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Figure 1: *Known today as Pío Pico State Historic Park—located immediately west of the 605 freeway, along Whittier Boulevard—Pico himself endearingly called this property "El Ranchito." By the time this photograph was taken around the turn of the 20th century, "El Ranchito" had become a relic of the Californio past. Photo courtesy of Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection.*

"Our Inheritance is Turned to Strangers"

The Pico Brothers and the Decline of the *Californio* Ranchers, 1850-1894

Dennis Bermúdez

On October 10, 1882 at the door of the Los Angeles Court House, Pío Pico's beloved *El Ranchito* was auctioned off to the highest bidder.[1] Thirty-three years before, in 1849, Pico—a prominent Californio in Southern California—had purchased El Ranchito, which was twelve miles from el Pueblo de

(*Continued on Page 3*)

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The Branding Iron is always seeking articles of up to around 20 pages dealing with every phase of the history of the Old West and California. Contributions from both members and friends are always welcome.

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Editor's Corner . . .

One of the ways the Los Angeles Corral of The Westerners shows its appreciation for Western history is by sponsoring student scholarship. This Fall 2019 issue of *The Branding Iron* is the first to have its lead article written by one of our student fellows, Dennis Bermúdez. In this revision of his senior thesis for Cal Poly Pomona, Dennis blends academic thoroughness and lively storytelling to evaluate the decline of the *Californio* rancher class.

To catch up on Westerners events you may have missed, check out the International Gather and Roundup reports by Brian D. Dillon and Los Angeles Corral Fellows yours truly, Jovanny Gochez, and Aaron Tate. Looking for something to read? Brian D. Dillon and Abe Hoffman offer their 2 cents in a pair of book reviews. Check out the announcements for upcoming events and publications too!

Many thanks to our contributors who make *The Branding Iron* possible. If you would like to submit, please feel free to contact me with your ideas.

Happy Trails!

John Dillon
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Los Angeles, and began the process of transforming it into his haven from the hustle and bustle of the growing pueblo. The property was sold to A. R. Loomis for $39,755, many times greater than its purchase price many years earlier. The auction, carried out by order of the Superior Court of San Francisco to satisfy a debt of Pío Pico, was representative of the story of all *Californio* ranchers. Only three decades before, *rancheros*, the Pico brothers among them, were at the helm, economically and socially, of California's cow counties. But, by the late 19th century, their social and economic position had ebbed until they were only a romantic relic of early California.

Historiography

The displacement of the Californio rancher class by Anglo-Americans was hardly swift but rather a result of many and varied factors—some of them the Californios' own doing. Nor were the Californios hapless victims of southern California's Americanization. Despite the American government's lack of commitment to the protections guaranteed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the challenge of hostile legislation like the Land Act of 1851, Californio ranchers were able to negotiate their way through the new social, economic, and political order in the decades immediately after the American takeover. Nowhere did this manifest itself more clearly than with the Pico brothers, Pío and Andrés. Ultimately, the Californios succumbed to Anglo power as a result of the failing cattle economy, a series of natural disasters, the clash between Latino and Anglo economic culture, and—near the turn of the 20th century—becoming outnumbered by the migration of Anglo-Americans to the emerging metropolis that was Southern California.

Primary sources like newspaper articles, memoirs, personal narratives, and court reports provide an understanding of the history of early American California and the role that Californio ranchers played within that story. The two historians looming largest over the Californio question are Robert Glass Cleland and Leonard Pitt. In his seminal work *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills: Southern California, 1850-1870*, Cleland focused on Southern California's cow counties—as the region came to be known for its complete reliance on the cattle economy. *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills* explored the multitude of factors that led to the decline of the Californio rancher class. Leonard Pitt's *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish Speaking Californians, 1846-1890* had a much larger demographic scope than Cleland's work and provides great insight into the decline of Southern California's rancher class within the context of the state's entire Latino community.

These seminal works are complemented by more recent scholarship by Richard Griswold del Castillo, Carlos Manuel Salomon, and Paul Bryan Gray—all great historians in their own right. Griswold del Castillo wrote two books on the Californios and early American California: *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* and *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History*. The former dealt nearly exclusively with the treaty ending the Mexican-American War and its ramifications for the Californio rancher class in Southern California. Griswold del Castillo traces a path from the treaty to the Congressional Land Act of 1851, which made life for the Californios endlessly difficult. *The Los Angeles Barrio*, on the other hand, focused on the social change that Los Angeles experienced after the American invasion; several chapters in the book were devoted to the social decline of Californios like Pío Pico.

Paul Bryan Gray, a lawyer and historian, specializes in the legal history of early California. *Forster vs. Pico: The Struggle for the Rancho Santa Margarita*, written in 1998, is an exposé of one of the most controversial cases involving Pío Pico. Gray delved into the world in which the Californio ranchers operated, outlining the economic and legal factors that led to their decline. His book highlights the drawbacks of Pío Pico's overzealous use of the American court system, especially the staggering financial and physical toll it exacted on Pico, as well as the complexity of the legal world which he was exposed to. One often overlooked aspect of the Californio

rancher experience in the mid 19th century, was their resorting to, and defending themselves in, court when the opportunity arose.

Carlos Manuel Salomon has written the best recent biography of Pío Pico. *Pío Pico: The Last Mexican Governor of California* paints a portrait of him as a bold, politically and economically driven individual. Years before the tension between Mexico and its northern neighbor exploded into outright hostility, Pico predicted the intentions of the newly arriving Americans in Alta California.

Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California, one of the more recent scholarly works on which this paper heavily relies, provided a thorough and comprehensive overview of Californio rancher decline. Its author, historian Douglas Monroy, set out to write a history of a Latinized frontier California. In doing so, it was indispensable to include the history of the ranchers of Southern California. Mexicanized Anglo cattle ranchers like Abel Stearns receive a fair amount of attention in Monroy's work, and with good reason, for both Anglo and Californio ranchers shared common interests and yet were at times pitted against each other.

Even before matters between the United States and Mexico came to a head, Anglo-Americans were increasingly moving into Alta California; they were merchants, traders, and even outlaws. The American presence grew in significance. Aided by Anglo travelers who wrote glowingly about Alta California—and how bountiful it could be if only it belonged to Americans[2]—tensions grew between Mexico and the United States.

More Than a Remote Colonial Frontier

Decades before war between Mexico and the United States broke out, Alta California, Mexico's northernmost territory, was undergoing important changes. California had not been settled by Europeans until the establishment of the first Franciscan mission in 1769. By the 1820s and early 1830s, Alta California had become a mainstay in the economy of the greater Pacific region. Ships from all over the world would anchor—most often clandestinely—in Alta California in search of provisions before continuing on to Hawaii and China.[3]

Alta California experienced an influx of foreign trade and commerce. Ships from England, France, Russia, Hawaii, and most of all, the United States were increasingly attracted to this far outpost of Mexico. In exchange for manufactured goods and specie, foreign ships took otter pelts and other California commodities that proved profitable in other Pacific markets like Canton. Though the Mexican government was much less restrictive of foreign trade than the Spanish empire, import and export taxes nevertheless pushed merchants and traders to operate through clandestine channels.[4]

Between 1790 and the 1840s, every succeeding decade in Alta California saw a quantifiable increase in trade and commerce. Only in the 1830s was there a small dip in the territory's foreign trade. Of the 953 ships that arrived to conduct business in Alta California during that time, a healthy 34% of them came in the 1840s[5], during the decade of the Mexican War. Many factors increased this trade. Not only was the Mexican government more lenient in its enforcement of trade and commerce regulations, but trade in other ports throughout the Pacific also increased simultaneously. Perhaps most importantly, the United States made its presence felt in Alta California's economy most strongly. An overwhelming majority of the ships that arrived in Alta California were American.[6]

By the mid-19th century, the United States teemed with expansionist fervor. Denigrations of neighboring countries and people of different "races" coalesced around a belief in America's "Manifest Destiny," the idea that the United States had a God-given right to expand its territory throughout the American continent. By the 1840s, the relationship between the United States and Mexico was fraught with tension. The administration of president James K. Polk took up the cause of Manifest Destiny in earnest. Domestically, each country was grappling with political instability—the United States was less than 20 years from its Civil War—which could have been an incentive

for Polk to direct the country's energies toward Mexico. More tangibly, the boundary between Mexico and Texas, recently annexed by the United States, was in dispute.[7] Mexico argued that the traditional boundary had always been the Nueces River in present-day Texas, while the United States insisted that the boundary was the Rio Grande, about 100 miles south of the Nueces River.

Historians agree that President Polk was the catalyst that pushed the situation between Mexico and the United States to the brink. One of Polk's four stated benchmarks to gauge his presidency's success was the acquisition of California—among other expansionist goals.[8] Fresh on the mind of Mexican government officials in Alta California was the memory of Texas, where American immigrants effectively overpowered and outmaneuvered the Mexican government to declare their independence.

Americans moving to California after the 1840s held different convictions than their peers who had migrated earlier. Small details, like the way incoming Americans casually dismissed Mexico's passport regulations, indicated a palpable disrespect toward Mexican law; all this alarmed the locals.[9] These newcomers brought with them American expansionist ideas. In contrast to the merchant immigrants that had arrived before, this new type of immigrant believed in the racial superiority of Anglo-Americans. They were convinced that California would one day separate from Mexico.[10]

War broke out between Mexico and the United States in early 1846 after the dubious claim by the Polk administration that Mexican soldiers had attacked their American counterparts on American soil. The location where the supposed attack on American soldiers occurred, however, was hardly regarded as American soil—it was in the disputed territory between the Río Nueces and the Río Grande. Polk had ordered American soldiers into the disputed territory after learning of the Mexican government's snub of John Slidell, an agent of Polk, tasked with offering money to Mexico in exchange for its northern frontier; this included Alta California.

Figure 2: *James Knox Polk, fervent believer of America's "Manifest Destiny" and 11th President of the United States. Courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica*

Even before the outbreak of war, American legislators were divided on its purpose. Democrats generally were in favor of the war, while Whigs strongly opposed it. A young congressman from Springfield, Illinois introduced the famous "Spot Resolutions" challenging the Polk administration to reveal the exact spot where "American blood had been shed on American soil." That young congressman was Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln, barely three weeks into his congressional term and representing a district that heavily favored the war, offered—at great political risk to himself—a lawyer's rejection of Polk's assertion that Mexican soldiers had attacked American ones. Not only was the "spot" where the alleged attack took place not American territory, that attack may not have happened at all.[11]

By November 1847 Mexican officials realized that regaining territory which the United States occupied, like California and New Mexico, was effectively impossible.[12] American forces were superior to their own. Besides the prohibitive distance between Mexico's capital and its embattled northern

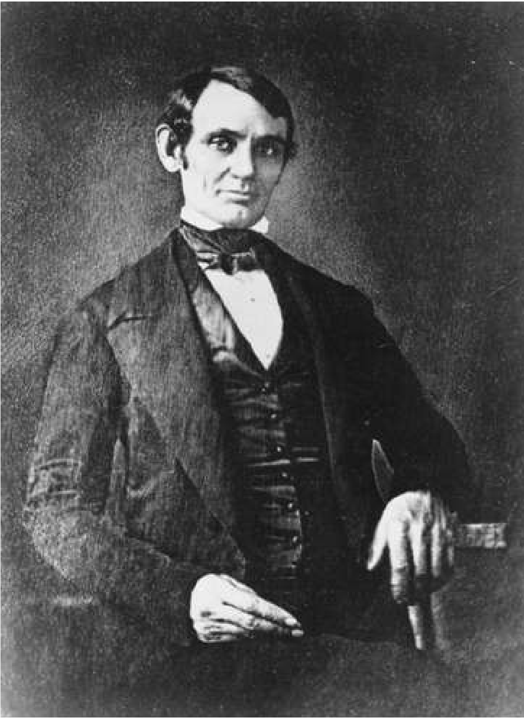


Figure 3: *Freshman congressman from Illinois, Abraham Lincoln pushed back against the Polk administration by introducing the "Spot Resolutions." Photo courtesy of Encyclopedia Britannica*

territories, the low morale of the Mexican army precluded any campaign to try to regain lost territory. Mexican officials were ready to meet American diplomats in order to reach a peace treaty.

