, Native people demonstrated their perseverance to destructive forces brought by these colonizing powers.[90]

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[89] Boulé, *The Missions: California's Heritage*, 9.

[90] Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction*, 22-60.

Part II

To this point, this analysis has focused on the development and popularization of a romanticized Spanish fantasy past in popular American culture and its impact on public perceptions of Native peoples. Now it will turn to specific examples of the ways mission museums continue to misrepresent Native experiences within the dramatized history of the California missions. Through examinations of unglamorous but realistic components of mission life including labor, resistance, death, disease, and punishment it becomes evident that many mission sites continue to promote distorted and unhistorical perspectives of the past. Scholars in the twenty-first century use historical records and Native testimonies to extract more accurate historical narratives. However, many California missions continue in the footsteps of *Ramona* enthusiasts and regional boosters such as Charles Lummis and John McGroarty that view Spanish California as an idyllic period and the missions as symbols of that time. The remainder of this examination will include case studies that illustrate that Native perspectives are important components of mission narratives that scholars and mission interpreters must take into account.

Chapter 4

Missionaries, Labor, and Land

The narratives constructed about Spanish California by regional boosters and promoters in the early twentieth century praised Spanish colonization efforts in the region. They worked to save the mission ruins as symbols of this dramatic era, filled with pious priests, obedient Indians, leisurely days, and joyous fiestas. Popularized by *Ramona* enthusiasts, booster publications, and John McGroarty's *Mission Play,* these images misrepresented Spanish California, especially for the thousands of Native Californians who were born, worked, and buried in the shadows of the mission walls. Changes to the Native economy brought by the Spanish cross and crown rippled throughout California and what is now the American Southwest into the twentieth century. The Spanish intrinsically altered the economies and work environments of the Native Californians within the grasp of mission institutions.[1] Many scholars have documented that Native Californians became the central labor force that supported Spanish colonization as members of mission communities.[2] While scholars examine the

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[1] Native people living along the California coast felt the greatest impact of Spanish colonization, as the Spanish erected a majority of missions, presidios, and pueblos within a league of the shoreline. Destructive changes to the Native landscape, including the introduction of intrusive plant and animal species, forced California Indian communities to turn to the missions for support.

[2] Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization* (1943; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Francis F. Guest, "An Examination of the Thesis of S.F. Cook on the Forced Conversion of Indians in the

interplay of labor with such things as power, control, and conversion, many contemporary presentations at California missions do not thoroughly address labor as a central component of mission life.[3]

Preservation and reconstruction projects, beautification efforts, and modernization of the surrounding landscapes have removed many missions from their historical contexts. Misrepresentations of the dramatically-reconstructed Spanish ruins also assists in divorcing popular understandings of the mission myth from more accurate historical accounts that include Native perspectives. As one of the most productive missions along El Camino Real, scholarship about Mission San Gabriel Arcángel and exhibits at the site serve as prime examples of the divide between academia and public presentations found at contemporary mission sites. Exhibits at two of the most popular missions among contemporary tourists, San Juan Capistrano and Santa Barbara missions, similarly reflect the sanitized narrative many visitors encounter in these modern spaces.

California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 61 (1979), 1-77; James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 272-320; Robert H. Jackson and Edward D. Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on the California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Rupert Costo and Jeannette Henry Costo, eds., *The Mission of California: A Legacy of Genocide* (San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, 1987).

[3] Mission La Purisima and San Francisco de Solano are two blatant exceptions to this statement. An examination of representations at these missions will follow in Chapter 7.

Mission visitors navigating Spanish California history frequently face unhistorical representations of the past that reflect positive aspects of Spanish colonization and ignore components that do not fit romanticized mission mythologies. Most occupations held by neophytes, or baptized Indians at the missions, do not fit into the romantic depiction of the Spanish era advocated by regional boosters. The work of skilled artisans, painters, sculptors, blacksmiths, weavers, musicians, and the like are the few aspects of Native labor that the missions currently address. Discussions of these skilled crafts contribute to the glorified mission myth, wherein the benevolent Spanish missionaries "civilized" California Indians. Current mission interpretations skim over the tedious work done by the more numerous labor crews and field hands who built the mission structures and harvested crops in the vast lands cultivated around the sites. Moreover, they do not address the key roles Native Californians played in meeting the goals set by the Spanish crown to create a self-sufficient economy in colonial California.[4]

Scholars documented the severe change the mission system had on the lifeways of Native people, while modern mission museums overshadow Native labor with exhibits about the lives of the small number of Spanish padres who came to the region. Shifts in the California economy and Native labor strategies have been some of the most long-lasting legacies of the mission system. As scholars have shown, the arrival of the Spanish marked the beginning of significant changes in the Native economy. The Spanish crown sought to make its overseas colonies more productive to reduce the cost of

[4] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 273-275.

colonization.[5] New Spain wanted to provide as little financial support as possible to its colonies in Alta California – relying on soldiers, settlers, priests, and, most importantly, Indian laborers to provide for themselves as much as possible. Several California missions reaped bountiful harvests that provided enough food for local populations and those of less successful missions as well by the mid-1770s. Over the next several decades, Spanish soldiers and growing settler populations became increasingly more dependent on food and goods produced by Native laborers and less dependent on the expensive supplies provided by unpredictable Spanish ships.[6]

The transition to a self-sufficient economy in Alta California placed a heavy burden on the backs of Native Californians as the primary source of labor in the region. Not just a secular act, the Spanish priests viewed labor as a "morally enriching disciplinary activity that hastened [Native] conversion from savagery to civilization."[7] Therefore, priests instituted regimented labor, and correlating punishments for idleness or failure to perform, as means to achieve eventual salvation of Indian souls.[8]

As a result of Spanish colonization and the collapse of Native economies and trade networks, many Native Californian communities along the coast shifted from a trade and shell money based economy to a system dependent on wage labor. California

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[5] More specifically, the Spanish crown instituted a mercantile system that sought to significantly reduce the costs of operating its colonies while maximizing profits from these overseas territories. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 273-274.

[6] Ibid., 273-276.

[7] Ibid., 280.

[8] Ibid., 280-282.

Indians became low-wage laborers for the new migrant groups that settled the region – first Spanish colonists, then Mexican rancheros, and finally American settlers. Missionization had a lasting negative impact on Native economies, yet contemporary mission representations continue to promote a romanticized depiction of the past that overlooks the memories and histories of Native Californians whose lives were transformed within the mission system. An examination of Mission San Gabriel, the Gabrielino-Tongva, and the history presented by interpreters at San Gabriel's contemporary mission museum exemplifies the divide between popular representations of mission history and scholarly understandings of the past.

The physical descriptions of the landscapes that surrounded Mission San Gabriel during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century are extremely different from the landscapes people see today. Two hundred years ago Mission San Gabriel was surrounded by leagues of open land available for grazing and no Spanish settlements between San Gabriel and Mission San Diego. Today San Gabriel's Mission District exists in the center of a bustling town, dominated by office buildings and busy streets. Interestingly, the City of San Gabriel defines itself through its mission heritage – a component of San Gabriel history that the city advertises through as many venues as possible. Visitors can print walking-tour maps from the city's website and plan a day trip to see "where the Los Angeles region began 200 years ago, at the San Gabriel Mission."[9]

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[9] City of San Gabriel, *San Gabriel: Historical Walk,* (City of San Gabriel: City Hall). While the city proudly proclaims its heritage in pamphlets and on its website, the actual

The restored Mission Playhouse, located only a few blocks away from Mission San Gabriel, played host to the legendary *Mission Play* that defined the romantic mission era for over a million patrons in the twentieth century.

The museum at Mission San Gabriel, crowded with display cases full of photos and objects, exhibits material that generally lacks historical context. It does not include interpretation provided in organized labels normally found at professional museums. Upon entering the museum through the far-left room, patrons receive information about Native Californian history. Pictures of Ishi, "America's last savage," rest on a wall behind the door. Interpreters do not provide a description about Ishi's relation to the mission, most likely because none exists. Also in this room is a display case full of tiles, old keys, baskets, ceramics, spurs, and hardware made by mission Indians. These material objects are ripe for use as interpretive devices in a discussion of Native labor at the mission. Regrettably, the museum presents no more than a superficial discussion of the objects and their creators. Rather than address a typical workday for Native mission residents, the mission museum displays tokens that reflect the romanticized past built by Charles Lummis and McGroarty. These items include Helen Hunt Jackson's novel *Ramona* and early *Ramona* tourism memorabilia.

Ramona itself is a conduit for discussions of changes in Native labor as a result of Spanish colonization. Set in the mid-nineteenth century, the main male character in the novel, Alessandro, works alongside other members of his local village as a traveling

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Mission District includes Mission San Gabriel, the Mission Playhouse, and the Old Grapevine Room (referred to as the birthplace of Jackson's *Ramona*).

seasonal sheep-sheerer on large ranchos owned by californios. Native people began to employ this type of seasonal work after mission secularization, wherein they found work in secular society using skills obtained from mission life. Native people left the missions after the Mexican government enforced secularization orders in the mid-1830s. The mission landscape in California gave way to the sweeping livestock operations of the Mexican ranchos that relied heavily on California Indians as their main source of inexpensive labor. From the 1830s to the end of the nineteenth century, the missions and presidios – symbols of the Spanish system that Mexico fought to rid itself of – fell into disrepair and ruin. Simultaneously, Native people continued to adapt to their ever changing environment by finding employment on ranchos, in growing towns such as Los Angeles, or by participating in the increasingly lucrative but dangerous livestock trades in the interior. With the shift to a wage based labor economy, many Native Californians had to find work in growing Mexican and American towns or take jobs on the ranchos to survive. In presenting *Ramona*, mission representations fail to take this opportunity to address changes in Native economies after Spanish colonization.

The first room in the museum is the only space that displays Native Californian history to any detailed extent. The museum minimizes the essential role of the local indigenous population, the Gabrielino-Tongva, in building the site and their labor in nearly every aspect of mission life. The failure to further describe Native experiences prevents visitors from understanding mission history from a Native perspective. Furthermore, a minimal description of the local indigenous population robs visitors of an

understanding of the rich history the Gabrielino-Tongva possessed for centuries before the arrival of the Spanish.[10]

Other rooms in the museum contain similarly eclectic collections of objects and photos. For instance, one room contains a bedroom set dated from 1623, however, the bed itself originated from the eighteenth or early nineteenth century.[11] A clock on the wall dates from the 1880s, and a wall label reports that the timepiece stopped in the magnitude 6.0 Whittier Narrows earthquake in 1987. This object demonstrates the mission's ability to withstand natural disasters.[12] Objects displayed by interpreters in the San Gabriel mission museum appear more as a collection of curiosities that loosely relate to the history of the mission, instead of relics that represent critical components of mission history. For instance, the stopped-clock addresses earthquakes – a common theme highlighted at many of the California missions.

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[10] One of Mission San Gabriel's only lengthy notes on Gabrielino heritage is a framed copy of a single page from a scholarly publication about the Gabrielino-Tongva by William McCawley. William McCawley *The First Angelinos: The Gabrielino Indians of Los Angeles* (Banning, CA: Malki Museum Press, 1996).

[11] Another room houses an early nineteenth century French organ but is also cluttered with artwork, vestments, and ceremonial clothing of the priests, as well as an early steam space-heater. The walls of the museum's central room are covered in photos with little to no description of their relevance to the mission or California history in general. Furthermore, a case in this central room displays more photos, although these are of famous people who visited the mission, including General George S. Patton, Senator Robert Kennedy, Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Lucille Ball, and Desi Arnaz. These trinkets reflect the personal interests of mission interpreters. They mask the voices of Native people that built the mission walls.

[12] Mission San Gabriel sustained significant damage during the 1987 earthquake. The walls had to be braced and reinforced to prevent further damage.

Visitors to California frequently view earthquakes as an identifying phenomenon of the state. Many mission sites use their historical experiences with these dramatic events to their advantage in entertaining visitors. However, earthquakes are not completely superfluous to the history of Native labor in the California missions. Mission records show that earthquakes caused damage to several missions throughout the state from the beginning of the mission period to the late twentieth century. For example, an earthquake damaged several buildings and the church at Mission San Gabriel in December of 1812. As illustrated by Robert Jackson and Edward Castillo, Native laborers worked for years to reconstruct these fallen structures.[13]

To a visitor familiar with the historical scholarship of the mission system, superfluous exhibits appear as filler that assist the museum in sidestepping real issues involving Spanish colonization and Native mistreatment. Displaying visually pleasing photos with minimal interpretation allows the museum to sanitize its history and ignore the impact of the mission system on the Gabrielino-Tongva. Understanding the history of the Native people who populated the greater Los Angeles area centuries before Spanish colonization is an essential component in creating a more honest history at Mission San Gabriel. Information about the Gabrielino-Tongva and other neighboring Native communities can easily be found in sources published by scholars and Native people from the early twentieth century to the present. Many scholarly sources also examined detailed histories of California missions, including Mission San Gabriel. Understanding the founding of Mission San Gabriel and Native interactions with the Spanish at the site

[13] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 150.

provides a more well-rounded narrative of Spanish California history that neutralizes the mission myth.

The history of Mission San Gabriel began in late 1770 when Viceroy of New Spain, Carlos Francisco de Croix, passed a resolution that ordered the establishment of Mission San Gabriel de Arcángel as well as five other missions located north of San Diego.[14] The Spanish priests and Gabrielino-Tongva built Mission San Gabriel near the Native village of *Shivaanga.*[15] Mission San Diego and the nearby military garrison provided guards and supplies for the founding of Mission San Gabriel. Contemporary interpreters at Mission San Gabriel focus their historical discussion on the establishment of Mission San Gabriel, ignoring the concurrent history of the Gabrielino-Tongva people and the residents of Shivaanga.

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[14] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Gabriel Mission and the Beginning of Los Angeles* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1927), *v*-5.

[15] Mission baptismal records and accounts given by Gabrielino-Tongva people refer to the nearby village where missionaries established Mission San Gabriel with variations of the same name. The name of the village appears in mission baptismal records as *Sibag-na, Sibapet*, *Sibanga*, *Sibap*, and so on. Other people note that the name of the village was *Tobiscanga* or *Toviscanga*; Robert Heizer, ed., *The Indians of Los Angeles County: Hugo Reid's Letters of 1852,* (Highland Park: Southwest Museum, 1968), 7, 107.

Figure 18 Picture of Our Lady of Sorrows from Mission San Gabriel. Source: Author's personal collection.

According to Mission San Gabriel history, the Spanish at first met a lot of resistance from indigenous people in the area. Following in the dramatic tradition of mission lore, interpreters at Mission San Gabriel tell visitors that the local people gave up their weapons after the missionaries unveiled a painting of Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows.[16] Following this display of submission, the Indians assisted the soldiers and

[16] This account of our Lady of Sorrows is one of the most prolific stories about Mission San Gabriel, found in nearly every publication and discussion of the site. In more detail, it depicts the first encounter between the Gabrielino-Tongva and Spanish missionaries. Father Pedro Benito Cambón noted in a letter to his superior, Father Rafael Verger, that the missionaries faced opposition by the local Gabrielino-Tongva in their first efforts to establish the mission. Cambón observed that the Spanish caravan "kept moving along in spite of the determined opposition of the *Indios,* who, in full war-paint and brandishing their bows and arrows… tried to prevent them from crossing the river." After members of the Spanish caravan barricaded themselves behind some bales and boxes, the missionaries unfolded a canvas picture of Our Lady of Sorrows. The Gabrielino-Tongva reportedly marveled at the sight of it "as if transfixed in wonderment." According to Cambón, the Gabrielino-Tongva dropped their weapons and two headmen placed their necklaces at the feet of the portrait—a symbol of their peaceful intentions and instant adoration of the Virgin Mary. This portrait still hangs in the church at Mission San

priests in preparing the mission site for construction. They also went out and returned with more Native people from neighboring Indian villages, known as *rancherias*, bringing with them offerings for Our Lady of Sorrows. The company celebrated the first Mass at the mission after erecting a shelter and a large cross – marking the establishment of Mission San Gabriel on September 8, 1771.[17] This hopeful account sets the stage for mission interpreters to tell a sanitized version of history wherein Native people sought conversion from the very beginning. It allows mission officials to discount historical controversy over coercive conversion practices, harsh labor regimens, fugitivism, and instances of rebellion that do not correspond to the "joyful" history presented in mission mythology.

At Mission San Gabriel, just as at the other twenty-one mission sites, the Spanish put local indigenous people to work constructing the mission buildings. During the first two years, missionaries at San Gabriel baptized seventy-three adults and children who built the living-quarters for the missionaries and soldiers, a defense stockade, corrals for cattle and horses, and a granary. Native converts also planted wheat, corn, beans, and vegetables in nearby fields. The increase in food supplies allowed the mission to support more converts, and by December, 1774, the missionaries baptized an additional 148 Indians and conducted nineteen marriages. The growing number of neophytes at Mission

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Gabriel, as a symbol of the "miraculous" founding of the church. Thomas Workman Temple II, "Founding of San Gabriel Mission," in *The Pride of the Missions: A Documentary History of San Gabriel Mission*, ed. by Francis J. Weber, (Hong Kong: Libra Press Limited, 1979), 4-5.

[17] Temple, "Founding of San Gabriel Mission," 4-5.

San Gabriel between 1771 and 1774 provided a labor force capable of tending large herds of cattle, horses, sheep, and mules. The livestock population and grain production at Mission San Gabriel increased substantially every year after its founding.[18]

Statistically, Mission San Gabriel was a success; however, the beginning of Spanish colonization in Alta California marked the start of a downward spiral for many Native communities. Hispanicization of indigenous people under the threat of physical punishment compelled many mission Indians to curb outward expressions of their Native cultural practices and conform to Hispanic styles of eating, dressing, praying, and living. Contemporary representations of the past at Mission San Gabriel generally focus heavily on Spanish efforts to establish missions and settlements in Alta California and ignore almost all aspects of indigenous history. The Spanish entered into the Gabrielino's sophisticated and established society with ethnocentric notions of Indians as generally primitive and savage beings without culture or religion.[19]

The Spanish described many of the Native people they encountered as inherently lazy, indolent, and undisciplined. To make indigenous people productive members of the

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[18] While grain production increased at the missions, the number of livestock grew dramatically as well. For instance, in 1780 Mission San Gabriel reported 450 head of cattle, 500 sheep, and 100 horses. Forty-five years later, the mission reported to have 18,400 head of cattle, 14,000 sheep, and 2,400 horses. Because of this large amount of production, Mission San Gabriel was able to support its missionary and neophyte population as well as that of the locally-stationed soldiers. Furthermore, Mission San Gabriel generally produced enough surpluses to help supplement the food needed at other missions located on less fertile ground, such as Mission San Diego. Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization,* 117-118; Engelhardt, *San Gabriel Mission and the Beginning of Los Angeles*, 60.

[19] For examples see: Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California,* I, in *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, XVIII, (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), 72-73.

mission community, many of the padres believed that they had to form regimented daily labor routines to stop Native people from "falling victim to vices bred by idleness."[20] Mission institutions looked to create compact and sedentary communities around the Spanish Catholic Church. The priests established localized congregations so that the padres could remove indigenous people from their traditional lifeways, to help control and "civilize" them more effectively.[21] Native people did not respond well to this coercion. Many secretly kept components of their traditional lifeways, while others fled the missions or actively resisted the Spanish. The Gabrielino-Tongva had long established cultural and religious traditions that did not fade away with Spanish colonization.

Mission San Gabriel officials noted that "it is difficult to picture early California more than 200 years ago when the wild, uninhabited miles of our Western land knew only the occasional footsteps of the Gabrielino-Tongva Indian tribes."[22] Counter to this description, people populated nearly every portion of California, from the Modoc plateau in northwestern California, to the Kumeyaay in southern San Diego County. For thousands of years, California Indians developed complex societies that transformed the

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[20] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 281; Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization*, 95-100.

[21] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 288-290.

[22] Val Ramon, *Mission San Gabriel Arcángel: Commemorative Edition*, (Yucaipa, CA: Photografx Worldwide Inc., 2008), 4.

cultural heritage of the region and enshrined the landscape with intrinsic meaning.[23] The Tongva, or Gabrielino, are the indigenous people who historically occupied large portions of present day Los Angeles and Orange counties in California.[24] Tongva is the traditional name of this group, but the Spanish referred to them as the Gabrielino to distinguish the Native people who surrounded the San Gabriel Mission.[25] The Gabrielino-Tongva identified closely with their individual villages, but understood that they shared language and customs with other villages as a larger Gabrielino-Tongva culture as well. Gabrielino-Tongva territory spanned more than 2,500 square miles and included the region between Topanga Canyon, Mount Wilson, east to San Bernardino, and southeast to Aliso Creek. To the northwest the Gabrielino-Tongva shared a border with the Chumash. Gabrielino-Tongva territory bordered Serrano land to the east, and they also shared borders with the Cahuilla and Luiseño to the south.[26]

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[23] Refer to the discussion of Native understandings of the landscape in Chapter 3 of this study.

[24] Indian people occupied the Los Angeles and Orange counties region, and much of California, thousands of years before Spanish missionaries set foot on the American continent. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), 620-621; Alfred L. Kroeber, "Shoshonean Dialects of California," *American Archeology and Ethnology* 4 (February 1907), 140-145; Bernice Eastman Johnston, C*alifornia's Gabrielino Indians*, (Los Angeles: Southwest Museum, 1962). McCawley updated much of what Johnston wrote to appeal to a more scholarly audience.

[25] The Gabrielino further traveled between the California coast and the Channel Islands, near the southern California coast. McCawley, *The First Angelinos,* 1-4.

[26] McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 89; Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, 620-621.

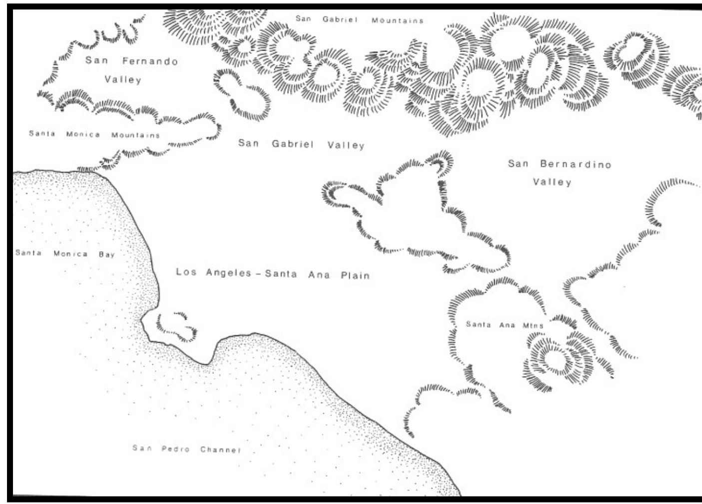

Figure 19 Map of Gabrielino-Tongva Territory. Source: McCawley, "The First Angelinos," 24.

Despite the presumption made by some mission officials that California was an "untamed" land before Spanish settlement, scholarly analyses and Gabrielino-Tongva descriptions of their religious, political, and socioeconomic structures before Spanish colonization demonstrates that Native people manipulated their surroundings to create a lifestyle in which they could thrive.[27] By overlooking important aspects of Gabrielino-Tongva society before sustained Spanish colonization, Mission San Gabriel places Gabrielino-Tongva people into the periphery of their historical discussion. Representations that fail to acknowledge the complexity and longevity of California Indian communities *long before* Spanish colonization also help elevate the claims of mission myths. They falsely contend that the Spanish landmarks signify the beginning of history in California, when, in fact, rich Native histories existed for countless years

[27] The Gabrielino-Tongva resided in many individual communities with populations that ranged from fifty to over two hundred people. A single Gabrielino village generally consisted of one or more ancestral bloodlines existing within individual family units. McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 25.

before the "discovery" of America. Examinations of Gabrielino-Tongva history illustrates that the Spanish entered a highly-developed Native world.

The Gabrielino-Tongva lived a hunter-gatherer lifestyle, but also developed a complex economic influence in the region due to their advantageous location between the Chumash, Serrano, Cahuilla, Luiseño, and the California coast. While this structure seems fairly straightforward, anthropologists have discovered complex aspects of Gabrielino culture and societal organizations.[28] Strict rules of reciprocity and exchange gatherings greatly assisted in the development of a local economy among the many Gabrielino communities and neighboring indigenous groups.[29] Native communities in southern California frequently interacted with other local indigenous groups who did and did not speak their language. They shared culture, language, and intermarried with people from other Native nations. This thorough mixing allowed for semi-porous yet defined boundaries between territories and helped create different indigenous communities with similar cultural values.[30]

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[28] Lowell J. Bean, *Mukat's People: The Cahuilla of Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 151-153.

[29] Bean, *Mukat's People*, 85, 151-153.

[30]For instance, archeological artifacts and records left by Spanish priests observe that the Gabrielino-Tongva shared similarities with the Chumash and the Juaneño, including belief in the deity *Chinigchinich*. Geronimo Boscana, *Chinigchinich: A Revised and Annotated Version of Alfred Robinson's Translation of Father Gerónimo Boscana's Historical Account of the Belief, Usages, Custom and Extravagancies of the Indians of this Mission of San Juan Capistrano Called the Acagchemem Tribe*, ed. by Phil Townsend Hanna, (1933; reprint, Banning, CA: Malki Museum Press, 1978), 41-44;

The Gabrielino-Tongva knew the leader of each local community as a *tomyaar*. The tomyaar, or headman, acted as the administrator for political, fiscal, legal, and religious affairs. Most importantly, the tomyaar regulated communal food distribution and the exchange of shell-bead money between lineages and other communities.[31] Gabrielinos and other neighboring Native communities viewed shell-bead exchange and redistribution as important ties that allied groups. Neglecting to adhere to tribal laws of food or shell-bead reciprocity could result in conflict and warfare.[32] Shaman also held powerful roles in Gabrielino-Tongva society, where they used spiritual power and skill to protect and control society.[33] Some shaman and tomyaars still held important and active roles in Gabrielino-Tongva life within Mission San Gabriel. Many times these people, who concealed the extent of their spiritual powers from the Spanish priests, became the elected leaders of indigenous people within the mission. Mission officials relied on these Native leaders, or *alcaldes*, to help organize and facilitate day-to-day activities at the missions. Alcaldes frequently followed through with orders given by missionaries, such as enforcing punishments, but these leaders also protected Native interests within the

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Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, 622-627; McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 23.

