Ringers of Bells and Teachers of Civilization: the Work of the California Franciscan Missionaries, 1769-1821

Gilberto Vega

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsrepository.llu.edu/etd

Part of the History Commons

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by TheScholarsRepository@LLU: Digital Archive of Research, Scholarship & Creative Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Loma Linda University Electronic Theses, Dissertations & Projects by an authorized administrator of TheScholarsRepository@LLU: Digital Archive of Research, Scholarship & Creative Works. For more information, please contact scholarsrepository@llu.edu.
Abstract

RINGERS OF BELLS AND TEACHERS OF CIVILIZATION:
THE WORK OF THE CALIFORNIA FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES, 1769-1821
by
Gilberto Vega

In 1769 Spain took active and decisive actions to settle the vast region of her empire known as California. To accomplish the feat she turned to the willing hands of the Franciscan missionaries. The friars willingly answered their call and through their labors assured Spanish hegemony over the region. Both soldiers and friars had participated in the project but the latter's role has usually been underestimated.

The usual mental picture of the Franciscan monks that settled California is one that belittles their greatness. Such views regard the friars as crude religious fanatics with little education and intelligence, whose only pleasure was in baptizing natives. Such a view is inaccurate and does no justice to their composite personality and their mission.

The missionaries were some of Spain's best minds who had a thorough classical education which made them the best educated group of individuals in California. Along with their academic distinction they had acquired the graces and refinements of continental and Spanish culture. When beset by the trials of rigid mission life, their academic
backgrounds proved not to be a hindrance but a means with which they worked out practical solutions. Because of their education, cultural attainments, and practical ways they were the legitimate conveyors of civilization to California.

Through the use of letters, reports, books, and archival documents an accurate vision of the missionaries emerges. The picture is one that reveals their well-rounded personalities. It is hoped that the obscure aspects of the missionaries' personalities that are highlighted in this thesis will erase mistaken images and supplant those with views in harmony with historical reality.
RINGERS OF BELLS AND TEACHERS OF CIVILIZATION:
THE WORK OF THE CALIFORNIA FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES, 1769-1821
by
Gilberto Vega

A Thesis in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts
in History

September 1983
Each person whose signature appears below certifies that this thesis in his opinion is adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree Master of Arts.

Wilfred J. Airey, Chairman
Wilfred J. Airey, Professor of History

Frederick G. Hoyt, Professor of History and Political Science

Juan R. Velez, Assistant Professor of Spanish
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. SAN DIEGO DE ALCALÁ: CALIFORNIA'S FIRST MISSION .............. 1
II. POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS AND THE CALIFORNIA MISSIONS .......... 15
III. LIFE AT THE MISSIONS ............................................. 43
IV. ELITE MISSIONARIES .................................................. 68
V. AMBASSADORS OF CIVILIZATION ...................................... 93
VI. PRACTICAL MISSIONARIES ............................................. 111
VII. CONCLUSION ............................................................ 132

.................................................................

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................................... 133

APPENDIX ................................................................. 143
CHAPTER I
SAN DIEGO DE ALCALA: CALIFORNIA'S FIRST MISSION

The founding of the mission at San Diego was more than the beginning of a mere mission; it was the origin of all the later missions and of the area's permanent settlement. Its history is then more relevant to California than that of any other mission.

In 1765 José de Galvez arrived in Mexico City as the visitador-general of king Carlos III (1759-1788). He had already achieved honors for himself in Spain for his able administration, and now he was appointed to inspect, oversee, and carry out reforms in the viceroyalty of New Spain. His visita proved to be exceedingly successful.

As an effective administrator, Galvez was quick to discover Spain's weak hold of the California region. Moved by such recurring thoughts, every letter he sent to Madrid was filled with pleas for

---

1 The visitador-general was a special deputy of the king who visited his empire to inspect and at times carry out special tasks. He was invested with extraordinary powers, at times exceeding those of the local governments. The period of time of his visit was known as a visita. Walton Bean, California: An Interpretive History, 3d ed., (San Francisco: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), pp. 20-21.

permission to expand the Spanish empire northward into Upper California.\(^3\) After many letters in which the vulnerability of California was persuasively presented to the monarch, he approved immediate settlement.\(^4\) It was a decision taken primarily to secure the region against "the pretension of foreign strangers."\(^5\) Immediately Galvez consulted experts and set about organizing the expedition. The Franciscans who were in charge of the Baja California missions were asked to lead the spiritual conquest, and Junípero Serra was designated as their leader.\(^6\)

The expedition would be divided into four divisions, two by sea, and two by land. They were to start separately but join at the port of San Diego, from where they were to settle Monterey. The reason for the divisions was to obtain a practical knowledge of both routes and to lessen the chances of failure.\(^7\)

---


\(^6\) Serra was born on the island of Palma de Mallorca, Spain (1713), and became a Franciscan in 1730. After a teaching career on the island he sailed for Mexico in 1749. At the time of his appointment he had had eighteen years of mission work experience. Francisco Palou, \textit{The Founding of the First California Missions} (San Francisco: Nueva California Press, 1934), pp. 121-124.

preparations the first sea division of the "sacred expedition" left La Paz, Baja California, on January 9, 1769. In a moving ceremony before departure the king's overseer reminded them that they were going to plant the cross of Christianity among the heathen and charged all to maintain peace and union.

Following the speech, everyone boarded the San Carlos and the flag, crew, and ship were blessed by Serra. Five weeks later the San Antonio sailed with the second arm of the expedition. Although this vessel departed more than a month after the flag-ship San Carlos, it was the first one to reach San Diego on April 11, 1769. The San Carlos had met contrary winds and was driven 480 miles north of its destination. The ship's supply of fresh water ran out, and it was forced to make an unsafe landing at the island of Cedros to resupply itself. Besides that, the men became sick and the long voyage drained their remaining strength. After orientating the ship, they were able to steer it into the haven of San Diego Bay on April 29, 110 days after leaving La Paz and two days before the San Antonio was due to leave for Monterey. Everyone on board had suffered from scurvy; two had died, and only four crew members were well enough to work the ship. The San Antonio

---

8 Expedición Santa was the official term used to designate the expedition.


10 Palou, California Missions, p. 47.

11 Constanso, Portolá Expedition, p. 84.
had not arrived there without difficulties either; half of its crew had scurvy and two had died from it.

The first thing done was search for a source of fresh water. Guided by the Indians, the Europeans were able to find the needed water supply. They also created a temporary hospital for all the sick who were so numerous that medicines ran out. To remedy the difficult situation the doctor went about collecting herbs "with a thousand anxieties," to use them as medication. The nights were cold and the days were hot, which made the sick suffer even more with "two or three of them dying every day."\textsuperscript{12}

Meanwhile the land divisions had been equipped and had left for Upper California. The first land expedition left March 24 commanded by Captain Fernando Javier Rivera y Moncada. The company was composed of twenty-five seasoned soldiers known as "leather jackets," three muleteers, and a company of Christianized Indians armed with bows and arrow. Friar Juan Crespi was their chaplain and diarist. The journey to San Diego was uneventful although very demanding physically. After fifty days of rigorous travel the third phase of the "sacred expedition" arrived at its destination. The date was May 14, when they beheld the anchored ships and signs of a settlement on the shore of San Diego.\textsuperscript{13}

Since the crews of both ships had become sick, the prevailing

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., p. 87.

\textsuperscript{13} Palou, California Missions, p. 50.
feeling was one of gloom. In a letter written by Crespi he described what they had found: "On land we found a general hospital erected for the crews of both vessels, and for the twenty-five Catalan volunteers soldiers of the San Carlos. Up to the present twenty-three persons have died, most of them sailors including two of the said soldiers." The friar was pessimistic about the future of the others, since most of them were suffering from scurvy and few were able to stay on their feet. He added that only "by a miracle will those most affected be able to escape with their lives." 14 Rivera took immediate actions to aid the sick and bolster morale. The camp was moved further from the shore and fortified. 15 The sick and the healthy were placed in separate tents, and both groups were kept apart by exercising strict military discipline. 16 In doing that Rivera may have prevented more sickness and loss of morale. Since supplies and men were low in number, the San Antonio was sent to La Paz to bring back some of both. In the meantime the officers, monks, and soldiers waited and cared for the sick. 17

The last phase of the expedition, which included the commander-

14 Juan Crespi to Juan Andres, 22 June 1769, Ibid., p. 52.


17 Bancroft, History of California, 1:134.
in-chief Gaspar de Portolá and Serra, left Baja on May 15, and arrived at San Diego on July 1, 1769. The "sacred expedition" had reached the promised land; the settlement of California was about to begin. A thanksgiving service in honor of St. Joseph was held the next day. A total of 126 persons were present, seventy-eight Spaniards and forty-eight Christian Indians.

In a letter written by Serra two days after his arrival he revealed that the crew of the San Antonio had died except for the cook and one sailor, while eight crewman of the San Carlos had fallen to scurvy. Undeterred by the situation, Portolá rounded up a company of men and on July 14 went north to locate Monterey. The Franciscans were pleased with their new environment but mindful of their calling; two days after the commander's departure Serra took it upon himself to found the mission that had brought him to Upper California. A cross was raised on the spot where the chapel was to stand and a high mass was sung followed by a homily

---

18 Serra's desire to work for the California natives was shown when he first entered California; he kissed the ground and thanked the king for allowing him to work for its pagans. Junípero Serra, Diary of Fra Junípero Serra, O.F.M. (North Providence, R.I.: Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, 1936), p. 24.


20 Junípero Serra to Francisco Palou, 3 July 1769, in Palou, California Missions, p. 66.

21 Constanso, Portolá Expedition, p. 89.
and the Te Deum, as muskets were fired. On the same day the stronger men helped in building a few huts and surrounded them by a stockade. The name of the first mission was San Diego de Alcalá. It was located on a hill that stood very close to the beach.

The Indian souls that the fathers sought had been approaching the camp but only with the intention of plundering it. The bedding of the sick soldiers was taken, and once they were found cutting the ships' sails. When they discovered that what they wanted could not be stolen, the natives attacked. On August 13 and 15 they stormed camp, killing Serra's personal servant and injuring a friar. The Spanish firepower easily repelled the assault but it also frightened away the potential converts.

Throughout this time the scurvy-stricken sailors and soldiers were nursed back to health. Some recovered, but many died, so that by the time Portolá returned a total of fifty had died.

22 The Te Deum is the Roman Catholic official hymn of praise to God, sung on all solemn and festive occasions. New Catholic Encyclopedia, s.v. "Te Deum Laudamus."

23 San Diego de Alcalá was an Andalusian Franciscan who lived from 1400 to 1463, and was canonized in 1588 for his pious life and the miracles wrought through him before and after his death. Bancroft, History of California, 1:137.


25 Palou, California Missions, p. 86.

The governor's expedition had been a fiasco and the dismal conditions of the camp were not encouraging. Immediately he had all sustenance surveyed and rationed, while Rivera was sent to Baja California for more supplies. However, by early March supplies had so dwindled that the commander-in-chief decided that if no aid arrived by March 19, the feast day of St. Joseph, patron of the expedition, San Diego would be abandoned. Father Serra, heart-broken at the prospects of having to leave his beloved infant mission, determined that he would celebrate a novena, nine days of public prayer, in honor of the saint. The novena was held and it culminated with a high mass on the 19th, just as everything was packed for departure on the next day. But in the last daylight hours of that day, the eyes that had for so long searched the Pacific for a ship beheld the white sails of one on the horizon. Although the craft did not stop at San Diego, everyone was relieved and felt that California had been saved.

The sails were those of the San Antonio which had returned to La Paz in July of the previous year and now was sailing to Monterey

27 Portolá's expedition had lasted six months and ten days (July 14, 1769-January 24, 1770). They suffered from heat, cold, thirst, and hunger, having had to kill some of their mules to keep themselves alive. Moreover, they had reached Monterey but had failed to recognize it, which led to Serra's greeting: "You come from Rome without having seen the Pope," José Porrúa Turanzas, ed., Noticias y Documentos Acoerca de las Californias: 1764-1795 (Madrid: Colección Chimalistac, 1959), p. 75. Fernando Boneu Companys, Documentos Secretos de la Expedición de Portolá a California: Juntas de Guerra (Lerida, Sp.: Gráficas Larrosa 1973), p. 162.

assuming that Portolá's men were there. It did not stop at San Diego assuming that the San José had furnished that outpost with supplies. Nevertheless, it ran out of fresh water and anchored by Santa Barbara where the natives reported that the Spaniards had returned south riding their horses, which they acted out by putting themselves in like posture upon the barrels which the mariners put ashore. The captain, faithful to his orders, was determined to go north but a loss of one of the ship's anchors forced him to go by San Diego to borrow one from the San Carlos. On March 23 the vessel, which did not know that it was just on time to save the troubled colony, sailed into the bay.

San Diego mission had been saved but full success was still distant. By the first anniversary of the arrival of the Spaniards (April 1770) no Indians had been baptized. If the spiritual conquest was difficult, on the physical side there was progress. In 1771 the new Governor, Pedro Fages, visited the compound and wrote: "I find that this mission has made a good beginning as regards temporary buildings and cultivation." Baptisms also began so that by 1772 there were fifty-two neophytes. Agriculturally, however, the mission

29 The San José was a supply ship that was sent to San Diego in mid 1769, but was lost at sea.

30 Constanso, Portolá Expedition, p. 97.


was not successful for lack of fresh water for irrigation. Another obstacle to growth was the immoral behavior of the soldiers who harassed and assaulted native women, thus chasing away potential converts.

In August 1774, a remarkable change took place for the mission: it was relocated six miles into the interior. The first indication of a desire for such a move was voiced by Father Jayme in 1773. His objections to the original site were two: scarcity of water and the proximity of the presidio with its negative influence on the women. The new site instilled the missionaries with zeal. By December there was a newly-built church, living quarters, granary, stable, smithshop, corral, and huts for the neophytes. By the middle of 1775 their labors began to produce impressive results with more than 276 baptisms between July and October. Progress was going extremely well and the future looked even better. But unforeseen circumstances were to thwart their advances. Two Christian Indians fled from the mission and visited the many nearby villages, warning them that the brown-robed strangers were to baptize everyone of them. It was time to drive the new comers back to their ships, the apostates told listening

---


35 Presidios were barracks built near the missions and staffed with soldiers whose responsibility was to provide protection for the mission.

36 Engelhardt, San Diego, pp. 54-56.

37 Ibid., pp. 56-58.
The result was that nearly one thousand Indians united to exterminate the mission and kill the soldiers. The night of November 4, 1775, was chosen for the attack. About one o'clock in the morning, the church and other buildings were looted quietly as everyone slept. When the soldiers at the mission woke up, the surrounding buildings were on fire. Only eleven Spaniards were in the compound that night. All rushed to join the soldiers at their barracks except Father Jayme who turned to the invaders and greeted them with his usual salute "Love God, my children." The entire night was spent in valiant defense of their lives, moving from shelter to shelter as the fire pursued them. By dawn a corporal was the only one firing while the others loaded muskets for him. With the coming of day the invaders fled to the mountains. A search was begun for Father Jayme and his dead body was found mutilated beyond recognition.

The physical structures of the mission were totally devastated. An eyewitness of the disaster wrote: "The mission had been reduced to ashes so that the Fathers were entirely destitute, their books,


39 The eleven were: four soldiers, two priests (Jayme and Fuster), two boys, and three men (a blacksmith and two carpenters). George Wharton James, The Old Franciscan Missions of California (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1913), p. 88.

40 The expression *amor a Dios* was the usual greeting in early California, introduced into the land by the Franciscan missionaries. Jayme, Letter, p. 49.

41 Bancroft, History of California, 1:252.
manuscripts, etc. having been all destroyed in the fire." However, their noble spirits were not broken and rebuilding was begun immediately. Sailors and soldiers provided the manpower, and by 1777 the mission was nearly totally restored. Prosperity continued to be slow but steady, so that by 1783 there were 740 neophytes under the monks' care.

Having glanced at the first years of the mission's history one can find sufficient evidence to corroborate that San Diego de Alcalá was indeed California's first mission. Chronologically it was the first one founded, and that gave it a unique status. It was the beginning point for many of the explorations that set out to settle California. The Portolá expeditions of 1769 and 1770 both originated at San Diego. If that first outpost had failed, the rest of the plan to settle the region would have been jeopardized. If that first settlement had failed, and had the Spaniards been forced to retreat, one can assume that many years would have gone by before there would have been another attempt at settlement. That period would have allowed the Russians time to establish a firm control in the area, and the history of California might have been different.

The location of the mission also aided in the settlement of the state. San Diego was the southernmost of all the missions


43 Engelhardt, Franciscans, p. 235.
and became a natural resting place for travelers between New California and Old California.

Since San Diego was the first mission founded, it experienced difficulties that later ones did not. It was the costliest outpost in terms of lives lost in its founding. It experienced unusual Indian resistance. In one fierce attack Father Jayme was killed, becoming the first martyr in California history.

Due to its primacy San Diego often helped other missionary establishments in their beginnings. When San Juan Capistrano was founded (1775) the San Diego fathers donated four colts and two sacks of wool; they also loaned expert Indians to assist the blacksmith. When San Gabriel began (1771), San Diego gave salt, brown sugar, twenty pounds of iron for plows, and two trained Indians to work with the blacksmith.⁴⁴

In the area of agriculture the mission also had a preeminent role. The olive, peach, and pear trees were brought to San Diego and from there spread to the rest of the state.⁴⁵ San Diego was also one of the first California missions where wine was made.⁴⁶

From the humble beginnings of the mission the number grew until

---

⁴⁴ Engelhardt, San Diego, p. 112.


there were twenty-one establishments. Together they brought Christianity, culture, and civilization to the new land. Through them Spain was able to conquer California with minimum expenses.

All of those feats had their origin at the mission of San Diego. Therefore, when the Franciscan outpost of San Diego was founded, its founding was more than that of one mission, it was the start of all twenty-one religious settlements, and it was the beginning of the conquest of California. San Diego de Alcalá is California's first mission par excellence, because through its founding California was also founded.
CHAPTER II
POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS AND THE CALIFORNIA MISSIONS

The California missions were primarily founded for political reasons by the Spanish government and consequently only indirectly for the salvation of the Indians' souls.

The Spain of the 1760's was a nation in political and economic decline. The wealth of her New World possessions had been gradually decreasing while European politics demanded that she still play a dominant role in continental affairs. Madrid was able to recognize its waning wealth and under such circumstances the value of her American colonies was acknowledged, for it was her extensive control of both American continents that gave her clout and respect at the negotiating table. When reports were circulated that Russia was enviously eyeing California, Spain was ready to assert its claim-by-discovery of that territory. The best way that could be reinforced would be by sending an expedition that would establish a permanent Spanish settlement on the treasured land.

A "sacred expedition" left lower California in 1769 and was able to begin the actual settlement of Upper California by founding San Diego mission in the same year. The Iberians were achieving what they wanted since then they could also claim the ownership of New California by their settlement.
The fact that the colonization of Alta California was due to the political atmosphere of the day was evident in the sudden Spanish expansion into the area. The explorations by Cabrillo in 1542 had provided Spain with knowledge and a claim to California. However, nothing serious for its settlement was done till 1769, two centuries later. Since there was fear of foreign encroachment, the Spaniards did not simply settle the southern part and allow for gradual migration to fill up the region. No, due to the Russian menace, Spain wanted to assure herself all the territory. The orders of the "sacred expedition" were to reach Monterey and there establish a mission and a presidio. Setting up those establishments at Monterey, 450 miles from San Diego, was not logistically sound but it was politically wise.

On June 3, 1770, Monterey mission and presidio were founded. After the religious ceremonies, Gaspar de Portolá, commander of the expedition, took formal possession of the country for Spain. When news of this event reached Mexico City the Spanish government officials were exceedingly satisfied. It was so significant to them that on August 10, the day the news reached the city, all the churches proclaimed it by ringing their bells. A solemn mass of thanksgiving was said which was attended by the leading government dignitaries of the city. Furthermore, six days later the news was spread throughout the viceroyalty of New


Spain by an official proclamation. 3

The mission founded at Monterey was named San Carlos de Borromeo. Since there was not enough water near the presidio Father Serra found another location in the valley of the Carmel River. Although Serra was the president of all the Upper California missions it was not in his power to relocate the mission. Relocation was only approved by the viceroy. After receiving the official approval for relocation, it was moved to a delightful spot upon a hill in sight of a broad plain through which the river ran. 4 A visitor years later gave us this description: "the mission buildings are situated on the north side of the valley near the sea. They stand on elevated ground, which overlooks the bay and seven or eight miles of the vale." 5 When a group of Indians approached the establishment Fathers Junipero Serra and Juan Crespi worked for their conversion. 6 The food supply soon dwindled and Governor Pedro Fages sent an expedition to the mountains to hunt for bears. During their three-month raid they killed so many of the beasts that they were able to send twenty-five pack mules with


six thousand pounds of bear meat to Monterey. Slowly the Indians were won over by the missionaries so that by the end of 1773 there were more converts at San Carlos than at any other mission. By 1772 the agricultural enterprises were already meeting the needs for in that year six bushels of wheat were harvested. A church building was completed by 1774, and by the end of that year the total number of baptisms had been 266. Another indication of progress at the church and presidio was that in 1779 the king issued an order that, weather permitting, all Manila galleons were to stop at Monterey or be subject to a fine. It was at San Carlos that Serra died (1784) and was buried next to Father Crespi.