After nearly two years of fighting, the United States wrested control of nearly half of Mexico's territory, with Alta California undoubtedly the most valuable. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war in February 1848. Apart from the trauma of losing half of its territory, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo appeared—at least on the surface—to be relatively benign toward Mexico, and towards the Mexicans who lived in the newly ceded territory. This document gave Mexican nationals the option of becoming citizens of their new country, and one historian found no record of Mexicans in California or Texas who chose to retain their Mexican citizenship.[13] However, it was not until much later in *People v. de la Guerra*, an 1870 court decision, that a court confirmed that the admission of California into the Union conferred American citizenship on former Mexican nationals.[14]

The United States' defeat of Mexico can be rationalized in several ways. Politically, California was too far from Mexico City in order for the latter to exert any real political influence over its northernmost frontier territory. The general instability between opposing political figures and factions in Alta California precluded any effective united resistance against the American aggressor.

The chief objective for the United States—especially for Polk—was the annexation of California.[15] As things turned out, the United States acquired California and much more; lands that today comprise the states of Colorado, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, part of Utah, and part of Wyoming were all acquired by virtue of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Furthermore, the lingering question over Texas' southern border was more or less settled.

At the time that the Mexican-American war broke out, California hosted an extremely rural society. After the war was over, amongst the most pressing issues needing attention was the issue of land ownership. Ostensibly, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guaranteed protections for *Californios*, as the elite Latino landowning population of Alta California called themselves.

The Question of Land Ownership

By the early 1850s, one historian wrote, life in Southern California continued just as it had two decades earlier. At the time, Los Angeles and its surroundings were short of water and significantly lucrative natural resources—it would be decades until the use and discovery of oil. Those who stopped in Los Angeles usually did so only for a night's rest on their way to gold country in Northern California.[16] For passersby with gold fever, Southern California's overwhelming dependence on the cattle economy precluded any reason to stick around. In the eyes of most California newcomers, the wealth was to be found in the north.

The United States Congress passed the

Figure 4: *The "diseños" of Southern California ranchos resembled this one for a rancho in Monterey, CA. As official documents for determining ownership of real property, they left much to be desired. Courtesy of Calisphere, Bancroft Library.*

California Land Act of 1851 on March 3rd of that year. The Land Act of 1851, as it is also known, proved a momentous piece of legislation that affected the wealthy Californios. The law set up a 3-man board of land commissioners on December 8, 1851 in San Francisco. They were charged with determining the validity of land grants made by the Spanish and Mexican governments.[17] The burden of proof was on the Californios to defend their land claims, which became a thorn in their sides. All land grants made under the Spanish and Mexican governments were subjected to the board's scrutiny, and any land claims not presented to the board within two years would be forfeited.[18]

Most land grants in Mexican Alta California lacked clearly defined boundaries. They were rewards for services rendered to the state,[19] often made in lieu of pay to the soldiers who manned the *presidios*, the small forts that complemented the Catholic missions in some parts of California. But private citizens also could petition for a land grant, simply by making an official request to the governor. Therein he would include personal information, his reason for requesting the land grant, a description and a sketched map of the land in question—*diseños*. The governor then forwarded an individual's petition to the local mayor (the *alcalde*) who would vouch for the applicant's standing within his community and would verify that the land requested was unoccupied. A positive report from the alcalde was necessary before the governor allowed the alcalde to for-

mally declare the applicant in possession of the land requested. The final step consisted of meeting requirements to improve the requested land before submitting the petition to the territorial legislature for final confirmation.[20] This process, which relied heavily on local authorities, was prone to suffer from substantial miscalculations in the outlining of property boundaries. The sketched maps that Californios made of their property—the diseños—more often than not were poorly drawn and were not meticulous official documents.

In the Los Angeles region, a surprisingly large number of land claims were confirmed. Many of those decisions were subsequently appealed to district courts and, there too a surprising 94% were upheld. Historians believe this might have been a result of the higher quality of the claims in the Los Angeles area.[21] Surprisingly, the majority of landholders throughout the state were able to defend their land claims; out of 813 cases in the entire state, 604 were upheld.[22]

Nevertheless, persons like Don Juan Bandini, a prominent Californio of Peruvian origin, lamented the Anglo-Americans' seeming disdain for the "customs of the country". Californios, it seemed, were content with the ill-defined boundaries of the plots of land that they owned. The need to defend their property may have surprised many Californios; in their eyes at least, the legality of their property claims was taken for granted. Some families had been in possession of swaths of land for dozens of years. Moreover, the Californios' own knowledge of other neighboring properties precluded any need to clearly demarcate property boundaries. Most importantly, there was little disagreement between them.[23]

After California statehood, however, Californios were forced to operate under a system of laws with which they were utterly unfamiliar. Property boundaries respected out of custom in Californio society were challenged under the new American government. To make matters worse, successful confirmation of a land grant depended upon producing legal documentation proving ownership; documents which many Californios took for granted and were lost or destroyed.[24] But ironically, even victory before the 3-man land commission did not guarantee that the Californios would keep their property. The cost of travel to San Francisco and lawyer's fees did what the land board did not, stripping land from Californios by driving them into ruinous debt and, subsequently, into bankruptcy.[25]

With the average land claim taking up to five years in litigation, legal fees soon became large expenditures for the defendants. Such costs likely ranged anywhere from five hundred to fifteen hundred dollars, not an insignificant amount for the mid 19th century. And, of course, if the original decision of the land commission was appealed, legal fees would increase. Some lawyers—cleverly identifying a profitable opportunity—agreed to work not for a dollar amount but rather for a portion of the disputed land claim; a typical fee would be 25%. On top of all of this, there were still fees related to the process of litigation, such as for land surveying. The Dominguez family provides an example of the small fortune that Californios might expend in order to defend their land claims; they spent twenty thousand dollars confirming ownership of their *Rancho San Pedro* property.[26]

While the great majority of Californios were able to uphold their land claims before the land commission, the drawn-out process proved extremely expensive. Admittedly, the land grants that many Californios possessed were laden with flaws and imprecisions. Land grants that were denied confirmation were most often rejected because they were found to have violated Mexican land law in the first place. Others were rejected due to the imprecision of their boundaries.[27] Finally, completely fraudulent claims like those of Joseph Yves Limantour in Northern California further complicated matters for Californios in other parts of the state, not least in Southern California.[28]

The Evanescent Riches of Californio Dons

After the American takeover of California, all aspects of society underwent a radical transformation. Nevertheless, the landown-

ing Californios, thanks to their wealth, continued living comfortable lives. Historians have noted that the ranchers of Southern California actually benefitted immediately after the Mexican-American War. The Gold Rush in the north allowed Californios in the cattle ranching business to sell their livestock for much more than the old hide and tallow prices.

With the Gold Rush underway in earnest, Californios experienced a boost in their commercial prospects. Ranches tens of thousands of acres in size were the norm in Southern California. Historians estimate that, by early 1850, the price of cattle from Californio ranchers rose from roughly $4 to $70 a head. Whereas before the Gold Rush, a cow county steer might fetch only two dollars for its hide and a dollar fifty for its tallow, but nothing for the meat that could not be readily preserved. During the Gold Rush that same steer was worth anywhere from fifty to sixty dollars, predominately for its meat. Prices could even reach up to 75 dollars by one historian's estimate.[29] For Californios, this was more money than they ever imagined having.[30] According to one historian, everyone in Los Angeles was rich.[31] After subtracting the twenty dollars it cost to transport each head of cattle to the north, Californios still netted thirty to forty dollars of profit.[32]

But these flush times were short lasting. For one, moving the cattle up north proved to be a gigantic enterprise fraught with many inconveniences; cold weather was just one of them.[33] As early as 1854, prices of cattle in the northern California market dropped precipitously to only $16 a head,[34] a tiny fraction compared to the prices only 4 years before. To make matters worse for the Californios, their market share dropped when cattle from other regions of the United States were driven to Northern California, chipping away even more at their profits.[35] The Californios may have believed that the good economic times would last indefinitely. But the oversaturation of the market—compounded with the decrease in demand—marked the death knell of the Californios' high profits. By 1856, the sun had set on the golden age of the cattle business in Southern California.[36]

Figure 5: *Don José Sepúlveda, the son of an old Southern California family and prominent Californio himself. Photo courtesy of Calisphere, Anaheim Public Library.*

However, before the collapse of the cattle economy, the Californios embraced lavish lifestyles. Historians of this era in California history invariably talk about the Californio appetite for extravagance. The Gold Rush cattle boom in the early 1850s convinced Californios that premium livestock prices would continue, creating a sense of financial infallibility. Historian Leonard Pitt had this to say:

> More than any other factor, the Californio's spendthrift tendency, encouraged by windfall profits in the early cattle trade, put him in financially hot water and caused him to part with more land than he wished….Prosperity fed into the old value system based on immediate spending, a process that had short-range advantages but long-range disadvantages.[37]

Figure 6: *La Placita de Los Angeles circa the 1860s; here wealthy Californios organized their now-legendary horse races. Photo courtesy of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.*

Periodicals like the local *Los Angeles Star* and the distant *Alta California* reported on horse races between prominent Californios, held in times of plenty. On Thursday September 16, 1852—Mexican Independence Day—Don Andrés Pico and Don José Sepúlveda held a 1,000-yard horse race in front of the plaza church. The *Los Angeles Star* reported Pico and Sepúlveda each betting $1,000 dollars on their steeds; "there was also considerable side betting, money and heifers, amongst spectators."[38] Sepúlveda ultimately won the race.