[31] *Tomyaars* received their power and authority through their familial lineage. It also provided them innate access to supernatural sources of power. Many *tomyaar* were male, however, occasionally a female *tomyaar* emerged in historic records. McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 91-93; Heizer, ed., *Indians of Los Angeles County*, 19-21.

[32] Bean, *Mukat's People*, 69-70.

[33] McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 99-103.

Spanish institutions.[34] Popular presentations based on romanticized mission myths do not address the presence of Native leaders at the mission.

Embracing the mission myth, contemporary interpreters ask patrons at Mission San Gabriel to "forget [their] cares and troubles as [they] relive the early days of the Western World."[35] The brief portraits of pre-Spanish Native existences painted by many mission officials reflect the romanticized Indian found in mission lore. According to this mythology, Native people lived serene and carefree lives before Spanish colonization, where "nature reigned supreme over man."[36] These sorts of generalizations allow mission officials to establish the Spanish as a greatly positive influence in the lives of Native Californians. According to this flawed description, the Spanish taught Native people to conquer their surroundings, learn to farm, and introduced "civility" into indigenous cultures. In contrast, accurate histories of early California history before Spanish colonization find that Native Californians, including the Gabrielino-Tongva, had complex lives and cultures, structured economies, and illustrate that indigenous people successfully managed the land.

California Indians occupied some of the most topographically diverse and naturally rich land in America. The Gabrielino-Tongva, for instance, developed settlement patterns that helped them utilize all of the plant, animal, and ocean resources

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[34]Steven W. Hackel, "The Staff of Leadership: Indian Authority in the Missions of Alta California," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (April 1997), 347-376.

[35] Ramon, *Mission San Gabriel Arcángel*, 3.

[36] Ibid. 4.

available to them throughout the changing seasons.[37] Men typically hunted and fished while women collected seeds, nuts, plants, and roots. However, during harvests when it was important to collect food quickly, all members of Gabrielino-Tongva communities participated in food gathering efforts. For example, acorns were an important food for many California Indians, but were only available for harvest once a year. Men and women worked to collect acorns that women brought back to village sites and processed into a meal.[38] Gabrielino people arranged their settlement patterns to accommodate for important harvests because other foods, especially seafood and wild game, were usually available throughout the year. Furthermore, the Gabrielino participated in trade with surrounding Native communities to supplement in times of shortage and for gain in times of prosperity.[39] During Spanish colonization, the padres frequently established mission sites near larger villages to build trade relationships with local leaders and gain the trust of potential converts. Native people did not like this intrusion within their territory and frequently resisted Spanish settlement.

Gabrielino-Tongva territory included important economic trading centers, such as *Nájquqar,* on Santa Catalina Island.[40] The mainland epicenter of Gabrielino society also

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[37] McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 25-26.

[38] Helen McCarthy provided an in depth analysis of the importance of acorns as a Native food source in "Managing Oaks and the Acorn Crop," in *Before the Wilderness: Environmental Management by Native Californians*, ed. by Thomas C. Blackburn and Kat Anderson, (Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1993), 213-228.

[39]Heizer, ed., *The Indians of Los Angeles County,* 43-45; McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 111-117.

[40] McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 76-82.

sat in the center of a large trade network that connected many southern Californian Indian groups together. Luckily for the Gabrielino-Tongva, their territory existed in a region that was so naturally rich that they relied minimally on trade for sustenance, but still exchanged with other indigenous groups for goods not found in their territory.[41] For example, they traded the Cahuilla soapstone and shell beads for fur, hide, and salt. The Gabrielino-Tongva also traded sea otter pelts, fish, and shell beads to the Serrano for deerskin and seeds. Further, the Mohave from the Colorado River region traveled hundreds of miles to trade "luxury" goods such as deer or antelope-skin shirts, red ochre, bighorn pelts, and blankets to the Gabrielino-Tongva for shells and soapstone from Catalina Island.[42] Trade provided outlets for specialized craftsmen, such as plank canoe manufacturers who produced goods for profit. Also, trade between the Gabrielino-Tongva, Chumash, Cahuilla, and others helped create the shell-bead as a standardized medium of exchange.[43] The natural richness of land in Gabrielino territory attracted Spanish explorers and missionaries, who saw the great potential for farming and ranching.

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[41] McCawley included a discussion of all of the resources available to the Gabrielino within their territory in *The First Angelinos*, 115-140.

[42] Island Gabrielino quarried soapstone and traded it with Gabrielino and other indigenous people throughout the region who used the stone extensively to make cooking utensils, pots, pipes, and a variety of other goods. Heizer, ed., *The Indians of Los Angeles County*, 43-44; Bean, *Mukat's People*, 123; McCawley, 111-112; Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, 628-629.

[43] To regulate prices and keep demand steady, many Native communities in southern California destroyed goods and beads during certain ceremonial activities, such as the Mourning Ceremony. Bean, *Mukat's People,* 151-159; McCawley, *The First Angelinos*, 113-115.

The sophisticated socioeconomic system developed in southern California exemplifies that California Indians led rich and sophisticated lives long before the Spanish set foot in the Americas. Mission officials and foreign explorers that deemed the California Indians "simple" and "ignorant" people, failed to understand Native history prior to Spanish contact. Native people were not "lazy" or "indolent" as described by many foreign explorers, Spanish priests, and soldiers. Rather, they developed complex socioeconomic systems that required strenuous work during harvests, but also allowed time for leisure, games, singing, dancing, and other cultural and religious activities.[44] Their lifestyles did not mesh with European standards of "civility." Before Spanish colonization, Native people developed labor strategies that best suited their lifestyles. However, cultural barriers between Native people and the Spanish bred conflict. The Spanish viewed idleness as a gateway to sin and the padres instituted a restrictive and stringent labor routine that they forced on California Indians at the missions.

The mission landscape was new to California Indians in the late eighteenth century, but Native people employed both new and older and more familiar methods in their roles as laborers under the Spanish. Native people at many missions refused to

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[44] Religion was extremely important to Gabrielino-Tongva people, who turned to their spiritual beliefs to define nearly every aspect of life, including economics, morality, politics, law, and life events. *Chinigchinich,* the religion of the Gabrielino-Tongva people, developed over time and reflected influences from the Chumash *'antap-yovaar* religion, traditions of earlier Uto-Aztecan speakers in the region, and possibly Christianity. The Gabrielino in general took care to keep aspects of their religion private. Despite this, scholars do know some details about Gabrielino-Tongva religious beliefs, based on Geronimo Boscana's writings on the Juaneño, also known as the Acagchemem. Boscana, *Chinigchinich*, 2-247.

completely abandon their traditional subsistence strategies and other economic activities.[45] They held onto traditional practices but also adapted to the occupations required by Spanish institutions to survive in a quickly changing world. For instance, Native women within the missions continued to make baskets, but also learned to weave wool into clothing, blankets, and rugs. Before and after Spanish colonization, music, song, and dance were important components of Native Californian cultures.[46] Spanish priests also valued music and song. They established choirs and orchestras as one of the first tasks after founding a mission.[47] While priests often considered Native dances to be "lascivious," they treasured talented musicians and young men with angelic voices.[48]

Priests placed a high value on musical instruction and trained these talented young men to sing in the Spanish style. They allowed gifted performers and members of the all-male choirs to focus on music rather than participate in labor intensive chores. Historian of Spanish California James Sandos argued that, in the social order of mission life, members of the choir were among the elite. According to Sandos, priests considered

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[45] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 280-281.

[46] For example, communities in southern California often used rattles from dried gourds while they sang, and some groups in northern and central California used flutes to accompany their song and dance.

[47] Joseph Halpin, "Musical Activities and Ceremonies at Mission Santa Clara de Asís," *California Historical Quarterly* 50, 35-42; James A. Sandos, "Identity through Music: Choristers at Mission San Jose and San Juan Bautista," in *Alta California: Peoples in Motion, Identities in Formation, 1769-1850*, ed. by Steven W. Hackel, (Berkeley: University of California Press, for the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, 2010), 111-128.

[48] Halpin, "Musical Activities and Ceremonies at Mission Santa Clara de Asís," 35; Sandos examined Franciscan perspectives on dancing in *Converting California*, 167-168.

music an important tool leading to total conversion for indigenous people. The padres believed that they could reach Native converts on a deeper level through music sung during Masses than just baptism alone. Scholars argue that priests frequently provided very little spiritual instruction to indigenous people before baptism. Rather, they imparted "abbreviated catechism," that sometimes lasted as little as a day. These abbreviated catechisms helped populate the mission with enough "converts" necessary to build and sustain the mission complex.[49] Therefore, mission musicians and choir members were central in the ultimate spiritual goal of the Spanish priests to provide instruction *after* baptism.[50]

Religious instruction appears as a secondary focus for the Spanish who initially viewed many adult neophytes as laborers needed to sustain the fledgling missions. Recent presentations at many California missions neglect to acknowledge this divide. Just as they highlight the more desirable labor roles, contemporary exhibits also do not address the close correlation between religious conversion and the need for indigenous laborers. Such an examination calls the intentions of the Spanish padres into question. And as Catholic inheritors of the Spanish tradition, many contemporary mission interpretations prefer to ignore the close connection between baptism and the need for laborers.

Along with choir members, the hierarchical organization of mission communities placed the most value on skilled artisans, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, weavers,

[49] Sandos, *Converting California,* xvi-xv.

[50] Ibid., 128-153.

masons, and artists.[51] As mentioned previously, discussions of labor at contemporary missions focus nearly exclusively on this group that produced many of the visible tools and objects displayed at the missions today.[52] For example, displays at the contemporary museum at Mission Santa Barbara focus on the work of neophyte artisans, painters, weavers, sculptures, blacksmiths, and potters rather than the laborious tasks done by field hands and builders. By highlighting mission-trained artisans, exhibits at Mission Santa Barbara continue to reflect romanticized attributes of the mission system that Americans view favorably. They also continue to promote the romanticized myth of Spanish California by depicting the missions as a training ground for Native artisans, rather than the sites of stringent work routines instituted by the padres. Many Native Californians today reject popular narratives that paint the missions as idyllic centers of religion. Rather, they contend that the Spanish kept indigenous people at the missions as slaves.[53]

Scholars debate the amount of force used by missionaries and soldiers to keep Indians at the missions and further disagree over whether Indian people were slaves for the Spanish. For instance, Steven Hackel noted that neophytes worked at the missions, not as slaves or indentured servants, but as a "semicaptive labor force" compelled to stay

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[51] Ibid., 9-10.

[52] Displays at several contemporary mission museums contain nails, horseshoes, adobe bricks, red roofing tiles, baskets, paintings, wine vats and other materials that symbolize the dramatized labor done by Native people at the "idyllic" California missions. This statement is based on observations of displays at the San Diego, San Gabriel, San Juan Capistrano, and San Juan Bautista missions from 2009 to 2013.

[53] Tony Pinto, "All of Us Know About Slavery at the Missions," in *The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide*, ed. by Rupert Costo and Jeanette Henry Costo, (San Francisco: Indian Historical Press, 1987) , 139.

based on a need for food and community.[54] Similarly, Sandos observed that scholars who relate the Indian condition under the mission system to slavery in the American South are "unfair." Sandos supported a "peonage" model of Indian labor in Spanish California wherein Indian laborers bound themselves to the mission and missionaries though baptism.[55] On the other hand, Native testimonials written in *The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide* depicted a history of forced conversion and slavery wherein missionaries and soldiers abused and killed many indigenous people.[56] Other oral histories provided by Native people throughout the twentieth century argue that Indians were slaves for the missions. For example, Tony Pinto a Kumeyaay from San Diego and tribal chair for his reservation stated that "all of our elders knew what happened to those who were forced to go to the missions…. The Indians were slaves. They did all the work, and after a day's work, the priests lock them up…. They beat them and killed them if they were sick, or couldn't work, or didn't agree to certain work."[57] Many components of the mission system such as labor, punishment, death, and disease left lasting negative imprints on California Indian communities into the late twentieth century. Despite this legacy, many Americans still understand the missions from glorified and romanticized perspectives.

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[54]Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 281.

[55] Sandos, *Converting California*, 107-108.

[56] Rupert Costo and Jeannette Henry Costo provide Native perspectives on the abuse and punishment Native people faced at the California missions in their edited volume, *The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide*, 136, 139, 141-142, 145-146, 154-155.

[57] Tony Pinto, "All of Us Know About Slavery at the Missions," 139.

At the same time, exhibits at private Church-owned mission museums tend to focus heavily on detailing the work schedule of the handful of priests that lived at the missions. For instance, an exhibit in the "kitchen and dining room" at Mission San Juan Capistrano includes an outline of a priest's daily life. It fails to address the work Native people performed under strict supervision at the mission. The display explains that, besides their religious obligations, priests filled the roles of accountants and architects, and the padres "built the sun dried adobe brick, they planted fields and orchards, they drove livestock up from Mexico. They created the Missions of California."[58] Pamphlets sold at the missions, used by many fourth grade students who produce school projects about the missions, conclude that "considering the period of history, the mission neophytes did less labor and lived better than the average worker or peasant in Europe."[59] According to Father Raymond Kammerer's idyllic description of mission life, priests punctuated three hours of work with a hearty meal of *pozole* and Indians enjoyed "many feast days."[60] These types of descriptions minimize Native sacrifices at the missions and support the romantic imagery created by Lummis, *Ramona* enthusiasts, and McGroarty's *Mission Play*. Kammerer did not explain that mission Indians also labored to produce enough food to feed themselves and the increasingly unproductive Spanish settler and soldier populations. At the same time they also built the Spanish California infrastructure

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[58] Raymond C. Kammerer, *Mission Life at San Juan Capistrano* (Cincinnati: Km Communications, 1991), 14.

[59] Ibid., 47-48. Hackel provided a more accurate account of mission life as agreed upon by scholars in *Children of Coyote,* 283-284.

[60] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 283-284.

and tended to the growing livestock population that skyrocketed into the hundreds of thousands.

Rather than relying solely on food from fishing, hunting, and gathering from the locally-managed land, mission Indians worked under a stringent labor program harvesting newly-introduced plants such as wheat, corn, barley, and grapes. Other neophytes managed vast herds of cattle, sheep, and horses. Spanish priests assigned Native women work in kitchens to make foods that appealed to the Spanish palate, including gruel made of corn meal, known as *atole,* as well as tortillas, stews such as pozole and *puchero,* and dough-breads including *tarrejas*. These labor routines partially resembled gendered divisions of labor familiar to indigenous people in California, but Native men frequently balked at agricultural work in the fields because women traditionally gathered plants.[61] While Native people adapted to Spanish expectations and new gender roles, they also struggled to adjust to new social structures.

At some missions, Native people constructed traditional semi-permanent tule-grass structures to house families within the mission complex. They also built separate permanent adobe quarters for priests, soldiers, and young or unmarried Native women, known as *monjeríos*. Indian women maintained the domestic sphere, according to the strict gender-based division of labor ingrained in Spanish society in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Conversely, Indian men did much of the heavy labor-intensive

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[61] Jackson and Castillo provide a detailed account of grain production and livestock at select missions in *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 113-131.

work such as building and repairing the Spanish infrastructure at the missions, presidios, and towns, known as *pueblos*.[62]

Once Native people became members of the mission community they began an extremely structured life as child-like wards of the missionaries. Each day they rose before sunrise, at daybreak priests said mass followed by recitation of Christian doctrine and hymnal singing. While the padres generally understood components of some Native languages, they preferred to instruct the neophytes in Castilian as an important part of the Hispanicization process. After these standardized Catholic rituals, converts ate breakfast and subsequently received their daily work assignments. Work included such things as tending the fields and livestock, preparing and cooking food, and assisting in the production of mission-made goods. The neophytes received lunch at noon, and returned to work until sunset. At sunset they again recited doctrine and sang.[63]

Neophytes worked and lived under strict supervision. Missionaries used Spanish overseers, known as a *mayordomo*, and alcaldes to monitor work and enforce daily routines under the threat of the whip.[64] The priests also doled out sentences in shackles and stocks to punish converts for skirting their chores, working too slowly, or for being "lazy." According to Native testimonials published by contemporary scholars, the missionaries sometimes even forced offenders to work in the fields wearing weighted

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[62] Ibid., 38-39.

[63] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 283-284.

[64] Spicer and Hackel address punishment and labor. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest*, 294-295; Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 280-309.

wooden stocks around their ankles as punishments.[65] Most mission sites do not acknowledge the punishments that missionaries and soldiers used to enforce the strict Spanish labor systems.[66] Interpretations at contemporary mission sites still preserve romanticized portrayals of the Spanish past upheld by the likes of McGroarty, Lummis, and *Ramona* tourists.

Figure 20 Native women working at a mission. The woman on the far right wears stocks around her ankles as she works. Source: David Rickman, California Missions Coloring Book (1992).

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[65] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 83-84.

[66] Two mission sites operated by the State of California do address components of labor punishment – Mission San Francisco de Solano sells a coloring book that includes an image of an Indian woman weaving in ankle stocks, and an exhibit at Mission La Purisima actually includes a reproduction of the heavy wooden stocks. Chapters six and seven will address representations of punishment and the state-operated museums further. This image can be found in, David Rickman, *California Missions Coloring Book* (New York: Dover Publications, 1992).

An outward air of romance permeates through the narrative provided at Mission Santa Barbara, although it acknowledges that "the missions were built *for the Indians*, and, to a great extent, *by them*."[67] However, publications produced for visitors to Mission Santa Barbara minimize labor regimens and paints work under the Spanish appear as more appealing than the stringent routines that modern scholars have documented. According to Franciscan historian Maynard Geiger, the Chumash of Santa Barbara traditionally "had quite a bit of leisure," but neophytes needed organized routines to adapt to Spanish culture. Geiger reported that these labor routines did not disturb the life of the Chumash too much. He argued that "few labor unions today have reached the working hour schedule and fringe benefits or the social security of the California Indians either at Santa Bárbara or elsewhere."[68] According to Geiger's idyllic representation of mission life, Native people worked only a handful of hours each day and "there was plenty of leisure" time to play games and other recreational activities.[69]

Geiger's description of light workloads and leisurely time at the mission, originally written in 1960, reflects the glorified Spanish narrative popular in the United States in the early twentieth century. Similar to other mission apologists, Geiger argued that indigenous people "lived under a benevolent and paternalistic regime, [they were] taught Christianity, and if [they] did not have the freedom enjoyed in pre-mission times,

[67] Maynard Geiger, *The Indians of Mission Santa Bárbara*, Second edition, (Santa Barbara: Franciscan Friars, 2010), 2.

[68] Geiger, *The Indians of Mission Santa Bárbara*, 32.

[69] Ibid., 36.

[they] received other social and economic gains in the form of social security."[70] Using statistical data recorded by missionaries and the journals and letters of Spanish officials during the mission era, historians today argue that labor regimens at the missions were far less ideal for Native people than those described by Geiger. As Hackel illustrated, labor at the mission took a toll on Mission Indians, especially when combined with the threat of physical punishment. Fear of punishments became ingrained in the Indian psyche and physically affected indigenous people, along with malnutrition and disease epidemics that permeated neophyte communities.[71] Sherburne F. Cook also found that the psychological effects of coercive labor routines greatly effected Native morale because California Indians were not accustomed to the intense workdays forced by the Spanish.[72]

Cook argued that indigenous people disliked the tedious and orderly labor traditions that were a central part of mission life. They also resented providing food and

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[70] Ibid., 39. Mission era "apologists" is a term Edward Castillo used to classify scholars that frequently focused on the positive attributes of the Spanish missions, and ignored or discounted negative components of the system. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. and Edward D. Castillo, "California Mission Indians: Two Perspectives," *California History* 70 (1991), 206-215.

[71] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 282-283.

[72] Cook noted that "the whole basis of the aboriginal system was the idea of intermittent effort, rather than steady, consistent exertion." Native people operated on seasonal schedules based on locally available foods. They worked hard to harvest food when it was ripe and rested after the work was done. Cook contended that highly structured daily labor regimens were not a part of Native life before Spanish colonization and Native people continually struggled with the drastic change to their daily patterns of life. Cook, *The Conflict Between the Indian and White Civilization*, 98-100.

labor for the Spanish soldiers who did little work themselves.[73] Unfortunately for neophytes working at the mission, mission sites were continuously under construction according to mission records. For example, while the original site of Mission San Gabriel sustained the Spanish and Native populations for a time, flooding forced the padres to move the settlement a league north in 1775. The missionaries chose a location closer to El Camino Real that helped San Gabriel become a trade center and resting point for travelers in Spanish California. At this new site, indigenous people again worked to build more permanent structures from adobe and wood. Native people constructed buildings at every mission from the ground up; they formed the adobe bricks from mud and water, one by one. They also fell trees, carried them miles to the mission site, and shaped them into the planks and beams needed to frame the walls and roofs of the mission.[74]

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[73] Unlike contemporary scholars such as Hackel, Sandos, Jackson, and Castillo who demonstrate that Native people quickly adapted to Spanish tools and labor systems, Cook argued that California Indians inherently could not adapt to the "necessities of the European and American economic system." Reflecting discriminatory notions in the early 1900s, Cook argued that because of their "innate inferiority… the race was doomed to severe depletion, if not extinction, in free completion with the whites simply because it could not sufficiently rapidly and successfully adapt itself to the labor system basic to white economy." Scholars today discredit Cook's contention and show that Native people have revived their traditional cultures while also contributing to American economies. Ibid., 98-101.

[74] Many of the missions were constantly under construction. For example, between 1775 and 1783 Indian laborers constructed a majority of Mission San Gabriel's quadrangle, including a chapel, quarters for the missionaries, storage facilities, sheds and corrals, a kitchen, a two-room hospital, separate dormitories for girls and boys, a tannery, and soldier barracks. Construction continued at the mission into 1827, during which time the neophytes built many more structures including the large stone and masonry church that still stands on the mission grounds. They also built several granaries, dozens of homes for neophyte families, mills, hen-houses, and facilities for a blacksmith. Jackson and Castillo

Many contemporary mission activities for visiting school children include adobe brick-making stations. With this limited exercise, students receive only a glimpse into the daily work routines of Native people at the missions. Kammerer recognized that "the visitor today to this Mission [San Juan Capistrano] (or any of the California missions) receives but some small idea of what a work day here was really like." But instead of recounting the daily labor routines, he describes a bustling town-like atmosphere where people could hear the "talking and laughter of many workers in and around the buildings and corridors."[75] Combined with the manicured gardens of modern California missions, these statements exude romanticized images of the missions as idyllic havens for Native Californians. They downplay actual Native experiences and negative components of mission history.

Figure 21 Postcard depicting gardens and courtyard at Mission San Juan Capistrano, c. 1915. Source: Author's personal collection.

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include a list of the buildings constructed at the missions, including dates and descriptions, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 145-168.

[75] Kammerer, *Mission Life at San Juan Capistrano*, 25.

Figure 22 Covered pathway adjacent to the cemetery and gardens at Mission San Gabriel. Source: Author's personal collection.

Sandos observed that labor and religious instruction served dual purposes to Hispanicize and control Native populations. He argued that "the primary purpose of the Franciscans in the missions was to mold good Christians" but the secular needs to economically sustain colonization in Alta California often superseded the goals of the padres.[76] Representations of Native labor at Mission San Gabriel similarly reflect the narratives told at San Juan Capistrano and Santa Barbara. Professionally printed signs placed at key sites throughout the grounds at San Gabriel note that Franciscan missionaries and the Gabrielino-Tongva constructed the mission together. In reality, Native laborers did exponentially more work than the handful of priests that served the mission. According to mission interpretations, they also made clay aqueduct pipes, produced food, ground wheat, and cured leather. These signs differ from older hand-

[76] Sandos, *Converting California*, 8-11.

painted placards also found throughout the mission that passively discuss laborious tasks done at the mission, such as soap and candle making, without identifying the groups of people responsible for manufacturing the goods.

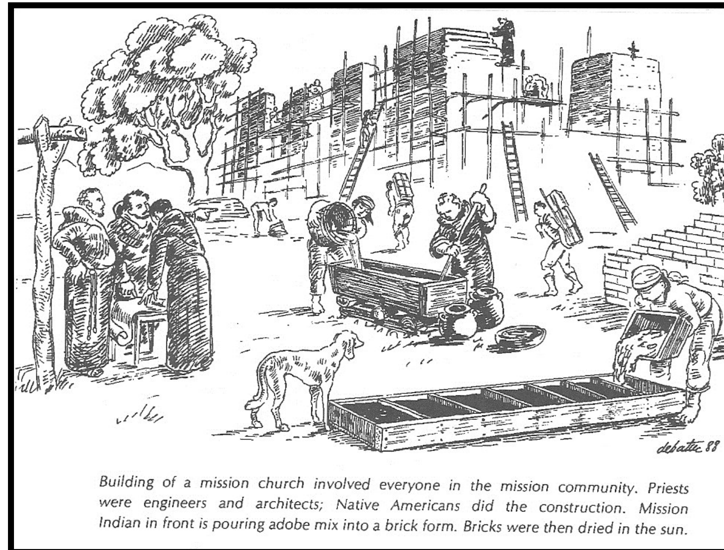

Figure 23 Picture from a booklet made for school children. Shows missionaries and neophytes building a mission together. Source: Mary Null Boulé, *The Missions: California's Heritage – Mission San Gabriel Arcángel*, 5.