On November 12, 1770, Viceroy Teodoro de Croix wrote to Serra telling him that more missionaries were being sent to California so that the work "so pleasing to God and so beneficial to the state" would forge ahead. The official added that he wanted four new missions to be established along the coast between San Diego and Monterey. The

7 Engelhardt, San Carlos, p. 35.


10 James, Franciscan Missions, p. 97.

11 Engelhardt, San Carlos, pp. 95-105.

same functionary also wrote to Governor Fages on the same day and instructed him to explore by land or sea as soon as possible the port of San Francisco. In union with Serra he was to establish a mission there soon "so that so important a place will not be exposed to foreign occupation." 13

With instructions so specific, plans were soon made for the founding of the next mission. On July 14, 1771, Serra travelled south from San Carlos and founded San Antonio de Padua. Initially it was located near the banks of a river with the same name but after a year and a half the lack of water forced the relocation to another stream about 1.5 miles from the old site. By 1773 corn had been harvested. 14 Father Francisco Palau described the weather there as being extremely hot and cold so that a nearby stream often froze. 15 Actually it was located between the two temperate zones of California and the oranges and palm trees that beautified the compound were the last to be found on the way north. 16 Within two years there had been 158 converts. Conversions were going so well that many of the nearby pagans were angered and on August 1774 attacked the outpost and wounded friendly

13 Marquiz de Croiz to Pedro Fages, 12 November 1770, Ibid, p. 189.

14 Pedro Fages, A Historical, Political and Natural Description of California by Pedro Fages, Soldier of Spain (Ramona, CA.: Ballena Press, 1972), pp. 56, 57.

15 Palou, Life, p. 113.

Indians. Governor Fernando Rivera sent troops and the revolt was controlled, and the leaders flogged. In 1779 a church and sacristy were completed and in 1824 a deep well was built. In the days of its glory San Antonio was in many ways the most famous of all the missions. The Indian converts were more numerous than those of all the other missions combined. The stables of the church became well-known for the swift and tough horses that were bred there.

The next mission founded was in the south of the territory. In August 1771 soldiers and missionaries left San Diego and in September 11, 1771, on the banks of the San Gabriel River founded a mission by the same name. Its location was in a fertile plain with abundant water so that by its second year it produced 195 bushels of corn and beans. The soldiers' atrocities to the natives kept them away from the compound so that after two years of labors the friars only had seventy-three baptisms. Governor Fages observed that the natives there were more combative than others. The Governor's observation in 1773 proved accurate for an Indian revolt occurred in 1777-78.

17 Ibid., p. 18.
18 Ibid., pp. 22, 24.
20 James, Franciscan Missions, pp. 109, 110.
21 Fages, California, p. 20.
Further trouble arose in 1785 when a woman emerged among the converts and urged a rebellion in the missions and the assassination of the missionaries. By 1791 San Gabriel was able to aid in the founding of other missions. Growth continued and by 1804 it reported ten rooms for activities and industries, and three years later it was designated as the retreat house for the Franciscans of the district. In 1814 a hospital was finished with four apartments for the treatment of sickness. San Gabriel was also the gathering center for a group of individuals who in 1781 set out to found the pueblo of Los Angeles. The mission grew in spiritual and material conquest so that it came to be known as the "pride of the missions." Because of its abundant agricultural production it was also referred to as the "mother of agriculture in California," and the most productive of all the missions.

The next mission established, San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, was founded on September 1, 1772, by Serra. Its location was between San Antonio and San Gabriel. The chosen site was approved by Fages for


23 Ibid., pp. 74, 75, 94.


it had abundant water and excellent fields. The natives were not hostile and Palou wrote that they were glad to have the Spaniards amongst them for they had killed so many of the bears that constantly attacked them. However, that did not turn them into easy converts. On the contrary, in 1776 the savages shot fiery arrows unto the reed roof of the compound and burned it. During the next ten years the missions was twice set on fire by the natives. Recognizing their desperate situation, one of the friars experimented with roof tiles. He was successful and soon all the missions were thus roofed. Even as late as 1794 there was talk of a revolt but the quick deportation of fifteen of the twenty leaders to Monterey put an end to it. In that same year the mission reached its highest population of converts: 946, and it had 6,500 cattle and horses and 6,150 sheep.

Since 1769 Spain had been aware of the extensive bay of San Francisco and had urged its exploration. When Fages arrived there (1772) he was thoroughly impressed for he could see entire islands and whales within the bay. Spain was eager to establish a mission in such a strategic bay and so in 1773 Viceroy Antoni Maria de Bucareli ordered Governor Rivera to cooperate with Serra to

26 Fages, California, pp. 42, 43.
27 Palou, Life, p. 128.
28 James, Franciscan Missions, p. 119.
29 Fages, California, p. 71.
It meant so much for the empire to secure the port that in order to speed up the settlement of San Francisco, Juan Bautista de Anza was commissioned to lead a group of settlers from Sonora to the bay. Due to Rivera's lethargy the mission and presidio were not founded till October 9, 1776. The church was named in honor of San Francisco de Asís. A year went by and significant contacts with the inhabitants were not made. However, the mere fact that a mission was found at Spain's northernmost frontier was gratifying to Serra who full of emotions wrote: "Thanks be to God that now our Father St. Francis with the holy cross of the procession of missions has reached the last limit of the California continent. To go further he must have boats."  

San Juan Capistrano, in the south, was the next establishment, founded (November 1, 1776). Its location was halfway between San Gabriel and San Diego. The Viceroy had already previously selected the names for the new missions and so the new outpost was given the name of San Juan Capistrano. Barely three weeks after the mission's founding a local Indian chief vehemently protested the assault of his wife by a soldier. The guards that were stationed at the missions were frequently

30 Bancroft, History of California, 1:231.
31 Ibid., pp. 257-259.
32 Ibid., p. 297.
convicts who were condemned to live in California and as a result their behavior was often damaging to the friars' labors.

Palou observed that the area was covered with wild grapevines. Consequently vines from Baja California were brought and the mission may have had the earliest production of wine in any of the Franciscan outposts.\textsuperscript{34} Wine remained very much part of the mission's lifestyle; for as late as the 1820's, an American trapper described the missionary there as "indulging his love of wine."\textsuperscript{35}

The first building erected was the chapel, since in all missions it was the center of spiritual and daily activities. By 1784, 566 natives had been baptized, 126 marriages had been blessed while 99 burials had been conducted. The grain harvest was 600 bushels of wheat, 1,430 of corn, and 60 of beans.\textsuperscript{36} To accompany its material wealth, a new church was begun in 1797. The building was to be in the shape of a cross and to surpass every other ecclesiastical structure in New California. Christianized natives quarried the stone from the adjacent hills and the entire edifice was of stone except for the doors and windows. It took nine years to construct. On the festive day of dedication (1806) Governor José Joaquin de Arrillaga and troops from the presidios of San Diego and Santa Barbara were invited to take part in celebrating the

\textsuperscript{34}Palou, \textit{Life}, p. 119.


\textsuperscript{36}Engelhardt, \textit{San Juan Capistrano}, pp. 24, 26.
festivities. 37 Unfortunately the majestic church was destroyed in the earthquake of 1812 which also killed thirty-nine worshippers. 38

San Juan Capistrano was called "the jewel of the missions" for many obvious reasons. Although its location was inland, its white plastered walls were visible from the ocean. An inlet allowed ships to anchor there for mission cargo. 39 Another charming characteristic was recorded by Robinson after his visit in 1831: "An alameda, or shaded walk, of some length, gave access to the establishment, in each side of which were gardens and cultivated fields." 40

The next mission that the Spanish government approved to be established was to fill the void between San Francisco and Monterey. Santa Clara was founded January 12, 1777. The physical location was one that Palou praised as perhaps the best in all the California territory. 41 His optimism did not allow him to foresee some of the hardships that the environment would soon provide. The natives, who turned out thievish, stole the Spaniards' mules and killed them for food. 42 By the end of the first year there had been sixty-seven


38 Engelhardt, San Juan Capistrano, p. 54.


41 Palou, Life, p. 197.

baptisms. With the passing of time its converts grew to make it one of the most populous. When Vancouver visited the establishment in 1792 he observed that twenty-four oxen were killed every Saturday for mission consumption. The report of 1800 revealed a population of 1,247 and 5,000 cattle and horses.

On March 31, 1782, the last mission founded by Serra came into existence. The President himself preached the sermon of dedication for San Buenaventura. It stood on the coast overlooking the south end of the Santa Barbara channel. Viceroy Bucareli had instructed that a presidio and three missions were to be established: "one towards the north of the channel which was to be dedicated to the Immaculate Conception; one towards the south, dedicated to San Buenaventura, and a third in the center, dedicated to Santa Barbara." Soon an aqueduct bringing water from a nearby stream to the compound was built. The next twenty years were fruitful ones. The records of 1800 indicate the largest Indian population in its history; 1,297 souls.

In 1784 Serra, the patriarch of the California missions, died. Father Fermín Francisco de Lasuen, the new president, was a man of wise leadership though he lacked the charisma and fervor that Serra

44 James, Franciscan Missions, pp. 142-144.
45 Quoted in Ibid., p. 151.
46 Palou, Life, p. 222.
47 Bancroft, History of California, 2:122.
possessed. In order that mission advancement would not stagnate the Viceroy ordered six friars to be sent to Upper California in 1786.\textsuperscript{48} The coming of these enabled Lasuen to establish the first of his missions on December 4, 1786. The men from the nearby presidio were used to raise the buildings of Santa Barbara.\textsuperscript{49} The mission stood on the summit of a hill and later became a landmark for ships.\textsuperscript{50} By the end of four weeks the first baptism was conducted although it was celebrated at the presidio for lack of proper mission buildings. By end of its second year the new mission reported 188 baptisms and a population of 438 in 1790. The highest population ever was in 1803 when 1,792 converts were housed at the compound.\textsuperscript{51} In 1802-03 vats for tanning hides were built of bricks and mortar. A dam with a depth of seven feet was built in 1806-07. To bring the water to the outpost pieces of stone were chiseled so that when in place and cemented they formed an aqueduct with conduits ten inches in width.\textsuperscript{52} Next to the fountain fed by the aqueduct there was a basin for washing clothes, and as one visitor observed it was "the theater of battling, splashing, laughing and scolding ..."\textsuperscript{53} The earthquake of 1812 destroyed the

\textsuperscript{48} Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries, 2:433.

\textsuperscript{49} Walter Hawley, The Early Days of Santa Barbara, California (Santa Barbara, CA.: The Schauer Printing Studio, 1920), p. 48.

\textsuperscript{50} Dana, Two Years, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{51} Bancroft, History of California, 2:121.

\textsuperscript{52} Hawley, Santa Barbara, p. 61.

\textsuperscript{53} Farnham, Days of California, p. 109.
church but it was rebuilt with sandstone and mortar with six-feet thick walls and heavy buttresses, which made it the strongest built church of all the missions.\textsuperscript{54} With the settlement at Santa Barbara a vital post had been rooted at the middle of the long California coast that Spain proposed to retain.

The third central mission founded was La Purísima Concepción. As early as 1783 Fages had recommended a site which his superiors approved and urged him to proceed. On December 8, 1787, Lasuen preached the dedicatory sermon and another mission was added to the chain. By the end of 1790, 234 Christianized natives were at La Purísima, and the crops yielded 1,700 bushels.\textsuperscript{55} In the year 1810 its livestock numbered 20,000. One of its missionaries, Father Mariano Payeras, translated the catechism and manual of confession into the native dialect.\textsuperscript{56}

Attention was next given to filling the void between Monterey and San Francisco, for there was only one mission in that area (Santa Clara de Asis). On September 25, 1791, Lasuen led the ceremonies that founded Santa Cruz. In the year 1796, 523 natives lived at the mission which was its highest population ever. As in all missions the natives were taught to till the land and the results were astounding. In 1797 the government established the pueblo of Branciforte near the mission. The townspeople, who were mostly criminals condemned to live in California, soon became a corruptive influence on the neophytes.

\textsuperscript{54} Bancroft, History of California, 2:364-365.

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 1:424, 425.

\textsuperscript{56} James, Franciscan Missions, p. 170.
The friars petitioned to have the pueblo or mission removed but both requests were denied. 57

Another mission was founded in 1791 north of Santa Barbara between Monterey and San Antonio. October 9 was the founding date for Nuestra Señora de la Soledad (Our Lady of Solitude). The name accurately described its isolation. When Robinson visited the area he wrote that it was the "gloomiest, bleakest, and most abject-looking spot in all California." 58 In spite of its unattractive location the natives did accept the religion of the Spaniards and by 1805, 727 were living at the mission. Though the Indians declined after 1810, the mission's livestock grew and in 1821 they numbered 16,000. 59 In industries, however, the outpost never attained the status of the sister churches; for as Archibald tells us, weaving, tanning, and leather work were pursued at all the missions except Soledad. 60

There was a lapse of six years till the next mission was founded. Lasuen wanted the new establishments to be between the old missions to fill the gaps and make them all more equidistant. In 1794 permission was granted by Governor Diego de Borica to search for new potential sites.

57 Bancroft, History of California, 1:564-572.

58 Robinson, California, p. 51.

59 James, Franciscan Missions, p. 182.

After extensive explorations Lasuen presented to the Governor the suggested future sites. Borica forwarded them to Mexico City so that the Viceroy would approve them. Borica urged his superiors to accept the new sites for there would be no added expenses; and, in time, as the Indians were civilized money would be saved by decreasing the number of the military. The Viceroy approved the sites and urged Borica to see that the proposed five missions were soon established. 61

The first mission to be founded under the new proposal was San José de Guadalupe, placed between Santa Clara and Santa Cruz. It was founded June 11, 1797, and by 1800 there were 286 coverts. 62 By 1820 the population had increased to 1,754 along with 6,859 large animals, 859 horses, and 12,000 sheep. 63 In its glory San José was the most successful mission enterprise in the north.

The area between Monterey and Santa Cruz was chosen for the new mission, San Juan Bautista. The name had been selected by the Viceroy and so in June 24, 1797, it joined the sisterhood of missions. 64 Three years later 516 natives were found at the outpost, and the crops yielded 2,700 bushels. The Indians were not easily converted for in 1789 the pagans harassed the converts and destroyed the mission fields. For

61 Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries, 2:490-494.

62 Bancroft, History of California, 1:556.

63 James, Franciscan Missions, p. 188.

64 Bancroft, History of California, 1:557-558.
nearly a month in 1800, a series of earthquakes and aftershocks caused the dwellers to prefer sleeping outside in the mission court.\textsuperscript{65}

San Miguel Arcangel, founded on July 25, 1797, was located half way between Santa Barbara and Monterrey. On the very day of its dedication fifteen children were baptized and by 1800 the total population was 362. The crops for that year amounted to 1,900 bushels. In 1805 forty-seven adobe dwellings were constructed for housing the natives.\textsuperscript{66} The following year a fire consumed 6,000 bushels of wheat and part of the church's roof. As usual in such calamities other missions helped to alleviate the disaster. In 1811 an oven was built for baking tiles and 20,000 were treated for native houses. The following year a tannery was built and a room to prepare dyes for coloring leather.\textsuperscript{67}

Another mission founded in 1797 was located between San Buenaventura and San Gabriel. September 8 was the birthdate for mission San Fernando Rey de España. The sixty-one year old Lasuen led the dedication. On the same day ten infants were baptized and by 1800 there were 282 natives within the compound. Above all San Fernando produced grapes for wine since the fertile soil and temperate climate was ideal for grape cultivation. Often production reached 2,000 gallons a year enabling them to even export some of it to Europe. By 1834 the mission

\textsuperscript{65} Bancroft, \textit{History of California}, 1:559.


\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., pp. 10-13.
had 32,000 grapevines and 1,600 fruit trees. In order to supply itself with water a stone masonry dam was built to impound water until it was released by a floodgate. In 1811 a system of clay pipes were laid out for 1.3 miles which brought water right to the mission fountain. In 1822 a conven to was finished which served the mission in many functions.

The last mission founded as part of Lasuen's strategy was also the last one established during his leadership, the last one of the eighteenth century, and the last one south of Santa Barbara. The new mission was located between San Juan Capistrano and San Diego. San Luis Rey de Francia, though founded late (June 13, 1798), was to become the most populous of the twenty-one missions. The same day that it was established fifty-one infants were baptized, and by the following week seventy-seven had been baptized and twenty-three catechumens were being instructed. By July 1, 6,000 adobe bricks were made. Prosperity abounded at San Luis Rey for in 1810 the population had increased to 1,519 and the mortality rate was the smallest of all the California missions. The all time record of mission population was set in 1826

---


69 Ibid., p. 17.

70 The conven to was a monastery which took twelve years to complete. It was 243 feet in length and fifty wide. It contained over twenty separate rooms including quarters for the two resident priests, guest rooms, a chapel, reception room, kitchen, storehouse, winery and refectory. Ibid., p. 19.

71 Bancroft, History of California, 1:563, 564.
when 2,869 natives lived in the compound. It also had 28,900 sheep and its yearly harvests averaged 12,600 bushels.\textsuperscript{72} It is no wonder that when Pattie visited San Luis Rey (1829) he was impressed: "This is said to be the largest, most flourishing, and every way the most important mission on the coast. For its consumption fifty beeves are killed weekly."\textsuperscript{73}

The coming century was to bring drastic changes to the missions. On June 26, 1803, Lasuen died after thirty years in California. Father Estevan Tapis succeeded him as president, and under his leadership the first mission of the new century was established. Santa Inés was founded on September 17, 1804, and it was located between Santa Barbara and La Purísima Concepción. By 1810 the population was 628 although that included many converts from other missions who had moved there. The same year's record reveals 3,200 cattle, 420 horses and 2,300 sheep.\textsuperscript{74} Santa Inés never became as large as her sister missions but it was noted for its industries. Every branch of industry was taught there and its fine leather and metalwork were noted.\textsuperscript{75}

In 1817 the twentieth mission was established under the leadership of Father Payeras. The decision to found another mission was taken in response to the poor health conditions at San Francisco. The bay

\textsuperscript{72}James, \textit{Franciscan Missions}, pp. 213, 214.

\textsuperscript{73}Pattie, \textit{Personal Narrative}, pp. 275-276.

\textsuperscript{74}Bancroft, \textit{History of California}, 2:28, 29.

\textsuperscript{75}Marie T. Walsh, \textit{The Mission of the Passes: Santa Inés} (Los Angeles: The Times-Mirror Press, 1930), pp. 15, 16.
mission proved inhospitable to the native converts so that the mortality rate was alarming to civil and religious authorities. It was then that Governor Pablo Vicente de Sola suggested that a new location in the north side of the bay be found. On December 14, 1817, with 140 natives from San Francisco, San Rafael Arcangel was founded, although it was not intended to be an independent mission, but part of San Francisco. By the end of 1820 the population had increased to 590.76

In 1818 a long building was erected and subdivided into all the necessary apartments of a small mission. The Indians that had gone there recovered promptly and other missions began to send their ailing converts to San Rafael.77

The last mission established was founded after strenuous discussions. Since the weather at San Francisco had not been healthy for the natives, Governor José Dario Arguello suggested that the entire mission be relocated at Sonoma, though still retaining San Rafael as an asistencia.78 The Franciscan College in Mexico rejected the proposal for they did not want to have any of the missions relocated or suppressed. They did accept that a new mission be established at Sonoma. Work began on July 4, 1823, and the name given was San Francisco de Solano. No other mission had caused so much controversy prior to


78 Asistencias were field chapels that were erected by the local missions to provide spiritual sustenance to those too far from the mission churches to attend daily (e.g., shepherd).
In addition to being the last founded, it was also the northernmost, and the only one founded after Mexico's independence. On April 4, 1824, the church was formally dedicated. At that time it already had a garden with nearly 300 fruit trees and 3,000 grape vines. By the end of 1824 there were 693 Christianized Indians at the mission though nearly all came from other institutions since only ninety-six natives had been baptized there.\(^80\) In all aspects the last of the missions did not inherit the bountiful prosperity of its older sisters.

In 1823 the territorial extension of the Franciscan missionary endeavors came to their end. For fifty-four years they had been expanding northward and bringing with them the essentials of civilization. From San Diego to Sonoma, a distance of six hundred miles, they had dotted the countryside with what one writer has called the "most just, humane, and equitable system ever devised for an aboriginal people."\(^81\) The missions were an effective way for the church to spread the gospel and bring thousands of destitute Indians into the fold of salvation. Besides the benefits to their souls, temporal advantages were provided too, from agriculture to music. The growth of stock during 1785-1795 demonstrates the point: in those ten years cattle increased 371%, sheep


\(^80\) Ibid., pp. 505, 506.

