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Conflict at Monterey: Indian Horse Raiding, 1820-1850¹

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DURING the Spanish-Mexican occupation of Monterey, California, the relationships of Indians with the whites underwent a sharp transition from peaceful, hospitable acceptance to outright hostility. To accomplish this transition, a remarkable change in a brief period of time had to take place in Indian culture. Within forty or fifty years, the Indians changed from a relatively peaceful hunting and gathering population to efficient and troublesome horse-raiding guerrillas or as Cook (1943a:35) described them, "fast, shifty, and quite clever cavalymen."

The Indians involved in such guerrilla raids were not those actually from the environs of Monterey (the Rumsen, a Costanoan group). There is no account of any hostile activity on their part; they were fairly quickly and effectively absorbed into Mission San Carlos. The Indian raiders were those of the Central Valley or Valle de los Tulares, usually referred to by writers of the period as Tulare Indians. This term probably has no direct tribal significance, but means simply that the Indians came from the direction of the Tulare valley. They may have been Yokuts, who inhabited the whole of the San Joaquin Valley proper, except for the northern end. They may have been Plains Miwok, who inhabited the northern end of the valley, or Sierra Miwok of the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada, or they may have come from all three groups. The evidence suggests that

Miwok were at least involved in the raiding. This matter will be discussed later.

Monterey was by no means the center of these raids, which were general throughout the area that could be reached from the San Joaquin Valley, wherever Californio² *rancheros* had settled and kept horses. In fact, Monterey was on the periphery of Tulare attacks and probably never felt the maximum effects. However, even there these raids were troublesome enough to worry the Mexican authorities. Monterey was chosen as the focus of this study because, being both the capital and the principal port of the province, the record there is more complete. Most foreign voyagers to California stopped at Monterey, and many left descriptions of the port and accounts of the state of affairs there. In addition, there are the accounts of the provincial governmental authorities, and those of such residents as Thomas C. Larkin, the American consul, and others.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Sebastián Vizcaíno is generally regarded as the first European to reach the site that was to become Monterey, although it is probable that Cabrillo and Cermeño also visited it briefly in 1542 and 1595, respectively. However, despite Vizcaíno's glowing descriptions of the port and the affability of its Indians, no attempt was made to colonize Upper



Indian horseman on the plain between the San Joaquin and King's River. From Lt. R. S. Williamson's "Report of Explorations in California for Railroad Routes to Connect with the Routes Near the 35th and 32d Parallels of North Latitude" (1853). Sketch by Charles Koppel. Lithographed by A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore.

California until 1769, when an abortive expedition was sent under Gaspar de Portolá and Junipero Serra to find Monterey again and establish there a mission and a presidio. It was a full year before the efforts to relocate and colonize Monterey were successful. A mission, San Carlos Borromeo de Monterey, was founded, together with a presidio for the protection of the mission and the port. The mission was moved to the Carmel Valley the next year.

Once the mission and presidio were established and settled, the Spanish occupation of California was well and truly begun. Monterey was the capital, and for a long time the principal port. Further missions were established; they started bringing in converts, and began to grow. Families of settlers began to

move into California, though never in very large numbers. The soldiers of the presidios often married neophyte women or brought wives from Mexico, and were given grants of land. A few American settlers began to arrive, and there were also quite a large number of sailors who deserted from foreign ships and settled in the country. The economy of these settlers was based largely on cattle. Immense herds roamed almost wild over the ranges. These formed the basis of the hide and tallow trade with Boston, pioneered by the firm of Bryant and Sturgis. This trade flourished in the 1820s and 1830s and is excellently described in Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* and Robinson's *Life in California*.

Mexican independence had some repercussions even on the backwater province of

California. For the Indians, the biggest event of the Mexican period was the secularization of the missions by decree of Governor Figueroa in 1834. The Franciscans had to turn the missions over to secular priests, and their affairs were to be handled by government officials. In effect, the officials simply appropriated the missions and their extensive lands, and allowed the buildings to fall into ruin. The Indian neophytes were supposed to be freed from the tyranny of the padres, and become independent Mexican citizens. Many of them returned to their aboriginal life, some joining tribes which were still unconverted in the interior. Many, however, remained near the Californio settlements, and became personal servants to Californio families or *vaqueros* on the ranches.

In the 1840s, Americans began to show an increasing interest in California. More American settlers began to arrive. In 1842, a misunderstanding led Commodore Thomas ap Catesby-Jones, of the U. S. Navy, to raise the American flag over the Monterey Custom House and "conquer" the town. He soon realized his mistake and gave the town back. In 1846, however, the American conquest began in earnest. The country was in turmoil with the activities of Fremont and the Bear Flag Revolt at Sonoma. In 1848 California was ceded to the United States.

In the same year gold was discovered by Marshall on the American River. The Gold Rush was on, and within months thousands of immigrants arrived at the gold fields. The effect for the Indians was little short of disastrous. They had been driven farther and farther into the interior, first by the mission settlement of the coastal strip, and then by the establishment of ranchos further inland. At this point, the only secure and peaceful place where the Indians could live was the Sierras. And the Sierras were precisely where the swarms of gold-seeking immigrants converged.

