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Haní'-cha Fiesta-yk : "Let's go to the Fiesta"
A Historical Analysis of Southern California Native Fiestas

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

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Oscar A. Muñoz

June 2022

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Clifford Trafzer, Chairperson
Dr. Rebecca Kugel
Dr. Robert Perez

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2022

The Dissertation of Oscar A. Muñoz is approved:

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Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

Acknowledgements

The completion of this dissertation is a result of a narrative. As a historian, I am often concerned with historical “narratives,” and accordingly, it is the result of my narrative and upbringing that this feat was accomplished, for which I must acknowledge and give credit. This dissertation also stems from the community that surrounded me throughout my lifetime, comprised of family, friends, acquaintances, and scholars. It is with their support and guidance that this work manifested. As an immigrant from Costa Rica who was undocumented for the majority of my life, words cannot express what this accomplishment signifies for myself and my family. From the coffee fields to the fourth floor and classrooms of the University of California, Riverside (UCR), I never thought this “tico” would one day accomplish such a feat.

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Dedication

Para mis antepasados en el cielo, mis familiares en la tierra, tanto en los Estados Unidos como en "Tiquicia," y para mi familia del futuro, este esfuerzo y logro esta dedicado a ustedes. Quien hubiera pensado que este mae, persiguiendo pollitos y corriendo por los cafetales de San Miguel de Santo Domingo de Heredia, hubiera podido lograr estas alturas. Por mi país y cultura de nacimiento, para todos mis ticos. "Diay mae," aquí estamos para seguir cosechando éxitos.

Pura Vida.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Haní'-cha Fiesta-yk : "Let's go to the Fiesta"
A Historical Analysis of Southern California Native Fiestas

by

Oscar A. Muñoz

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in History
University of California, Riverside, June 2022
Dr. Clifford Trafzer, Chairperson

This dissertation analyzes Native fiestas of Southern California. Although Native fiestas appear in various narratives concerning Southern California Native history, there is to date no study solely dedicated to analyzing the significance and impact of these events to Southern California Native and regional history. The dissertation traces Native events of tradition, later deemed fiestas by Spaniards, from their Spanish pre-invasion origin and follows fiesta activity throughout the Mission, Californio, and Euro-American Periods. Significantly, it presents a new analysis of Native fiestas, which have traditionally been understudied by academia, in order to present a new historical lens through which to consider Southern California Native and regional history.

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Introduction

On Sunday, September 9, 1928, a multiple-day fiesta of the Soboba community in San Jacinto, California, neared its end.[1] The smell of arroyo and willow filled the air from the tightly-woven ramadas under which a noisy, culturally-mixed crowd of Natives, Mexicans, and Euro-Americans enjoyed a variety of advertised games, friendly competitions, conversations, food and dancing. Throughout the course of the evening, however, the romanticized get-together of games and festivities took a dramatic turn. On this final night of the fiesta, a stabbing occurred, leaving one "badly slashed" man in the hospital and another facing charges of assault with a deadly weapon.[2] Additionally, law enforcement charged ten individuals with liquor law violations for the illegal possession of alcohol during the era of national Prohibition. One of these men included a young Native scholar from Riverside Community College who became the future founder of the American Indian Historical Society and the Costo endowment at the University of California, Riverside, Rupert Costo.[3]

In contrast, at a different fiesta in the twentieth century, a young *Payomkawichum* (Luiseño) woman named Villiana Calac Hyde watched as a medicine man swallowed hot coals. At one fiesta, a medicine man cured her of an illness, and at another fiesta, Hyde recollected driving fiestagoers to and from the event in a Model T Ford. Recalling Native

[1] Terminology debates exist over the use of the terms "Indian," "Indigenous," "Native," and "American Indian" when referring to the first communities of the Americas. This footnote serves to acknowledge these debates, and to inform the reader that this study will use the word "Native" when referring to past and present groups of America's First People.
[2] "Knives Flash; Liquor Flows: Arrests Mark Close of Fiesta on Soboba Reservation," *Riverside Enterprise*, September 11, 1928.
[3] Ibid.

fiestas, Hyde mentioned "everything was so nice long ago."[4] The experiences of Costo and Hyde at Southern California Native fiestas differed, and symbolically represent the multiple and at times conflicting narratives associated with fiesta event analysis from Spanish pre-invasion and into the present. Though no historical narrative can precisely express what these events and sites have meant to the many individual fiestagoers of the past, this study nevertheless aims to analyze fiesta events within the confines of Southern California Native and regional history.

Whether by way of oral narratives from Native communities or literature produced by scholars, Native fiestas appear throughout the traditional narratives and historical documentation of Southern California. Often, their mention lies within a backdrop to more popular historical narratives concerning Native California history, namely Spanish exploration, Missionization, Hispanization, the Gold Rush, and Euro-American settlement. At present, no direct studies exist solely concerned with analysis of fiesta events, whose mention are oftentimes interwoven throughout all historical periods of Southern California history up to the present. This study aims to initiate dialogue, engagement and future research concerning the significance of Native fiestas to Southern California Native communities and to the narrative of Southern California history.

Native communities throughout Southern California have a long history of gathering for the purposes of trade, ceremony, socialization and celebration. Ornamental abalone shells from the Pacific coast for instance are found in basket-maker caves of

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[4] Villiana Calac Hyde and Eric Elliot, *Yumáyk Yumáyk* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 583.

Pueblo Indians in Arizona, thus marking an extensive trading network that required an intimate knowledge of resources, trading routes, and relationships with outside groups prior to Spanish invasion.[5] That Native communities throughout Southern California and the Southwest had an intimate knowledge of themselves, their traditional territories, and their relations to one another is certain. Pre-invasion events of trade, ceremony, socialization and celebration were pivotal in smoothing and in fostering the relations necessary in order to achieve such a vast Native trading network.

Upon the arrival of the Spanish, these events were interrupted, but as discussed in the upcoming chapters, nevertheless continued in events termed "fiestas" by incoming foreign migrants. As settler communities arrived to Southern California, they often aimed to impose a foreign culture on Native Southern California, which often required Native communities in the region to accommodate certain aspects of traditional pre-invasion culture. Though clothing, foods, music, dance, and activities at traditional Native events changed in accordance with the settler community in power throughout California's history, the initial intent of a large gathering of Native people for Native purposes did (and has) not. Similar to the significance of the pow-wow for Native plains communities, for Southern California, there can be no aims of understanding the Native past of the region without considering the influence and impact of Native fiestas.

Fiestas typically lasted into the early morning hours and continued for a duration of about one week. Throughout this week, the fiesta provided sites of communication,

[5] William Duncan Strong, *Aboriginal Society in Southern California* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1929), 348.

socialization, economic, and cultural exchange for Native communities and their non-Native counterparts throughout the course of Southern California history. Interactions and exchanges at these events between Natives, Spaniards, Californios and Euro-Americans impacted the character and culture of Southern California; therefore, Native fiesta analysis also serves as one microcosm of regional Southern California history.

Fiestas are mentioned throughout the earliest existing traditional narratives and documentation of Southern California. In chapter one, the traditional origins of fiesta events are analyzed. Many traditional narratives from Southern California's Native communities mention fiesta events, some of which even incorporate them into their stories of creation. Although not termed "fiestas" by traditional Native communities prior to the arrival of the Spanish, these events nevertheless mimicked fiestas, and existed in pre-invasion California. As mentioned in the chapter, the Spanish did not know what to term these events, and likely referred to them as "fiestas" in order to categorize what they witnessed with events of festivity, socialization, and ceremony throughout Spain and its colonial provinces. The chapter then presents several traditional narratives from Southern California's Native communities that mention fiesta events, thereby stemming these events to traditional, pre-invasion origin. First encounters with Native fiestas by Spanish explorers is mentioned, along with first encounters with Spanish fiestas by traditional California Native communities.

In chapter two, fiesta analysis turns to the Mission Period. Throughout this period, fiestas were utilized by Spanish missionaries for a variety of purposes. At times, missionaries utilized fiesta splendor in order to lure and attract Native communities to

mission sites and for the purpose of Christianization. Also, missionaries utilized fiesta events likely in order to suppress feeling of uprisings and discontent among traditional and Native neophytes within mission walls. Some observations on fiestas by early visitors to Southern California are presented, as well as mention of fiesta events by Spanish missionaries in their observations and reports to the Spanish Empire. Largely, the chapter is devoted to assessing fiesta continuity throughout the Mission Period. Although Southern California's Native communities experienced a large degree of cultural genocide at mission sites, the chapter discusses the continuity of fiesta-related events, at times with secrecy, within the confines of mission walls.

Following mission secularization, fiesta activity throughout the Californio Period is assessed in chapter three. The wealth and power of Southern California's Dons and Doñas was largely expressed at Californio fiestas, which occurred frequently throughout this time period. In contrast to seasonal Mission fiesta events that were often regulated by the ecclesiastical calendar and field harvests, Californio fiestas occurred year-round, and for a variety of purposes including birthdays, christenings, funerals, marriages, or at the end of cattle drives. As the primary labor force as servants and ranch hands for Southern California's expansive ranchos, Native Southern California communities were constantly surrounded by fiesta activity throughout the California Period. Supported by the Hispanic rancho-owning elite alongside their Native laborers, Californio Period fiestas characterized some of the grandest social events known throughout the colonial history of Southern California.

Lastly, following the collapse of the Californios and the increased migration of Euro-Americans to Southern California, chapter four assesses fiestas throughout the Euro-American Period. The primary trepidations of Euro-America towards Native fiestas were religious, moral, and largely economic. As discussed in the chapter, fiestas throughout the Euro-American Period continued year-round throughout the late nineteenth and the early to mid twentieth century. In their efforts to control and influence Native society and culture however, Euro-America established the Mission Indian Agency, which aimed to suppress Native fiesta-related activity they felt disrupted Native labor throughout the region and decreased Native chances for self-dependency. Native communities, however, continued their practice, which resulted in the Agency's focus turning towards fiesta policing rather than banishment. The chapter is largely devoted to assessing fiesta activity and fiesta policing between the Mission Indian Agency and Southern California's Native communities.

A note on parameters concerning this study is necessary. The focus of this study lies in Southern California. Although aims were made to include mention of as many Native communities throughout the region as possible, fiesta activity is a constant throughout the history of the region, and accordingly will require further research in order to achieve a more specific Tribal community-by-community analysis of these events. Also, this study does not aim to include the "Big Times" events of Northern California, which will also require further study. Terminology limitations also exist in this study – often what was a Native fiesta for instance differed from a fiesta produced by Californios, but nevertheless in the documentation the term "fiesta" is used. Often the term "fiesta"

meant any event in Southern California where a crowd gathered for events of spectacle and entertainment. Although Native fiestas continue today, they pale in comparison to the grand fiesta events of pre-invasion and the colonial past. Native fiesta culture, however, continues to persist, and it is the hope that this study can in some way impact and expand the significance of these events to Native Southern California, where ultimately the history and future of these events lie.

Chapter One: *Yumayk Yumayk:* Long Ago

Since *yumayk yumayk*, long ago, Southern California Native communities transferred cultural knowledge from generation-to-generation through songs, dance, example, and oral tradition based upon their relationship with the land and its physical and metaphysical realities.[6] A considerable amount of cultural knowledge transmission occurred prior to Spanish invasion at Native events of ceremony, celebration and socialization, hereto referred to as Native events of tradition. As exemplified in the upcoming chapter, these events, later deemed *fiestas*, *feasts*, or *festivals* by Europeans, continued throughout the process of European invasion of Southern California. The present chapter concerns the traditional, or what archaeologists term, the "prehistoric," origin of Native fiesta events as recounted by several traditional narratives from Southern California Native communities. Further, this chapter will include some reference to these events from academia and early Spanish explorers in order to further trace Native fiestas from their traditional origins and into the early Spanish Period.

Originally, Southern California Native communities did not term events of tradition "fiestas." Each Tribe and Band had its own name for the gathering of the People to enjoy and be together, and to take part in sacred ceremonials to fulfill religious obligations. Upon the introduction of the Spanish language to Southern California by Spanish missionaries, settlers introduced the term fiesta and added the term to the languages of all Native people throughout Southern California. Fiesta terminology was

[6] *Yumayk yumayk*, is *Payomkawichum* (Luiseño) for "long ago," taken from Villiana Calac Hyde and Eric Elliot, *Yumayk Yumayk: Long Ago* (University of California Press, 1994).

constructed, and later, continued throughout the Californio Period and into the present by Europeans. Ethnologist Constance Goddard Dubois for instance referenced the use of the word fiestas by Europeans as “a convenient Spanish word to express the gatherings for the important religious ceremonies.”[7] Archaeologist William Duncan Strong too mentioned that fiesta terminology stems from non-Native origin:

> … there has been a marked tendency in the last sixty years to gather all fragments of old ceremonies, many of which were once unconnected, into a one-week period of mourning and “fiesta”… The aboriginal tendency has been greatly accelerated by modern conditions, and today these week-long ceremonies, somewhat erroneously called “fiestas” by the white people, sum up for the Indians all that they remember and cherish of their former life.[8]

Although Europeans termed the events they witnessed “fiestas,” these statements by scholars attest that fiesta terminology at its core is non-Native.

According to renowned linguist and ethnologist John P. Harrington, for the *Acjachemen* (Juaneño), the word *tcaŋíllaχic* was “the old native word for fiesta, for which fiyesta [sic], from the Sp. [Spanish], is now generally substituted. It is from tcaŋíllaq, to celebrate a fiesta, Sp. Festejar.”[9] According to Harrington, there are two Native words in Acjachemen for assembly or gathering of any kind: *yúnnnaχic,* from yunnaq, to assemble; and *purú”axic*, from puru”aq, to assemble.[10] In addition, Harrington noted that a special name exists for a meeting of ceremony, *máqqaχic*, from maqqaq, meaning to

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[7] Constance Goddard DuBois with edits by Don Laylander, *Listening to the Raven: The Southern California Ethnography of Constance Goddard Dubois* (Salinas: Coyote Press, 2004), 88.
[8] William Duncan Strong, *Aboriginal Society* (Banning: Malki-Ballena Press, 1987), 121.
[9] Father Geronimo Boscana with annotations by John P. Harrington, *Chinigchinich: A revised and annotated version of Alfred Robinson's translation of Father Geronimo Boscana's historical account of belief, usages, customs, and extravagencies of the Indians of this Mission of San Juan Capistrano called the Acagchemem Tribe* (Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1978), 158, note 110.
[10] Ibid.

hold a meeting for ceremonial purposes.[11] It is likely that pre-invasion Acjachemen communities from Southern California utilized some, or a combination of, these terms when they referred to events of traditional ceremony, socialization, and celebration. This is merely one example. Other Native communities throughout Southern California also utilized their own language when referencing their own events of tradition. The Spanish, on the other hand, having no word for Native events of tradition they witnessed, called the events 'fiestas' in order to categorize these sites with those of festivity, socialization, and ceremony they were accustomed to witnessing in Spain and throughout other colonial provinces of the Spanish Empire. Later, Euro-Americans also borrowed the term fiesta to describe Native gatherings.

The most significant evidence in the historical record concerning the traditional origins of fiesta events stems from Native communities, and their inclusion of fiesta events in their ancestral traditional narratives. While attending an image ceremony at a fiesta, Dubois for instance mentioned that "The sanction for this fiesta, as for all the religious ceremonies, is to be found in the myths."[12] Accordingly, the beginnings of this chapter will assess and present a number of traditional Southern California Native narratives, though not all, that concern fiesta events and their association with the ancestral past in order to bridge the relationship between Native events of tradition, and of Native fiestas of the present.

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[11] Ibid.
[12] DuBois, *Listening to the Raven,* 90.

Fiestas appear in the traditional narratives of the *Payomkawichum* (Luiseño), specifically concerning *Wiyot*, a significant cultural and religious ancestral being. According to DuBois, it was Wiyot who instructed hummingbird to tell the People to eat acorns and make flour, after which "all men were glad and made the fiesta of the bellota [acorn]."[13] In addition, Wiyot also instructed the People to make a fiesta for the eagle. According to traditional Payomkawish narratives, "The eagle was a big man and a very great captain, and Ouiot [sic] had told them that when they made this fiesta they were to kill the eagle; and so they do."[14] Fiesta origins from the Payomkawish stem from the ancestral spirit of Wiyot, who originally instructed the *Kammalam*, the first People, to make a fiesta.

After the passing of Wiyot, fiesta production continued for the Payomkawish, notably to make mourning ceremony for his passing. According to the Payomkawish, upon the death of Wiyot, "it was told them [sic] that in all time to come they must have fiestas for the dead as they had done for Ouiot [sic]."[15] Consequently, the first Payomkawish fiesta for the dead took place in order to perform the mourning ceremony following the death of Wiyot:

> A fine basket was made and the ashes and bones of Ouiot [sic] were placed within it, and they buried the basket in the ground. While they were burying it, they sang solemn words with groans (grunting expirations), and they danced in the fiesta. This was the first time there had been singing or dancing for the dead. Until that time they had known nothing of it, but after this they knew how to make the fiestas and to sing and dance.[16]

[13] DuBois, *Listening to the Raven,* 64.
[14] DuBois, *Listening to the Raven,* 97.
[15] DuBois, *Listening to the Raven,* 96.
[16] Ibid.

Following Wiyot's passing, a meeting was held at the village of Éxva Teméeku (Temecula) where the proper order of all living things was decided.[17] Wiyot, who originally instructed the first People to have a fiesta, became the first spirit to experience the fiesta ceremony of mourning. After the passing of Wiyot, there was a "big fiesta," and "that was the beginning of the fiestas for the dead."[18] It is likely that both the eagle and mourning fiesta ceremonies arise from Payomkawish traditions surrounding the teachings and subsequent passing of Wiyot long ago, where after his fiesta of mourning the order of all living things were decided.

In addition to Wiyot, fiestas are also included in other aspects of traditional Payomkawish narratives, specifically that of *Nahachish*, *Tahquitz,* and *Tukúupar*. Nahachish lived long ago, and historical accounts place him as either a "great man living at the beginning of time" or as a non-popular "Chief" of the Payomkawish living in Temecula.[19] According to historical narratives, Nahachish travelled throughout Southern California and subsequently named several prominent places throughout Payomkawish territory, including Temeku (Temecula), Huyama (La Jolla), Pala (Pala), and Yohama/Makwimai (Rincon).[20] In relation to fiestas, one traditional narrative from the Payomkawish mentioned that Nahachish once received assistance throughout his travels at a fiesta in Temecula: "He went to Picha Awanga, Pichanga [sic], between Temecula and Warner's Ranch, and named that place. There were a lot of people there having a

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid., 97.
[19] D.L. True and C.W. Meighan, "Nahachish," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 9, no. 2 (1987): 188-189.
[20] True and Meighan, "Nahachish," 188-191.

fiesta, and there was plenty of food. They passed everything to him, and there was a sort of mush of a light gray color."[21] Traditional narratives from the Payomkawish incorporate fiesta events within the framework of ancestral narratives of powerful spirits such as Nahachish, thereby noting their cultural significance and connection to Native events of tradition from the ancestral past.

Tahquitz, the malevolent spirit of several Native communities throughout Southern California, and Tukúupar (the sky) are also spoken of in relation to fiestas throughout traditional Payomkawish narratives. Told by Chief Juan Sotelo Calac and recounted by Harrington, Tukúupar once killed Tahquitz at a fiesta. According to Calac, Tahquitz and Tukúupar were cousins, and Tahquitz always stole the "spirit of the life" of people.[22] One day Tahquitz stole the life of Tukúupar's son.[23] As a result, Tukúupar and his people invited Tahquitz to a fiesta, where they killed him: "he called together his people and told them that Taakwic [sic] had eaten his son, and they decided to give a fiesta and to invite Taakwic to the fiesta… at last they got him good and killed him."[24] According to Calac, the fiesta continued for four days after Tahquitz's death, "for the people were very happy because they had killed Taakwic."[25] Tahquitz eventually returned to life during cremation, but nevertheless, this narrative centers the killing of Tahquitz by his cousin Tukúupar at a Native fiesta long ago. For the Payomkawish, fiesta events stem from tradition, and are integrated and appear in traditional narratives of

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[21] DuBois, *Listening to the Raven,* 159.
[22] Boscana with annotations by Harrington, *Chinigchinich,* 182.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Boscana with annotations by Harrington, *Chinigchinich,* 184.
[25] Ibid.

significant cultural figures, namely Wiyot, Nahachish, Tahquitz and Tukúupar. Payomkawish oral narratives passed down from generation-to-generation therefore confirm the pre-invasion origin of Native events of tradition, later deemed fiestas.

In addition to the Payomkawish, the Acjachemen also incorporate fiestas in their traditional narratives of long ago. According to Franciscan missionary Gerónimo Boscana, who produced one of the most ethnographically detailed accounts of Mission life in the nineteenth century, fiestas appear in the very naming of the Acjachemen community. According to Boscana, the *Capitana* (Chieftess) Coronne, daughter of Chief Oyaison, once held a "grand feast" of several days in which all the neighboring tribes were invited to attend.[26] Following the feast, Capitana Coronne's body swelled while she slept, and became a mound of earth, as recounted by Boscana in the following traditional narrative from the Acjachemen community:

> …where they celebrated the feast, there is a small rising ground which was probably formed by the course of the water in a freshet, but the Indians say, and religiously believe, that it is the body of Coronne. After having taken leave of their friends, who remained sorrowful and disconsolate for the loss of their *capitana*, the Indians, on returning home, arrived and put up for the night at a place called Acagchemen, distant from where the mission now stands only about sixty yards. From this time, the new colony assumed the name corresponding to the place. [27]

Harrington further referenced this narrative from Boscana in his notes. He called Capitana Coronne *Kurooni, the village where the fiesta was held *Putiioum*, and termed the feast mentioned by Boscana a fiesta in his notes.[28] This traditional narrative of the Acjachemen, retold by Boscana, demonstrates the significance of fiestas to Native

[26] Boscana with Harrington annotations, *Chinigchinich*, 84.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Boscana with Harrington annotations, *Chinigchinich*, 217, note 233.

communities surrounding the village of Putiioum. In particular because following the fiesta of *Kurooni the community received their designation as the Acjachemen.

To the south of the Payomkawish and the Acjachemen, the *Kumeyaay* (Diegueño) additionally include fiestas in their traditional narratives. While recounting old customs and dances at fiestas, Kumeyaay elder Hokoyél Mutaweér, more commonly referred to as Cinon Duro, mentioned that "This is not the chief's invention; but God taught them to do it. God taught the people in time past to make these fiestas."[29] Though Duro was influenced with Christian words like God, all people had their own names for their creator and first peoples who put the world into motion and order. Duro likely referred to the spirit of *Tu-chai-pai*, as told by another Kumeyaay elder, José Yacheño: "Tu-chai-pai was the name of God. He was good and he made the world very glorious and men very good… Tu-chai-pai alone was the Creator…The moon died and God died, and the people wept and cried and moaned and made a fiesta for mourning."[30] Both of these narratives from Kumeyaay elders associate fiestas to Tu-chai-pai and his passing long ago. His death, according to traditional Kumeyaay narratives gathered by DuBois, sparked the beginnings of fiestas for the Kumeyaay:

> The people at that time wanted to make the appropriate ceremonial dance for the dead god, but no one knew how to do it. No one had yet danced or sung; so a messenger was sent to the islands of the ocean to ask a mysterious being, Mai-ha-o-witt, to teach them how to *make the fiesta*. He came to Wik-a-mee from the ocean in the form of an immense serpent, the trail of whose progress is still to be seen in a white line traced upon the mountains that border the river.[31]

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[29] Don Laylander, "Early Ethnographic Notes from Constance Goddard DuBois on the Indians of San Diego County," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 26, no. 2 (2006): 207.
[30] Laylander, "Early Ethnographic Notes from Constance Goddard DuBois," 211.
[31] DuBois, *Listening to the Raven,* 111. Italics added by author.