Months before the horse race that Pico and Sepúlveda organized, the *Daily Alta California* reported on another prominent horse race, that time pitting Sepúlveda's Australian mare "Black Swan" against Pío Pico's "Sarco." Astonishingly, the race was 9 miles long and lasted close to 20 minutes. Sepúlveda's imported "Black Swan" won by 75 yards. The *Daily Alta California* finished by reporting that "about $50,000 changed hands during the occasion."[39] Another account placed that number at a more modest $25,000.[40]

Not only newspapers documented the extravagance of the Californios. Harris Newmark, a German Jew who came to Los Angeles in 1853 from East Prussia, also commented on Californio culture in early American Southern California. Newmark arrived when the cattle boom was still in full swing. He carefully observed everything from the clothing that the Californios wore to the quality of the saddles they rode on. The men wore tight-fitting jackets with gold or silver lace or fringe, the favorite colors being blue, green, and yellow. Boots were preferably worn the smallest size possible, no matter how uncomfortable or impractical that may have been. The most extravagant Californio outfits, Newmark noted, were worth up to $1,000.[41] Don Antonio María Lugo, a prominent Californio, "had a silver-mounted saddle, bridle and spurs that cost fifteen hundred dollars."[42]

Horace Bell, an Anglo-American who immigrated to Los Angeles in the early 1850s and was best known for being part of a volunteer police force, the Los Angeles Rangers, extensively documented Californio society in his memoirs. In his *Reminiscences of a Ranger*, Bell reserved some of his most effusive praise for Don Antonio María Lugo. Bell wrote:

> Soon after my arrival at the Angels [Los Angeles], it was my good fortune to visit the home ranch of possibly the most eminent Spaniard in California, Don Antonio María Lugo, by the Spaniards designated as *El Viejo Lugo*, by the Americans as *Old Man Lugo*, the patriarch of the numerous Lugo family, once so rich, powerful, and influential. Don Antonio María Lugo was eminent, not as a politician or as a man of learning, but as a man of princely possessions, of great generosity and unblemished honor.[43]

Don Antonio María Lugo, Bell asserted, could travel the seven hundred miles between San Diego in Southern California and Sonoma in the north and every night still sleep on his own land, exchange horses from his own herd, and slaughter his own cattle for food throughout the whole journey. Lugo was the ideal "Don" and the envy of his peers; the young amongst them "were emulous of acquiring the style and carriage known and designated as *el cuerpo de Lugo*—the carriage of the Lugo."[44] The honorific "Don" was invariably added for all elite Californios.

An integral part of Californio culture and society was the *fandango*. Named for a type of Spanish dance, the fandango brought together different elements of Californio society. Men wore their best outfits and accessorized them with the cleanest, most reliable revolver they had. Bell, writing at a time when fandangos were well past their heyday, remembered with a great deal of nostalgia:

> We will dress as we please, only we must dress expensively fine. We must be sure and wear a red *vicuña* hat with a broad brim and a sugarloaf crown, a gold cord wound twice around, and heavy tassels. We can either wear a blue claw hammer [coat] with gilt buttons, or a modern black frock, or an elegantly fitting blue jacket, with a little gold embroidery, a red Mexican sash, sky blue pants and a gold bullion stripe down the side will make up an *outre* fashionable fandango costume…[45]

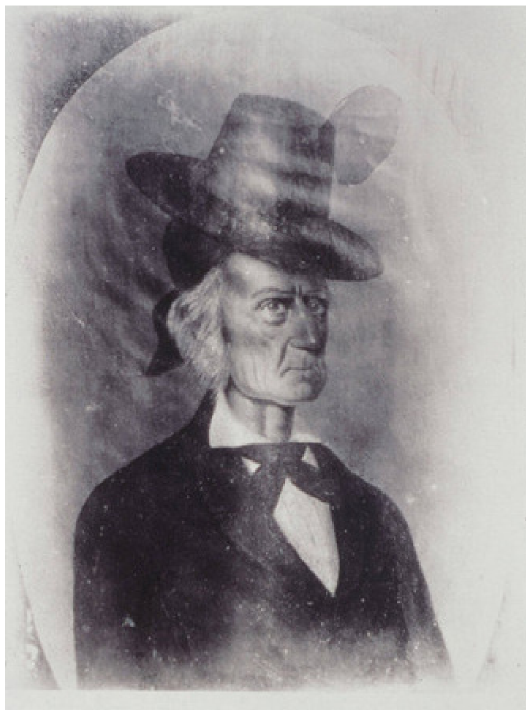


Figure 7: *Don Antonio María Lugo, renowned amongst his Californio peers for his opulent lifestyle and extravagant attires. Image courtesy of Calisphere, Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library.*

Californio religious celebrations provided an escape from the monotony of ranch life. Weddings were especially important affairs. The family of the bride would usually host a grand fiesta or dance to which people from as far away as 40 leagues were invited. Californio society was not egalitarian; there were clear class distinctions. Indicative of the stratification of Californio society, "lower-class" people were seldom invited. Wedding celebrations lasted three to four days, there was "dancing at night and horse-racing during the day, and generally winding up with bull-fighting."[46]

There were those who derided ranchers, Californios and Anglos alike, for what they perceived as their indolent lifestyle. When the Gold Rush brought an economic boom to the cattle business in Southern California, an Anglo-American remarked, "they made haste to spend what they got so easily."[47] Indeed, it seemed as if some Anglo-Americans could not understand the Californio way of conducting business, in which merchants would take a few hours off of work to play a game of billiards with a friend.[48] Times of plenty very rarely lead to businesses saving money for leaner times, and as one historian noted, the Californios were no exception. Besides, the lavish lifestyle that the Californios lived—and which many Americans saw as profligate and unwise—may have had more to do with the seigneurial status they held within Californio society than a predilection for being spendthrifts. While some Anglo-Americans derided the Californios' lavish lifestyle, others marveled at their hospitality. One historian wrote:

> Anglo-American travelers in particular marveled at the generosity of rancho proprietors. A weary traveler presumably could knock on a ranchero's door and, without having to offer an explanation, receive a warm welcome. The visitor felt helpful hands guide him to an honored place at the table. Tasty food, usually steaming slabs of beef spiced with chilies, awaited. Indian servants supposedly bustled about, moving quickly as the host demanded that the visitor not suffer one moment of neglect… The eagerness to share might suggest that the cattlemen had enough money to stock a full pantry and build a home spacious enough to receive guests.[49]

Californio ranchers lived lavishly not only because they could—or thought they could—but because their status as "Dons" demanded it.

The Californios had no way of knowing that the cattle economy would come crashing down thanks in large part to the natural disasters of the 1860s. Prior to that their situation looked rosy. Additionally, under the United States, the state of affairs was much more stable than under Mexican rule. But the Californios developed a false sense of financial infallibility. "It was as if wealth had been forced on the rancheros, Anglo and Californio alike," one historian wrote.[50] Anglo-Americans scoffed at the Californios for failing to save money for leaner times.[51]

The profits that the Californios produced during the economic boom of the early 1850s piqued them to add to their already gargantuan cattle empires. But unfortunately for the Californio ranchers, these expansions would most often be financed by borrowed money, further adding to their debt. Mortgaging their property, borrowing at outrageously high interest rates, the introduction of livestock from other parts of the country, and the cataclysmic natural disasters of the 1860s led to the gradual impoverishment of the Californio ranchers. While some weathered the Land Act of 1851, what lay ahead proved a tougher challenge.

Floods, Drought, and Crippling Debts

In the early 1860s a series of natural disasters exacerbated an already bleak economic situation for Californio ranchers in Southern California. A rain storm that began on Christmas day 1860 wreaked havoc throughout Los Angeles, damaging property of notable citizens in the city. A house situated on the north end of the plaza that functioned as a U.S. District Court –owned by California Governor John Downey—showed extreme signs of damage.[52] The *Los Angeles Star* reported:

> On Tuesday last, Christmas Day, the heaviest rain known in Southern California for the last eight years commenced falling. It began in the afternoon as an ordinary shower and ceased about dark—but commenced again about ten o'clock at night, pouring from that time till about 3 P.M. of the next day, in a perfect torrent. The rivers, creeks, arroyos, etc, were all full, and deluged the whole valley of Los Angeles, doing an incalcu-

> lable amount of damage, to our citizens in town, from the settling of foundations, the washing down of houses and walls, and the filling of cellars.[53]

A year later, on Christmas Eve 1861, a month-long storm brought unprecedented levels of rain to Southern California. The rains caused floods which proved devastating not only for the Californio ranchers, but also for the economy of the state of California in general. Thousands of cattle drowned. Up to one fourth of the state's taxable wealth was destroyed by the floods caused by the unusually long storm. The most affected areas were the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys. The flooding in some areas reached high enough to cover telegraph poles.[54]

The floods caused significant destruction in Southern California as well. Waterways usually dormant suddenly roared back to life, wreaking havoc. Embankment improvements made for some waterways gave way to the force of the torrents. The Los Angeles River spilled over; so too did the *Arroyo Seco*. Vineyards and citrus groves were swept away. In El Monte, a community east of Los Angeles, the San Gabriel River caused significant disruption to the region's byways and destroyed several residences.[55]

The rains affected places as far from Los Angeles as San Bernardino and Anaheim—then a relatively young community. The *Los Angeles Star* saw the silver lining in the situation, hoping that the floods would replenish the depleted soil in places like El Monte.[56] Ironically, the floods had another unforeseen negative effect on the cattle economy of Southern California. Pastures, replenished by the storm, led to fatter cattle which in turn resulted in a glutted market. Juan Forster—a Latinized Anglo and brother-in-law of Pío Pico—naively believed that better pastures boded well for himself, his brothers-in-law and the rest of the Californio ranchers.[57]

But what came after the deluge was catastrophic for the Californios. After the rainy season of 1861-1862, Southern California was beset by an unprecedented drought. The lack of water translated into a lack of pasture to feed cattle. A *Los Angeles Star* article of January 23, 1864 made clear the unusual dryness of the southern California winter season. The same article continued:

> During the present winter only two rains have occurred, one in November and a slight shower in January. Altogether not more than an inch and a half of rain has fallen. The weather is now unusually warm, assuming in the daytime a temperature almost that of summer heat, withering every remnant of vegetation and leaving not a green spot on the whole plain.[58]

The natural disasters decimated herds, and thus hurt an already sluggish ranching business. One historian put the number of dead animals due to starvation at 1 million. By 1870, cattle in Los Angeles numbered only twenty thousand, down from seventy thousand only ten years earlier.[59]

The eventual shift of economic power from Californios to Anglo-Americans occurred gradually. Exorbitant legal fees and loans at astronomical rates went hand in hand. With their wealth tied up in land and cattle, cash-poor Californios had few options besides borrowing money at usurious rates in order to comply with the Land Act of 1851. At one point, Pío Pico borrowed $44,000 at the *monthly* rate of 3%.[60] For perspective, this amount would be roughly equivalent to 1.3 million 2018 U.S. dollars.