\(^81\) Weber, *San Fernando*, p. 3.
The result was that by 1800 there were 88,000 sheep, 74,000 cattle, 24,000 horses and 1,000 mules, a total of 187,000 head of stock. Results as marvelous as these have led many writers to speak as McGroarty who said: "Within the sheltering walls of those vast establishments there were as many as thirty thousand Christianized Indians at one time, leading wholesome Christian lives, but following, as well, all the occupations of artisans known in those days." 

That the Franciscans were extremely earnest in their zeal to convert savages into Christians can not be denied. The decision by Serra of coming to the crude new world leaving behind the comforts and status of an academic life serve as an example. In New Spain the friars had accomplished much after being asked to come there by Hernan Cortés. Spain had been awakened to realize that California was threatened by foreign intrusions, and it turned to the faithful Franciscans so that they might win over the souls of the Indians for

---

83 Richman, California, p. 452, Note 40.
84 McGroarty, California, p. 96.
85 Palou, Life, p. 6.
86 At one time in Mexico when another religious order took over the mission that the Franciscans had begun, the Indians hid all the church ornaments and thus forbid the new order to minister to them. Soon thereafter the Franciscans were recalled and the natives rejoiced. José G. Navarro, Los Franciscanos en la Conquista y Colonización de América (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica, 1955), pp. 63, 84.
their church, and the soil of California for their king. Since the Spanish government had traditionally acted as an agent for the dissemination of the faith, the friars as subjects of the king were pleased to thus serve both pope and king. Due to that intimate relation between church and state the missionary saw it as his duty, in addition to converting the Indians, to turn them into desirable subjects of the king, by initiating them into the rudiments of civilized society. "Hence, the missions were designed to be not only Christian seminaries; but, in addition," in the words of Herbert E. Bolton, "were outposts for the control and training schools for the civilizing of the frontier." 87

In the eyes of the Spanish bureaucrats the mission had the function of securing land for the crown. In fact, the government officials realized that, when missions were used in colonizing, the probability of success was greater and the antagonism with the natives lessened. In counsel from Viceroy Bucareli to the King the idea was bluntly expressed: "... the acquisitions which have been made slowly by means of the missionaries have always resulted better than those secured by force of arms." 88 However, in the 1760's when Spain had to deter the Russians, she was in economic difficulties. But, by turning to the mission system, the enterprise could be carried out in a way that would hardly affect the royal treasury, and then the land would be Spanish, the Indians converted, civilized, and utilized. Thus the

88 Quoted in Richman, California, pp. 31, 381, Note 1.
missionaries were used by Spain as a positive, vital part of their political and civilizing agents, and as such were essential to the crown's pioneering system. 89

With the conversion of the Indians the missions played a unique role on the frontier. They eliminated the savages as a liability and transformed them into an asset to the province and country. The royal administrators realized that only by that method could they settle and control the vast areas of California. 90 From the Spanish point of view everything indicated the suitability of the mission as the spearhead of northern advance. One historian has declared: "Indians in large numbers were known to inhabit northern California; congregating them into missions would not only provide for their conversion into Christianity but would also eventually, it was hoped, turn them into loyal subjects of the king." 91 The missions were economical to establish and once founded became self-sustaining. Besides, the Spanish Empire was so immense that Spanish colonists could not be secured for every frontier and thus the missions provided an avenue for settlement.

The Spanish bureaucrats also understood that the missionaries were able to counteract foreign influence among the natives and turn their loyalty to Spain. The policy had been effective in Florida where, after countless military raids to subjugate the natives, the missionaries


were able to win their allegiance to Spain. It was for this reason that the government was so willing to furnish the missionaries with soldiers at each mission, to protect the Franciscans in the "greater" work they were doing of "reducing" the Indians. It is then easier to understand why permission to found new missions was given at councils of defense and finance.

To the Spaniards in America the mere lust, or vain glory of conquest in itself without the inducement of profits, had little appeal. Apparently there was nothing in Upper California that made it worth the trouble. That the government was operating on that principle is obvious from the fact that ever since the exploratory expedition by Sebastián Vizcaino in 1602, the Franciscans had been requesting permission to evangelize California. The requests were not seen as important until 167 years later when there were rumors of Russian encroachment. It was then that a meeting was called by the Viceroy of New Spain (1768) to discuss the possibility of settling New California. Miguel Constanso was present at that conference and observed that: "The security and keeping of the coasts of California was one of the topics


93 Reduction (Spanish; reducción) was the general term used for the goal of missions concerning the Indians. See Florian F. Guest, O.F.M., "Mission Colonization and Political Control in Spanish California," Journal of San Diego History 24 (1978):97.

94 Bolton, Wider Horizons, p. 125.


96 Bolton, Wider Horizons, p. 122.
that fittingly engaged the attention of the Marquez de Croix." The overall decision was that California would be settled and the Franciscans would play the crucial role in the conquest. Since it was the state that now wanted the "evangelization" of Upper California and in their eyes time was a factor, the "sacred expedition" was launched in record time. Even to the Guardian of the Franciscan College in Mexico City the entire enterprise had been pushed through too fast, for he wrote: "This undertaking was attempted without that preparation and mature thought that has always been employed and which ought to be employed in enterprises of this nature." 98

The idea of honoring the long-standing offer of the Franciscans was even more appealing since it would be inexpensive to the crown. Funds to finance the expedition could be used from the "pious fund" which had been donated for that very purpose. 99 Instead of having to equip and pay for a navy to patrol the California coasts, the zealous missionaries of St. Francis were commended to the task.

Thus the "brown robes" were allowed to plant their institutions

---


99 The Pious Fund was a large amount of money that wealthy Mexican believers had donated for Jesuit mission expansion into California. At their expulsion the fund was used to finance most of the Franciscan enterprises. See Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries, 2:653-660.
in California. As the expansion progressed the friars appealed to Madrid's political concern to further their spiritual conquests. In 1776 the Franciscan College of Mexico City gave an account of the state of the missions to the king. In their description of the Bay of San Francisco they wrote optimistically that it might be the Strait of Anian, and they subtly suggested that the king aid further enterprises to avoid the harm that would befall to the church and the kingdom should a Protestant nation gain control of the "strait." 100

Since the origin of the California missions was for the purpose of protecting the land from foreign powers it is easy to see the direct government intervention in their planning and affairs. The mission names, sites, and relocations had to be approved by the government. The dual purpose of the mission also explains why the first two mission sites, San Diego and Monterey, were chosen. Since the earlier sea expeditions had rendered favorable reports of the two bays, they were selected for mission sites; but, had they at that time known about San Francisco, one can be sure that that site would have also been among the first settled.

The missions were founded roughly at equidistant points along the coast. Thus they provided a balanced approach in the "conquest." Although there were countless Indians in the interior of the land, the missions spread north and south and seldom far from the coast. The practical results were relevant to the important role that the control of the California coast meant for Spain and which the missions unmistakably

100 Documentos Históricos, Misiones, p. 48.
helped to secure. In 1798, of the eighteen existing missions, only two were relatively removed from the coast. La Soledad, the farthest inland, was only thirty miles from the sea.

It is revealing to look at the last mission founded by Spain in California. In 1812 Russia founded Fort Ross north of San Francisco but within the Spanish Empire. For a number of years diplomats of both nations tried to find a solution to the Russian intrusion. While the talks continued in 1817 Spain founded Mission San Rafael, north of San Francisco to counterbalance the Russian post. The Spaniards had not forgotten how effective missions could be in geographical disputes.

From the beginning to the end of the extension of the missions there were political motives behind the earnest labors of the friars. The land of California was to be protected and settled, and soldiers alone could not do that. Twenty-one missions were set up and they accomplished what the best soldiers of his majesty were unable to do; they put California safe within the Spanish empire. The missions and their history proved Bucareli correct; that indeed the acquisitions made slowly by missionaries "resulted better" than the ones secured by arms.

101 Since the 1560's ships laden with the treasures of the East (Manila Galleons) had sailed past California. Due to favorable currents they sailed up the north Pacific and then south along the California coast to Acapulco. Foreign control of California would be a threat to such a lucrative trade.


103 Bancroft, History of California, 2:329.
CHAPTER III
LIFE AT THE MISSIONS

Life at the missions was not a utopia of unending joy nor an outpost of unrestrained abuse. More accurately, the missionary compound was a place of work, worship, rest, and recreation, governed by a regimented and dictatorial treatment of its converts. It was a place of demands but with provisions; restraints but security; innovative but traditional.

Writers on the topic usually present a one-sided, biased picture of Franciscan benevolence and of their noble characters that brought happiness and civilization to the natives. Others, equally prejudiced, portray the life of the Indians at the hands of the despotic missionaries as utter misery and equal in their wretchedness to slaves. With such an existing polarity in views, it is of urgent necessity to examine all aspects involved and thus arrive at a conclusion. This paper will present life as it was at the missions by a mere statement of the facts, without trying to promote a particular view.

To understand the mission Indian it is imperative that one know him as he roamed the mountains prior to the coming of the missionaries. Due to their immense diversity it is difficult to categorize the California natives into specific groups. As an early Spanish chronicle put it, some were white, blond, tall, short, fat, black, and ugly.\(^1\) By the time of

\(^1\)Colección de Documentos Históricos, Las Misiones de la Alta California (Mexico City: Tipografía de la Oficina Impresora de Estampillas, 1914), p. 82.
the coming of the Europeans (1769) there were about 275,000 Indians in California. \(^2\) Their dialects were as diversified as their physical appearances. Many times the inhabitants of one valley could not communicate orally with their neighbors of the next valley since about every twenty or twenty-five miles a different language was spoken. \(^3\)

The common tongue was a characteristic of every village, which ranged from 100 to 500 in population. A chief was part of their social hierarchy, and due to his position was allowed to have more than one wife. The other villagers were expected to have one wife unless they were able to support additional ones. In their natural state the men went about naked while the women of the interior used deer skins to cover most of their bodies. The females along the coast used otter skins. The men had their ears pierced with reeds and the women wore earrings. \(^4\) Some of the natives shaved their heads while others grew their hair long and even considered it a mark of beauty. \(^5\)

To supply themselves with food the men fished, hunted and made the utensils needed for their tasks (arrows, bows, boats, nets). The women worked very hard for they were obliged to gather seeds, prepare and cook them while doing all the other chores that were expected of them.


\(^5\) Boscana, *Chiniochinich*, p. 3.
Females were even required to go to war to pick up enemy arrows from the ground and then supply them to their people. Another curiosity among the California Indians was the existence and acceptance of homosexuality. In some villages there would be two or three men who dressed as women, remained with them and were accepted as such by everyone.

Their diet included anything they could kill or find since they did not cultivate the land. One who knew them well and married an Indian woman wrote that they ate almost anything. One of their special dishes was grasshoppers roasted on a stick. The coastal dwellers also consumed seals, whales, shellfish and other marine life. Francisco Palou observed that whenever a whale was swept ashore the natives of San Francisco celebrated since they were fond of its fatty meat. They also ate seal since its meat was like that of the whale. When Governor Fages was exploring the area north of San Diego (1769) the inhabitants shared their food with the Spaniards, including fish, pinenuts, acorns "and other seeds prepared after their fashion."

Life at the Indian villages was cyclical and monotonous.

---

6 Ibid., p. 50.


10 Fages, *California*, p. 8.
Dwellings were rude and simple with a conical shape. The centrality of village life was survival from one year to another. Nevertheless, there were certain cultural traditions. Boscana discovered that the natives of San Juan Capistrano had an oral tradition about creation and a vague notion of a flood. Superstitions were deeply ingrained and included the veneration of certain animals, such as the owl. The residents about San Juan Capistrano had a deity which they worshipped, whose temple was at the center of their villages. The name of their god was Chinigchinich, which meant to the worshippers "all powerful."\(^{11}\)

The children were educated according to their sex. In some villages they were betrothed when only infants. The girls were taught domestic duties and obedience, and faithfulness to their husbands. On the other hand, if the husband was not loyal the wife's relatives could take her back and marry her to another man.\(^{12}\) In other tribes when the wife was disloyal her husband would take the spouse of her lover and everyone would accept the switch.\(^{13}\) To prepare the young men for bravery in battle they were laid on anthills and ants were put on their chests and faces after which they were made to swallow them in large amounts.\(^{14}\)

Disease ran rampant among the natives. There was a class known as physicians who treated the many cases of tuberculosis which was the

\(^{11}\)Boscana, Chinigchinich, pp. 10, 44, 7.

\(^{12}\)Ibid., pp. 26, 31.

\(^{13}\)Dakin, Scotch Paisano, p. 226.

\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 239.
was common sickness. When the medicine man treated a patient and that individual failed to recuperate the physician would state that it was beyond his power for the gods had determined the illness.  

There was also in their midst a type of astrologer who examined the heavens to discover the seasons for their religious festivals. At the festivals, some of which lasted weeks, dancing was the main function. The Europeans who witnessed their dances were not impressed. To them they only amounted to the imitation of "animals in all their gestures."  

Some of the dances had explicit sexual overtones. Father Gerónimo Boscana who studied the natives closely considered most of them to be hypocritical, treacherous, deceitful, and lazy.  

Such were the people living in California when in 1769 the Spanish vessels announced the end of their peaceful primitive society. At first the Indians were cautious with the newcomers, but the friendly gestures of the friars and the liberal gifts of clothing and food attracted a few. Since the natives were in constant search for food, they were glad to receive some from the strangers and thus alleviate their hunger. With the food, the Europeans also passed out beads, trinkets, and clothing to attract a larger number of pagans to their outposts. Many came  

15 Boscana, Chinigchinich, pp. 52,53.  


17 Boscana, Chinigchinich, p. 69.  

and stayed at the crude settlements and even helped to build the larger mission compounds.

The early mission buildings were simple temporary wooden structures, but as time passed strong, permanent edifices emerged. The plan followed was a quadrangle formed around a large open square. The quadrangle contained on its inner side all the essential buildings of a mission and at the same time acted as a protective barrier for them, since its walls were at times as much as eight feet thick. With such massive features it resembled a fortress, for it only had one or two entrances which were strictly locked at nine every night and opened at sunrise. The church, the focal building in all missions, was usually located in the northeastern side of the square. The friars' quarters were next to the church and they were followed in order by the shops of the many industries housed at the missions. Other structures were dedicated to the kitchen, dining room, warehouses, and the living quarters of the young women. In the central square there was a water fountain adding charm and providing a vital necessity. Some missions even had bathing rooms with hot water. Outside of the mission quadrangle was the village of the converted Indians. The guards' quarters were always placed so as to have in sight the church, the fathers' dwelling, and the Indian village.19

To fill the mission with converts the Franciscans baptized infants whenever they could obtain the parents' permission. Adults were put through a training process to teach them the highpoints

---

of the Roman Catholic faith. statues, religious paintings, music, and other devices were used to illuminate the new teachings for the Indians.20

Many of the savages came voluntarily but there are also the records of many excursions for the purpose of gathering villages and forcefully bringing them to the missions.21 Reid wrote about such an expedition in which adults and children were tied, whipped, and brought to the mission. The older youngsters were then taken away from their parents, who in order to regain the company of their children conceded to the missionaries' wishes and became followers of a heretofore unknown Christ.22

The Indians who had been uprooted from their villages and their primitive superstitions had a very meager knowledge of Christianity.

One crucial problem was the language barrier, for with so many Indian dialects the communication at the mission oftentimes had to pass through as many as three interpreters.23 In addition there was the


22 Dakin, Scotch Paisano, pp. 265-266.

23 José Longinos Martínez, California in 1792: The Expedition of José Longinos Martínez (San Marino, CA.: Henry Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1938), p. 41.
problem of semantics, for it became nearly impossible to make the
natives understand the abstract theological theories that they needed
to comprehend in order to become Christians. The native dialects had
no vocabulary for such ideas and that complicated the teaching process
of the doctrina. For many of the heathen, conversion was essentially
learning to say "amar a Dios" (love God). 24

When the Indians were baptized at the mission they were no
longer allowed to go back to their rancherías (villages). The friars
were certain that their conversion would not resist the test if the
neophyte was surrounded by his pagan relatives. They were provided
with food at the compound so that the converts would not visit the
countryside and expose themselves to the threats and taunts of the
"gentiles" (unconverted Indians). As their numbers increased small
villages grew outside the mission walls. Richard Henry Dana visiting
the hamlet outside of San Diego Mission in 1834 found between twenty­
five and thirty huts built of straw and tree branches. 25 Another
visitor, Thomas J. Farnham, visited Santa Barbara and found better
living conditions. The natives' dwellings were constructed with
adobe brick and tiles and lined in rows with streets running between
them. 26

24 Doctrina was the term employed by the Spaniards for the
catechism used by the missionaries in teaching the Indians the Christian
religion. It contained basic elements of the Roman Catholic Church. See
Footnote 20.

25 Richard Henry Dana, Two Years Before the Mast (New York: P. F.
Collier & Son, 1909), pp. 122-123.

26 Thomas J. Farnham, The Early Days of California: Embracing
What I Saw and Heard There, With Scenes in the Pacific (Philadelphia:
Those living at the mission village were most of the mission's converts and as such were regulated by the missionaries' plan of operation. They had to attend morning and evening worship services, Sunday mass, and in fact they were the very core of the institution's life, since few converts lived within the walls of the compound. There was only one group that lived within the quadrangle at every mission and that was the young people. Girls from nine up, single women, and wives whose husbands were absent were required to sleep in a mission building nicknamed the monjerio. During the day they worked, although closely watched, and at night great care was taken to learn that all were accounted for. Following that the door was locked with a key which was handed to the fathers for possession till the next morning.27

In the eyes of the Franciscans there was a logical reason for their close watch over the young people, and that was to prevent and curtail the cases of immoral relationships. The missionaries believed that the converts were always willing to give full sway to their carnal desires. An early visitor to California gave another reason. Vancouver wrote that the women were very dear to the Indians and with that knowledge the Spaniards constantly kept a number of them within their power as a pledge for the good conduct of the men.28

The young women lived in the monjerio until they married; at

27 The monjerio (nunnery) was thus called because the young women who were required to live in it were ironically nicknamed monjas (nuns) due to their highly regimented lives. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., The Missions and Missionaries of California, 4 vols. (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1912), 2:249.

which time the couple would move to the mission village. In joining a couple in marriage the friars played a vital role. Initially, the male suitor would tell the friar of the girl whom he would like to marry and the Franciscan would speak to the girl and arrange for them to meet. If those involved agreed, the missionary would conduct their wedding. The nuptials would be celebrated on a Sunday and festivities would be part of the day. Food and music were provided to delight everyone. 29

The everyday life of converts was monotonous with little variation and excitement. The days were busy, for there was much work to be done at the mission. At sunrise the toll of a bell announced the beginning of a new work day. All over the age of nine would rise and congregate at the church where a thanksgiving service was held in which appropriate music was sung ending with a unison singing of the Alabado. 30 This was followed by breakfast which normally lasted forty-five minutes. The morning food was atole, a gruel made from corn or any other grain that had been roasted before grinding. Every family was given its share which was taken to their huts in baskets. The young women ate in their respective quarters. 31

After breakfast everyone had a task to do. Some went to the shops, mills, looms, kitchen, fields, and to a variety of other work


30 Another song used as a morning prayer was called Ya Viene el Alba (The Morning Cometh). See Appendix B.

31 Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries, 2:254.
situations. Work was seen in its many expressions throughout the morning hours. Every worker was closely supervised and harassed by the mayordomos (overseers). The bosses, who were tough and strict, were chosen from the indolent ones and thus enjoyed working the converts. The supervisors were of Spanish and Indian blood and were given a little education by the fathers. 32

The young women of the monjerío worked during the day by cooking, sewing, weaving and working the looms that produced much of the converts' clothing. Their work was assigned by quotas; and, after those were reached, they were allowed to visit the nearby village. The daily supervision of the young women was entrusted to an older female convert or the wife of the garrison's corporal. 33

Often when the adults were engaged at various chores, the fathers held teaching sessions for the children. They were assembled in the sala, or reception room of the mission, and received instruction in the areas that the Franciscans believed were essential for their mature development into Christians. At times the young ones were joined by couples to be married, those nearing their annual confessions, and older people who had never grasped the essence of Christianity. 34 When the youngsters were not in such classes they were used for light

---

32 Dakin, Scotch Paisano, p. 272.; Smith, Expedition, p. 130.
33 Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries, 2:249.
34 Ibid., p. 255.
duties around the mission such as driving birds away from the fields. At eleven-thirty the tolling of the bells announced to the working hands that it was time for their midday meal and rest. The food was called pozole, a broth to which was added, according to the season, meat, beans, peas and lentils. Meat from the missions' own herds was frequently provided. Vancouver noticed that twenty-four oxen were killed weekly at Santa Clara; while Pattie recorded that fifty were killed for mission consumption at San Luis Rey. After everyone had eaten and rested, the afternoon shift began at two. At times the friars would go around to the different work areas and inspect the labors of their children. At San Diego mission, and probably at others as well, the workers were refreshed by a drink of vinegar and sweet water that was brought to them in the fields.