Similar to the death of Wiyot for the Payomkawish, Kumeyaay fiestas likely stem from the passing of Tu-chai-pai. As DuBois recounted, once the Kumeyaay discovered that Tu-chai-pai was dead, "they went on a high mountain, and set up two tablets, one to the East, and another to the West, and on these tablets were written the number of the days of the fiesta of the death of Tu-chai-pai."[32] From the death of Tu-chai-pai stem the mourning ceremonies and fiesta gatherings of the Kumeyaay. This traditional narrative of the Kumeyaay therefore marks the beginnings of fiestas for the community, and ascribe fiesta events to ancestral times and to spirits of power of the community from the ancestral past prior to European invasion.

Fiestas also appear in traditional Kumeeyay narratives concerning *Chaup*, the Kumeeyay word for Tahquitz, who according to the Kumeeyay appears as a shooting star or great fire-ball in the sky that illuminates the ground with a bright light and a sound like thunder.[33] According to Rosendo, who served as a Kumeyaay informant for DuBois, Chaup was "a dreadful ogre whose occupation while on earth had been the reprehensible one of luring into his clutches and then devouring men and boys."[34] Similar to Tahquitz, members of the Kumeeyay community plotted and killed Chaup at a fiesta. Rosendo recounted to DuBois the following traditional narrative of the death of Chaup:

> … the people became so weary of his evil practices that they laid a plot to destroy him. So they made a great *fiesta* and invited Chaup to the gathering as if he were a friend; and when he came suspecting nothing, they had a great fire burning within the council-house; and they fell upon Chaup and killed him and flung his body in

[32] DuBois, *Listening to the Raven,* 39.
[33] Constance Goddard DuBois, "The Story of the Chaup: A Myth of the Diegueños," *The Journal of American* Folklore 17, no. 67 (1904): 217, footnote 1.
[34] Laylander, "Early Ethnographic Notes from Constance Goddard DuBois," 213.

> the fire, where the flames consumed it all but the heart which could not be burned but exploded and flew up into the sky where it still appears as a great light.[35]

Plots and actions that led to the death of Chaup and Tahquitz both occurred at fiestas, and further place fiestas in ancestral times and in narratives of great spirits of traditional power.

Traditional Kumeyaay narratives concerning Wildcat and Coyote also discuss fiestas. Told by Campo Kumeyaay elder Jim McCarty in 1920, fiestas assisted Wildcat and Coyote in establishing relations with one another long ago:

> Coyote lived alone… Wildcat had a wife. He invited all his own people and everyone else who lived in the vicinity to a feast… All the people were drinking the soup. Coyote had nothing, but he wanted to impress others, so after he had eaten to repletion, he invited them to a feast at his own house... Coyote said to Wild Cat, "Bring all your people to my camp tomorrow. I am going to give a feast." Wild Cat gathered all the people he could and started for Coyote's house... Coyote continually visited Wild Cat. Wild Cat said, "I think that you had better come to another feast."[36]

In this traditional Kumeyaay narrative, fiestas served to bolster relations between two Kumeyaay spirits. As a result, fiesta reciprocity between Coyote and Wildcat clans continued throughout the early twentieth century. According to anthropologist Edward W. Gifford, in the early twentieth century, "When a fiesta is to be given by a coyote clan or party, the members first meet and discuss the matter. At the fiesta, they often cook for and serve the wild cat guests."[37] Cultural relations and fiesta reciprocity between Coyote and Wildcat clans likely stem as a result of traditional Kumeyaay narratives concerning

[35] Laylander, "Early Ethnographic Notes from Constance Goddard DuBois," 213. Italics added by author.
[36] Leslie Spier, *Southern Diegueno Customs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1923), 333.
[37] Edward Winslow Gifford, "Clans and Moieties in Southern California," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 14, no. 2 (1918): 196.

fiesta activity between these two spirits, thereby further ascribing fiesta events to the ancestral past of the Kumeyaay community.

To the north of the Kumeyaay, the desert *Cahuilla*, too, include fiestas in their traditional narratives, in particular with the passing of *Mukat*. According to the mother of Cahuilla elder August Lomas of the *autaatem* clan, Mukat was one of the Creators of all things.[38] Prior to his death, Mukat told his people to "hold a fiesta once a year, in memory of the dead."[39] According to Lomas, Coyote knew what was needed for the first fiesta of the Cahuilla:

> When they were ready to hold the fiesta, Coyote told them he knew what to make effigies of and offered to go to the end of the world to get it. Misvut (a seaweed) is what he got. It grew far under the water. It had probably been made in the beginning for this purpose… During that first fiesta, the Isil people wanted to some more misvut… The misvut was always kept rolled up and had a stone pipe in it. Net had given a feast in order to get this pipe, for Mukat had told them that this was necessary.[40]

This traditional narrative of the Cahuilla also places fiesta events in the ancestral past of the community. Similar to Wiyot for the Payomkawish and Tu-chai-pai for the Kumeeyay, it was Mukat who first instructed the Cahuilla community to hold a fiesta, and the first fiesta was held by the community in order to hold a mourning ceremony for his passing. For all three communities, the Payomkawish, the Kumeyaay, and the Cahuilla, Native fiesta origins stem from the passing of powerful spirits from the

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[38] Lucile Hooper, "The Cahuilla Indians," *University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* 16, no. 6 (1920): "Origin of all things," 317-328.
[39] Hooper, "The Cahuilla Indians," 326.
[40] William Duncan Strong, *Aboriginal Society in Southern California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1929), 61.

ancestral past. As a result, the significance of ceremonies of mourning at Native fiesta events cannot be under stressed.

Fiestas also appear in the traditional narrative of the Cahuilla concerning *Kunvachmal* and *Tukvachtahat*. Kunvachmal was a powerful man of magic who had a son named Tukvachtahat. The following narrative, titled "The Magician and His Son," was told to ethnographers Edward Winslow Gifford and Gwendoline Harris Block by the Cahuilla community:

> Kunvachmal became very rich and Tukvachtahat poor. The time came when Tukvachtahat came to Kunvachmal and begged for food, that he and his sons might eat, for they were starving. Kunvachmal said, "Surely, go help yourself." Later on, a big feast was being held some distance away. Tukvachtahat and his sons were invited to attend and sing. Kunvachmal wanted to go also, but his mother said no, for he did not have fine enough clothes and could not sing well. Kunvachmal did not listen to his mother and went to the feast. No one paid any attention to him, for he was too poorly dressed. This made him feel badly and he decided to go into a hole and get clothes made of the colors which are on a worm. Then he got the mosquitoes to sing for him. When he returned to the feast everyone stopped admiring his father and brothers to gaze at him. His clothes far surpassed those of any of the other guests and his singing was beautiful. When Kunvachmal returned from the feast he was very happy. After a while he went to the sky and became a bright star.[41]

This traditional narrative from the Cahuilla touches upon several aspects concerning fiesta events. Fiestas for instance served as places where members from a Native community could seek sustenance during times of hardship. Also, this traditional narrative exemplifies the importance of song at fiestas, and how these events served as areas where community members could attain prestige and ascend socially if their presence at a fiesta was noteworthy. Similar to Chaup, Tahquitz, Tukúupar and

[41] Edward W. Gifford and Gwendoline Harris Block, *California Indian Nights* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1930), 231.

Nahachish, traditional narratives of the Cahuilla include fiestas in the accounts of powerful spirits of the ancestral past.

In order to demonstrate the deep-rooted cultural connection between fiesta events and the ancestral past of Southern California Native communities, some notable traditional Native narratives were presented that incorporate fiesta events within the framework of powerful spirits of the ancestral past. Traditional narratives of Creation are sacred and embody Native perspectives of the cosmos, the natural world, and a Native community's responsibility and reciprocal relationship to it. It is therefore significant to express that the aims of their mention in this chapter are solely for the purpose of affirming the traditional and ancestral origins of Native fiesta events prior to European invasion of California. That Native events of tradition, later deemed fiestas, held "prehistoric" origin, is unquestionable, as several Southern California Native communities include fiesta events in narratives concerning origin itself. In the cases of the Payomkawish, the Kumeyaay, and the Cahuilla, it is significant to note certain similarities; notably that fiesta events originated with the passing of Creator spirits who taught their people to hold such events for the purpose of mourning and ceremony after the passing of members from the community. Fiestas, or events of tradition, are as old as some of these traditional Native narratives, and thus, for some Southern California Native communities, as old as time.

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, Native events of tradition occurred frequently, and for a variety of purposes. For the Chumash for instance, events of tradition were held for reasons such as birth, the naming of children, adolescence, the drinking of toloache,

marriage, illness and recovery from illness, wakes, a chief's birthday, the appearance of rattlesnakes in the Spring, the completion of the harvest in the Fall, and the summer and winter solstices.[42] In addition, dances were frequently performed simply for pleasure.[43] Likely, other Native communities throughout Southern California held events of tradition for similar purposes, or for additional purposes of regional significance prior to the arrival of the Spanish that are undocumented, but likely present.

Native events of tradition also held an economic benefit for the trade and distribution of resources. According to Bean for instance, formal or informal "trade feasts" were produced between groups living in different ecological areas (coastal, foothills, deserts, etc.), so that "goods from the mutually advantageous but politically separate areas were exchanged for those of others."[44] These "trade feasts" involved communities within an estimated radius of fifty to seventy-five miles, which would often bring several hundred to several thousand Native community members together.[45] Such was the case for the Chumash, where "Redistribution of resources transpired during regularly occurring ceremonial feasts, where individuals came from a wide geographical range – island, mainland, and interior villages."[46] The production of Native fiestas prior

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[42] Thomas Blackburn, "Ceremonial Integration and Social Interaction in Aboriginal California," in Lowell J. Bean and Thomas C. Blackburn, *Native Californians: A Theoretical Perspective* (Ramona: Ballena Press, 1976), 233.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Lowell Bean, "Social Organization in Native California," in Lowell J. Bean and Thomas C. Blackburn, *Native Californians: A Theoretical Perspective* (Ramona: Ballena Press, 1976), 120.
[45] Bean, "Social Organization in Native California," 104.
[46] Lynn H. Gamble, *The Chumash World at European Contact: Power, Trade, and Feasting among Complex Hunter-Gatherers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 61-62.

to the arrival of the Spanish were therefore not solely for ceremony, but for economic and resource distribution as well.

In addition, pre-Spanish Native events of tradition were also held for reciprocal ceremonial obligations, and attendance to these events by village chiefs was taken seriously. According to Bean, whenever a group held a ritual, they invited "ritualists and relatives" from other Native communities in order to fulfill ritual obligations of sacred power, which often included the exchanging of gifts for the purpose of establishing formal trading relationships.[47] According to Kroeber, one event of tradition, the mourning ceremony, which is practiced by several Native communities throughout Southern California, "bulks so large in the life of many California tribes as to produce a first impression of being one of the most typical phases of Californian culture."[48] Concerning mourning ceremonials, Kroeber further noted that "there can be little doubt that its origin is southern," as the greatest development of mourning practices are found among the Tongva/Kizh (Gabrieleño) and the Payomkawish.[49] Events of tradition were and continue to be affairs taken seriously by members of Native communities. In pre-Spanish times, this was especially so for Native chiefs, who were responsible for sponsoring and organizing these events for neighboring communities and leaders. Attendance to these events by village chiefs was a serious enough affair that refusal to accept an invitation by a neighboring chief were grounds for war.[50]

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[47] Bean, "Social Organization in Native California," 120.
[48] Alfred Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1925), 859-860.
[49] Alfred Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, 860.
[50] Gamble, *The Chumash World at European Contact*, 63.

Documented by both traditional narratives and throughout academic literature, the significance of pre-Spanish events of tradition to Southern California communities cannot be under stressed. As Thomas Blackburn mentioned, "fiestas of one kind or another seem to have been a prominent feature of aboriginal life in Southern California," and "the intensity of ceremonialism in aboriginal life must have been pronounced… there were few occasions during the course of the year when the life of an average person was not touched, directly or indirectly, by its social or economic concomitants."[51] He continued, and further mentioned "Unlike certain other aspects of aboriginal culture that were rapidly eroded under the impact of massive acculturative influences, fiestas continued to be important contexts for both social and religious interaction until surprisingly late, although naturally subject to considerable modification in detail."[52] Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, Native communities throughout Southern California utilized events of tradition for the purpose of sacred ceremony, economic exchange, political alliance, and relationship building. Further, these events also were for amusement and socialization that bridged and built relations between Native community members. These events presented the opportunity for courtship and family-building for instance, aspects of which are difficult to document, but that nonetheless continued throughout Native fiestas into the present. Native fiestas stem from these events of tradition of the pre-Spanish past.

In addition to traditional narratives and academic literature, early Spanish explorers and missionaries to California provide the first European accounts of fiestas in

[51] Blackburn, "Ceremonial Integration and Social Interaction in Aboriginal California," 229; 233.
[52] Blackburn, "Ceremonial Integration and Social Interaction in Aboriginal California," 229.

California, and of encounters with Native events of tradition. Sebastian Vizcaino, a successful Spanish merchant turned conquistador, encountered several Native communities throughout California upon his voyages of exploration.[53] In one encounter, his crew produced what is likely the first Spanish fiesta in California. Taken from the writings of Franciscan Zephyrin Engelhardt, the following account by Vizcaino is presented: "Friendly relations with the natives having been thus established, it was decided to celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi in this out of the world place just as it is celebrated all over the globe, notably in Spain."[54] Exactly how this event was "celebrated" is not expressed in the documentation, but nevertheless, this event was likely the site of what may constitute the first Spanish "fiesta" in California. Likely, too, is that this event was the first Spanish fiesta Native California communities witnessed.

Alongside producing the first Spanish fiestas in California, early explorers also encountered traditional Native fiestas upon their arrival to the region. While enroute from San Diego to Monterey, the Portola Expedition encountered a Native fiesta on July 30, 1769, in La Brea Canyon, north of present-day Fullerton. This encounter was documented by missionary Juan Crespi, who accompanied the Expedition, and who stated "The Indians of this village were having a feast and dance, to which they had invited their neighbors of the river."[55] The following month in August, 1769, the Expedition encountered yet another fiesta further north around present day Santa

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[53] For a detailed account of Vizcaino and his voyages, see Charles E. Chapman, "Sebastian Vizcaino: Exploration of California," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 23, No. 4 (1920): 285-301.
[54] Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California: Volume 1, Lower California* (Santa Barbara: Mission Santa Barbara, 1929), 55.
[55] Juan Crespi, *Fray Juan Crespi, missionary explorer on the Pacific Coast, 1769-1774, by Herbert Eugene Bolton* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1927), 143.

Barbara.[56] Consisting of around sixty homes, the Native community numbered around eight-hundred and were likely Chumash.[57] According to Portola's diary, the Native community there "gifted us much food and courted us in much music and dance."[58] Crespi also documented this encounter of feasting and dancing from Chumash community in his diary:

> … they brought to the camp so much [fish] that it was necessary to tell them to not bring any more, for it would eventually have to spoil. They were not content with making us presents of their food, but wished also to entertain us, and it was clear that there was rivalry and emulation among the towns to come out best in the presents and feasts in order to win our appropriation… These dances lasted all afternoon, and it cost us much trouble to rid ourselves of the people… as night fell they returned, playing on some pipes whose noise grated on our ears.[59]

Upon their return from Monterrey in 1770, the Portola Expedition also encountered a Chumash village in Ventura whose occupants left the village to attend a Native fiesta on one of the Channel Islands. According to Crespi, the Portola Expedition arrived in Ventura and encountered an "empty" village with only four to six elders and a few women.[60] Hungry, the expedition inquired about fish to eat, but according to Crespi, the few remaining occupants of the village responded that "all of the people are with the canoes on the Islands, which is why they do not have fish."[61] In his discussions of Chumash inter-village economic exchange, Chester King referenced this event by the

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[56] Gaspar de Portola, "Diario del Viaje Que Hace por Tierra D. Gaspar de Portola, A Los Puertos de San Diego Y Monterrey en las Californias," in Jose Porrua Turanzas, Editor, *Noticias y Documentos Acerca de las Californias, 1764-1795* (Madrid: 1959), 61.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid. Spanish to english translation provided by author: "nos regalaron mucha comida y nos cortejaron en mucha musica y bailes."
[59] Crespi, *Fray Juan Crespi, missionary explorer on the Pacific Coast, 1769-1774,* 167-168.
[60] Juan Crespi and J.G. Maximin Piette, "An Unpublished Diary of Fray Juan Crespi, O. F. M. (San Diego to Monterrey, April 17 to November 11, 1770)," *The Americas* 3, no. 1 (1946): 114.
[61] Ibid. Spanish translation of Crespi's account provided by author: "Y nos dijieron que toda la gente estaba con las canoas en las Islas, y que por esso no tenian pescado."

Figure 1: *Father Serra's Landing Place or Celebration of the First Mass*. Painting by Léon Trousset, circa 1877. The painting depicts Father Serra at the altar surrounded by members of the Gaspar de Portola Expedition. Illustrated in the foreground, Native neophytes are participating in the ceremony, while others watch from the forest. Original held by *California Historical Society*.

Portola Expedition, and mentioned the occupants of the village temporarily left "presumably for a fiesta" on one of the Channel Islands.[62]

One of the first documented instances where Spanish explorers referred to Native events of tradition as "fiestas" likely occurred prior to the Portola Expedition of 1769, in 1766. Between February and April of that year, Jesuit missionary Wenceslaus Linck travelled throughout Northern Baja California to obtain for Spanish and Catholic authorities information concerning Native communities and the physical environs of the region.[63] Upon encountering a Native community that numbered one-hundred seventy-five, Linck mentioned "these rancherias had three wrappings of hair and other instruments that they use in the barbarous dissolutions and gross superstitions of their fiestas."[64] Though Linck failed to recognize the ceremonial significance of the items he viewed by referring to them condescendingly, Linck nevertheless referred to the traditional ceremonial events of the Native community as fiestas. Spanish soldiers and missionaries likely utilized similar language throughout early encounters with Native events of tradition they failed to understand.

The accounts of early Spanish explorers Vizcaino, Portola, Crespi and Linck indicate that from early transitions of pre-Spanish invasion and into the Mission Period of

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62 Chester King, "Chumash Inter-Village Economic Exchange," in Lowell J. Bean and Thomas C. Blackburn, *Native Californians: A Theoretical Perspective* (Ramona: Ballena Press, 1976), 295.
63 Frances Kellam Hendricks, "Wenceslaus Linck's Diary of His 1766 Expedition to Northern Baja California," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 47, no. 4 (1967): 623.
64 Wenceslaus Linck, "Diario del Viaje Que Se Hizo En La Provincia de California Al Norte de Esta Peninsula Por Febrero de Este Año de 1766," in Jose Porrua Turanzas, Editor*, Noticias y Documentos Acerca de las Californias, 1764-1795* (Madrid: 1959), 23. Spanish to English translation provided by author: "tenian estas rancherias prevenidos tres emboltorios de cabelleras y otros instrumentos de que usan en la disolucion barbara y grosera supersticion de sus fiestas."

California, Native events of tradition were encountered by early European explorers, who termed them fiestas. Vizcaino's account in particular noted the presence and production of Spanish fiestas in California from initial voyages of exploration throughout the State. Portola's account documented the presence of Native fiestas and events of tradition prior to the arrival of the Spaniards, and how these events were at times likely utilized in order to establish relations with outside groups. Crespi's account related an existing network of Native fiestas and events of tradition that Spaniards infringed upon with their arrival to California. Lastly, Linck's account noted the Spanish synthesis of Native events of tradition with Spanish fiestas in efforts to categorize, define, and make sense of Native events Europeans deemed peculiar and foreign.

Native events of tradition, that Europeans deemed "fiestas," have traditional origins, as recounted by several traditional accounts from Southern California Native communities. These events were produced for a variety of purposes, and surrounded several aspects of traditional Native life throughout Southern California, including ceremony, trade, socialization, and enjoyment. These events, which occurred year-round, assisted in the maintenance of political, economic, and social relations between Native villages throughout Southern California. Encounters of these events by the Portola Expedition document that prior to the arrival of Europeans, Native Southern California communities held Native fiestas and events of tradition that included song, feasting and dancing, and likely utilized these events in order to bolster or promote relations with neighboring or outside groups. Pre-Spanish Native events of socialization, ceremony and celebration were thus a commonplace occurrence throughout Native Southern California.

These events were largely attended to by Native communities all throughout Southern California, and as recorded by early explorers, Native people travelled great distances and even across waterways to attend these events prior to the arrival of Europeans. These documentations by Spanish explorers of traditional Native fiestas indicate that Europeans entered into an existing network of Native events of tradition constituted, and continue to constitute, a principal aspect of traditional Native Southern California life. Though Spanish missionaries aimed to suppress these events through Christianization throughout the Mission Period, as discussed in the upcoming chapter, their efforts proved unsuccessful.

Chapter Two: *qál-qu$ padres*: There were Priests

Following initial encounters with Spanish explorers, Southern California Native events of tradition continued into the Mission Period. Practiced since the beginning of time by Southern California's Native communities, these events were numerous and sacred, and thus, as Sherburne Cook once mentioned, these events held a "strong proclivity" that "was carried into the missions with them and was almost impossible to suppress in its entirety."[65] Proclivity towards the continuity of traditional events by Southern California Native communities was such that in 1782, Spanish authorities issued specific orders prohibiting Native dances of any kind at mission sites.[66] This order by Spanish authorities indicates that Native fiestas and events of tradition were not only continued at missions, but that they were continued at such an alarming rate that missionaries designated a formal order from the Spanish empire in order to discontinue their practice. This chapter will assess the extent of mission fiestas and Native fiesta continuity throughout the Mission Period.

From the initial founding of the first mission in California in 1769, Mission San Diego de Alcalá, Spanish authorities began a process of aimed missionization and Christianization of Southern California Native communities based upon forced labor, subjugation and violence. Numerous historical accounts exist that at times aim to excuse or limit the amount of Spanish violence towards Native communities in order to justify the process of missionization of California, but as Cook mentioned, "Despite

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[65] Sherbourne F. Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 151.
[66] Ibid.

innumerable lamentations, apologies, and justifications, there can be no serious denial that the mission system, in its economics, was built upon forced labor."[67] From its beginnings, the Mission Period of Southern California history severely impacted traditional forms of livelihood, ceremony, and power for Native communities. In order to understand the efforts by Native communities to continue to practice their fiestas and events of tradition throughout the Mission Period, it is necessary to respectfully recognize the violence endured during this time period at the hands of Spanish authorities.[68]

Often, California Native communities' first encounter with fiestas at mission sites occurred upon the completion of the mission itself, upon which it was blessed and dedicated.[69] These dedication events were attended by mission leadership, including Junipero Serra and Juan Crespi, and mission dedications occurred "with much solemnity and in exact accord with the Roman Ritual."[70] Following the religious ceremony, soldiers fired their muskets in the air and attendees participated in celebratory games, which according to one scholar, "all made the occasion one long to be remembered by neophytes and other participants alike."[71] These commemorated and celebrated events often saw the presence of mission leadership and introduced Southern California Native communities to fiesta-related activity at the missions; namely, a religious ceremony and procession typically followed by celebration, socialization and general festivity. Having

[67] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 95.
[68] For further reading on mission trauma endured by Native California communities, please see Rupert and Jeannette Costo, editors, *The Missions of California: A Legacy of Genocide* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1987).
[69] Edith Buckland Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1952), 279.
[70] Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, 278.
[71] Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, 279.

sailed from Spain or its colonies to California, missionaries "brought Spanish color and fiesta making; tools and methods unchanged for centuries. With the Spanish Padres came all the magnificent pageantry of the Roman Catholic Church."[72] Throughout the history of California, fiesta events marked major transitions of power throughout the State, as will also be noted in the upcoming chapters concerning the Californio and Euro-American Periods. Upon mission establishment, fiestas were utilized by Spanish authorities to not only celebrate their completion, but also to symbolically stake a mark on traditional Native lands in order to solidify their claims for the Spanish crown and to showcase their presence to Native communities in the nearby area.