It was not so much the amount of the loans that hurt the Californios, but the insane monthly—not yearly—interest rates to which they agreed.[61] Although this phenomenon was not limited to Southern California, it did affect Californio ranchers substantively, and many were forced to mortgage their real property.[62] Californios like the Pico brothers, Andrés and Pío, also made the unfortunate mistake of cosigning on loans for their peers, like Don José del Carmen Lugo. These legally binding contracts put Californio land at risk if the original borrowers failed to honor their debts.[63]

Many years after the rancheros' golden age, when narrating his life story, Don José del Carmen Lugo lamented his decision to

cosign loans made to his peers. Don José del Carmen Lugo recorded in his *narración:*

> Up to the year 1853 I was in good circumstances. If I did not have cash I had cattle and other possessions of value. I had the misfortune to loan my signature as bondsman for other persons in whom I had confidence, and these, for one reason and another, left me as they say vulgarly, "on the horns of the bull," and I had to sacrifice my property and even the house in which I lived to meet these obligations.[64]

Borrowing money at such high interest rates was not exclusive to the Californios, but it nevertheless would become a problem for them. For example, Don Juan Bandini of San Diego borrowed $10,000 with an interest rate of 4% a month. Benjamin D. Hayes, an Anglo-American and respected judge in Los Angeles, paid 5% on a $500 principle. More examples of incredibly high rates exist. In 1854, Don José Ramón Yorba—who owned land in what today is Orange County—mortgaged his *Rancho Las Bolsas* to Anglo James P. McFarland and Irishman John G. Downey. This included his home and a vineyard; all together it comprised 17,000 acres of land. The amount he borrowed was $5,500.[65]

Much of the debt the Californios contracted was during the early 1850s, a time of plenty. By the next decade, during much leaner times, they found it hard to repay that debt. Historian Robert Glass Cleland wrote:

> Easy going by nature, accustomed to an open-handed credit system under which the debtor was seldom pressed for payment, unfamiliar with the diabolical attributes of compound interest, most of the native rancheros fell easy prey to every financial ill and questionable practice of the time.
>
> Short-term mortgages (secured by property far in excess of the value of the loan), unconscionable interest rates, and deficiency judgements that stripped the defaulting debtor of his last real, eventually took from even the wealthiest and most distinguished of the native California families, first their herds of cattle, then their broad leagues of land, and finally the friendly shelter of their simple adobe *casas*.[66]

As if this were not enough, the *Los Angeles Star* announced auctions of properties of individuals delinquent on their state taxes. Newspaper notices included properties that would be auctioned and amounts each delinquent tax payer owed. Members of prominent Los Angeles families made it on the list: Alvarado, Sepúlveda, Cota, Yorba, Lugo are there. Combined, members of the Sepúlveda family owed approximately $190 in back taxes to the state and county governments.[67] In 1857, this was no small sum.

A similar list appeared in the *Los Angeles Star* in the year 1860. Again, some of Los Angeles' most familiar family names make the list. According to that list José del Carmen Lugo, son of the legendary Don Antonio María Lugo, owed $12.06 in back taxes to the state and county. Although this was a comparatively small sum when compared, for example, to the $190 that members of the Sepúlveda family owed in 1857, for José del Carmen Lugo it was still a serious matter since his property had to be auctioned off. The announcement in the *Los Angeles Star* read as follows:

> Notice is hereby given, that on Tuesday, the 18th day of December, A.D. 1860, at the hour of 10 o'clock A.M. of said day, at the Court House door, in the City of Los Angeles, I will proceed to sell at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash, enough of said property to pay the taxes and all costs to wit…[68]

The real property auctioned to satisfy José del Carmen Lugo's delinquent tax balance was a "lot and house [on the northwest corner of] Eternity and Virgin [streets]."[69]

Though the majority of Californio ranchers successfully fended off the legal challenges that the Land Act of 1851 hurled toward them, there were larger forces at play contributing to their eventual decline. The cultural

clash between the Californios and their counterparts in charge of a new Anglo-American government was significant. An example that perfectly illustrated this was the trouble that taxes represented for Californio ranchers.

Under Mexican rule, the territorial government of Alta California was supported by taxes levied on commerce conducted at the ports.[70] The meager taxes that were collected supported what was by many accounts a completely dysfunctional territorial government apparatus—wracked by near-constant pronouncements against sitting authorities. No longer would Californio ranchers be expected to pay no taxes on their property. With the coming of statehood to California also came the concept and policy of property taxes. In 1858, the total wealth of Los Angeles County assessed for tax purposes was $2,370,523. Californios Ricardo Véjar and the Pico brothers, Andrés and Pío, formed part of a group of just eleven individuals who, in combination, owned half of that wealth.[71] For perspective, Abel Stearns—the prominent Anglo-American Southern California rancher, respected and considered by the Californios as one of their own—owned $187,673 worth of personal and real property. On that wealth he paid $1,163.57 in state taxes and $3,753.46 in county taxes.[72]

It is easy to see then how taxes, specifically property taxes, could easily be a source of trouble for the Californios. In an 1859 petition, a group of Californios from Northern California led by Antonio María Pico, lamented the state of their finances due to what they described as onerous property taxes.[73] There is no reason to believe that the situation was any different for Californios in the southern half of the state. After the natural disasters of the 1860s which decimated the cattle herds, Californio ranchers found it difficult to pay their property taxes, as revealed by the tax delinquent lists that appeared in newspapers like the *Los Angeles Star*. One historian wrote about the general Californio outlook in the 1860s:

> Failure to contend successfully with debts contracted at the prevailing interest, or to adapt themselves to other conditions imposed by the new economic order, compelled the old *paisanos*, one by one, to surrender their vast estates to alien hands and pass, almost unnoticed and forgotten, into the dim twilight of their once-romantic day.[74]

Going into the 1860s—the second full decade under the new American government—the Californios in Southern California struggled to adapt to the new economic order. The Land Act of 1851, though it rejected one-third of Californio claims, was not in and of itself responsible for the Californios being supplanted by Anglo-Americans. The boom of the early 1850s might have created a sense in many Californios of a healthy economy. But the cattle economy's bonanza was sputtering by the mid 1850s.

The debts that Californios incurred, the property taxes they now had to pay, and the devastating natural disasters of the early 1860s all played significant roles in the gradual removal of the Californio ranchers from power. To be sure, the Land Act did pose a serious challenge for the Californios ranchers. But even though their land claims were understood to be in doubt until proven otherwise, it is nevertheless significant that they were able to defend themselves in the first place.

The Californio petition to the U.S. Congress in February 1859 proves as much. The group of 50 Californios, led by Antonio María Pico, forcefully made their sentiments known to federal legislators. With a resolved, rather than defiant tone, the petition outlined the predicaments that assailed the Californios. Written in the third person, the petition read:

> Onerous taxes were levied by new laws, and if these were not paid the property was put up for sale. Deprived as they were of the use of their lands, from which they had now no lucrative returns, the owners were compelled to mortgage them in order to assume the payment of taxes already due and constantly increasing… without crops or rents, the owners of those lands were not able to

> borrow money except at usurious rates of interest. The usual interest rate at that time was high, but with such securities it was exorbitant; and so, they were forced to either sell or lose their lands; in fact, they were forced to borrow money even for the purchase of the bare necessities of life.[75]

The California Land Act of 1851 alone did not lead to the decline of the Californio ranchers in Southern California; the situation was much more complex. Defeated and conquered, left to live among strangers, operating within a wholly new society and economy, the Californio ranchers nevertheless benefitted from the windfall of the Gold Rush, reaping only dreamed-of profits early on in the 1850s. But the times of plenty lasted only a brief period. Soon the Californios felt the financial strain of falling cattle prices, property taxes, and exorbitant interest rates on substantial loans. The natural disasters of the 1860s only exacerbated the situation; first the floods and then an unprecedented drought. Yet, along the way Californio ranchers attempted to adapt to the new order. In addition to their extraordinary economic success immediately after the American takeover, some Californio ranchers also made inroads into the American political scene. Their ability to successfully defend their land claims showed their willingness and ability to leverage the American judicial system in their favor.

Pío and Andrés Pico

Few Californios were as prominent as the Pico brothers, Pío and Andrés. Between them they controlled 291,000 acres of land and disputed control over thousands of acres more.[76] On paper at least, the Pico brothers were incredibly wealthy thanks to their large estates. As with the majority of Californio ranchers, the cattle business of Pío and Andrés saw unprecedented success in the boom of the 1850s. The United States' annexation of California helped increase the value of the brothers' property. But this wealth—as was invariably the case for other Californio ranchers—was tied up in land and cattle, and very little of it was in capital.[77]

Yet even before the boom of the 1850s, Pío Pico continued to expand his landholdings. In 1849 he purchased *Rancho Paso de Bartolo*, an 8,894–acre plot of land. Located only about a dozen miles east of Los Angeles, next to the San Gabriel River, Rancho Paso de Bartolo had extremely fertile soil; allowing Pico to rent 40-acre plots of land to tenants. In *El Ranchito*[78]—as Pío Pico endearingly called it—the river's proximity allowed Pico to grow fruits and vegetables, he was able to safeguard his cattle, and even run a general store which catered to his tenants. This store sold household essentials and even non-essentials, like the 25-cent *dos basitos de licor*.[79]

Located in present-day Whittier, El Ranchito also functioned as a stop for the Pico brothers' cattle on their trek from Pío's *Rancho Santa Margarita* in present-day Orange County up to San Fernando mission, owned by Andrés. From his brother's property in San Fernando, Pío would drive his cattle to markets in San Francisco or sell directly from Los Angeles. Costing him $4,642, El Ranchito turned out to be a sound investment for Pío Pico. As noted earlier, the demand for livestock that the Gold Rush created allowed Pío to sell his cattle for their hide, tallow, beef, and suet. Beef was converted to *carne seca*,[80] or jerky. Suet was used in the making of candles, a product in high demand due the state's increasing population, leading to the sale of suet by the tons.[81] The demand for such goods made Californio ranchers richer than northern California's gold miners.[82]

The life stories of Pío Pico and Andrés Pico are a metaphor of the Californio experience after the American takeover. But at the same time, the experiences of Pío and Andrés made them exceptional among their peers. According to one historian, what distinguished Pío Pico from his Californio contemporaries was the dexterity with which he maneuvered within the newly established Anglo-American judicial system in California.[83] Similar judgements can be made about his younger brother Andrés, who was successfully involved in California's politics from the outset.

Figure 8: *A depiction of Pio Pico's beloved "El Ranchito," painted by artist Herbert Hahn in the 1960s; in the background are the imposing San Gabriel Mountains. Courtesy of KCET.*

Andrés had arguably the more successful political career of the two brothers—for a long time he was a major figure within the Democratic Party in Southern California. Andrés' willingness to navigate through California's new political order is evident in an open letter published in the March 17, 1855 edition of the *Los Angeles Star*. Written in Spanish, in it Andrés addressed a group of fellow Californios who advocated for Californio repatriation to Mexico—specifically to the northern state of Sonora. Declining an invitation to form part of their organized group, Andrés wrote:

> I am extremely grateful that you have remembered me, for I have always adamantly expressed warm feelings toward my fellow countrymen, and, undoubtedly, I would take any opportunity that, in accordance with my present duties, would help me contribute to their well-being and prosperity; but my present station at the behest of the government to which we *de facto* belong to [the United States], or in other words, the public office which is given me by the Federal government of the United States, leads me to decline your gracious invitation, it being my greatest wish to work for the advancement and well-being of [California] my native land.[84]

This polite rebuff of his fellow countrymen in favor of staying in his adopted country, the United States, and his native land, California, showed his willingness to actively participate in American politics.