Between five and six another bell called the population to the church. A recitation of the doctrine was conducted and an exhortation was given in Spanish or in the local dialect. Usually the Alabado concluded the service, after which supper was served. The meal would

35 The youngsters employed to watch the birds were known as pajareros (birdwatcher). José Cabot to José Echeandia, 23 April 1829, California Mission Documents, Santa Barbara Mission Archives.

36 The name was obtained from pozolera, the big iron kettles in which the food was prepared, while the cook was known as the pozolero. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., Mission San Carlos Borromeo: The Father of the Missions (Santa Barbara, CA.: Mission Santa Barbara, 1934), p. 174.

37 Wilbur, Vancouver, p. 46; Pattie, Personal Narrative, p. 276.

be atole again with a minor variation. 39 If a group of workers was distant, food was sent to them in a copper kettle. 40 After supper and before bedtime, which was at nine, there was a short period for relaxation. It was normally spent in games, music, and dances. It was a period in which the missionaries could spend time with their children and teach them more of the elements of Christianity and civilization. At eight o'clock the familiar bell would tell the mission population that in one hour the gates would be closed, and everyone would have to retire. By nine, all was quiet at the compound and it would remain so until the next toll at sunrise. 41

The repetition in the day's structure would be identical from Monday through Friday. On the seventh day work stopped at midday. After the noon meal soap was passed out and everybody went to wash themselves and their clothes as they prepared for church the next day. It was probably this scene that Farnham viewed at Santa Barbara for he recorded seeing the laughing, battling, splashing, and scolding of the wash-day. 42 The remaining part of the day was spent in a festive mood, for at night there were various modes of recreation. As usual the tolling bell announced the time for rest. 43

---

39 Engelhardt, San Carlos, p. 71.

40 Dakin, Scotch Paisano, p. 279.


42 Farnham, Days of California, p. 109.

43 Dakin, Scotch Paisano, p. 279.
The Indians' work, worship, and recreation was faithfully punctuated by the non-erring authoritative toll of bells. There were two types of bells that the neophytes had been trained to recognize. Although some missions possessed many bells, one that was essential was the stationary bell. Those did not move but were rung by causing the clapper to strike the side of the bell with a strong force. The other type of bell was the esquila, known as the "glad" bells of the missions. They were rung on happy occasions as when a visiting friar arrived at the mission. When Juan Bautista de Anza's expedition arrived at San Gabriel (1776) there was much celebration and the pealing of such bells.\footnote{Herbert E. Bolton, ed., \textit{Font's Complete Diary} (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1933), p. 176.} Another occasion at which the "glad" bells were rung was at the baptism or death of infants. Infants were seen as sinless and so the bereaved parents were reminded that it was a happy occasion for now they had an angel in heaven.\footnote{Edith B. Webb, \textit{Indian Life at the Old Missions} (Los Angeles: Warren F. Lewis, 1952), pp. 32-34.}

The Sunday mass provided another occasion for the use of the esquila. That was the highpoint of the week for the entire population. Only the most essential chores were done that day and everyone dressed up and went to church. There was an early morning mass and the high mass which was about 9:30 A.M. and lasted for an hour.\footnote{Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., \textit{San Juan Capistrano Mission} (Los Angeles: The Standard Printing Co., 1922), pp. 53, 55.}
always an interpreter at the services since so few of the converts could understand Spanish. Robinson has left a picture of a church service at San Luis Rey in 1829. Men and women were segregated each occupying a side of the sanctuary. The aisle was paraded by zealous "deacons" to enforce silence and attention on the part of the worshippers. Others with less fervor were forced by the mayordomos' whips to the very doors of the church. To keep a record of who was absent from church the fathers employed a procedure at the weekly services. At the end of worship one of the priests would call everyone by name from the padrón. At such time the parishioners would approach the minister and kiss his hand.

In the afternoon there was again a mandatory devotional service in which a litany, rosary, and short prayers were offered. The remaining time of Sunday was spent in singing, dancing, games, horse races, gambling, and feats of strength. One peculiar form of entertainment was bear and bull fights.

One mission feature that made the Indians' lives positively richer and added to their spiritual convocations was music. In their natural state the natives used music at their fertility, religious, and war rites. However, their music was a monotonous series of shouts

49 The padrón was a book which contained the names, birthdates, sex, etc., of every member of the community. Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries, 2:255.
50 Ibid., p. 256.
51 Pattie, Personal Narrative, p. 304.
and yells that were repeated continuously. The only musical instruments they possessed were an elementary form of a flute and whistles made from deer bone. As the natives joined the missions the missionaries soon discovered their natural musical abilities. They loved to sing and since there was much congregational singing at the missions, that was very pleasing to them. While they enjoyed themselves singing, the music was used to teach them basic tenents of the Christian faith.

Singing was encouraged to alleviate the burdens of work. The friars sang grace before each meal, which exposed them to more music. In the intervening time after supper and before retiring there was much singing which gave an opportunity for the friars to scout for talent. In time, the Franciscans who loved music and had some basic training in it, organized choirs. Such groups would practice for long hours in order to be ready for the Sunday masses. Given the Indians' natural musical abilities the choruses matured into real assets for the worship services of the church. One of the missionaries of San Antonio, speaking of his neophytes, said that they learned every kind of song taught to them and that as choir members they could sing a mass as a group.

Since many of the Franciscans were musicians or had a great

---


54 Nunis, Padres, p. 135.
aptitude for music, they taught the Indians to play European musical instruments. The results were that orchestras of converts were found at all the missions. The customary instruments used in the bands were violin, viola, violincello, bass-viol, flute, German flute, trumpet, horn, lute, guitar, drum and triangle. Their main function was to play at mass but as they matured and their repertoire increased they were asked to play at weddings, funerals, and other social and religious events. The presidios and nearby Spanish communities also occasionally asked for their musical services.\(^55\) On other occasions the entire musical groups would go to other missions to take part in special celebrations. At the dedication of the church at Santa Barbara (1820) the bands of Santa Inés and San Fernando were both present and played for two hours.\(^56\)

As much as music was part of mission life on a continuous basis, it was during the numerous holidays that most music was performed. Since the Catholic church had many religious holidays and each mission had a holiday for its patron saint, there were many festive occasions for the converts to enjoy themselves. On Thursday of Holy Week there was a special mass followed by a procession from the church around the inner courtyard and returning to their house of worship. On those occasions everyone dressed in their finest as they sang and chanted. In the afternoon of the same day a footwashing ceremony was held, in which a friar washed the feet of the Indians and then delivered a short homily on humility. Another ceremony celebrated on Good Friday was called tinieblas (darkness); it illustrated the confusion and

\(^{55}\) Smith, Expedition, p. 223.

\(^{56}\) DaSilva, Mission Music, pp. 8-9.
darkness after the death of Christ. On Saturday all the church ornaments were blessed, and on Sunday everyone dressed up and participated in celebrating the resurrection.  

The most celebrated of all religious holidays in all the missions was Christmas. During the preceding weeks and months the choirs and orchestras were busy rehearsing hymns and carols. On Christmas eve the main feature was a dramatization of the nativity called Los Pastores ("The Shepherds"), an account of the shepherds going to worship the babe and Satan trying unsuccessfully to frustrate their plans. Performances of the play were given at the missions, chapels, and plazas on Christmas Day and for several days thereafter. Children followed the players to the presentations, for sweets were given to the performers and guests by some hosts.  

The institutions were also centers of industries. Cattle raising was the greatest of these, and one of the busiest and most exciting events was the rodeo, or cattle round up. At such times the animals would be counted, examined and branded by the vaqueros (cowboys). The end of this annual event was celebrated by a rowdy feast. Another cattle-related task was the matanza, when the killing for hides, tallow, and other exports was done. At times thousands of livestock were slaughtered which gave the laborers plenty of work. In order to achieve quality hides, they had to be removed from the carcasses immediately, cut with small holes to place them on poles without


58 Robinson, California, pp. 43-44.

shrinking. The tanning process was quite involved and time-consuming. Part of the process included having the leather lie in vats for months under strict supervision. The final stage was taking the leather to the leather shop where it was turned into saddles, shoes, and other articles by the Indian artisans. Since the missions had thousands of sheep, goats, hogs, horses and mules one can see the amount of work that they generated for the mission laborers. 60

Agriculture was also very important to the cycle of mission life and it employed many workers. Wheat was the preferred crop at all the missions since it was a staple of the diet. Corn was second for its high yield, followed by berley which was also given to the animals. 61 In addition, beans, grapes, olives, oranges, peaches, apples and pears were grown. With good harvests and the converts providing the labor, the missions usually had abundant provisions that were stored in granaries and warehouses for bad years or to succor a sister mission. 62

The textile shops employed many women including those of the monjerio. It was there where the clothing for the institution was prepared since under mission rule everyone was to be clothed at all times. Vancouver saw one such establishment at San Francisco in which blankets were made from the wool produced at the same mission. As he examined the cloth manufactured he was impressed and found it "by no

60 Webb, Indian Life, pp. 189-194.

61 Archibald, Economic Aspect, pp. 168-175.

Other neophytes worked in the construction of mission buildings. Adobes, essential matter in mission architecture, were made at every compound. Another vital job was the manufacture of tiles which were commonly used at the compounds. There was always work for the construction crew since cabinets, vats, fountains, ditches, woodwork, bookcases and such were in steady demand.

A few missions had water or animal-powered mills that ground their grain. When these were not available, the women accomplished the task by the use of stones. The kitchen was also a place of work for many, since missions often surpassed a thousand in population and feeding such a multitude required many hands. Blacksmiths supplied the mission with essentials like anvils, bells, hoes, chains, locks, spurs, hinges, cattle brands, and similar objects. With an abundance of milk at every mission the natives were taught to make cheese and butter. The results were pleasing even to Europeans for Father Pedro Font wrote (1776) that the cows of San Gabriel were "very fat and they give much and rich milk, with which they make cheese and very good butter."

Since the missionaries were primarily ministers who were not specialists in vocational trades to teach the Indians, the government helped in that area. California was seen as an inhospitable, desolate land and few wanted to go here. For that reason in 1790 the government

63 Wilbur, Vancouver, pp. 22, 23.
64 Webb, Indian Life, p. 105
66 Bolton, Font's Diary, p. 177.
hired artisans to go to the missions and teach the natives. Twenty professional artisans with four and five year contracts went to the missions and taught the natives new skills. 67 Through this training many of the converts became skillful workers. Often the mission would loan out the skillful natives to the community who requested their services. They were paid by food, clothing, or a small wage was credited to the mission at the presidio. 68

One uncomfortable aspect of mission life was the regimentation and the punishment incurred when it was violated. Visitors were understandably surprised. Smith wrote that the Indians were "kept in the strictest order," being punished for the most trifling offence of neglect. 69 Pattie observed: "In order to keep them at their daily tasks, the most rigid and unremitting supervision is exercised. No bondage can be more complete, than that under which they live." 70

Once the Indians became Christians they were forbidden to return to their rancherias (villages). The Franciscans soon learned that the natives' desires to visit their villages were so strong that a plan was instituted in which they could work for five weeks and then take two weeks to visit their relatives. 71 However, if the

67 Archibald, Economic Aspect, pp. 147-150.
68 Ibid., p. 103.
69 Smith, Expedition, p. 108.
70 Pattie, Personal Narrative, p. 306.
individual left without any consent or stayed beyond the time allotted, he would be considered an \textit{huído} (escapee) and the soldiers would be sent after such to return him. At the mission the runaway would be punished by the \textit{mayordomos}. The usual number of lashes for sundry violations was twenty-five, but overexactng overseers often went beyond their duty.\textsuperscript{72} At times the number of lashes was diminished by the fathers' direct interventions. Rogers, a companion of Smith, witnessed the chastisement of two Indians who refused to go to work. Each received from twelve to fourteen strokes on their bare posteriors in spite of being nearly sixty years old.\textsuperscript{73}

There were numerous reasons why the natives were castigated, but the most common were for escaping, refusing orders, immorality, fighting, witchcraft, and abortion. The more serious cases, murder and rebellion, were turned over to the military authorities of the \textit{presidios} where many times the result was execution of the culprits.\textsuperscript{74} The women were flogged without regards to their sex but privately, and by another woman.\textsuperscript{75} If a person with a large following became rebellious he would be exiled to another mission.\textsuperscript{76}


\textsuperscript{73} Smith, \textit{Expedition}, p. 223.

\textsuperscript{74} Smythe, \textit{San Diego}, p. 68

\textsuperscript{75} Heizer, "Impact of Colonization," p. 129.

The Indians' reaction to their tough treatment was to flee to the mountains. Some remained at the institutions from fear of being recaptured and punished, while others stayed for they were true converts to Christianity and their loyalty was to the friars. The fact that most returned when their passes expired and at times brought their relatives was evidence of their sincere satisfaction with mission life. Other converts were totally dissatisfied with their regimented life and wished to escape. Underground movements developed whose aims were to flee or destroy the institution and its priests.  

The Franciscans had foreseen the potentiality for revolt and had prohibited the possession of weapons by natives. Nevertheless, Indian discontent was openly manifested at the missions. At San Miguel in 1801 three friars were struck by abdominal pains from which one of them died. Afterwards certain of the Indians boasted that they had administered poison to them. In the same year at Santa Barbara a woman gathered a considerable following when she blamed the new religion for the rampant disease among the Indians. In 1803 the government reduced the number of soldiers at the missions and that prompted the neophytes into insubordination. At San Gabriel forty neophytes fled and two hundred from Santa Barbara; and in all the missions there was restlessness. In 1811 the cook of Mission San Diego tried to


78 Pattie, Personal Narrative, p. 306.

poison a friar. The following year a missionary was murdered by the converts at Santa Cruz. It was a premeditated act in which the priest was asked to go and administer rites to a dying man, but was ambushed and killed. Such acts reveal the type of secret plans organized by the discontented Indians.

An additional reason why mission life was unattractive to many neophytes was that disease abounded there. In addition to their known ills the Spaniards brought others to the natives for which they had little resistance and the results were alarming. Before 1805 measles was unknown to them but in 1807 that ailment alone killed more than three hundred natives. In 1805 an army doctor studied the situation and reported that the Indians were dying from dysentary, fever, tuberculosis, and syphilis. Treatment was scarce and when available often the sick refused it. Diseases caused such a havoc that almost every mission reported a deficit between the number of births and deaths. San Antonio noticed that for every two births there were three deaths.

Mission life was full of contrasts. There was work and

---

80 The cook justified his actions by stating that the day before the friar had punished him with 50 lashes in the morning and 24 at night. The next morning he also received 27 lashes and 25 in the afternoon. Ibid., pp. 220, 464, Note 26.


85 Nunis, *Padres*, p. 76.
recreation, sickness and prosperity. Some Indians were entirely converted while others remained paganized. There was punishment but there was also food. It was a place of education and of prevailing superstitions. There was an elevation of the Indian and yet he always remained a neophyte, or an apprentice of Christianity. All of these aspects forbid that a dogmatic position on the nature of Indian life at the missions be taken. One can not condemn something entirely when it has noble traits along with its evil features, and neither can one condone something entirely when it has evil along with its noble features.
CHAPTER IV
ELITE MISSIONARIES

The Franciscan missionaries of California were the most educated segment of the region’s population. As individuals and as a group they stood far above everyone in their education and personal culture. The average missionary had a thorough academic education as part of his ministerial training. In eighteenth century Spain, youths who were preparing themselves for ecclesiastical careers attended the Latin schools where they partook of a classical education. An exact knowledge of Latin, some Greek, and familiarity with the classical works were essentials in their preparation for the higher studies of philosophy and theology. That was necessary since before the student began his studies in philosophy he had to pass a rigorous exam in Latin. Failure only meant more studies until the language was thoroughly known. It was essential that the students understood Latin, since the advanced lectures were delivered in that tongue.1

One missionary of whom we can know the exact phases of his schooling was Junípero Serra (1713-1784). His biographer, Francisco Palou, tells us that when he decided to study to become a clergyman he went to one of the principal seminaries of the city “in order to

follow the courses of philosophy and theology."² He demonstrated unusual skills, so that when he completed his undergraduate training, he was elected professor of philosophy for a friary. The classes taught by the young Serra were delivered in Latin according to the scholastic method. Logic, dialectic, metaphysics, and cosmology were used to train the thought process and stimulate learning. While he taught at the seminary, Serra began graduate studies at Lullian University of Mallorca and obtained from there the degree of Doctor of Sacred Theology in 1742.³ Two years later he was asked to fill an academic post at that institution, where he remained till 1749. That year he was asked to deliver the main address at the celebrations honoring the university's patron saint. Before all the school's faculty, city elite, and ecclesiastical hierarchy, Serra delivered his homily. One of his academic rivals later remarked that the sermon was "worthy of being printed in letters of gold."⁴ Soon thereafter the young scholar sailed to New Spain, but he already carried with him the reputation of a deep thinker. For that reason the leadership at San Fernando College, in Mexico City, desired to test his learning and soon assigned him to speak on the patron saint of that institution.


³Extant university records refer to him as "Dr. Junípero" or "Dr. Serre" whenever he is listed as having assisted at university examinations. Maynard J. Geiger, O.F.M., The Life and Times of Fray Junípero Serra, O.F.M., or the Man Who Never Turned Back, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1959); 1:24-25, 31, 324, Note 30.

⁴Palou, Life, p. 6; Geiger, Life and Times 1:40.
He welcomed the opportunity and spoke from Psalm 44 while the regulars, congregation, and community were spellbound by his profound exposition. All present only regretted "that a man so learned and exemplary was going to bury himself among the pagans." Serra's vast education was illustrative of the many highly educated, talented, and brilliant men who sailed to America wearing a monk's habit to missionize California. Among them were some who had a claim to noble blood. Others had had promising careers before embarking for the missions. Francisco Palou (1723-1789), a student and companion of Serra, studied philosophy and took the competitive examinations which qualified him to teach it. After his ordination, Vicente Francisco de Serria (1767-1835) became a professor of philosophy and arts for the Franciscan clerics at Bilbao. Pablo José

5 Palou says that while a teaching professor Serra achieved "a great reputation for learning and profundity . . . " and that his Biblical knowledge was such that: "On hearing him speak on Sacred Scripture, one concluded that he knew it by heart." Ibid., pp. 5-6, 282. In his correspondence he frequently quoted or paraphrased many and varied Biblical texts. See Antonine Tibesar, D.F.M., ed., Writings of Junípero Serra, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 3:209, 213, 367, 387.

6 In the case of Fermin Francisco de Lausen, the prefix "de" was found on both sides of his family and suggests hidalgo descent. Hidalgos were the lesser nobility of Spain who were hijos de aloc, "sons of someone" but often were impoverished. Guest, Lasuen, p. 3.; Alistair Hennessy, The Frontier in Latin American History (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), pp. 29-30.


8 Geiger, Franciscan Missionaries, p. 228.
Mugartegui (1736-?) was professor of philosophy in Spain and after his California mission days returned to San Fernando College, Mexico City, where he was elected guardian and professor of philosophy and theology. The abilities of Joseph Matias Moreno (1799-1845), were recognized by his companions for they stated that if he had remained in Spain he would probably have held a chair of philosophy or theology. Gerónimo Boscana (1775-1831) had been professor of arts in the Royal Convent of his native Mallorca, a school of great reputation for its learned faculty in theology, philosophy, and the arts. Juan Amoros (1773-1832) was seen by his fellow workers as fit to qualify for office within a college or within the order. Antonio Jayme (1757-1829) had been for many years a school teacher in Mallorca. Luis Jayme (1740-1775) had also been a professor of philosophy of the order before sailing to America.

Given the appetite that the Franciscans had for academic learning, libraries were standard in all of their institutions. The one at San Fernando College had an impressive number of volumes on a wide range

---


12 Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries*, p. 11.

13 Ibid., p. 127.

14 Ibid., p. 128.
of topics. Once the missionaries left Mexico for Upper California their thirst for learning did not languish, rather they set about to organize their own libraries at their individual outposts. In time every mission had a general book-room with a considerable collection of volumes provided for the use of its ministers. Consequently, the very first libraries established in the state were those of the Franciscan Fathers. Moreover, every individual missionary had his own personal books which he carried with him and complemented those of the institution. Realizing that they were in a land that had no printing presses, bookshops, or newspapers, their books took on an additional value. After the long laborious days they undoubtedly found refuge with their bound companions. On September 27, 1788,

15 By the middle of the nineteenth century the College of San Fernando had 11,786 volumes categorized as follows: Sacred Scriptures 932; ecclesiastical and secular history 1,943; philosophy 610; dogmatic theology 984; homiletics 1,826; mystical theology 1,365; literature and education 1,051; church fathers 402; canon and civil law 1,563. Maynard J. Geiger, O.F.M., "The Library of the Apostolic College of San Fernando, Mexico, in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," The Americas 7 (1951):432-433. The holdings were augmented as books were brought from Spain. In 1810 a report indicated that 35 titles were added, topically including geography, dictionaries, mathematics, rhetoric and religious themes. Document dated 20 June 1810, California Mission Documents (Hereafter referred to as CMD), Santa Barbara Mission Archives (Hereafter referred to as SBMA).