Production generally increased at Mission San Gabriel throughout the mission period, especially after the padres relocated the mission deeper inland into the Los Angeles basin. For example, the mission reported harvesting 960 bushels of wheat and 1,605 bushels of corn in 1780 – both non-native foods that the Gabrielino-Tongva learned to cultivate after the Spanish arrived in Alta California.[77] The mission secured benefits from a completed irrigation system constructed by the Gabrielino-Tongva and

[77] The original name used to depict units of measurement by the Spanish was *fanegas*. All of the data regarding grain production located in Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization* is measured in *fanegas*. One *fanegas* is equivalent to 1.5 bushels. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 441.

missionaries after 1778. This aqueduct system supplied water for the kitchen, tannery, and irrigated fields surrounding the mission complex.[78] The completed irrigation system helped reap successful wheat harvests of over 4,500 bushels a year. Workers at Mission San Gabriel produced a record-setting 16,500 bushels of wheat in 1821. Native laborers also increased corn production over the years, reaching a height of 12,000 bushels in 1817. Many contemporary mission sites highlight the "sophisticated" aqueduct systems that the Spanish introduced to California – images that harken back to the aqueducts constructed by Roman architects during antiquity. At the same time, they neglect to address the large amount of labor it took to create the aqueducts and the number of workers it took to procure such bountiful harvests.

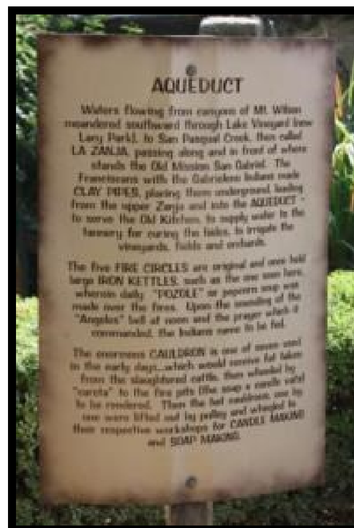

Figure 24 Signpost from Mission San Gabriel detailing the construction and benefit of the aqueduct system. Source: Author's personal collection.

[78] The Gabrielino-Tongva and missionaries constructed an aqueduct system that brought water into Mission San Gabriel from Wilson Lake.

Cattle ranching and agricultural production at missions is also a major aspect of history ever present in the interpretations of the past at contemporary sites. Absent at Mission San Gabriel, however, is a clear portrayal of the physical work conducted by Indian laborers, and the toll livestock and hard labor had on Indian people and their communities. The Spanish first brought cattle to Alta California as early as 1769 – coinciding with the founding of Mission San Diego. The Los Angeles basin provided some of the best land in Alta California for cattle ranching that the Spanish utilized widely. Meat, hide, and tallow that Native people cultivated from cattle quickly became staples for Spanish settlers who relied heavily on products developed from these raw goods in their daily lives.[79] Hides and tallow products, such a soap and candles, also lured foreign trade ships to the California coast. These merchant ships helped supplement Spanish supplies in the region when the self-sufficient mission system left them wanting a variety of different tools and other goods.[80]

The Spanish crown considered self-sufficient systems ideal for its Alta California colonies. Within this system, the crown supplied minimal resources. Ideally, soldiers, settlers, missionaries, and neophytes would all benefit from the food and goods produced at missions and in the pueblos. Unfortunately, many accounts given by Native people and Spanish officials observed that indigenous people suffered great exploitation under this system. Besides the physical abuses Spanish soldiers and missionaries inflicted on

[79] Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 7-35.

[80] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 126-127; Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 161-165.

Indian laborers, neophyte populations had to absorb the shortcomings during poor harvest years while missionaries and soldiers consistently received the same amount of food.[81] Romantic and dramatized narratives of the California missions do not include accounts of California Indians absorbing shortfalls. Regional promoters and contemporary mission officials prefer to omit these negative images of the mission system from their representations of Spanish California.

The Spanish established a reliance on Indian labor in place of working themselves early on in the mission era, both within missions and beyond their walls. In return, the settlers gave Native laborers clothing, goods, or promised to pay them wages. Missionaries allowed neophytes to work for setters and soldiers, who "rented" Native people to help construct buildings and harvest fields, in exchange for a daily wage.[82] Many Spanish settlers during the late eighteenth century also began to petition the Alta California government for access to the large tracts of land that surrounded the missions. In some cases the government granted these requests, while in others the missionaries requested that the government deny these requests in the name of neophytes.[83] At first the missions controlled most of the land in Alta California. But beginning in 1784,

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[81] In times of shortfalls, missionaries still expected Native laborers to produce the same quantities, even though they had less nourishment. Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 26-29.

[82] Increasingly, the soldiers neglected to pay Indian laborers. Soldiers often received late or no payments from the government in New Spain, contributing to their inability or disinterest to pay Indian workers. Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 26-29.

[83] Engelhardt, *San Gabriel Mission and the Beginning of Los Angeles*, 62-68.

Governor Pedro Fages granted large tracts of land in southern California to four retired Spanish soldiers, Manuel Neito, Antonio Yorba, Jose Maria Verdugo, and Juan Jose Dominguez.[84] Labor of both neophytes and non-mission Indians became central in the homes and fields of the emerging *californio* class in Spanish California.[85]

Native people worked as domestic servants and did much of the heavy physical labor in California. Hackel observed that Spanish settlers and soldiers, who referred to themselves as *gente de razón*, people of reason, insisted that Indians did the manual labor because they were inferior, *gente sin razón*, people without reason. This division of labor distinctly branded indigenous people as the working class – a distinction that lasted long after the Spanish flag came down in California. Native people filled the roles of laborers to earn a subsistence wage in the wake of extreme cultural, economic, and environmental upheaval that made it nearly impossible to continue traditional Native ways of life.[86]

Spanish settlers and soldiers also pressured the mission system for inexpensive food and goods in Alta California. Presidios and settlements relied on the grains and

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[84] Landscapes in southern California still hold the names of some of these early Spanish land grants. J.J. Warner, Benjamin Hayes, and J.P. Widney, *An Historical Sketch of Los Angeles County: From the Spanish Occupancy, by the Founding of Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, September 8, 1771, to July 4, 1876*, (Los Angeles: Mirror Printing, Ruling and Binding House, 1876), 8-10.

[85] The large ranches established by settlers also unleashed large numbers of cattle and horses in the Los Angeles Basin. Herds of grazing animals went unchecked and grew tremendously. Theses herds decimated the natural vegetation in the area and strained Gabrielino-Tongva access to traditional foods—forcing local indigenous people to turn to towns for access to money and a stable food supply. Warner, et al., *An Historical Sketch of Los Angeles County*, 8-10.

[86] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 318-320.

meat produced at prosperous California missions such as Mission San Gabriel. Thus, missions and Native laborers increasingly served the secular needs of the state. Native laborers skilled in specific trades, such as carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, soap and candle production, tanning, and weaving, allowed for even more trade between missionaries, soldiers, and foreign ships that frequented the California coast in the early 1800s.[87] Seeking the goods produced by Native laborers, foreign merchants helped erode the dependence Alta California had on New Spain. These exchanges and heavy reliance on Indian labor only increased under Mexican rule.

Many mission museums today point to the end of the mission system as the cause of widespread destruction of Indian communities. According to this perspective, Native Californians faced abuses from incoming settlers once the Mexican government removed neophytes from the protection of the Spanish padres. Conversely, historical records, including petitions for emancipation by California Indians, demonstrate that many neophytes chose to leave the missions on their own accord once the governors of Alta California provided them that liberty.[88] To significantly reduce the power of the church, the Mexican governors turned the missions into local parish churches, replaced missionaries with parish priests, and drastically cut funding for the missions in the

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[87] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 272-277.

[88] Many others fled the missions from the 1770s to the 1820s; however, mission officials sent soldiers after mission runaways and prescribed punishments for those they caught. Following the emancipation decree, mission Indians did not have to fear these punishments and many left the missions without recourse. Ibid., 369-381.

1830s.[89] These actions led to the immediate collapse of many mission sites. According to interpreters at Mission San Gabriel, "with secularization, with the missions destroyed, with the Indians dispersed to dusty reservations, one of the most idealistic adventures in colonization ever attempted came to a sad end."[90] Interpreters romanticize the mission era without paying tribute to the labors of California Indians. Instead, the "idealistic adventure" of Spanish colonization abruptly ends and Native people quickly move into the social periphery on "dusty reservations."

Interpreters at many contemporary missions, including San Gabriel, San Juan Capistrano, and Santa Barbara, openly engage in promoting the mission myth of a romantic Spanish past. By failing to include significant discussions of Native cultures *before* Spanish colonization and sidestepping realistic experiences of Native people at the missions, interpreters do not openly address changes to the Native economy and labor systems. Furthermore, mission sites fail to acknowledge the lasting legacy that the Spanish missions left on Native communities.[91]

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[89] The missionaries did not groom Native people for this shift. According to Jackson and Castillo, "social disruption and psychological dislocation, results of the extreme paternalism practiced at the missions, left the Indians ill-prepared to deal with the new conditions that existed in California following the closing of the missions." Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 53.

[90] Excerpt taken from a sign post in the museum at Mission San Gabriel. April, 2013.

[91] While some newer statements posted at the mission briefly mention Gabrielino-Tongva labor in constructing the mission and producing certain goods, other signs passively discuss production at the mission. Many of the newly interpreted signs and discussions point to the June 27, 2008, Gabrielino-Tongva rededication of Mission San Gabriel's gardens and crucifix (a memorial to their Tongva ancestors who built the mission). Mission San Gabriel only details this event in a laminated one-page article from *The Tidings*, the weekly newspaper produced by the Los Angeles Archdiocese. This article

In the midst of scholarly debates over the true nature of Spanish colonization, many contemporary mission sites continue to represent their history in a way that promotes a more positive view of the Catholic Church and California's Spanish past. Interpretations at these sites frequently overlook the memories and history of Native Californians whose lives were so intertwined with the mission system. Interpretations at mission museums prefer to exhibit components of mission history that reflect positively on the Spanish past in contemporary Catholic spaces. Native testimonials present in Spanish mission records include labor regimens and harsh punishments as some of the many reasons behind indigenous resistance against the mission system. Contemporary mission sites also fail to adequately address confrontations between indigenous people and the Spanish at the California missions. The numerous instances of resistance ever present at all of the California missions counters the "White Legend" Lummis build around the Spanish in America. However, at some missions, struggles to resist the Spanish left such indelible marks on the region's history that mission officials must create narratives to reconcile these events with the mission mythology.

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noted that the rededication, plans to plant Native vegetation in gardens, and building a *ki* (Gabrielino-Tongva house) in the courtyard all help to recognize Native contributions at Mission San Gabriel. Ellie Hidalgo, "A meaningful rededication at San Gabriel Mission," *The Tidings*, July 4, 2008.

Chapter 5

Resistance at the California Missions

The mission myth constructed and popularized in the twentieth century does not include discussions of California Indians in Spanish California from a *Native* perspective. Patrons who visit the California missions leave with a distorted understanding of the past, tinged by the biased history presented by promoters of "benevolent" Spanish colonization. Site interpreters mislead visitors into believing that the only purpose of the Spanish missions was to guide Native people to salvation from paganism – to save souls. Interpreters at these historic sites do not provide Native perspective and often neglect to present a clear understanding of the traditions and customs of the local indigenous people, as exemplified in the previous discussion of labor in the missions. Several scholars including Steven Hackel, Robert Jackson, Edward Castillo, James Sandos, George Harwood Phillips, Richard Carrico, and Florence Shipek have argued that Indian people came to the missions with worldviews shaped heavily by their Native religious beliefs, customs, and tribal histories.[1] It is nearly impossible to understand Native

[1] Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonia California, 1769-1850*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Robert H. Jackson and Edward D. Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: the Impact of the Mission System on the California Indians*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Richard L. Carrico, "Sociopolitical Aspects of the 1775 Revolt at

experiences within the mission system and their resistance to these Spanish institutions without also having a basic understanding of these important components of their lives. A case study of the Kumeyaay, the local Native Californians who populated Mission San Diego, will serve as an example of the skewed presentations of resistance to Spanish colonization promoted by contemporary California missions, influenced by a misunderstanding of Native people.[2] An analysis of available scholarship regarding Kumeyaay culture and interaction with the Spanish before and after settlement will greatly improve public understanding of the motives behind key disputes in mission history, such as the 1775 San Diego Revolt. Furthermore, this more complete understanding of people and events helps pinpoint, and hopefully mend, the specific faults in mission mythology that continues to discount Native resistance to Spanish colonization.

Mission San Diego de Alcala: An Ethnohistorical Approach," *The Journal of San Diego History* 43 (Summer 1997); Florence Shipek, "California Indian Reactions to the Franciscans," *The Americas* 41 (1985), 53-66; George Harwood Phillips, C*hiefs and Challengers: Indian Resistance and Cooperation in Southern California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975); George Harwood Phillips, *Indians and Intruders in Central California, 1769-1849* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

[2] For example, Edward D. Castillo responded to this bias in a reply to *California History* after Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. criticized Castillo's use of Lorenzo Asisara's narrative about the assassination of Father Andres Quintana – according to Nunis it is a "document flawed in the extreme." However, Castillo retorted that many historians before the late twentieth century discounted Native testimonials as inaccurate or unreliable especially when Native accounts countered the romantic mission myth that mission "apologists" continually upheld. Castillo argued that apologetic scholars selectively read historical documents left by Europeans to present a more "cozy" narrative of the Franciscans. For more see: Doyce B. Nunis, Jr. and Edward D. Castillo, "California Mission Indians: Two Perspectives," *California History* 70 (Summer, 1991), 206-215.

The Catholic Church currently owns and operates a majority of California missions. Many of these sites continue to conduct services in the mission churches. Mission San Diego de Alcala is no exception. It is an active Catholic parish church in the Diocese of San Diego, with an enrolled congregation of over three thousand members. This bustling parish holds several masses at the mission church throughout the week and six alone on Sundays. With a large Catholic presence at the historic site, mission interpreters embrace the romanticized mission myth with an extremely positive view of the Franciscan padres and their interactions with Native people.

Publications produced and distributed by Mission San Diego also promote an extremely positive view of the mission system. For instance, one booklet proclaimed in its introduction that "San Diego de Alcala, the first of the great California Missions, marks the birthplace of Christianity in the far West…. This remarkable and significant shrine provides an understanding and appreciation of the beginning of Catholicism in this corner of the world, so remote from the Mother Country of Spain and yet so similar." Statements such as these directly conjure romanticized imagery of the Spanish past and establish the restored missions as the center of antiquity in the region. The author continues that the mission site allows people to "relive the grandeur and excitement of more than two centuries of California history and tradition."[3] Many interpreters at this historic site are proponents of the Spanish era as a golden-age in California history.

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[3] I. Brent Eagen, "A History of Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcala: The First Church of California Founded by the Venerable Junipero Serra, July 16, 1769," (San Diego: Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcala). Hereafter referred to as, Eagen, "A History of Mission San Diego."

Romanticized depictions of the Spanish era do not recognize the experiences of Native people, let alone their traditional cultures and beliefs. Native people had rich cultures, religions, and socioeconomic interactions long before Spanish colonization. Therefore, it is difficult for advocates of the mission myth to reconcile Spanish (and later American) attempts to destroy Native cultures. Mission mythology and the "White Legend," of benevolent Spanish colonizers that argue that the Spanish introduced "civility" into a "wild" landscape do not translate well to historical accounts of cultural destruction and Native resistance.

Instead, publications, docent-led tours, and exhibits at many of the California mission, including Mission San Diego, detail more routine aspects of Native life such as housing and subsistence strategies. They ignore the ways Native people skillfully managed the landscape and navigated changes after Spanish contact.[4] Mission representatives note that the Spanish first introduced written history and agricultural production in California, with the establishment of Mission San Diego. Many mission interpreters describe the purpose of Spanish exploration into Alta California, citing the search for more resources and efforts to respond to Russia's growing interest in northern California. After skimming the surface of Spain's initial involvement in the region, interpreters shift to a discussion of the specific mission site itself – its founders, accomplishments, and post-secularization history.[5]

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[4] Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[5] Eagen, "A History of Mission San Diego"; Information also obtained from docent led tour and self-guided tours from the spring of 2009 to the summer of 2013.

Interpreters neglect to fully address the roles California Indians filled at the San Diego mission. They note that Spanish institutions taught Native people about Christianity, but also showed indigenous communities how to raise cattle and crops. Interpreters inform visitors that the Kumeyaay were peaceful and had a good relationship with the mission. These presentations misrepresent Kumeyaay interactions with the Spanish, and do not address the fact that indigenous people were displeased with the Spanish when they first arrived in San Diego. However, the Spanish encountered Native resistance on several separate occasions, beginning with first encounters that erupted intermittently until mission secularization.[6]

Phillips argued that individual Native communities resisted foreigners for many reasons, but central to every response were "the preservation of political sovereignty, corporate unity, and cultural integrity."[7] Native people employed policies of resistance, withdrawal, or cooperation when outsiders threatened their sovereignty, unity, or cultural integrity. The amount of violent resistance varied from total revolts in which local indigenous people assassinated missionaries, to nonviolent resistance where people fled the mission and moved inland, hopefully outside the Spanish reach.[8] Contemporary mission narratives mostly overlook resistance because it reflects poorly on Native-

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[6] Even after mission secularization many Native communities resisted foreigners in the state. For instance, they raided ranches for livestock to hinder Mexican and American settlers from succeeding in the region. Phillips examined Native forms of resistances in *Indians and Intruders*, 3-165.

[7] Phillips, C*hiefs and Challengers*, 2.

[8]Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 73-86.

Spanish relations. They present Spanish colonization in the best possible light and ignore potential motives for resistance such as maltreatment at the hands of the Spanish, sexual abuse, cultural conflicts, disease, punishment, and unrelenting deaths that stalked Native communities after contact.

Mission myths highlight joyful interactions between Europeans and American Indians, as if Native people accepted newcomers full heartedly from the start. However, early explorers documented contentious encounters between the Spanish and indigenous people in some of their first writings from California. For instance, on September 28, 1542, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo anchored in San Diego Bay – formally founding Alta California in the name of Spain. Many Native people fled the Spanish, but some met Cabrillo and his men on the beach. They informed Cabrillo, through gesturing, that other Spaniards traveled inland and had murdered many Native people. These actions, most likely connected with expeditions led by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, created an atmosphere of fear and distrust of the Spanish among indigenous people. That night, local Kumeyaay people attacked and wounded three Spanish sailors who went ashore to fish.[9] Despite this foray, Cabrillo reported that his men did not respond with violence, although they did take two Indian boys with them to use as translators as they continued

[9] Iris H.W. Engstrand, "Seekers of the 'Northern Mystery': European Exploration of California and the Pacific," *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush,* ed. by Ramon A. Gutierrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 78-110, 83-86; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 41-42.

north up the California coast.[10] The sailors traded food and beads with the indigenous people to pacify them and show their "peaceful" intentions.[11] No doubt the parents of the boys did not find food and beads to be a sufficient exchange for their children. These contentious interactions negatively tinged Kumeyaay responses to Spanish explorers for generations.

Naval voyages to Alta California died down for two centuries after explorers found few of the riches they sought. Native Californians saw Spaniards more scarcely and usually only in emergencies when the sailors were ill or desperately needed provisions. Exploration began again in the late eighteenth century when Spanish officials learned of Russia's increased presence in the Pacific Northwest. As previously discussed, Inspector General of New Spain José de Gálvez decided to use Alta California as a strategic buffer zone between these foreign settlements and the heart of New Spain in Mexico. Gálvez proposed a chain of presidios throughout the northern-most region of Spain's American territory to embed a military presence in the region. Along with presidios, Spanish officials also sent Franciscan missionaries to assist in the religious expansion of the Spanish domain. Under Father President Junípero Serra, the Spanish established missions in Alta California.[12]

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[10]Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 33.

[11] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California: San Diego Mission* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1920), 7-9.

[12] Engstrand, "Seekers of the 'Northern Mystery,'" 86-92; Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 40-42.

Figure 25 Statue of Serra at Mission San Diego. Source: Author's personal collection.

Figure 26 Statue of Serra and an Indian boy at Mission San Juan Capistrano. Source: Author's personal collection.

Many contemporary mission narratives focus on Serra and his important role as the founder of the mission system. Nearly all of the modern mission sites venerate Serra, "The Apostle of California." They honor him with a statue made in his likeness – with Serra either standing alone or with a Native child under his arm (see images above). Although small in stature, Serra was a very determined man. He wasted little time fulfilling his goal to establish a mission in San Diego. The padre raised the cross at the first San Diego mission on July 16, 1769 but the Kumeyaay people resisted the Spanish establishment. The first mission consisted of a few rudimentary structures constructed with tule and other locally-found materials. Serra labored to find Native converts but language and cultural barriers between the missionaries and Kumeyaay made communication, let alone conversion, difficult.[13]

Curious people from local villages visited the temporary site frequently, but also attacked the fledgling mission shortly after its establishment.[14] At first, many Native people cooperated with the Spanish. But as the newcomers established permanent camps and pressured indigenous communities for food without reciprocating in kind, local people became resistant to the Spanish.[15] Frustrated with the Spanish, Kumeyaay men

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[13] Sandos, *Converting California*, 39-42.

[14] According to Sandos, the Spanish failed to reciprocate by giving Native people gifts. Local indigenous people began to take what they wanted from the Spanish, especially once they became more comfortable with the newcomers. Sandos, *Converting California*, 41-42.

[15] Three ships set sail from New Spain's port at La Paz. The *San Antonio*, the second ship sent to San Diego, reached San Diego Bay on April 11, 1769, after a lengthy voyage that was extended by turbulent seas. The flag-ship, *San Carlos*, set sail from La Paz nearly one month before the *San Antonio,* but also faced extremely rough seas,

attacked the Spanish settlement on August 15, 1769. They stripped the clothes off the sick and took whatever else they wanted from the Spanish site. According to Hackel, the Kumeyaay sought to humiliate and raid the weak Spanish encampment.[16] A skirmish began after soldiers returned to the site. Serra described the attack and observed that the Indians saw the number of sick and dying sailors – attacking suddenly when the mission only had four soldiers on guard. Both Spanish and indigenous people received injuries during the skirmish, but Serra noted that "the one worst hurt was a young Spanish lad…. At first shot he darted into my hut, spouting so much blood at the mouth and from his temples, that I had hardly time to absolve him and help him to meet his end."[17] The padre noted that the fighting stopped when the Indians realized how many of their own were injured. Interestingly, Serra remarked that he believed the Spanish did not kill any

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mistakenly sailed past San Diego Bay, and the passengers on board were plagued with contaminated water and scurvy. The third ship was lost at sea. Unfortunately, by the time the *San Carlos* reached San Diego Bay on April 29, a majority of those on board had severe cases of scurvy and either died during the voyage or expired within a few days after their arrival. Members of the overland expedition arrived healthier. However, settlement plans in San Diego relied on supplies brought on the ships. After several months, missionaries, sailors, and the soldiers that arrived on the overland expedition found that their food supply quickly diminished. They nearly abandoned Alta California. In the midst of talks to abandon the mission, a supply ship arrived with food and goods for the Spanish settlers. Junípero Serra to Francisco Palou, San Diego, July 3, 1769, in *Writings of Junípero Serra*, I, ed. by Antonine Tibesar, (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 141-147. Hereafter referred to as, Serra to Palou, San Diego, July 3, 1769. Bancroft and Hackel also address this topic. Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 126-139; Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 42-47.

[16] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 44-46.

[17] Junípero Serra to Juan Andres, San Diego, February 10, 1770, in *Writings of Junípero Serra*, I, ed. by Antonine Tibesar, (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 149-155. Hereafter referred to as, Serra to Andres, San Diego, February 10, 1770.

indigenous people in this fight, which meant that the missionaries could still baptize them and bring them into the mission fold.[18]

Along with skirting instances of early Native resistance against the Spanish, mission interpreters also do not discuss the problems missionaries encountered in their efforts to convert Kumeyaay people to Christianity. For instance, Serra faced several setbacks in his attempts to perform his first baptism in Alta California. Native people in the region had established cultures and religions. The Spanish did not offer an improvement to Kumeyaay lifeways during the first years of colonization; therefore, the Kumeyaay rejected Spanish advances. After trying for months with no success, Serra eventually communicated sufficiently enough with local Kumeyaay to express his desire to baptize a baby. Soon thereafter, a group of people came to the temporary mission, one cradled a baby. The baby's nervous parents took the child and ran almost as soon as the padre tried to baptize the baby.[19]

These actions contradicted Serra's earlier encounters with Indians in Alta California recorded while traveling on the expedition to San Diego. Serra noted that "they [the Indians] came out to meet us both along the roads and at our camping places. They displayed the fullest confidence and assurance just as if we had been lifelong friends."[20] Conversely, Juan Crespi described interactions with more hostile Native

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[18] Serra to Andres, San Diego, February 10, 1770. Sandos noted that five Native people lost their lives during this skirmish. Sandos, *Converting California*, 42.

[19] Serra to Andres, San Diego, February 10, 1770. Sandos also describes these events in *Converting California*, 42-43.