Spanish missionaries, aware of the attractiveness of mission fiestas, fully utilized their splendor in order to attract and appeal mission sites to California Native communities. As one historian described: "That the Indians would be attracted by glittering ornaments, colored beads, trinkets, and bits of cloth was a fact known to all the early explorers... music and solemn ceremonies would irresistibly draw them to the church was equally well known."[73] Though this description of California Native communities is outdated and condescending, the primary message reigns truth in its description of missionary perceptions of Native communities, which were often childlike. These perceptions towards Native communities stemmed from mission leadership and throughout lower ranks. Junipero Serra for instance often "inaugurated the observance of many feast days and ceremonies calculated to attract the Indians and to inspire in them

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[72] Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, 7.
[73] Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, 259.

greater devotion to spiritual matters."[74] In essence, mission fiesta production by Spanish authorities was intentional, and further, was weaponized as a tool to fulfill the Christianizing aims of mission leadership for Southern California Native communities.

The missionaries' use of fiestas for the purpose of colonization and Christianization of Native communities was not concealed, but was recognized by both Spanish missionaries and other European visitors to Southern California throughout the Mission Period. Engelhardt for instance mentioned that "ceremonies were carried out and the procession was held with utmost splendor, in order to impress the mind of the natives through the eye, and then through the ear by means of special instructions on the consoling doctrine celebrated that day."[75] An early visitor to the California missions, Frenchman August Bernard Duhaut-Cilly, confirmed these goals of mission leadership, and provided an account of the significance of mission fiestas to the missionaries' Christianizing aims. In June of 1827, Duhaut-Cilly and his men arrived at Mission San Luis Rey in time for a mission fiesta. Recounting the event, Duhaut-Cilly stated:

> The mission was all astir with preparations for the two festivals… These were religious solemnities; but in order to attract the largest possible number of attendants, the president of the mission was accustomed, at such a time, to keep an open house, and to produce all the amusements, shows, and games dear to Californians.[76]

Missionaries utilized mission fiestas as tools for indoctrination that often concealed the violence and subjugation Native communities would endure once confined within

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[74] Edith Buckland Webb, "Agriculture in the Days of the Early California Padres," *The Americas* 4, no. 3 (1948): 325

[75] Engelhardt, O.F.M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California: Volume 1* (Santa Barbara: Mission Santa Barbara, 1929), 138.

[76] Auguste Bernard Duhaut-Cilly, *A Voyage to California, the Sandwich Islands, & Around the World in the Years 1826-1829* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 111.

mission walls. Spanish missionary authorities intentionally concealed the violent truths of mission life from Native communities behind the guise of fiesta events, which were largely festive and celebratory.

Music was also an integral aspect of Spanish Christianization aims and of Mission Period fiestas. As stated by one mission music historian, "Music has been interwoven with the Sacred Liturgy of the Church from the very beginning," and throughout the Spanish missions, "They found music a magnet that would draw men to God."[77] Often, Southern California Native communities first encounters with Spanish missionaries was through music, which was sung on the trail in early explorations, and was reported to "lure" to Spanish camps Native communities "by the soft strains of the soldier's guitar or the padre's singing of the alabado."[78] Mission music was utilized as a tool for Christian indoctrination. Native children would often be gathered in the mission patio during catechism and would be encouraged to sing little hymns by the Spanish priest who would reward their efforts with candies and fruits.[79] With practice, Native neophytes became talented musicians that performed at mission services and fiestas, as related by Engelhardt:

> A great deal of singing was done at the missions. In time, the men formed choirs and on all the feasts of the year they sang, of course in Latin, the parts of the Mass and the Vespers. Many of the hymns, however, were Spanish. Naturally, all this demanded that the Indian learn to read and write. A number of boys served the priests at the altar. For this the brightest were chosen, and as a matter of course they learned to read Latin and Spanish. The Alabado figured on all occasions.[80]

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[77] Rev. Owen da Silva, O.F.M., editor, *Mission Music of California* (Los Angeles: Warren F. Lewis, 1941), 3.
[78] *Mission Music of California*, 4.
[79] Rev. Owen da Silva, *Mission Music of California*, 7.
[80] Fr. Zephyrin Engelhardt, O.F.M., *Missions and Missionaries: San Diego Mission* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1929), 133.

Mission instruments were often made at the mission, and included the violin, the viola, the violincello, the bass-viol, the flute, the sweet German flute, the trumpet, horns, the bandola (lute), the guitar, drums and the triangle.[81] As Engelhardt mentioned, in time, "Every church could boast of a band of musicians."[82]

Native choristers and musicians would often play at Mission Period fiestas, and in turn, had "more and different contact with the gente de razon from other mission Indians."[83] Some of the events where Native musicians would play were at weddings, receptions, fiestas, and all-night fandangos.[84] Native musicians learned to play religious as well as secular music, which was used to entertain presidio soldiers and early Spanish settlers at their fiestas.[85] One early California settler characterized the music of Native fiesta musicians as "lively and inspiriting operatic airs and dancing tunes," which included dances such as the contradanza, minuets, and Aragonese jotas.[86] Mission Period fiesta Native musicians were often paid, likely in minimal sums, for their entertainment during fiesta events.[87] Native musicians were integral to fiesta production throughout the Mission Period, where they often were exposed to Spanish fiesta culture and but unfortunately gained little compensation for their skills.

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[81] Rev. Owen da Silva, *Mission Music of California*, 8-9.
[82] Engelhardt, O.F.M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California: Volume 1*, 165.
[83] James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Mission* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004): 143.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Mission*, 144.
[86] Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Mission*, 143.
[87] Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Mission*, 152.

Figure 2: Last Native choir and band of Mission San Buenaventura, circa 1873. Creator unknown. *Black Gold Cooperative Library System.*

Spanish fiesta production throughout the Mission Period occurred frequently. Charles Nordhoff, a regular visitor to California throughout the nineteenth century, remarked on mission fiestas and their frequency, specifically at Mission San Luis Rey. According to Nordoff, San Luis Rey "made place and occasion for frequent festivity," and to the mission "came families from fifty miles around, with their retainers, for a fiesta."[88] Nordoff also mentioned that often fiesta attendees remained at the fiesta for "a

[88] Charles Nordhoff, *California: for health, pleasure, and residence. A book for travellers and settlers* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873): 242-243.

week or two," that the fiesta was "partly religious, partly secular," and that the padres "entertained all who came, and thus the countryside kept up acquaintance."[89] Mission leadership promoted and produced Spanish fiestas regularly in order for padres and other missionaries to themselves socialize with communities throughout the California countryside. Fiestas were enjoyed by Spanish leadership, and thus, were produced frequently in order to maintain acquaintances and for entertainment from the rudimentary work at mission sites. Fiestas brought communities, Spanish and Native, physically together, and served as a tool for early community building throughout the Mission Period of Southern California.

Alongside promoting and producing mission fiestas, Spanish missionaries at times allowed for the continuity of Southern California Native events of tradition throughout the Mission Period. While at San Luis Rey, Duhaut-Cilly for instance also attended a traditional Native fiesta upon his visit. According to Duhaut-Cilly, "When night was come [sic] I went with Fray Antonio to watch the Indian dances, which to me were as interesting as they were strange."[90] Duhaut-Cilly continued further, and remarked upon the allowance of this event by mission leadership: "For although they may all be Christians, they retain many of their former beliefs, which the padres, *as a matter of policy*, pretend not to notice."[91] Alfred Robinson, translator of Franciscan missionary Geronimo Boscana's work, further remarked on the allowance of Native events of tradition by mission leadership: "They have been careful to preserve the traditions and

[89] Ibid.
[90] Duhaut-Cilly, *A Voyage to California*, 119.
[91] Ibid. Italics added by author.

customs of their ancestors, and are permitted to indulge in the observance of them on their feast days, which occur several times during the year."[92] Mission leadership, aware that Southern California Native communities sought to maintain their traditional practices, at times allowed for the production of Native events of tradition, likely for the purpose of suppressing feelings of rebellion and discontent within the walls of mission life, or for their own amusement and spectacle.

Native fiestas and events of tradition, with or without the consent of the missionaries, continued throughout the Mission Period, as attested to by mission historians. According to Steven Hackel, dances and ceremonies were "quite common at most missions throughout the colonial period."[93] Historian James Sandos also affirmed this statement, and indicated missionaries only controlled Native dances throughout the San Francisco area, where they would at times allow their supervised performance for visitors to the missions.[94] In Southern California, Native dances and ceremonies continued on a more frequent basis. Alfred Kroeber for instance remarked on the continuity of Native dances and ceremony at Missions San Diego and San Luis Rey, and indicated "They [the Indians] are exceedingly desirous (apasionados) of preserving the customs of their elders," and that "they have a great desire to assemble at a ceremony regarding a bird called vulture (gavilan)."[95] These observations by Kroeber were further emphasized by Engelhardt concerning the Native community at Mission San Diego,

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[92] Boscana with annotations by Harrington, *Chinigchinich,* 15.
[93] Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 264.
[94] James A. Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Mission*, 22-23.
[95] Alfred Kroeber, "A Mission Record of the California Indians," *American Archaeology and Ethnology* 8, no. 1 (1908): 4-5.

when he remarked that "they [the Indians] are very fond of participating in the Feast of the Bird."[96] Boscana, too, further commented on the continuity of Native events of tradition at mission sites:

> As on all the feast days of the Indians, dancing was the principal ceremony… Such was the delight with which they took part in their festivities, that they often continued dancing day and night and sometimes entire weeks. Their whole heart and soul were wrapt [sic] up in the amusement, and hardly a day passed without some portion of it being devoted to this insipid and monotonous ceremony.[97]

Boscana continued on his remarks concerning Native fiesta production throughout the Mission Period and indicated that "the dance ceremonies in their grand feasts (which are properly exercises of religion) cannot be understood," and that the Native calendar "served principally to denote when to harvest the grain, *celebrate their feasts*, and commemorate the death of their friends."[98] Not only did fiestas continue throughout mission complexes, but their continuity was frequent throughout the year.

Documentation from mission historians confirm the continuity of Native fiestas at mission sites throughout the Mission Period. As explained by Robert Jackson and Native scholar Edward Castillo, historians however largely comprised studies focused on "missionaries, colonial officials, and settlers," where the Native community served only as "supporting actors in a drama" that characterized the parochialism of the mission system itself.[99] As a result, it becomes necessary to analyze the continuity of Native

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[96] Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, 180.
[97] Boscana with annotations by Harrington, *Chinigchinich,* 57.
[98] Boscana with annotations by Harrington, *Chinigchinich,* 17; 66. Italics added by author.
[99] Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 5-6.

fiestas from first-hand accounts of mission neophytes and mission authorities throughout the Mission Period.

The writings of neophyte Pablo Tac exemplify the survivance of Native events of tradition at mission sites. Born at Mission San Luis Rey in 1822, Tac attended the mission school and became literate. He travelled to Rome in the mid-nineteenth century, where he attended college and studied Latin, rhetoric, humanities and philosophy. During his time in Rome, Tac compiled a document detailing his experiences at the mission.[100] This document is significant, as it provides the earliest written account of mission life from the perspective of a Native neophyte.

In the document, Tac discussed Native dancing, and specifically recounted three dances: the "Dance of the 'Cheyat'," "Another dance," and the "Dance of the Pala."[101] He recounted the procession of the dances, and included some personal perspectives concerning their performance. In addition, Tac sketched a drawing of two Payomkawish dancers at Mission San Luis Rey. This illustration likely presents the earliest known illustration of Native dancing by a Native neophyte of Southern California and further promotes that Native fiestas and events of tradition continued at mission sites. Tac also recounted that "No one can dance without permission of the elders."[102] This is significant, as Tac did not mention the permission of missionary leadership. He specified

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[100] Pablo Tac et al., "Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey," *The Americas* 9, no. 1 (July 1952), 88-91.
[101] Pablo Tac, Minna and Gordon Hewes, editors, *Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey: A record of Mission Life by Pablo Tac, an Indian neophyte, written about 1835* (Oceanside: Mission San Luis Rey, 1958), 22-25.
[102] Tac, *Indian Life and Customs*, 22

Figure 3: *Native Dancers by Pablo Tac*. Circa 1835, Mission San Luis Rey.

that mission dances, at least at San Luis Rey, and likely in other areas of Southern California, were controlled and produced with the approval of Native elders, not of mission leadership. Tac also mentioned in his document that Native elders "teach them the song and make them learn perfectly" all before "doing the dances publicly."[103] The mention of the word "publicly" signifies that in addition to their public performance, Native fiestas continued in secrecy, likely throughout mission complexes and the surrounding Native territory outside mission walls, for the purposes of training and for the passage of traditional knowledge and power.

In addition to Tac's account, other strong indicators of the continuity of Native events of tradition throughout the Mission Period stem from documents from the missionaries themselves. Father Fermín Lasuén for instance once commented on the continuity of Native fiestas:

> It happens that they put on a heathen and abominable dance or *fiesta;* if the Christian who is present refuses to participate in that vile diversion, they mock him and laugh at him and persecute him until he gives in.[104]

Fray Luis Sales, who worked in Kumeyaay territory and throughout Baja California, remarked on fiestas in 1794 in relation to traditional healers at mission sites. According to Sales, there were two occasions where traditional healers exercised their authority and power at missions: "one is in the public *fiestas* and dances; the other in the ceremonies of the dead."[105] Sales continued on his remarks on traditional healers, and indicated that the

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[103] Ibid.
[104] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 152.
[105] José Porrúa Turanzas, editor, *Noticias de la Provincia de Californias, 1794 por Fray Luis Sales* (Madrid: José Porrúa Turanzas, 1960), 45. Italics added by author. Translation provide by author: "En dos ocasiones manifiestan estos viejos su autoridad y sus facultades; la una en las fiestas publicas y bayles; y la otra en las exequias de los difuntos."

"tables, feathers, and other items pertaining to fiestas and ceremonies are hidden with diligence by the old man."[106] These remarks by missionaries confirm the continuity of Native fiestas and events of tradition at mission sites. Also, they indicate that the items necessary for the production of Native fiestas were oftentimes hidden by elders from mission leadership, a continued tradition of items being "put away" until future use.

Some of the strongest indicators of Native fiesta continuity throughout the Mission Period stem from Spanish documents. Between 1813 and 1815, California's missions responded to questionnaires about the state of Native conversion at Spanish missions, known as *Preguntas y Respuestas*. Put forth by the Spanish Empire's Department of Overseas Colonies, these questionnaires contained thirty-six questions geared at determining the successfulness of Spain's Christianizing mission throughout California. [107] Pertinent to analyzing fiesta continuity at mission sites, some of these questions included the continued belief of Native "superstitions," the practice of "burial and mourning ceremonials," and on "evidence of idolatry."[108] The responses by Spanish missionaries to these questions shed light on the continuity of Native fiestas throughout Southern California missions.

Question ten of the questionnaire concerned the retention of "any superstitions."[109] In response to this question, mission leadership at Mission San Diego

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[106] Turanzas, editor, *Noticias de la Provincia de Californias*, 52.
[107] Maynard Geiger, O.F.M., "Historical Introduction," in *As The Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries, 1813-1815*, with contributions by Maynard Geiger and Clement W. Meighan (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission Archive, 1976): 1.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Contributions by Maynard Geiger and Clement W. Meighan, *As The Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries, 1813-1815* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission Archive, 1976): 47.

reported that "They are quite fond of gathering for the feast of the bird called Gavilan or eagle."[110] Mission San Luis Rey reported on the continuance of "plenty of ridiculous superstitions," which included fasting of two or three days "in order to win at their games," and on the drinking of sacred *toloache*.[111] Mission San Juan Capistrano reported that superstitions "are as numerous as they are ridiculous and difficult to understand."[112] Mission San Gabriel reported "they have some superstitions or rather vain practices," and Mission Santa Barbara that there existed those who "carry on certain pagan practices and who are reputed to have the characteristics of their pagan state."[113] Though the term "superstition" is condescending, these reports to question ten by mission leadership note the continuity of Native fiestas and ceremony, which kept intact traditional belief systems and power of Native communities throughout Southern California missions.

Missionaries also reported on the continuity of Native fiestas in question twenty one of the questionnaire, which inquired on the use of "any strange ceremonial at the time of burial or mourning."[114] At Mission San Diego, mission leadership reported that upon the passing of a member of the Native community, the "relatives of the deceased throw some seeds on the shroud and howl and weep," and that "this lasts for some days."[115] At Mission San Juan Capistrano, missionaries reported that "after they bury a deceased person they go apart, weep and dance during which they practice all their superstitions

[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.
[114] *As The Padres Saw Them,* 97.
[115] Ibid.

and savage customs."[116] Mission San Luis Rey reported that the Native community there "throw the corpse on a great pyre; then the relatives and friends of the deceased come together, stir the fire as much as they can, meanwhile sending up a howl and weeping until the corpse is consumed."[117] Further, the missionaries at San Luis Rey noted that Native community members "manifest their sorrow by cutting their hair more or less short depending on the degree of relationship with the deceased."[118] At Mission San Gabriel, missionaries reported that in addition to cutting their hair and uttering mourning cries for three days, "when a famous person died they called together the villages nearest theirs even if they were a distance away and held a great feast which consisted of dancing and feasting… the dancing and feasting lasted for three days."[119] These statements by mission leadership evidence the continuity of mourning ceremonials and fiestas at mission sites throughout Southern California.

Question twelve of the questionnaire concerned mission Native communities' continuity "towards idolatry," and further evidenced the continuity of Native fiestas at mission sites. To this question, Mission San Luis Rey reported on the Eagle ceremony, and indicated that "when the birds have attained a good size the Indians hold a great feast" where "They dance and sing a very sad chant."[120] Mission San Juan Capistrano paralleled reports by San Luis Rey, and indicated "We know they worship a large bird."[121] Mission San Gabriel reported that "idolatry is still practiced by some

[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] *As The Padres Saw Them,* 57.
[121] Ibid.

Indians."[122] Mission San Buenaventura reported that elders often "would relate a long series of fabulous stories… regarding the creation of the world and its government," and that "The boys and young people took much delight in them."[123] These reports by mission leadership attest to the continuity of Native fiestas and ceremonials throughout the Mission Period, namely the Eagle Ceremony. Also, as reported by Mission Buenaventura, these reports document the continuity of cultural knowledge and traditional narrative transmission from elders to young at mission sites. Analysis of the responses of mission leadership to certain questions of the questionnaire, namely questions relating to the retention of traditional beliefs and the continuity of mourning and eagle ceremonies, illustrates that Native fiestas and events of traditional origin continued throughout mission sites.

These reports by missionaries concerning mourning ceremonies affirm the continuity of Native fiestas and ceremonials throughout the Mission Period. Though missionaries likely misunderstood the mourning ceremonials they witnessed, the reports nevertheless express their continuity for a matter of days after the passing of a Native community member of a mission. Further, the reports of Mission San Luis Rey and San Gabriel affirm the gathering of relatives, friends, and members of other villages for the event, even from great distances, which was and continues to be a typical trait of Native fiestas. This notes the interconnectedness, continued communication, and cultural significance of Native fiestas throughout the Mission Period for Native communities

[122] Ibid.
[123] Contributions by Geiger and Meighan, *As The Padres Saw Them,* 58.

within and outside mission walls. Further, these responses affirm that mission leadership at times stepped aside or at least turned a blind eye in order to allow the Native community at mission sites to conduct such ceremonies.

In addition to the continuity of Native events of sacred ceremony, Native events of socialization and celebration also continued throughout the Mission Period. Fernando Librado (Chumash) once recounted for instance that private marriage ceremonies of celebration continued at Mission San Buenaventura. Recounting marriage ceremonies, Librado mentioned "The *smyi* was private and came first, about 9 o'clock in the morning in which the fiesta began."[124] Noting their secretiveness, Librado further indicated that Native marriage ceremonies were at times celebrated in the southernmost row of adobes west of Mission Ventura, or between the east and middle rows of adobes south of the Mission.[125] On one occasion, the marriage ceremony included the *pehili sisimt'*, or Coyote Dance, which Librado mentioned "was otherwise never given at a serious festival."[126] These mission fiestas of celebration and Native dancing were at times openly supported and encouraged by mission leadership. During a baptismal anniversary fiesta that took place near the Native adobes at Mission Santa Barbara for instance, Captain Francisco Solano was reported to have "requested many dances that day, among them the Blackbird Dance."[127] As noted by Librado, Native events of celebration and socialization

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[124] Travis Hudson, editor, *Breath of the Sun: Life in Early California as Told by a Chumash Indian, Fernando Librado to John P. Harrington* (Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1979), 28.
[125] Hudson, editor, *Breath of the Sun,* 30-31.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Hudson, editor, *Breath of the Sun,* 50.

also continued throughout the Mission Period, which were at times encouraged and supported by Spanish leadership.

Native fiestas and events of tradition also served as spaces for traditional healing and medicine throughout the Mission Period. Constrained within mission walls and continuously surrounded by disease and death, mission Native communities turned to traditional healers for assistance at Native events of tradition. mission leadership often recognized the failure of European medicine, and as a consequence, "covertly permitted the neophytes to get what benefit they could from their own methods."[128] On one occasion in Santa Ynez, several Natives were found dancing in one of the houses, where they were bringing to the house the most dangerously ill.[129] In the mission questionnaire, Mission San Luis Rey reported upon the use of traditional healers, and mentioned "in their illnesses there are some healers who suck the patient where the pain is felt and produce blood from the healer's mouth, and at other times pebbles, pieces of wood, bone, skin, etc… With the sick they also make use of superstitious dances."[130] Fray Luis Sales also commented on traditional healers, and indicated at a fiesta that "the main point of this fiesta is the old man [healer]… he orders what should be done… this usually lasts three to four hours, sometimes longer."[131] Native fiestas throughout the Mission Period presented community members with access to traditional healers and traditional medicine. Further, these events throughout the Mission Period presented traditional

[128] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 149.
[129] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 148.
[130] Contributions by Geiger and Meighan, *As The Padres Saw Them,* 72.
[131] Turanzas, editor, *Noticias de la Provincia de Californias*, 46. Spanish to English translation provided by author: "El papel principal de esta fiesta es el Viejo… el ordena lo que se debe hacer… que suele durar tres y quatro horas, y a veces algo mas."

healers with the opportunity to practice medicine, and to maintain their positionality within Native social and religious networks of traditional power.

Native fiestas also continued to occur in secret throughout the Mission Period, whether within or outside mission walls. While commenting on Native dances at the missions, mission Natives Tapis and Cortes told Sherburne Cook the following: "… but almost every night they put on some dance in the kitchen or the main room of the mission."[132] Librado further confirmed the secretiveness of some fiesta performance, and noted "some dances were performed in front of the entire mission community, but others were observed in the privacy of Indian houses or in the secluded 'plaza' spaces (between rows of houses) in the mission village."[133] Mission Native communities utilized certain areas within mission complexes where surveillance by mission leadership was low to likely teach, learn and practice Native songs and dances for Native fiestas and events of tradition.

