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El Capitan: Adaptation and Agency on a Southern California Indian Reservation, 1850–1937. By Tanis C. Thorne. Banning: Malki-Bellena Press, 2012. 236 pages. \$24.95 cloth; \$15.95 paper.

Tanis Thorne has written a sympathetic and well-researched examination of the removal of the Ipai/Tipai people of San Diego County, California from their homes on the Capitan Grande Reservation to the Barona and later to the Viejas reservations. The well-crafted narrative assumes a story arc that is a compelling read and seeks to dispel the widely held belief that the Indians of California were passive in the face of their expulsion from their ancestral lands. Thorne directly challenges other widely held notions, such as that the Indians of Southern California lived in a semi-civilized hunter-gatherer state until the advent of white civilization in the late eighteenth century, or that they lacked a distinct cultural heritage worthy of saving once contact had been established. The book begins primarily in 1853, when a group of Indians led by Leandro and Patricio colonized the Capitan Grande area with the permission of white military authorities. From there, Thorne weaves the story of the families that moved to the area into the backdrop of the changing world around them. While the band of Indians she references numbered only 150–350 during the historical period she discusses, as she maintains, “even a small group of people can make history” (3).

Using the Capitan Grande Reservation as her launching point, Thorne uses the Ipai/Tipai traditional beliefs about the importance of captaincy, or tribal leadership, to begin her argument. Captains within the communities of the Native people of Southern California “brokered alliances and acted as intermediaries in dealing with outsiders” (3). It is this traditional power structure that was transferred to the Capitan Grande Reservation as a whole and to its leadership in particular. Drawing on this theme to outline the importance of place in social/cultural development, she identifies the Capitan Grande Reservation as central to Native resistance because of its cultural importance to the Native people of the region. The ideas reflected in the power of place have been explored in recent scholarship by several authors, such as Dolores Hayden and Robert Fogelson. However, their work more prominently deals with the urban environment while Thorne’s focuses on the intrinsic cultural value the land held for Native people.

Long overlooked in general histories about the region or the state, ideas about the interconnectedness of Native people to the land that they occupy is an important concept when exploring the history of any native people and an increasingly important theme presented in recent works by authors like Susan Sontag. The uncomfortable theme that runs through Thorne’s monograph is the repetitive and intentional misuse of power by federal and local authorities

and the seemingly unrelenting greed that taints interactions between the burgeoning white population and Indians during the development of Southern California. The ideas of land tenure and the often illegal and certainly immoral treatment visited upon Native people in Southern California have been well treated by authors such as Florence Shippek and more recently Richard Carrico. Thorne's work is in tandem with and sympathetic to their scholarship in this regard.

While the loss of land threatened the stability and longevity of the small bands of Indians in the region, another issue on the horizon loomed equally as large: water. Southern California's semi-arid climate is incapable of sustaining large populations without the control of all available water sources. Unfortunately for the Indians of Southern California, their traditional lands were naturally suited for the diversion or collection of water that could then be funneled to the burgeoning community of San Diego. The water wars have been a well-researched topic in California history and the presentation is normally focused on the tragic consequences to areas like Mono Lake or the Owens Valley. Little writing focuses on the part Natives played in these ongoing battles. Authors such as Norris Hundley have suggested that during the early settlement of the state, aboriginals and Mexicans enjoyed a measure of cooperation with recently arrived whites in harnessing this precious resource. That level of cooperation disappeared soon after the seizure of the land by the Americans. From there an adversarial relationship developed and here Thorne picks up on the same theme. The result of this conflict forced Native people to create new identities and communities in the land that had once been wholly theirs. Thorne presents the Indians as active agents in these proceedings and in the establishment of their new communities. However, this presumed activism is not universal and often belied by tribal inactivity.

Lacking the protection of American citizenship, the Indians settled into a pastoral existence that would have been familiar to any Mexican pueblo in the nineteenth century. However, by the 1870s internal transportation improvements and an entrepreneurial spirit among the burgeoning white population compelled many to refuse to acknowledge Indian rights to public lands. To resolve the issue of landless and impoverished Indians, executive-order reservations were created and then partially dissolved during the Grant administration. To protect the Indians further, the federal government also created the Mission Indian Agency to manage the assimilation of the Native population. Here the limited nature of the work is perhaps most glaring. While well researched and presented, the larger national and regional issues that were at work are only lightly treated by the author. Individuals such as Helen Hunt Jackson, who personally championed the cause of the Mission Indians, are not examined in any depth, nor are other white individuals who

appear in the text, whether in a supportive or non-supportive role. While this maintains the focus on the tribe and the events that imperil their existence, it does not provide a complete account of what happened. Instead, the story Thorne seeks to elucidate is how the captains of the band protected their people and lands with all the resources at their disposal. While the contentious issue over water retired large portions of productive land from possession by the Indians, perhaps the most intriguing aspect of Thorne's argument is the introduction of a contentious and divisive internal element in the early years of the twentieth century—the Mission Indian Federation. Thorne draws from well-established studies for much of her information on the Federation, including work by Edward Castillo and Deborah Dozier. However, much that has been written on the Federation has only lightly treated the divisive effect the organization has had on tribal unity, even generations after it collapsed in the 1960s. The Mission Indian Federation plays as a single element in the story of Capitan Grande Reservation, but one that clearly divided the band both literally and ideologically.

While Thorne's work is well immersed in primary documents, this is at times one of its most frustrating features. Several conclusions are drawn in regard to the political divisions the tribe experienced in the 1920s, but those conclusions are based on unpublished manuscripts. There are also statements made in the text that leave the reader to assume a conclusion that is not supported by the facts presented in either the body of the work or the references. While these conclusions may not have materially impacted the ideas developed by the author, they do leave the issue open to question. Thorne's work extensively uses archival pictures, maps, and figures to visually recreate the world the Indians of Capitan Grande experienced. Despite a slight error on the 1895 allotment map, all are accessible and support the author's contentions. Overall, Tanis Thorne has undertaken the difficult task of recreating a world and a culture that is largely missing from most accounts on the history of the state. Her well-crafted narrative is both compelling and enlightening. It is perhaps because of these reasons that the brevity of the work leaves the reader with the desire for more.

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