[20] Serra to Palou, San Diego, July 3, 1769.

populations. For instance, he reported that twenty-nine Indians followed his expedition for three days, taunting the Spanish with gestures and eventually engaging them in a brief fight.[21] Also, after traveling overland from San Francisco to San Diego, Crespi noted that "all this land [California] is populated with a large number of Indians who are gentle, generous, and well-formed. The most savage natives that we have found are those of San Diego and a circle in the same neighborhood."[22] Fear of continued Native attacks plagued residents at the young San Diego mission. Kumeyaay people were not happy that the Spanish settled within their territory. The Spanish faced a number of raids wherein Indians from local villages took clothing and valuables from the site.[23]

Examining these events from a Kumeyaay perspective illustrates that they did not attack the Spanish without motivation. As stated previously, the Kumeyaay resided in an environmentally diverse area and relied on many different types of food found throughout this region. Luis Jayme observed in a letter written on October 17, 1772, that rumors of Spanish soldiers who raped and mistreated Indian women encouraged many indigenous

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[21] Crespi to Palou, San Diego, June 9, 1769.

[22] Juan Crespi to Francisco Palou, San Diego, February 6, 1770, in Fray Francisco Palou, *Historical Memoirs of New California*, IV, ed. and trans. by Herbert Eugene Bolton, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926), 269-285. Hereafter referred to as, Crespi to Palou, San Diego, February 6, 1770.

[23] Junípero Serra to Francisco Palou, San Diego, February 10, 1770, in *Writings of Junípero Serra*, I, ed. by Antonine Tibesar, (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 157-161; hereafter referred to as, Serra to Palou, San Diego, February 10, 1770.

people to move further inland and forego their coastal food supply.[24] Native people frequently moved to interior areas to avoid contact with the Spanish who established missions and presidios in coastal areas within Kumeyaay territory. Hence, Spanish actions encouraged Kumeyaay attacks and resistance to priestly efforts to baptize members of the community.

In conjunction with poor soil and inadequate irrigation sources at the original mission site, missionaries moved their settlement further inland in August, 1774, to put distance between neophytes and soldiers at the presidio. The padres allowed many neophytes to live outside of the mission complex while they struggled to reap successful harvests. Outside of the mission, neophytes collected food and interacted with non-converted communities.[25] Converted Kumeyaay people kept strong ties to their culture and heritage through these interactions. At the same time, the padres in charge of Mission San Diego, Luis Jayme and Vicente Fuster, increased conversion efforts in Native villages in inland areas. Many Native people that already relocated to the interior did not appreciate Spanish encroachment further inland. Increased contact between the Spanish and indigenous people created hostilities that erupted in violence in November,

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[24] Luis Jayme to Raphel Verger, San Diego, October 17, 1772, in *Letter of Luis Jayme, O.F.M. San Diego, October 17, 1772*, ed. and trans. by Maynard Geiger, (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1970). Hereafter referred to as, Luis Jayme to Raphel Verger, San Diego, October 17, 1772. Similar information was also provided to me during a discussion with educational interpreters at the Barona Cultural Center and Museum, Lakeside, California.

[25] Shipek, "A Native American Adaptation to Drought," 299; Sandos, *Converting California,* 55.

1775.[26] The San Diego revolt led by Kumeyaay people was one of the largest and most damaging attacks against a mission in Spanish California history.

While sitting in the restored mission church at Mission San Diego, students and visitors learn that a large group of Native people, ranging from 400 to 600 people, attacked the new mission site on November 5, 1775. According to interpreters at the mission, this crowd of non-local Indians from Yuma assaulted the fragile mission, made of brush, timber, and small portions of adobe.[27] After sacking the mission of valuables, the attackers burnt it to the ground and killed Jayme in the midst of the fury.[28] The purpose of recounting this story is not to describe Native discontent with the mission. Rather, it serves as a gateway to discuss the "sacrifice" of Jayme, whom the mission champions as California's first martyr.[29] Interpreters describe the attack in booklets sold at the mission as "perhaps a raid on the mission for the purposes of stealing clothing, ornaments, and articles, [that] developed into an open attack…. The Indians broke open vestments cases and dispatched their women to the mountains with the plunder. They

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[26] Sandos, *Converting California*, 55-60.

[27] Yuma Indians, known as the Quechan, did revolt against Spanish settlement. However, the attacks associated with this revolt occurred in Yuma in July, 1781. Historians attribute this revolt to increased pressure by the missionaries and demands for food and land for pasture by Spanish settlers. This revolt caused the closure of the Spanish's overland route between Alta California and Sonora and cut-off land travel to Alta California from New Spain. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 57-59.

[28]Mission San Diego docent-led tour, spring 2009.

[29] Tour groups are told this story in the church so that the docents can show them Jayme's eternal flame, which burns in front of the alter.

then began to set fire to the guardhouse, church, and living quarters."[30] Native people appear in these narratives as a wild horde of attackers seemingly without organized purpose.

Figure 27 Graphic depiction of the murder of Jayme on display at Mission San Diego. Source: Author's personal collection.

After a brief trip into the mission museum, patrons discover the underlying causes of the revolt according to mission interpreters. A wall placard next to a depiction of the last moments of Jayme's life notes that the people who attacked the mission primarily came to take food, clothing, and valuables. But the assailants lost sight of their initial goal. In a furry, they sacked the mission and engaged in a total revolt. Indigenous attackers destroyed the mission. They killed three Spanish men, including Jayme, who met his killers with the greeting "Love God, my children." Mission publications note that Jayme did not hide from the revolt as Fuster and some soldiers had done. Instead, Jayme

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[30] Eagen, "A History of Mission San Diego."

approached his attackers who took his clothes, beat him, and shot him with arrows several times. Many historical records indicate that neophytes found the body of the thirty-five year old missionary the next morning near the river – only recognizable by his "sacred hands."[31]

Many scholars active in the polemic debate about Spanish treatment of Mission Indians have varying interpretations of the ultimate reasons behind the attack on the San Diego Mission in November, 1775. Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz noted generally that Kumeyaay leaders rallied support for the attack based on their dejection of the culturally destructive practices of Spanish padres and soldiers at the mission and the presidio.[32] Sandos and Carrico more specifically argued that the revolt emerged out of Native and Spanish competition over access to the scarce food supply, anger towards Spanish soldiers that raped Indian women, and Spanish encroachment on Native land.[33] On the other hand, supporters of the mission argue that the revolt began as a raid for food

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[31] Eagen, "A History of Mission San Diego." Sandos provides a thorough scholarly description of the revolt. Sandos, *Converting California*, 55-68.

[32] Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, eds., "1775: Rebellion at San Diego, Vicente Fuster," *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1864* (Santa Clara: Santa Clara University, in conjunction with Heyday Books, 2001), 186.

[33] Sandos, *Converting California*, 55-68; Richard L. Carrico, "Sociopolitical Aspects of the 1775 Revolt at Mission San Diego de Alcala: An Ethnohistorical Approach," *The Journal of San Diego History* 43 (1997), accessed March 12, 2009, http://www.sandiegohistory.org/ journal/97summer/missionrevolt.htm.

and valuables that eventually evolved into violence.[34] Although the Native assailants did raid the mission complex for valuables, accounts of the attack given by those present noted undoubtedly that the raiders came prepared for a violent revolt.

Scholars most commonly agree that one cause of the revolt points to Kumeyaay people displeased about livestock destroying Native food sources. Lazy soldiers failed to pen their livestock and the animals indiscriminately ate Native plants, including the grasses that were staples in the Kumeyaay diet. Carrico contended that Spanish soldiers allowed their cattle to graze on Indian fields and grasslands. This instigated Kumeyaay people to take the livestock – an act that frequently resulted in punishments from Spanish officials. Further, Carrico argued that the Kumeyaay revolted because they feared being captured by the Spanish and forced to work at the missions.[35] Finally, Native people resented Spanish officials who neglected to adequately punish soldiers that raped women in Indian villages. Sandos noted that the Kumeyaay viewed the proclaimed moral supremacy of the gente de razon as hypocritical. In the eyes of many indigenous people, Spanish soldiers continually behaved immorally and lived lives that countered the teachings of the padres. This led some Kumeyaay to believe that Christianity offered no

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[34] See information published and distributed by Mission San Diego de Alcala, such as, I. Brent Eagen, *A History of Mission Basilica San Diego de Alcala*: *The First Church of California Founded by the Venerable Father Junipero Serra, July 16, 1769*.

[35] Carrico, "Sociopolitical Aspects of the 1775 Revolt." This information was further corroborated by contemporary Kumeyaay cultural educators, who said that stories surrounding these types of fears have been transmitted orally throughout the generations.

improvement to their current religious beliefs. They called for removal of the Spanish from the region through the revolt.[36]

Local Indian leaders began planning the revolt months in advance. In the weeks leading up to the revolt, Kumeyaay people from nearby villages sought baptism in greater numbers than ever before. The overwhelming number of converts in a short time span forced the padres to allow large numbers of new neophytes to live outside of the mission where their Native cultures and religion continued to be main components of their daily lives.[37] The new converts utilized the information they learned about the mission and its operations in planning many aspects of the attack, including the day and time.[38]

The range of indigenous people that reportedly participated in the revolt varies from between six-hundred to one thousand people, depending on the informant. According to testimonies taken from participants after the revolt, the attackers originally planned to use light from the full moon to assault the mission complex and the presidio simultaneously on the night of November 4, 1775. While they successfully attacked the mission complex, no such attack occurred at the presidio.[39] The Kumeyaay waiting to assault the presidio abandoned their plan and joined the attack on the mission when they

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[36] Sandos, *Converting California,* 55-57.

[37] Nearly one hundred people joined the mission in November alone.

[38] Maynard J. Geiger, *The Life and Times of Fray Junípero Serra, O.F.M.; or, The Man who Never Turned Back, 1713-1784, A Biography,* II, (Washington: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1959), 58-59; Sandos, *Converting California*, 55-58; Carrico, "Sociopolitical Aspects of the 1775 Revolt,"

[39] See the varying accounts given by such people as Fuster, Anza, and Lasuén as demonstrated in Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 249-255.

realized that the revolt at the mission began earlier than expected. They worried that the presidio soldiers would prepare for their impending assault. However, the soldiers remained unaware of the attack until the following morning when survivors of the mission attack arrived at the presidio for protection.[40]

Based on the information written in a letter to Serra from Fuster, who witnessed the revolt first-hand, scholars gather that around six-hundred Indians participated in this revolt.[41] Fuster's account highlighted a clearly violent intent on the side of the indigenous attackers. The padre observed that "it is something to be grateful for to Almighty God that one of the Fathers can give you an account of what happened. That certainly was not the intention of those wicked men. They meant to exterminate the entire white population and the Fathers in particular."[42] Fuster detailed the violent scene wherein Native people sacked the mission, burned the complex to the ground, and simultaneously attacked those living at the mission and nearby Indian village. Fuster described the large number of arrows shot at him and others at the mission to support his inference that the Indians intended to stage a violent revolt.[43] The bloody and battered condition of Jayme's body also suggested that attacking Native people felt extreme anger towards the Spanish and the mission system. Fuster described that Jayme "was

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[40] Beebe and Senkewicz, "1775: Rebellion at San Diego, Vicente Fuster," 187-192.

[41] Sandos contended that six hundred Indians participated in the attack. Hackel noted that up to one thousand Native people participated in the revolt. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 259; Sandos, *Converting California*, 59.

[42] Beebe and Senkewicz, "1775: Rebellion at San Diego, Vicente Fuster," 187.

[43] Bancroft, *History of California,* I, 249-251.

disfigured from head to foot, and I could see that his death had been cruel beyond description and to the fullest satisfaction of the barbarians." The attackers humiliated Jayme. They stripped his body "even to his undergarments around his middle. His chest and body were riddled through with countless jabs they had given him, and his face was one giant bruise from the clubbing and stoning it had suffered."[44] Clearly Jayme was not an unintended casualty of this revolt, more explicitly, the Kumeyaay most likely saw him as a symbol of the system they sought to destroy.

In the end, the attackers killed three people, Jayme, a blacksmith, and a carpenter, while they also injured numerous others, including Fuster. In the wake of the revolt, neophytes and missionaries in the region relocated to the presidio for protection. Other missionaries and Spanish officials also moved to the presidio, including Fermín Francisco de Lasuén. The attack at Mission San Diego forced him to halt construction on nearby Mission San Juan Capistrano, started merely one week before the attack.[45] The destruction of Mission San Diego and the abandonment of Mission San Juan Capistrano worried Serra, who advocated for their quick re-establishment.[46] The troubling causes of the revolt and details of the attack do not mesh well with mission mythology that praises Spanish colonizers. Descriptions of lazy, brutal, and immoral Spanish soldiers also

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[44] Beebe and Senkewicz, "1775: Rebellion at San Diego, Vicente Fuster," 191.

[45]Fermín Francisco de Lasuén to Fray Juan Prestamero, January 28, 1776, San Diego, in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, I, ed. by Finbar Kenneally (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965), 59-61.

[46] Junípero Serra to Antonio Maria de Bucareli y Ursua, Monterey, December 15, 1775, in *Writings of Junípero Serra*, II, ed. by Antonine Tibesar (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1956), 401-407.

closely reflect the Spanish Black Legend that promoters such as Charles Lummis tried to dispel in the early twentieth century.

A formal investigation into the revolt, conducted by officials including Lieutenant Francisco Ortega, charged two Indian brothers, Francisco and Carlos, with inciting the rebellion. Carlos and Francisco were local village leaders accused of thievery for taking fish and seeds from an unbaptized elderly women. Hackel noted that the two leaders probably believed that they were entitled to these goods. They interpreted attempts from the Spanish to exercise authority outside of the mission complex as a threat to their leadership. Carlos and Francisco, along with five other neophytes, fled the mission and excited neophyte and non-neophyte communities to join their resistance effort.[47] Spanish abuses towards Native people contributed to the large company that these two leaders were able to assemble against the mission.

The Ortega report noted that people from over a dozen Christian and non-Christian villages participated in the revolt. The role of the neophytes living at the mission is unclear. Some sources state that the attackers used force to restrict neophyte involvement, while Lasuén and Juan Bautista de Anza postulated that the neophytes living at the mission took an active role in the revolt.[48] For instance, Anza, in a January 1776 journal entry, speculated that Indians residing at the mission stole valuables from

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[47] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 259-261; Geiger, *The Life and Times of Fray Junípero Serra*, II, 58-59.

[48] Bancroft, *History of California*, I, 249-251; Michael Connolly Miskwish, *Kumeyaay: A History Textbook* (El Cajon, CA: Sycuan Press, 2007), 47-48.

the church hours before the revolt started. He also contended that converts set fire to the mission before leaders sounded the war cry to officially begin the attack.[49]

Spanish officials who analyzed the revolt found a range of other possible motives. Palou attributed the attack to workings of the devil "because the missionaries, with their fervent zeal and apostolic labors, were steadily lessening his following, and little by little banishing heathenism from the neighborhood of the port of San Diego, [the devil] found a means to put a stop to these spiritual conquests." He argued that a malevolent Satan, "influenced a few of the new Christians not yet confirmed in the Faith to rebel, destroy the mission, and take the lives of the missionary fathers and soldiers who were guarding and defending him."[50] Interpreting what Palou wrote, it is apparent that increased conversion efforts sparked a response against the Spanish assault on Kumeyaay religion and culture. In Palou's statement though, mission officials attempt to place blame for the attack on outside forces to reduce self-criticism. These efforts continue today in reconstructed missions that stand as symbols of California's golden past, and in the popular mission myth that understands Spanish colonization as a wholly positive influence in the region.

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[49] Juan Bautista de Anza, Diary of Juan Bautista de Anza, Thursday, January 11, 1776, University of Oregon, Web de Anza, accessed May 24, 2013, http://anza.uoregon.edu/Action.lasso?-database=a76&-layout=standard&-op=eq&date=1/11/1776&-response=format/a76pg2fmt.html&-maxRecords=100&-noresultserror=anzaweb/sorry.html&-search.

[50] Francisco Palou, *Historical Memoirs of New California*, IV, ed. and trans. by Herbert Eugene Bolton, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926), 62-63.

Many inconsistencies exist between Mission San Diego's interpretation of the revolt in November, 1775, and accounts of the resistance movement given by eye witnesses, Spanish officials, and contemporary scholars. Contemporary mission publications neglect to describe Indian attacks that preceded the revolt. They also fail to discuss the continued threats and rumors of other planned incursions in San Diego after 1775. Current mission interpretations attribute many different causes to the attack, including the resentment of a *few* Indian leaders who grew angry after losing control of converted indigenous people. Mission publications penned by Monsignor I. Brent Eagen further described that, "other causes may have centered around the treatment of the Indians by persons at the Mission and Presidio." For instance, "floggings by the soldiers, threats by Padre Fuster, and the seizure of the two Indian leaders, Carlos and Francisco, for thievery were among these causes." Most missions attribute any noticeable instances of Native hostility to inappropriate behavior of soldiers, rather than examining the larger negative impacts of missionization on indigenous communities. Eagen continued, speculating that "another motive for the attack may have been the articles of value housed in the church and the quarters of the missionaries, which seemed to the Indians as prized possessions, especially among those clans where leadership was determined by the number and value of personal belongings."[51] Contemporary mission interpreters also discount Native discontent with the mission by attributing the revolt to the greediness of thieves.

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[51]Eagen, "A History of Mission San Diego."

More recently attributed causes of the revolt determined by Mission San Diego also include the two Indians, noting that "Father Jayme had a great rapport with the American Indians but two of the mission Indians became discontented with the rules and regulations necessary for an orderly unit and they incited hundreds of Indians in remote villages to riot."[52] To state that the discontent of merely two people caused hundreds to revolt is overly simplistic and at least begs inquiry into the kind of influence these two leaders wielded over so many "remote" communities to incite them to revolt. This source also notes that the padres rebuilt the mission in the same location, but to the specifications of a military fort because they worried about the possibilities of another attack.[53] Building a reinforced mission may seem excessive when, according to current public interpretations, Native people only attacked the mission once and the Spanish otherwise coexisted peacefully with indigenous people.

In reality, Kumeyaay people attacked the Spanish many times in San Diego since their arrival. Also, few padres described the local Indians as submissive. Rather, Spanish officials such as Crespi, actually noted that some of the most hostile Native populations

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[52] Mission San Diego de Alcala, "Mission History," accessed May 24, 2013, http://www.missionsandiego.com/mission_history.htm.

[53] Mission San Diego de Alcala, "Mission History." The booklet, Eagen, "A History of Mission San Diego," does not have a noted publication date. However, I have deduced that the booklet was most likely last updated in the late 1970s or early 1980s due to the booklet's last reference to 1976 in the "Present Use" section. Furthermore, the pictures of the museum in the booklet depict an older museum which has since been renovated and updated. I also assume that the mission's website is updated more regularly than their in-store publications, due to recent events referenced and posted on the site.

his expedition faced occupied the greater San Diego area.[54] These narratives do not fit into the utopian imagery promoters built around the Spanish era. To better situate Native people into this constructed past, contemporary signs at Mission San deign tell visitors that "the padres encouraged the observance of many feast days and as a result, processions, fiestas, games, and celebrations were frequent." The quiet and serene atmosphere cultivated at current mission sites continues to encourage a vision of the Spanish missions that is incongruent with the harsh realities for Native people at these colonial institutions.

Figure 28 An 'ewaa, used by the Kumeyaay, displayed in the courtyard at Mission San Diego. Source: Author's personal collection.

[54] Crespi to Palou, San Diego, February 6, 1770.

Interpreters at Mission San Diego communicate a misunderstanding and oversimplification of the local Kumeyaay people. Within the mission gardens, interpreters display a life-size hut that inserts indigenous presence, but lacks Native voice. They use this structure as a tool to describe Native experiences within the mission. Placards at the mission inform people that the Kumeyaay were hunters and gatherers who lived simple lives. Their lives were so simple, in fact, they had never seen cloth before, but instead used natural material such as grass, seashells, and stains to cover their bodies. They lived in crude huts, called an 'ewaa, constructed from brush and other non-permanent items. The Kumeyaay did not have a sense of land ownership, and lived as nomads, moving from place to place with the seasons.[55] While some of this information is correct, in its most basic sense, the lack of any further detail about these people and their life ways contributes to the notion that Native people lived primitive lives with little social development. According to the mission myth, the Spanish brought "civility" to California and enriched the lives of Native people. Similar to interpretations of the Gabrielino-Tongva at Mission San Gabriel, representations of the Kumeyaay at Mission San Diego do not delve into the complex realities of the indigenous people who built and supported the mission system. It is important to communicate a clear understanding of the local Native people for mission interpretations to accurately address historical interactions between Native people and the Spanish.

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[55]Eagen, "A History of Mission San Diego."

Many mission sites neglect to adequately examine Native history before Spanish colonization in their exhibitions and museum displays. Critical discussions of Native people tend to fall out of contemporary mission narratives, similar to the booster narratives of the early twentieth century, in favor of presentations of Spanish padres and their "contributions" to the California cultural landscape. In reality, the Kumeyaay had long established cultural histories with rich social and religious traditions. The Kumeyaay resided in the greater San Diego region for centuries before European contact.[56] Some archeologists and anthropologists theorize that this group originally emerged from a much larger society. This large group occupied a vast territory that spanned north to the current-day Utah-Arizona border, east to Flagstaff, Arizona, and southwest to San Diego, Baja California, and portions of Sonora, Mexico.[57]

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[56] Kumeyaay are also referred to in literature as the Mission Indians, Diegueño, Kumiai, Tipai, or Ipai. Tipai and Ipai are geographical designations for southern and northern Kumeyaay. Furthermore, many early writers had various spellings for Kumeyaay found in reports, letters, and ethnohistoric studies conducted by such scholars as T.T. Waterman. This study uses the term Kumeyaay as an overarching term for the Tiapi-Ipai. The label "Diegueño" emerged from the mission period. The United States government also used this term during the reservation era when it provided reservation land to the "Diegueño" Indians. This caused many of the Kumeyaay to accept this mission-derived name to gain federal recognition. For more on the Kumeyaay name see: Miskwish, *Kumeyaay*, 16-21.

[57] These theories are based on ceramic findings throughout this region. See map and description in: M. Steven Shackley, ed., *The Early Ethnography of the Kumeyaay* (Berkeley: Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, 2004), 16.

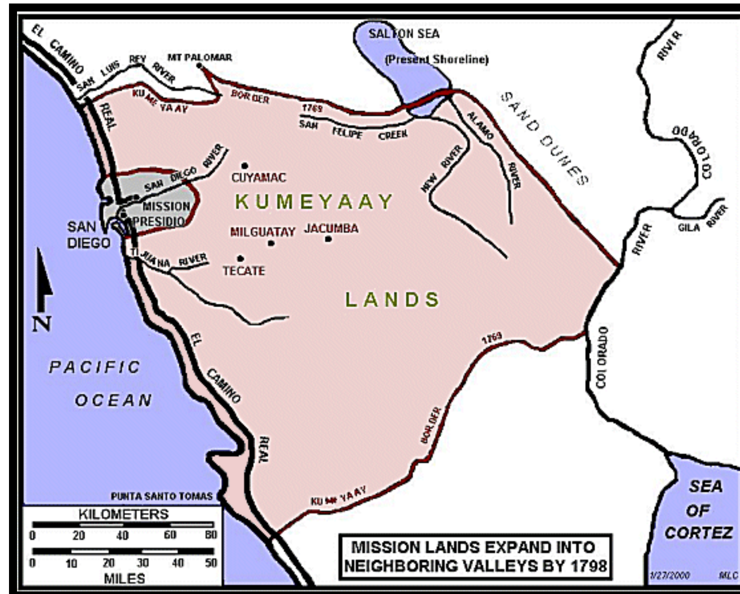

Figure 29 Map of Kumeyaay territory according to Kumeyaay scholar Michael Connolly Miskwish.

Archeological evidence suggests that Kumeyaay ancestors constantly migrated to find more abundant food and better accommodations for their growing population, especially as climate and water sources shifted.[58] Between 1000 and 1500 CE these Yuman speakers migrated to the southwestern coastal regions of the above described territory.[59] Scholars theorize that the complex organization and kinship structure of Kumeyaay culture developed and matured during this period.[60]

[58] Shackley, *The Early Ethnography of the Kumeyaay,* 21.

[59] Roland B. Dixon and Alfred L. Kroeber address Californian languages in "The Native Languages of California," *American Anthropologist* 5 (1903), 1-26.

[60] Shackley, *The Early Ethnography of the Kumeyaay*, 22. The map of Kumeyaay territory according to Kumeyaay scholar Michael Connolly Miskwish is titled, "Mission Lands Expand Into Neighboring Valleys by 1798," accessed June 6, 2013, http://www.kumeyaay.info/kumeyaay_maps/kumeyaay_spanish1798.html.

Kumeyaay conceptions of property allowed for mobility between territories. People from one village could hunt on the property of another clan but could not settle on it. This structure demonstrated a distinct concept of territorial possession.[61] It also explains why the Kumeyaay initially cooperated with the Spanish but grew hostile once the foreigners built settlements and stopped trading goods with local people. Close kinship relationships over a vast territory permitted people within one family or village to take up residence with kinfolk in another village, no matter the distance.[62] This flexibility encouraged sharing between regions and assisted in trade relations important during years of drought. The geographic diversity in Kumeyaay territory also allowed for a more varied food supply throughout the changing seasons.[63] These relationships may have helped coastal Kumeyaay relocate to inland villages once the Spanish began to colonize the region.

The Kumeyaay maintained a flexible and semi-mobile society to accommodate for a wide variety of hunting, gathering, and plant husbandry. The relatively short distance between the mountain, valley, and coastal regions within their territory also helped Kumeyaay people maintain a varied diet. Food redistribution was an important aspect of Kumeyaay society as well. Kumeyaay people managed their environment by planting seeds and utilizing controlled burns to stimulate plant growth for the future. The Kumeyaay also fished extensively and hunted game as a major food source. Wild game

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[61] Miskwish, *Kumeyaay*, 25-26.