They brought with them an attitude towards Indians which was fundamentally different from the Spanish one. Both may be observed throughout the histories of Anglo-American and Spanish colonization in the New World. The Spaniard tended to see the Indian as a potentially valuable vassal, worth protecting if only to be exploited and ruled over. This attitude is reflected in document after document concerning the governing of the Indians, beginning with the New Laws of 1542. The Anglo-Americans, however, had gone into the New World to get land, not people. The consistent trend in the eastern United States was one of settling as farmers and laborers rather than as rulers of conquered peoples. This involved the movement of larger numbers of people. The Indians already there were not regarded as vassals, an important exploitable resource; they were simply in the way, occupying space that the Americans wanted for themselves. Many Indians were simply killed by the Americans on any pretext or none at all. Besides sheer homicide, however, there were other more subtle effects on the Indian population which Cook (1943b:92) has discussed. He stated, "it is apparent that impact of settlement from the United States was three times as severe as that of pre-American colonization."

THE HISTORY OF CONFLICT AT MONTEREY

As the missions were established, the Spanish began to draw the nearby Indians into them, at first by peaceful means such as offering them gifts and other inducements. As easily accessible Indians became scarcer, expeditions were sent into the Central Valley to bring in more converts, frequently by force. Many Indians did not like mission life. It meant a complete disruption of every aspect of their life, from social organization to diet. The Spanish pattern of work was completely

new to them, and they had great difficulty adjusting to it.

The reaction of the dissatisfied Mission Indians, however, was not direct violence or revolt. They simply tried to run away. As Cook (1943a:31) remarked, instead of attempting to remove the disturbing part of their environment, they removed themselves from the environment. However, running away was often not a satisfactory solution. The Californios were not content to let them go. They sent expeditions after the escaped neophytes, who often took refuge with friendly tribes in the Tulares. The whites descended on the rancherias of the host tribes, and besides carrying off the escapees, often did a great deal of damage, and killed and kidnapped many other Indians as a punishment for sheltering the runaways. Not unnaturally, this did not make for good relations between the Californios and the interior tribes.

The reaction of the free Indians to this hostile treatment was more violent and positive than that of the Mission Indians. Early in the nineteenth century, they began to raid Spanish settlements and run off horses, at first to eat, and later to sell. As early as 1816, Father Payéras of Santa Barbara Mission was pleading for the establishment of an inland chain of missions to stop stock-stealing (Beattie 1930:17). However, Roquefeuil (1823), during a stay at San Francisco in 1817, made no mention of Indian raids, although he did describe Californio raids to recover neophytes. In 1818, during the Bouchard affair (a French pirate raid on Monterey), Mission Santa Cruz was evacuated. Ord (n.d.:f. 3) suggested that during this evacuation the mission was raided by Indians and others.

The 1820s are marked by a lack of documentary sources on Monterey. No important voyages stopped there during this time. By the 1830s the hide trade was well established, and provides some material. Robinson

(1891:110) reported that in 1831 two Indians were shot at Monterey presidio for cattle-stealing. He did not indicate whether these were local Indians or captured raiders.

From 1836—two years after secularization—on, the record is more complete. In that year, Ruschenberger visited Monterey from October 24 to October 30. With regard to the Indians, Ruschenberger (1838:507) stated: "They plunder the farms of the colonists of horses, which they eat in preference to beef, though horned cattle are more abundant" Belcher (1843:116), who visited Monterey from the second to the sixth of December, 1837, stated: "[The Californios are] harassed on all sides by Indians, who are now stripping them of their horses, without which their cattle are not to be preserved" And again (p. 117): "The Indians are robbed [of mission property]; they do nothing but rob when they can, run away to escape punishment, and then form themselves into gangs, and set their masters at defiance."

In 1838, José Castro reported to Alvarado, then governor, that several ranchers had been killed in Indian raids, and that an expedition would have to be sent out to punish them (Castro 1838). In 1839, Laplace (1854:290-291) reported a Scottish resident of Monterey as saying: ". . . ne sommes-nous [the foreign residents] pas les meilleurs défenseurs du pays contre les tribus des sauvages, dont sans cette protection les attaques sans cesse renouvelées depuis quelques années, auraient porté la desolation au sein des plus riches cantons!" Farnham (1850:83, 86) gave a brief and rather vague account of an attempted raid on Monterey on April 21, 1840. About 50 Indians arrived to "lay tribute upon the mules and horses of the Californians." It seems that warning of their approach was received in time for the Spanish to take defensive action. Farnham provided no real description of the action taken, beyond describing a state of general confusion

and consternation.