In a bulletin printed in the *Los Angeles Star* on February 16, 1856, Andrés Pico was named as delegate to the Democratic State Convention, nominated by members of the Democratic Party of Los Angeles County.[85] By 1860—one year after Antonio María Pico and a group of Californios had sent their petition to Congress—the San Luis Obispo Democratic Party passed resolutions stating their explicit opposition to Andrés Pico's possible nomination as a delegate to the national Democratic Convention in Charleston,

__Figure 9:__ General Andrés Pico enjoyed substantial political power during the early American era of California. Photo courtesty of Calisphere, Huntington Library.

South Carolina.[86]

Andrés Pico was at the forefront of a movement that called for the division of California because the southern counties felt like they were being denied equal power in the State legislature. The proposed "Territory of Colorado" would have included the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and San Diego. Most surprisingly, both houses of the California Legislature approved the bill that would carry out the division; presumably residents of California's northern counties were apathetic toward the cow counties of the state's southern half. But the bill died at the federal level, as Congress was unwilling to disturb the precarious sectional balance of states in the Union.[87]

Notwithstanding the failure of the division bill he had introduced, Andrés Pico's leadership of Southern California's separatist movement suggests that, at least amongst his peers in the southern counties, his political standing and his ideas were respected. Though his movement came to nothing, the fact that his bill garnered enough votes to pass both houses of the California Legislature was indicative not only of Andres Pico's skillful use of rhetoric within the new political system, but also the legislature's acceptance of the political power of a Californio—albeit a very wealthy and prominent one at that.

As a member of the California Assembly, Don Andrés Pico also advocated for the translation of laws into Spanish. On the floor of the Assembly, he delivered a speech to his colleagues arguing for the importance of having laws written in both English and Spanish, since many Californios were not fluent in English. He declared:

> It is in the interest of the Spanish population in California to have state laws written in clear, precise, and unambiguous language. It is known that they have not always been translated faithfully! There are printed laws that are wholly unintelligible, and others still that say in Spanish something entirely different than what they say in English. In the southern counties of the state, by a prior Legislature's decree, court proceedings in many cases are conducted in Spanish; a significant number of justices of the peace are members of the Spanish population, and for many a reason it is absolutely necessary that the laws be written in a language understood by all.[88]

Again, at display was not only Andrés Pico's skillful rhetoric but also his willingness to advocate for his countrymen, the Californio ranchers.

Pío Pico, the elder, was perhaps the more prominent of the two brothers; he is remembered as the last governor of Mexican Alta California. Pío's experience, like his brother Andrés', suggests that there were avenues through which the Californio rancher was able to take a stand while trying to adapt to the new American order. Just as his Californio rancher peers, Pío Pico saw unprecedented economic success immediately after California was taken over by the United States. One historian argued that Pío Pico did not follow the traditional pattern of Californio

decline, but rather displayed a willingness to guard his interests "at times overzealously, by using the newly established California judicial system."[89]

Even though he profited handily from his ranching business and continued to make significant sums from renting plots in El Ranchito up until 1880, Pío Pico nevertheless sought to diversify his business prospects. For struggling colleagues, he acted as bondsman for the debts they incurred, making decent sums of money when loans were paid off.[90] The risks inherent in this practice of cosigning of loans must have been known to Pico.

In one such case, vouching for someone else backfired; notwithstanding, the case sheds light on Pío's willingness to use the legal channels which were open to him. According to the report of the case *McFarland v. Pico*, Pico acted as cosigner on a loan for Samuel Carpenter, a resident of Los Angeles. When the $4,508 loan was not repaid by Carpenter, James McFarland and John Downey, to whom the money was owed, went to Pío Pico. The report provided details for what occurred:

> On the last day of grace, during the afternoon, some hours previous to sunset, the note was presented by a notary public, at the request of the plaintiffs, to Carpenter, for repayment, which was refused. The note was then formally protested for non-payment, and "notice of protest" given the same afternoon to Pico, by letter addressed to him at his residence, and there delivered to a person, in charge of the residence, of proper age and capacity—Pico being at the time absent.[91]

Not satisfied with having to pay Carpenter's debt, Pío Pico appealed all the way to the Supreme Court of California, where he would eventually be forced to pay the full amount of Carpenter's original loan including interest, as well as $131.15 for the plaintiff's legal fees.[92] Nevertheless, Pío Pico's appeals in court—just as his brother's holding elected office—serve as an example

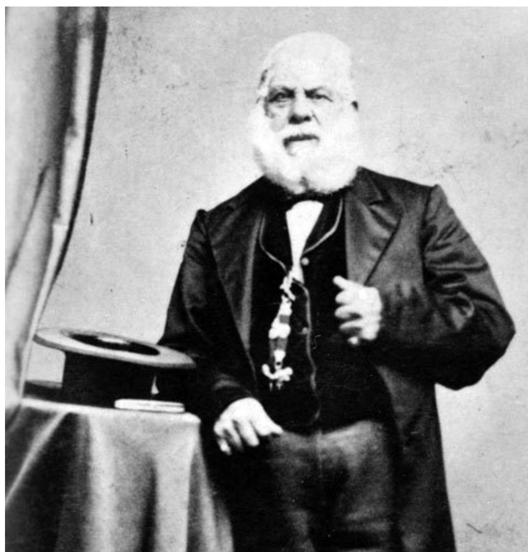


Figure 10: *The last Mexican governor of California, Pío Pico was prominent in Southern California social and economic circles even after the American takeover, and learned to navigate the complicated American judicial system. Photo courtesy of Whittier Museum.*

of Californios' ability to navigate through the new American order; Andrés through politics and Pío through the judicial system.

Even though he was able to take legal stands through the court system, one such instance serves as an example of Pío Pico's vulnerability under the new American order. In one of early California's most notorious legal battles, Pío fought his Anglo-American brother-in-law Juan Forster for control of Rancho Santa Margarita in present-day Orange County. Pío, like many other Californio ranchers, had amassed large amounts of debt by 1855. That year he mortgaged Rancho Santa Margarita for $25,000 dollars from the San Francisco firm Pioche and Bayerque. With an interest rate of 3% a month, this obligation haunted Pío Pico for many years.[93]

In 1864, during the great drought, Juan Forster agreed to help relieve Pío Pico of some of his debt in exchange for half of Rancho Santa Margarita. On February 25, 1864, Andrés and Pío met with their brother-in-law to sign all the necessary documents that would finalize the agreement. In what

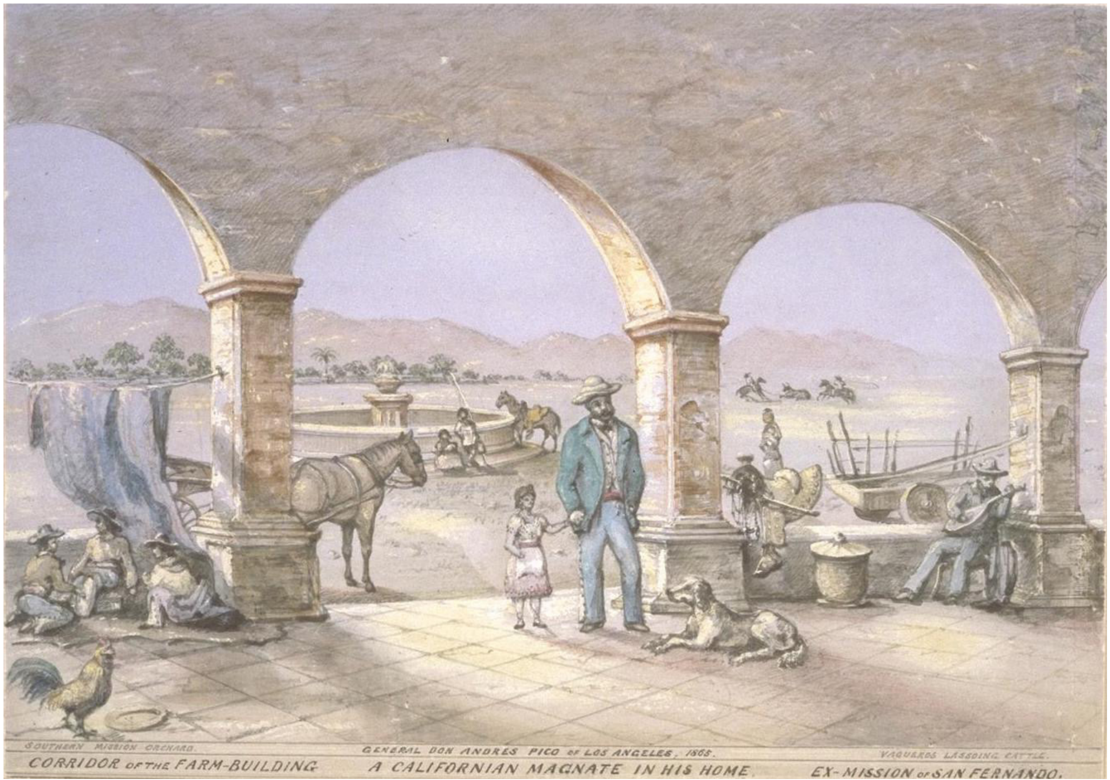
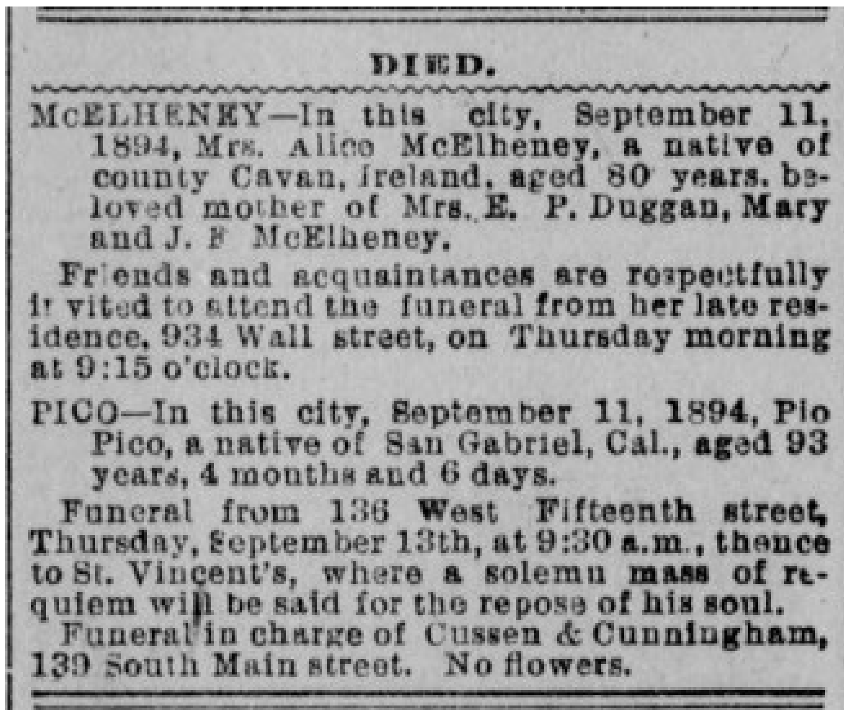


Figure 11: *Two relics of a bygone age—the "Californian Magnate" Andrés Pico and one of his properties, the former Mission San Fernando. Painting by Edward Vischer, and courtesy of the Bancroft Library.*

can only be described as a cowardly act of betrayal, Forster abused Pío's trust by having the contract which both parties were required to sign written only in English. The contract stipulated that all, not half, of Rancho Santa Margarita would be transferred to Forster. One historian wrote of the fateful meeting:

> The Picos accepted Forster as a family member and reposed trust in him. Pío was Forster's godfather and had given him a fortune in land when he was governor. The men enjoyed strong personal ties and a confidential relationship. Therefore, the discovery that Pío had signed a deed for the whole ranch was cause for unspeakable anguish and rage. Forster knew very well that Pío was unable to read English and would rely entirely on Forster's judgement to sign the deed. Pío signed it without question, not even bothering to look at the English hieroglyphics which it contained. When the deed was recorded by Forster, the fraud was complete.[94]

The battle for control of the Rancho Santa Margarita went all the way to the Supreme Court of California. A lower court had ruled in favor of Forster, a jury "found that Pío Pico intended, at the time of the delivery of the deed, to convey the whole, and not merely the one-half" of Rancho Santa Margarita. Moreover, the jury found that Juan Forster had not committed any fraudulent action.[95] Historians have since asked why Pío Pico—as someone who by the mid 1860s knew how the laws worked—ever agreed to sign a deed that he did not completely understand. Forster's motive for taking on Pío Pico's debt in exchange for one-half of Rancho Santa Margarita has also never been completely explained. What is clear, however, is that the loss of Rancho Santa Margarita and the ensuing court battle was an enormous setback for Pío Pico. Though he made extensive use



DIED.