[62] Shackley, *The Early Ethnography of the Kumeyaay,* 29-35.

[63] Miskwish, *Kumeyaay*, 31-35.

became increasingly scarce as droughts reduced water supplies and Spanish livestock over-grazed the land in the late eighteenth century.[64] Native people responded to drought and the strain on the population in several ways. They dispersed all able-bodied members of the community to find food, adopted infanticide and abortion practices in extreme cases, and turned to the mission for assistance after Spanish colonization.[65]

According Shipek, an anthropologist, the Kumeyaay experienced a two decade period of abundant rainfall before the Spanish arrived in the 1770s. An extended period of drought followed this time of plenty. The strain of Spanish settlement and droughts severely damaged Native food supplies and restricted population growth.[66] As discussed previously, low food supplies in the San Diego area hindered the development of the mission. The Spanish and Kumeyaay similarly relied on rain water and a restricted food supply for support in late 1700s.[67] Competition over scarce water and food supplies created tensions between the Kumeyaay and the intruding foreigners. Interpretations at Mission San Diego do not engage many of these important details about how Kumeyaay experiences informed their interactions with the Spanish.

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[64] Leslie Spier, "Southern Diegueño Customs," in *The Early Ethnography of the Kumeyaay*, 334-340.

[65] Shipek, "A Native American Adaptation to Drought," 299.

[66] Ibid., 296-297.

[67] Ibid., 298-299.

Interpreters leave other important aspects of Native life at the mission in the shadows as well. For instance, displays at the historic site tell visitors that the missionaries relocated the mission to find a better water supply. While it is true that the missionaries originally founded the mission in a poorly irrigated location, presentations at the mission fail to mention that the missionaries had difficulties finding converts at the original mission site.[68] The padres also relocated the mission to put space between neophytes and soldiers at the presidio who assaulted Indian women. These attacks prompted Native anger toward the missionaries who failed to protect the women and lacked power to punish the soldiers. Soldiers who wanted to silence witnesses also threatened, beat, and punished Native people that witnessed these assaults.[69] The mission does not discuss any of this information, documentation of which can all be found in published letters written by Jayme and Serra. Rather, mission interpreters avoid addressing motives for resistance prompted by Spanish soldiers and missionaries that reflected negatively on missionization.[70]

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[68] The Ortega investigation noted that people from many villages surrounding Mission San Diego and from dozens of miles away participated in the attack. Leaders from these villages most likely learned about the attack through the intricate system of runners. Leaders in many Kumeyaay villages used runners to communicate with people in other villages. Obtaining the role as a runner was a prized and sought after position for Kumeyaay boys. These runners played a key role in keeping lines of communication open between villages throughout Kumeyaay territory – spreading vital news extremely quickly. Shipek, "Kumeyaay Socio-Political Structure," 297-299.

[69] Luis Jayme to Raphel Verger, San Diego, October 17, 1772.

[70] A mission docent noted that the majority of the people who raided the mission were non-local Indians from Yuma. Information provided during a mission tour, April 23, 2009. One of the only connections that arise between "Yuma" and the San Diego revolt is that the Kumeyaay language is considered a Yuman language. Hence, a reader with an

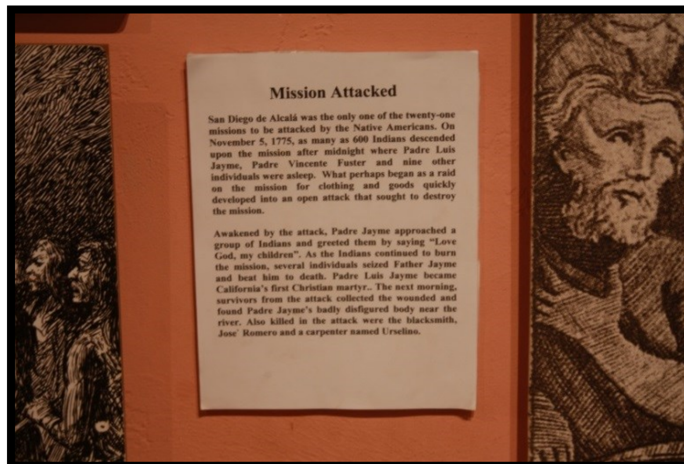

Figure 30 Sign at Mission San Diego stating that it was the only mission site attacked by Native people. Source: Author's personal collection.

Most striking in contemporary interpretations of the revolt is the claim that Mission San Diego was the only mission attacked by indigenous people. This statement is groundless and completely false. Native people attacked several missions throughout the southwest from the beginning of foreign colonization to the end of Spanish rule in the 1820s. They continued to attach Mexican and American settlements for several more decades to resist their presence on Native lands. Scholars studied many revolts in California alone, specifically focusing on the attempted revolt at Mission San Gabriel and the Chumash revolt in the Santa Barbara area. Furthermore, written documents by Spanish missionaries, soldiers, and officials discussed smaller attacks and resistance

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agenda to make local Indians appear content with their position in the mission system may support the notion that attackers who spoke a Yuman language actually were Indians *from* Yuma. Kumeyaay scholar Michael Connolly Miskwish noted that Indians as far as Yuma heard calls for participation in the revolt, but no historical accounts attribute the attack to Native people from that far distance. See chart in Miskwish, *Kumeyaay*, 17, 48; Carrico, "Sociopolitical Aspects of the 1775 Revolt at Mission San Diego de Alcala."

movements at nearly every mission in California from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries.[71]

Interpreters at Mission San Gabriel and San Diego present similar omissions and misinformation about resistance efforts during the Spanish period. Presentations at San Gabriel provide little discussion about the attempted rebellion against the Spanish. The San Gabriel mission museum briefly mentions Toypurina, the "leader of the aborted Indian rebellion of 1785," who Father Miguel Sanchez pardoned and baptized in 1787. Interpreters do not discuss or develop Toypurina's significant role in the Gabrielino community, past and present. Nor do interpreters address the trials surrounding Toypurina's revolt in their popular presentations. The mission also ignores important components of Native culture including shamanism, despite its relevance to the revolt. Instead popular depictions of Toypurina label her "a sorceress, medicine woman and witch."[72] If mission interpreters discussed the role of religion and shamanism in Gabrielino-Tongva society, they would uncover Toypurina's actual role as a powerful

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[71] For more see, Edward D. Castillo, "Blood Came from Their Mouths: Tongva and Chumash Responses to the Pandemic of 1801," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 23 (1999), 47-61. For information on the attempted revolt at Mission San Gabriel see, Thomas Workman Temple II, "Toypurina the Witch and The Indian Uprising at San Gabriel," reprinted in *Spanish Borderlands Sourcebook: Native American Perspectives on the Hispanic Colonization of Alta California*, ed. by Edward D. Castillo, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), 326-152; Steven W. Hackel, "Sources of Rebellion: Indian Testimony and the Mission San Gabriel Uprising of 1785," *Ethnohistory* 50 (2003), 643-669.

[72] Francis J. Weber, "Toypurina the Temptress" in *The Pride of the Missions: A Documentary History of San Gabriel Mission*, ed. by Francis J. Weber, (Hong Kong: Libra Press Limited, 1978), 29-30.

leader and female shaman.[73] They would also find that Toypurina did not instigate calls for rebellion, but joined the movement later. Just as with the San Diego revolt, scholars recently extensively reexamined the historical documents surrounding planned resistance efforts against Mission San Gabriel to uncover contributing factors for Native displeasure with the mission, finding Spanish physical abuse and culturally destructive practices at the heart of calls for rebellion.[74]

Throughout most of the twentieth century, many scholars and mission officials discounted Native perspectives and testimonials. They openly remarked that these sources were unreliable because many indigenous people depend on oral traditions to transmit history rather than the written word.[75] Historians who neglected to recognize Native perspectives also contributed to the type of misinterpretations found in presentations about Toypurina. Fortunately, scholars in the late twentieth century increasingly reexamined Native sources to incorporate different perspectives into their

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[73] For more on Toypurina's revolt see, Edward D. Castillo, "Gender Status Decline, Resistance, and Accommodation among Female Neophytes in the Missions of California: A San Gabriel Case Study," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 8 (1994), 67-93; Steven W. Hackel, "Sources of Rebellion: Indian Testimony and the Mission San Gabriel Uprising of 1785,"*Ethnohistory* 50 (2003), 643-669; Antonia I. Castañeda, "Sexual Violence in the Politics and Policies of Conquest," in *Building With our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies,* ed. by Adela de la Torre and Beatríz M. Pesquera, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 15-33.

[74] Hackel, "Sources of Rebellion," 643-669.

[75] For a debate between two scholars on precisely this point see: Nunis and Castillo, "California Mission Indians: Two Perspectives."

analyses. These new perspectives shed light on the varied methods indigenous people used to resist Spanish colonial systems.[76]

Native peopled employed several forms of resistance at many mission sites throughout the Spanish period. For example, indigenous people either attempted to poison or did poison priests at many missions, including Mission San Carlos, San Miguel, and San Diego. Native people at Mission Santa Cruz also assassinated Father Andrés Quintana. Quintana's alleged cruelty and use of an iron-tipped whip pushed some neophytes to ambush and murder the man in 1812.[77] Furthermore, indigenous people at Mission San Carlos in Monterey raided the mission and nearby settlements for horses and other goods into the Mexican era to supplement their food after the destruction of local

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[76] Specifically, Hackel reexamined Thomas Workman Temple's findings about the San Gabriel resistance movement. He noted that scholars commonly cited Temple but Temple misrepresented events and misread historical sources. Hackel reanalyzed sources, including trial testimonies, and found that Nicholás José actually instigated the rebellion because the Spanish refused to allow the man to exercise cultural practices. Hackel, "Sources of Rebellion," 643-669.

[77] Lorenzo Asisara, "The Assassination of Padre Andrés Quintana by the Indians of Mission Santa Cruz in 1812," *Spanish Borderlands Sourcebook*, 3-11; Edward D. Castillo, trans. and ed., introduction to "The Assassination of Padre Andrés Quintana by the Indians of Mission Santa Cruz in 1812: The Narrative of Lorenzo Asisara." For more general information on resistance to California missions see, Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization*; Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1769-1810* (Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1995); James A. Sandos, "Between Crucifix and Lance: Indian-White Relations in California, 1769-1848," in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, ed. by Rámon A Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 196-229; Sandos, *Converting California,* 154-173; Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization,* 73-86; Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 228-271. Hackel's work is especially helpful in seeing the important roles elected Indian leaders within the missions played in rebellions.

resources by European livestock.[78] The Chumash also led a large revolt against local missions in 1824 – attacking Mission Santa Inés, Santa Barbara, and La Purisima.[79]

Mission scholars further examine forms of Indian resistance and social control. Together they illustrate the difference between primary and secondary resistance, as well as the difference between active and passive resistance. Common Native resistance to the mission system included active uprisings and fugitivism, or fleeing the mission. It also encompassed passive resistance, such as work slow-down and non-compliance. Fugitivism grew to be the most common form of active resistance, a tactic that also depleted mission labor forces. Hackel examined fugitivism in detail as an important component of resistance and cultural expression under Spanish social controls. For instance, scholars analyzed Indian testimony and death records to demonstrate that Native people fled the missions to escape unhealthy conditions after epidemics killed scores of people.[80] While missionaries generally blamed fugitivism on the bad influence of local unbaptized Native populations, scholarly examinations show that Native people left

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[78] Sylvia M. Broadbent, "Conflict at Monterey: Indian Horse Raiding, 1820-1850," reprinted in *Spanish Borderlands Sourcebook*, 364-379.

[79] Thomas Blackburn, "The Chumash Revolt of 1824: A Native Account," reprinted in *Spanish Borderlands Sourcebook*, 59-68; Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, "The End of the 1824 Chumash Revolt in Alta California: Father Vicente Sarría's Account," *The Americas* 53 (October 1996), 273-283; James A. Sandos, "*Levantamiento*! The 1824 Chumash Uprising Reconsidered," *Southern California Quarterly* 67 (1985), 109-133, reprinted in *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850,* ed. by Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 506-525.

[80] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 92.

missions, in part, to escape death and punishment.[81] Contemporary mission sites do not address these common reasons for resistance.

Native people used resistance as a central forum to shape their own experiences with the California missions. To this end, scholars have demonstrated that Native people *outside* the missions also resisted the Spanish. Sherburne F. Cook extracted Native interactions with Spanish colonization and found that Native people fled the missions, raided stock, and interior groups developed defensive measures to protect themselves from violent Spanish intruders.[82] Phillips also examined indigenous communities living in the interior of California. He found that Native people adopted stock-raiding to restrict Spanish settlements from spreading inland. They also used stock-raiding as a means to profit from trade with the increasing number of European and American migrants in California. These types of scholarly examinations incorporate Native perspectives and provide more complete analyses of indigenous responses to Spanish colonization.[83] They

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[81] Ibid.

[82] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization* , 227-229.

[83] All of the information about raids, attacks, and revolts exist in easily accessible locations for current scholars. Scholars have translated and published many of the letters of Serra and Lasuén, along with exploration journals of Crespi and Juan Bautista de Anza. Researchers can easily locate these resources in the libraries of universities throughout California. Finbar Kenneally, ed., *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén* (San Francisco: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965); Antonine Tibesar, ed., *Writings of Junípero Serra*; Juan Crespi, *A Description of Distant Roads*: *Original Journals of the First Expedition into California, 1769-1770*, ed. and trans. by Alan K. Brown, (San Diego: San Diego State University Press, 2001); Fray Francisco Palou, *Historical Memoirs of New California*, ed. and trans. by Herbert Eugene Bolton, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926). For translations of Anza's diaries see University of Oregon, "Web de Anza," (accessed May 24, 2013) anza.uoregon.edu.

also include perspectives of Native communities in the interior, not just the coastal groups most frequently pulled into the missions.[84] While many contemporary scholars work to find Native perspectives in historical documents, Costo and Costo, as well as Castillo went further to include Native voices. In each of these publications, historians paint "Indians as shapers of events, rather than as violent savages or helpless victims."[85] Interpretations that ignore or discount Native perspectives frequently neglect to utilize the abundant body of work amassed by scholars in recent decades and continue to misrepresent Native experiences at the missions.

Contemporary interpreters at California missions face a difficult task in reconciling resistance to the Spanish missions with the idyllic utopia that they and regional promoters constructed around mission ruins. Navigating representations at Mission San Diego and more accurate discussions of the past found in historical documents is a tricky task. Stewards of these historic sites maintain relationships with the church that promotes biased presentations of the past. Many people have created a sense of collective identity around the mission sites – seeing them as the place where Christianity first found its way into California. The mythical past built around missions supports a romanticized depiction of California in all of its "grandeur and excitement."

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[84] Phillips, C*hiefs and Challengers*; Phillips, *Indians and Intruders*; George Harwood Phillips, *Vineyards and Vaqueros: Indian Labor and the Economic Expansion of Southern California, 1771-1877* (Norman: Arthur H. Clark, University of Oklahoma Press, 2010).

[85] David J. Weber, "The Spanish Borderlands of North America: A Historiography" *OAH Magazine of History* 14 (Summer 2000) Special Issue, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 5-11, 7.

To recognize that local California Indians resisted against the missions forces a revision of popular perceptions of this idealized past by acknowledging extremely negative components of Spanish colonization. It also pushes stewards of these sites to recognize historic failures of the institutions they support.[86]

Shipek observed that "it must be emphasized that any study of mission history and its relations to changes in Indian cultures and behaviors requires knowledge of the specific belief systems of each tribal group to be examined."[87] This statement highlights many of the current faults of mission sites that fail to adequately acknowledge Native involvement – exclusions that date back to the popularization of the mission myth in the early twentieth century.

Many scholars and members of Indian communities worked to negotiate for a more prominent role for Native histories within popular narratives over the last several decades. Participants in this movement pushed museums and other public venues across the country to incorporate more accurate and active representations of Native people into their displays. Still, many mission sites as the direct inheritors of booster efforts led by Lummis, McGroarty, and *Ramona* enthusiast continue to promote positive interpretations of the Spanish past that devalue Native perspectives and overlook Spanish abuses. Along with "civilizing" institutions, foreigners introduced California Indians to a range of new

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[86]Thomas S. Bremer, "Tourists and Religion at Temple Square and Mission San Juan Capistrano," *Journal of American Folklore* 113 (Autumn 2000), Special Issue, *Holidays, Ritual, Festival, Celebration*, *and Public Display,* 422-435.

[87] Florence Shipek, "California Indian Reactions to the Franciscans," *The Americas* 41 (1985), 53-66.

diseases that caused widespread destruction in Native communities. Resistance efforts against the Spanish often erupted when Native people became dissatisfied with the intentional or inadvertent changes the Spanish brought. Violence, punishments, diseases, and death bred by the Spanish emerged as some of the largest complaints Native people levied against the missions that contributed to resistance from the beginning of Spanish colonization to the end of the mission era. By including Native perspectives, mission histories provide more accurate historical narratives that demonstrate the power Native people had over their lives.

Chapter 6

Death, Disease, and Punishment at the California Missions

The vast population decline in California Indian communities following Spanish contact left a legacy that helped silence Native people in popular history during the twentieth century. From the early 1800s to the beginning of the twentieth century, settlers to the region frequently pushed Native Californians into the social periphery. While thousands of Native people lost their lives to disease, malnutrition, and starvation, the ruthless violence that some of these newcomers unleashed on Native communities also impacted survivors in many ways. The Hispanicization process undertaken by the Spanish missions attempted to strip Native converts of their customs and language and replace it with Spanish culture and labor strategies. This cultural indoctrination helped some mission Indians better assimilate into life as "Mexican" citizens.[1] However, the Spanish overall introduced large-scale systems of destruction to Native communities generations before American wagon trains crossed the Rockies and settled in California.

Mission museum presentations provide little room for discussions of the negative impacts of Spanish colonization, such as disease, death, and punishment – factors that frequently encouraged resistance movements among both neophytes and non-mission Indians. Resistance, stringent labor routines, health, and wellbeing were all interrelated

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[1] James J. Rawls, *Indians of California: The Changing Image* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), 116-201.

facets of Native life at the California missions. Priests at many of the missions constantly expressed their concern over the amount of disease and death that haunted mission walls. They further conveyed their frustration over the violence inflicted on Native people by the Spanish soldiers. The padres understood the connection between these negative impacts of Spanish colonization and increased hostility amongst Native peoples. The letters, journals, and writings of many missionaries who served in Alta California are readily available for mission interpreters to examine.[2] Unfortunately most contemporary narratives at mission sites fail to address negative components of Spanish mission history. Without clearly communicating how Native people navigated life in Spanish California, many contemporary mission sites neglect to recognize the most significant impacts of the California missions and some of the weightiest concerns of the Spanish priests. Rather, they skirt such topics as disease, punishment, and death to keep their romantic depiction of the Spanish past untarnished.

Historians of Spanish California note that death and punishment are some of the strongest memories kept and passed on by California Indians.[3] Candid interpreters at contemporary California mission sites observe that some Native Californians still refuse to visit the historic sites because they view the missions as symbols of their people's

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[2] Francisco Palou, *Historical Memoirs of New California*, ed. and trans. by Herbert Eugene Bolton, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1926); Antonine Tibesar, ed., *Writings of Junípero Serra* (Washington DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955); Maynard Geiger, ed. and trans., *Letter of Luis Jayme, O.F.M. San Diego, October 17, 1772* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1970).

[3] Robert H. Jackson and Edward D. Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on the California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 73-87.

holocaust. Still at other sites, indigenous people visit the mission graveyards and memorials with tears in their eyes as they reflect on the loss of life that these places symbolize.[4] The impacts of death and disease are ever present at contemporary California missions, yet they frequently remained unexamined by site interpreters.

Scholars highlight the devastation that death and disease caused among Native populations in Spanish California. As discussed in previous chapters, scholars such as Hubert Howe Bancroft, Herbert E. Bolton, and Sherburne F. Cook argued that Franciscan missionaries treated Native Americans poorly. The Spanish instituted stringent labor regimens and took rations before indigenous populations in years of shortages. Spanish livestock that belonged to soldiers and the missions roamed the California landscape freely. The animals devoured Native food sources – causing malnutrition and starvation in many Indian communities. Moreover, as a result of Spanish settlement, Native people faced contact with newly-introduced European diseases that killed thousands of indigenous people. California Indians turned to the missions as potential havens from starvation and disease. Mission communities offered food, but also exposed Native people to a wider variety of diseases.[5]

To respond to these negative influences, Native people frequently stopped cooperating with the Spanish. They employed resistance tactics including fugitivism, stock-raiding, and violent revolts to defend their communities against continued

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[4] Interpreters and docents at Mission La Purisima and San Francisco de Solano provided these observations in the spring of 2013.

[5] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 41-58.

destruction.[6] Cook's study exists as one of the first scholarly condemnations of the mission system; however, he did not view Indians and Europeans as equals. Cook held many of the same prejudices towards Native people as the general public in the early twentieth century. He argued that Europeans could not expect "semi-savages" to maintain modern standards of cleanliness. Cook contended that Native sexual "promiscuity" and preferences for the "wild" contributed to the demographic collapse of California Indian populations.[7] He also labeled Native accounts of life at the missions as non-credible. Instead, Cook preferred accounts of the mission system produced by European explorers and Spanish padres.[8] Many contemporary representations of the mission period that ignore or discount Native perspectives also neglect to recognize the deadly impact Spanish colonization had on Native Californian communities. Interpreters at the overwhelmingly Catholic-operated missions currently maintain representations of a glorified mission past by ignoring Native death, disease, Spanish enforced punishments, and instances of violence.

Franciscan scholars such as Zephyrin Engelhardt and Francis F. Guest presented mission history to the public from a Catholic perspective. They countered the negative portrayal of the missions with focused examinations of the institutional history of

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[6] Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization* (1943; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press,1976), 227-229.

[7] Ibid., 32.

[8] Ibid., 71.

missions and the lives of padres in Alta California.[9] Guest, who replied to Cook's scathing demographic evidence, argued that scholars must understand the cultural perspectives of the Spanish priests before condemning their actions in California. Specifically, Guest defended the continued spread of the mission system even though the missionaries recognized the existence of a significantly high death rate among missionized Indians. Guest argued that death at an early age and premature ageing were common facets of life in the 1700s. in Spain, priests from small rural towns experienced food shortages, frequent epidemics, and inadequate health care that made them accustomed "to rubbing elbows with death" from childhood.[10] Native people in California did not have the sanitation issues or constant threat of epidemics common in Spain that fueled this familiarity with death. On the contrary, archeological evidence suggests that Native populations throughout much of California thrived before Spanish contact.

To mend the problem of disease epidemics at the missions, Guest contended that the priests commissioned mission residents to build hospitals. But a lack of knowledgeable doctors and inadequate medical supplies hindered the development of more advanced healthcare in the region. Guest insisted that Native people did not die

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[9] Guest directly responded to Cook's arguments, especially his contention that the mission complex was a breeding ground for disease and that missionaries forcibly converted Native people to Christianity. Francis F. Guest, "An Examination of the Thesis of S.F. Cook on the Forced Conversion of Indians in the California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 61 (1979), 1-77.

[10] Francis F. Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," *Southern California Quarterly* 65 (1983), 1-65, 4.

because the padres neglected their duties to protect the Indians. He argued that the missionaries cared for Native people to the best of their abilities. The padres were not "callous and indifferent," but the restraints of the mission system itself lent to the death and disease that marred the period. According to this perspective, disease was too rampant and the missions had too few resources to combat the maladies that infected so many neophytes.[11] This may have been true, but the Spanish still carry the blame for introducing several devastating diseases to California Indian populations.

Contemporary scholars including Robert Jackson, James Sandos, and Edward Castillo focused heavily death among mission Indians. They examined the many non-epidemic causes of death, such as limited access to medical attention, malnutrition, poor sanitation, and cramped living quarters for women and small children. These scholars also analyzed the high death-rate among missionized Indians as a result of epidemics and disease. Jackson and Castillo noted that labor and high stress levels impacted the bodies of missionized Indians. It contributed to weakened immune systems and lethargy.[12] Sandos also addressed lethargy among missionized populations, but found the probable cause to be related to high instances of syphilis.[13]

Native Californians faced the threat of disease epidemics throughout their lives at the missions, yet contemporary interpreters at mission sites provide little discussion of the effects of diseases on mission populations. Scholars including Sandos, Cook, Steven

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[11] Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," 4-6.

[12] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 51-52.

[13] Sandos, *Converting California*, 111-127.

Hackel, and other documented the effects of these illnesses in widely available publications that mission interpreters can easily access. Rather, graveyards filled with headstones bearing the names of deceased priests and prominent members of the local community greet patrons as they pass through the gardens at several missions. At Mission San Gabriel, a towering crucifix in the center of the mission gardens marks the gravesite of over six thousand unnamed Gabrielino-Tongva people. According to signage at the mission, the people who occupy this mass gravesite died from the "cholera and small pox epidemics of 1825." Interestingly, this memorial points to epidemics late in the Spanish period as the cause of large-scale death. It ignores the wide-spread devastation caused by venereal diseases, malnutrition, violence, and sexual exploitation that affected Indian people during the mission era. It also attributes the deaths to common diseases that killed many Native Americans during colonial times. However, small pox was far less prominent in Alta California than venereal diseases and intestinal ailments.[14]

The gravesites of priests and prominent community members also frequently exist in markedly different spaces than the Indian cemetery at many of the missions. These separate sites underscore the duality of presentations in mission histories. Mission sites freely venerate deceased priests in individually marked graves but they fail to adequately address the historical importance of the thousands of Native people buried in mass gravesites nearby. Furthermore, publications sold at contemporary missions primarily focus on sensationalized or accidental deaths in Spanish California that lend to

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[14] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 114.

entertaining ghost stories or tales about the haunted landscape.[15] Many missions today present sanitized narratives that emphasize the sites as positive conductors of change in California. They neglect to impart a clear understanding of life for Native people during the Spanish period that includes a discussion of death, disease, punishment, and violence.

