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The Diary and Copy-book of William E.P. Hartnell, Visitador General of the Missions of Alta California in 1839 and 1840.

Starr Pait Gurcke (translator) and Glenn J. Farris (editor and annotator). The California Mission Studies Association and the Arthur H. Clark Company, Spokane, WA, 2004, 153 pages, 9 figures and 1 map. \$24.00 (paper, non-member CMSA) (\$18.00 paper, member CMSA).

Reviewed by:

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The missions of California continue to be a topic of great interest to scholars and lay persons alike. Defenders and detractors clash over the treatment of the neophytes, the economic role played by the missions, and the legacy of Father Junípero Serra. But they agree on one issue: the secularization of the missions was a watershed in the history of early California. It ended the mission system, dispersed the neophytes, and thrust the rancho into a position of social and economic prominence. Scholars, especially archaeologists, are now reexamining the role of the rancho in ways not thought possible a few years ago.

There is, however, a short, transitional phase in California history that has yet to receive the attention it deserves, and that is the time between the end of the missions and the emergence of the ranchos, between roughly 1834 and 1840. It was during this short phase that the missions came under the control of civil administrators, many of whom were instrumental in creating ranchos out of mission lands. Some of these administrators, such as Juan Bandini, were already well established figures in Californio society when given this responsibility. But we know much more about their social and economic activities than about their goals and abilities as administrators. Thus, the publication of the diary and copybook (consisting of letters sent and received) of William Hartnell, is of particular importance. It gives us a rare glimpse into how the Indians were treated and how the administrators managed the institutions placed in their charge.

Englishman William Edward Petty Hartnell arrived in California in 1822, learned Spanish, went into business, married into a prominent Californio family of Santa Barbara, and became a *ranchero*. But he is best known as Visitador General of the Missions of Alta California, an appointment made by Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado in 1839. His task was to inspect the condition of the missions, in particular to see if the Indians were receiving the lands, animals, and equipment promised them in the secularization law. The two trips he made cover the period between April 1839 and August 1840. Hartnell has something to say about most of the missions, pueblos and presidios. More important, in his letters and diary, he recorded many interviews he had with various officials, *rancheros*, administrators, priests, and neophytes.

Occasionally, we see neophytes standing up for their rights, as at Mission San Gabriel on July 26, 1840:

After Mass I assembled the Indian community to announce to them that Father Eztenaga [sic, Esténaga] had proposed Sr. Juan Pérez as *mayordomo* with my approval, and the Indians were very content with the nomination but with the strict condition that he should take no steps without the knowledge and approval of the Father and there should be no other white *mayordomo* than he. They made various complaints against Bandini, of which the main ones are that he left the Mission without waiting for my arrival, that he made off with many of the Mission's best horses and took them to his Rancho, that he also took twelve new *carretas* which, as they understand it, were made in the Arroyo Seco on the Missions' account, that he bought several chamois skins with Mission horses and gave boots derived from them only to a chief and two *vaqueros*, that he put a tavern in the Mission and was selling aguardiente to all the Indians who wanted to buy and then punished most severely those that got drunk (pp. 123-24).

Although Farris has arranged the letters and diary in chronological order, this is still a collection of

primary sources and thus the information presented is uneven—some individuals and missions receiving more attention than others. Yet thanks to Farris' extensive footnotes, it is relatively easy to follow Hartnell's footprints up through California.

This collection of documents should serve two purposes. Certainly, it will fascinate all those interested in the Mexican period in California history, and it may stimulate some into investigating those few neglected years in that period.