Native communities also at times fled mission sites and practiced their events of tradition in the forests or countryside in secret. While remarking on the continuity of traditional healers for instance, Fray Luis Sales mentioned: "they congregate and form a circle of sticks in a ravine in the forest (they always hide for these functions)… These functions always occur at night, and they use wood for illumination and warmth."[134] In

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[132] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 151-152.
[133] Ken Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 95.
[134] José Porrúa Turanzas, editor, *Noticias de la Provincia de Californias, 1794 por Fray Luis Sales,* 46-47. Spanish to English translation provided by autor: "Mientras se van congregando las gentes se forma un circulo de palos en un bosque en un barranco (pues siempre se esconden para estas funciones)… Estas funciones siempre son de noche, y asi hacen prevencion de leña para iluminarse y calentarse."

addition, Sales remarked upon the response by Native communities when mission leadership aimed to suppress these fiestas in the forest:

> … if for contingency the missionary knows, and he approaches the dance [ceremony] with the troops in order to rid them of these occasions, all run away; one carries the drum, the other the seeds, and they go hiding into the forests.[135]

This observation by Sales is further confirmed by mission leadership of Mission Santa Cruz. In response to inquiries about superstitions from the Spanish empire, missionaries at Santa Cruz responded "they hold at times secret nocturnal dances always avoiding detection by the fathers. We are informed that at night, only the men gather together in the field or the forest."[136]

Secret Native fiestas outside mission walls also occurred near Mission San Diego, where an "unstable situation" developed as "neophytes continued to attend pagan dances in their rancherias and the priests could only threaten and admonish them for their backsliding."[137] Testimony from two recaptured fugitives of Mission La Purísima Concepcíon also made similar reports, that "the mission Indians escaped to the interior" and that "A great celebration took place, with twenty-five stolen steers slaughtered for the feast."[138] Whether within, or outside of mission walls, reports from mission documents attest to the secrecy and continuity of Native fiestas and events of tradition beyond the surveillance of mission leadership, many of which were likely never or underreported.

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[135] Turanzas, editor, *Noticias de la Provincia de Californias, 1794 por Fray Luis Sales,* 49. Spanish to English translation provided by the author: "si por contingencia el Misionero lo sabe, y se encamina hacia el bayle con la Tropa para quitarles estas ocasiones, todos huyen; el uno coge el tamboril, el otro las semillas que puede, y se van escondiendo entre los bosques."
[136] Contributions by Geiger and Meighan, *As The Padres Saw Them,* 50.
[137] Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Mission,* 58.
[138] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 178, footnote.

Secret Native events of tradition likely occurred in various forms all throughout the California mission system, with neophytes and fugitives often remaining in contact with non-missionized villages. As reported by several missions throughout California, that Native communities engaged in fugitivism and flight from mission sites is well-known, with Cook placing fugitivism estimates at ten percent of a mission Native community.[139] Engagement in fugitivism occurred at such an alarming rate that Spanish authorities prohibited Natives from going about on horseback in 1818 to prevent its practice.[140] Unfortunately, mission authorities would follow and capture mission runaways, which were either returned to the Mission or murdered on the spot.[141] Nevertheless, participation at Native fiestas by members of mission communities constitute what Native scholar Edward Castillo termed *passive resistance*, or "the belief and practice of native cults within the neophyte community."[142] In order to attend these events of secrecy, Native communities would engage in mission fugitivism, which Castillo termed *active resistance*.[143] This is further supported by historian James Sandos, who mentioned "Clandestine performance of native dances seems to have become a routine form of resistance."[144] Native fiesta attendance and the continued belief in the ceremonials that occurred at these events by mission Native communities characterize a form of resistance to the Spanish mission system. Further, the participation of members

[139] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 57-64.
[140] Robert Heizer and Alan F. Almquist, *The Other Californians: Prejudice and Discrimination under Spain, Mexico, and the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 11.
[141] Heizer and Almquist, *The Other Californians*, 14-15.
[142] Edward Castillo, "An Indian Account of the Decline and Collapse of Mexico's Hegemony over the Missionized Indians of California," *American Indian Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1989): 393.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Mission,* 168.

from a mission Native community at these secret fiestas is indicative of the great length's community members underwent in order to continue to practice and engage with their traditional events of ancestry.

Mission Native communities sought to maintain their connection with events of tradition to such a degree that when mission leadership suppressed the continuity of these events, mission Native communities took part in another form of active resistance: revolt. Though the 1775 revolt on Mission San Diego by the Kumeyaay community included a "confluence of events and circumstances," the suppression of Native dances and events of tradition by mission leadership undoubtedly fueled animosity towards the mission.[145] According to one historian, widespread resentment of the Spaniards increased in October when several baptized Indians suffered a whipping at the mission for participating in a dance at a rancheria nearby.[146] As a consequence of Spanish intrusion in "cultural affairs far beyond the mission," Kumeyaay leaders organized a coalition of about sixty-five to seventy villages that destroyed the mission and murdered several of its leadership, including its primary priest, Father Luís Jayme.[147]

In addition, the revolt on Mission San Gabriel, led by traditional healer Toypurina and neophyte Nicolas Jose, was also influenced by the suppression of Native dances and events of tradition. In 1782, the Spanish governor ordered Spanish soldiers to ban dances, which included the Mourning Ceremony.[148] In the trial following the attempted revolt, Nicolas Jose specifically complained about the prohibition against dances, and stated "he

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[145] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 259.
[146] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 260.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 264.

was angry with the Fathers and the corporal for not allowing him to perform his dances and gentile indecencies."[149] Having recently lost his son, Jose wished to perform the proper Mourning Ceremony required to release his son's spirit from the earth and into the land of the dead.[150] Prevented from performing the ceremony, Jose recruited Toypurina, who garnered support from the surrounding villages for a revolt that never came to fruition as a result of warning of the attack to the mission corporal.[151]
The revolt of Mission San Diego and the attempted revolt of Mission San Gabriel resulted from aims by mission authorities to eliminate the continuity of traditional Native ceremonials and events of tradition. This indicates the extent to which Native communities throughout Southern California were willing to go in order to continue to practice their ancestral ceremonies. Throughout the Mission Period, one of the prominent motives that initiated aggressive response by Native communities throughout Southern California was when their events of tradition and ceremonies were threatened.

The yearly frequency of mission fiesta events varied, but according to several accounts, they were indeed frequent. Engelhardt for instance mentioned that Spanish fiestas occurred during the feast of the titular saint of the mission, the feasts of nativity, Corpus Christi, Easter, and Pentecost.[152] Webb mentioned that "the dias de fiesta (feast days)" occurred "sufficiently frequent to break the monotony of the workday mission

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[149] Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, "Revolt at Mission San Gabriel, October 25, 1785: Judicial Proceedings and Related Documents," *The Journal of California Mission Studies Association* 24, no. 2 (2007): 20.
[150] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 263.
[151] Beebe and Senkewicz, "Revolt at Mission San Gabriel," 22-23.
[152] Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, 171.

life."[153] Elias Castillo mentioned the allowance of "native dances on holidays and Sundays."[154] According to Hackel, holidays and Sundays were also days when mission Native communities did not work, and accounted to as many as ninety-two days in the calendar of Catholic worship.[155] Concerning fiesta activity, Fray Luis Sales mentioned "there is no determined time for fiestas; but usually they occur during times of harvest, and always during the new moon."[156] These accounts note that Native fiestas and events of tradition were indeed frequent throughout the Mission Period. In addition to public feasts and fiestas, these estimates fail to account for the several secret fiestas that occurred throughout the year outside of mission walls throughout Southern California. Overall, though mission leadership aimed to suppress Native events of tradition, they nevertheless continued, in varied frequency, in public or in secret, from mission-to-mission throughout Southern California. The continuity of Native fiestas and events of tradition at mission sites occurred for a variety of reasons. On one end, their continuity within mission walls was promoted by mission leadership for the sake of amusement and in order to dispel Native inclinations towards revolt.

Towards the end of the Mission Period, in order to loosen "disciplinary bonds," priests for instance openly encouraged "displays of native dances for the amusement of

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[153] Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Mission*, 281.
[154] Elias Castillo, *A Cross of Thorns: The Enslavement of California's Indians by the Spanish Missions* (Fresno: Craven Street Books, 2015): 126.
[155] Steven W. Hackel, ""Land, Labor, and Production: The Colonial Economy of Spanish and Mexican California," *California History* 76, no's 2-3 (1997): 122.
[156] Turanzas, editor, *Noticias de la Provincia de Californias, 1794 por Fray Luis Sales,* 46. Spanish to English translation provided by the author: "Para las fiestas no hay tiempo determinado; pero lo regular es en el tiempo de las semillas, y siempre en Luna nueva."

the civilian population."[157] For example, in 1820, upon the dedication of the new church building, Mission Santa Barbara hosted a three-day celebration that by day was a religious occasion but at night became a "raucous public fiesta."[158] This event was attended by Native dancers and Franciscans from neighboring missions, by soldiers from the presidio, and even the governor of California who travelled from Monterey for the event.[159] Lucario Cuevish, who was born at Mission San Luis Rey, additionally recalled that following mission secularization, fiesta activity still continued at mission sites. According to Cuevish and retold by DuBois:

> After the padres left, the mountain Indians stayed at the Mission for some time. Padre Antonio is the one he [Cuevish] remembers being in charge, and he allowed the Indians to keep up their religious dances. The Padres never objected to this. The Indians who could not talk Spanish were allowed to pray in Indian in the church; but they kept up the old dances outside.[160]

Though mission leadership initially aimed to prevent the occurrence of Native dances and events of tradition, they were often presented with heavy backlash and aggressive responses from mission Native communities who sought to continue to practice the dances and events of their ancestors, which continued after mission secularization.

The continuity of Native fiestas and events of tradition throughout the Mission Period is most strongly attributed to their perseverance of practice by the various Native communities throughout Southern California. Often confined within mission walls, Native communities at mission sites nevertheless continued to be exposed to "a large

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[157] Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, 153.
[158] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 156.
[159] Ibid.
[160] DuBois, Constance Goddard, "The Religious of the Luiseno Indians of Southern California," *American Archaeology and Ethnology* 8, no. 3 (1908): 74-75.

number of people who continue to practice their traditional religion," whether within or outside of the purview of mission leadership.[161] As a result, Native events of tradition continued to be practiced, as those with the proper knowledge and power capable of organizing and conducting the dances and ceremonies of these events continued to maintain authority within and outside mission sites. Further, as Native scholar Edward Castillo and Robert Jackson mentioned, Native populations throughout Spanish America largely incorporated Christianity into their belief systems "on their own terms."[162] This occurred with Native fiestas throughout the Mission Period. Though mission leadership aimed to dismantle and suppress their continuity, Native communities persevered and continued to practice the dances and ceremonies of their ancestors oftentimes by adapting or adopting elements of mission life and Christianity to suit the continuity of these events, such as conducting traditional dances for Saint's Day celebrations, or adjusting the traditional Native fiesta cycle to suit the calendar of mission life. Native events of tradition were an integral part of the survivance of traditional song, dance, religion, and power throughout the Mission Period, aspects of which continued into the Californio Period.

[161] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization,* 52.
[162] Jackson and Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization,* 34.

Chapter Three: *Que Viva la Fiesta*: Long Live the Fiesta

Following mission secularization in 1834, fiesta culture continued as a way of life for both settlers and Native communities throughout Southern California. In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain and initiated a process of reorganization and wealth redistribution throughout California that impacted California's Native communities and the character of Southern California fiestas. During this transitionary period, Mexican "soldiers and settlers agreed and hungered for control over the land, livestock, and laborers that missionaries controlled." [163] Accordingly, the Mexican government secularized the California missions and emancipated Native communities from mission sites, thereby initiating a new political and economic order throughout California. As one scholar described, "secularization cut the last chord still linking California to its Spanish 'mother'."[164] As mentioned in the previous chapter, throughout California's history, fiesta celebrations marked major transitions of power. Doña Maria Inocenta Pico, a Californio widow and large hacienda owner, recalled the transition of power into the Californio Period and noted its celebration with a fiesta in Monterey:

> In 1822 we were living in Monterey. We attended the grand fiestas to celebrate the changing of the flag. I remember the tremendous emotion expressed by the Spaniards, especially by the missionary Fathers, because of that event.[165]

Pico's account attests to the continuity of fiesta celebrations into the Californio Period. Though power now rested in the hands of the Mexican government, California's fiesta

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[163] Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 369.
[164] Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846-1890* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 7.
[165] Doña Maria Inocenta Pico, in Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, *Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women, 1815-1848* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2006), 312.

culture continued to mark significant celebrations and events throughout the colonial history of the State.

The transition of power from missionaries to the Mexican government was framed by large transfers of land and resources. The Colonization Act of 1824, its supplemental regulations of 1828, and the Secularization Act of 1834 created the "greatest transfer of land and resources in California since Portola had claimed the region for Spain."[166] In an effort to settle the land and incorporate its resources into the new colonial order, land privatization occurred at a "dizzying pace" throughout the 1830s and 1840s, as Mexicans transferred some ten million acres into private ownership.[167] These land transfers occurred via land grants that established large agricultural and livestock haciendas or ranchos that soon replaced the missions as the predominant settlement institution.[168] Secular administrators were appointed to inventory each mission and parcel out land, livestock, tools and buildings to the newly emancipated Native neophytes, but in reality few Native communities were granted land and the majority of wealth was stolen by corrupt civil administrators.[169] Comprising just under three decades, the Californio Period of California's history was brief, but nevertheless this time period contributed to the character of Southern California fiesta events.

Often, fiesta activity throughout the Californio Period surrounded the activities and celebrations of the church and the local pueblo, and fiesta attendance characterized

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[166] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 374.
[167] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 388-389.
[168] David Hornbeck, "Land Tenure and Rancho Expansion in Alta California, 1784-1846," *Journal of Historical Geography* 4 (1978), 376-379.
[169] Edward D. Castillo, "An Indian Account of the Decline and Collapse of Mexico's Hegemony over the Missionized Indians of California," *American Indian Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1989): 394.

major aspects of early colonial life for settlers and Natives alike. According to Douglas Monroy, "Fealty to the true church was a central aspect of being de razon… Church attendance was obligatory on Sundays and holy days… Much of their extensive social lives revolved around mass and church fiestas."[170] As California's rancho elites solidified their presence in the State throughout the 1830's and 1840's, many interactions between settlers and Native communities occurred at townsites where settlers often rode on horseback for one of four main purposes: business, bullfights, fiestas, or church attendance.[171] Fiesta events were eagerly attended to by settlers throughout the Californio Period, often to the dismay of church officials. Concerning the proclivity of settlers attending fiestas, Fathers Urias and Dumetz of San Fernando for instance mentioned: "Do they attend mass once in awhile? Some go once a year, but they seldom miss a fiesta or fandango."[172] Throughout the Californio Period, fiesta attendance and fiesta culture characterized major aspects of social life in Southern California for both settlers and Native communities. As described by one historian, "The old Spanish tradition of a carefree life, with its delight in music, dancing, fiestas, rodeos, and open-handed hospitality, survived until the end of the ranchos."[173]

As the new political and social power throughout California, hacienda Dons and other Californio settlers were required to contend with California's Native communities

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[170] Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1990), 140.
[171] W.W. Robinson, *Panorama: A Picture History of Southern California* (Los Angeles: Title Insurance and Trust Company, 1953), 19.
[172] William Mason, "Indian-Mexican Cultural Exchange in the Los Angeles Area, 1781-1834," *Aztlan* 15 (Spring 1984): 130.
[173] Robert Glass Cleland, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills: Southern California, 1850-1880* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1951), 83.

and their pre-invasion fiesta events of tradition. At Mission San Fernando in Southern California for instance, Andres Pico, brother of famed Pio Pico, allowed the continuity of Native fiestas at the newly termed Rancho Ex-mission San Fernando that was placed under his care.[174] According to historian George Phillips, "Pico allowed and probably encouraged the neophytes who remained to engage in activities of both pre- and post-contact origins."[175] Rancho Ex-mission San Fernando included for instance the feast day of San Fernando, where "Indians and Mexicans would attend Mass, feast at long rows of tables in the orchard at the rear of the church, and engage in or observe horse racing, a rodeo, and a bullfight."[176] In the evening, Native communities from the region engaged in song and dancing, and practiced their mourning ceremonies at this Californio-sponsored fiesta.[177] According to attendee Isabela Villegas, who heard stories about fiestas from her grandmother and parents who moved to the mission, "The Indians had special fiestas of their own… The feature of the fiesta was a dance in which all the members of the different tribes joined… as the dancers moved in a circle about the image, they cast into the fire some personal belongings of their dead."[178] Villegas' account indicates the continuity of Native Southern California's mourning ceremonies at fiesta events, and is indicative of the continued fiesta culture throughout the Californio Period that followed mission secularization.

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[174] George Harwood Phillips, *Vineyards and Vaqueros: Indian Labor and the Economic Expansion of Southern California, 1771-1877* (Norman, Oklahoma: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2010), 235-236.
[175] Phillips, *Vineyards and Vaqueros*, 236.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Villegas, "San Fernando Mission, 1797-1825," 8-9, from Phillips, *Vineyards and Vaqueros*, 236. Mourning ceremonials represent one of the most important, if not the most important, ceremonies of Native Southern California, which continue in a variety of forms.

Fiesta encouragement, or at least allowance, by Californio Period rancho owners also occurred at other parts throughout Southern California. At Ranchos Buena Vista and nearby Rancho Guajome, rancho owner Cave Johnson Couts and his family often provided the center of social activity and fiesta production throughout the region "on the grand scale of Mexican hospitality."[179] These ranchos were comprised of dozens of Native servants, great herds of sheep and cattle, and an abundance of food and fine horses "ridden by young and old in rodeos and fiestas."[180] Further east, at Warner's Ranch in *Kuupangaxwichem* (Cupeño) territory, rancho owner Juan Jose Warner was said to be a "kindly host," and "tolerated the presence of the natives because he needed their labor on the ranch, and did not want to incur their enmity."[181]

Fear of Native uprisings and the need for Native labor likely contributed to rancho owner decisions to produce fiestas for local Southern California Native populations throughout the Californio Period. Numerically inferior and ill-organized, early Californios and rancho owners throughout the Californio Period "suffered greatly" as a result of Native horse and cattle raiders, and "lived in perpetual dread of Indian hostility."[182] William Heath Davis, a visitor to California throughout the colonial period wrote of Native horse raiders and indicated that "They would come quietly in the night, and carry off one or two *caponeras* [pens] of horses, sometimes as many as five or six,

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[179] Philip S. Rush, *Some Old Ranchos and Adobes* (San Diego: Neyenesch Printers, Inc., 1965), 17.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Rush, *Some Old Ranchos and Adobes*, 61.
[182] George Harwood Phillips, *Chiefs and Challengers: Indian Resistance and Cooperation in Southern California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 5.

and drive them back to the Indian country for their own use."[183] Many rancho owners accordingly planted high cactus groves around their rancho buildings in order to discourage Native attacks and uprisings on their properties.[184] Significantly, in order to maintain a contented labor force and dissuade Native raids and attacks, rancho owners likely produced and encouraged fiesta events for Native communities, where social relations would be soothed in aims of discouraging Native discontent and uprising. Fiestas throughout the Californio Period therefore likely served as sites that aimed to foster friendly relations between early settlers and Southern California's Native communities. These events assisted in the maintenance of social relations between California's Native labor force and the rancho-owning elite.

Fiesta continuity and promotion was often reflected in building architecture and planning throughout the Californio Period. This is likely a byproduct of the Laws of the Indies, a body of law formed by the Spanish crown for the governance of its kingdoms outside of Europe, that among many regulations for its dominions aimed for Native communities to be "settled into towns" and that "churches be built so that Indians can be instructed into Christian doctrine and live in good order."[185] The Laws of the Indies suggested these towns have "the traditional plaza for fiestas and a commons," which was reflected in early settler townsites and buildings throughout Southern California.[186] At

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[183] William Heath Davis, *Sixty Years in California: A History of Events and Life in California; Personal, Political and Military, Under the Mexican Regime; During the Quasi-military Government of the Territory of the United States, and After the Admission of the State Into the Union, Being a Compilation by a Witness of the Events Described* (California: A.J. Leary, 1889), 81.
[184] Cecil C. Moyer, Edited by Richard F. Pourade, *The Historic Ranchos of San Diego* (San Diego: Union-Tribune Publishing Co., 1969), 41.
[185] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California,* 27.
[186] Ibid.

Assumption Church in Barona for instance, a pole framework in the churchyard was constructed which "Indians covered with tree branches for use during fiestas."[187] In San Diego, the Estudillo House, famed as the marriage place of Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*, had a tower with a round balcony so family and friends "could watch the bull or bear fights in the square or where musicians could play for the many fiestas and religious festivals."[188] Further, colonial estates such as the Guajome Rancho, which consisted of twenty rooms for servants and Californio visitors, were structured and built to entertain and promote fiesta activity.[189] Throughout Southern California, architecture and townsite planning by colonial Spanish and Mexican settlers often promoted fiesta culture and continuity. The architecture of colonial Southern California was often built with fiesta production and amusement in mind, and furthered fiesta events as a way of life for settler and Native communities throughout the colonial history of Southern California.

The living environs of Southern California's Native communities differed from the romanticized architecture of Spanish and Mexican colonial buildings throughout Southern California. Providing the backbone of labor, some Natives lived in servants' quarters on large hacienda properties, but the majority lived on the outskirts of colonial estates in rancherias or dwellings that were at times mistaken for cattle or chicken sheds by visitors to the area. In 1828 for instance, six years after Southern California became a part of Mexican territory, Spanish sea captain José Bandini visited California and

[187] Moyer, *The Historic Ranchos*, 66.
[188] Richard F. Pourade, *The History of San Diego: The Silver Dons* (San Diego: The Union-Tribune Publishing Company, 1963), 12.
[189] For an architectural description of the Guajome Rancho, see Moyer, *The Historic Ranchos of San Diego*, 70- 71.

described that Native rancherias consisted of “some small adobe dwellings built in rows along the street,” while others were more “primitive,” and consisted of “rough poles covered with tule or grasses in such a way as to afford complete protection against all inclement weather.”[190] One account by a visitor to the San Bernardino Valley throughout the early nineteenth century estimated that rancherias consisted of “from two to three hundred people.”[191]

Outside of rancherias, living conditions differed for Natives who labored at ranchos. Cave Johnson Couts of the Guajome Rancho for instance recruited three-hundred Natives as workmen, and although some servants’ quarters were available, the majority of the Native labor force constructed “crude native huts of poles and tree branches.”[192] Reports from visitors to these haciendas confirm the living conditions of Native Southern California’s rancho communities:

> Beyond the house itself, about fifteen feet distant, was a clay oven for baking bread, covered with a raw bull’s hide… and beyond this, a few feet farther off, marking the boundary of what Western people call their “yard,” was a range of open shanties, which, on riding up, I had innocently taken for cattle sheds. Here, close to the house, the Indians lived.[193]

Nevertheless, descriptions of Native living conditions by California visitors also attest to their cleanliness, and indicated “If you can tell the difference between mere squalor and

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[190] Doris Marion Wright, translator, *A Description of California in 1828 by José Bandini*, in Carlos E. Cortes, *Mexican California* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 6.
[191] Rev. Father Juan Cabelleria, “History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851,” in Carlos E. Cortes, *Mexican California* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 46.
[192] Moyer, *The Historic Ranchos of San Diego,* 70.
[193] “Appendix F: Charles Nordhoff’s Description of the La Laguna Rancho,” in Steve Lech, *Pioneers of Riverside County: The Spanish, Mexican and Early American Periods* (Charleston and London: The History Press, 2012), 139.

filth, you would see that these Indian houses and their inhabitants are not dirty."[194] Described by a visitor to California, the usual living environs for settlers and Natives throughout Southern California were as follows: "if the house is of reeds and straw, the owner is Indian; if it is of adobe, it is a Spaniard who lives there."[195]

As a result, fiesta architecture throughout this time period mirrored the living environs of Southern California's Native communities. Accustomed to building out of the natural resources available throughout Southern California, Native communities often constructed thatched ramadas or other brush dwellings at fiesta sites throughout the Californio Period, such as the ones in the background of the early illustration of a fiesta by Alexander F. Harmer in figure four below. These dwellings served as temporary or semi-temporary structures, which mimicked the temporal seasonality of fiesta events. Disassembly of these structures required little effort, and the building materials for these structures could easily be transported by ox cart to other locations as necessary from one fiesta or another.