Pamphlet sold in mission gift shops welcome patrons into the "God-blessed surroundings of [the] Mission… [where] we enter another world – a world of peace, of harmony, of humanity's adoration of God."[16] Through these pamphlets, patrons find that places such as Mission San Gabriel have been a "haven" for people throughout time, including the "Gabrielino-Tongva Indian, valiant Spanish explorer, the jovial-spirited Mexican, and the adventurous American." The mission asks visitors to forget their worries and troubles as they wander through "the age-worn gardens, picturing in your mind those brown-robed friars and gentle aborigines who toiled so patiently within the shadows of these walls and nearby lands."[17] The contemporary state of Mission San Gabriel, the self-described "haven for the weary," presents a very serine atmosphere. Gardens dominate the courtyard of the mission complex, including many fountains and stone benches that define places of rest and reflection. Grapevines on beautiful wooden trellises provide shade for visitors as they retrace the steps of countless people before

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[15] Richard Senate, *Ghosts of the California Missions and El Camino Real* (Santa Barbara: Shoreline Press, 2011).

[16] Val Ramon, *Mission San Gabriel Arcángel: Commemorative Edition*, (Yucaipa, CA: Photografx Worldwide Inc., 2008), 3.

[17] Ibid.

them and view, room by room, mission history as it is interpreted by representatives of the historic site.

Many contemporary mission sites highlight themes that correspond to church history and the productive contributions the Spanish made to California. Unfortunately, a greater understanding of Native people and their role within the missions is hidden from view in exhibits, publications, and in information provided in tours. For example, displays at many of the most productive missions, including San Gabriel, San Luis Rey, and La Purisima describe the ranching and agriculture ventures of the missions. They tell visitors that livestock populations thrived in Spanish California. Missions produced enough leather, soap, and meat to support themselves and supply less prosperous missions as well.[18] Regrettably for Native Californians, grazing animals such as horses, cattle, and sheep brought by the Spanish multiplied far beyond the control of the mission. These animals ate and trampled the plants and seeds that Native Californians relied on to survive.[19]

While mission herds doubled and tripled in size, California experienced a drought that weakened local food supplies and exacerbated the shortage beyond what livestock had already eaten and crushed.[20] However, anthropologists argue that drought alone did not cause the high numbers of death and malnutrition that pushed Native people into the

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[18] Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 161-165.

[19] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 65-123.

[20] Ibid., 79-81.

missions. For example, archeological evidence shows that Native groups, such as the Chumash in the Santa Barbara area experienced cycles of drought and El Niños several times over their 11,000 year existence in the region without suffering severe population decline. Furthermore, Spanish documents from the early mission period in California describe thriving Indian communities that relied heavily on the local landscape for food.[21] Many scholars agree that the introduction and propagation of European livestock and grains in California destroyed Native food resources and caused malnutrition as well as starvation. This forced Native people to turn to the missions for sustenance. Contemporary exhibitions at Mission San Gabriel highlight the productive ranching, tanning, soap, and candle making facilities manned by Indian laborers at the mission, but they do not discuss the toll of hard labor on Native bodies or the effects of livestock on Native food supplies.

Historical records indicated that Native people commonly came to the missions for food. Pedro Font, who accompanied the expedition led by Juan Bautista de Anza from Sonora to Monterey, noted in January, 1776, that the missionaries did not force baptism on the local Indians. Nevertheless, hungry people turned to the missions as a solution to their food shortages. Indigenous people stayed at the missions and followed the instructions of the priests to maintain access to a stable food supply. Many priests mistook Native people coming to the missions for food as expressed interest in Christianity. Scholars maintain that the missionaries frequently provided abbreviated

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[21] Deana Dartt-Newton and Jon M. Erlandson, “Little Choice for the Chumash: Colonialism Cattle, and Coercion in the California Missions,” *American Indian Quarterly* 30 (2006), Special Issue, *Decolonizing Archeology*, 416-430.

catechisms before baptism, lasting as little as a few hours or one day, to supply the missions with an ample labor supply.[22] After baptism, the padres prevented the new converts from leaving the mission without permission. The priests informed the neophytes that if they left the mission without permission, soldiers would hunt them down and forcibly return them to the mission to face punishment. Font observed that many times neophytes asked for permission to leave to gather acorns and visit nearby relatives, which missionaries allowed them to do once a year.[23] Thus, people who turned to the missions for food quickly found themselves bound to a culturally destructive institution that threatened the continued existence of Native communities.

People from more distant villages moved to the missions as livestock grazed on lands further away from the Spanish settlements and decimated Native food sources. Font observed that "[a]t times they come with a pagan relative who stays for the catechetical instruction, either drawn by the example of others or attracted by the pozole, which suits them better than the herbs and the food they gather in the hills. So these Indians are wont to be collected through the stomach."[24] Missionaries such as Font recognized that the availability of food drew Native people to the missions. Even though Native Californians survived for generations from the resources provided by the land,

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[22] Sandos, *Converting California*, 128-134.

[23]The amount of time missionaries allowed Native people to leave the missions varied at each missions, depending on the productivity of each mission. For example, Native people at San Diego and San Luis Rey often lived in villages outside of the mission walls. Engelhardt, *San Gabriel Mission and the Beginning of Los Angeles*, 33-34.

[24] Ibid.

Spanish food produced by neophytes at the missions offered stability for hungry populations.[25]

Scholars of Spanish California argue that Native people also moved to the missions to escape the ravages of disease in their own communities. Many indigenous people in California witnessed their friends and family members die from starvation and newly-introduced European diseases that Native healers treated ineffectively.[26] At the same time, Native Californians saw that Spanish soldiers and priests did not die from the same diseases. Native people turned to the mission complexes in hopes of protecting themselves and their families from death. Unfortunately, the missions proved to be ineffective against stopping the spread of pestilences – proving instead to be breeding grounds for the foreign diseases. Epidemics spread like wildfire in mission communities where Native people worked, ate, prayed, and slept in close proximity to one another. According to scholars, venereal diseases were the most heinous European maladies that infiltrated Native populations. Cook, Sandos, and Hackel argued that the Spanish introduced venereal diseases to the California Indian population. These diseases caused

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[25] Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 76; Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 65-72. While Hackel focuses on the Rumsen of Mission San Carlos near Monterey, his study is applicable to the experiences of Native people throughout California.

[26] James A. Sandos, "Between Crucifix and Lance: Indian-White Relations in California, 1769-1848," in *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*, ed. by Rámon A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 196-229; 205.

indigenous people to die in large numbers and left survivors in decimated villages to turn to the missions for help.[27]

Missionaries Jose de Miguel and Jose Maria Zalvidea at Mission San Gabriel wrote that Spaniards traveling with the overland expedition led by Juan Bautista de Anza in 1777 first introduced venereal diseases to the Gabrielino-Tongva. Moreover, Sandos noted that earlier expeditions led by Gasper de Portolá in 1769 also spread diseases throughout Native Californian communities. During these expeditions, Indians from Baja California, who the Spanish previously infected, had sexual encounters with people in Alta California. Spanish soldiers also raped Indian people and infected them with sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea. Priests lamented about the mistreatment of Indian women by the soldiers. Native people also changed their lifestyles to protect women from sexual assaults. Through archeological evidence and historical documentation, scholars have found that some indigenous women who previously worked collecting plants on the outskirts of villages rarely left the safety of their homes after Spanish colonization. Others reoriented their communities and dug ditches around village sites so Spanish soldiers could not ride through on horseback.[28] Most scholars believe that a wide range of venereal diseases did not exist in California

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[27] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indians and White Civilization*, 227-229; Sandos, *Converting California*, 111-127; Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 65-72..

[28] Barbara L. Voss, "Colonial Sex: Archeology, Structured Space, and Sexuality in Alta California's Spanish-colonial Missions," in *Archaeologies of Sexuality*, ed. by Robert A. Schmidt and Barbara L. Voss (New York: Routledge, 2000), 35-61, 41.

prior to Spanish contact, however, these diseases spread quickly shortly after the Spanish arrived in Baja and Alta California.[29]

Syphilis, the most deadly of the venereal diseases Native Californians encountered with Spanish contact, progressed in several stages in the human body. Native people unfamiliar with syphilis could easily overlook the first symptoms of the disease – a rarely painful sore that developed at the infection site known as a "chancre." The secondary stage began between two to six months later and lasted for up to two years. People with stage-two syphilis have a highly contagious rash on their skin and mucous sores around their mouth, throat, rectum, and genitals. During this stage non-infected persons may easily contract syphilis by coming into contact with an infected person's body fluids. Native people at the missions shared clothing and bedding that exposed infectious body fluids unknowingly to others. Infected people with stage-two syphilis felt sick with fever and headaches, joint and bone pain, and experienced hair loss. Pregnant women with stage-one or stage-two syphilis had a high chance of passing the disease on to their newborn child.[30]

Late stage syphilis symptoms developed after a dormant period that ranged anywhere from a few weeks up to fifteen years. Infected people at this stage frequently experienced blindness, debilitating arthritis, memory-loss, dementia, aneurysms, and death. Children born to mothers with syphilis had a high chance of developing deformed skulls and showed signs of late stage syphilis early in life. Many children born with

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[29] Sandos, *Converting California*, 111-127.

[30] Ibid., 114-115.

congenital syphilis died within their first few years.[31] Advanced stages of syphilis also caused scarring of the fallopian tubes in women that significantly lowered their fertility. Poor reproductive health caused by diseases also caused women to miscarry or deliver still-born babies.[32] The high number of death associated with women and children infected with syphilis contributed greatly to the destruction of Native populations. Sandos argued that Native people moved to missions as places of possible refuge, in response to the severe population decline they witnessed.[33]

Representatives at missions today do not discuss the impact of venereal diseases on Native populations. Rather, interpreters at such places as Mission San Gabriel attribute the six thousand Native bodies buried near their walls to smallpox and cholera epidemics. Understandably, a discussion of Native population decline due to deadly venereal diseases does not seem appropriate for an institution whose main visitors consist of fourth-grade schoolchildren. Nonetheless, to falsely attribute the high number of deaths to two epidemics that occurred in the 1820s, on the eve of mission secularization, does not accurately represent Native experiences at the missions. Misleading interpretations such as these further sanitizes early California history to reflect the

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Some missionaries punished women who miscarried. Some priests thought these women actually aborted their babies, a practice sometimes done by Native women especially when their pregnancies resulted from rape by Spanish soldiers. For more details about Native Californians, abortion, and punishment see, Sandos, *Converting California*, 111-127.

[33]Ibid.

mission myth and Spanish "White Legend" promoted by boosters such as Charles Lummis and John McGroarty.

Romanticized presentations congruent with mission mythology portray the padres as benevolent forces in the lives of Native Californians. In reality, the Spanish significantly threatened the perseverance of many Native cultures. Spanish priests attempted to regulate the most intimate aspects of life for Native people, in part to curb the spread of disease. Most regularly they used *monjeríos*, or female dormitories, to closely monitor and separate young women from the remainder of the mission population until marriage. Guarding "the purity of their spiritual daughters," priests segregated unmarried women for their "protection" against Native men and Spanish soldiers. Missionaries advocated for the construction of monjeríos as one of the first buildings erected at mission sites, along with missionary residences and chapels.[34] At night the priests and their assistants locked young unmarried Indian women over age eight in the single-room dormitories.[35] These spaces were important components of the mission complex used as tools of surveillance and control.[36] These rooms were poorly ventilated and helped in the spread of diseases between Native girls locked in the cramped spaces.

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[34] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 48-49.

[35] *Monjerío* translated into English means nunnery. Engelhardt, *San Gabriel Mission and the Beginning of Los Angeles*, 36-38.

[36] The monjeríos also helped the priests and the *llavera*, or keeper of the keys, regulate punishments for the girls. Chelsea K. Vaughn, "Locating Absence: The Forgotten Presence of Monjeríos in the Alta California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 93 (2011), 141-174; 145-146.

The matron, or *llavera*, who watched over the monjerío also supervised unmarried girls and women during their daily work. Interpretations at contemporary mission sites gloss over the lived experiences of young Native women isolated in the monjeríos. They focus instead on the daily chores of women and girls such as weaving, basket making, and food preparation. English and Russian explorers to Alta California during the Spanish era described women doing similar chores, but they also provided condemning descriptions of the ways mission officials treated the young women. German navigator Otto von Kotzebue, who worked in service for the Russians in the 1820s, described the "poor girls" he viewed at several missions. Some of the girls wore shackles and all were eager to take in fresh air during their quick walk between the monjerío and church. He wrote that,

> We were struck by the appearance of a large quadrangular building, which having no windows on the outside, and only one carefully secured door, resembled a prison for state-criminals. It proved to be the residence appropriated by the monks, the severe guardians of chastity, to the young unmarried Indian women, whom they keep under their particular superintendence, making their time useful to the community by spinning, weaving, and similar occupations.[37]

Foreigners and Spanish priests in Alta California described the monjeríos as protective sites. According to this perspective, the dormitories shielded young women from the brutality and depredations of both Indian men and Spanish soldiers.[38]

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[37] Otto von Kotzebue, *A New Voyage Round the World, in the Years 1823, 24, 25, and 26,* II, (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830), 95.

[38] Vaughn, "Locating Absence," 147-155.

Restricting all unmarried females over age eight to the dormitories gave missionaries the power to intimately control the lives of converted women from a young age. Monjeríos forcibly separated young women from their families. This separation allowed the missionaries to engrain Spanish customs and Catholic teachings into the minds of secluded women at an early age. It restricted indigenous parents from teaching their children about Native culture, traditions, and religious beliefs. Women who matured within the mission system and had children with neophyte men produced new generations of Catholic Indians disjointed from their Native heritage.[39]

Presently, few missions provide insight into the life of neophyte women in monjeríos. For example, a single wall panel at mission San Gabriel that discusses the monjerío in the museum actually stands as a tribute to Eulalia Pérez, the "keeper of the keys." The label notes that Pérez held the keys to the monjerío for fourteen years, took care of the unmarried girls, and supervised the production of food, soap, and clothing at the mission. A sign notifying patrons of the different rooms housed in the south side of the quadrangle briefly recognizes that space originally occupied by the monjerío, or as the mission refers to it as the "quarters for unmarried girls." Missions San Juan Capistrano and San Luis Rey similarly mask the negative impact of monjeríos on the lives of Native women. They also neglect to address the monitoring and surveillance roles of the dormitories in the mission complex. Some of this misrepresentation began in the early and mid-twentieth century when inaccurate reconstruction and restoration

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[39] Robert Heizer, ed., *The Indians of Los Angeles County: Hugo Reid's Letters of 1852,* (Highland Park: Southwest Museum, 1968), 87; Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization*, 81-83.

efforts by Church officials or regional boosters omitted monjeríos from the physical narrative of the sites.[40]

Mission officials formally established monjeríos as a precaution to protect the "virtue" of Native women against Spanish-perceived social ills of pre-marital sex. For example, priests at Mission San Gabriel condemned Gabrielino-Tongva culture for its acceptance of premarital and extramarital sexual encounters. The strict boundaries the missionaries established around the lives of neophytes caused some Native people to turn to desperate measures to find semblances of happiness. While priests constructed physical borders to closely monitor Native people at the missions, they also created social boundaries to restrict the sexual relations of converts. The priests also regulated marriage through Catholic doctrine to control sexuality. Native Californian communities had their own customs regarding sexuality and marriage. They placed taboos on incest and adultery, but not on premarital relations or divorce as did the Spanish.[41]

Viewing sex outside of marriage as sinful behavior, the padres exercised very little flexibility in exacting punishments against Indians who violated the very conservative belief structure of the Catholic Church.[42] Many Native communities, on the

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[40] Vaughn, "Locating Absence," 156-164.

[41] Specific beliefs regarding marriage, sex, and divorce differed between groups of California Indians. But many groups shared a similar general understanding of marriage as a cultural institution also related to economic and political needs of a family or community. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 182-185.

[42] This belief structure was outlined in the codes from the Council of Trent (1545-1563). These codes sought to regulate the type of marriage deemed appropriate in the eyes of the church. It banned marriage between close relatives. The codes made marriage a sacrament between two Catholics in the church given by a priest who investigated the

other hand, did not have as restrictive views of marriage and sexuality as found in Spanish Catholic traditions.[43] To reinforce Catholic conceptions of marriage and sexuality, priests in Alta California vigorously questioned couples about their sexual exploits during premarital investigations. The padres sometimes coerced neophytes into admitting sinful acts in the eyes of the Church. The padres further inquired into the sexual lives of married neophytes on an annual basis to consistently reinforce Roman Catholic concepts of sin, penance, punishment, and forgiveness.[44]

Indian people developed resentment against the Spanish who attempted to regulate the sexual relations of neophytes. Historical records also indicate that indigenous people often resisted Spanish attempts to control their marriages and divorces. Conflicts between the two groups emerged especially when conservative Spanish practices clashed with traditional Native understandings of personal relationships. Historians observe that the Spanish documented instances wherein priests, Indian overseers, or soldiers punished Native people at the missions for their sexual exploits. Hackel provided examples of conflicts between priests and neophytes over punishments for premarital or extramarital affairs at Mission San Carlos, San Miguel, Santa Cruz, and

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couple before performing the nuptials. The priests also announced the couples' intent to wed for three consecutive days to make sure there were no communal objections to the marriage based on the regulations set forth in the aforementioned codes. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 189-191.

[43] Voss, "Colonial Sex," 38.

[44] Scholars argue that the priests often confused indigenous people by consistently preaching against certain behaviors yet forgiving others of many of the same sins. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 199-202.

San Juan Capistrano. The priests punished offending neophytes with penalties that included cutting their hair, floggings, confinement sentences at the presidio, and hard-labor terms in shackles.[45] In one of the most extreme examples, a man and woman, Aurelio and Tomasa, trapped in an unhappy marriage at Mission San Juan Capistrano faced punishment on several occasions for embracing extramarital lovers. Aurelio eventually murdered Tomasa for being "a bad wife" after missionaries punished his mistress and forced Tomasa's lover to stop compensating Aurelio for his wife's company. Aurelio and Tomasa's circumstances were not unique. Mission records indicate that men and women trapped in unhappy marriages murdered or attempted to kill their spouses at several missions so that they could remarry without facing continual punishments for adultery.[46] Representations at modern mission sites do not delve deep enough into the personal lives of neophytes to uncover these types of complicated narratives found in the historical record. Once learned, such accounts add rich texture to the sanitized mission history displayed at many contemporary sites.

Spanish missionaries attempted to regulate marriage and sexuality to control "illicit" behavior, but also hoped to stop the rampant spread of diseases among neophyte populations.[47] Priests especially tried to restrict sexual relationships between neophytes

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[45] Ibid., 197-213.

[46] Ibid., 203-213.

[47] The priests tried to stop the spread of disease though forced chastity by compelling unmarried Native males and females to sleep at night in separate and locked rooms. Unmarried Indian men slept in separate housing at some missions as well. The missionaries locked the men in at night, but they did not station a guard at the male dormitory. José del Carmen Lugo, "Industrious Indians," Nellie Van de Grift Sanchez,

to help curb the spread of venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea.[48] Unfortunately, the crowded, unclean, and poorly ventilated monjeríos further assisted in the spread of diseases among young women who were trapped for hours in the small rooms.[49] Young women within the mission system had relatively short life expectancies. They frequently died in childbirth, made more risky from endemic diseases. At Mission San Carlos, one-third of all married women who reached childbearing age (fifteen years old) died before their nineteenth birthday. Hackel noted that young men and women died more often in their early adulthood from diseases transmitted by intimate contact with other neophytes. The high mortality rate among people of childbearing age also directly impacted the infant death rate. Babies commonly inherited diseases from their mothers. They also frequently lacked proper nourishment usually provided by their mothers who had died in childbirth or suffered from malnourishment themselves.[50] Mission communities were not only plagued by high infant and child mortality rates; indigenous women also commonly lost a quarter of pregnancies to miscarriages and stillbirths. These tragedies must have taken a severe toll on the minds and hearts of Native men and

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trans., in *The Pride of the Missions: A Documentary History of San Gabriel Mission*, ed. by Francis J. Weber (Hong Kong: Libra Press Limited, 1978), 136-139.

[48] Gonorrhea and especially syphilis spread directly through sexual intercourse, contact with open wounds, though Native medicinal practices of blood-letting, and also though indirect contact with contaminated clothing and sheets. For a brief discussion of blood-letting see, Heizer, ed., *The Indians of Los Angeles County*, 32-33.

[49] Sandos, *Converting California*, 120-122.

[50] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 96-112.

women – as they witnessed their children die and communities deteriorate in front of their eyes.[51]

Based on descriptions of disease symptoms provided by missionaries and health officials traveling through Alta California, syphilis and gonorrhea were the most serious and deadly diseases to chronically infect Indian communities. Pregnant women infected with either disease lost one out of three pregnancies. They were more likely to have premature babies that did not survive, and infants that did live often died in early childhood from congenital forms of the maladies. Moreover, both diseases caused sterility in men and women that further contributed to the low birth rate in mission communities. Hackel observed that Native people could not stop the spread of these diseases without halting sexual contact with each other. But they probably tried to conceive more children after witnessing the decline of their communities.[52]

Missionaries tried to take an active yet misguided role in reducing the infection-rate of diseases among neophyte communities. The padres preached against "unchaste" behavior, provided ineffective medical treatments, or publically ridiculed women and men as a punishment.[53] Witnessing the ravages of disease and death on Indian populations forced some priests to recognize that the missions ultimately failed in their goals to "be the joy of the sovereign majesties of heaven and earth."[54] Missionaries

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[51] Ibid., 108-115.

[52] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 115-120.

[53] Ibid., 118-123.

[54] Ibid., 121.

struggled with death and diseases that wrought havoc on neophyte populations. Most contemporary representations of mission history, however, do not address this crucial component of life in Spanish California. Hackel noted that "for the Franciscans, without Indians alive, working, and undergoing a process of civilization, the conquest had lost its object and could even be deemed a failure."[55] Native people originally turned to the missions to find sanctuary from the diseases and malnutrition that ravaged their communities, but the missions "in reality proved to be graveyards for their kin."[56]

Some contemporary missions provide minimal information about diseases in early California history. On the other hand, these historic sites rarely address the violence, punishment, and other abuses the Spanish inflicted on Native people during the mission era. Franciscan scholars worked to counter many of the negative narratives that historians in the twentieth century unearthed regarding punishment, abuse, and violence at the California missions. For example, church historians stressed that priests commonly used whips in their daily lives. According to Franciscan scholars, the padres viewed the discipline as a form of penance that helped a person become closer to Christ. Conversely, contemporary accounts provided by Native people argue that the Spanish punished and abused indigenous people. They contend that the missionaries used physical threats as a powerful form of coercion to force Native people into the Spanish

[55] Ibid., 122.

[56] The missionaries also lost converts to fugitivism after epidemic outbreaks. Unfortunately, priests at some missions unsympathetically ordered that mourning people be whipped for grieving too long. Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 121-123, 123.

Catholic fold. Lorena Dixon and Hazel Maldonado recalled that the missionaries did not understand Native lifeways "so [the missionaries] had to browbeat their religion into us. Whipping was common…. So the missions [*sic*]… was the worst thing that could happen to our people."[57] Many Native people expressed similar sentiments condemning the way the Spanish treated their ancestors during the mission period. This narrative is absent from many interpretations at contemporary California mission sites. Modern mission interpreters rarely address Spanish abuses at the missions. In the unusual instances that they do discuss abuse, mission representatives blame the Spanish soldiers for exacting harsh punishments on indigenous people. The padres remain kind, caring, and compassionate figures in mission presentations, just as they existed in Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* and McGroarty's *Mission Play*.[58]

In reality though, discipline and punishment played an important role in Spanish California – both in religious expression and maintaining the social order. Native Californian communities had their own rules and guidelines that regulated society and doled out punishments for offenders before the Spanish ever set foot in the Americas.

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[57] Lorena Dixon and Hazel Maldonado, "Some Were Fooled," in *The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide,* ed. by Rupert Costo and Jeanette Henry Costo (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1987), 148-149.

[58] The missionaries often tried to protect Native people from Spanish soldiers and settlers. They wrote to colonial civil authorities and requested that officials reassign and/or punish offending soldiers. However, some priests also abused Native people. For example, neophytes from Mission Santa Clara accused Father Tomás de la Peña of beating them. They argued that he was so brutal and "hotheaded" that he beat two men and a young boy to death. De la Peña was not the standard, but, at the least, many priests doled out punishments to neophytes. Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 321-331.

But the Spanish instituted a more severe, stringent, and increasingly violent set of regulations in Alta California. Both secular and religious officials investigated perceived wrongdoings, recommended sentences, and punished Native offenders. At the same time, many Franciscans, including Serra, used self-discipline as an important part of their religious practice. Scholars actively debate the use and cultural understanding of discipline for both neophytes and priests in the Spanish California missions. Contemporary mission sites exclude this discussion nearly completely to maintain romanticized depictions of early California. Physical discipline and violence against indigenous people more closely reflected brutality found in the Spanish "Black Legend" that boosters in the twentieth century sought to dispel.

Popular depictions of brutal Spanish conquistadors laid the backbone for the Spanish "Black Legend" that regional boosters such as Lummis worked to counter in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Excluding violence and punishment from their romanticized histories allowed boosters to create a "White Legend" wherein Spanish padres were benevolent colonizers that brought civilization to California. In reality, the cycle of violence and punishment created seeds of resentment. It bred resistance efforts among some neophytes that manifested in large-scale rebellions in places such as San Diego (1775) and the Santa Barbara area (1824). Native people also fled the missions to escape humiliating public punishments. Others fired back at mission officials by poisoning and killing the leaders responsible for ordering punishments.[59]

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[59] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 321-332.