16 "To the furnishings of the house, there has been added one bookcase with four shelves for larger to smaller, lined with red wood." Report of San Carlos, 15 August 1779, CMD, SBMA.

17 Because of its distance from cultural centers and its simple life California was often called "este último rincón del mundo" (this last corner of the world). When a missionary passed away his books were returned to San Fernando College or permission was granted for the mission to appropriate them. "I am also sending you a list of the books which were for the use of the late Father Murguia for your Reverence to determine what is to be done with them." Junipero Serra to Juan Sancho, 18 June 1784, in Tibesar, Writings, 4:255.
Hilario Torrent wrote from San Diego Mission stating that he spent his evenings reading "the well-pondered life and labors of our beloved ... and Venerable Founder."\(^{18}\)

That the Franciscans made practical use of their books is quite obvious from extant records. When Juan Crespi (1721-1782) became ill at San Carlos, the fathers diligently searched the *Florilegio Medicinal de Toda Las Enfermedades*, a home guide on sickness and remedies.\(^{19}\) When Serra was debating points of law with Governor Felipe de Neve, he felt certain that that a copy of the *Recopilación de Leyes de las Indias* would provide legal defense for his argument.\(^{20}\) Soon thereafter, Lasuen ordered the work from Mexico. In a reply letter he was told: "The four volumes *Leyes de Indias* leave here for you ... The Curia Filipica has not yet been found ..."\(^{21}\) After the acquisition of these legal works the missionaries used them extensively in the defense of Indian and mission rights.\(^{22}\)

---

\(^{18}\) Palau, *Life*, foreword p. X.

\(^{19}\) "All the remedies to be found in the *Florilegium* were tried on him." Junípero Serra to Francisco Pangua, 17 July 1782, in Tibesar, *Writings*, 4:147.

\(^{20}\) "... it would be a very suitable thing, if the five volumes of the *Recopilación de Leyes de Indias* were bought at the expense of all ... The gentleman [Governor] has a copy, and he is outmatching us with his quotations." Junípero Serra to Rafael Verger, 15 August 1779, Ibid., 3:353.


\(^{22}\) On one occasion greedy colonists tried to take away some lands from the San Diego Mission Indians but the friars defended the natives and cited book 4; law 9 from the *Recopilación*: "It is commanded that the converted Indian shall not be deprived of their lands of which they held possession before ... so that they may cultivate them and use them for their own profit." Ibid., p. 226.
In 1779 Governor Neve argued with the clerics regarding the Indians' work regulations on Sunday. Once again the perplexed Serra "got busy and consulted what books we have here. But I could not come across the first bull of Benedict XIV, who made the changes in the said feast days... Only in a recent Potesta, I found a bull issued by the same Holy Father..." 23 In his never-ending feuds with governors, Serra on one occasion used the illustration of Hernan Cortés allowing himself to be flogged by the Franciscans to impress the natives about equality before ecclesiastical laws. He used an event from history to emphasize his argument and one which he could substantiate from his personal copy of Monarquía Indiana. 24

Since books were joyful companions and faithful instructors to the men who had forsaken civilization and exchanged it for the lonely valleys of California, they rejoiced when new volumes arrived. One annual recording by the San Diego Mission proudly listed eleven new titles. 25 At the time of the secularization of the missions in the mid 1830's, detailed inventories were taken which testified to the

23 Tibesar, Writings, 3:341.

24 "I am sending to your Lordship the three volumes of the Monarquía Indiana by Father Fray Juan de Torquemada." He owned the books and loaned them to Neve. Junípero Serra to Felipe de Neve, 17 September 1779, Tibesar, Writings, 3:375.

25 The eleven titles were; Flos Sanctorum (3 vols); Itinerario de Parrocho; El Manoqita de Tellado; Biblia Sacra (4 vols.); Mística Ciudad de Dios (4 vols.); A Life of Venerable Mother de Agreda; Speculum Parrochorum; Moral Theology (2 vols.); Doctrinas Prácticas (3 vols.); Florilegio Medicinal; and Prólogo Galeato. San Diego Mission Annual Report, 31 December 1777, CMD, SBMA.
extent of their libraries. It is estimated that in 1835 the twenty-one establishments possessed approximately 3,185 books or an average of 151 titles per mission. The inventory for Santa Cruz enumerated 152 volumes. Santa Barbara's count revealed that, in addition to the traditional devotionals, there were valuable reference works. Copies of Don Quijote, Medicina Práctica, and Reflections on the French Revolution along with dictionaries in Spanish, Latin, and French were discovered at San José. After secularization the majority of the mission and privately owned books were housed at Santa Barbara and they reveal a wide realm of learning.

The missionaries' classical formal education, their devotion to knowledge, and their unusual intelligence, made them a unique group. The hard-learned Latin was not obsolete in the mission field, for many of their favorite books and Bibles were written in it. Moreover, many of the church decrees and regulations were often sent


27 Inventory of Mission Santa Cruz, December 1835, CMD, SBMA.

28 Florilegio Medicinal, Diccionario Geográfico de América, Diccionario Geográfico de Universal, and Diccionario Castellano. Inventory of Santa Barbara Misión, 15 March 1835, CMD, SBMA.


30 Some of the categories found in the library are: agriculture, apologetics, architecture, ascetic theology, Biblical literature, catechisms, classics, commerce, dictionaries, government, grammar and language, hagiography, history and church history, homiletics, law and legislations, languages, literature, medicine, music, natural sciences, philosophy, religion, etc. Archival Library, SBMA.
The writings of Serra, Lasuen and others were at times in Latin; and, even when writing in Spanish, they were liberally interspersed with Latin expressions.

Besides the professional use for that language it even proved practical on certain occasions. When a Russian naval expedition visited San Francisco in 1806 they were frustrated at their inability to communicate with the Spaniards. Among the crew there was a Prussian scientist who, as a trained scholar, likewise knew Latin and was able to communicate thus with the missionaries. The doctor recorded the event: "As not one of our party understood Spanish, the conversation was carried on, in Latin, between one and the Franciscan friar, this being the only medium by which we could make ourselves intelligible to each other."

On a later occasion when an American mountainman named Jedediah Smith visited San Gabriel, the monks tried the same method, but were disappointed since the visitor did not know Latin. Smith left an account of the

---

31 Two examples are a two page letter authorizing Lasuen to administer confirmation and a four-page report by San Fernando College. Emmanuel de Silva to Fermin Lasuen, 9 September 1792, and Report of San Fernando College, 23 May 1795. Both are in the CMD, SBMA.


event: "He then presented the note from the father written in Latin and as I could not read his Latin nor he my English [sic] it seemed that we were not likely to become general correspondents."34

The love for knowledge was instilled in the friars during their academic preparation. They were told that by studying men came closer to God, but that on the other hand "those who carry on in stupidity, and fail to cultivate their minds by higher things ... in a rational way ..." would much easier fall prey to the "seductions of the world ..."35 That devotion to erudition remained alive with the California fathers. An example of this was Narciso Duran (1776-1846) who amongst his many labors found time to write a treatise on moral theology where he expounded on various moral and ethical questions.36

Another studious minister was found at Mission Purisima where he astonished visitors by his ability to speak for hours on the theory of the motion of the planets.37

As members of an order that practiced reflective, meditative thinking many of the missionaries kept individual logs and diaries of personal experiences and viewpoints. From those documents much has


35 That is taken from a lecture on philosophy given to all Franciscans in training. Francisco Diego y Moreno, 4 January 1820, CMD, SBMA.

36 In his treatise Duran dealt with the free will, conscience, law, circumstances, sin, penitence, confession, and oaths. The work was twenty-one tight written pages long and it contained a liberal usage of Latin. Treatise of Duran, 1846, CMD, SBMA.

been learned about the period. Palu was the first to see the grandeur of the California settlement and used primary documents to write the first history of the region. Because of their dedication to exact record keeping, today we have detailed accounts of their early explorations into the interior of the state. As men who were zealous record keepers, they also understood the value of history and of leaving accurate historical accounts of their accomplishments. Hence, in 1818 the Franciscan leadership asked that Father José Senan (1760-1823) be given the necessary time off so that he could write an updated history of the missions.

Since the missionaries were articulate, intelligent, and educated men they found it difficult to be cast away from civilization and to be ignorant of world events. On March 4, 1799, Mariano Payeras (1769-1823) returned some books to Governor Diego de Borica and after expressing how much he had enjoyed them ("... los cuales he leído con mucho gusto...") the Friar complained that they had not heard any recent news from Spain. He was especially anxious to know about the fate of

---

38 Palou's Noticias de Nueva California incorporated the missions' history till the 1780's. The government recognized their scribal abilities and often selected a missionary to accompany exploratory expeditions to serve as chaplain and diarist. Pedro Font and Juan Crespi took part in such explorations and their diaries have been published for the wealth of material they contain. Other such expeditionary diaries are found at SBMA: Diary of José María Zalvidea, 14 August 1806; Diary of Ramón Abella, 31 October 1811, CMD, SBMA.

39 They wanted to have "a historical narrative of those missions" (una relación histórica de esas misiones). Juan Bestard to the Prefect of San Fernando Mission, 29 August 1818, CMD, SBMA.
the Roman Catholic faith throughout Western Europe. Then he pleaded
to the Governor that any bit of news from the old continent be
communicated to him whenever possible.40 Other missionaries likewise
begged their superiors that newspapers and periodicals be sent to them
if all possible. The Franciscan Order and its officials did send out
occasional circular letters to inform their ministers of significant
secular and ecclesiastical events, but those reports were not very
regular and sufficient to quench the friars' desires of keeping abreast
of world affairs.41 To remedy their isolation from the news publications
in 1808 the joint missionaries of five missions contemplated subscribing
to gazettes, newspapers, and other news-filled magazines.42 When commun-
cations and visitors were sparse in arriving and the men of God simply
found themselves overwhelmed by the interminable labors that denied
them time with their books, they understandably felt depressed. They

40 His concern for Catholicism was justified in view of the anti-
Catholic feelings triggered by the French Revolution. Mariano Payeras to
Diego de Borica, 4 March 1799, CMD, SBMA.

41 Example of a circular was in 1796 when one such letter was
sent to all the missions announcing the treaty of peace between Spain
and France, and ordering the missionaries to celebrate it with prayers.
Circular letter of Lasuen, 5 March 1796. Another circular in 1800 informed
about the election of Pius VII as the new Pope. Circular letter of
Lasuen, 7 December 1800. Both are found at CMD, SBMA.

42 Some of the missionaries asked for Mexican newspapers ("He oído
que los diarios mexicanos son muy bonitos . . ."). Mariano Payeras to
José Viñals, 3 March 1807. Others would have been pleased with anything
that was newsy (" . . . gazetas y demás papeles curiosos, e instructivos
. . . "). Mariano Payeras to José Viñals, 4 May 1807. All of them would
have been pleased with any type of publication that kept them aware of
international affairs. Mariano Payeras to José Viñals, 25 October 1808.
All found at CMD, SBMA.
were some of Spain's best minds surrounded by ruthless pagans who showed little appreciation for their unselfish labors. Even Fermin de Lasuen (1736-1803) president of the missions could not hold back on one occasion as he unburdened his heart to his superiors:

Oh . . . What anxieties! What disappointments! What vigilance! What anguish of mind! What labors day and night for the tired missionaries! What liberties! What excesses! What irregularities! What ignorance! What disorders! How Christian civilization and pagan barbarity can give way to one another in the same neophytes. 43

Although the missionaries suffered intellectually in their distant outposts, generally they overcame their feelings of despair and fully dedicated themselves to their chosen tasks by employing their talents to better understand the natives. Boscana spent years in careful research, observation, and consultation with the Indians at San Juan Capistrano, and produced a booklet that has become a most useful anthropological work on those Indians. 44 Another Spaniard who delved into the strange world of native languages and customs was Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta (1780-1840). He made it a task to learn the dialects of the heathen tribes to which he ministered, and in time was able to preach in thirteen languages. Many of his grammatical findings he put down in booklet form for the benefit

43 Kenneally, Lasuen, 2:277.

44 The title of the treatise was Chinicchinchich, the only study of this nature produced by a California missionary. It was finished in 1825 and in 1846 Alfred Robinson translated it and published it in English. Dr. John P. Harrington, an anthropologist, considered it: "... unique and excellent." Geiger, Franciscan Missionaries, pp. 29-30.
of others. People acquainted with him considered the friar to be "a
man of great learning" while Bancroft labeled him as "a scholar and
always a student." Vicente de Santa María (1742-1806) of San Buena-
ventura also took it upon himself to learn the local tongues and accord-
ing to Vancouver his parishioners flocked around him and were very glad
of his ministry primarily because he could speak their languages per-
fectly.

All aspirants for mission service were expected to acquire an
elementary knowledge of simple medical treatments, but in the missions
of California some of them surpassed that minimum level of expectation.

Arroyo de la Cuesta was a scholar whose personal library
listed sixty-three titles at the time of his arrival in California.
Document dated 6 September 1808, CMD, SBMA. "He applied himself most
assiduously to the learning of the respective languages with such
success that I doubt that there is another who has reached the same
proficiency in understanding and describing its intricate syntax."
Such was Father Sarria's assessment of his linguistic skills. Quoted
in Francis J. Weber, "Versatile Franciscan Linguist," The Masterkey 42
(1968):154. The findings of his studies he recorded in a manual called
Vocabulary and Phrase Book of the Mutsun Language, which consisted of
2,884 native phrases with Spanish translations and Latin footnotes. It
was translated and published in English under the auspices of the Smith-
sonian Institution in 1852. Recent ethnologists have praised the work
as "one of the most satisfactory treatises dealing with an Indian idiom
of California." Ibid., pp. 155-156.

Angustias de la Guerra Ord, Occurrences in Hispanic California
(Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1956), pp. 33,
34.

Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California, 7 vols. (San

Marguerite E. Wilbur, ed., Vancouver in California, 1792-1794
Luis Gil y Taboada (1773-1833) of San José taught himself simple surgery and became an authority on local disease. His expertise was recognized and utilized by Langsdorf who quoted him in a chapter devoted to California ailments. Another Franciscan knowledgeable in medicine was Vicente Francisco de Sarria who in 1830 composed and sent to all the missions a treatise on Cesarean operations. The motive for the surgery was to rescue the fetuses of dead pregnant women and thus save the infant's life or at least baptize them. Sarria was not trained in medicine but through personal study and bold actions he was able successfully to perform the operation and instruct others in it.

The natural and learned abilities of the California missionaries were also notable in another area: music. Every Franciscan in training was urged to learn to sing and play an instrument. Among the missionaries Arroyo de la Cuesta was known for his rich singing voice and as the author of various hymns. Serra had a sonorous voice and always enjoyed singing. Father Pedro Font (1738-1781) was also a musician.

---


50 Langsdorf, Voyages and Travels, 2:211.

51 Document Dated 26 July 1830, CMD, SBMA.

52 Geiger, Franciscan Missionaries, p. 20.

53 During his last illness Palau heard him sing with his usual strong voice and reasoned that Serra was not seriously ill, but a soldier replied: "This saintly priest is always well when it comes to praying and singing, but he is nearly finished." Palau, Life, p. 243.
who was popular as a harpsichord player. Lasuen was also a musician of distinction whose instructions long remained in the memories of the natives. George Vancouver, the English navigator who visited California in 1792, understood the friars' love for music and donated a hand organ to the president of the missions which was deeply appreciated. Florencio Ibañez (1740-1818) was another gifted musician having served as choirmaster in Zaragoza before arriving at the missions. Father Juan Bautista Sancho (1777-1824) possessed a strong, agreeable singing voice and taught both the Gregorian chant and figured music. Another talented musician was José Viader (1765-1835) who as a choir master

54 While visiting San Diego Mission in 1776 he took part in the worship service by singing and "accompanying myself on a bad spinet . . . left . . . by Fray Angel Sonera . . . " At San Gabriel the neophytes were all assembled and he played for them "on the musical instrument, with which they were very much pleased." Herbert E. Bolton, ed., Font's Complete Diary (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1933) pp. 204, 240.


56 By merely turning a small handle you get the most beautiful sound. It plays thirty-four brief melodies, and none is far removed from what is sacred. It is an instrument of beauty and a truly precious piece." Fermin de Lasuen to Tomas Pangua, 27 December 1793, in Kenneally, Lasuen, 1:298. Lasuen was so pleased that he determined to show Spanish gratitude (gratitud española) to the English generosity (generosidad inglesa). Fermin de Lasuen to George Vancouver, 15 December 1792, CMD, SBMA.


58 Geiger, Franciscan Missionaries, p. 223.
had one of the best choirs in the province. 59

For the missionaries, music was a double blessing, a form of worship and a way to alleviate their burdens. Songs incorporating simple Christian teaching were taught to the pagans. 60 In 1773, on his first trip to Upper California, Palou was touched when he was greeted by a group of neophytes who sang for him the Alabado. 61 The natives' introduction to music was reinforced throughout the day; at mealtimes music was used to offer grace by the Bendito. 62 In due time choirs were organized and instrumental ensembles to accompany them. The missionaries worked diligently to promote the growing talents of their converts. When one lacked advanced knowledge to teach his pupils, he would seek aid from other missions. 63 On one occasion Narciso Durán wrote to Mexico and asked his superiors that an organ be sent to Upper California to be used in teaching the natives. 64 Unfortunately,

59 Ray, Glorif Dei, p. 8.


62 DaSilva, Mission Music, pp. 6, 7.

63 In 1823 Ripol requested the governor that a certain artillery man stationed at Monterey, who played the clarinet, be transferred to Santa Barbara to teach the natives to play it, since he had six instruments and no player. Antonio Ripol to Luis Arguello, 18 September 1823, CMD, SBMA.

his request was negated. Nevertheless with the fathers' enthusiastic leadership the bands developed into respectable organizations. They were used to celebrate the many holidays observed at the missions and at times travelled to neighboring communities to unite with their festive celebrations. On such occasions they would play lively secular Spanish songs that were also taught to the Indians.

Visitors to the missions had complimentary remarks about the orchestras. Harrison Rogers, companion of Jedediah Smith, describing such music at San Gabriel, called it "tolerable good music." Alfred Robinson, describing a similar experience, wrote "the music . . . was well selected, and the Indian voices accorded harmoniously with the flutes and violins that accompanied them." A French visitor was fascinated when the Indian orchestra of Santa Clara played for him the Marseillaise and Vive Henri IV.

An American who visited San José

---

65 Juan Cortés to Narciso Duran, 21 June 1820, CMD, SBMA.


67 Smith, Southwest Expedition, p. 223.


(1836) described the band as having about twenty musicians and that the pieces performed "were executed very well".\textsuperscript{70}

Although many of the Indians were talented, the bulk of the credit for the success of the orchestras belonged to the missionaries for their ability as musicians and teachers of their talent. Two of them made magnificent contributions to mission music. Estevan Tapis (1756-1825) created the ingenious system of the colored notation that enabled the Indians to follow successfully their lines by coloring all of their notes with just one color.\textsuperscript{71} However, the greatest of all mission musicians was Narciso Durán. He was the trainer, choirmaster, and band conductor at San José. In addition he composed two musical masses—\textit{Misa Vizcaína} and \textit{Misa Cataluña}—the only serious liturgical works composed by a California missionary. To enable those untrained in music to understand his compositions he used only one clef, colored notation, and a six-line staff that made notes look uncomplicated.\textsuperscript{72} Robinson recorded that so sharp was the ear of Durán that he could "detect a wrong note on the part of" any musician "instantly".\textsuperscript{73}

In a prologue that he wrote for his masses his wide knowledge of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{70}Nunis, \textit{Diary of Atherton}, p. 9.
\item \textsuperscript{71}DaSilva, \textit{Mission Music}, pp. 13, 14.
\item \textsuperscript{72}Ibid., pp. 23, 24; Ray, \textit{Gloriæ Dei}, p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{73}Robinson, \textit{California}, p. 72.
\end{itemize}
literature, history, and music was demonstrated. He cited the counsel on music of five Biblical books, Philo, St. Denis, Tertullian, St. Basil, Chrysostom, Augustine, Jerome, and the guidelines set up at the Council of Trent. 74 The Franciscans introduced European music to the neophytes and gradually they were able to master it and the instruments with which it was to be played. 75 It was a gift that the missionaries gave to their children and one that remained with them long after the fathers were gone. 76

As European-trained men of culture, the missionaries had cultivated an appreciation for art; and as Catholic clergy, they were aware of the medium that it provided to illustrate and communicate the church's teachings. Consequently, some of the standard objects found at every mission were paintings and sculptures of saints. The altars and walls of the churches and chapels were extensively decorated with paintings and statues of Jesus, Mary, Joseph, angels, and impressive representations

74 DeSilva, Mission Music, pp. 29-33.

75 By the time of secularization in the 1830's there were hundreds of Indians playing European-style instruments in the missions. Ray, Glorei Dei, p. 15. The inventory taken at Santa Barbara in 1835 revealed 4 flutes, 3 clarinets, 2 trumpets, 2 bass viola, 3 drums, 20 violins, 3 triangles, 4 music stands, and the musicians' uniforms. Inventory of Santa Barbara Mission 1834, CMD, SBMA.