Throughout the Californio Period, Native communities constituted the primary labor force, often times unpaid or by force at Californio ranchos. Native women often served as domestic servants and took care of household chores such as sweeping, sewing, cooking, washing, gardening, as well as making bread, candles, and soap to support the hide and tallow trade of the Californio economy.[196] According to one California traveler,

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[194] Charles Nordhoff, *California: A Book for Travelers and Settlers* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1874), 157.
[195] Ibid.
[196] For servant duties, see Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1990), 151.

Figure 4: Fiesta scene by Alexander F. Harmer. Circa 1885. *Seaver Center.*

they also “dressed and tanned sheep and calf skins for clothing; they wove blankets; they made wine; they raised grain enough for their bread.”[197] Typically, domestic skills were taught by a Native neophyte or by a European settler, as recalled by Doña Eulalia Perez: “In each of the different work areas there was a teacher who was a Christian Indian. This person had received some formal instruction. A white man was in charge of the looms, but he stepped down once the Indians finally learned the skill.”[198] Some of these skills also included the manufacture of clothing. The extravagant fabrics and material culture of fiestas throughout the Californio Period rested on the domestic labor of Native women.

[197] Nordhoff, California: A Book for Travelers and Settlers, 243.
[198] Eulalia Perez, in *Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women, 1815-1848, Introduction and commentary by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2006), 108.

Their work is evident in figure five on the following page of typical dress of Californio women and men throughout this time period. Further, Native women were often responsible for producing the food and domestic labor necessary for the continuity and sustenance of fiestas in Southern California throughout the Californio Period.

Native men, on the other hand, were largely responsible for the manual chores and labor of the ranching and vaquero culture of Californio society, specifically with the training and care of horses and the rounding of cattle. Native men's association with horses originated in the Mission Period, but further accelerated throughout the Californio. Often, Native men began their apprenticeship by saddling horses and getting boots or spurs for Californio riders until the Native apprentice was ready to saddle and begin bronco training.[199] Following this initial apprenticeship, Native men were taught how to gentle, rein, hobble, throw and finally saddle a horse.[200] Though Native men's association with horses was often restricted by rancho owners to riding after cattle for roundups and subsequent *matanzas* (slaughters), this association nevertheless produced some of the

[199] Jo Mora, *Californios: The Saga of the Hard-riding Vaqueros, America's First Cowboys* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1949), 47.
[200] Ibid.

Figure 5: Earliest known images of Hispanic couple in California, 1791, by Jose Cordero. *Museo Naval*, Madrid.

best vaqueros not only throughout California, but throughout the Spanish Empire.[201] Likely, Native cultural traditions of appreciation and respect for wildlife for millennia contributed to their superior abilities in the care and taming of horses. According to Doña Eulalia Perez, some rode bareback while others rode in saddle.[202] For bareback riders, typical clothing consisted of nothing more than their shirt and a blanket and loincloth, whereas saddled riders were provided with a shirt, vest, pants, a hat, boots, shoes, spurs,

[201] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California,* 152.
[202] Eulalia Perez, in *Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women*, 104.

and a saddle, bridle, and *reata* for their horse.[203] At fiestas, their Native horsemanship taming and training skills would often be displayed by either a Native or Californio rider in the many horseraces, bull fights, rooster pulls, and rodeos that provided competition and entertainment for fiesta attendees throughout this time period. Though the vaqueros fighting the bulls, competing or performing at these events were likely Californios, the ones responsible for transforming wild horses into the ones that "performed such remarkable feats probably were Indian vaqueros."[204]

Though fiesta events were enjoyed by both Californio and Native communities, their production was impossible without the labor of Native men and women throughout the Californio Period. Some accounts indicate Californios paid between fifty cents and one dollar and twenty-five cents per day for Native labor, but often labor payment came in the form of clothing, food, and other items of sustenance, if at all.[205] Nevertheless, Native women and men labored at rancho sites and contributed to the production of fiesta events. Native women manufactured the fanciful dresses of Californio men and women on display at these sites and produced the foodstuffs and décor that characterized Californio fiesta events. Native men constructed ramadas for the events and prepared the horses and ox-pulled carretas with supplies necessary to produce fiesta events throughout Southern California. As expressed in later years, Californio fiesta events and material culture was often absorbed into the production and experiences that would later

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[203] Ibid.
[204] Phillips, *Vineyards and Vaqueros*, 225.
[205] For payment amounts for Native labor, see Nordhoff, *California: A Book for Travelers and Settlers*, 145-146. For payment in the form of material items, see Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers,* 153.

Figure 6: Illustration of a saddled rider, 1839. From *California: A History by J. Forbes*.

Figure 7: Illustration of a bareback rider, Southern California, Temecula. Sketched in 1871 by Edward Vischer.

characterize Native fiestas throughout the Euro-American Period. Fiesta production during this time period was a direct result of the labor of Native men and women.

Californio Period fiestas, supported by the rancho-owning elite alongside their Native laborers, characterized some of the grandest social events known throughout the colonial history of Southern California, and occurred frequently. The Californio Period witnessed the widespread production of fiestas, at times characterized as the "best-attended public celebrations, the longest weddings, and the most carefully staged sporting events" in the history of Southern California.[206] As described by one scholar, "These children of the Golden Age were ever alert for an excuse, if not a reason, to stage a *fiesta.*"[207]

In contrast to seasonal mission fiesta events that were often regulated by the ecclesiastical calendar and field harvests, Californio fiestas occurred year-round, and for a variety of purposes including birthdays, christenings, funerals, marriages, or at the end of cattle drives and matanzas.[208] Many fiestas throughout the Californio Period lasted for several days, with wedding fiestas often reported to have lasted the longest out of all events, lasting anywhere between three to eight days.[209] Angustias de la Guerra, daughter of a wealthy commander throughout Chumash territory in Santa Barbara, once recalled her wedding, and mentioned "My father would always host a huge feast for the whole

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[206] Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians,* 128.
[207] Edna Parker Harrington, "Fiestas of Other Days," *The Masterkey* 5, no. 3 (1931), 80.
[208] Edna Parker Harrington, "Fiestas of Other Days," *The Masterkey* 5, no. 3 (1931), 80-81. See also Mora, *Californios: The Saga of the Hard-riding Vaqueros*, 93-94.
[209] Rev. Father Juan Cabelleria, "History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851," in Carlos E. Cortes, *Mexican California* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 110.

pueblo whenever one of his sons or daughters got married."[210] According to de la Guerra, fiesta food generally consisted of *olla podrida,* roasted pork, stuffed hens, roasted lamb, and a stew made with lamb chops and wine, with sweet pumpkin, rice pudding or bread pudding for dessert.[211] The length of fiestas was largely determined by location and the wealth of the rancho host; if a rancho owner could afford to feed his guests, the fiesta could last up to a week, if not, a few days. In larger settlements where wealth was aggregated among several Californio families, fiestas lasted longer, such as in Los Angeles, where festivities "occurred more frequently… lasted longer, and had relatively more participants."[212]

Wedding fiestas characterized the grandest events of festivity throughout the Californio Period, which typically occurred as follows: a young man would notify his parents of his intent to wed, and if they were favorable to the match, they would give their consent; if not, they would aim to dissuade the union. If no objection arose, the father of the young man would write a courteous letter to the father of the young lady that requested the hand of his daughter for his son. The father of the young man would personally deliver the letter to the father of the young lady, who after waiting eight days would return a written reply of acceptance or denial. If approved, the family of the young man would visit the family of the young lady, bringing with them gifts such as jewelry

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[210] Angustias de la Guerra, *in* Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, *Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women, 1815-1848* (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2006), 286.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians,* 218.

and money. Hereafter, the two families would plan a large fiesta, and invite family and friends from near and far.[213]

The wedding ceremony was often followed by a "noisy cavalcade" led by Native choirboys playing flute, violin, drum, and singing hymns, after which followed the bridal *carreta*.[214] Behind the bridal carreta were other carretas comprised of family and friends of the wedding party, with Californio *caballeros* riding alongside on horseback. According to an observer, trailing the wedding procession were always "many Indians afoot…happy over a fiesta."[215] Fiesta cavalcades therefore often reflected social hierarchy and power. Hugo Reid, an early resident of Los Angeles County who commented on wedding processions during this time period, also indicated the "whole cavalcade reflected wealth and freedom from care," regardless if Native blankets had holes and some Californios "wore or rode their entire fortunes."[216] Comprised of both Californio and Native communities, the importance of wedding fiestas was placed on the appearance and expression of wealth, and not necessarily on its reality. According to Reid, as a result of the wedding fiesta, "business was suspended," and "merrymaking went on for a week."[217]

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[213] See Cabelleria, "History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851," in Cortes' *Mexican California*, 110-111. Though unions surely varied widely from family to family, or between Californio and Native communities, wedding unions were nevertheless largely ritualized throughout the Californio Period.
[214] Carreta is Spanish for wagon. For a description of a wedding cavalcade, see Susanna Bryant Dakin, *A Scotch Paisano: Hugo Reid's life in California, 1832-1852, derived from his correspondence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939), 45-46.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Dakin, *A Scotch Paisano: Hugo Reid's life in California, 1832-1852*, 47.
[217] Dakin, *A Scotch Paisano: Hugo Reid's life in California, 1832-1852*, 50.

Fiesta-bound party circuits were a common sight throughout colonial Southern California as both Californio settlers and Native laborers travelled great distances to attend these extravagant events sponsored and supported by Californio wealth. Rancho Guejito in San Diego County for instance was host to "countless fiestas" where neighbors for sixty miles around came for "merrymaking."[218] Other accounts attest to a typical fiesta travel distance of "one hundred and more miles."[219] Accordingly, fiesta travel was an organized and thoughtfully planned affair for both settlers and Native laborers that required the aggregation of provisions and supplies for the day journey to and back from the fiesta site. Once notified of a fiesta, Native laborers readied the oxen, lubricated carreta wheels with home-made soap, prepared the horses, and at times sent the loaded carretas with baskets of provisions ahead.[220] During their travel to a fiesta, Californio women travelled by carreta, while the men always travelled alongside on horseback.[221] The ox-pulled journey was a slow one, where often "horses, impatient at the pace of the oxen, plunged and danced, showing their fine leather saddles, intricately carved and silver adorned; their stirrups, ending in tapaderas that reached to the ground; and beautiful, cruel-bitted bridles, clanking and jangling."[222] Fiesta-bound caravans often presented the opportunity for Californios to socialize, view the countryside, and eagerly anticipate the arrival to the fiesta site, meanwhile notifying the countryside of its occurrence as the noisy procession steadily travelled to the event.

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[218] Moyer, *The Historic Ranchos*, 87.
[219] Cabelleria, "History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851," in Cortes' *Mexican California*, 110.
[220] Edna Parker Harrington, "Fiestas of Other Days," *The Masterkey* 5, no. 3 (1931): 80
[221] Cabelleria, "History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851," in Cortes' *Mexican California*, 108.
[222] Dakin, *A Scotch Paisano: Hugo Reid's life in California, 1832-1852*, 46.

At Californio fiestas, rancho-owners expressed their wealth and power, largely in order to claim or further solidify their elite status throughout Californio society. Californios aimed to live in the grand style they perceived of wealthy hidalgos in Spain, and expected their laboring population to support this lifestyle. As one scholar described, “The fiesta affirmed the social relationships of Spanish and Mexican California by serving to spotlight the big man giving it.”[223] Fiestas were costly affairs, and it was not uncommon for a week-long fiesta to require the slaughter of a calf per day to feed the guests along with a provided abundance of other foods and alcohol, such as wine and brandy, which one Californio recalled was at times served “without limit.”[224] Expressions of wealth at fiestas often occurred in the extravagant clothing that adorned Californio Dons and their horses at fiesta events. One visitor to California describe their appearance at a Saint’s Day fiesta as follows: “When thus mounted and fully equipped, these men presented a magnificent appearance… they were arrayed in their finest and most costly habiliments, and their horses in their gayest and most expensive trappings. The outfit of a ranchero and his horse, thus equipped, I have known to cost several thousand dollars.”[225] Adorned in their finest clothing, Californio Dons expressed their wealth at fiesta events while seated atop their finest horses, which were often “highly ornamented” in leather stampings and in gold and silver threads.[226] Californios never cut their horses’ tails either,

[223] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California*, 149.
[224] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California*, 148.
[225] Davis, *Sixty Years in California: A History of Events and Life in California*, 87.
[226] Mora, *Californios: The Saga of the Hard-riding Vaqueros*, 109.

Figure 8: Typical dress for Californio Vaqueros. California Vaqueros, by James Walker, 1875, *American Museum of Western Art* - the Anschutz Collection - Denver, Colorado.

and instead allowed them to grow at their longest, "washing and grooming them for fiesta occasions," which further added to an impressionable sight.[227]

Expressions of wealth by Californio Dons and Doñas at fiesta events throughout the Californio Period was largely in order to assert their social classification as *gente de razón*, or people of reason. In contrast to other parts of Spanish America throughout this time period where legal, social, and economic stratification was largely defined along *castas* (castes) of racial heritage, Californio identity was more focused upon the cultural,

[227] Mora, *Californios: The Saga of the Hard-riding Vaqueros*, 123.

linguistic, and ethnic differences between gente de razón and Natives.[228] Classification as being de razón meant joining the upper stratifications of Californio society, with the privileges of social, political, and economic accesses that resulted from such designation. Upon his visit to the region in 1828, Spanish sea captain José Bandini confirmed these distinctions throughout Californio society, and mentioned "The inhabitants of these pueblos are white people, and in order to distinguish them from the Indians they are commonly called gente de razon; there are probably about five thousand of them in the territory."[229] In colonial Southern California, social stratifications and boundaries were largely drawn along cultural, not racial lines.

Fiesta events assisted in the assertion by Californios of being gente de razón. By serving as a host of a fiesta event for instance, existing ranch owners or those who wished to enter into de razón classification asserted their idealized superiority as a non-laboring people who could afford to entertain the masses. As one scholar noted, fiesta production by Californio Dons of their surplus wealth through "ritualized generosity safeguarded the social standing of the elite gente de razón."[230] By producing fiesta events for the masses, Californios were able to "assert their superior position on the social ladder through community celebrations."[231] Though some scholars suggest that oftentimes these expressions of wealth and power were in reality more often a "pretense to affluence" than a reality, nevertheless Californios went to great lengths to solidify their place atop the

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[228] Yolanda Venegas, "The Erotics of Racialization: Gender and Sexuality in the Making of California," *A Journal of Women Studies* 25, No. 4 (2004): 66.
[229] Doris Marion Wright, translator, *A Description of California in 1828 by José Bandini*, in Carlos E. Cortes, *Mexican California* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 9.
[230] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California*, 146.
[231] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California*, 147.

social, political, and economic order of Southern California as gente de razón through the use of fiesta events during the Californio Period.[232]

In addition, fiestas throughout the Californio Period served as sites of courtship that often led to marriage, and in turn, to the interrelationships of ranching families, Native communities, and the continuity of Californio society throughout Southern California. According to one scholar, "family fathers locked up their unmarried daughters at night… when they noticed dangerous flirtations at the Californios' frequent fiestas."[233] At times, these fiesta flirtations occurred during the *cascarón* dance. During this dance, a fiesta attendee surprised an unsuspecting victim by playfully cracking open an eggshell on their head filled with some harmless substance, such as confetti, cologne water, or during good years, gold dust or gold leaf.[234] This action resulted into playful flirtation as the victim would often aim to get even, thus initiating courting relations between the two fiesta attendees. As one cascarón dance observer mentioned, "the greatest compliment that a gentleman could pay a lady was to break one of these cascarones over her head," and that "the floor, at the termination of such festivities," was "literally covered with bits of paper and egg-shell."[235] Fiesta events throughout the Californio Period were attended by both ruling and laboring classes, and as a result, these sites presented individuals with spaces to socialize, court, and get-to-know one another. As a result, fiesta events often spurred relationships between groups and individuals that typically would not interact

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[232] Rush, *Some Old Ranchos and Adobes*, 2.
[233] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California*, 140.
[234] Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, 129.
[235] Harris Newmark, *Sixty years in Southern California, 1853-1913, containing the reminiscences of Harris Newmark* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1926), 135.

socially on a day-to-day basis, which often served to bolster miscegenation between Southern California's Hispanic and Native communities.

Fiesta events throughout the Californio Period influenced the development of relations between Southern California's Hispanic and Native communities. According to one scholar, relations between Native rancherias and Californio pueblos from the outset of the Californio Period were "reasonably good," which likely resulted from continued communication and interaction between Californio ranch owners and Native laborers, who were utilized for labor throughout the Los Angeles area "at least" through the 1790s.[236] Fiestas assisted in these relations, and some scholars suggest that fiesta events during this period "softened the relationship of domination" between Californios and their Native laborers, principally because at fiesta events the "produce of the land was shared with those who worked it."[237] Fiesta events throughout Southern California's colonial period allowed for Californio and Native communities to "rub elbows- figuratively, of course."[238] Though social hierarchies at fiesta events continued to be maintained and often further solidified at these events, fiestas presented opportunities for socialization between Southern California's ranch owners and their laboring Native communities.

Highly attended and anticipated throughout the year by both Californios and Native communities, fiesta events throughout this time period provided a social buffer that also often led to the exchange of language and culture between these two groups. To

[236] William Mason, "Indian-Mexican Cultural Exchange in the Los Angeles Area, 1781-1834," *Aztlan: International Journal of Chicano Studies Research*, Volume 15 (1980): 124.
[237] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California*, 149.
[238] Ibid.

a certain degree, this interaction is reflected in the bilingual Native and Spanish abilities of Californios. For instance, in 1814 Padres Luis Gil y Toboada and Jose Maria Zalvidea of Mission San Gabriel mentioned that Californios who frequently interacted with Natives "speak the Indian idiom… even better and more fluently than their own language, which is Spanish."[239] In order to attain such proficiency with the Native language, Californio settlers required "extensive contact with Indians."[240] Other than their day-to-day interactions for the purposes of ranch labor, fiesta events likely further assisted in producing interaction and bridging relations between Californio settlers and Native communities throughout Southern California during the colonial period. At the very least, it is likely that social engagements at fiestas between Californio and Native attendees further added to the recognition of who-was-who; who was from the pueblo, who was an outsider, who had wealth, and who did not. These social engagements and recognitions between Californios and Natives were likely used to navigate the social intricacies and stratifications of pueblo life throughout colonial Southern California.

In contrast to the ecclesiastical character of mission period fiestas, fiestas of the Californio Period encouraged merrymaking and secular festivity. Though some fiestas continued to occur around mission complexes on certain holy days, specifically the fiesta of Corpus Christi, the fiesta of San Juan, and the Noche Buena on Christmas Eve, the majority of fiesta activity throughout this period was celebratory, and included an

[239] Mason, "Indian-Mexican Cultural Exchange in the Los Angeles Area, 1781-1834" 131.
[240] Ibid.

abundance of "drinking, love-making, dancing, feasting, singing, and music."[241] This was largely a result of a decline and rejection of Spanish forms of piety among the male part of the Californio population, that according to one scholar, viewed Sunday Mass as an affair for women, children, and Native neophytes.[242] Though Californio men continued to attend the livelier religious fiestas, they did so only as "nominal Catholics."[243]At one gathering at Mission San Carlos in 1836 for instance, the presence of alcohol and open gambling reflected the altered character of fiesta events from the Mission Period to the Californio Period, where often fiesta attendees "socialized, gambled, and drank, all activities that the padres had tried to prevent."[244]

As a result, secular activities, such as alcohol consumption and gambling, were dramatically increased at fiesta events throughout the Californio Period; activities which were traditionally foreign to Native communities throughout the region. Though Spanish militarymen introduced alcohol consumption and gambling to Natives in the Mission Period, these activities developed into part of the fiesta norm throughout the Californio Period. This is confirmed by an early Los Angeles resident:

> Sonoreños [Mexicans from the State of Sonora] overran this country. They invaded the rancheria, gambled with the men and taught them to steal; they taught the women to be worse than they were, and men and women both to drink. No we do not mean or pretend to say that the neophytes were not previous to this addicted both to drinking and gaming, with an inclination to steal, while under the

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[241] For the three primary holy fiestas, see Cabelleria, "History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851," in Cortes' *Mexican California*, 111. For fiesta-related activities, see Mora, *Californios: The Saga of the Hard-riding Vaqueros*, 94.
[242] Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, 4.
[243] Ibid.
[244] Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis*, 408.

> dominion of the Church; but the Sonoreños most certainly brought them to a pitch of licentiousness before unparalleled in their history.[245]

Secular activities such as alcohol consumption, gambling, horse racing, and other forms of non-ecclesiastical entertainment was promoted by Hispanic Californios and subsequently adopted into Southern California fiesta culture throughout the Californio Period. These activities continued into Native fiestas throughout the Euro-American period, but their beginning associations with fiestas occurred throughout the Californio Period. As expressed in the upcoming chapter, these secular activities became a primary topic of discontent between Native communities and the federal government throughout the Euro-American period.

In comparison to missionaries, Californios had a more laxed approach towards the traditional cultural and religious activities of Native communities throughout Southern California rancherias. Many Californios were mestizo, or married into Native families, and so the cultural boundary distinctions between Natives and Californios was often fluid. This likely led to a more open-minded approach towards Native culture and events of tradition. There exists for instance, little documentation concerning the policing or aimed suppression of Native ceremonies at rancheria sites. An early Southern California resident mentioned "In some instances, the government has attempted to suppress the dances, but 'with indifferent results.'"[246] This is likely the result of codes put in place by Governor Pedro Fages in 1787 throughout the Los Angeles region, known as Fages'

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[245] Hugo Reid, Letter No. 21, in Dakin, *A Scotch Paisano: Hugo Reid's life in California, 1832-1852*, 282-283.
[246] Cabelleria, "History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851," in Cortes' *Mexican California*, 59.

Code of Conduct Towards Indians, which continued throughout the Californio Period "with few, if any, modifications."[247]

Specifically, rules ten through sixteen of Fages' Code concerned interaction between settlers and Natives, and dictated rules such as that Natives were not allowed to sleep in settlers' homes, that entrance and recruitment of labor at rancherias needed approval from the Native *alcalde* or *comisionado*, that Native labor required direct supervision, that punishment for Natives resulting from inept labor required approval by the rancheria *capitán* (Captain), and that dances at Native rancherias and interaction with Californio pueblos should be monitored by the *comisionado*.[248] Significantly, these codes, which established practices of social interaction between Californio pueblos and Native rancherias, illuminate that Californios in no significant way were concerned with halting or suppressing Native traditional culture or dances at rancheria fiestas. Rather, their primary aim concerned to separate Native and Californio pueblo life in order to prevent hostile relations from developing that might lead to an uprising and subsequently a disruption of Native labor for Californio ranching enterprises. Rule sixteen for instance merely indicated that care should be taken "by day as well as by night whenever the Indians congregate for their dances" at rancherias, but to further stress, no indication existed concerning the termination of Native traditional practices, only their vigilance.