Officials in Spanish California punished indigenous people for a variety of wrongdoings as a central tool in maintaining social control. Crimes ranged from severe misdeeds such as murder and stealing livestock, to more minimal offenses including failing to complete daily chores, young women not returning to their dormitories in a timely manner, or excessively crying about the death of a relative. Mission officials prescribed punishments depending on the severity of the crime. The punishments included whippings, being shackled, hard labor, or confinement sentences at the presidio. Many California Indians viewed Spanish teachings and their actions as contradictory. The padres punished Native people for considerably minimal offenses, while soldiers ravaged the countryside, attacked Native women, stole from them, and killed indigenous people but faced less severe recourses.[60]

Moreover, Native Californians rarely used physical punishments or imprisonment to discipline their children or other community members before Spanish colonization. Rather, the community understood that offenders were in the debt of those they had wronged and must compensate victims for their crimes. The general absence of physical punishments in Native communities differed greatly from Spanish Franciscan customs. Many of the Spanish priests "considered violence towards Indians integral to their missionary approach" but also used the whip for self-discipline as a part of their own spiritual practices.[61]

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[60] Ibid., 321-366.

[61] Ibid., 321-322, 326.

Guest observed that self-flagellation and whippings played a crucial role in the religious exercises of many Catholics in the eighteenth century.[62] Some religious people during this time viewed voluntary self-flagellation as a form of penance and an expression of faith. According to Guest, "religious practice at the time was dominated by devotion to the passion of Christ and by the spirit of penance that issued from it."[63] Bodily pain personified this religious devotion. For Spanish Franciscan priests, discipline was as central to their faith as "their rosary, or even their missal or breviary."[64] Father President Fermín Francisco Lasuén, Serra successor, defended missionaries who physically punished Native people to his inquiring superiors. He argued that "here are aborigines whom we are teaching to be men, people of vicious and ferocious habits who know no law but force, no superior but their own free will, and no reason but their own caprice."[65] Of course Lasuén mistakenly assumed that force played a central role in Native Californian cultures. In reality, Native people used physical punishments very infrequently before Spanish contact.[66]

Lasuén and Guest observed that twenty-one to twenty-five lashes were moderate punishments for any cause requiring discipline. They argued that students in Spain frequently received worse punishments for lower offenses than Native people in

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[62] Guest addresses punishments and discipline in "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," 6-15.

[63] Ibid., 14.

[64] Ibid., 15.

[65] Lasuén as quoted in Sandos, *Converting California*, 89.

[66] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 322-330.

California.[67] While whippings averaged around twenty per charge, lashing sentences could range into the hundreds for more severe crimes. For instance, the men accused of murdering Father Andrés Quintana at Mission Santa Cruz in 1812 received two hundred lashes each, as well as prison terms at the presidio.[68] Physical punishment strained the relationship Native people had with the missions.

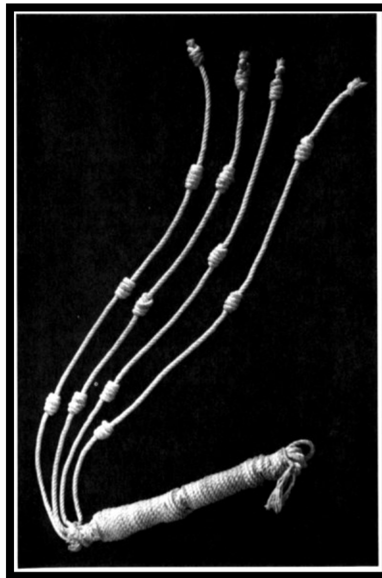

Figure 31 The type of instrument used in self-flagellation, this discipline was used by someone in the Santa Barbara area. Source: Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life."

Guest argued that scholars cannot condemn the padres for the high mortality rate, overwhelming disease contagion, and use of corporal punishment in California. He replied to what he called "newsreel" history – reports of early California that emphasized sensational accounts of abuse. Guest contended that these things were common in eighteenth century Spanish society, not just colonial California. However, he did not

[67] Sandos, *Converting California*, 89.

[68] Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," 14-17.

acknowledge that corporal punishments, rampant epidemics, and wide-scale death were uncommon facets of Native life *before* Spanish colonization. Guest questioned why Native people "submit[ted] to these whippings so patiently," and concluded that neophytes saw the whippings as an extension of the religious fervor of the padres, who practiced self-discipline almost daily.[69]

Scholars more recently have argued that Native people did not submit to punishments as acceptingly as Guest suggested. Neophytes often fled the mission to escape humiliating punishments and refused to work under threatening conditions as the mission system progressed. Moreover, changing ideologies in Spanish Catholicism under reformist Bourbon policies in the late 1700s increasingly questioned the need for corporal punishment. They banned parish priests from using the whip for discipline. Missionaries did not adopt these changes, and found themselves defending their use of corporal punishment to the governors of Alta California.[70]

The tension between secular officials and missionaries in Alta California regarding Indian punishment was only one piece of a power struggle between the two colonial authorities. The government questioned the priests' excessive use of the whip on neophytes, but secular officials still believed that errant Indians should face physical punishments – only at the hands of the military. The Spanish believed that indigenous people must fall in line with Spanish colonial society, become productive members of the

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[69] Ibid., 14-17.

[70] Hackel, *Children of Coyote,* 322-331.

Hispanic community, or face punishment for their perceived misdeeds.[71] Native people responded by fleeing the missions, attacking priests, or staging revolts to demonstrate their displeasure.

Guest argued that "American scholars, inclined to view [the whipping of the Indians] at the missions from the standpoint of either secular or Christian humanism, understand it less perfectly," than Latin American or Spanish scholars who are more familiar with "the discipline."[72] Guest insisted that scholars use cultural and historical perspective when examining punishment, disease, and death in the missions. He fails to recognize that Native perspectives are equally as important as Euro-American views. Native perspectives also provide a much needed counter-narrative to the traditionally church-centric story.[73] Guest questioned why Native people continued to come to the missions knowing that physical punishment was a possibility. Since Guest's inquiry, a new generation of scholars has argued that Native people found themselves drawn into the missions out of necessity – to escape malnutrition, starvation, disease, violence, and death that stalked their communities following Spanish colonization. In this light, Native people accepted strict discipline as a more appealing fate than almost certain death. Neophytes also reacted forcefully when necessary. They fled the missions and others responded with violence against the Spanish when they felt neglected or abused in the

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[71] Ibid., 329-330.

[72] Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," 20.

[73] Guest's perspective in his call for scholars to not condemn Spanish priests for the disease and punishment of neophytes is not unrelated to his official work as a member of the Order of Friars Minor, a Franciscan priest.

mission system. As previously illustrated, scholars in the last two decades have demonstrated that Native people did not sit by passively and allow the Spanish to exert control over them. Disappointingly, many contemporary mission sites inevitably place Native people in passive roles while they present history from a church-centered perspective.

Guest observed that "the contrast between Catholic missionization of today, both in doctrine and in practice, and the Spanish missionary program of two hundred years ago is like the difference between day and night."[74] However, this distinction is not clear at many of the contemporary California mission sites. A majority of the California missions today present carefully selected objects without interpretation. They represent the past through the experiences of the Spanish priests and provide visitors with a sanitized history almost completely devoid of negative experiences. Because of this misleading historical representation, visitors may erroneously apply their understanding of current Catholic missionization to Spanish colonial systems of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this way, these church-operated sites can present romanticized and idyllic depictions of California history without considering the impact of Spanish missionization on Native communities.

The contemporary representation at Mission San Juan Bautista is an effective illustration of this problem. Today Mission San Juan Bautista is a state historic site and a very active Catholic parish church. Officials boast that the church has had a continuous succession of religious custodians since its founding on June 24, 1797. Because of this,

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[74] Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," 25.

the mission museum has one of the best kept collections of religious objects from Spanish California, displayed in a professional and aesthetically pleasing layout. Yet, there is very minimal signage that explains objects within the context of Spanish colonization. With an uninterrupted Catholic presence, the religious zeal among parishioners is palpable during a Sunday visit to the historic site. Members of the congregation proudly saunter through the mission museum and picturesque rose gardens neighboring the historic church. They do not get a sense of the disease, death, punishments, or violence that the Spanish inflicted on the Native population.[75] There is no cultural perspective that assists patrons in understanding the mission system through the eyes of Native people two hundred years ago.

[75] A booklet sold at the Gift Shop at Mission San Juan Bautista provides minimal basic information about the cultural history of the historic site. In the midst of a discussion about the construction of the church, the pamphlet notes that "although the neophyte population reached 1,100 in 1805, by the time the church was finished [June 23, 1812], death and desertions had cut the number to less than half that many." Later, the booklet addresses the cemetery, where "the remains of about 4,300 Mutsun Indians and early Spanish, Mexican, and American colonists" are buried. It does not discuss causes of death. Similar to many other mission sites, San Juan Bautista points to mission secularization as the devastating blow that destroyed many Native Californian communities. Mission San Juan Bautista, *Mission San Juan Bautista* (Arroyo Grande, CA: Lowman Publishing, 2008).

Figure 32 Serene setting in the courtyard at Mission San Juan Bautista. Source: Author's personal collection.

Without accurate historical perspective, portrayals of abuse and population decline during the mission era have been misappropriated in popular culture. For example, ghost hunters in popular television programs search Mission San Juan Capistrano for "Magdalena," a "beautiful" young woman killed when the bell tower collapsed on the Great Stone Church during an earthquake in 1812.[76] Books sold at mission gift shops provide guides to the ghostly legends that follow El Camino Real.[77] Tour guides and audio accompaniments at many of the contemporary missions recount experiences with the supernatural at these historic sites. Popular presentations such as

[76] About forty neophytes died when the bell tower collapsed and fell on top of the church. Mission San Juan Capistrano addresses this tragedy in its discussion of "Legends and Folklore." A booklet sold at the mission observes that "[church] service was just beginning when this tragedy struck. The ringing bells quickly silenced and 40 people were buried alive." Mission San Juan Capistrano, *Mission San Juan Capistrano* (Oxnard, CA: John Hindle Curteich, Inc., n.d.).

[77] Senate, *Ghosts of the California Missions and El Camino Real*, 1-30.

these sensationalize the dead and use "haunted" stories to lure tourists to the missions. They misdirect the focus of mission history to a fictive and sensationalized past using dramatic stories that even portray death in romantic fashions.[78]

While mission representations continue to promote romantic narratives, Guest contended that scholars increasingly relied on misguided interpretations of the missions. According to Guest, historians erroneously viewed the institutions as political and economic entities with an understanding that missionaries primarily served the Spanish crown instead of the church. According to this Franciscan historian, anthropologists also failed to adequately misrepresent the era with their focuses on the sociocultural components of mission life that illustrated change to Native cultures at the hands of Spanish priests. Guest argued that both of these interpretations missed the mark – that "a different dimension of mission life calls for its share of attention. The missions need to be viewed as expressions of Spanish religious culture."[79] Interestingly, the type of expression Guest called for is the exact presentation many visitors find at contemporary California mission sites. They see mission history commonly through symbols of religious Spanish culture – vestments, oversized hymnals, as well as paintings of saints,

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[78] For example, the narrative of Magdalena told at Mission San Juan Capistrano includes a love story. Magdalena fell in love with a young Indian man at the mission. Her father caught the lovebirds during one of their secret meetings. As a punishment, the priest ordered Magdalena to walk in front of the congregation holding a penitents candle. The earthquake struck and Magdalena was killed as she performed her penance. Mission legend claims that Magdalena's face still sometimes appears in the window of the church on half-moon nights – where the young girl continues to pay the price for her "forbidden love."

[79] Francis F. Guest, "An Inquiry into the Role of the Discipline in the California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 71 (1989), 1-68, 58-59.

Jesus, and the Virgin Mary. The perspective of Native Californians remains hidden within romanticized mission mythology. The voices of the tens of thousands of Native Californians who lost their lives as a result of Spanish contact remain muted within these bias and unhistorical representations of the past.

Chapter 7

Poles Apart: Glimpses of Changing Representations at California Missions

Francis Guest struck the nail on the head when he argued that people must view the Spanish mission system in its cultural perspective.[1] The Spanish established the California missions as a component of their goal to claim Alta California in the name of the Spanish crown. They used methods of labor, punishment, and religious indoctrination (by attempting to eliminate Native cultures) that other societies at the time viewed as arcane. However, sanitized public narratives at contemporary mission sites remove the story of early California from its cultural perspective. This deceiving trend neglects the experiences and stories of many Native Californians who were born, lived, and died at the missions. Examining components of the mission system often minimized or hidden in modern representation, including labor, resistance, punishment, disease, and death provides a more complete understanding of the system and removes the romanticized mission myth.

Some mission sites, especially those operated by the State of California, work to mend the unrealistic depiction of Spanish history common in popular venues. Interpretations at these sites focus more heavily on Native perspectives. Their

[1] Francis F. Guest, "Cultural Perspectives on California Mission Life," *Southern California Quarterly* 65 (1983), 1-65.

presentation of history displays a balanced portrait of early California that focuses on the lived experiences of indigenous populations. Church narratives fall into the periphery in their exhibition spaces. The history presented at some of these missions also pulls back the curtains on the Spanish "White Legend" popularized by Charles Lummis, John McGroarty, and *Ramona* enthusiasts. They interpret the mission system for what it was, and acknowledge that early twentieth century preservation and reconstruction efforts helped create this mythology. They provide Native voices sorely missing in other mission representations and hopefully help to increase understanding of Indian experiences in the missions for future generations.

The contemporary Spanish missions that dot the landscape in California exist as centers of historical interpretation. Visitors to California, residents of the state, and school children often turn to these sites to learn about the early history of the region. Unbeknownst to many visitors, the history presented at many contemporary California mission sites reflects an incomplete, skewed, and biased perspective of the past created in the early twentieth century by local promoters such as Lummis, through McGroarty's *Mission Play*, and intensified by *Ramona* tourists. This "revisionist" history focused on a romantic and idyllic representation of the mission era. Narratives centered on the benevolent work of Spanish priests and promotional efforts to preserve the mission ruins. Revisionists pushed Native Californians into the periphery of this manufactured narrative, despite the central role of indigenous people in building, populating, sustaining, and expanding the missions. Following in this tradition, many museums associated with

contemporary mission sites continue to present an edited version of the past. A select few California mission sites, mostly those owned and operated by the State of California's Department of Parks and Recreation, tell a more accurate story that includes Native experiences. They also present perspectives of the past as informed by recent scholarship of Spanish California. The histories presented at Mission La Purisima Concepción and San Francisco de Solano, as well as the church-owned San Francisco de Asis (also known as Mission Dolores) reflect this shifting trend in mission history.[2] Moreover, a recently recreated version of the *Mission Play* communicates a more active Native presence in popular culture as well.

Promoting a new understand of mission history requires many venues to reexamine and rephrase the traditional narratives told to the public. The California State Parks have done a sufficient job in revising history at their sites to reflect the realities of mission life gleamed from Native people, historic records, and current scholarship. Other

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[2] The State of California's Department of Parks and Recreation also controls the only building left of Mission Santa Cruz which was the housing for neophyte families at the mission. The exhibitions at Mission Santa Cruz focus on the experiences of the Ohlone and Yokut. The mission presents a video of the Ohlone entitled "We are Still Here." The film provides visitors with the Ohlone perspective of life *after* the mission period. It emphasizes the cultural complexity and richness of California Indian communities. The film notes that "to gain a foothold for Spain in [the] new world, the Spanish made the Indians work as laborers to build the missions. The padres used the missions to culturally change, civilize, and convert the California Indians into Christians." "They built the mission buildings, they raised fields of grain, tended cattle and sheep and labored in workshops to sustain hundreds of Indians and the few Spaniards living at the mission." The film emphasizes the significant amount of stress and change that the Spanish brought, including the diseases that killed thousands of indigenous people. It pointedly notes that "the way [California Indians] had lived for thousands of years would never be the same again." A copy of the film can also be found on the State Park's website. California Department of Parks and Recreation, "We Are Still Here," accessed June 7, 2013, http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=27198.

civic groups have also worked to revise public presentations of mission history to impart a more accurate narrative to audiences. These public sites and private venues promote mission history by incorporating more honest historical interpretations and Native perspectives in representations of the past. They represent the shift in public presentations and museology not seen at many of the other California missions.

Civic groups in Los Angeles reinvented McGroarty's work to reflect contemporary understandings of the mission era that highlight Native perspectives. The *Mission Play* once again graced the stage of the San Gabriel Mission Playhouse in early April, 2013, in celebration of the city's centennial. Foregoing the romanticism that epitomized the original incarnation of the production, the newly "reimagined" *Mission Play* examines the impact of the California missions from multiple perspectives. Tony Plana, a creative consultant for the production, described that the producers undertook the project of resurrecting the *Mission Play* "in a way that speaks to us today; about the wonderful diversity that exists… in San Gabriel where all the different races and cultures contribute to its richness. And the play, as we are reconceiving it, will be a celebration of that diversity."[3] The reimagined play begins in modern-day San Gabriel with a group of teenage hip-hop dancers gathering outside of Mission San Gabriel. Four of the teens are visited by the apparition of a man named Ubaldo, who takes them back in time to witness the history of California firsthand. The re-envisioned performance sought to be

[3] Tony Plana, "Tony Plana talks about the Mission Play, July 31, 2012," The Mission Playhouse, accessed April 9, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vK9Y9UtcLcs.

educational and entertaining; reframing the dramatic original presentation with more honest and inclusive perspectives.[4]

Similar to many young students learning California history, the teens in the reconceived *Mission Play* were familiar with basic components of Spanish California history. But they were surprised to see the complex interactions between Native people, Spanish soldiers, and the padres. The young people witness Spanish soldiers and priests straining to survive in San Diego, Native people grappling with changes brought by the Spanish, and Junípero Serra's struggle to find Native converts. In the first act, the play addresses abbreviated catechisms and points out faults in the baptismal practices used by Spanish priests interested in finding converts as quickly as possible. It demonstrates that the priests desperately wanted to baptize a child to prove that the mission system would be viable in Alta California. Throughout the play, one of the teen observers continually asserts a critical voice against Spanish colonization. She acknowledges the destruction done to Native communities and addresses the historical implications of what she witnesses. She speaks from an educated perspective – criticizing the Spanish for the disease, death, and the legacy of "genocide" they brought to California Indians.

[4] There are still some definitively unrealistic components added to the re-envisioned version of the play. For instance, Chinese dancers enter center stage during celebrations in the second and third acts. They appeal to the diversity of the large Chinese population of San Gabriel, but the Chinese were not present forces during the Spanish and Mexican periods.

Figure 33 Photo from the reimagined *Mission Play* during the marriage scene. Source: San Gabriel Mission Playhouse.

The retooled production removes much of the idyllic delusions of early California promoted by McGroarty, even while maintaining his general storyline and communicating Spanish colonization through the lens of a love story. The second and third acts illustrate the personal impact of Spanish colonization as it follows Serra's adopted ward, Anita, a half- Indian and half-Spanish girl, and a young Indian man named Pablo. Pulling from documented experiences found in historical records, the Commandante of the Alta California Presidios, Captain Fernando de Rivera y Moncada, requested Anita to be his "personal servant," but Serra rebuffed the captain. Serra recognized that Moncada had perverse intentions for the young woman. To protect Anita from further exploitation, Serra married Anita to her true love, Pablo, at Mission San Carlos Borroméo.[5] To avoid falling into a trap of romanticizing the era in the modern

[5] In the original production, Serra marries Anita to another neophyte to protect her from the commandante – removing Anita's agency to choose her partner while glorifying the padres as the protectors of California Indians. Chelsea Vaughn, "Locating Absence: The

reproduction of the *Mission Play*, the padres present at the marriage ceremony acknowledge that the newly-weds will have a hard life and will likely not be accepted in either Indian or Spanish communities.[6]

Highlighting the contemporary cultural diversity in San Gabriel, a procession of misplaced Chinese dancers appears at Anita and Pablo's marriage ceremony before the Spanish flamenco dancers.[7] To illustrate the multiple historical perspectives, the revised play includes several Native song and dance performances, along with the Spanish flamenco and Chinese routines. Drunken Spanish soldiers invade the church and shoot Pablo after a brief confrontation following their marriage celebrations. The revised version of the *Mission Play* paints the Spanish soldiers as the main perpetrators of violence and disruption in the region. The missionaries remain benevolent forces, even if their actions had unintended consequences that negatively impacted indigenous communities. This is a common thread found in many presentations that critically examine the impact of Spanish colonization. Interpreters tread carefully to not place fault on the Church. As a result, Spanish soldiers take a majority of the blame for spreading disease and abusing indigenous people.

Forgotten Presence of Monjerios in the Alta California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 93 (Summer 2011), 141-174; 155.

[6] Because Pablo was not a mission Indian and Anita was half-Spanish and brought up at the missions with Father Serra.

[7] Spanish flamenco dancers were a popular yet unrealistic component of the original *Mission Play*.

McGroarty's original version of the *Mission Play* and interpreters at contemporary California mission sites all point to secularization under Mexican rule as the downfall of the mission system. The end of the mission system is a turning point, and often an end point, in representations of early California history. It marks the transition into a generation of instability for the region and Native Californians in particular. Demonstrated in the third act of the reinvented *Mission Play,* the missions fall into ruins during this chaotic period. Ubaldo, the first Indian baby brought to Serra for baptism, remains the sole caretaker for Mission San Juan Capistrano. Ubaldo contemplates his life as a part of the mission system and the future of the crumbling site. Rather than use Señora Yorba to romanticize preservation of the Spanish landscape, as in the original *Mission Play*, the ghost of Ubaldo tells the modern-day teen observers that people must reconcile the past with the present – not to forget, but to move forward. Significantly, Ubaldo then attempts to reconcile his anger with the abandonment of the missions with concerns over the incoming Americans. The final curtain falls with a single Native man standing under a spotlight, center stage, slowly beating a drum, as if to say "we are still here." Affirming and reiterating Native cultural continuity is a central theme in mission histories that aim for accuracy and improved representations.

Pastor of Mission San Gabriel Father Bruce Wellems observed that "as Catholics, the work of reconciliation is what we embrace." According to Wellems, reconciling "the struggle of cultures" between the Catholic Spanish and Native Californians is an

important component of the new *Mission Play.*[8] In moving forward and away from the romanticized portrayals of Spanish colonial history presented at many California missions, a number of interpreters at some mission sites work to present a different and more honest narrative to their audiences. Two of the missions operated by the State of California, Mission La Purisima Concepción and Mission San Francisco de Solano, focus much less on church history and venerating the padres. Instead they emphasize the lived experiences of Native Californians. They recognize that Native people overwhelming outnumbered Spanish padres, soldiers, and settlers in California. Presentations at both of these missions work to tell the story of early California from the important perspective of Native Californians.

Mission La Purisima boasts the most complete narrative and professional displays among any of the twenty-one California missions.[9] Its exhibits are shining examples of the way missions can present a complicated history to a diverse audience. Mission La Purisima is the model for other popular representations of California during the Spanish era and excellently articulates the "struggle of cultures" from a *Native* perspective.[10]

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[8] Jennifer Wing Atencio, "Reconciliation: 'The Mission Play,' reimagined, in San Gabriel," *The Tidings Online,* March 29, 2013, accessed May 28, 2013, http://www.the-tidings.com/index.php/news/newslocal/ 3271-reconciliation-the-mission-play-reimagined-in-san-gabriel.

[9] Information about Mission La Purisima was gleamed from visits to the site in the spring of 2013.

[10] The interpretations at La Purisima are not without flaws. For example, they continue to sanitize their reenactments of mission history by presenting simple chores conducted

Interpreters at the mission challenge the romanticized narratives upheld at many of the other California missions.[11] Instead of contextualizing the mission period through the lens of the Catholic Church, interpreters at Mission La Purisima communicate the interactions between Native people and the Spanish through a sociocultural analysis of the period.[12]

Figure 34 Photo of the west portion of Mission La Purisima. Source: Author's personal collection.

Exhibits display images of the Chumash and Spanish interacting, a diorama of the mission at its height, and photographs from the mission restoration efforts in the 1930s under the Civilian Conservation Corps. The history presented at Mission La Purisima

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by Native people, including tortilla and bread making. They do not have reenactors do heavy manual labor as many Native people did during the Spanish and Mexican periods.

[11] The visitor’s center is a few hundred feet away from the mission buildings at La Purisima. Visitors do not have to file through the exhibition hall and gift shop to see the mission. This is unlike the layout of many of the other California missions where visitors pay for admission or provide a donation at the gift shop.

[12] Signs at the mission operate under the premise that Mission La Purisima ultimately was a failure.

begins with a discussion of the Chumash before contact and ends with mission restoration in the twentieth century. A team of museum professionals, park service leaders, local scholars, and knowledgeable volunteer docents known as the "Prelado de los Tesoros," worked to create an acceptable narrative that they shared with the Chumash community.[13] This team of professionals, in conjunction with select members of the Chumash, examined every component of the exhibition with a fine-tooth comb to make certain they presented this history with truthfulness and compassion for the experiences of indigenous people. Representations of history at Mission La Purisima have increasingly aimed for accuracy since reconstruction efforts began in the 1930s.