76 In 1880 Robert Louis Stevenson visited the old and broken-down mission of San Carlos de Borromeo at Monterey. On Sunday the Indians congregated at the old church for a worship service. Most were old and feeble but they surprised Stevenson with their "choir." "... They have the Gregorian music at their finger ends, and pronounced the Latin so correctly that I could follow the meaning as they sang." Robert Louis Stevenson, Across the Plains: With Other Memories and Essays (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), p. 106.
of heaven, hell, judgement, purgatory, and the crucifixion. 77 A traditional way of teaching about Christ was through the Via Crucis, or the fourteen stations of the cross. 78 The paintings came from Spain, were made at San Fernando College or at times were the work of the fathers with native help. At least in a few of the outposts the features of the saints were darkened to appeal to the minds of the heathen. 79

Perousse, a French navigator who visited San Carlos in 1786, observed that the church was "... adorned with some tolerable pictures, copied from originals in Italy... Among the number is a picture of hell, in which the painter appears to have borrowed from the imagination of Callot..." 80 Langsdorf, while visiting San Francisco, was shown a painting of a plant "... from the midst of which, instead of a flower stem, rose a holy virgin..." 81 Thomas Farnham, an American visitor, noticed another representation of hell painted with such a red glare that it would have driven Titian to an extreme

77 Engelhardt, Missions and Missionaries, 2:253.


81 Langsdorf, Voyages and Travels, 2:155.
madness. Thus the fathers capitalized on art to communicate their theology to the simple minds of their congregations and by using that medium they introduced yet another trait of Western civilization to the uncivilized valleys of California.

Since the friars had been taught the merits of education, they were quick to realize its usefulness as an avenue to free the illiterate heathen from their archaic world of brutality and ignorance. Schools were immediately set up at the missions to instruct the natives in the fundamentals of Catholic dogma and of the Castilian tongue. The teaching sessions were held in one of the large rooms of the compound, and as far as possible were conducted in the fathers' native language. The results were positive: "The little boys ... in a few months learn anything, as reading in Spanish or Latin, and learn to read from manuscripts, to sing the plain as well as the figured music." Thus, the Franciscans initiated California's education, something for which they were qualified by their superior learning.

---


83 Nunis, Padres, p. 36.

84 There were few settlers in early California, and those who came were usually uneducated. In 1785 of the 50 soldiers at Monterey only 14 could read. In 1786 at San Francisco the ratio was 7 of 30 while in 1791 it was 2 of 28. In 1794 none of the soldiers at San Francisco could read, only the officers. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., San Francisco or Mission Dolores (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1924), p. 120.
The cultured missionaries were the first to introduce into California certain amenities that were essential for a civilized lifestyle. Something crucial in successfully conducting a massive scheduled daily program were clocks and every mission possessed at least one. Although bells were the audible timepieces around the institutions, clocks were just as important and highly regarded. As early as 1777 Santa Clara reported having a "wooden clock with little bells for striking the hours and quarter hours..."\(^{85}\) Whenever a mission's time piece was in disrepair there were urgent pleas that another be sent.\(^{86}\) In some places sundials were built to enable the natives to understand the concept of hours.\(^{87}\) Another practical invention of civilization that the Franciscans brought along was thermometers. When Smith visited San Gabriel he used them.\(^{88}\)

In their concern for aesthetics in 1818, San Antonio acquired ten

\(^{85}\) "... Un reloj de madera con campanitas para hora y quartas." Annual Report 1777, CMD, SBMA.

\(^{86}\) "... el reloj lo necesita mucho esta misión." (the clock is much needed by this mission). Luis Gil y Taboada to Tomás de la Peña, 31 March 1806, CMD, SBMA. At another time a missionary asked for an alarm clock but if they did not have such, one without alarm would be welcomed due to their needs. Mariano Payeras to José Viñals, 12 October 1807, CMD, SBMA.

\(^{87}\) "There is a sundial, placed on a stone pillar in front of the mission building, which was placed there by some of the padres." That was at San Luis Obispo in 1856. Henry Miller, Account of a Tour of California Missions, 1856 (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1952), p. 29.

\(^{88}\) "... the thermometer stands at 60 and 63 in the days, & 50-53 in the night, the thermometer hangs within doors." Smith, Expedition, p. 221.
chandeliers for the sacristy, nine of brass and one of silver.\(^89\)

There were many more utensils that the Franciscans introduced to the region and those were mentioned in their annual reports. In 1777 (eight years after its founding) San Diego Mission reported having a number of such devices, and the report for 1783 revealed even more.\(^90\)

The Franciscans' cultured ways were in contrast with the crude barbarity of the frontier, but they managed to maintain a certain degree of formality. An example of this was Font who was critical for having to eat on a makeshift table without tablecloths.\(^91\) Impartial guests were witnesses to the fathers' propriety. James Pattie described the parlor where he was hosted as "... richly adorned with paintings of saints..." and was further impressed by the "glassware, the decorations... and the arrangements of everything showed me at a glance, that this priest was a man of taste and fashion."\(^92\) Similar observations were recorded by Smith: "Our knives and forks according to the common custom of the country were rolled up in a napkin

---

\(^89\) Report, San Antonio de Padua, 1818, CMD, SBMA.

\(^90\) Relevant items reported at the friars' living quarters (1777) were: 4 pine chests with lock, 1 ink stand, 1 saltcellar of metal, 1 bottle case with 18 bottles, 6 knives, 1 comb, 1 pair of scissors, 1 mirror, 4 copper pots, 8 copper pans, 2 tablecloths, 6 napkins, and 18 pewter plates. San Diego Annual Report, 31 December 1777, CMD, SBMA. In 1783 some new items were reported: 2 scales with weights, 1 medicine chest with bottles, 2 tin funnels, 2 metal cups, 2 sets of razors with shaving mugs, 1 inkwell with metal sand-box, 8 crystal glasses, 1 syringe, 2 toilet bowls, and 2 beds. San Diego Inventory, 4 May 1783, CMD, SBMA.

\(^91\) Bolton, Font's Diary, p. 241.

and laid by the side of the plates." Robinson was similarly impressed by the finesse of his host, Pedro Cabot (1777-1836), whom he described as "a fine, noble looking man, whose manner and whole deportment would have led one to suppose that he had [been] bred in the courts of Europe, rather than in a cloister."

The evidence is substantial in attesting to the fact that the Franciscan missionaries of California were educated and cultured individuals whose cultivated view of life enabled them to introduce into the area a degree of civilization that only they could bring to this "last corner of the world."

93 Smith, Expedition, p. 102.

94 Robinson, California, p. 91. Cabot's manners were also recognized by others who associated with him and respectfully called him "el caballero" (the gentleman). Geiger, Franciscan Missionaries, p. 36.
The primary and foremost calling of the missionaries was to be ambassadors of Christianity; but with their vast education and refinement, they also made it part of their mission to uplift their converts' total lifestyle.

The very first task taken by the men of brown to elevate the natives from their savage life to a civilized society was to teach them to cover their bodies. All of the early visitors to Upper California remarked about the nakedness of its inhabitants. Juan Crespi in his diary described the men going about like "Adam in Paradise before he sinned," while the women wore small aprons which barely concealed them. The fathers responded by providing the women with skirts and blouses and the men with pants, shirts, and jackets. As the Indians were won over to the mission lifestyle, a clothing ration was set up to provide everyone with adequate garments.

suitable for their chores. New mothers were provided with old clothes which they could use to make diapers, mattresses, and infant clothes. Although there were always some who resisted the innovation, gradually all the neophytes learned the principle of decency. Visitors to the Franciscan outpost were impressed by the converts' dress. Altherton observed that the men were all "comfortably clothed in good blankets made in the mission" while women were prettily dressed in "fancy calico gowns," and a few had "muslim silk dresses." Davis briefly wrote that the Indians looked rather "civilized" and "well clothed." In addition, the primitive race was instructed about personal hygiene. They were taught about washing their bodies and clothes. In time that health-

2 Blankets, tunics, pants, and skirts were generally provided. For those whose work required it special clothing was also provided. "The cowherds have been given mangas, pantaloons, and boots have always been given to them, and where possible leather jackets ... in addition to a hat and shoes." Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, California Mission Documents, Santa Barbara Mission Archives (hereafter referred as CMD, SBMA). This information is confirmed by secular sources: "The Indian women were given material for skirts and also a blanket and a blouse. Once a year they were given a dress." Pio Pico, Don Pio Pico Historical Narrative (Glendale, CA.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1973), p. 160.

3 Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, CMD, SBMA.

4 With the old people the missionaries found it necessary to use threats in order to have them keep their clothes on. Doyce B. Nunis, ed., As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs, as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries, 1813-1815 (Santa Barbara, CA.: Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library, 1976), p. 148.


promoting innovation was generally accepted and practiced by the converted Indians.  

Another area that the missionaries immediately set about to reform was the primitive practice of marriage. In their natural society the natives practiced multiple sexual immoralities. They exercised premarital and adulterous relations and participated in ritualistic orgies. Chiefs were allowed any number of wives they could support. It is not surprising then that Lasuen was shocked at their behavior and described them as a people "without education, without government, religion or respect for authority," who "shamelessly pursue without restraints whatever their brutal appetites suggest to them."  

---

7 Atherton saw a typical wash-day at San Jose, as nearly thirty women were at the public fountain busy in that activity. Nunis, Atherton, p. 9.


10 Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, CMD, SBMA. Also found in Finbar Kenneally, O.F.M., ed., Writings of Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965), 2:220. In their efforts to abolish such immoralities the Franciscans worked closely with the young people, teaching them chastity by way of the monjería (see pp. 51, 52).
After the Indians were instructed and baptized they were received as part of the mission community. They were taught the Christian ethics of marriage and family life, to love their wives and to be mutually kind.\textsuperscript{11} The fathers taught them those virtues objectively by assigning little or no work to expectant or nursing mothers.\textsuperscript{12} The friars also had to eradicate superstitions that often led to abortion and suffocation of infants.\textsuperscript{13}

One of the requirements placed on the heathen upon their baptism was mandatory residence within the mission village. By limiting their contacts with their pagan relatives, the neophytes were prevented from lapsing back into their former ways. The immediate proximity of the village also enabled the missionaries to teach further their converts on a daily basis, as well as to employ their energy to operate the missions' industries. The dwellings provided for them at the village were a definite improvement over their former filthy and miserable huts. The size reached by the hamlets was extensive; for, in 1812, Mission Purísima reported constructing eighty of such adobe homes; and, after

\textsuperscript{11} It was observed by the missionaries that: "The young men when they observe their wives pregnant, nursing, or in protracted illness, show them little sympathy." Nunis, Padres, p. 24.

\textsuperscript{12} Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, CMD, SBMA.

the earthquake of the same year, one hundred were left uninhabitable.\textsuperscript{14} As economic conditions permitted, the native villages were improved and more advanced innovations introduced for the welfare of the former savages. When Robinson visited San Juan Capistrano, the houses were made of adobe, having tile roofs, and extending over six blocks which provided "a neat comfortable appearance."\textsuperscript{15} To elevate further their lifestyle the families were provided with sheets, and even curtains. It was the duty of the alcalde to visit each room weekly and see that every article in the house was kept clean. The monks made monthly visits for the same purpose.\textsuperscript{16}

The laws of the Indies clearly spelled out that the neophytes were to be provided with a nominal measure of self-government. They were to elect their own mayor (alcalde) and assistants (regidores) who were entrusted with minimal power to maintain law and order in the village.\textsuperscript{17} If the population exceeded eighty Indians, two alcaldes

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14}Mariano Payeras to Luis Martinez, 6 October 1812, CMD, SBMA; Mariano Payeras to Antonio Ripol, 31 December 1812, CMD, SBMA.
\item \textsuperscript{15}Alfred Robinson, \textit{Life in California} (Oakland, CA.: Biobooks, 1947), p. 19. Furthermore, some of dwellings were provided with grinding stones, pans, pots, ovens for baking bread, and had windows, doors, and such facilities so that the houses were "the envy of the presidio soldiers . . . " Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, CMD, SBMA.
\item \textsuperscript{16}Susanna Bryant Dakin, ed., \textit{A Scotch Paisano: Hugo Reid's Life in California, 1832-1852, Derived From His Correspondence} (Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press, 1939), p. 278.
\item \textsuperscript{17}Rafael Gómez Hoyos, \textit{La Iglesia de América en Las Leyes de Indias} (Madrid: Instituto Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo--Instituto de Cultura Hispana de Bogotá, 1964), p. 147.
\end{itemize}
and four regidores were to be elected. Once elected, rods were
given to the officials symbolizing their capacity to judge others. Generally, the fathers were not enthusiastic about providing the
Indians with such authority, fearing that they would become despotic and corrupt. However, as faithful subjects of the king and true Spaniards that they were ("como verdaderos españoles") they complied.
In 1796 Lasuen wrote a circular letter to all the missionaries in which he urged them to elect the necessary alcaldes and regidores, for that would "prepare the neophytes to keep the laws."

Eventually the native officials proved to be faithful agents with the missionaries in their task of maintaining order and good conduct. Their aid was appreciated since it was indeed a laborious task to instill civility into the former pagans. Lasuen described their violent past:

Here are aborigines whom we are teaching to be men, people of vicious and ferocious habits who know no law but force, no superior but their own will, and no reason but their own caprice. They look at their own most barbarious and cruel actions with an indifference foreign to human nature, and

---

18 Diego de Borica to Missions, 1792, CMD, SBMA.
20 Francisco Dumetz to Vicente Santa María, 29 November 1794, CMD, SBMA.
21 "... en ella vamos preparando a los neofitios para el cumplimiento de las leyes ... " Fermin de Lasuen to Diego de Borica, 12 November 1796, CMD, SBMA.
death is their customary way of avenging injuries. Such is the character of the men we are required to correct, and whose crimes we must punish.

Obviously, the task was not an enviable one. The savages had to be taught that they were worthy human beings far superior to the beasts, and yet that they were amenable to divine and human laws. In short, it was their mission to make good Christians and law-abiding citizens of a race who until recently had neither recognized nor practiced any form of restraint.

To uphold the integrity of their moral experiments the missionaries resorted to the use of corporal punishment. Common forms of punishment were: lashings, shackles, stocks, and imprisonment. Men were locked in the mission jail and females in the monjerio. Some of the typical punishable violations were: 1. absence from work/church 2. absence from the mission for longer periods than those allowed 3. fighting 4. theft 5. immorality 6. destruction of mission property. Through these measures order and responsibility were brought to the outposts.

22 Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, CMD, SBMA.

23 "If we can not gently withdraw their hearts from their own way of living, how are we to get them to appreciate ours? How shall we teach them Christian obedience, and the way of civil society?" Ibid.; de la Perouse, *Voyage Round the World*, 1:448.

24 Florian F. Guest, *Fermin Francisco de Lasuen: A Biography* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1973), p. 236. However, in their efforts to make the discipline a teaching experience the punishments were relatively mild. Estevan Tapis to José Joaquin de Arrillaga, 15 September 1810, CMD, SBMA. We have on record a description of a mission jail: "... the calaboose is a miserable dark room of two apartments one with a small loophole in the wall, the other a dungeon without light or ventilation." Edwin Bryant, *What I Saw in California: Being the Journal of a Tour* (Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, Inc., 1967), p. 312.
One visitor, noticing its visible effect on the Indians, remarked that the order was militaristic. As a result of such innovations the neophytes were indoctrinated in the value of liberty, respect for the law, and communal responsibility.

There were many other aspects of civilized society that the Indians needed to learn. The social responsibility of work was one. During their years as pagans the natives did not work routinely but merely gathered food for seasonal survival. A missionary that knew them well recorded:

"... they live without providing for what is indispensably necessary for existence; they know nothing of comforts; and they enjoy life as long as they can sustain it with ease, and without having recourse to what they regard as work."

Once the aborigines were on the Spanish compound they were subjected to regulated daily schedules. Bells were used to announce the time for rising, breakfast, work, lunch, supper, vespers, and bedtime thus imposing a sense of regularity to the previously void lives of the primitives. The missions taught the Indians the dignity of work and of balanced rest. Their idea that work was only done to avoid starvation was extracted from their minds and replaced with the concept of community welfare. Consequently everyone at the mission was assigned a job for the benefit of the entire institution, and thus to himself. That interdependent teamwork was something alien to the

---

25 Davis, Seventy-Five Years, p. 179.

26 Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, CMD, SBMA. "The pagans do not plant. They are like the birds of the air who neither spin nor gather into barns." Nunis, Padres, p. 111.

27 "For timing their rest, meals and work, we sound the bell." Ibid., p. 81.
natives' society and yet another practical lesson in communal responsibility that the fathers provided for them.

To show the positive benefits of labor, the missionaries themselves set the example. Often they worked alongside the neophytes to implant in them work habits. That the friars were exemplary hard-workers is obvious from their correspondence. In a letter of 1774 Serra spoke of his garden being "full of vegetables" and having a spot already "set aside for tobacco plants."28 In 1780, at age sixty-seven, the active president casually reported that on that day he had personally planted five fig trees.29 In their endeavors to train the converts in the art of tilling the soil, the Franciscans became responsible for introducing the first mechanical farm tools into the area. The annual reports by the missions reveal how extensively and quickly they introduced those implements of civilization into the "last corner of the world."30 Not surprisingly an early visitor to California commented that the fathers had "taught the Indians many of the useful arts and accustomed


30 The first annual report for Santa Barbara revealed that in just twelve months the missionaries had provided the mission with: 8 crowbars, 15 pickaxes, 6 ploughshares, 12 plough parts, 5 machetes, 12 sickles, 12 large knives, 8 ploughs, and 1 carreta (wagon). Annual Report, Santa Barbara Mission, 31 December 1787, CMD, SBMA. As time permitted other useful tools were introduced as the 1783 report of San Diego reveals: 1 iron compass, 3 jack planes, 4 carpenters' axes, 2 crowbars, 6 chisels, 4 augers, 5 saws, 1 buck-saw, 4 hand saws, 4 gimlets, 1 square, 4 anvils, 3 vises, some bench vises, 6 Spanish round files, 10 files, etc. Annual Report, San Diego Mission, 4 May 1783, CMD, SBMA.
After the natives had been baptized and settled in the mission hamlet, the Spaniards used all of their abilities to civilize and Hispanicize them further. One of the fundamental things that the missionaries endeavored to teach their parishioners was the Spanish language. Through education, song, conversation, and church services the language was gradually taught. In many cases the use of their native dialect was prohibited and a rewards system was instituted as reinforcement for the neophytes to express themselves in the Spanish tongue. The converts were Hispanicized by receiving proper Spanish


32The task of Hispanicizing them fell entirely on the missionaries since the soldiers were rude and uneducated, and upright, civic-minded settlers were scarce. Six years after San Diego was founded Serra would complain that up to that moment no mission had a single person that could qualify as a settler. Florian F. Guest, "Municipal Institutions of Spanish California" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1961), p. 77. The settlers were still noticeably few even decades later when in 1816 Santa Purísima reported that its European population consisted of only one neighbor (vecino). Mariano Payeras to Bishop of Sonora, 3 April 1816, CMD, SBMA.

33After only two years of work at Monterey, Serra could write: "... the children are beginning to express themselves in Castilian." Junipero Serra to Francisco Palou, 18 August 1772, in Tibesar, *Writings*, 1:267.

34In 1795 all missionaries were reminded that they should make the effort to teach the neophytes Spanish and to curtail their use of dialects: "... que se esmeren en enseñar a sus respectivos hijos el idioma castellano ..." Fermin de Lasuen to all missionaries, 23 February 1795, CMD, SBMA. "They are exhorted to learn it; they are given and offered prizes for speaking it; they are reprimanded for not using it; and it is the custom to deny their request unless it has been expressed in Spanish." Fermin de Lasuen, Reply to Charges, 19 June 1801, CMD, SBMA.
names at baptism. Through these measures the Indians gained the ability to communicate in an international language, understood by millions around the world.

The quality and quantity of the food supply greatly improved under the Franciscans' paternalism. As primitives, their meals were never certain, but under the missions' protection three daily rations were provided. Meat was served routinely and there were seasonal variations to their diets. Under their new system, they were instructed to abstain from eating unclean foods, such as snakes, that had formerly been consumed. Overall their diet was improved, balanced, and widened by the new products. Furthermore, healthier ways of cooking food, and the usage of condiments (e.g., salt) were also taught.