By this time the Mexican authorities were becoming seriously disturbed by the raids. On July 4, 1840, Alvarado drew up a document to establish a force of twenty men to patrol the area between San Jose and San Juan de Castro (San Juan Bautista). The preamble of this decree may be translated as follows (Alvarado 1840:f. 86): "The desire to prevent in some way the continuous robberies which are made in the countryside by the wild Indians and other evildoers in the 1st district of this Department, causing the ruin of the proprietors of ranches, and menacing the lives of the defenseless families, has obliged the Governor to organize a force of twenty men, to be divided into two parts, who must remain ready at the points where these evils are frequently committed . . ." This was to have been a permanent police force, on call at all times to aid the ranchers in preventing incursions of raiders. The change in policy represented by this move will be discussed later. According to Cook (1943:35) it was never put into effect.

In 1842, Simpson visited Monterey from the 15th to the 19th of January. Simpson (1847:194-196) made extensive reference to Indian raids: "... a systematic course of savage depredation . . . the constant pilferings of cattle and horses . . . under these circumstances the two races live in a state of warfare, that knows no truce. The Indian makes a regular business of stealing horses, that he may ride the tame ones and eat such as are wild."

Another attempt was made on the part of the Californios to establish defensive measures in 1843. Governor Micheltorena proposed the establishment of a fort in Pacheco Pass. It was never built (Cook 1943a:36).

Numerous accounts are available from the year 1846, owing to the American conquest. Although this is probably the reason for the large number of reports, there is some indica-

tion that it was actually a peak year for raiding. Larkin (1917:72-73) reported: "Some few farms are being vacated by the Californians from fear of further depredations of the wild Indians, who yearly steal thousands of horses even out of the enclosed yards near their dwelling houses. They are now (almost every week) committing depredations of this kind. The whites but seldom follow them to regain their property. The Indians are losing all fear of the inhabitants and with their arrows have shot several of them during the years 1845 and 1846." A correspondent (Lewis 1934:41) known only as "The Farthest West," writing from Yerba Buena (San Francisco) on June 26, 1846, reported: "The Indians are inveterate horse thieves, and during six days in May, while I was making an excursion of three hundred miles on horseback, they stole over *four hundred horses* from the farms I visited, or the immediate neighborhood, until the distressed farmers thought they would lose every horse in their 'Caballadas.'" This may refer to either the San Joaquin or the Santa Clara Valley.

Walpole (1849:213), who was in Monterey in late July, 1846, had the following to say with regard to raids: "Before the American came (and even since) the Indians frequently prowled about, and committed outrages of all sorts, stealing horses, to eat chiefly, for they say they are the best meat possible . . ." Walpole (1849:214) also makes the following statement: "In one of the side-chapels [at Carmel Mission] is a small statue of the Virgin, with three cannon-balls on her head—a votive offering from a person who was three times saved from being shot by the interposition of the Virgin in an attack on the Mission by the Indians." This is the only known reference to an attack on the mission itself, and it sounds as if some confusion is involved.

On December 14, 1846, however, a raid occurred of which there is a more trustworthy

account. "W.G.," an American resident of twenty-two years' standing, wrote on December 16, 1846: "On the 14th inst. a large body of Indians came down and swept every horse they could find in a circle of twenty-five or thirty miles, and left the farmers without a single horse to hunt up their working cattle" (W.G. 1924:204). This raid will be discussed in more detail later.

In 1847, the military situation in California had settled down somewhat. Wiss, who was in California from January to October of that year, and who made several visits to Monterey in that time, made no mention whatsoever of Indian raids. However, they probably did not stop so abruptly. In May, 1851, Hutton (1942:60-62) gave a detailed account of a raid on Rancho Santa Manuela in San Luis Obispo County. This is outside the Monterey area, but it serves to indicate that raids still happened even three years after California was ceded to the United States.

This history of raiding may be summed up as follows. During the earliest period of Spanish settlement and the establishment of the missions, the Californios were not troubled by raids from interior tribes. Before 1820, however, such raids were beginning to occur. The events of the 1820s remain unknown. In the 1830s they were becoming a serious problem, so much so that by the early 1840s defensive measures were being considered by the Spanish. A peak seems to have been reached in 1846, when the Americans were struggling for power in California; after that there was a decline. The Americans did not, however, succeed in stopping the raids immediately.

It is perhaps no coincidence that the conflicts between the Indians and the Californios and the Americans and the Californios reached a peak at approximately the same time. W.G. (1924:198) suggested that the distracted attention of both American and Mexican authorities made raiding easier. Lar-

kin (Lewis 1934:9) believed that the existence of the raids might facilitate American conquest: "The deplorable state they [the Californios] are now in, arising from the robbery of their horses, and so forth, will hasten the result [American conquest]. They are convinced that a proper administration of affairs would put down the Indians, and there are sufficient Californians to drive them out, but the energetic aid of government is required, which they cannot obtain from the Mexican authorities."

According to "The Farthest West," it was even believed that the Indians were taking an active part in the American-Californio conflict. This correspondent remarked:

... lately the topic has become current that Castro had excited the Indians against the foreigners generally, and made promises of valuable presents if they would burn the crops and destroy the people. In consequence of this belief, they [the foreigners] have attacked the Indians three times in the valley [San Joaquin?], and killed nearly two hundred in the three fights. And now they assert that the Indians confess that they agreed to do this, and were to be rewarded for it. The Indians are inveterate horse stealers ... [Lewis 1934:41].