McELHENEY—In this city, September 11, 1894, Mrs. Alice McElheney, a native of county Cavan, Ireland, aged 80 years, beloved mother of Mrs. E. P. Duggan, Mary and J. F McElheney.

Friends and acquaintances are respectfully invited to attend the funeral from her late residence, 934 Wall street, on Thursday morning at 9:15 o'clock.

PICO—In this city, September 11, 1894, Pio Pico, a native of San Gabriel, Cal., aged 93 years, 4 months and 6 days.

Funeral from 136 West Fifteenth street, Thursday, September 13th, at 9:30 a.m., thence to St. Vincent's, where a solemn mass of requiem will be said for the repose of his soul.

Funeral in charge of Cussen & Cunningham, 139 South Main street. No flowers.

Figure 12: *The inconspicuous announcement of Pío Pico's death in the Los Angeles Herald. Courtesy of the California Digital Newspaper Collection*

of the legal channels open to him, in *Forster v. Pico*, where it was an Anglo-American's word against a Californio's, Pío lost handily.

The Pico brothers in many ways exemplified the Californio rancher class. Just as their peers did, they skillfully navigated their way through the hurdles that the Land Act of 1851 put in their path. As late as 1858, the U.S. Supreme court confirmed a land claim in Andrés Pico's favor in Amador County.[96] In other matters, they proved exceptional, providing a case study of Californios who adapted—or at least attempted to adapt—to the new American order.

Yet, Andrés and Pío remained Californios operating in a new country. They may have been conquered during the Mexican War, but managed to stay afloat and even thrive under the new American government. Unlike their lower-class counterparts—or members of other minorities like the Chinese, brutally massacred in Los Angeles in 1871[97]—Californio ranchers were never quite subjected to vitriol on such an explicit level as were less wealthy minorities. But, for dozens of other Californio ranchers, there were larger forces at play which led to their gradual decline. Andrés and Pío also struggled with huge amounts of debt, the natural disasters of the 1860s affected them as much as anyone else in Southern California. By 1887, the *Los Angeles Herald* published an announcement for the foreclosure of one of Pío Pico's properties in downtown Los Angeles. The announcement read, "plaintiff alleges that he loaned defendant $4,000 and took a mortgage on the above property [in the rear of the Pico House] and the note remained unpaid."[98]

Californio Sunset

The year 1876 marked the coming of the Southern Pacific Railroad to Los Angeles. Government officials and prominent business men in Southern California had been calling for it for many years.[99] On November 5, 1872, voters in Los Angeles County went to the polls and approved a deal that gave the Southern Pacific the right to operate in Los Angeles. In April 1873, the pre-existing Los

Angeles and San Pedro Rail Road Co. merged with the Southern Pacific,[100] transforming the history of Southern California.

Agriculture in Southern California was steadily superseding the ranching economy. The railroad meant that farms and orchards would no longer depend entirely on slow moving overland transportation or on the port at San Pedro. Los Angeles, a city surrounded by desert, hemmed in by mountains, and devoid of a significant inland waterway, was no longer isolated. One Los Angeles historian wrote that the railroad made Los Angeles' burgeon into "one of the largest cities of the United States" just decades after "its opening to the outside world."[101]

The gradual displacement of Californio ranchers kicked into overdrive with the coming of the iron horse. In Southern California, ox carts gave way to rail cars, cattle to citrus, and Californio ranchers increasingly gave way to a growing Anglo-American population. Biographers under the direction of Hubert Howe Bancroft set out to record the stories of the old Californios, allowing them at least some degree of control over their legacies.[102] Today, these testimonies form one of the most important holdings of U.C. Berkeley's Bancroft Library. These *narraciones*, as most are called, still play a part in the way we continue to romanticize the story of the Californios.

On September 13, 1894 in a crammed column surrounded by advertisements, the *Los Angeles Herald* announced the death of Pío Pico two days before. Next to descriptions of other deceased persons, Pío's read: "[Died] in this city, September 11, 1894, Pío Pico, a native of San Gabriel, Cal., aged 93 years, 4 months, and 6 days."[103] A day later, a San Francisco newspaper reported Pío Pico's funeral as "the largest funeral ever held in [Los Angeles]."[104] Southern California had changed dramatically since the ranching heyday of the early 1850s. The gradual displacement of the Californios was now complete, and the sun had set on the era of the Californio ranchers.

Endnotes

1. Salomon, 2011: 160.
2. Dana, 1869: 200.
3. Igler, 2014: 116.
4. Ibid, 119.
5. Ibid, 120.
6. Ibid, 120.
7. Griswold del Castillo, 1990:, 3.
8. Monroy, 1993: 177.
9. Ibid, 173.
10. Ibid: 312.
11. Greenberg, 2013: 248-249.
12. Guardino, 2017: 323.
13. Griswold del Castillo, 1990: 67.
14. Ibid, 68.
15. Ibid, 5.
16. Pitt, 1998: 105.
17. Gray, 1998: 76.
18. Cleland, 1975: 38.
19. Ibid, 52.
20. Ibid, 54.
21. Clay and Troesken, 2006: 57.
22. Ibid, 73.
23. Cleland, 1975: 41-42.
24. Ibid, 39.
25. Ibid, 41.
26. Clay and Troesken, 2006: 58-59.
27. Ibid, 62-63.
28. Griswold del Castillo, 1990: 74.
29. Monroy, 1993: 180.
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31. Ibid, 107.
32. Monroy, 1993: 180.
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34. Pitt, 1998: 108.
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37. Pitt, 1998: 108.
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44. Ibid, 174.
45. Ibid, 199-200.
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57. Monroy, *1993:* 231.
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60. Cleland, 1975: 112.
61. Ibid, 114.
62. Ibid, 111.
63. Ibid, 109.
64. Lugo, 1950: 236.
65. Cleland, 1975: 111-112.
66. Ibid, 111.
67. *Los Angeles Star*, 1857.
68. *Los Angeles Star*, 1860a.
69. Ibid.
70. Cleland, *1975:* 117.
71. Ibid, 117-118.
72. Ibid, 120.
73. Pico *et al*, 1975: 238-243.
74. Cleland, *1975:* 116.
75. Pico *et al*, 1975: 240.
76. Salomon, *2011:* 127.
77. Ibid, 126.
78. Author's translation: "the little ranch"
79. Author's translation: "two shots of liquor"
80. Author's translation: "dried meat"
81. Salomon, 2011: 131.
82. Ibid, 129.
83. Ibid, 126-127.
84. *Los Angeles Star*, 1855: "Me es en extremo grato ver que os acordais de mi, por que siempre he profesado los mas ardientes sentimientos hacia mis compatriotas, é indudablemente me aprovecharía de cualquier circumstancias, que, siendo compatibles con mis deberes, me darían lugar para contribuir a su bienestar y prosperidad; pero mi presente posicion ante el gobierno al cual nosotros *de facto* pertenecemos, ó en otras palabras, el empleo public que tengo que desempeñar por el nombramiento del gobierno general de los Estados Unidos me compete a decliner vuestro benevolo ofrecimiento, siendo principalmente mi mas gran deseo el adelantamiento y sosten de mi tierra natal."
85. *Los Angeles Star*, 1856.
86. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 1860.
87. Cleland, 1975: 124.
88. *El Clamor Público*, 1858: "El interés de la población Española en California, es tener las leyes del Estado en un language claro, preciso y castizo. ¡Cuan sabido es que no han sido siempre traducidas con esmero! Leyes impresas hay que son enteramente ininteligibles, y otras que dicen en español cosas del todo distintas que en inglés. En los condados del sur del Estado, por un decreto de la Legislatura anterior, los procedimientos en los tribunals en muchos casos, se conducen en español; un numero considerable de los jueces de la paz son de la poblacion Española, y por todos motivos es indispensablemente necesario que las leyes esten en un language a la comprehension de todos."
89. Salomon, 2011: 127.
90. Ibid, 133.
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92. Salomon, 2011: 135.
93. Ibid, 133.
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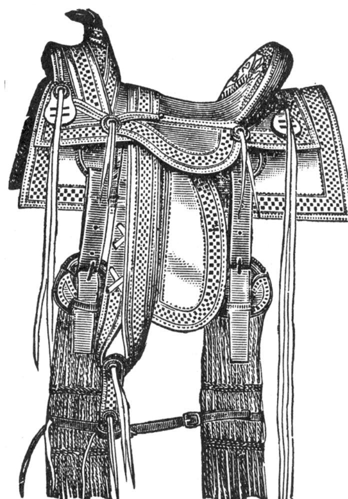


Mark Your Calendar!

Less Than Two Years Until the

75th Anniversary Fiesta of the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners

Held Jointly with the

4th Annual Westerners International Gather

Friday, October 8th, and Saturday, October 9th, 2021

Saddle Your Mule, Hitch up your Team, and Come Join us for

Two Days of Fun, Food, Entertainment and History
Way Out West in Los Angeles, California!

Guided Tours of San Fernando Mission (1797)
and The Autry Museum of the American West
Historical Lectures, Cowboy Poetry, Book Auction
Hot Rod Night (Friday) at Bob's Big Boy Burgers
(Burgers, Shakes, and Dozens of SoCal Hot Rods, 1920s-1960s)
Saturday Night BBQ and Open Bar at the Hacienda Turner!
Drinkin', Dancin', Tomfoolery, and Live Mariachi Music!