The Iberian missionaries observed similarities in the weather of California and that of Spain and were quick to introduce some of their favorite foods. Tac, a native Californian, described the bounty of fruits that were found at San Luis Rey and enumerated pears

35 An extant mission document has a list of the Spanish names given at baptism and their former tribal designations. By receiving Castilian names the natives were saved from ridicule due to their unpronounceable tribal names. Undesignated Document, 21 June 1815, CMD, SBMA.

36 Cabbage was one such new food. Junípero Serra to Francisco Pangua, 26 February 1777, Kenneally, Writings, 3:99.
apples, peaches, quinces, pomegranates, cabbages, watermelons, lettuce, radishes, mint, and parsley. Oranges, lemons, limes, and olives were also introduced. To extract oil from the olives presses were brought; the first such machinery in the region. In the mid 1770's grapes and the technique for making wine were for the first time brought into California. Palou recorded the event for he was happy to announce that New California was producing some wine for the "altar" and for the "table." The so-called mission grape was a large, reddish-black, juicy grape that provided its first wine in 1783. By 1801 wine was extensively being produced in five missions. The visitors to the province were full of praises for the wine prepared under the guidance and supervision of the missionaries. Langsdorf

37 Tac, San Luis Rey, p. 16.; Wilbur, Vancouver, p. 28. "The gardens of the . . . missions were filled with an infinity of plants of culinary use, which were furnished as in such abundance, that our people had in no country been better supplied with vegetables." De la Perouse, Voyage Round the World, 1:461. The missions produced plenty of cauliflower, artichoke, and lettuce. Bolton, Font's Diary, p. 303.


considered their wine "excellent . . . resembling Málaga." Bryant was of the opinion that their wine was of "good quality." The friars also introduced another use for grapes. The grapes were dried and often served as dessert as raisins. Smith was hosted with some "dried grapes" and he observed that the monks were very fond of them as dessert.

The concern of the missionaries in bringing an abundant variety of vegetation into California has been preserved in their correspondence. In 1816 one of the monks grew some chestnuts which he described as "the first fruits of this nut in this land." In their efforts to develop each institution to its utmost agricultural potential, seeds and shoots were frequently shared between the missions.

To help them in their labor the missionaries introduced various animals to Upper California. By the introduction of such creatures


43 Bryant, Journal of a Tour, p. 391. Davis described it as "fine" and "of a superior quality." Davis, Seventy-Five Years, pp. 5, 42. The fathers of San Diego Mission were sufficiently proud of their wine that in 1822 they sent eight jars of it as a gift to the King of Spain. Document dated 1822, CMD, SBMA.


45 Vicente Francisco de Sarria to Mariano Payeras, 8 November 1816, CMD, SBMA.

46 José Sanchez to José Zalvidea, 10 January 1830, CMD, SBMA.
they had not only lightened their work load but had added a new dimension to the native's ability to conquer their environment. 47 The animals also provided new and healthful foods for the Indians. Meat, eggs, milk, butter, and cheese were amply found at the outpost. 48 With the addition of the animals the diet, health, and work habits of the neophytes were improved.

That the friars were men of pious living was readily demonstrated by their customary disposition to open the doors of their institutions to any road-weary stranger. The guests were treated with lively conversation, sumptuous meals, and free lodging. Guest rooms were kept at every mission so that a traveller could go from San Diego to San Francisco and nightly be welcomed at a different establishment. Tac wrote that at San Luis Rey four such guest rooms were kept. 49 In sharing their hospitality and charm the friars were not prejudiced, having at different times hosted Spaniards, Russians, Englishmen, Americans ("Bostonians") and Frenchmen. A British-Canadian group of

---

47 In their first year at Santa Barbara the friars accumulated 24 cows, 3 bulls, 19 oxen, 34 calves, 27 sheep, 87 goats, 9 mules, 20 horses, 11 mares, and 1 stallion. Annual Report, Santa Barbara Mission, 31 December 1787, CMD, SBMA. As time permitted they also introduced ducks, geese, turkeys, dogs, hens, hogs, donkeys, doves, and cats. Annual Report, San Diego Mission, 4 May 1783, CMD, SBMA.

48 In 1816 Jayme sent Governor Sola two dozen cheeses made in the Mallorca fashion (a la mode de Mallorca). Antonio Jayme to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 1 July 1816, CMD, SBMA.

49 Tac, San Luis Rey, p. 15.
fur traders described their reception by the missionaries with great admiration and gratefulness. The strangers were warmly welcomed by the friars and given supper, lodging, provisions, and at their departure the next morning they were provided with an Indian guide. Episodes similar to this one repeated themselves at every Franciscan mission. With such an honorable tradition it is no wonder that when the missions came under criticism prior to secularization the fathers retaliated by stating that they had traditionally provided hospitality for every "comer and goer." The Franciscans' open-door hospitality was to their flock an object lesson in interpersonal relationships and the Christian principle of serving others.

50 John Work, Fur Brigade to the Bonaventura: John Work's California Expedition, 1832-1833 (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1945), p. 37. Another eyewitness depicted their hospitality: "On approaching the mission the traveler would be met at the door or at the wide veranda by the padre, who would greet him warmly, embrace him and invite him in, and he was furnished with the best the mission afforded at the table, given one of the best rooms to sleep in, attended by servants, and everything possible was done to make him at home and comfortable during his stay. On leaving he was furnished with a fresh horse, and a good vaquero was appointed to attend him to the next mission, where he was received and entertained with the same hospitality, and so on as far as the journey extended." Davis, Seventy-Five Years, p. 42.

51 "... a todo viniente y andante." Juan Amoros to José Sanchez, 1 January 1831, CMD, SBMA. Some of those helped were the Frenchman de la Perouse and the Spaniard Alejandro Malaspina. The former came to California in 1786 in command of a scientific expedition and the friars provided him with native artifacts. The latter was also the leader of a Spanish scientific expedition for his country. Malaspina was given the opportunity to question and observe the Indians in their natural environment. Fermin de Lasuen to Count de la Perouse, 18 September 1786, CMD, SBMA. Joseph de Bustamante and Alejandro Malaspina to Fermin de Lasuen, 21 September 1791, CMD, SBMA.
Another innovative concept that the missionaries indirectly taught the natives was that of chronology. In their heathen past they only had a vague idea of the passing of time. Its measurement was simply noted as "from acorn to acorn" or from "seed to seed." They knew not their ages or how far back tribal events had occurred. With the coming of the mission lifestyle the pagans were introduced to a systematic chronology based on hours, days, weeks, months, and years. As a result a new dimension of time was opened to the former savages.

The introduction of Christianity decreased their crude barbarity and brought the heathen closer to European ethics and viewpoints. Knowing well the depraved conditions of their minds and bodies, the missionaries made it a point to present Christianity in a positive tone. They also incorporated much ceremonious pomp into their services and insisted that utmost reverence be observed within the sacred walls of the churches. Sunday, the day of rest, was observed at the missions with the same devotion as in the rest of Spanish America: morning mass and the rest of the day spent in leisurely relaxation. Throughout the calendar year there were many festivities and holidays observed by the

52 Nunis, Padres, p. 83.

53 Describing the celebration of his mission's patron saint Father Sarria wrote that it was conducted "with much solemnity" (con mucha solemnidad). Vicente Francisco de Sarria to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 14 June 1816, CMD, SEMA.

54 Dakin, Scotch Paisano, p. 279. On the day of rest the neophytes were taught to put on their "Sunday best," thus assimilating them with the Spaniards.
Franciscan Order in addition to their spiritual value also served to further clarify the mental concept of time. As the years and festivals repeated themselves their understanding of time was further enlightened. Christmas also provided lofty music that elevated them far above their former songs which have been described as little more than shouts and yells of animals. 55

With the advent of Christianity the natives' aimless lives, which therefore had been like those of brutes, were made aware of their values and human potential. As the new ethical principles were internalized the hatred toward their enemies was substituted with love for them. New approaches to life expressed themselves in the new way in which they dealt with the deceased. All missions had cemeteries and the neophytes learned from them to respect and honor those that passed away. 56. After years of teaching such concepts to the aborigines, one father could say that his flock had a practical knowledge concerning, creation, hell, heaven, and "all the fundamental truths" of Catholicism and the Christian religion. 57 Slowly but steadily the pagan characters were transformed into relatively honest

55 ruin, Padres, p. 136.

56 Cemetery (campo santo) were beside the church, fenced, and with a cross at the center. Fermin de Lasuen to Jose Joaquin de Arrillaga, 20 December 1792, CMD, SBMA.

57 Nunis, Padres, p. 145.
and upright individuals. A positive example of their success in being able to penetrate the lives of the Indians was the case of Pablo Tac and companion, natives of California who embarked for Europe to study for the priesthood. 58

The Herculean task that the missionaries encountered in trying to Christianize, civilize, and Hispanicize the California natives was indeed monumental. The vast differences that separated them culturally, and morally created almost insurmountable barriers. However, through the use of innovative means they penetrated into the uncivilized state of the pagans and succeeded in literally bringing them civilization. It was through the men of brown robes that the last corner of the world began to move along with the rest of the globe. Through them the first fruits of Western civilization were successfully planted amongst the California barbarians.

58 Tac was born at mission San Luis Rey and in 1832 with another companion was taken to Spain and from there to the Urban College in Rome where they began studies for the priesthood. His partner soon died but Tac continued his studies in Latin (1834-1838) after which he studied rhetoric, humanities, and philosophy (1838-1840). In the very midst of his schooling Tac died in 1841, but having left as a class assignment a descriptive essay of his beloved and distant mission. Tac, San Luis Rey, pp. 3-9.
CHAPTER VI
PRACTICAL MISSIONARIES

The men at the helm of the missions proved to be leaders of innovative and practical views whose skills and foresight transformed their modest frontier outposts into wonders of architectural beauty, economic stability, and self-sufficient institutions. Their talents for administration were demonstrated by the astounding temporal success reached by their institutions.

Upon arriving in California the Franciscan missionaries found themselves surrounded by hostile pagans, lonely valleys, and with little companionship. In the early days there were no majestic buildings of the romanticized type of later years. When a mission was founded only a crude structure to serve as a chapel and other shacks for storage and living were erected. Soldiers and Christianized Indians helped to build the buildings, which were usually palisade and plaster, with thatch covered roofs. Such was the beginning of all California missions. ¹

¹ Edith B. Webb, Indian Life at the Old Missions (Los Angeles: Warren F. Lewis, 1952), pp. 100, 103. "The principal building has a flat roof made of clay and dirt. The walls are made of stout limbs of pine trees, stripped off and well trimmed, the spaces in between filled with stones, rubble or branches and stuccoed all over both inside and out. The roof is made of thick beams of both pine and cypress well trimmed, and covered with poles and straw protected by plastered clay and mud." Junípero Serra to Rafel Verger, 8 August 1772, in Antonine Tibesar, O.F.M., ed., Writings of Junípero Serra, 4 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 1:255.
As the temporal prosperity of the outposts permitted, more permanent structures were erected. In the renovations adobe bricks and tiles were used. The edifices went through two or three remodellings and were gradually transformed into charming examples of "Californis Franciscan" architecture. The "architects" were in most cases the missionaries themselves, some of whom had some training, others merely practical ingenuity and the aid of books. Only in a few of the missions were expert masons used in designing the buildings. 2

The multiple variations of architecture found in any one of the missions testify that unprofessional architects directed their construction. The results were a fusion of earlier forms and styles adapted to local needs and further modified by geography. The architectural layouts as visualized and constructed by the fathers were entirely functional as well as aesthetically attractive. They incorporated the principles of defense, unity, supervision, and community. Consequently the quadrangle was essential for the under-defended settlements, for it was a natural form of defense and a way to closely examine those that entered or left the grounds. 3

As clergymen who understood the low morality of their parishioners the friars endeavored to make the churches the most imposing and predominant edifices in the compounds. With their grandeur they were


3 "Baroque elements are fairly common in California Missions." Ibid., p. 32. Santa Barbara was a curious mixture of Spanish, Moorish and native styles. However, the overall product was new and unique; distinctly Californian. "It is neither Spanish, nor Moorish nor Mexican. It should in fact be called Franciscan architecture." Kurt Baer, Paintings and Sculpture at Mission Santa Barbara (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), p. 51.
designed to teach in a practical fashion about the awesomeness of God.\textsuperscript{4}

In style most churches were long and narrow with no transepts.\textsuperscript{5} The church at San Carlos has been studied architecturally; its nave was found to be enhanced by an arched ceiling, and its massive tile roof was supported by arches skillfully constructed. So unusual was the construction that experts believe that the principle of the catenary curve was employed in the arches. The foundation of the building was on granite so that it provided resistance against earthquakes and its ceiling was Gothic, supported by four columns. The main entrance to the sanctuary was under an arched stone doorway; its baptistry was an example of skilled stone cutting, and its floor was paved with tiles.\textsuperscript{6}

A typical innovation by the fathers to their missions was in the bell tower where they introduced the pierced belfry with space on both sides of the bells.\textsuperscript{7}

The missionaries not only erected beautiful buildings but in the process created or altered architectural features. Some of the common features were: 1. patios with gardens and fountains 2. massive

\textsuperscript{4}The tower at the San Juan Capistrano church could be seen for ten miles. Webb, \textit{Indian Life}, p. 137.

\textsuperscript{5}Only three of the twenty-one had transepts. Baer, \textit{Architecture}, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{6}Frances Rand Smith, \textit{The Architectural History of Mission San Carlos Borromeo} (Berkley, CA.: California Historical Survey Commission, 1921), pp. 52-57. The catenary curve is: "The curve theoretically formed by a perfectly flexible, uniform, inextensible cable suspended from two points." The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, s.v."Catenary."

\textsuperscript{7}Baer, \textit{Architecture}, p. 46.
walls, at times six feet thick to protect against earthquakes. 3. arched corridors which provided a means of communicating within the compound which were cool in summer and dry in winter. 4. curved, pedimented gables. 5. bell towers with pierced belfries. 6. wide projecting eaves. 7. sloping red tile roofs. With their limited knowledge and scarcity of materials the fathers led the way in creating and adapting innovative architectural style. The pleasant physical attractions of their structures have been duly appreciated by professional architects. Baer wrote: "Certainly there are few buildings in the United States more picturesque and of greater interest than the missions of California..." Newcomb likewise lavishes praise on them: "... among the limited sources within our own boundaries there is no class of buildings more interesting than the missions built in the Southwest by the monks of the Franciscan Order." Weber, though not an architect, concurs that the Franciscans indeed contributed some originality to American architecture: "No other architectural style in the United States has a greater claim to originality and simplicity than that developed on the Pacific coast two hundred


9 Furthermore, Baer believed that due to its new fresh style the missions' architecture should be called "California Franciscan." Baer, Architecture, Preface, p. 14.

10 "So many elements combine themselves in these buildings that the architect can find among them precedents for the design of a church, a school, a residence, a workshop, or if he desires all of these well connected and charmingly related." Newcomb, Mission Architecture, historical note.
years ago."

Water was vital to the daily life and survival of the missions and so the monks used their ingenuity to assure certain supply to every institution. Spanish law specified that missions were to be planted near abundant water supplies but in California the dry, hot summers made unattractive otherwise ideal sites. To alleviate the problem of inadequate water supply the energetic friars led out in building dams and aqueducts. The water-related problems encountered by the San Diego Mission and the way they were solved was typical of most missions. At San Diego, uncertain water supply made the future success of the institution doubtful. By the use of ditches, water from nearby streams was diverted and used for irrigation but nonetheless, the meager supply of water did not allow the outpost to expand. After relocating the institution in an effort to ease the problem, permission was sought and granted for the missionaries to build a more dependable water supply. In 1813 work was begun on a dam and the aqueduct that would carry the water six miles to the compound. The work was conducted by the mission artisans who were under the command of the fathers. Three years later the project was completed; and, through ingenuity, a forty-seven-year-old hindrance to their water supply was solved.


13 Fred E. Green, "Old San Diego Mission Dam and Irrigation," California Collection, San Diego Public Library, San Diego, CA., pp. 3-35.
The practical-minded missionaries learned to overcome the limitations that nature imposed on their enterprises. In 1776, while Font inspected the then-infant San Carlos Mission, he commented that it did not yet irrigate its field for lack of a channel (acequia) from the river although one could easily be made. That challenging attitude, typical of the missionaries, met the obstacles and accomplished great feats. Serra spearheaded the project since he also wanted to create an artificial fish pond. Within seven months the mission had plenty of water for its crops and Serra had his pet project of which he said: "Some salmon have been placed in the pool and so we have it handy."

In time many other missions worked out projects to alleviate their water shortages. Soledad, the most desolate and unprosperous of the missions, completed its aqueduct system in 1801. It carried the water for five miles to the institution. In 1806 Santa Barbara began its dam and aqueduct, which carried water for one-and-a-half miles in an open aqueduct. The stone and mortar structure followed the contour of the land, and the water flowed into two reservoirs outside the mission and from there was distributed to all quarters. In 1808


15 Junípero Serra to Fermin de Lasuen, 8 January 1781; Junípero Serra, Report of Missions, 1 July 1784, in Tibesar, Writings, 4:101, 273.

16 "In Soledad they successfully completed the most important work of bringing water from the arroyo they call Seco and it is now running in great abundance through the middle of the mission." Fermin de Lasuen to José Gasol, 1 May 1801, in Finbar Kenneally, D.F.M., ed., Writings of Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965), 2:192.
a public fountain and a wash basin were erected. To obtain the best possible drinking water filters were employed. Some of the water was diverted from the reservoir by a gate and passed through a filter of charcoal and crushed granite which acted as clarifiers. From there it was carried to the mission grounds in a flume built on top of a high stone wall. At La Purisima tile pipes to gather water and an open aqueduct were built to carry it down to the mission. In 1817 two fountains were built; one for the neophytes and the other for the infirmary. Mission San Antonio built a deep well in 1824 in

17" ... en beneficio de la humanidad ... " Webb, Mission Life, p. 72; Walter Hawley, The Early Days of Santa Barbara, California (Santa Barbara, CA: The Schauer Printing Studio, 1920), p. 65.

18 Webb, Indian Life, p. 73; Hawley, Santa Barbara, p. 61; Maynard J. Geiger, O.F.M., Mission Santa Barbara, 1786-1965 (Santa Barbara, CA: Franciscan Fathers of California, 1965), pp. 52, 53. "Before the church they erected a series of concentric urn fountains, ten feet in height, from the top of which the pure liquid bursts, and falls from one to another till it reaches a large pool at the base; from this it is led off a short distance to the statue of a grizzly bear, from whose mouth it is ejected into a reservoir of solid masonry, six feet wide and seventy long ... these fountains are solid, cemented stone pavements, and ducts to carry off the surplus water ... Near the aqueduct which carries the water into the reservoir of the mills, stands a small stone edifice ten feet in length by six wide. This is the bath. Over the door, outside, is the representation of a lion's head, from which pours a beautiful jet of water." Thomas J. Farnham, The Early Days of California: Embracing What I Saw and Heard There, With Scenes in the Pacific (Philadelphia: J. E. Potter, 1859), pp. 109, 110. The bath house and aqueduct were seen by Miller in his California tour. Henry Miller, Account of a Tour of California Missions, 1856 (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1942), p. 37.

19 Webb, Indian Life, p. 74. In 1808 San Fernando also built a dam which held the water until released by a floodgate. Weber, San Fernando, p. 17.
which clay pipes were used to carry the water to the garden. Three years later an underground pipe system was installed from the well to the gardens. The feat was something that visitors made note of, including Robinson who wrote: "In the rear of the establishment is a large reservoir of excellent water, which is carried through pipes, to the gardens, and other parts of the mission . . . ."

By 1821, the final year of Spain's control of California, the twenty missions harvested 79,740 fanegas of wheat, 14,171 of barley, 22,084 of maize, 4,850 of beans, 2,164 of chickpeas, 1,277 of peas, and 763 of kidney beans. The mission herds included 14,973 cattle, 193,234 sheep, 1,469 goats, 1,633 swine, 14,058 mares and colts, 5,772 tame horses and 2,011 mules. The figures were amazing especially when one acknowledges the dismal beginnings and short period of development. The fathers understood that success in agriculture and livestock were keys to economic independence and they excelled in those areas. The very first products planted at the outposts were the staple crops of the Spanish-American diet: wheat, maize and barley. By the late 1770's the cultivation yielded surpluses and in the 1780's it reached the point of development and productivity that enabled it to provide foodstuffs to


the military and visiting vessels. 23 When the missionary "farmers"
were at a loss on how to achieve better results they consulted the
bound volumes on the subject of agriculture that were on their
bookshelves. 24 As their farming skills improved they sought diversification
of products, introducing many new crops into the region such as cotton,
tobacco, sugarcane, hemp, and flax. 25 In their search for better-quality
foods the monks went as far as practicing tree-grafting. 26

23 Archibald, Economic Aspect, pp. 12, 13. When the San Carlos
arrived at Monterey for the first time in 1775 the mission sent "sacks
upon sacks" of greens, cabbages, lettuce and turnips as a refreshing
change of diet for its crew. Junípero Serra to Viceroy Antonio María
de Bucareli, 2 July 1775, in Tibesar, Writings, 2:269. On September 15,
1785, Count de la Perouse arrived at Monterey and bought from the
mission 44 head of cattle, 51 sheep, 200 hens, 30 fanegas of wheat,
22 of barley, and 8 of peas. Fermin de Lasuen to Count de la Perouse,
18 September 1786, California Mission Documents, Santa Barbara
Mission Archives (hereafter referred as CMD, SBMA).