The tone of this correspondent, however, is distinctly skeptical.

The 1840 raid reported by Farnham (1850:83, 86) took place when the Californians, worried about the intentions of certain Americans in Monterey, had incarcerated some of them. Farnham suggested that if the Indians who came down to raid had known of the plight of the Americans, they might have been interested in the matter, but that sounds like one of his frequent exaggerations.

To sum up this point, it seems possible that the confused state of military affairs in California in 1846 made it easier for the Indians to raid Californio settlements, and that they took advantage of the opportunity.

The damage done to the Californios by Indian raiding may have facilitated the American conquest to some extent. At one point the Americans believed that the Indians had actually been induced to take an active part in the conflict on the Californio side, and punished the Indians for it. However, it seems unlikely that such actions ever took place. Farnham's attitude suggests that not all Americans believed it, and it does not seem very probable that the Indians would take the part of those with whom they had been in a state of active hostility for at least thirty years.

THE PATTERN OF CONFLICT

Although there are many general references to raiding in the literature of the period, the number of descriptions of specific raids is very limited. The best yet located is Hutton's (1942:60-62) lively account of the 1851 raid in San Luis Obispo County. Although this raid took place outside the Monterey area, and the date is later than most, it is probably fairly representative.

The main facts of this narrative may be summarized as follows. At a date probably in the first half of May, 1851, at least five Indians came down at night on Rancho Santa Manuela, and removed about fifty horses from a corral at some distance from the house, where it was not customary to leave them overnight. Although Hutton does not suggest it, the complicity of one or several of the *vaqueros*, who may well have been Indians, might be suspected. It seems like a rather odd coincidence that the horses should have been left so conveniently on the very night when the Indians made their raid. They drove the horses by an indirect route—at least, not the shortest—over towards the San Joaquin Valley. Shortly after leaving the ranch, they left a "medicine," a plume of crow feathers, in the road to give bad luck to their pursuers. At one point they scattered the

horses to confuse the trail. They were pursued by nine white men, recruited from Santa Manuela and neighboring ranches, who were well armed and mounted on horses that had not been left in the corral and thus had not been taken. They caught up with the Indians on the morning of the second day after the raid. The Indians by this time thought they were safe from pursuit, and were unprepared for the attack, their bows unstrung, and some on foot. A white man fired a shot at them, which hit no one but came close. This was their first warning that they were pursued. They made no attempt to fight. Those on foot hid in the bushes; the five Indians who were mounted started to flee. Two of these were driven into the brush, while the other three escaped. This apparently satisfied the whites for the time, and two of them returned to see that the Indians who had hidden did not escape with the horses. Apparently they made no attempt to do so. The three horses of those who had escaped were missing, plus four others. No more mention is made of the Indians who hid in the brush; they may account for the missing horses. Three colts had been killed and eaten. Hutton says the whites believed the horses had been stolen for sale to travellers rather than for food.

The horses regained, the white party returned to their previous camp for the night, keeping a strict watch over the horses. The next day seven of them—i.e., all but Hutton and one other—were still angry enough to want to go to punish the Indians at their rancheria. Hutton decided that he "had nothing to do with killing wild Indians in Tulares," and so helped take the horses back to the ranch; retaking the horses was right, he felt, but further punishment was none of his affair. The majority of the party followed the trail into the valley until they lost it, probably somewhere near Goose Lake. They then returned. Apparently they were after the real raiders, and not simply planning to mete out

punishment indiscriminately to any Indian who came their way. There is no mention of their attacking any Indian village whatsoever.

The next best account of a specific raid is the 1846 raid mentioned above. This is described by W.G. (1924:204). On December 14, 1846, "a large body of Indians came down and swept every horse they could find in a circle of twenty-five or thirty miles . . .," leaving the farmers without horses either to work their cattle-ranges or to chase the Indians. Most of these were taken from the ranch of Francisco Pacheco, who had thirteen or fourteen thousand head of cattle. It was believed that the culprits were Indians who had lived in Monterey for years, and who had taken off for the Tulares; in hopes of a better reception there, they took the horses with them, which had the additional advantage of providing transportation for the refugees. Their departure was attributed to unaccustomed restrictions due to near-martial law in Monterey on account of the Mexican conflict with the Americans. The Indians were blamed because some of them were seen on Pacheco's ranch. As a result of this raid, it was feared that the Indians would start raiding in larger numbers, and would start stealing cattle, as had often been threatened. The reason they had not done so before was that cattle travel slowly, and could easily be overtaken by horsemen. Now that all the available horses had been stolen, this would no longer be a problem.