As a result, Native cultural and religious practices appear to have continued relatively undisturbed at rancherias throughout Southern California during the Californio

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[247] Mason, "Indian-Mexican Cultural Exchange in the Los Angeles Area, 1781-1834," 138.
[248] William Marvin Mason, "Fages' Code of Conduct Towards Indians, 1787," *The Journal of California Anthropology* Volume 2, no. 1 (1975): 96-99.

Period, with few exceptions. Though surveillance of Native rancherias was recommended, this was again only for the purpose of preventing uprising, and not to abolish the cultural survivance of Native practices at these sites. Some pueblo residents who were disturbed by the activities of the nearby rancheria at times appealed to political authorities. On February 19, 1846, for instance, a group of twenty-six citizens from the pueblo in Los Angeles presented a petition to Governor Pio Pico to do something about the "vulgar and mean" Natives who came into town on Saturdays to engage in "fiestas bacanales."[249] Pueblo residents felt that "such drunken parties" did nothing but spread disease and would result in the degeneration of the Natives.[250] As a result, Governor Pico turned the matter over to the local ayuntamiento, whose council ordered the rancheria be placed under the supervision of an "honest warden," who was instructed to "moderate the customs" and thereby "avoid crimes."[251] Again, this was solely for the purpose of vigilance, not suppression.

On the contrary, California residents often remarked on the continuity of traditional Native practices at rancheria sites. As stated by one early resident, "Survivals of ancient ceremonial dances are still common among certain tribes of semicivilized Indians."[252] Mourning ceremonials also continued, as related by Jose Bandini:

> …they have an incomprehensible respect for their dead… the rancherias are accustomed to unite annually for a general weeping. The chief of the group proposing the celebration invites the friendly rancherias, and at the conclusion of three days of weeping they say good-bye to their guests, giving them presents of

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[249] Iris Higbie Wilson, *William Wolfskill: 1798-1866, Frontier Trapper to California Ranchero* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1965), 180.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid.
[252] Cabelleria, "History of San Bernardino Valley, 1810-1851," in Cortes' *Mexican California*, 59.

> feathers, pelts, acorns, pine nuts, and other seeds. They venerate their old people, who are their oracles and healers.[253]

No longer under the strongarm of Spanish missionaries, Native communities appear to have held a certain degree of Native fiesta autonomy at rancherias throughout the Californio Period, and continued to hold a degree of cohesion with neighboring rancheria communities of sacred power throughout Southern California. As long as Native activities did not interfere with their labor duties or disturbed the neighboring pueblo, Native communities continued their traditional practices relatively undisturbed at fiestas on rancheria sites.

As a result of Fages' Codes that aimed to separate Native and pueblo life and forbade settler entrance into rancherias without the approval of an alcalde or comisionado, documentation that details the activities of Native fiestas on rancherias throughout the Californio Period is limited. Evidenced, however, is that Native fiestas and traditional cultural practices at rancheria sites continued, and were often left undisturbed by the surrounding inhabitants of the pueblo as long as these activities did not interfere or impede Native labor. Traditional cultural practices that occurred at Native fiestas on rancherias nevertheless flowed into the early Euro-American period, and often mirrored activities of Californio fiestas, as described in the upcoming chapter. Throughout the Californio Period, Native participation at fiestas was largely in their capacity as laborers for fiesta production, as servants for Californio fiesta attendees, and to a lesser degree as bystander participants of Californio fiestas. Though throughout the

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[253] Doris Marion Wright, translator, *A Description of California in 1828 by José Bandini*, in Carlos E. Cortes, *Mexican California* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 17-18.

Californio Period, "abuse of Indians was common," Californios nevertheless considered Natives "a permanent part of their society," and accordingly, "the Mexican government and the Catholic Church expressed an interest in their welfare."[254] This mindset transitioned into Native experiences with Californio fiestas. Though not of de razon and on a lower level of social hierarchy and power, Native communities nevertheless were included and not excluded from participation within the parameters of Californio fiesta culture and society throughout the Californio Period.

Following the conquest of California by United States forces during the Mexican-American War 1848, the discovery of Gold at Sutter's Mill in 1849, and the establishment of a State government in 1850, Euro-American settlers poured into California and marked an end to the Californio Period and the grand fiestas of their pueblos and rancherias. As described by one scholar, "Anglo-Americans seized control of the state's political affairs, leaving the Spanish-speaking Californians without political influence."[255] By 1850, for instance, the Anglo population throughout California reached one hundred thousand, with Californios making up only eight percent of the population as more and more waves of gold and wealth-seeking Euro-American settlers entered the State.[256] For Californios, the "lack of unity" based upon language differences and regional cultural patterns added further to their "political weakness," and made it difficult for Californio to "compete successfully with Anglos at their own game, under their

[254] Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 70.
[255] Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, 24.
[256] Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, 25.

rules."[257] As a result, the grand fiestas of the Californios, which were attended by both elite and laboring classes during this time period, ended.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Euro-Americans in California attempted to recreate the splendor of Californio fiestas with the Fiesta de Los Angeles, which lasted between 1894 to 1916.[258] However, similar to the re-branding of California's mission past by Euro-America, this attempt was largely in order for Euro-Americans to "claim California history as their own" by portraying the "idyllic descriptions of Spanish and Mexican California provided by Californios" in order to create a "usable history" of a romanticized colonial past they could feel a sense of pride to be a part of.[259] The original purpose of a Californio fiesta was to celebrate a moment in time or a rite of passage, be it a birthday, marriage, funeral, christening, holy day, etc. – there was a reason and meaning behind the production of a fiesta. In contrast, the recreated fiestas that followed the Californio Period and some of which continue today primarily serve Euro-America for the purpose of spectacle, entertainment, monetary gain and historical rebranding. At present, this tone of nostalgic remembrance and fiesta romanticism is continued in The Old Spanish Days Fiesta in Santa Barbara and the Fiesta de Reyes in San Diego.[260]

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[257] Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, 32.
[258] Cecilia Rasmussen, "Downtown's Fiesta Began as a Multicultural Celebration," *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 2003.
[259] Michelle M. Lorimer, *The California Mission Myth* (Pechanga, CA: Great Oak Press, 2016), 36-37.
[260] For more information concerning present recreations of Californio fiestas, see "Old Spanish Days – Fiesta," Old Spanish Days, Inc., 2021, https://www.sbfiesta.org/; "Fiesta de Reyes," Old Town Family Hospitality Corp, 2012, https://www.fiestadereyes.com/

As Euro-American settlers continued to occupy Southern California, Californio spheres of cultural influence and power disappeared along with their fiesta production. Fiestas and fiesta culture, however, was adopted and fused with Native traditions by Native communities throughout the Californio Period. As a result, the Southern California fiesta transformed into more of a Native rather than a Hispanic institution following the decline of the Californios and into the Euro-American period. As one reported from the *Los Angeles Herald* and Soboba fiesta attendee in 1900 remarked: "Mexicans coming to California and finding congenial spirits on the reservations, instituted their celebrations there. The Mexicans, similar to the Indians and largely mingled with them, caused the fiestas to assume an Indian color and to be recognized as an Indian institution."[261] The Euro-American period, as expressed in the upcoming chapter, witnessed the rise of Native fiestas of Southern California, which often resembled fiestas of California's colonial Hispanic past. Throughout Southern California, fiesta association drifted from Californio to Native communities, which continued many of the activities and practices introduced to fiesta culture by Southern California's Hispanic past. Unfortunately, these activities and practices clashed with the morals and laws of Euro-America throughout the twentieth century.

[261] James De Souza, "La Fiesta de Soboba," *Los Angeles Herald*, September 30, 1900.

Chapter Four: "All such extreme things are wrong and should be put aside and forgotten"

Along with other transitions of power throughout the history of California, the transition into the Euro-American Period was marked with the raising of an American flag at a fiesta, this time in San Bernardino. Daniel Sexton, the first American in the region, who arrived in San Bernardino in 1841 and worked the local mountains nearby, made acquaintances with local Cahuilla who he employed, and eventually married the niece of Chief Solano.[262] In 1842, the Cahuillas asked Sexton if Americans did not celebrate feast days. As a result, Sexton raised the American flag on July 4, 1842, and celebrated the day in fiesta with his Cahuilla friends in San Bernardino, thereby forecasting the transition of power that was soon to come to California.[263] This fiesta marked the first raising of the American flag in the State of California, and symbolically noted the transition into the Euro-American Period of the State.[264]

In 1848, the United States invaded Mexico in the Mexican-American War and issued a new era for California's Native communities and their fiesta activities. In contrast to policies of the Mexican government that largely emphasized Native incorporation into society, those of Euro-America consisted of social, economic and political exclusion, and eventually outright genocidal annihilation. According to one scholar, one of the primary motives for Euro-American exclusion of Native communities as in order "to regulate the cultural context of newly settled areas so that frontier

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[262] Arda M. Haenszel, "Early 4th of July Celebrations," City of San Bernardino Historical Society, *Odyssey* 2, No. 4 (1980): 32-33.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid.

resources could be conveniently exploited."[265] In the eyes of resource-hungry Euro-Americans that continued to enter the State, Native communities presented a threat to the exploitation of California's vast resources, and accordingly, needed to be eliminated or at the very least controlled. As a result, in 1849, the California Constitutional Convention denied Indian voting rights and requested their removal from the territory.[266] Further, the next year the state legislature prohibited Natives from testifying in a court of law against any white person.[267] These actions by the State created a legally defenseless Native population from incoming Euro-American migrants to California, that given the discovery of Gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848, largely "overran" Native communities.[268]

Throughout the mid to late nineteenth century, other factors further contributed to Euro-Americas grip on Southern California. Section 20 of the 1850 Act for the Government and Protection of Indians for instance instituted unfair vagrancy laws where Natives found to be "loitering and strolling about" were susceptible to arrest and subsequently hired out to the "best bidder" in a Native bonded labor system.[269] This law had disastrous effects on Native communities throughout Southern California who still continued to maintain traditional forms of livelihoods outside the capitalistic employ of Californios and Euro-Americans. Arrests were common enough that in Los Angeles, Sunday auctions of Natives were held near Olvera Street and in the 1860 census of San

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[265] Albert L. Hurtado, *Indian Survival on the California Frontier* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 29.
[266] Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 424.
[267] Ibid.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Kimberly Johnson-Dodds, "Early California Laws and Policies Related to California Indians," *California Research Bureau* (2002), 7-8, https://www.library.ca.gov/crb/02/14/02-014.pdf.

Diego County, of the 2,692 Native listed, only 106 were noted as having an occupation, thus leaving 2,586 susceptible to arrest according to this law.[270] Starting in the 1860s too, Southern California experienced an episode of severe flooding and subsequent drought that decimated the cattle herds of the Californios, forcing many indebted rancho owners to put huge tracts of land onto the market.[271] Land-hungry Euro-Americans that sought riches in the territory purchased these lands, putting a further end to the Californio period and an increased hold on Southern California for Euro-America.

Throughout early Euro-American settlement of California, settlers indisputably violently mistreated and massacred Native communities. Historian Benjamin Madley described the killings, and stated "Californians treated Indians as disposable laborers based on a disregard for their value as human beings and how cheaply they can be replaced," and that "it is stated by white men that it was no uncommon thing for them to shoot an Indian just for the fun of seeing him jump."[272] Miners organized armed militias in response to hostilities with Native communities near mining districts, determined to "exterminate these merciless foes, or drive them far from us."[273] California did not chastise this violence, kidnapping and murder against Native communities, but rather supported and outright subsidized their continuity through paid bounties for Native scalps. As historian Albert Hurtado mentioned, "some newcomers clamored for wars of

[270] Richard Carrico, *Strangers in a Stolen Land: Indians of San Diego County from Prehistory to the New Deal* (San Diego: Sunbelt Publications, 2008), 83.
[271] Steve Lech, *Along the Old Roads: A History of the Portion of Southern California that became Riverside County, 1772-1893* (published by author, 2004), 59.
[272] Benjamin Madley, "Unholy Traffic in Human Blood and Souls: Systems of California Indian Servitude under U.S. Rule," *Pacific Historical Review* 83 (2014), 640.
[273] James J. Rawls, "A Golden State: An Introduction," *California History* 4 (1999), 9.

extermination and the new state government tried to accommodate them."[274] In the 1850s, California subsidized state and volunteer militias to hunt and kill Indians, regardless of whether they were men, women or children.[275] Euro-Americans slaughtered entire villages and many settlers accrued wealth by exploiting California's promotion of the subsidized murder of its Native communities. It is under this genocidal historical context that Southern California Native fiestas continued from the mid-nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth.

Native Southern California communities did not stand idly by throughout this time period, but rather, resisted encroachment by Euro-American settlers, the most notable instance being the Garra Uprising, where fiestas were utilized as a form of political organizing and cooperation. In 1851, Cupeño village Capitan Antonio Garra led an uprising as a result of an attempt by José Warner of Warner's Ranch to collect a tax on the traditional lands of the Cupeño.[276] As a form of reprisal, the Cupeños joined a Yuman raiding party and stole a large herd of sheep near the Colorado River, killing six Americans in the process.[277] Upon their return to Cupa, Garra further ordered the killing of the Americans in the camp at Warner's Ranch, and aimed to create a united Native rebellion against American settlers within the territory.[278] Garra's plan was to coordinate a State-wide attack on American settlements: the Tulares were to sack Santa Barbara, the

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[274] Robert Heizer, introduction by Albert L. Hurtado, *The Destruction of California Indians* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), vi.
[275] Kimberly Johnson-Dodds, "Early California Laws and Policies Related to California Indians," *California Research Bureau* (2002), 15-22, https://www.library.ca.gov/crb/02/14/02-014.pdf.
[276] William Edward Evans, "The Garra Uprising: Conflict between San Diego Indians and Settlers in 1851," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 45, No. 4 (1966): 4.
[277] Ibid.
[278] Ibid.

Cahuillas and Cupeños would take Los Angeles, and the Quechans were to attack San Diego, killing only Americans in the process.[279] According to the diary of Richard Hopkins, a Mormon church clerk, Garra gave a fiesta for Cahuilla leaders Juan Antonio, Cabezon, "and others," in aims of garnering their support for the uprising and in order to secure their allegiance in the affair.[280] Though the attack failed to occur and Garra was eventually captured, this example nevertheless expresses that throughout the early Euro-American Period, Native communities utilized fiestas in order to coalesce political solidarity throughout early Euro-American invasion of Native Southern California.

As a result of continued violence and in efforts to control Southern California Native communities, the federal government aimed to negotiate eighteen treaties "of friendship and peace" with various California Native communities soon after California became part of the United States, which were presented to the senate legislature after the opening session of 1852.[281] These treaties, however, were never ratified, as legislators believed the commissioners that negotiated the treaties had committed an error in assigning such large portions of mineral and agriculturally rich lands to Native communities, who were "unable to appreciate their value."[282] As a result, the eighteen treaties went unratified. Nonetheless, California became the first state to establish a small reservation at Fort Tejon in 1853, which initiated a precedent for negotiations between

[279] George Harwood Phillips, *Chiefs and Challengers: Indian Resistance and Cooperation in Southern California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 76-77.
[280] Richard R. Hopkins, "Journal of Richard R. Hopkins," November 28, 1851, Office of the Church Historian, Salt Lake City, 61-62, *in* George Harwood Phillips, *Chiefs and Challengers,* 76-77.
[281] William Henry Ellison, *A Self-Governing Dominion: California, 1849-1860* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1950), 150.
[282] Ibid.

the federal government and Native communities for the West and for Native policy throughout the Nation at large.[283] Likely, these initial failed treaty negotiations between the federal government and California's Native communities set an antagonistic precedent for federal-Native relations throughout the State, that likely later further spurred federal aims to control, police, and prevent Native fiestas, which were perceived by the federal government to present a threat to the establishment of Euro-American control and power over California.

In the first years following Statehood, fiesta activity continued relatively undisturbed throughout Southern California as Euro-America continued their political and economic efforts to establish a firm political, economic, and more importantly, cultural influence in the territory. One scholar noted that for the first ten to fifteen years following Statehood, Southern California life was a essentially a "continuance" of what it was throughout the days of Californio ranchos.[284] As a result of continued Californio influence throughout Southern California, fiesta activity continued, and further, experienced its height after the economic boom of the 1880s.[285] The continuity of fiesta activity throughout the early Euro-American Period is supported by Harris Newmark, a Prussian who immigrated to Los Angeles in 1853, three years following statehood:

> Among the old California families… there was much visiting and entertainment, and I often partook of this proverbial and princely hospitality. There was also much merrymaking, the firing of crackers, bell-ringing and dancing the fandango, jota, and cachucha marking their jolly and whole-souled *fiestas*. When the fandango really was in vogue, Bandini, Antonio Colonel, Andres Pico, the Lugos

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[283] William Henry Ellison, *A Self-Governing Dominion*, 166.
[284] Steve Lech, *Along the Old Roads: A History of the Portion of Southern California that became Riverside County, 1772-1893* (published by author, 2004), 59.
[285] Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 262.

> and other native Californians were among its most noted exponents; they often hired a hall, gave a fandango in which they did not hesitate to take the leading parts… On such occasions not merely the plain people (always so responsive to music and its accompanying pleasures) were the fandangueros, but the flower of our local society turned out *en masse*.[286]

Fiestas throughout the mid and late nineteenth century largely introduced Euro-American settlers to the colonial past and culture of Hispanic and Native Southern California, and further, were sites of early relationship building between incoming settlers and Southern California's Hispanic and Native communities. In Los Angeles for instance, Euro-Americans attempted to re-create the fiestas of the Californios, and held their first "Los Angeles Fiesta" in 1875 in the same plaza where Californios held their celebrations years prior.[287] Euro-America, eager to romanticize and lay claim to California's mission and Hispanic past, initially endorsed fiesta production throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century for purposes of entertainment, spectacle, and cultural appropriation.

Though the federal government aimed to eliminate fiestas in the late nineteenth century, they continued to persist. Throughout the 1870s the Office of Indian Affairs created the Mission-Tule Agency, which was charged with overseeing Native affairs throughout Southern California. According to historian Clifford Trafzer, superintendents of the Agency largely aimed "to end Indian fiestas as part of their attempt to civilize and assimilate Southern California Indians."[288] The annual report of 1893 by the Office of Indian Affairs however confirmed the continued presence of fiestas throughout Southern

[286] Harris Newmark, *Sixty years in Southern California, 1853-1913, containing the reminiscences of Harris Newmark* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1926), 135.
[287] Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers*, 223.
[288] Clifford E. Trafzer, *Fighting Invisible Enemies: Health and Medical Transitions among Southern California Indians* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2019), 286.

California, and further, the Agency's inability to police or control their production. In the report of 1893 by Daniel Dorchester, superintendent of Indian schools, Dorchester described a fiesta held in San Diego in September, 1892, for the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the "discovery" of California by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo.[289] Following the description of the fiesta, Dorchester mentioned the "fiesta here described has just been *tolerated* by the highest local authority, in church and state, in San Diego."[290] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Euro-American authorities were still unable to control or police fiesta events, which continued to be part of the status quo of Southern California life, and which were largely supported by local leaders and governments.

As more Euro-American settlers continued to migrate into Southern California, initial endorsements of fiesta activity changed in the early twentieth century, largely as a result of Christian dogma towards Native culture. Upon his visit to California at the turn of the century, Moravian Rev. Morris Leibert for instance referred to Southern California fiestas as "the most pronounced vestige of heathenism surviving among the Mission Indians."[291] Further, upon attending a Native fiesta at Soboba in 1900, a reporter from the *Los Angeles Herald* called the event "four days devoted to general deviltry."[292] The

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[289] United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1893*, page 397-398, University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, accessed February 2022, https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/.
[290] Ibid. Italics added by author.
[291] Rev. Morris W. Leibert, "Journey to California and Indian Territory," in *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Foreign Missions of the Church of the United Brethren ("Moravians"), Second Century, Volume IV* (London, 1899), 159-160.
[292] James De Souza, "La Fiesta de Soboba," *Los Angeles Herald*, September 30, 1900.

reporter concluded his report of the fiesta with the following indicative statement of Euro-American perceptions of Native fiestas:

> It is getting late now. Twelve o'clock, and we had better leave. By morning the men who were dancing so merrily on the eve before will be sleeping off their drunkenness wherever they happen to fall. The maidens who were so pretty when the dance began will be drunken and disheveled, asleep in some hut, where some friend of perhaps father or brother has taken them. Before morning there will probably be several fights, for a fiesta without fights is almost an impossibility. We go home. We have seen one night of the fiesta, and all others will be the same.[293]

For Euro-Americans, Southern California Native fiestas were events that confirmed their perceptions of Native ungodliness, barbarity, and solidified Native stereotypes of savagery, debauchery and immorality. As a result, after the continued influx of Euro-American settlers to California, Southern California Native fiestas soon served as sites of cultural and moral contention between the federal government and Southern California Native communities.

Documents from the annual reports of the Office of Indian Affairs throughout the early twentieth century confirm this contention between the federal government and Native fiestas. At the turn of the century, the Office took on a more aggressive tone towards fiesta activity. In 1901 for instance, Indian Agent L. A. Wright referred to fiestas as an "outrageous feature of our Indian life" that "generally ends in drunken debauch."[294] He mentioned that he notified Native communities that "the Government has forbidden fiestas," but that "they will not desist," and that "It will require considerable force to stop

[293] Ibid.
[294] United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1901*, page 200, University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, accessed February 2022, https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/.

this old-time practice."[295] In 1905, Charles Shell, superintendent and special disbursing agent, mirrored the sentiment towards fiestas of Wright and called them "the greatest barrier to the advancement of these Indians."[296] Further, he mentioned that instead of "undertaking to break up the fiesta, I have tried to make it respectable and bring it back to the original intention of making it a religious feast," which he aimed to do so by focusing on the elimination of liquor at fiesta events.[297] In the report of 1908, a similar tone from the Office continued, and referred to fiestas as "orgies of drunkenness."[298] In 1911, the Office of Indian Affairs took a different approach towards fiestas, and reclassified them as Native "agricultural fairs."[299] A plan was then devised by the Office to reduce the number of fiestas by grouping Southern California Native reservations into three districts of four reservations each, and holding one "fiesta or fair" annually in the districts in rotation.[300] To the dismay of the Office, their efforts to eliminate Native fiestas were futile.

The primary concerns of Euro-America towards Native fiestas were religious, moral, and largely economic. Documents from the Indian Affairs Office largely express their concern over three primary topics: liquor, gambling, and the disruption of Native

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[295] Ibid.

[296] United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1905*, page 189, University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, accessed February 2022, https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/.

[297] United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1905*, page 190.

[298] United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1908*, page 37, University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, accessed February 2022, https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/.

[299] United States Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the year 1911*, page 10, University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries, accessed February 2022, https://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/.