24 Agricultura General was one of such books; today it is found
at SBMA and it treats everything that an amateur farmer would wish
to know about soil, planting, animal breeding, grafting, etc.

25 "... a beginning has been made in cultivating the olive and
in San Diego a little olive oil of very good quality has been obtained."
Fermin de Lasuen, Biennial Report for 1801 and 1802. Kenneally,
Lasuen, 2:391-392. In 1820 Father José Sanchez reported to Governor Sola
that fourteen arrobas of cotton and seeds had been harvested. José
Sanchez to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 22 January 1820, CMD, SBMA. San
Fernando was the site of the experimentation with sugar and Pedro
Muñoz wrote the Governor "... we are growing sugar and they have
made some panocha but it is not as good as that which comes from ... other places." Pedro Muñoz to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 29 April 1817,
CMD, SBMA. See José San Martín, Memoria y Proposiciones del Señor
San Martín Sobre Californias Con Ocasion de no Haber Jurado su Intendente
La Independencia Por La Preponderancia de Aquellos Religiosos Misioneros
(Mexico City: Biblioteca Aportación Histórica, 1943), p. 11. An arroba
was twenty-five pounds. Diccionario de la Lengua Española, s.v.
"Arroba."

Livestock raising was promoted by the fathers in their goal of making the institutions self-supporting. Cattle raising was the greatest of such enterprises, since they provided milk, butter, cheese, meat, leather, tallow, and other derivative products. Every mission saw to it that a considerable number was kept at the institution; for in case of bad harvests, they provided an immediate food source. With such a premium on the cattle they were well-cared for and grew into handsome animals.\textsuperscript{27} Sheep also provided multiple uses for the monks. They were the principal providers of meat, and as a source of wool they were vital to the clothing industry. Their skins were made into protective clothing or sold to the presidios for military usage. In 1816 Father Juan Bautista Sancho sent Governor Sola seventy-one sheepskins from San Antonio with which to clothe his needy soldiers.\textsuperscript{28} Goats were kept for milk and meat and swine for meat and lard.\textsuperscript{29} Horses and mules were necessary as work animals and for transportation. The most numerous of the fowls were chickens, clearly because of their meat and eggs. We see then that the animals that were raised were those that best provided for the missions' prosperity. That foresight

\textsuperscript{27} "The horned cattle of California which I have thus far seen, are the largest and the handsomest in shape which I ever saw. There is certainly no breed in the United States equalling them in size."


\textsuperscript{28} Juan Bautista Sancho to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 2 September 1816, CMD, SBMA

\textsuperscript{29} In 1816 San Juan Bautista Mission was asked by the government to send some supplies to the Monterey presidio and among those sent were 28 hogs. Estevan Tapis to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 14 September 1816, CMD, SBMA.
enabled the institutions to develop into self-sufficient outposts that supplied themselves and the needs of the region.30

Self-sufficiency for the missions meant that certain basic industries had to be operated locally. Consequently manufacturing of essential articles was maintained at every institution. The need to dress the neophytes and supply them with adequate garments naturally called for a clothing industry. In starting the industries the friars used a practical method; they brought Christianized Indians from older establishments who taught their acquired skills to the new neophytes.31 Thus the arts of spinning, weaving, etc., were passed from native to native and the results were commendable.32

30 In a sense the missions became victims of their own success for all too often the government placed high demands on them. In mid 1833 Governor Figueroa decreed that the missions from San Francisco to Monterey annually supply the northern presidios with 2,430 bushels of wheat, 530 of beans, 23,000 pounds of tallow, and 18,750 of flour. Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California, 7 vols. (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1886), 3:322.


32 "One large room was occupied by manufacturers of a coarse sort of blanketing, made from the wool produced in the neighborhood. . . . I saw some of the cloth, which was by no means despicable . . . " Marguerite E. Wilbur, ed., Vancouver in California, 1792-1794 (Los Angeles: Glenn Dawson, 1953), pp. 22, 23. In 1797 one of the fathers said that even without the government-sent artisan their mission-made blankets were just as good or better. Vicente Fuster to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 31 March 1797, CMD, SBMA. Being the only place in California where any manufacturing was conducted, the missions were constantly courted by the government for supplies. In 1816 they were asked to supply 200 serapes, 80 blankets, and 300 shepherds blankets. Pablo Vicente de Sola to Franciscans, 3 January 1816, and Pedro Cabot to Vicente Francisco de Darrias, 7 March 1816, CMD, SBMA.
Tanneries were built at every mission so that hides could be turned into useful leather that would supply the needs for belts, saddles, sandals, jackets, hats, and many other leather goods. Shoemakers definitely relied on the tanneries since they not only made shoes, but knapsacks, reins, and boots.

Blacksmiths were brought to the missions or trained there since their skills were very useful to the institutions. They provided the vaqueros with bridles, stirrups, spurs, branding irons and the rest of the community with keys, nails, locks, and hand-wrought iron. Skilled masonry workers were responsible for producing adobes, bricks, tiles, mortar, and plaster. Carpenters were useful, for their creations lessened the roughness of frontier life. They made tables, chairs, bookcases, pulpits, benches, and the inside woodwork of the homes. Built-in cupboards, closets, and doors that hinged at the bottom and when let down served as tables were frequently found at some of the twenty-one local

33"The California saddle is, I venture to assert, the best that has been invented, for the horse and the rider." Bryant, California, p. 447.

34Pablo Tac, Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey (San Luis Rey, CA.: Old Mission, 1958), p. 20. Bandini stated that between 30,000 and 40,000 hides, most from the missions, were exported annually. José Bandini, A Description of California in 1828 (Berkeley, CA.: Friends of the Bancroft Library, 1951), p. 8.

35Tac, San Luis Rey, p. 20; Webb, Indian Life, p. 128. As early as 1777 there were able blacksmiths in the missions: "I brought home with me from San Diego the bells of the said mission ... but they had no clappers so I had them made there." Junípero Serra to Francisco Pangua, 26 February 1777, in Tibesar, Writings, 3:89.

36Baer, Architecture, p. 19. Tiles were first made at San Antonio around 1780. Junípero Serra to Fermin de Lasuen, 8 December 1781, in Tibesar, Writings, 4:99.
missions. Another useful item from the hands of the carpenters was the carreta (wagon) which was widely used for the transportation of goods. Using the mechanical principles of such wagons one of the friars built a custom-made carriage that was the amazement of those who saw it.

The fathers' industrious spirit was also shown by their actions in having a fishing boat built to get into the profitable otter trade with China. It was built at San Gabriel at the instigation of Father José Sanchez and taken to San Pedro where it was solemnly launched, making it the first ship launched in Southern California.

37 "A door, hinged at the bottom, which served to close a recess in the wall, used as a cupboard, was let down upon the occasion; and on this was placed our repast." Robinson, California, p. 23. "The charm of design and ornament . . . was the result of the romantic spirit of the Spanish workmen, the religious zeal of the Franciscan missionaries, and the patience and mysticism of the Indians." Arthur Williams, Spanish Colonial Furniture (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1941), p. 4.

38 "It was a singular contrivance, invented by himself, [José Viader of San José] and built by the Indian mechanics under his direction—a narrow body, of sufficient width for one person only, hung on a pair of low wheels; and the whole frame was covered with brown cotton. The seat well stuffed with lamb's wool, served to compensate for the absence of springs; and the harness, which he had made from green hide, twisted into rope, though not very ornamental, was sufficiently strong, and answered every purpose." Robinson, California, p. 71.

The thoughtful friars also worked out a primitive form of air-conditioning. By placing tiles on the high ceiling beams, the air in the attic space was cooled and that in turn lowered the room temperature.

Overall, the mission workshops produced nearly everything the inhabitants needed. From hats to shoes, soap, candles, and ropes, it was all made there. Their organization and achievements were so outstanding that even the enemies of the missions could not but describe them in positive terms. Though the daily physical work was not done by the missionaries, it was through their foresight and immediate direction that the operation of the institutions was carried out. Their dedication to the success of the establishments was such that, if need be, they worked side by side with the neophytes. Father Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta spoke for all of them when he wrote: "I made the vows of a Friar Minor; instead, I must manage temporalities, sow grain, raise sheep, horses, and cows. I must preach, baptize, bury the dead, visit the sick, direct the carts, haul stones, lime, etc."

40 Weber, San Fernando, p. 32.


42 Bandini who was in favor of secularization wrote: "In all of them there are . . . warehouses for the storing of goods, granaries large enough for the grain, places for making soap, rooms for weaving, carpenter shops, forges, wine presses, cellars, large patios, and corrals . . ." Bandini, California, p. 5.

The fathers' outstanding success in the operation of the missions was revealed by the dependance that the military and civilian population had on the institutions. In January 1816 the governor asked the central missions to supply the government troops with 100 serapes, 380 blankets, and 60 varas of ordinary cloth. In August when a British ship anchored and sought to buy 2,200 arrobas of flour, 45 of lard, 310 of pork, 456 of tallow, 36 of soap, 827 fanegas of maize, 130 of peas, 15 of wheat, 8 of barley and 20 of lime, the governor simply asked the Franciscan installations to fulfill their order. From 1820 to 1821, when political events strained communications with Mexico, the missions took the brunt of feeding and clothing the civilian and uniformed population of California. So often and with so much were they asked to bail out the presidios that Father Payeras estimated their benevolence to be in excess of half a million pesos.

44Account books at San Diego Mission reveal that many individuals from the presidios bought food, animals, shoes, blankets, candles and similar items from the mission. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., San Diego Mission (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1920), p. 78. Davis says that the mission workshops were busy places since they also supplied the needs of colonists and rancheros and they took furs, hides, and cattle as payment. "The fathers were first class merchants." Davis, Seventy-Five Years, p. 157.


46Mariano Payeras to Guardian of San Fernando College, 18 June 1821, CMD, SBMA.
The neophyte population of most missions exceeded one thousand and that meant many mouths to feed. To help themselves in that task the followers of St. Francis had mills built to grind grains. The first, a water-powered mill, was erected at Santa Cruz in 1796, and a similar one at San Luis Obispo two years later. In the one constructed at San Antonio (1806) the water supply was controlled by the use of gates. The mill house was two stories high. 47 San Gabriel inaugurated its mill in 1815, a water-powered grist mill, making it the first in California. 48 For seven years it served the community, but then it developed leakage and another one was built. 49 Others were built at Santa Inés and Santa Barbara. 50 These massive projects again reveal the diligent character of the fathers as they sought ways to tap the energy of the country and improve their missions and bless them with the fruits of civilization.

To combat disease and promote health the missionaries built

---


48 San Gabriel Annual Report, 1816, CMD, SBMA.


50 Geiger, Santa Barbara, p. 97.
infirmaries and maintained well-stocked supplies of medicines.\textsuperscript{51} In 1804 one such hospital was erected at San Luis Obispo, containing four treatment rooms.\textsuperscript{52} San Gabriel built its clinic in 1814, which also had four patient areas; and the following year a chapel for the ill was added.\textsuperscript{53} Tac states that San Luis Rey had two sanitariums; one for each sex.\textsuperscript{54} With much rampant disease abounding in their parishes, the monks were compelled to act boldly in the role of physicians and in many cases they were very successful; not because they excelled in medicine but because as bright, practical individuals they took drastic situations into their hands and bravely fought to make the best of them.\textsuperscript{55}

In the operation of the missions the Franciscans revealed essential abilities that demonstrated administrative skills. When one considers that there were only two missionaries per institution, and acknowledges the extensive religious and temporal affairs, that

\textsuperscript{51} Many of the natives were victims of bear and snake bites as the documents reveal. Gregorio Fernández to Diego de Borica, 3 June 1799, CMD, SBMA. In another document a missionary wrote to the Governor and asked for medicines to treat his neophytes. José Zaldivea to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 11 June 1816, CMD, SBMA.

\textsuperscript{52} Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., Mission San Luis Obispo in the Valley of the Bears (San Barbara, CA.: W.T. Genna, 1963), p. 43.

\textsuperscript{53} San Gabriel Mission Annual Reports, 31 December 1814, 31 December 1815, CMD, SBMA.

\textsuperscript{54} Tac, San Luis Rey, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{55} "... They exercise the arts both of surgery and medicine with great success, especially the latter ..." Wilbur, Vancouver, pp. 235-236.
needed attention, one must admit that they were indeed able administrators. To better serve their calling, one of the ministers took charge of the temporal affairs, while the other handled all spiritual facets. As managers their accurate and thorough record keeping was one of their positive trademarks. The anxiety with which Lasuen wrote his reports indicates the sincerity through which he viewed his task: "I am at present working on the summary of the annual and biennial Reports, and for me this is like a recurring illness that is serious every year and quite serious every two years." The chore of maintaining exact records was so crucial that standard items for any mission were "blank record books." The information included in the reports presented a thorough picture of the status of the mission in both its physical and spiritual attainments. Whenever the friars lagged behind in reporting their information, they were reminded by their superiors.

The men who wore the habit of St. Francis were also financial

---

56 Fermin de Lasuen to Miguel Lull, 1 February 1799, Kenneally, Lasuen, 2:109. All missions kept books that recorded baptisms, burials, marriages, confirmations, population, and folios which contained every circular ordinance and decree from the ecclesiastical and civil superiors.

57 A list of items needed for an average mission is found in Tibesar, Writings, 2:279-283. A gift by the Viceroy to the missionaries included "... 4 reams of Genoese paper ... " Palou, Historical Memoirs, 3:123.

58 In their records the missions' financial standing with the presidios were stated and the reports included general statements of their industries (e.g., fields are good) or any unusual occurrences (e.g., baptism of Russians). Document dated 17 November 1817, CMD, SBMA; José Señan to Pablo Vicente de Sola, 9 April 1816, CMD, SBMA; Estevan Tapis to Bishop Rouset, 6 June 1811, CMD, SBMA.

59 Circular letter of Lasuen to missionaries, 4 December 1789, CMD, SBMA.
managers of ability who operated the missions on sound economic principles. Payeras summarized their practical policies when he said: "... it is fitting for a well arranged and prudent economy to remember tomorrow today..." Their fiscal policies were acknowledged by foreign merchants who praised them for their business abilities. Davis regarded them as "superior men in point of talent, education, morals, and executive ability" whose talent was reflected in the success and "administration" of their establishments. Another American visitor, Thomas Farnham, categorized the fathers as "... men whose equals in mental power, in physical courage and moral intrepidity, we shall seek in vain in these days of vapid benevolence..." That they were men of bold deeds was seen in the actions of Luis Martinez, who organized some of his neophytes to withstand the "invasion" by Bouchard in 1819. His brave and decisive actions were hailed and commended by Governor Pablo Vicente de Sola to the Viceroy.

60 Mariano Payeras to Guardian of San Antonio, 18 June 1821, CMD, SBMA.

61 Davis, Seventy-Five Years, p. 42. Their business acumen was reflected in the zeal with which they entered the otter pelt trade. They had ships built (see footnote 39), and thoroughly mobilized to enter the profitable trade. "I have already charged the missionaries of San Francisco and Santa Clara to make every effort to have their Indians and their coastal areas effect the greatest possible catch of pelts..." Fermin de Lasuen to Count de Revilla Gigedo, 10 September 1790, Kenneally, Lasuen, 1:209; compare with Adele Ogden, The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848 (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1941), pp. 18-22.

62 Farnham, Early Days of California, p. 279.

63 Pablo Vicente de Sola to Viceroy, 6 July 1819, CMD, SBMA.
The educated, intelligent, and industrious missionaries were in stark contrast with the other settlers of the province. The very few colonists who were lured to California were given plots of land by the government as an incentive for rapid colonization. However, the colonists' efforts to cultivate their land were minimal. The settlers' lack of initiative was criticized by the Franciscans and visitor to California. The fathers described them as "lazy" and "given to idleness." A secular Spaniard judged them as a people who only exerted themselves in "dancing, horsemanship, and gambling, with which they fill their days." Dana had similar words for them: "idle, thriftless people" who totally lacked industry. Bryant observed their illiteracy and Atherton could not refrain from calling the early settlers "damned

64 "The people ... who live in this province are so lazy and so given to idleness that they know nothing else but to ride horseback, and consider all work dishonorable ... even for the most necessary personal maintenance, they solicit the service of Indians for cooking, washing, working in the garden, minding a baby, ..." Doyce B. Nunis, ed., As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries, 1813-1815 (Santa Barbara, CA.: Santa Barbara Mission Archive, 1976), p. 130.

65 "In most cases they ignore the arts, and I doubt if there is to be anyone who practices a trade." Bandini, California, p. 99.

66 "The Californians are an idle, thriftless people, and can make nothing of themselves. The country abounds in grapes, yet they buy bad wines made in Boston and brought round by us, at an immense price ... Their hides, too, which they value at two dollars in money, they give for something which costs seventy-five cents in Boston; and buy shoes ( ... made of their own hides, and which have been carried twice around Cape Horn) at three or four dollars ..." Richard Henry Dana, Two Years Before the Mast (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909), p. 81.
Dancing, horse riding, and gambling occupy all of their time . . . the arts are entirely unknown, and I am doubtful if there is one individual who exercises any trade; very few who understand the first rudiments of letters, and the other sciences are unknown." Bryant, California, p. 284. "Found the people there same as usual—doing nothing but telling large stories of what they would do if . . . they were not so damned lazy . . . " Doyce B. Nunis, ed., The California Diary of Faxon Dean Atherton, 1836-1839 (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1964), p. 60.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The monks that operated the California missions were men of education, refinement, and practical aptitudes. Their natural and acquired abilities were unmatched by settlers or soldiers of Spanish California. European-bred and educated, the missionaries possessed a classical education that made them able scholars and provided them with a liberal, broad intellectual training. As members of the Franciscan Order they were great moralists who lived well-disciplined and regulated lives. However, their academic attainments did not prove to be a handicap for them when they faced the innumerable hardships of mission life. Moreover, they employed their vast intellectual powers to upgrade every facet of the lives of their Indian parishioners. The ample mental powers possessed by the Franciscans also proved helpful in their tasks of managing the vast mission lands, stock, and neophytes. Their administrative skills were demonstrated in the magnitude of success obtained by the missions. Using their superior capabilities, the Franciscan Fathers not only brought Christian meaning to the savage lives of the natives but also introduced to them the basic elements of refined and cultured living. Overall, the friars were ministers to their souls and their teachers of civilization.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. PRIMARY MATERIALS


——. *Representación al Virey Para el Reforme de las Misiones de California por los Franciscanos del Colegio de San Fernando.* Mexico City: Biblioteca Aportación Histórica, 1946.


San Martín, José. *Memoria y Proposiciones del Señor San Martín Sobre Californías Con Ocasión de no Haber Jurado su Intendente la Independencia por la Preponderancia de Aquellos Religiosos Misioneros.* Mexico City: Biblioteca Aportación Histórica, 1943.

Santa Barbara, CA. *California Mission Documents.* Santa Barbara Mission Archives.


B. SECONDARY MATERIALS


C. UNPUBLISHED WORKS


D. REFERENCE WORKS


*Cassell's Spanish Dictionary.* S.v. "Fanega."

*Diccionario de la Lengua Española.* S.v. "Vara;" "Arroba."


E. DISSERTATIONS


F. PERIODICALS


APPENDIX
YA VIENE EL ALBA

1. Ya viene el alba rompiendo el dia,
2. Nacio Maria para consuelo
3. Nacio Maria con eficacia
4. La sierpe fiera llo- ra sus penas
5. El infierno no tres veces tiembla
6. Todos cantemos en alta la voz

Díganos todos: Ave Maria
De pecado res y luz del cielo
Ave Maria, llenos de gracia
Maria le pongan fuertes cadenas
A de car pronto, Ave Maria
Ave Maria, Madre de Dios

APPENDIX B: A MORNING HYMN
Alabado.

Lento.

1. Alaba-do y en-sal-za-do Sea el Di-
2. Y la lim-pi-a Con-cep-cion, De la Re-
3. Y el Ben-di-to San Jo-seph, Electo por Di-

vi-no Sa-cra-men-to, En quien Di-cs o-cul-to a-
i-na de los Ci-e-lo-s, Que que-dan do Vir-gen
os In-men-so, Pa-ra Pa-dre es-ti-ma-

sis-te. De las Al-mas el sus-ten-to,
Pu-ra, Es Madre del Ver-bo E-ter-no.
ti-vo De su Hi-jo el Di-vi-no Ver-bo.

APPENDIX C: A SONG OF PRAISE