This account has a number of interesting aspects. First, it was believed that the thieves were local Indians, and not raiders from the wilds. If this raid was really so efficiently executed, it indicates a detailed knowledge of the locale. It is suggested that the free Indians were, or had become, none too hospitable to runaways. Given the trouble they had received from the Californios for sheltering runaways, such an attitude would be reasonable. They wanted no dealings with helpless

refugees; this group set out to show that they were by no means helpless.

The explanation given for the fact that previous raids had taken only horses is interesting. Other, more general accounts say that the Indians preferred horseflesh to beef. While horseflesh is excellent meat, cattle were more abundant, and it is not easy to see why they were so consistently and completely ignored by the Indians. W.G.'s explanation may be right.

A third specifically-described raid took place April 21, 1840. Farnham (1850:83, 86) stated that on that day news of a band of about fifty Indians about to attack was brought to Monterey by a half-breed horseman, who first spoke briefly with the prison guard, then went to see the Governor (Alvarado), and then Castro, who went in his turn to see Alvarado, while the horseman hurried to the "Castello" (the presidio? or barracks?). Alvarado came out on the balcony, and ordered the drums to beat to arms. The result was violent activity, and it appears as if the people of Monterey were badly frightened. Farnham thought such raids were due to mistreatment of Indian and white fur-traders, but stated that they came down to "lay tribute upon the mules and horses of the Californians." He seemed to think the Indians involved were Plains Indians from the eastern side of the Rockies—about a thousand miles to the east of Monterey! Farnham's accounts tend to be melodramatized and probably exaggerated. What can probably be relied on is the following: Warning of a possible Indian attack was received in Monterey on April 21, 1840, and this news gave rise to considerable concern and activity. The number of Indians involved may be exaggerated, since it is out of line with other reports.

One further fairly well-defined account of raiding remains, contained in Castro's letter to Alvarado, dated September 26, 1838, at Monterey (Castro 1838). Only a summary of this

letter is available, in the notes on the California archives made by Bancroft's workers, now located in the Bancroft Library. It may be translated as follows: "That everything is quiet; only some Indians have committed thefts and have killed some ranchers; that an expedition will have to be sent to punish them" These events probably took place within a few weeks of writing the letter, since it is a report on the immediate state of affairs in Monterey. Probably, therefore, there was at least one raid somewhere close to Monterey in about September, 1838, in the course of which several ranchers were killed. Apparently no very strong retaliation was made, but it was contemplated.

In view of these accounts, what was the general pattern of Indian raiding? I cannot describe this better than did W.G. (1924:194-198) in 1846:

December 9, 1846.—This country has for a long time been distracted by excursions of the wild Indians from the mountains, commonly called *Tularenos* [sic], and even yet, although this part of the country is under the government of the United States of America, and they are well aware from what they have formerly experienced from American trappers, that such depredations will meet with the most vigorous punishment, they occasionally pay a visit, taking off with them any stray horses or mares that have been left by either of the parties now at war [the Americans and the Spanish].

He goes on to say that a farm-dwelling Indian, who knew the grazing-grounds of the horses of a well-supplied rancher, would go and tell a friendly tribe in the Tulares this fact, first stipulating what his share of the loot was to be. He would then supply information on the numbers, risks, road of entry and return. The tribe then made grass ropes, moccasins, and bows and arrows, to have them ready before the full moon, plus two quarts of meal per man. The chief then

chose eight or nine out of many volunteers. Their informant led the party. They reached the ranch a day ahead of time to reconnoiter. They crept up on the house after its inhabitants were asleep, and posted one or two sentries by each door to keep them in; they were known to have killed several people who had tried to get out. The rest went to the corral, quietly let down the bars of the gate, and stood, kneeled, or lay down ten or fifteen paces away on the opposite side of the gate from that on which they planned to drive the horses. The horses soon walked out. The Indians then drove them slowly to about half a mile from the house, where the sentries rejoined the party. All bows were strung. Half the party had arrows ready for defense; the other half had arrows with cross-sticks tied onto the point or half an inch below it, to shoot at straying horses to bring them back into the herd. One such punishment was usually enough.

When they were well clear of the house, they drove the horses into a deep ravine, where the best lasoer caught some to ride while the rest of the party kept the herd surrounded. Lacking a ravine, this was done under a tree branch by dropping the lasso around the horses' neck. As soon as all were mounted, they set off at a full gallop until daybreak, taking the worst and most devious course to deceive their pursuers. If all was safe at daybreak, the horses were driven into a hiding-place, and the party breakfasted and let the horses breathe. A fat colt or preferably a mule was slaughtered for breakfast. If it seemed safe, the party would stay all day, preferring to travel at night. If they were not overtaken on the second night, they were usually safe.

If the rancher had left his horses loose at night, he usually had some left after the raid, due to the difficulty of rounding them all up. If they were left in the corral, the Indians could get them easily, but the rancher knew

immediately that they were gone, and could get on the trail at once; if he did so, five out of six times he would recover his horses.