[300] Ibid.

labor throughout fiesta season, which typically occurred throughout the fall harvests. In February 1923, Indian Service Commissioner Burke appealed to Southern California Indian communities, pleading they cease fiesta activity. His appeal exemplified Euro-American attitudes towards Native fiestas and their disruption of labor:

> Now, what I want you to think about very seriously is that you must first of all try to make your own living, which you cannot do unless you work faithfully and take care of what comes from your labor, and go to dances and other meetings only when your homework will not suffer by it. I do not want to deprive you of decent amusements or occasional feast days, but you should not do evil or foolish things or take so much time for these occasions. No good comes from your "giveaway" custom at dances and it should be stopped. It is not right to torture your bodies or to handle poisonous snakes in your ceremonies. All such extreme things are wrong and should be put aside and forgotten. You do yourselves and your families great injustice when at dances you give away money or other property, perhaps clothing, a cow, a horse or a team and wagon, and then after an absence of several days go home to find everything going to waste and yourselves with less to work with than you had before.[301]

To the Indian Affairs Office, Southern California Native fiestas threatened Western economic concepts of self-reliance and independence. In the view of the Office, fiestas and their associated activities presented an obstruction to Native self-dependency and the capitalistic order of the Southern California economy. As a result, the Indian Affairs Office attempted to ban Native fiestas altogether in 1919, which the Office eventually overturned due to their pervasiveness.[302]

One way to analyze and interpret the significance of Native fiestas throughout the twentieth century is by viewing the documents produced by the federal government

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[301] "Problem of Indian Dances," *Riverside Press*, August 30, 1923; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

[302] Notice Governing the Holding of "Fiestas," Department of Interior; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

concerning these events. Within Record Group 75 of the National Archives there exists a folder titled "Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-1939," which consists of roughly four hundred documents produced by the Mission Indian Agency (MIA) concerning Native fiestas of Southern California. Primarily, these documents are a variety of correspondence between the Superintendent of the MIA, Native police and field agents, and leaders from various Native communities throughout Southern California comprising of either requests for fiesta policing by field agents and Native communities, or orders for fiesta policing from the Agency. The following pages are dedicated to analysis of the contents of this folder.

Throughout the early to mid twentieth century, fiesta production occurred year-round, and for a variety of purposes. In 1939, the MIA produced a document that detailed what times of year certain reservations throughout Southern California produced fiestas, and for what intended purpose. According to the MIA, Native fiestas in 1939 occurred for the following reasons: New year, for mourning ceremonies, to celebrate Corpus Christi, for Thanksgiving, for Christmas, and to celebrate Saint Days (a tradition stemmed from fiesta celebrations of the Mission Period).[303] Included in the document is a column titled "description," which indicates the types of activities that occurred at these fiesta events. For many fiestas, general activities consisted of the holding of a "High Mass," followed by "tribal games and dances," and sometimes "horse races and rodeo."[304] As described

[303] "Dates of Indian Fiestas, Celebrations and Ceremonials Held by Mission Indians Located on Reservations Within The Mission Indian Agency Jurisdiction in Southern California"; Items 899-901; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[304] Ibid.

by Esther Adamson, a MIA social worker, fiesta celebrations "started with a Mass at the beginning of the fiesta," which was "followed up with a regular Indian celebration that has little to do with the church."[305] Most of these fiestas lasted between three to seven days or over the course of two weekends, and the MIA documented which fiestas allowed outside visitors and which were private. In Palm Springs for instance, visitors were not allowed for the first three days of the ceremonials for the dead, but were allowed thereafter. Other fiestas are simply documented as "visitors admitted," which referred to the allowance of non-Natives, primarily those of Mexican and Euro-American descent.[306]

The fiestas documented by the MIA in 1939 were those that Native communities organized and intentionally notified and shared with the federal government; however, some fiestas throughout the twentieth century also went undocumented by the federal government. At the end of the MIA document of 1939 for instance, there exists a "note" that indicates that in addition to the documented fiestas, some fiestas had "no set date," but rather occurred "as advertised or announced."[307] If, for instance, a Native community member passed away, their mourning ceremony and fiesta would be held following their passing, and this fiesta would be one of non-documented yearly irregularity. This is confirmed by correspondence from the MIA. In February 1946, on account of the "sudden death" of a community member from Cahuilla, Superintendent John Dady

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[305] Esther Adamson, School Social Worker, to John W. Dady, Superintendent, August 14, 1939; Item 898; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[306] Ibid.
[307] "Dates of Indian Fiestas, Celebrations and Ceremonials Held by Mission Indians Located on Reservations Within The Mission Indian Agency Jurisdiction in Southern California"; Item 901; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

reported that the Chief of Police there "will need help at the burial ceremony starting today and which may extend over several days."[308] Though unexpected, these mourning fiestas were highly attended to by Native community members throughout Southern California, as documented by Native policeman Dan Ames in March 1939, who wrote to MIA superintendent John Dady and mentioned "there is to be a Memorial doing here at Sequan [sic]… please I would like to have some help as there might be lots of people as they always do when they have that king of doing."[309] Under or un-reported fiestas, which often occurred as a result of the sudden passing of community members, occurred frequently and were highly attended to by Native community members throughout the Euro-American Period.

In addition, Native communities at times intentionally produced fiestas without the knowledge of the federal government, likely to hold Native-only private ceremonies or for reasons concerning liquor consumption, which the federal government adamantly aimed to stop at fiesta events. In 1928 on the Pala Reservation for instance, local Reverend Robertson wrote to the MIA concerned about the production of a fiesta outside the watch of the Agency. Robertson mentioned the community was in the process of moving the fiesta from the church grounds to out near the cemetery onto private land, and were "bosting [sic] that they are going to have no officers as they will be on private

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[308] John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to August Lomas, February 25, 1946; Item 1091; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[309] Dan Ames, Indian policeman, to John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, March 24, 1939; Item 847; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

property."[310] Other times, Native communities reported fiestas to the MIA too close to the event date to allow for proper policing. Such was the case in May 1940, when Native policeman Dan Ames reported to superintendent John Dady that the community of Sycuan decided to hold a fiesta "so suddenly they didn't give me much time. I am afraid there will be lots of people so I need help."[311] Throughout the early to mid twentieth century, Native communities oftentimes dictated the degree of federal involvement at Native-run and organized fiesta events, either by outright not reporting these events or by reporting them too close to the date to allow for proper policing. Native communities therefore engaged in a process of selective cooperation of policing of Native fiestas with the federal government.

The number of yearly fiestas produced by Native communities throughout the early to mid twentieth century likely varied from year-to-year, but nevertheless they were plentiful. As an example, in 1939 there was a total of twenty-one fiesta events documented by the MIA that were produced for that year.[312] Adding to that number the undocumented or unannounced fiestas by Native communities, a conservative number for yearly fiestas might range somewhere between twenty to thirty. In addition, each fiesta event typically lasted around three to seven days. Taking a conservative multiplication of

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[310] Reverend Robertson to C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, April 23, 1928; Item 712; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[311] Dan Ames, Indian policeman, to John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, May 12, 1940; Item 932; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[312] "Dates of Indian Fiestas, Celebrations and Ceremonials Held by Mission Indians Located on Reservations Within The Mission Indian Agency Jurisdiction in Southern California"; Items 899-901; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

four fiesta days by twenty-five fiesta events per year, a rough estimate of total fiesta days throughout the mid twentieth century equals around one-hundred fiesta days per year throughout Southern California. This rough estimate indicates that for Native communities in the region, fiestas were a continuous aspect of Native life year-round. Whether for the purpose of mourning, for religious celebration, for socializing, or for economic exchange, Southern California's fiesta circuit occupied the minds and lives of Native communities throughout the region, who highly anticipated attending these events year-to-year.

Upon their realization that efforts to ban and discontinue fiestas from Native Southern California life were futile, the MIA focused on fiesta policing rather than elimination. Beginning in 1910, the MIA sought to increase their control over Native Southern California through a reorganization that provided on-site teachers, field matrons, farmers, superintendents, and Indian police to reservations.[313] Fiesta activity was at times reported to the federal government by these field agents assigned to the various reservations throughout Southern California. In 1930 for instance, Morongo Reservation field nurse Florence S. McClintock wrote to Superintendent C.L. Ellis, requesting fiesta policing: "About the first week of October the fiesters [sic] on the Morongo Reservation begin. I have been unable to get the exact date yet… Can we have the Federal Prohibition officers notified of these occasions, and have them watch for liquor on the Reservations?"[314] As a result of policing requests by field agents such as

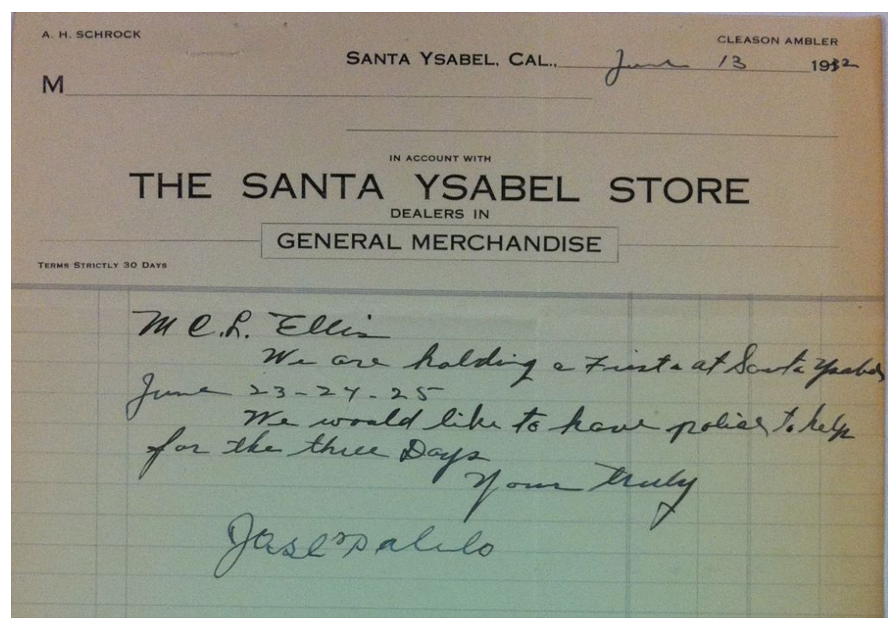
[313] Richard Carrico, *Strangers in a Stolen Land*, 172.
[314] Florence S. McClintock, Morongo field nurse, to C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, September 18, 1930; Item 759; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files,

these, the MIA superintendent ordered officers to fiesta events: "You are requested to send Condino Hopkins to the Morongo Reservation.. in keeping order and in the suppression of liquor during the fiesta, which begins next Monday."[315] Several orders for fiesta policing involved this form of back-and-forth correspondence between field agents and the MIA superintendent. Policing of Native fiestas throughout Southern California was therefore largely reliant upon the observations and conversations with Native community members by MIA field agents, who notified the superintendent of fiesta events.

Other times, leaders from Native communities themselves wrote to the MIA superintendent to request officers at their fiestas, largely for purposes of safety from non-Natives, specifically bootleggers and gamblers. Unlike correspondence from MIA field agents, which were often typed, requests from Native communities are distinguishable in the fiesta folder of the National Archives collection as many were handwritten, or written by a local mercantile store owner nearby a reservation and signed by the reservation Captain or committee. At times, requests for policing were made by the reservation Captain, while at others, requests were made by reservation leaders, spokesmen, or the reservation committee. Although the MIA aimed to limit Native fiestas, Native communities requested the resources of the federal government in order to continue these events with federal protection, largely on Native terms.

1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

[315] C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to a Mr. Harry J. Hess, October 4, 1930; Item 761; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.



A. H. SCHROCK

CLEASON AMBLER

SANTA YSABEL, CAL., June 13 1932

M

IN ACCOUNT WITH

THE SANTA YSABEL STORE

DEALERS IN

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

TERMS STRICTLY 30 DAYS

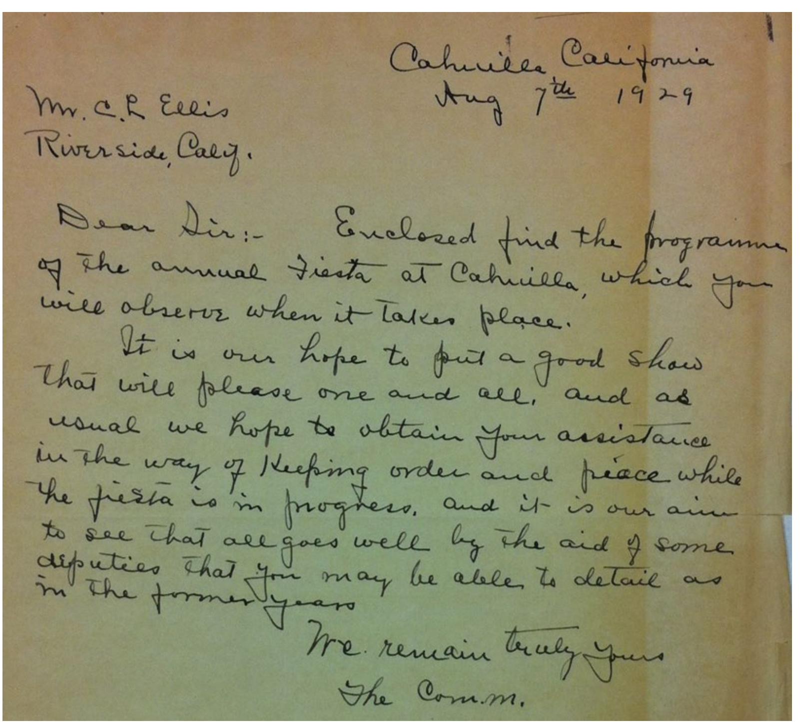
M C.L. Ellis

We are holding a Fiesta at Santa Ysabel
June 23-24-25
We would like to have police to help
for the three Days

Your truly

Jose Palilo

Figure 9: Handwritten request for fiesta policing by Jose Palilo of Santa Ysabel in 1932. Correspondence appears to be written by Santa Ysabel store staff and signed by Palilo. *National Archives and Records Administration, Perris, California.*



Cahuilla, California
Aug 7th 1929

Mr. C.L. Ellis
Riverside, Calif.

Dear Sir:- Enclosed find the programme of the annual Fiesta at Cahuilla, which you will observe when it takes place.
It is our hope to put a good show that will please one and all, and as usual we hope to obtain your assistance in the way of keeping order and peace while the fiesta is in progress, and it is our aim to see that all goes well by the aid of some deputies that you may be able to detail as in the former years

We remain truly yours
The Comm.

Figure 10: Handwritten request for fiesta policing by the Cahuilla Committee for purposes of "keeping order and peace" at their fiesta, 1929. *National Archives and Records Administration, Perris, California.*

One of the primary motives that led Native communities to request policing of their fiestas was for protection against bootleggers. In 1928 for instance, the Captain at Valley Center requested policing by the MIA in order to "have everything in peace. We see there are three men bootlegging."[316] That same year, the Campo community requested "protection from your [MIA] office," and stated they did not "want trouble of any kind; we want to be protected on our Fiesta grounds for liquors and bootleggers, etc."[317] Signed by a total of twenty-seven leaders and notarized, the request for policing from Campo further stated "It is our custom to have our Fiesta once a year for the benefit of our people and children of our reservation. We have Mass once a year at our Fiesta to baltise [sic] our children and have some ceremonies and performances douring [sic] our Fiesta."[318] Cahuilla leaders too formally requested assistance from the MIA to patrol their fiesta in 1928, and indicated "We do not want none of that [alcohol] if we can prevent it and this only can be accomplished by having a force of men deputized to see to that. We don't mean to say that we haven't men for that purpose but we find it necessary to have other help from the outside."[319] The Cahuilla also requested policing for purposes of liquor suppression in 1930, and cited "it is not our desire to see any liquor or liquors used

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[316] Bruno Sobenish, Valley Center, to D.E. Murphy, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, August 6, 1928; Item 730; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[317] Several signees of the Campo Indian Reservation, to the Sheriff of San Diego County, July 13, 1928; Item 710; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Juan Costo, Santos Lubo and Leo Arenas to C. L. Ellis, Superintendent of Mission Indian Agency, August 7, 1928; Item 724; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

to such an extent if we can possibly prevent it."[320] In 1944, Campo spokesman also requested policing from the MIA for purposes of trying to "curve some of these bootleggers here; they are well supplied now."[321] These request significantly express that fiesta policing by the MIA of Native fiestas was not necessarily a coerced process. Rather, Southern California Native communities at times utilized the resources of the federal government for protection from non-Natives in order to promote and continue fiesta-related Native activities.

Correspondence from non-Natives and the MIA also attest to Native requests for policing against bootleggers. On July 14, 1928, the Sheriff of San Diego County wrote to MIA superintendent and stated that a delegation from the Campo reservation came into his office that day and requested that "they desire to have an orderly and well regulated fiesta, and that they have been annoyed and bothered by bootleggers and gamblers, and are very desirous of having the protection of my officers to prevent this trouble."[322]

During the prohibition era of the early to mid twentieth century, bootleggers targeted Native fiestas to exploit these sites for monetary gain in their liquor enterprises. Accordingly, fiestas became sites of federal scrutiny. At the request of the Indian Affairs Office, the Bureau of Prohibition assigned prohibition agents to Native fiestas that

[320] Juan Costo, Leo Arenas, and Pat Casero, Cahuilla, to C.L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, August 11, 1930, Item 752; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[321] William F. Coleman, Campo spokesman, to John Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, July 6, 1944, Item 1065; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[322] James C. Byers, San Diego County Sheriff, to C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, July 14, 1928; Item 718; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

worked undercover, and would not reveal themselves as federal agents at fiesta events until an arrest was made.[323] Liquor was often bootlegged into the reservation by Mexicans or other non-Natives, with the assistance of a few Native fiesta attendees.[324] In 1930 for instance, MIA superintendent C.L. Ellis wrote to the acting deputy administrator of the Department of Justice, and documented that at times bootlegging at fiestas involved non-Natives with Native support:

> We have received reports that several bootleggers are making plans to be present with liquor smuggled from across the border… Some of the Indians living around Alpine are said to be particularly active in bringing in liquor from Tecate and peddling it to the Indians.[325]

According to field nurse Florence McClintock, liquor was also sometimes produced and sold on the reservation itself.[326] Women also took part in bootlegging enterprises. Native policeman Will Coleman of the Campo reservation for instance once wrote to superintendent Dady concerning fiesta policing, and mentioned "we are trying to catch

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[323] Superintendent Ellis: "I shall try to have Prohibition Officers present. The Prohibition officers work 'undercover', that is they do not reveal themselves until an arrest is made." From C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Juan Costo, Santos Lubo, and Leo Arenas, August 7, 1922; Item 726; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[324] Reverend from the Pala reservation mentioned the bootleggers at a fiesta consisted of those from the reservation along with "some Mexican friends that work with them." Reverend Robertson, Pala Indian Reservation, to C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, August 2, 1928; Item 723; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[325] District Superintendent, Mission Indian Agency, to Walter L. Peters, Department of Justice, September 20, 1930, Item 858; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[326] Florence S. McClintock, field nurse on the Morongo reservation, to C.L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, September 18, 1930, Item 759; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

Mrs. Moore the woman who sells to our Indians all the time."[327] Bootlegging of liquor to Native fiestas throughout the era of prohibition was an enterprise that often required coordination by Natives and non-Natives, and by both men and women. For Native community members, involvement in liquor enterprises likely presented a viable option to supplement wages, if any, in order to provide for their community and families.

If caught, Native community members faced strict fines or imprisonment. One account from a fiesta on the Pauma Reservation in 1928 for instance mentioned that Natives in possession of alcohol could expect a fine of twenty-five dollars or ten days in jail.[328] For impoverished Southern California Native communities, penalties such as these presented significant financial hardships. Local Mexican and Euro-American land owners often paid these fines for "Indians who were unlucky enough to be jailed or convicted of a crime," who became indebted to land owners in systems of labored bondage.[329]

Fiesta policing was conducted by MIA Native policemen, termed United States Indian Police (USIP) by the MIA, and often in cooperation with local non-Native sheriffs of the local city. In all, there were twelve USIP officers who served to police thirty reservations throughout the MIA.[330] According to a report by the U.S. Department of Justice, permission for Natives to participate in the policing of reservations was first

[327] Will F. Coleman, USIP officer, to John Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, January 21, 1941, Item 965; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[328] Ibid.
[329] Richard Carrico, *Strangers in a Stolen Land: Indians of San Diego County from Prehistory to the New Deal* (San Diego: Sunbelt Productions, 2008), 82.
[330] Carrico, *Strangers in a Stolen Land*, 173.

granted in the 1860s.[331] Primarily, this decision was reached for two reasons: Native officers were required to emulate non-Natives which in theory would "set and example" for their community to follow, and also because Native officers were "more adept" in dealing with traditional leaders than federal troops.[332] This in turn presented a "tactical advantage" to the federal government, which was more concerned with pushing their agendas on Native reservations than furthering increased rights to self-determination of Native communities.[333]

USIP positions were difficult to fill, and oftentimes communication lacked between the MIA and Native communities throughout Southern California. Normally, there were one or two USIP officers present at fiestas for policing, who if lucky and if resources allowed, were at times supported by one or two local non-Native sheriffs from the local city.[334] Vacancies for USIP officers were difficult to fill, as according to MIA superintendent Dady, it was "extremely difficult" to find a "qualified Indian who is willing to accept the salary we are able to offer."[335] Additionally, it a times was not known who was or was not a USIP officer, likely because the MIA did not adequately

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[331] Stewart Wakeling et al, *Policing on American Indian Reservations: A Report to the National Institute of Justice* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2001), 41.
[332] Ibid.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Several documents from the "Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39" folder of the National Archives mention the placement of one or two Native policemen at fiesta events, who were at times supported by local non-Native officers. See for instance A.W. Kern, Mesa Grande teacher, to C.L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, September 16, 1930, Item 774; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[335] John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Will F. Coleman, Spokesman of Campo Indian Reservation, May 4, 1943; Item 1038; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

inform reservations who was under their employ. In 1928 for instance, a spokesman for Aguanga wrote the MIA superintendent only to inquire "right away" on whether or not someone was in fact a USIP officer or if they were pretending to be one: "if he comes here I will receive him as one of the officers but if he is nothing he can stay around fiesta grounds just like anybody else."[336] This confusion however went both ways, and the MIA at times was unsure if a fiesta policing request was being sent by an appropriate spokesperson from a reservation. In 1944 for instance, Superintendent Dady wrote to the spokesman of Barona in order to clarify a policing request because "we do not know anybody by this name at Barona" and "we are writing to ask you if there really is going to be another fiesta."[337] Communication between the MIA office and reservation communities was therefore limited, which at times likely added to confusion with fiesta policing.