Figure 1 (Left): *Grinning Chimps just escaped from the Zoo with their keeper? No, just the Dillon boys (left to right) Ross, Brian, and Dave, with Westerners International Boss Cowgirl Dr. Bonney MacDonald, at the Panhandle-Plains Museum, Canyon, Texas. Ken Pirtle photo, 10/11/2019.* ***Figure 2 (Right):*** *Jim Olds on the Adobe Walls Battlefield, at the grave of his namesake, William Olds, a casualty of the second battle of Adobe Walls, 1874. B. Dillon photo, 10/11/2019.*

Second Annual Westerners International Gather
Canyon, Texas, October 10-11, 2019

Half a hundred Westerners from all over the United States tied up to the hitchin' post at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in beautiful Canyon Texas to celebrate the *Second Annual Westerner's International Gather.* This wonderful event was the brainchild of Westerners International Chair Dr. Bonney MacDonald (Figure 1), and all of the hardworking folks at the Home Ranch. The highlight of this congregational confab was a field trip out to the Adobe Walls Battlefield, and a "living history" lecture there by world-famous historian Michael Grauer, Chair of Cowboy Culture and Curator of Cowboy Collections and Western Art at the National Cowboy Museum in Oklahoma City. California Westerners were well-represented at this great meeting of the minds: all three members of the Dillon gang were in attendance (Figure 1), as was Jim Olds (Figure 2). Next year, the third annual Gather is planned for early September, 2020, in Colorado Springs. Then, in 2021, it will be our own turn, right here in the City of the Angels.

— Brian Dervin Dillon, Ph.D. Westerners International Representative

Rendezvous, October 2019 . . .

Westerners of the Los Angeles Corral congregated on October 19th for their annual Rendezvous, graciously hosted by Sheriff Jim Macklin's new home at the Royal Oaks Retirement Community in Bradbury. All attending, plus some curious residents from the Royal Oaks, admired a pair of vintage automobiles and browsed the Corral's biannual book sale. Bibliophiles seized the opportunity for some great deals, and helped make this book sale one of the Corral's most successful yet. In the event hall, the Westerners enjoyed a sumptuous dinner of BBQ beef brisket and chicken—I for one especially appreciated the dessert of chocolate cake!

After mingling over good food and drinks, the Westerners bestowed accolades upon some of its outstanding members. Sheriff Jim Macklin recognized former Sheriff Bill Warren as the Honored Guest of the Rendezvous and promoted him to "Honorary" (dues exempt) member. Sheriff Macklin also presented the Coke Wood Award for Best Article to former Sheriff Brian D. Dillon—his eighth consecutive Coke Wood prize, but first ever first place. In his capacity as the Los Angeles Corral's liaison to the Home Corral in Texas, Brian passed on the Westerners International Danielson Award for Best Presentation to Paul McClure, and the Westerners International Second Place Best Cowboy Poetry Award to Gary Turner. Abe Hoffman received the first prize for cowboy poetry, but could not attend the Rendezvous and accepted his award at November's Roundup. Many congratulations to our winners!

The Rendezvous concluded with a musical performance by the Banjo Buddies band. To the twang of their namesake instrument, they led the Westerners in singalongs of American folk classics like "The Camptown Races," "She'll Be Coming 'Round the Mountain," and "Deep in the Heart of Texas." One of the Banjo Buddies, Nancy, gave a stunning one-woman band performance using a washboard, harmonica, cowbells, cymbal, tambourine, and bicycle horn.

Many thanks to the Royal Oaks for hosting and catering, the Banjo Buddies for entertaining us, and to all Westerners who stayed behind to help pack up the book sale. The 2019 Rendezvous was one to remember, and we are all looking forward to 2020's!

— John Dillon

Above: *The Banjo Buddies put on a rousing performance for the Westerners. Photo by Paul McClure.*

Above: *Guest Miriam Carter and member Paul Clark peruse voluminous stacks at the Corral's book sale.* ***Top Right:*** *The multi-talented Nancy of the Banjo Buddies performs as a one-woman band.* ***Right:*** *Eight-time Coke Wood Award recipient Brian D. Dillon presents Gray Turner with the Westerners International 2nd Place prize for poetry.* ***Below:*** *Guest Ken Mallory, Royal Oaks resident and Battle of the Bulge veteran, swaps stories about his 1930 Ford Model A with member Steve Baker. Photos by Paul McClure and Jim Macklin.*

Monthly Roundup . . .

September 2019

Elizabeth Pomeroy

In September the Westerners Corral was privileged to have as its speaker Elizabeth Pomeroy, a professor and administrator who received her PhD in English from U.C.L.A. and taught for many years at Pasadena City College. Elizabeth presented the story of one of our greatest, Glen Dawson. Glen is best known as one of the founders of the Westerners Corral back in 1946. In fact, Elizabeth shared with us the joy Glen felt about being part of many historical organizations, but, Elizabeth shared, the organization he felt most affection for was the Los Angeles Corral. In fact, many members of the Corral have had relationships with Dawson. Clearly, we are all a huge family.

Born in 1912 in Los Angeles, Glen's future was foreshadowed by his love of climbing, as he was known to climb his home and frequently spend time on his roof. In addition, he was known for having a profuse love of reading. It would come to no surprise that Glen would grow up devoting himself to mountain climbing and later on, to owning a bookshop. As a teenager, in 1931, Glen had reached his apex with the climb of Mt. Whitney, a memorable climb where he and few of his mountaineer buddies were aided by Harvard Philosopher, Robert Underhill, who taught them the latest of rope safety techniques.

After graduating from U.C.L.A. in 1935 with a B.A. in history, Glen devoted himself to traveling around the world to the disappointment of his alma mater. One of his professors at U.C.L.A. had insisted Glen stay at U.C.L.A. and study for his PhD. Glen refused the offer as his father Ernest Dawson had paid for a global trip; however, Glen's real interest was in studying the book selling trade. He began his training in Munich at an ominous time when Nazi flags flew from every house.

Dawson by 1940 had married and three years later joined the army in a Mountain Expedition Force where he spent his time training for combat under harsh weather. After the war, Glen devoted himself to his father's book shop. By 1947, Ernest Dawson had passed away. Glen and his brother now took over the shop. By 1968, economic volatility in Downtown forced Glen and his brother to move the shop around a few times. Figueroa would be the last location in Downtown where Glen's bookshop would be located. For economic reasons the Dawson brothers next chose to leave Downtown and settle in Larchmont. Here their business boomed, and many books were published particularly, in Western Americana. At Larchmont many Corral members visited and came to know Glen.

Dawson passed away at the grand old age of 103. The "Sierra Mortal" was finally at rest from climbing mountains. Pomeroy's talk ended with many of our members sharing memories of Glen. Even though I personally never met him, the presentation made me feel as if I knew him his whole life.

— Jovanny Gochez

November 2019

Stephen Gee

It was “Hat Night” for the Los Angeles Corral at November’s Roundup. Westerners wore a range of eclectic headgear, but only three could claim prizes. Hal Eaton won 3rd place for his Korean *jeonrip* hat, Alan Heller came in 2nd for a gear-festooned “steampunk” helmet, and in 1st place was Dorothy Mutz with an splendid head of garlic.

For the night’s presentation Stephen Gee treated the Corral to a history of the various city halls of Los Angeles. In 1853 City Hall was a small shack on Los Angeles Street. It moved to a larger building on Spring Street that same year. This new building was an improvement in that its floor had actual floorboards instead of bare dirt. City Hall then moved to the Temple Market Building in 1866. This building hosted the first stage production in Los Angeles, and it is also where LA residents mourned Abraham Lincoln.

The first building built specifically for City Hall came in 1884 on Second Street. It wouldn’t stay there long. Between 1880 and 1890 the population of Los Angeles jumped from ten thousand to fifty thousand. It was so crowded at City Hall that the mayor at the time, William Workman, could not have an office there. In 1888, the city hired the architectural firm of Caulkin & Haas to build a new City Hall on Broadway. The cost of this new building was an exorbitant two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Almost twenty years later the population of Los Angeles had skyrocketed to six hundred thousand people, and City Hall was falling into disrepair.

In 1921, George Crier became mayor and acquired a five-million-dollar bond for a new City Hall, along with two and a half million dollars for buying land. A legal kerfuffle arose between the City Council and the Board of Public Works over who should hire an architect to build the new City Hall. The Board of Public Works eventually won the legal battle and hired John Parkinson, John C. Austin, and Albert C. Martin. These three men built the City Hall we all know today, which opened in 1928. Over a third of Los Angeles’ then-1.5 million residents attended the huge parade that celebrated its completion. At the dedication ceremony Irving Berlin performed, a chef made an eleven-foot-tall cake in City Hall’s likeness (that no one ate because it was too beautiful), and President Calvin Coolidge lit the Charles Lindbergh Aviation Beacon with a telegram from the White House.

In 1967 Mayor Sam Yorty hired architects to build an annex that would become known as City Hall East. He also wanted to connect the two buildings with a large bridge that he envisioned as the largest civic center outside of Washington, D.C. He was not successful. In the early ‘90s a seismic retrofit of City Hall was approved for just a little over a hundred million dollars. Then the Northridge quake hit in 1994, and the price jumped to three hundred million. Along with the retrofitting came a restoration project to bring City Hall back to its original glory.

— Aaron Tate

Above: *City Hall, 1931. Public domain internet photo.*

Top Left: *1st place "Hat Night" winner and Gilroy garlic girl Dorothy Mutz, and manly antler man Mark Mutz.* ***Above:*** *2nd-place winner, machine head Alan Heller.* ***Left:*** *Cabbage-headed Therese Melbar, and 3rd-place finisher and Korean court minister, Hal Eaton.* ***Bottom Left:*** *Capitalist Jim Macklin and Fireman Brian D. Dillon present the three-eyed alien Abe Hoffman the Westerners' 1st prize for poetry, 2018.* ***Below:*** *Mary Riegler tips her hat to a hidden leprechaun. Photos by Patrick Mulvey and Jim Macklin.*

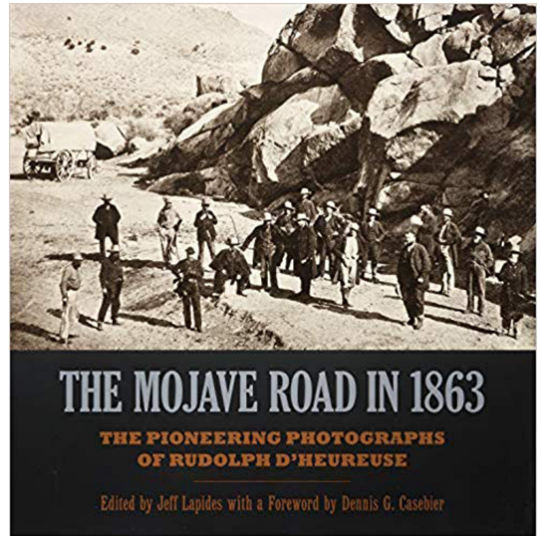
Down the Western Book Trail . . .

THE MOJAVE ROAD IN 1863: The Pioneering Photographs of Rudolph D'Heureuse. Edited by Jeff Lapides with a Foreword by Dennis G. Casebier. Tales of the Mojave Road, No. 30, Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association, Essex, California, 2018. $39.95

This is a splendid book, full of remarkable photographs, accompanied by contemporary accounts of the 1863 travels of Rudolph d'Heureuse (1823-1896), the earliest-known photographer of what has come to be called the *Mojave Road.* Historians, archaeologists, and anthropologists "in the know" have long been familiar with some of d'Heureuse's photographs. Now every exposure surviving from his journey from Los Angeles eastwards to Fort Mojave and to the Eldorado Gold fields of the Colorado River country, has been assembled between two covers.