If the Indians knew they were pursued, they drove as fast as possible to a thick wood or a bad pass. One or two of them went ahead with the horses as rapidly as possible. The rest dismounted and waited in ambush for the whites. If these were few, the Indians fought it out, or simply shot at the first horseman from ambush; he would then often decide that he would rather lose his horses than risk his neck. The Indian party would then re-gather at a prearranged spot, and continue. When they reached the village, they traded the horses to a trapping company for blankets or cloth, or slaughtered them, keeping only the fleetest to hunt elk.

This general description agrees well with the known facts of specific raids, and gives more detail of events on the Indian side. As to immediate white reactions, contemporary observers (admittedly biased) report differences between Spanish and American. According to "The Farthest West" (Lewis 1934:71-72): "The foreigners invariably pursue the Indians and retake their horses, but the lethargic Californian reports 'los malditos Indios' to Alcalde, and the Priest, if there is one near, and quietly submits to his loss." Larkin adds: "... there are sufficient Californians to drive them [the Indians] out, but the energetic aid of government is required, which they cannot obtain from the Mexican authorities" (Lewis 1934:9).

Simpson's remarks (1847:194-196) are more extensive:

But the Indians of all descriptions are, from day to day, rendered more audacious by impunity. Too indolent to be always on the alert, the Californians overlook the constant pilferings of cattle and horses, till they are roused beyond the measure even of their patience by some outrage of more than ordinary mark; and then, instead of hunting

down the guilty for exemplary punishment, they destroy every native that falls in their way, without distinctions of sex or age. The blood-hounds, of course, find chiefly women and children, for in general, the men are better able to escape, butchering their helpless and inoffensive victims after the blasphemous mockery of baptism . . . I subjoin a more detailed description, on the authority of an eyewitness. When the incursions of the savages have appeared to render a crusade necessary, the alcalde of the neighbourhood summons from twelve to twenty colonists to serve, either in person or by substitute, on horseback; and one of the foreign residents, when nominated about three years before, preferred the alternative of joining the party himself, in order to see something of the interior. After a ride of three days they reached a village, whose inhabitants, for all that the crusaders knew to the contrary, might have been as innocent in the matter as themselves. But, even without any consciousness of guilt, the tramp of the horses was symptom not to be misunderstood by the savages: and accordingly all that could run, comprising, of course, all that could possibly be criminal, fled for their lives. Of those who remained, nine persons, all females, were tied to trees, christened, and shot. With great difficulty and considerable danger, my informant saved one old woman by conducting her a short distance from the accursed scene; and even there he had to shield the creature's miserable life by drawing a pistol against one of her merciless pursuers. She ultimately escaped, but not without seeing a near relative, a handsome youth who had been captured, slaughtered in cold blood before her eyes, with the outward and visible sign of regeneration still glistening on his brow . . . under these circumstances the two races live in a state of warfare, that knows no truce. The Indian makes a regular business of stealing horses . . . In his turn, the Californian treats the savage, wherever he finds him, very much like a beast of prey, shooting him down, even in the absence of any specific charge, as a common pest and a public enemy . . .

W.G. (1924:198) said that the Californios

killed many Indians, raiders as well as non-raiders, which infuriated the Indians, and moved them to further raids. They had begun coming in parties of one or two hundred. These statements of not unprejudiced foreigners can be supplemented by the remark of a Californio, Castro (1838), who, reporting on the Indian raids of that year, said: "an expedition will have to be sent to punish them."

These statements suggest that the characteristic Californio reaction was to do nothing about any particular raid, but to wait until conditions had become nearly intolerable, and then send a punitive expedition into the Tulares, which did not necessarily punish the raiders, but simply any Indians they could lay their hands on. This would be a continuation of their reported behavior towards escaped neophytes. The Americans, on the other hand, felt that a "crime" committed by a despised Indian called for immediate retribution. If Hutton's (1942:60-62) narrative (see above) is representative, however, the Americans were generally after the real "culprits."

One general point of some importance is that the Indians themselves do not seem to have been out to inflict direct physical violence on the persons of the whites; they were simply after horses. They were prepared for violence if the Californios put up any resistance, but only in this case. Bloodshed seems to have resulted rather from Californian and American retaliation, and it was Indian blood rather than white. It will be remembered that Hutton's party was well armed, and that the seven who went on after the horses were recovered were out to kill.

Who were the Indians who were making these attacks? The accounts call them Tulares or Tulareños, or "wild Indians from the Tulares." The Indians who inhabited most of the Tulare or San Joaquin Valley were the Yokuts, and the term "Tulare" is usually taken to refer to them. However, the name

Tulares needs not be taken so literally, at least in this context; it probably means only that the raiding Indians came *from the direction* of the Tulare Valley. A robbed rancher was hardly likely to take precise observation of what tribes his attackers belonged to even in the unlikely event that he could tell a Miwok from a Yokuts at a glance. The raiders might have come from the Valley, or from farther or nearer, but from that general direction. The nearer Indians, in the Coast Range, had almost all been brought into the missions, and there were very few of them left. Those that remained lived around the Spanish settlements working for the Spanish, and from all accounts they were rather badly demoralized. On the other side of the Valley, however, were the Sierra Miwok, and the Plains Miwok in the northern end of the Valley. The Miwok were far from demoralized; in fact, they gave the Californios a great deal of trouble under their brilliant leader Estanislao (Cook 1943a: 33). Moreover, Bidwell (1948:47-48), describing an encounter just before his emigrant party entered the San Joaquin Valley from the Sierras, reported: "Afterwards we found that these Indians were always at war with the Californians. They were known as the Horse Thief Indians, and lived chiefly on horseflesh; they had been in the habit of raiding the ranches even to the very coast, driving away horses by the hundreds into the mountains to eat." Bidwell's party lost a number of horses to these Indians, and when Bidwell first encountered them, they were slaughtering some horses that the emigrants had had to leave behind owing to difficult terrain.