Similar to many of the other California missions, La Purisima fell into ruins after mission secularization in the 1830s. A variety of Euro-American occupants used the buildings to house sheep and cattle, to accommodate a blacksmith shop, and some even used it as a saloon. Treasure hunters and collectors in the early twentieth century rummaged through the mission for relics. These vandals removed many of the iconic red roof tiles and flooring from the crippled site.[14] Stewards of the mission took down the remaining deteriorating roof tiles to prevent injury to site visitors. However, they unintentionally exposed the adobe walls to the natural elements. The adobe bricks deteriorated into mud over several decades. Just as Lummis and other mission

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[13] "Prelado de los Tesoros" translates into "Keepers of Treasure"

[14] Joseph H Engbeck, Jr., *La Purisima Mission: A Pictorial History*, (Sacramento: State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation, 1987), 17.

conservators feared, vandals and negligence caused significant damage to Mission La Purisima and left little of the original mission structure standing by the early 1900s.

Figure 35 View of Mission La Purisima Concepcion c. 1883. Source: Bancroft Library.

Lummis had his chance to preserve the crumbling mission through his work with the Landmarks Clubs. Union Oil Company offered the Landmarks Club deed to the La Purisima ruins, provided that the civic organization could raise enough funds to protect the site.[15] However, under financial stress brought on by World War I, the Landmarks Club failed to meet their required financial commitment of $1,500 to maintain holding deed to the structure. Soon thereafter, under increased financial strain, the Landmarks Club folded completely.[16] Union Oil eventually turned the property over to the State of

[15] Union Oil Company held title to Mission La Purisima and the surrounding land in the early twentieth century, as a part of its oil land holdings in Santa Barbara County. Union Oil Company sold off much of its agricultural land in Lompoc valley around 1904.

[16] Edwin R. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis: Editor of the Southwest* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library Publications, 1955), 111.

California. After many more decades of neglect, the National Parks Service assigned members of the Civilian Conservation Corps to restore Mission La Purisima in 1933. They used historical documentation to reconstruct the mission accurately.

Rather than use the mission as a museum itself, as is common at the other California missions, each of the rooms in the re-built mission reflects the actual uses of the space in the 1820s. This provides visitors with a more accurate understanding of the mission and its secular and religious goals. For instance, the church does not contain pews for parishioners to sit because Native people sat on tule mats laid on the floor during masses.[17] The walls of the monjerío, the dormitory for girls, are lined with plank bunks similar to the ones young Native women slept on during the mission period. And a group of tule huts nearby the mission demonstrates the living arrangements used by many neophytes.

Figure 36 Structures that represent Native housing at Mission La Purisima. Source: Author's personal collection.

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[17] La Purisima is a part of the California State Parks system, but holds mass at the mission church once a year in celebration of the mission's founding day on December 8, 1787. For this occasion, the mission brings in folding chairs for attendees, using the lack of pews as a learning experience for visitors.

At many of the other contemporary mission sites, the churches contain ornate alters and are lined with pews, while histories of the sites often glaze over monjeríos and living arrangements for neophytes. La Purisima is not affiliated with the local Catholic diocese. Its church and exhibition space provide limited references to the religious components of Spanish colonization. The visitor's center and exhibition hall, opened in 2009, promotes an understanding of mission history that places Native people at the center of its discussion. As the most populous residents of the missions by far, indigenous people and their experiences with the mission are front and center for visitors to explore. Patrons at Mission La Purisima find a vastly different presentation than that found at many other mission sites.

Figure 37 Display at Mission La Purisima showing Chumash and Spanish interactions. Source: Author's personal collection.

Figure 38 Counter to displays at Mission La Purisima, exhibition space at Mission San Juan Bautista displays religious artwork and Spanish furniture. Source: Author's personal collection.

The exhibits and displays at the interpretive center do not reflect the romanticized narrative told at many of the other California mission sites. It does not devote a majority of its exhibition space to venerating Serra, the Spanish priests that helped build the mission, or other religious relics as seen as San Gabriel, San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano, San Juan Bautista, and many other missions. Mission La Purisima presents its history from the perspective of the Chumash people and examines the mission system within the context of Spanish colonization. Aligning its discussion with leading scholars, the narrative told at Mission La Purisima introduces Spanish settlement in Alta California as a primarily imperial and economic undertaking. Religious conversion was a parallel goal of the system. Representations of religion do not overshadow the need for Native labor or the devastation brought by the Spanish to California Indians. Interpreters at La Purisima emphasize that the Spanish crown meant for the missions to be temporary

institutions, not the monolithic symbols of religion and the coming of "civilization" as suggested by other mission sites.

Just as at many of the other missions, La Purisima's interpretive center includes a diorama of the mission set during the Spanish period. However, Native laborers populate the set doing such chores as making adobe bricks, constructing buildings, carving wood, working the grist mill, tending gardens and livestock, while others talk with the priest. Other than the priest, the only additional Spanish person in the scene is the mayordomo who oversees the laborers. Visitors are not misguided by lush gardens, ornate statues, or cityscapes that encroach into the mission backdrop. The mission grounds at La Purisima remain on several hundred acres of undeveloped land opened to the wilderness. Visitors walk over un-landscaped dirt pathways spotted with holes dug by ground squirrels and gophers. They pass through doorways where snakes lie in the shade to escape the sun. In many ways, visitors at Mission La Purisima can experience the mission landscape as it was nearly two centuries ago.

Figure 39 Panoramic view of the landscape at La Purisima. Source: Author's personal collection.

The presentation at Mission La Purisima does not lend itself to the romantic depiction of life in Spanish California popularized by boosters of the state in the early twentieth century. It lays out evidence in a topical and chronological order, focusing on the tangible experiences of Native people during the Spanish era. Throughout the displays, interpreters foretell the inescapable failure of the mission instead of dramatizing a romantic foregone time. For example, under the heading "From Humble Beginnings to a Bustling Community," interpreters explain that perceived success at the mission, measured by baptisms and agricultural production, actually masked growing unhappiness among the Native community by 1804. In the life size exhibits, Native people rarely have smiles on their faces but rather show concern when interacting with the Spanish. Exhibits explain that "corporal punishment and the regimented lifestyle fueled discontent among the neophytes. As more Chumash die from disease, the work from those remaining grows more difficult, and discontent increases." This more accurate perspective demystifies the romanticized mission myth constructed by regional promoters in the twentieth century that is proliferated at many other mission sites.

Backdrops display indigenous people working at the mission ranch with acres of farmland in the background. In the foreground of the display, visitors can see and touch cattle hides, blankets, reproduced farming tools, and iron implements made by the blacksmith. Mission La Purisima hosts several events throughout the year including Mission Life Days. Visitors can see demonstrations and participate in tortilla and bread baking, candle and soap making, as well as weaving, carpentry, blacksmithing, and pottery production. La Purisima is the only mission to still have live animals.

Interpreters host a Sheep Shearing Day in late April, during which patrons learn about the labor intensive process of wool cleaning and production – both activities done by women at the mission. Docents use the wool to weave blankets similar to the ones mission Indians received annually during the Spanish era. Site interpreters also highlight the roles of children at the mission during Children's Mission Life Day. Visiting children, overwhelmingly fourth grade students, can participate in some of the daily activities performed by Native children at the missions. Interpreters inform visitors that Chumash children worked to support the mission economy as well by assisting in food production, wool cleaning, and a variety of other tasks.

Mission La Purisima also hosts several Village Days that combine reenactments of life at the neophyte village near the mission walls. Visitors can play Chumash games, learn basketry, grind acorn into meal, build tule houses, and make dolls out of tule. Several times a year the mission holds living history reenactment days, known as Purisima's People Days. During these times, interpreters "transform" the mission back to 1822, where it is again populated by "Native" men, women, and children working at the mission. Spanish officials including Father Payeras and the mayordomo who directed the ranching and agriculture at the mission also make appearances. The majority of reenactors are aging white volunteers as well as Park Service employees. They highlight daily chores mission Indians preformed but do not replicate the surveillance and control the Spanish exercised over neophytes. Similarly, the interpretive center addresses the high rate of death and disease throughout the mission system, yet living history days depict a sanitized past that appeals to visitors as educational and fun experiences.

Communicating death, disease, and punishment through living history demonstrations is a complicated task that La Purisima does not undertake.

On the other hand, docents at Mission San Francisco de Solano in Sonoma report that students are very interested in learning what happened to indigenous people after the mission system. They are not frightened or traumatized from learning about the negative components of the mission system, including death and disease. Presented in the right way, students learn a lot about the perils of mission life and the complicated relationship between Native people and the Spanish.[18]

Mission San Francisco Solano in Sonoma is the last of the twenty-one California missions established by Spanish colonizers in 1824. It is also owned and operated by the California State Parks Service. Because the mission is not an active Catholic parish church, as a majority of the California missions are today, the historical narrative told at Mission Solano focuses much more heavily on the experiences of Native people rather than the few Spanish priests and soldiers who occupied the mission sites. Unfortunately, the exhibition space at Mission Solano falls short of the professional displays at La Purisima. The Sonoma mission is one of the smaller mission sites with downtown Sonoma pushing against the mission walls on all sides. It is only partially reconstructed, and the building at the site currently is an inaccurate representation of the original mission. The museum and gift shop fill four of the rooms at the site, unlike the separate

[18] Information about Mission San Francisco Solano was gathered from visits to the site in April, 2013.

exhibition space at La Purisima State Park.[19] Site interpreters are quick to point out that the displays at Mission Solano are outdated and boring. To make up for the poor displays and inaccuracies in the layout of the reconstructed site, docents have worked to create a well-rounded and engaging narrative geared towards school children who visit the mission. Regrettably, visitors who do not take these guided tours have a difficult time contextualizing the history presented at the mission, characterized by dated and dry displays that contain a great deal of written information.

At many of the missions, the brief history expressed visually through exhibitions commonly differs from the narrative told by docents. Expert docents can assess their audiences, bring the history to life, and navigate difficult subjects with sensitivity to a greater extent than permanent exhibits and stationary displays in a museum. Done correctly, personal interaction at the missions help patrons better understand the "human" experiences of Native people during the mission period. Working to address Native representation more directly, an interpretive planning firm hired by the State Parks conducted research and provided recommendations for a new interpretation master plan for the site. The firm recommended that leaders at the Sonoma State Park make Native experiences central to the themes presented at the mission. They suggested that the park consult local Native communities "to ensure Native American culture and history of the Mission is property interpreted." The firm also recommended recreating tule homes to form a neophyte village at the mission site to help visitors understand "the interwoven

[19] The chapel and the bathrooms make up the other buildings at the location.

cultures of Native American neophytes and Hispanic colonizers."[20] As mentioned previously, many other contemporary missions fail to incorporate Native people as an active presence in the history of early California. These recommendations worked to amend this flaw at Mission Solano.

Just as at the other missions, visitors and thousands of fourth-grade students who patron the missions each year learn about California's early history from personnel at the mission. Unlike many of the docents at a majority of the California missions, park service personnel at the state-operated mission museums do not have professional ties to the church. Interpreters may not even be Catholic, yet they are the public purveyors of history at these sites. Without strong ties to the Catholic Church, interpreters at state-owned missions have greater flexibility in presenting more controversial narratives that depict negative components of the mission system. Guides at the state-owned missions more freely adopt programing that reflects the multifaceted history supported by scholars – often critical of the impact of Spanish colonization on Native Californians. As mentioned previously, Church-operated mission sites tend to highlight the lives and experiences of Spanish Catholic priests. Conversely, guides at Mission Solano communicate mission history to visitors through the eyes of Native people who actually lived at the mission.

[20] Sonoma State Historic Park, "Draft Recommendations Section for the new Interpretation Master Plan," June 6, 2011, accessed June 7, 2013, http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/479/files/draftinterprecommendations.sonomashp.6.3.11.pdf.

When school children visit Mission Solano, interpreters provide the children with a lanyard inscribed with the Christian name of a Native child.[21] As the children tour the mission they learn about the varied reasons why Native people originally came to the missions. Guides explain that many missions offered Native people a source of reliable food after Spanish livestock and plant species decimated traditional food sources. Native people also came to the missions because they were interested in goods the Spanish brought. Some indigenous people also recognized similarities between Shaman and Spanish priests. They were curious about the spiritual power the Spanish brought with them. Native people also highly valued song, dance, and music and the missions offered new instruments and songs for Native people to learn. Rather than mask the realities of how Native people lived at the missions, guides at Mission Solano explain to children that indigenous people often lived in villages outside the walls of the mission. The original mission quadrangle was not full of beautifully landscapes gardens, so Mission Solano does not have large lush gardens in its courtyard either. Instead, it has a fountain in the center, along with some trees, but also a large prickly pear cactus grove in the back that illustrates the types of natural "living" walls Native people used to manage livestock herds and also used as food. Once in the modest mission-complex interior, where lush gardens often grow at Catholic missions, children learn that the Spanish used the hundreds of Coast and Lake Miwok, Pomo, Patwin, and Wappo people that once occupied Mission Solano as the main source of labor.

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[21] One docent explained that the mission uses Native people's Christian name because local Native traditions prefer to not use the indigenous names of people after they die.

Docents weave a narrative around the lives of the Native children whose names the students wear around their necks. Mission guides place the students in the figurative shoes of their historical counterparts and explain the daily lives of Native children roughly their own age. They explain that children as young as ten or eleven (the same age as fourth-grade children) worked at the missions. They helped tan hides, harvest, prepare, and cook food, and build things, and they did many other jobs as well. Students at Mission La Purisima also learn that children frequently followed in the footsteps of their parents; thus, a baker, weaver, or field worker's child would often be relegated to the same work. At both Solano and La Purisima children learn that the Spanish housed all the young girls in a single dormitory. Docents explain that the living conditions were so bad in the monjeríos, with only a tiny window for ventilation, thick walls, and a dirt floor, that many young women died. Rather than hide negative components of mission life including malnutrition, disease, and death, docents at Mission Solano tackle these topics head-on.

By the end of their mission tour, the school children realize that the missions were complicated places that Native people sometimes turned to improve their lives, but more frequently indigenous people experienced a great deal of pain and hardship at these sites. Using an image from early explorers, docents show how local Native people cut their hair short as a sign of mourning. Interpreters tell students that indigenous people with singed short hair was not unusual, as the high death rate meant that neophytes constantly mourned. A memorial of the dead buried at the mission reflects this sad reality for Native people living at Mission San Francisco de Solano.

Figure 40 Docents at Mission San Francisco Solano show students the above image to illustrate Native dejection at the missions. *Portrait Heads of Indians of California.* By Louis Choris, c. 1816. Source: Bancroft Library.

Along the outside western wall of Mission Solano rests a striking granite memorial that honors the names of the nearly 830 Native people buried at the mission during its short existence. A street adjacent to the west wall of the mission and a small housing complex bordering the east side of the site now stand on top of the mission cemeteries. At the memorial, guides encourage the students to look for the name they have been wearing around their neck. Some students find that their historical counterpart lived a long life at Mission San Francisco de Solano. Other students sadly see their name at the beginning of the list and realize that this life was cut short, just like the lives of many others during the brief tenure of Mission Solano's existence. State-owned California mission sites such as San Francisco de Solano, La Purisima, and the church-owned San Francisco de Asis, make great efforts to reconcile the problems of the Spanish

missions with the experiences of indigenous people. They publically recognize the astonishingly high death rate of Native people after Spanish colonization but also demonstrate Native cultural continuity into the twenty-first century.

Figure 41 The granite memorial for the Native Californians that died at Mission San Francisco de Solano. Source: Author's personal collection.

As previously discussed, many contemporary mission presentations do not recognize continuance of Native cultures after Spanish colonization. For instance, museums at Mission San Juan Capistrano and San Diego briefly mention Native societies before contact. They do not include further references to modern Native cultural perseverance – relegating indigenous people to the periphery of their institutional histories. Historical sites are often slow to adapt to changes in scholarship, especially with bureaucratic hierarchies that must approve any changes in public representations. This is particularly true when examining Native history that reflects unflatteringly on long held notions of dramatic colonial histories in the Americas. Andrew Galvan, curator

at Mission San Francisco de Asís, also known as Mission Dolores, is a Native Californian whose ancestors were baptized at the mission. He works to create a museum atmosphere that focuses on Native people and their continued presence, noting that "I proudly remind people that the mission was built by and for Indians. I'm determined to tell that neglected history."[22] Church leadership at the mission support Galvan and his message.

The contemporary museum at Mission Dolores is a tribute to the Ohlone Indians that populated the San Francisco Bay area. It includes reproductions of baskets, buckskin clothing, tools, and other implements used by local indigenous people. Galvan worked to change the shared graveyard and traditionally idyllic garden space in the mission courtyard after he took over curatorship at the mission a decade ago. Under Galvan's guidance, the mission planted local plants and built a dome shaped tule Ohlone house in the mission courtyard. Similar to Mission Solano though, the complete narrative is not necessarily displayed in signs and panels that accompany exhibits. Again, docents and interpreters at Mission Dolores provide accounts of the complexities of mission history through their tours. Visitors who take self-guided tours of the mission site receive far less information than those who benefit from a tour led by Galvan, or his assistant curator Vincent Medina (Ohlone). Galvan and Medina present "the other side of the mission story, from the viewpoint of the Indians," with the approval of the mission pastor.[23]

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[22] Edward Guthmann, "Mission Dolores Curator Andrew Galvan," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 21, 2011.

[23] Dana Perrigan, "Ohlone descendant and devout Catholic tells painful truths about Mission days," *Catholic San Francisco* September 7, 2012, accessed May 29, 2013, http://catholic-sf.org/news_select.php?newsid=23&id=60242.

Together the two curators recount accurate and controversial histories of Spanish California as documented by contemporary scholars. From the perspective of these curators, the Spanish sought to extinguish Native cultures and religions but ultimately failed. The Spanish baptized the Indians "gave them new names. They enslaved them, and forced them to perform heavy labor." The Spanish punished converted Native people with beatings, "and worked to eradicate their culture and replace it with their own."[24] Galvan and Medina, both Catholic, argue that the contemporary church is not like the Spanish missions established in California nearly 250 years ago. They observe that many Native people continually work to reconcile contemporary Catholic beliefs with the abuses their ancestors endured under the Spanish system.[25] Galvan argues that "the missionaries were well intentioned but they weren't anthropologists. Father Serra was very, very good person in a very, very bad system."[26]

Other Native people, including Galvan's brother Michael Galvan, a priest for the Oakland diocese in the 1980s disagreed with positive assessments of Serra. Father Galvan argued that Serra, as a leader of the Spanish California missions, symbolized the

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[24] Perrigan, "Ohlone descendant and devout Catholic tells painful truths."

[25] Perrigan noted that some Ohlone continue to practice their Native religion, *Kuksu*, while others practice a hybrid of Christianity and Kuksu. This also applies for many other California Indians whose ancestors were introduced to Christianity by Euro-Americans but maintained their Native religions as well. For examples of cultural and religious blending among other groups of contemporary California Indians see, Malcolm Margolin, ed., *The Way We Lived: California Indian Stories, Songs, and Reminiscences* (Berkeley: Heyday Books and the California Historical Society, 1993), 190- 192.

[26] Galvan sits on the board for The Serra Cause, an organization that is working to have Serra canonized by the Catholic Church. Perrigan, "Ohlone descendant and devout Catholic tells painful truths."

oppressive ideologies of eighteenth century European expansionism. Unlike Guest, Father Galvan argued that "we cannot merely excuse the process of colonial expansion of Europe… simply as a product of its time." People who romanticized the mission era and want to venerate Serra must ask themselves "whether or not the understanding of those priests of the eighteenth century would be one which we would wish to proclaim today." Father Galvan declared that "this writer does not believe that a model of eighteenth century Spanish Missionary thought would be one that should be emulated in the present day Church."[27] Even viewing the California missions in their cultural perspective demonstrates a divide between practices at the missions, such as whippings, and behavior deemed acceptable by the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century.[28] Yet, Serra and other Spanish missionaries are venerated at many of the California mission sites today. As previously discussed, interpreters at many mission sites celebrate the lives and accomplishments of the priests and neglect Native perspectives. This follows a long trend in American museum representation of Native people that view them as vanished or extinct cultures. By recognizing-g the cultural continuity of indigenous people, a small number of religious leaders and mission sites shift their narrative to reflect the perspective of contemporary California Indian groups.

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[27] Michael Galvan, "No Veneration for Serra," *The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide*, ed. by Rupert Costo and Jeanette Henry Costo, (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1987), 168-170.

[28] Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonia California, 1769-1850*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 322-330.

Some local leaders in the Catholic Church likewise have begun to acknowledge the abuses and cultural destruction the Spanish missions inflicted on Native Californians. Church leaders at a few sites have made public apologies to contemporary Native communities for injustices imposed on their ancestors by the Spanish. For example, Bishop Francis Quinn apologized to the Coast Miwok during a special mass that celebrated the 190th anniversary of the founding of Mission San Rafael in December, 2008.[29] Quinn acknowledged the mistakes of the Spanish priests who should have *offered* Catholicism to Native people rather than force the religion and Spanish lifeways on neophytes.[30] He observed that "the padres tried to impose a European Catholicism upon the natives…. The church this evening apologizes for trying to take Indian out of the Indian."[31] This watershed apology met audible gasps by the many Native people in attendance. Leaders of the church, especially in northern California, have increasingly begun to publically acknowledge the negative impact of the Spanish mission system on Native people. They work to reconcile this negative history with members of their contemporary communities.

Similarly, Bishop Richard Garcia held a special "Reconciliation Mass" at Mission San Juan Bautista on December 22, 2012. Garcia acknowledged and apologized for

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[29] Mission San Rafael is located in the north San Francisco bay area.

[30] Bishop Francis Quinn was retired at the time of his apology. He worked for years among the Navajo in Arizona. This experience gave him personal connections and knowledge of the richness of Native spirituality and culture. Betty Goerke "Bishop Quinn Apologizes to the Coast Miwok," *The Acorn* 39 (Spring 2008), 1,7.

[31] Goerke, "Bishop Quinn Apologizes to the Coast Miwok," 1, 7.

Spanish Catholic brutal mistreatment of Native people, especially the Amah Mutsun that he personally addressed at the mass. Some contemporary church leaders work to reconcile present ministering efforts with past mistakes by working with local Indian communities and apologizing for the misdeeds of Spanish Catholicism from the sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries. Amah Mutsun Tribal Chairperson Valentin Lopez observed that "there is a history here [that] the Catholic Church has wanted to deny for many years, so this [apology] is really something of a breakthrough in reclaiming our history, and gaining recognition as the survivors of cultural genocide."[32] While these apologies and public recognitions help reconcile some Native communities with the Catholic Church, many public representations of the Spanish missions overwhelmingly continue to depict the mission sites and the Spanish era as dramatic and romantic times and exclude negative impacts of the mission system on Native peoples.

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[32] Patrick Dwire, "Healing Historical Wounds," *Good Times,* January 9, 2013, accessed May 30, 2013, http://www.gtweekly.com/index.php/santa-cruz-news/santa-cruz-local-news/4472-healing-historical-wounds.html.

Figure 42 A postcard that depicts "the bells that rang for Ramona's wedding." Source: Agua Caliente Cultural Museum.

Although a select few mission sites and popular venues seek to dispel the mission mythology and pull the curtains back on its origins, some regional magazines continue to promote the missions as symbols of a lost romantic history in California. For example, a recent edition of *Westways* magazine promotes the California mission trail. It calls for tourists to take a pilgrimage on foot, bike, or horseback along the historic El Camino Real to build an ethereal relationship with the California landscape, and Spanish missions in particular. The mission myth is alive and well in the minds of promotional writers, who note that along El Camino Real, "the sky appeared almost neon blue through the Monterey pines and oak." The pristine environment begs inquiry "if the missionaries, walking through Alta California, believed they had reached the most beautiful place on

earth. Did they… catch their breath when cresting the peninsula to see the Pacific Ocean, waves crashing along the endless dunes?"[33] Many people who have been Californians for generations, new residents, and tourists alike are still captivated by the mission myth and Spanish fantasy past constructed by boosters and regional promoters a century ago.

Again, local promoters call on residents to forego their vehicles to build a more natural connection with the California landscape. Just as Charles Fuller Gates urged tourists in the late 1890s to "follow nature along the foothills, and beside the sea" to "those grand old piles, the California Missions, our world-famous, historic ruins, [that] are bound together and brought closer by the swift bicycle," promoters today ask tourists to leave the car behind to gain a more authentic experience with the Spanish past.[34] As in the early twentieth century, the California missions continue to exist as remnants of a more serene past not touched by technology and the busy chaos of modern life. Contemporary boosters in magazines and at mission sites glorify the California mission landscape. They contemplate the mindset of the Spanish padres who traversed the same terrain nearly 250 years ago and interact with the California missions from a distinctively Spanish perspective. Contemporary promoters continue to provide little attention to Native experiences with the mission sites and their continued presence on the California landscape.

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[33] Jamie Stringfellow, "On a Mission: A Personal Journey Along El Camino Real," *Westways* (June 2013), 52-57.

[34] Charles Fuller Gates, "Cycling in Southern California," *Land of Sunshine* 5 (1896), 41-44.

Traveling along the mission trail, from San Diego to Sonoma, people today have the opportunity to witness California history first hand. Many people continue to romanticize the Spanish California missions, following in the footsteps of *Ramona* enthusiasts, readers of promotional magazines, and fans of John McGroarty's *Mission Play* in the early twentieth century. Representations at many mission sites help dramatize the period by presenting idyllic landscapes and sanitized narratives of the past. Following in the tradition of many museums in the 1900s with absent presentations of Native people, interpreters at many California missions frequently ignore or overshadow indigenous perspectives. Rather than emphasize aspects of mission history that evoke Native existence such as labor, resistance, disease, punishment, and death, mission sites more often celebrate the lives and labors of Franciscan priests. A select few mission sites work to reorient their narratives to tackle these complicated subjects from indigenous perspectives. Reexamining the mission myth by incorporating indigenous perspectives helps people better understand the experienced reality of Native communities in these institutions. Once learned, such accounts add rich texture to the sanitized mission history displayed at many contemporary mission sites.

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