This new, beautifully-produced, large-format book reflects very well upon the Los Angeles Corral of the Westerners, since its compiler, editor, and designer Jeff Lapides, the writer of its Foreword Dennis Casebier, and its pre-print production boss Charles Allen, are all L.A. Corral members. And this wonderful contribution to California history and historical photography is dedicated to our friend, historian, mountaineer, prolific author, and fellow Los Angeles Westerner, the late, great, John Robinson.

The photographs and accompanying text represent moments frozen in time, and it is very easy to get lost in them. They feature miners, prospectors, soldiers, and California Indians. Newspaper accounts, letters, and eyewitness observations chronologically bracket d'Heureuse's 1863 visit. Some are earlier, some are contemporaneous, and some are later, but all expand our view of the time and place revealed by unique photographs of a California historical episode too often overlooked by mainstream historians. Author/Editor Jeff Lapides also provides useful maps by d'Heureuse himself, locating the photographs and text accounts. A brief



biography of the photographer, a summary of the detective work involved in tracing his exposures, the unusual "life stories" of some of them over the past 150+ years, and a bibliography round out this very readable book.

D'Heureuse's photographic accomplishments were a sideline to his primary objective in California's Colorado Desert: prospecting, surveying, and mapping the latest gold "strike" in the southeastern-most corner of the Golden State. No mere tourist, Rudolph d'Heureuse was a trained engineer who had already paid his dues in both placer and hard rock mining. So it is not surprising that his experienced, analytical, gold-seeker's mind's eye composed so many photographs that reveal so much detail. D'Heureuse later worked for the California Geological Survey, rubbing elbows with pioneer scientists like Josiah Whitney before finally leaving California for the more verdant, but much less exciting, Eastern Seaboard.

By the early 1850s, a prehistoric Indian footpath across the desert had became a mule path, and then, by 1863, the most important wagon road between Los Angeles on the Pacific Coast and Fort Mojave on the Colorado River. This lonely military outpost was the gateway to the wide-open spaces of the Sonora Desert, both in Mexico to the

southeast, and Arizona to the northeast, and to the basin and range country of Nevada and Utah to the north. The rutted, sandy and rocky track came to be called the *Mojave Road*, after the most famous group of Indians living near its eastern terminus. Most of the early Anglo-American travelers of the Mojave Road were as unfamiliar, and unconcerned, about geographic and ethnographic accuracy as most modern California residents still are. In fact, ask any ten present-day Californians where the *Mojave Desert* begins and ends, and you will probably get ten completely different answers, at least nine of them wrong. The Mojave Indians, after whom the Mojave (or "High") Desert is named, didn't live there. Instead, they lived, along with their neighbors the Chemehuevi and Halchidhoma, in the Colorado (or "Low") Desert, on the California side of the Colorado River.

The Mojave Indians had no villages, hunting camps, nor any permanent or semi-permanent presence within their namesake "Desert" far to the west of their actual homeland. But they nevertheless installed plenty of footprints on and across the Mojave Desert proper, for they were perhaps the most remarkable, energetic, and peripatetic pedestrians of Native California and, for that matter, the greater American Southwest. At the turn of the 19th Century, forty years after d'Heureuse's visit, the Mojave were favorite subjects of study for A.L. Kroeber, the founding father of California Anthropology. Another seventy years later I heard the old anthropological joke still being told at U.C. Berkeley in *Kroeber Hall* that any Mojave Indian would run twenty miles just to look at a rock out in the desert, and then run another twenty miles back, forty miles in all, on a whim, before breakfast.

Hundreds of years before the first wagon creaked along the Mojave trail, later to become the Mojave Road, pre- and protohistoric Mojave Indian traders routinely walked all the way from the Colorado River to the Pacific Coast along it to trade obsidian, soapstone, and other scarce and valuable lithic materials with the coastal Indians. They exchanged these for marine shells, shell beads, and other things equally rare back in the desert hinterland. In the opposite direction, the Mojave crossed the Colorado River and ventured into what are now Northern Mexico and Arizona, trading Coastal California shells and shell beads with the Anasazi, the Late Prehistoric ancestors of the Protohistoric Hopi and Zuñi, for turquoise. They also traded with less sedentary tribes in the Sonoran Desert, for *tunas* at the time of the cactus fruit harvest. So it was not surprising that the Mojave Indians later served as guides across the California, Arizona, and Sonoran deserts for the first European explorers like Fray Francisco Garcés (1738-1781) − he called them the *Jamajabs*− and the first Anglo-American mountain men like Jedediah Smith (1799-1831) to penetrate Spanish Colonial, later Mexican, California overland from the east.

One of the most important contributions of Lapides' beautiful book may not be immediately obvious to some readers. It suggests most strongly that elsewhere, most likely inside old trunks, half-remembered safety-deposit boxes, or even within that most clichéd of all treasure-containers—*the old shoe box up in the corner of the attic*—other collections of 150-year-old photographs or glass plate negatives still await rediscovery and publication.

For every Timothy O'Sullivan, Eadweard Muybridge, Carleton Watkins, or Isaiah Taber, all of them famous photographers of a now-vanished California, there may have been another dozen obscure ones like Rudolph d'Heureuse, talented amateurs who photographed people and places before anyone else did. And, when and if the collections of such photographers are found, we hope that they can be shared with an appreciative audience as skillfully and artistically as Jeff Lapides has with the impressive legacy of Rudolph d'Heureuse.

The Mojave Road in 1863 reminds us that people long dead can indeed come back to life through the magic of photography and the written word. This is a book that should be on every Westerner's shelf, and in every western library. Highly recommended.

— Brian Dervin Dillon

"I WILL NOT SURRENDER THE HAIR OF A HORSE'S TAIL:" The Victorio Campaign 1879, by Robert N. Watt. West Midlands, England: Helion & Company, 2017. 504 pp. Tables, Maps, Illustrations, Appendices, Annex: Original Documents, Bibliography, Index. Hardbound, $69.95.

Robert N. Watt is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science and International Studies at the university of Birmingham. Although he resides in England, he has made numerous visits to the United States and delved deeply into sources at the National Archives, the Newberry Library, the New Mexico State University Archives, and other sources, plus making a number of visits to the Southwest to observe onsite where the U.S. Army pursued Apaches in the period 1879-1881. Watt took most of the photographs in the book to show the terrain, often rugged and isolated, where the Apache campaign was conducted. The bibliography runs to almost twenty pages and includes both books and scholarly articles. The Appendices contain some 150 pages of reprints of primary documents that include reports of U.S. and Mexican officials, Army officers, newspaper accounts, memoirs, and first-hand descriptions of conflicts with the Apaches. All of this research supports a meticulous narrative in which Watt traces an almost daily account of the efforts (often unsuccessful) to capture Victorio and put him and his Chihennes Apache people on the San Carlos Reservation.

The exploits of Geronimo in efforts by the U.S. government to end his depredations are widely known. Less well known are other Apache leaders, most notably Victorio. Watt assesses Victorio's leadership qualities and finds much to admire in his military tactics that frustrated the Army as well as Mexican officials and military units. Victorio successfully navigated between the United States and Mexico and excelled in stealing horses and cattle from ranches and military encampments.

What brought the warfare that pitted Apaches against the U.S. government? The simplest answer lay in the insistence by Victorio and the Chihennes that they wished to live on the Ojo Caliente Reservation where the environment offered conditions that would enable them to sustain themselves. U.S. policy, however, insisted on removing the Chihennes to the San Carlos Reservation where a number of Apache bands were to be placed and compelled to share limited resources. Victorio's refusal to move to the San Carlos Reservation sparked Apache raids on ranches and villages and the frequently unsuccessful efforts of Army detachments to pursue, find, and capture the Indians.

Although Watt's narrative mainly consists of actions taken by officers and men of the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry, he provides insightful analyses of Apache culture and the Indian point of view in resisting the U.S. government's policies. Racism is apparent as the Apaches are described as savages, their raids often wildly exaggerated in newspapers as to white ranchers and farmers killed. African American cavalrymen come in for their share of discrimination as those newspapers editorialized them as less than intelligent and as incompetent.

Watt credits the Army with doing what they could do, given the limited support the government gave in providing adequate firearms, ammunition, training of troops and, above all, horses and mules. For anyone seeing the image of the U.S. Cavalry in terms of John Ford's films *Fort Apache* and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, it comes as a surprise that the cavalrymen often outnumbered the number of horses available to them. Military leaders such as Major A.P. Morrow, General John Pope, and Colonel Edward Hatch begged the Department of War and Congress to provide the funding needed for supplies, equipment, horses, and more troops, only to be met with bureaucratic red tape and a reluctance to spend money on such an isolated region as New Mexico Territory.

This volume covers the year 1879 with some background dating to 1860. Watt's second volume, "*Horses Worn to Mere Shadows:" The Victorio Campaign 1880*, continues the struggle between Apache and Army into 1880.

— Abraham Hoffman

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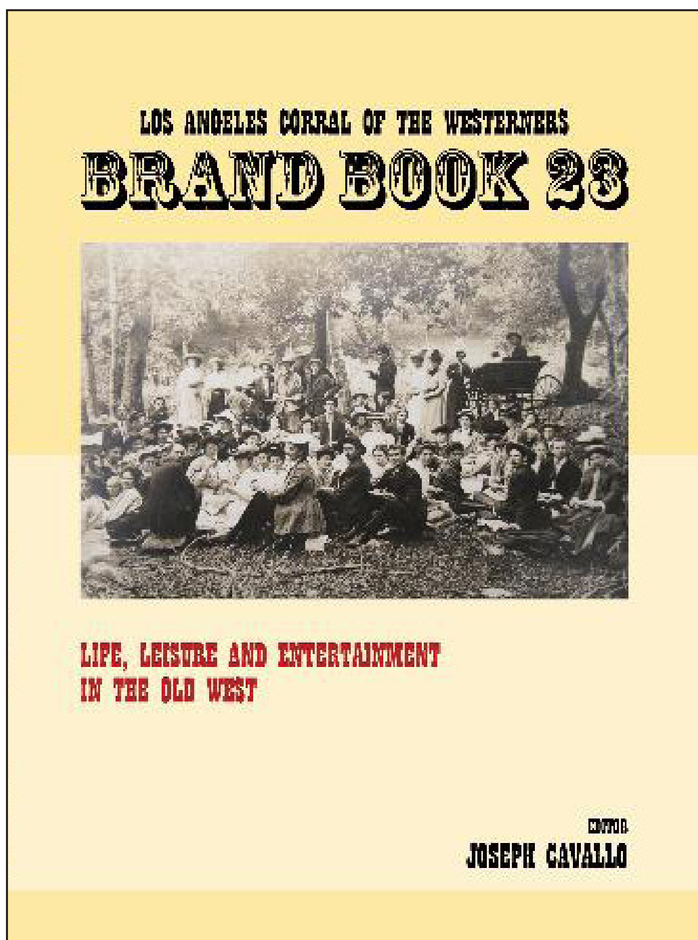

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