This suggests that the Sierra Miwok were at least involved in the raiding, and may have been the principal raiders. There is no reason to suppose, however, that the Yokuts never took part. The Miwok would have to cross their territory to get to the Californio settlements, which presupposes a friendly relationship, and at least no disapproval of the

raiding. The Yokuts received the brunt of white retaliation.

CONCLUSIONS

The first contacts made between the Spanish and the Indians of Central California were, on the whole, peaceful and friendly. However, after some forty or forty-five years, a pattern of almost continual conflict developed. The Indians stole horses from the Californios; they, and later the Americans, retaliated with bloody raids on Indian settlements. Why did relationships change?

One factor in the change was undoubtedly the Californio reaction to neophyte runaways. It is hardly unnatural that the free Indians should have become hostile to the Californios in the face of such treatment. Cook (1943a: 32) described the Indian reaction as "a common response to a uniform style of treatment."

Another factor is an ecological-economic one: the introduction of the horse. Horses were very common throughout the Spanish area. Almost every writer of the period comments on the fact that a Californian rarely walked, he always rode, and that excellent horses, beautiful, swift animals of Arab descent from Andalusia, were cheap and plentiful. By the early 1800s, large herds of these animals were roaming wild in the Central Valley, along with the immense herds of elk that were already there. To the Indian, they were simply an added food resource, an excellent new kind of wild game. He also learned to ride them, which meant swifter mobility, which helped in hunting the elk. It also helped when he began to seek his horseflesh farther afield, on Californio ranches. And there he could obtain horses already trained for riding. Economic motives were therefore added to psychological ones, and the stage was set for the development of a pattern of hostility.

What is particularly interesting is the form that Indian hostility took. There was not much of a tradition of warfare or of inter-group hostility with personal violence in the pre-contact California Indian culture, as there was in the Plains, or, nearer home, among the Colorado River tribes. In such areas, hostility to whites developed quickly, with much personal violence—homes of settlers were attacked, priests were killed in mission uprisings. Not so in Central California. There, conflict took the form mainly of alienation of property—stealing horses. The Indians found that with suitable tactics this was fairly easy to do, and that it was exceedingly annoying to the Californios. The more Indians found this out, the more they attacked. But they resorted to physical violence only when there was active resistance. It was a guerrilla campaign of mainly economic and nuisance value, not an attempt to exterminate the enemy. As such, it came close to achieving a degree of success that such campaigns can rarely attain.

In the early 1840s a drastic change in Californio policy was being contemplated, represented by Alvarado's plan for a permanent police force and Micheltorena's plan for a fort in Pacheco Pass. These were essentially defensive measures, and stand in sharp contrast to the offensive, retaliational measures previously in use. They were to keep the Indians out, not to punish them. Other, non-official writers suggested similar measures. Simpson (1847:196), who visited Monterey in 1842, reported that "... a band of fifty resolute horsemen . . . *would hold at bay* all the savages, with their wretched bows and arrows, between Sonoma and San Diego . . ." (italics mine). W.G. (1924:198) said that but for the insurrection in Los Angeles drawing the attention of the Governor General and Fremont, the raids would have been stopped by "eighty riflemen set aside to *quell the invasion*" (italics mine). The implication is that further Californio expansion had

stopped; it was becoming difficult to hold onto what they already had. It took the different colonial approach of the Americans to add to white holdings in California.

Another Californio approach had been suggested earlier. This was the favorite Spanish frontier technique of "reducing" the Indians by missionization. Father Payéras of Mission Santa Barbara as early as 1816 began to plead for the establishment of a second chain of missions, to be placed in the Central Valley (Beattie 1930:17). Such pleas continued for many years. Father Payéras seems to have been the main proponent, but others joined him in constant requests for missionaries, money from the Pious Fund, and soldiers for presidios to defend the proposed missions. The already existing *asistencias* of San Antonio de Pala, Santa Isabel, and San Bernardino were to be converted into missions as part of this proposed chain. Concern for the spiritual welfare of the natives aside, these missions were specifically the missionaries' answer to the raiding problem. If they had been established, they might well have been successful, if only by reducing the number of Indians through the usual high mission death rate. However, the necessary help never came, and the missions were fortunately never established.