With low wages and confusion within the USIP arm of the MIA, documents suggest of the existence of policing issues. This was likely influenced by the reality that Native policemen were either a part of, or at least well-acquainted with, the reservation community they policed, who oftentimes viewed USIP officers simply as "agents of the U.S. Government."[338] According to historian Richard Carrico, these officers were

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[336] Pete L. Largo, Aguanga,, to C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, August 8, 1928; Item 729; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[337] John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Ramon Ames, Barona Reservation Spokesman, October 2, 1944; Item 1079; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[338] Stewart Wakeling et al, *Policing on American Indian Reservations*, 41.

accused of favoritism, excessive force, and abuse of power.[339] In July 1928 for instance, a delegation of Natives from the Campo Reservation approached the local sheriff of San Diego County with several protests concerning policing by USIP officers at their fiestas. According to the Sheriff, Campo representatives stated “quite frankly they felt the Government Indian Police were partial and allowed their friends to conduct themselves in any way they saw fit, to drink and gamble and carouse, while others who were not their friends were arrested for the same offense.”[340] In addition, at times the community being policed refused to listen to orders by USIP officers. In August 1928 for instance, Reverend Robertson of Rincon reported to the MIA that some fiesta attendees “refused to listen” to the USIP officer.[341]

One of the greatest limitations concerning fiesta policing however was the lack of available resources and funding, which fell under “law and order funds” for the MIA.[342] Several documents from the MIA folder on fiestas attest to issues concerning funding for fiesta policing, specifically due to high fiesta frequency throughout the year which in turn exhausted travel expenses for USIP officers. In 1938 for instance, policing for a fiesta at Pechanga was limited to one USIP officer due to a shortage of funds. According to MIA Superintendent Dady, this was because “owing to the many fiestas that have already been

[339] Carrico, *Strangers in a Stolen Land*, 173.
[340] James C. Byers, San Diego County Sheriff, to C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, July 14, 1928; Item 718; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[341] Reverend Robertson to C. L. Ellis, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, August 14, 1928; Item 735; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[342] Superintendent Dady mentioned the “shortage of law and order funds,” see John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to William Coleman, Campo Reservation, July 31, 1939; Item 850; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

held this fiscal year, our Law and Order funds are sadly depleted, which precludes detailing any additional police for duty at Pechanga."[343] This also occurred at a fiesta at Sycuan in that same year, where only one officer was assigned to police the fiesta due to another fiesta being held at Rincon. Superintendent Dady wrote to USIP policeman Dan Ames in July 1938 and told him "you may remain at Sycuan instead of attending the fiesta at Rincon. Because of so many fiestas coming at the same time, it is *impossible* for us to assign any officer to assist you at Sycuan."[344] Fiesta frequency throughout Southern California throughout the twentieth century strained the resources of the MIA to such an extent that appropriate policing of fiesta events was impossible at times.

In addition to fiesta frequency, travel expenses also imposed limitations on policing at fiesta events. In order to assist with travel expenses, the MIA distributed gasoline coupons to USIP officers upon request.[345] Additionally, the MIA had a government car that was at times assigned to USIP officers for fiesta policing purposes.[346] In order to cut down on travel expenses, USIP officers were instructed to commute to fiesta events together, and the officer who at the time held the government

[343] John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Mr. J.A. Moore, September 24, 1938; Item 837; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[344] Italics added by author. John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Dan Ames, US Indian Police, July 21, 1938; Item 810; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[345] From Dady: "In compliance with the request contained in your letter… we are enclosing 10 gasoline coupons." John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Dan Ames, Chief of Indian Police, August 10, 1945; Item 1112; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[346] From Dady: "Both of you should make the trip in the Government car." John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Will F. Coleman, US Indian Police, December 2, 1938; Item 839; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

vehicle held priority for policing during the time the government vehicle was in his possession.[347] Further, for purposes of saving travel expenses, officers who lived closest to the fiesta event held priority over officers who lived further away. By measures such as these the MIA attempted to save expenses.

Though the MIA aimed to curtail the expenses required to adequately police fiesta events, funding for law and order funds continued to strain the fiesta policing arm of the agency. In August, 1939, Superintendent Dady released a two-month schedule for USIP officers, which presents an indication of the amount of work officers could expect to receive in a two-month period as well as a brief overview of the funding the fiesta policing arm of the MIA required. The two-month schedule for August and September assigned twenty-two days of fiesta policing by three to four USIP officers per fiesta event.[348] Policing of fiesta events strained the law and order coffers of the MIA to such an extent that by the 1940s, Superintendent Dady was denying request for fiesta policing by reservation communities. Towards the end of 1944 for instance, Dady denied a request for fiesta policing by Barona and cited that "we are at a loss to know how to send police officers since our allotment of travel money for this year is already entirely exhausted and we may not be able to get anymore."[349] In 1947, Dady further denied requests for fiesta

[347] From Dady: "You should both go in your car in order to keep down expenses." John Dady to Dan Ames, August 7, 1944, Item 1068; *and* From Dady: "We are asking Mr. Coleman to attend as he has a government car and Chris Pinto does not." John Dady to Will Coleman, USIP, November 29, 1939; Item 889; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[348] John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to all US Indian Police, August 16, 1939; Item 864; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.
[349] John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Ramon Ames, Spokesman of Barona Indian Reservation, October 2, 1944; Item 1079; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified

policing for the community of Manzanita, and indicated all USIP officers were placed on "enforced vacations" due to "the shortage of funds."[350] Shortly thereafter, all documents of the fiesta policing arm of the MIA cease from the NARA collection, presumably as a result of shortage of funds that discontinued the operation of the office.

Funding for fiesta policing was limited, and accordingly, these limitations influenced fiesta policing throughout Southern California. Notification of fiesta events to the MIA were made by federal field agents or by Native communities who largely sought protection and safety from gamblers, bootleggers and non-Natives at their events. Policing of Native fiestas occurred by Native USIP officers with the assistance of non-Native sheriffs when possible. However, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, these policing practices should not be interpreted as a sign of increased control by tribes over their own affairs since the federal government supervised these forces, which continued to act for the interests of the United States and not for Native communities.[351] Although acting as an arm of the federal government, USIP policing of fiestas was nevertheless likely a better alternative than non-Native policing of these events.

In contrast to the bleak economic portrayal of Native fiestas by the MIA, Southern California fiestas of the twentieth century provided Native communities with economic opportunities, in part due to the increase of non-Native spectators at these events.

Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

[350] John W. Dady, Mission Indian Agency Superintendent, to Larkin Osway, Spokesman of Manzanita Indian Reservation, June 16, 1947; Item 1132; Relations, Feasts, Fiestas, Festivals, 1928-39; Central Classified Files, 1920-1953, Box 15; Mission Indian Agency, Record Group 75; National Archives Building, Perris, California.

[351] Stewart Wakeling et al, *Policing on American Indian Reservations*, 41.

Described by historian Tanis Thorne as "spectacles of cultural exoticism," throughout the twentieth century, Native fiestas attracted more and more non-Natives. According to Thorne, "The general prosperity of the 1920s, the ease of automobile transportation, and the boom in tourism afforded the leisure, the means, and motive to participate in such events in southern California's reservation communities."[352] Throughout the twentieth century, fiestas further became moneymaking events for Native communities, that specifically and openly welcomed non-Natives. This is evident in fiesta poster advertising, such as in figures eleven and twelve in the following pages, that directly stated "everybody invited" and "come all and bring your friends." In addition to traditional fiesta activities, twentieth century fiestas also included events geared towards a Euro-American audience, such as baseball games, pie-eating contests, barbecues, and modern dancing. In response to the influx of outsiders and tourists, Native communities supplemented their livelihoods by selling concessions at these events.[353]

Concessions at Native fiestas throughout the twentieth century often included food, Native crafts, and other goods of "exoticism" that appealed to non-Native tourists. At Pala, Native children for instance sold Christmas cards at their fiesta in order to financially support the school on the Reservation. As described by the pastor of the Pala

[352] Tanis C. Thorne, "On the Fault Line: Political Violence at Campo Fiesta and National Reform in Indian Policy," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 21, no. 2 (1999), 188.
[353] Ibid.

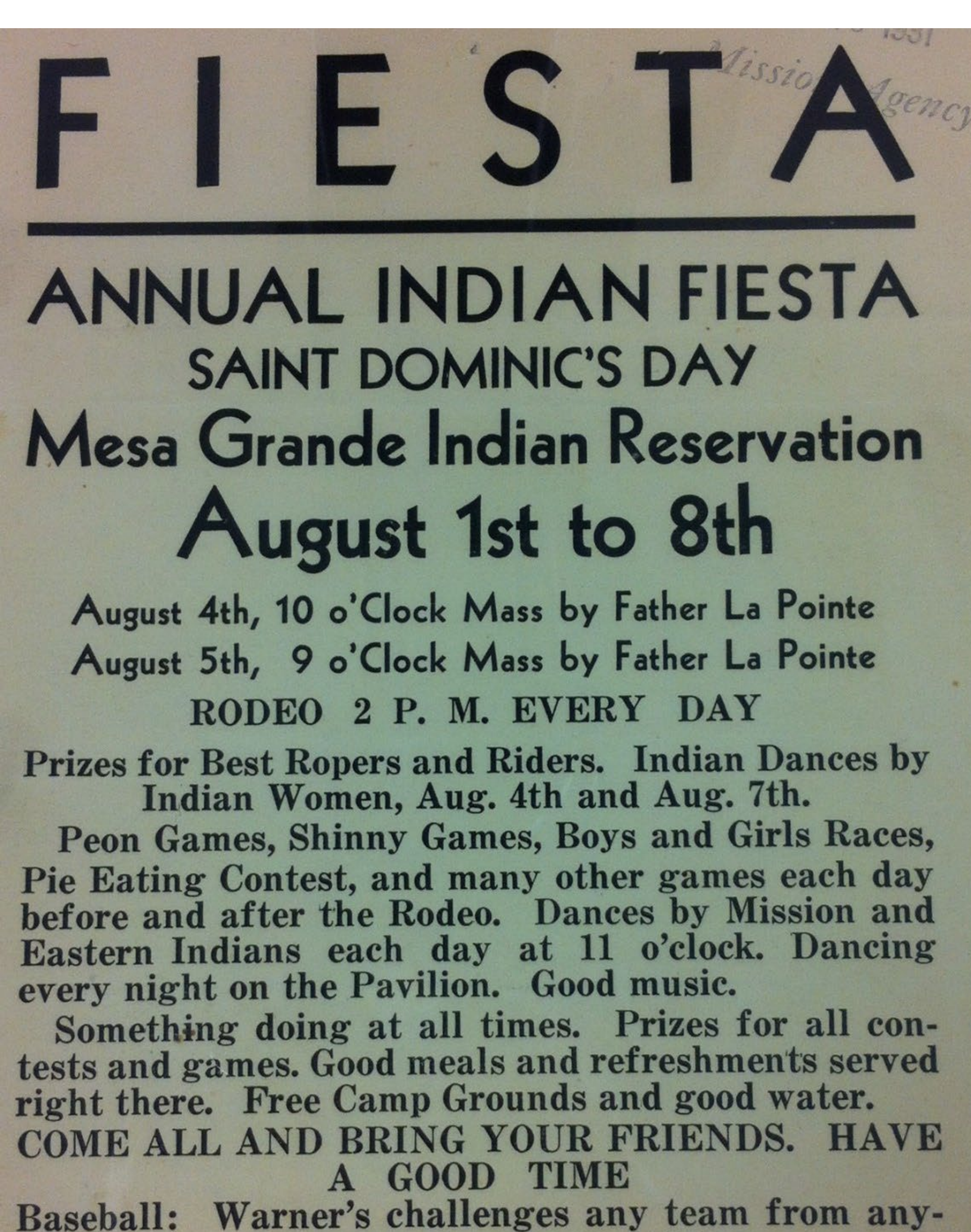

Figure 11: Mesa Grande fiesta poster for August 1-8, 1931. Depicted are a variety of Native and non-Native events geared at attracting a varied crowd. *National Archives and Records Administration, Perris, California*.

Figure 12: San Jacinto (Soboba) fiesta poster for July 2-4, c. 1932. Along with the event being held for a U.S. holiday, the poster advertises a stereotypical image of a Native American likely for the purpose of appealing the event to a non-Native audience. *National Archives and Records Administration, Perris, California*.

Reservation in 1966, "It takes $30,000 a year to run this place… Our main sources of income are the Corpus Christi Fiesta every June and Children's Fiesta in October and the sale of Christmas cards made by the children."[354] At Morongo, too, the community supplemented their incomes by making jewelry, artifacts, and by tanning hides, which were sold at the annual fiesta sponsored by the Malki Museum.[355] According to anthropologist Lowell Bean, activities such as these indicated that at fiestas, Native communities were able to exploit "the outsider's widespread fascinations for things that are 'Indian'."[356] Southern California Natives utilized profits from fiestas in order to support their families, their reservation institutions, and the overall well-being of their communities.

For Southern California Native communities, twentieth century fiestas served as sites for a variety of Native purposes; in particular, for socialization, amusement, and the continuity of traditional ceremonies. In 2007, Gordon Johnson (Cahuilla/Cupeno) nostalgically remarked on Native fiestas on the Rincon Reservation in the twentieth century:

> Everything seemed wide open back then. Pure wilderness. You could smell it in the dust kicked up by the muscled-up cars with racing slicks and rapping pipes as they spun into the parking lot. You could hear it in the untamed laughter erupting from the revelers gathered around the pickups weighted down with ice chests filled with beer. You could see it in the don't-mess-with-me sneers flashed by the buffalo-shouldered bad boys at the outsiders who ventured in. These were the classic fiesta nights on the Rincon Indian Reservation in north San Diego County in the early 1970s. They just don't make 'em like that anymore.[357]

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[354] Lynn Lilliston, "A Fiesta for Fun and Profit," *Los Angeles Times*, June 10, 1966.
[355] Lowell John Bean, "Morongo Indian Reservation: A Century of Adaptive Strategies," in *American Indian Economic Development*, Ed. Sam Stanley (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), 224.
[356] Bean, "Morongo Indian Reservation: A Century of Adaptive Strategies," 216.
[357] Gordon Johnson, *Fast Cars and frybread: reports from the Rez* (Berkeley, California: Heyday Books, 2007), 22.

Fiestas of the twentieth century provided Southern California Native communities opportunities for socialization, interaction and amusement.

Social interactions at Native fiestas oftentimes led to courtship and marriage, which produced a variety of tribal and intertribal relationships and familial bonds. While discussing challenges to married life and jealousy, Villiana Hyde (Rincon) mentioned "My husband wasn't jealous, and I wasn't either. It's good that way. Everything's alright that way. I told him, 'I don't want to hold on to you here all the time. Why? If you want to go somewhere to a fiesta or a dance, anywhere, then go.'"[358] This statement by Hyde alludes to the type of courtship activities that oftentimes occurred at Native fiestas. Throughout Native communities in Southern California, for instance, there exists a term for a baby that resulted from the sort of interactions that frequently occurred at these events: "fiesta baby."

In addition to social interaction, Native communities utilized fiestas of the twentieth century in order to continue their sacred traditions and customs. The following comment is from a reporter of the Mission Indian Federation upon attendance of a fiesta in 1934:

> The first days are spent on visiting; the Indians conversing in their own language… Then at night when the fires are kindled, and the flickering flames cast their reflections on the huddled old people, "the spirits from the under-world" and "from the beginning" creep in. All their worship of the orthodox Christian rites give way to their pagan gods; to their ancestral rites… to the chanting, dancing and accent of the turtle rattle… On and on, they dance and chant, far, far into the night.[359]

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[358] Villiana Calac Hyde and Eric Elliot, *Yumayk Yumayk: Long Ago* (University of California Press, 1994). 290-291.
[359] "An Indian Fiesta," *The Indian: Magazine of the Mission Indian Federation*, Vol. 4, No. 3, July-August, 1934.

Hyde further confirmed the presence of traditional ceremony and medicine at Native fiestas of the twentieth century while discussing an encounter with a Native medicine man:

> He and the youngest of his younger brothers used to do that. And his little brother would also eat fire. And I don't know how, but he never did burn his mouth. His younger brother was once at a fiesta in Rincon, I think… They sang there. They lit a fire. There was a big fire burning there. The people were looking at it. They went over to it. I guess it was that very same man. I was surprised. I had never seen him eat fire before. And so he sang his magical *chááttush* song, the shamans' *chááttush* song. After he had sung he danced like the *tááƙwish*, or like the raven. And then he stopped. They stopped dancing. And I guess he walked to the fire. The embers were there. The hot coals were glowing brightly. I guess he walked over from there, and after pushing it (the coals) around with his foot he grabbed a piece. And then he shouted. I didn't want to watch him. But I wanted to see whether he could do it or not. Everything shone inside him. You could see all his insides… Everyone was watching. Everyone was still. [360]

Native fiestas throughout the twentieth century provided Native communities with sites of traditional healing and medicine. Similar to their pre-contact origins, these sites served to promote ceremonial reciprocity between Southern California Native communities. In addition, these events presented platforms for traditional healers and medicine practitioners to publicly express and assert their roles as keepers of ancestral power throughout Native communities of Southern California.

Fiestas throughout the Euro-American continued a long tradition of gathering, celebration, trade and ceremony for Native communities of Southern California. Unlike the fiestas held throughout the Californio Period that often openly promoted and held these events for a variety of purposes, Native communities throughout the Euro-

[360] Hyde and Elliot, *Yumáyk Yumáyk: Long Ago*, 938-940.

American Period were forced to contend their fiesta activities with a settler colonial power that at times aimed to outright ban the holding of these events. When Euro-America realized the banning of these events were futile, they turned to policing strategies in order to still retain some semblance of Euro-American control over these Native events. The desire of Native communities to continue fiesta culture nevertheless outweighed Euro-American desires to see them erased from the pages of Native Southern California history.

Epilogue

Prior to European invasion of Southern California, Native communities transferred cultural knowledge from generation-to-generation through stories, songs, dance, example, and oral tradition based upon their connection to the land and its physical and metaphysical realities. Much of the transmission of this cultural knowledge occurred at pre-invasion events of socialization, ceremony, and celebration. These events, dotted with communication and cultural knowledge exchanges between tribal groups, were grounded on trading networks, kinship ties, and ceremonial reciprocity. The Spanish, Californios, and Euro-Americans, aiming to eradicate or limit expressions of Native culture and knowledge throughout the region, at times negated the continuity of these events of tradition, but allowed some semblance of pre-invasion Native events by instituting others termed “fiestas.”

In order to continue their traditions, Southern California Native communities responded by culturally accommodating some aspects of pre-invasion society and adopted these events as sites for the promotion of Native traditions and the public expressions of Native culture. Though clothing, foods, activities, and dances changed at fiestas depending on the settler colonial period of fiesta production, fiestas nevertheless remained as spaces where Native people would gather and come together for Native-oriented purposes and ceremony. In turn, these events assisted in the continuity of traditional aspects of Southern California Native communities that may have otherwise fallen into the abyss of the ancestral past. Fiestas, therefore, served as tools and spaces for Nativism and the cultural reclamation of Southern California Native communities aiming

to secure their pre-invasion societies from non-Native infringement upon their lands, traditions, and culture.

This study aimed to begin conversation and dialogue with the significance of fiestas to Southern California Native communities. In chapter one, the traditional origins of fiesta events were analyzed, which stemmed from the many traditional accounts from Southern California's Native communities that note their mention. Although not termed "fiestas" by traditional Native communities prior to the arrival of the Spanish, these events nevertheless existed in pre-invasion California. Likely, Spaniards called these events "fiestas" in order to categorize what they witnessed with events of festivity, socialization, and ceremony they were accustomed to witnessing throughout Spain. The chapter presented several traditional narratives from Southern California's Native communities that mention fiesta events, and thereby stemmed these events to traditional, pre-invasion origin. First encounters with Native fiestas by Spanish explorers was mentioned, along with first encounters with Spanish fiestas by traditional California Native communities.

In chapter two, fiesta analysis turned to the Mission Period. Throughout this period, fiestas were utilized by Spanish missionaries for a variety of purposes. At times, missionaries utilized fiesta splendor in order to lure and attract Native communities to mission sites and for the purpose of Christianization. Also, missionaries utilized fiesta events likely in order to suppress feeling of uprisings and discontent among traditional and Native neophytes within Mission walls. Some observations on fiestas by early visitors to Southern California were presented, as well as mention of fiesta events by

Spanish missionaries in their observations and reports to the Spanish Empire. Although Southern California's Native communities experienced a large degree of cultural genocide at Mission sites, the chapter discussed the continuity of fiesta-related events, at times with secrecy, within the confines of Mission walls.

Following Mission secularization, fiesta activity throughout the Californio Period is assessed in chapter three. The wealth and power of Southern California's Dons and Doñas was largely expressed at Californio fiestas, which occurred frequently throughout this time period. In contrast to seasonal Mission fiesta events that were often regulated by the ecclesiastical calendar and field harvests, Californio fiestas were discussed as occurring year-round, and for a variety of purposes including birthdays, christenings, funerals, marriages, or at the end of cattle drives. Supported by the Hispanic rancho-owning elite alongside their Native laborers, Californio Period fiestas characterized some of the grandest social events known throughout the colonial history of Southern California.

Lastly, following the collapse of the Californios and the increased migration of Euro-Americans to Southern California, chapter four assessed fiestas throughout the Euro-American Period. As discussed in the chapter, the primary concerns of Euro-America towards Native fiestas were religious, moral, and largely economic. In their efforts to control and influence Native society and culture, Euro-America established the Mission Indian Agency, which aimed to suppress Native fiesta-related activity that they felt disrupted Native labor throughout the region and decreased Native chances for self-dependency. Native communities, however, continued their practice, which resulted in

the Agency's focus turning towards fiesta policing rather than banishment. The chapter then focused on assessing fiesta activity and fiesta policing between the Mission Indian Agency and Southern California's Native communities.

At present, fiesta events continue throughout Southern California and are held by both Natives and non-Natives. The "Old Spanish Days Fiesta" for instance is slated to take place in August of this year in Santa Barbara. Advertised as including an assortment of activities such as music, parades, dancing, rodeos, food and drink, the fiesta aims to continue a long line of fiesta activity with particular emphasis placed on the celebration on Southern California's Hispanic Californio past.[361] In May, the Morongo Reservation will hold their annual fiesta, known as the *Kewét* in Cahuilla, which advertises more Native-centered activities such as bird songs, dances, Native crafts and fry bread (see figure fourteen).[362] Although some Native fiestas remain, many were replaced throughout the late twentieth century by the more popular powwow, which are non-traditional events to Native Southern California. Having originated "most directly" from the Warrior dance societies of the Oklahoma Ponca, and the Omaha and Pawnee Grass dances, the powwow circuit gained prominence throughout Southern California in the late twentieth century.[363] Accordingly, as more Native communities invested their capital, labor, resources and energies into constructing and promoting these powwow events, fiestas slowly dissipated in frequency and visibility throughout Southern California.[364] Although some Southern

[361] "Old Spanish Days – Fiesta," Old Spanish Days, Inc., accessed April 2022, www.sbfiesta.org
[362] "Kewet," Malki Museum, accessed April 2022, www.malkimuseum.org/kewet
[363] Anita Herle, "Dancing Community: Powwow and Pan-Indianism in North America," *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 17, no. 2 (1994): 60.
[364] Discussion with Myra Masiel-Zamora (Pechanga), Pechanga Indian Reservation, February 9, 2018.

California Native fiestas still exist, their character differs from the grand Native fiestas of pre-invasion and colonial times throughout Southern California history. Nevertheless, present fiestas continue to stand as testaments of Southern California Native survival, adaptability, and Native-centered promotion of traditional Southern California culture.

Figure 13: Advertisement for the Morongo fiesta, know as the Kewét, for 2022. *Malki Museum*, www.malkimuseum.org/kewet

Although the primary focus of this study was to trace the origin and continuity of Southern California Native fiestas throughout several time periods, the significance and impact of fiestas on Southern California history is far from complete. This study merely

presented a new lens of consideration in relation to Southern California Native history. Can we for instance understand Native communities of the plains without understanding the powwow? The author of this study believes the same reasoning applies to fiestas and the history of Southern California Native communities – fiestas and their associated activities have historically been so intertwined with the Native experience of Southern California that their impact throughout the region warrants further study and consideration. From here, fiesta analysis can take a variety of forms: analysis and impact of the fiesta economy, fiesta material culture, political organizing at fiesta events, or the impact of traditional medicine at fiesta sites, to name a few. Activities at fiestas such as the performance of traditional bird songs, peon games, or of rooster pulls and bear fights also requires further analysis. Each one of these subsects in their own right can warrant a separate study of historical analysis and understanding, not to mention the various narratives and accounts from elders from Native communities that continue to recall fiestas throughout the twentieth century. Their voices should be heard, as the history of Southern California fiestas continues.

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