The ultimate answer to the conflict was American settlement. W.G. foresaw this: he hoped that the raids would be stopped by getting the Indians to work for the Americans and "forgetting their misery." Then, after the successful raid of December 14, 1846, he stated, "I am sorry to be of the opinion that nothing but the extermination of many of the Indian tribes will ever prevent these outrages . . . the Tulare valley will be the first place for settling, and these impunitous outrages will come to an end in a few months . . ." (W.G. 1924:197, 234, 235). The American solution was the establishment of a permanent, settled farming population in the

valley itself. This had worked effectively in other places; the farmers seeing the Indians only as competitors for land, simply got rid of them. It was quite different from the characteristic Spanish method of missionizing the Indians and converting them into servants, if high death rates did not eliminate them.

The example of conflict discussed here has been "explained" by correlating it with a series of fairly simple historic phenomena: the Spanish treatment of the Indians, the introduction of a new element into the faunal ecology of the Valley, with a consequent economic change, and an Indian discovery of the possibilities of particular hostile behavior. The ultimate quelling of hostilities has been related to divergent colonial policies. It is debatable whether these particular explanations are of any broader significance, since they refer to a specific and unique coexistence of events. There are, however, some interesting comparisons that might be made.

There is probably a noteworthy difference between the response of the free Indians and those in the missions to the Spanish invasion. The free Indians developed an active, hostile response; the Mission Indians became apathetic, died, or ran away. They hardly ever revolted. They also declined more rapidly in numbers. Cook (1943a:35) felt that this difference was due to the Mission Indians being protected and the free Indians not, thus being forced to make their own adjustment to a changed situation, and finding a more viable one. Furthermore, the Mission Indians were subjected to far more radical cultural changes than the free Indians, and seem to have been unable to adapt to them. The rapid and effective adaptation of the free Indians to a far less radically changed situation is remarkable enough, and speaks well for their perceptiveness and courage for change. Cook (1943a:35) described it as "an adaptation to new conditions of the first order of magnitude."

The few occasions when Mission Indians did revolt in California are interesting. There was a violent revolt at San Diego mission in 1775; Father Jayme was killed, and the mission was temporarily abandoned. There was a threat of further trouble there in August 1777, and one soldier was killed. In July, 1781, the Yuma Indians attacked mission establishments on the Colorado River, which were wiped out and never reestablished. These are the only known instances of conflict in the early mission period. Revolts also occurred in 1824 at Santa Barbara, Santa Ynez, and La Purísima as a result of a kind of messianic movement.

The Yuma and the Mohave were the only California tribes with a well-developed war complex. The Diegueño were their linguistic relatives, and shared some of their traits. Here then appears to lie the decisive difference: a cultural one. The Santa Barbara revolt is much later, and I am unwilling to hypothesize on the effects of messianic movements.

Since one of the factors in the development of conflict in Central California appears to have been the introduction of the horse, another possibility for comparison presents itself. In the Plains area, the introduction of the horse brought cultural changes. First, it made for greater mobility. It meant that the possible hunting range could be larger, and this increased wealth. The use of the horse instead of the dog with the travois meant that more goods could be transported, and hence that more goods could be owned, and, incidentally, that the tepee could be larger—which the larger number of buffalo hides available from the increased hunting range had also made possible. Then horses themselves became a form of wealth, one which had the advantage of being self-perpetuating and self-increasing. However, they could be stolen, and among some groups stealing one's enemies' horses became a war honor. The greater ease of hunting on horseback probably

made more leisure available, which meant more time to fight. Horses undoubtedly changed the character of warfare to some extent, just as cavalry warfare is different from infantry warfare anywhere. These effects of the advent of the horse on Plains warfare may be summed up thus: an added motive, increased leisure, and changes in form. They are changes within a system already present.

In the case of California, the advent of the horse, with other factors, led to the development of a raiding complex where there does not seem to have been one before. However, the raids were not made with the specific intent of killing the Californios, or simply for the sake of fighting, or because fighting brought honor. Actual fighting appears, rather, to have been avoided if possible. The immediate, and probably the sole conscious reason for making raids was to get horses to eat, and later to sell just as wild animal hides were sold to trappers. The raiding complex in California can therefore be seen as an extension of the already-present hunting complex. Again, the changes were within an existing system. On the surface, then, there seems to be some similarity between the effect of the horse on the Plains and on California, but on deeper analysis, the similarity disappears. Deeper still, a new similarity turns up: people tend to keep on behaving the way they have always behaved, and when they change, they change in ways consistent with their old behavior.

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NOTES

1. This paper was written in 1953 as a seminar report for Sociology 210B, Historical Sociology, taught by Professor Kenneth Bock at the University of California, Berkeley. It has been revised only for purposes of stylistic improvement. It seemed to me that although

this paper was written so long ago, it is still of sufficient interest to present here, albeit with apologies for gaps due to materials published since it was written.

2. *Californio* means a Spanish-speaking inhabitant of California before it was ceded to the United States. This is what they called themselves, and it has the advantage of being applicable under both Spanish and Mexican rule.

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