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Coastal Frontiers: The Littoral Borderland in Alta California and the Spanish Pacific World

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COASTAL FRONTIERS: THE LITTORAL BORDERLAND IN ALTA CALIFORNIA AND
THE SPANISH PACIFIC WORLD

CHANTRA VANNA POTTS

Doctoral Program in History

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2023

Dedication

To my beloved partner, dearest family, and the cherished friends whom I met along the way.

COASTAL FRONTIERS: THE LITTORAL BORDERLAND IN ALTA CALIFORNIA AND
THE SPANISH PACIFIC WORLD

by

CHANTRA VANNA POTTS, M.A., B.A.

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

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of the Requirements

for the Degree of

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the intricate relationship between Spanish exploration, the economy of the Pacific World, and their impact on colonization in Alta California during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It offers a new perspective on the history of the region by situating it within the context of the Eastern Pacific Basin and littoral borderlands, highlighting the transregional and global processes that shaped social and economic exchanges among Spanish colonists, Indigenous people, European and Anglo-American merchants, and diverse groups of sailors on the northern frontier of New Spain. Using the theoretical framework of mental mapping, or the subjective mental representation of the world, this study shows how interactions with the Pacific Ocean and its maritime world allowed diverse people in Alta California to create a new segment of the Spanish Pacific, which I call the *California-Pacific littoral*. Alta California was reimagined as an integral part of the Pacific Ocean through these relationships. This convergence of various groups provided a fertile ground for the emergence of new spatial definitions that shaped Alta California's place within the broader Pacific World. This dissertation challenges the conventional use of internally and externally fixed boundaries, such as those imposed by states to separate provinces or those between imperial states, as units of historical analysis. It argues that spaces and territoriality were not rigid but continually created and reimagined through social interaction and material processes.

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Introduction: The California-Pacific Littoral and the Spanish Pacific Ocean

The poor people stow'd in the cabins of the galleon bound toward the Land of Promise of New Spain, endure no less hardship than the children of Israel did when they went from Egypt towards Palestine. There is hunger, thirst, sickness, cold, continual watching, and other sufferings; besides the terrible shocks from side to side, caus'd by the furious beating of the waves.¹

The excerpt from the diary of Giovanni Gemelli Careri (1651-1725), an Italian traveler writing in 1699, describes the hardships sailors and passengers faced while aboard the Manila galleons, crossing the Pacific Ocean between the Philippines and Acapulco. He continues to discuss the universal raging itch experienced by all passengers caused by vermin known as “gorgojos,” or weevils, bred out from the hardtack biscuit, the staple food for extended sea voyages of the time. The unsanitary conditions of nearly six months on the open sea produced clouds of gnats and flies, infesting sailors’ and passengers’ cabins, beds, dishes, and food. Live animals and excrement promoted the growth of pests and especially disease-carrying rats. According to Careri, the abundance of flies and other insects fell into the dishes of broth. These ordinary meals contained so many larvae that they swam to the top. The conditions were so grueling that he ended the account by stating that no amount of riches would ever possess him to undertake another Pacific crossing. Despite the Pacific voyage’s considerable hardships, the Manila galleon route was nearly one-hundred-fifty years old at the time of Careri’s trip. And the traffic would last for another one-hundred and twenty years. The two-thousand-ton vessels annually carried silver extracted from mines in Mexico to the Philippines. They returned with bountiful riches in the forms of silk, porcelain, ivory, perfumes, cotton fabrics, exotic seeds, and

¹ Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri, *A Voyage to the Philippines* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1963), 155.

many other items from India, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Malacca, Borneo, and several other Asian ports. The cost in human life on Pacific voyages was enormous, with nearly a fifty-four percent mortality rate across the entire period between 1565 and 1821.² Deaths were most pronounced in the first century of the galleon's operation and gradually declined by the eighteenth century. Approximately one-third of the crews were Spain- or Mexico-born sailors levied from New Spain, while roughly two-thirds were Indigenous people (*Indios Luzones*) conscripted from the Philippines and the Marianas. Crewmembers also included deportees, convicts, and vagrants impressed from across Spain's colonies. Officers and sailors received a salary paid-in-full upon their return to Manila to ensure they did not abandon duty in Acapulco. Each crewmember also earned a cargo allotment for personal belongings, which most smuggled merchandise to sell in New Spain for one-hundred to three-hundred percent profit.³ If sailors died on the long voyages, their next of kin collected a pension and shares in the Manila galleon trade, most often an allotment of cargo space.⁴ Encouraged by the promise of riches, sailors annually enlisted to serve aboard the naos. For over two hundred and fifty years, the ships were the sole line connecting the Mariana Islands and those of the Philippines to New Spain and, by extension, metropolitan Spain.

² Scholarship sometimes places the Manila galleons ending in 1815 when the 1811 galleon departed for Manila after a four-year delay. Official suspension of the galleons occurred in 1814, and subsequently, free trade between New Spain and the Philippines on private vessels replaced it. However, the crown sponsored one more galleon voyage in 1820, seized by Mexican revolutionaries in 1821.

³ Stephanie Mawson, "Convicts or Conquistadores?: Spanish Soldiers in the Seventeenth-Century Pacific," *Past & Present* 232, 1 (August 2016), 87-125; Cameron La Follette and Douglas Deur, "Views Across the Pacific: the Galleon Trade and Its Traces in Oregon," *Oregon Historical Society Quarterly* 119, 2 (2018), 160-191.

⁴ Jacinto Sánchez Tirado to King, January 29, 1802, MSS 91/111 z, Box 6, Item 55, Philippine Commerce and the Manila Galleon Collection, 1769-1830, Bancroft Library [BANC], Berkeley, California.

Careri's account exposed European readers to the miseries faced by sailors and passengers crossing the Pacific Ocean in the eighteenth century. As he disembarked the ship in Acapulco after six months at sea, the Crown had already instigated plans for colonizing the southern peninsula of the Californias, which was to become Baja California in the late-eighteenth century.⁵ Jesuit missionaries and an entourage of frontier soldiers and mariners had arrived on the peninsula in 1697, commencing the construction of a chain of missions and presidios extending from Cabo San Lucas, on the southern tip of Baja California, to San Francisco Bay in Alta California. Although colonization began with the Jesuits, their expulsion in 1767 opened the door for the Dominicans to take over in Baja California in 1769 and the Franciscans in Alta California, in the same year.⁶ This dissertation examines how Pacific Ocean exploration and the economy of the Pacific World influenced colonization in the Californias in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century through involvement in the Manila galleons, commerce with San Blas, the maritime fur trade, and exchanges with the Indigenous borderlands. More specifically, it reframes the history of Alta California as a littoral borderland by positioning the region within the Pacific Ocean to better understand how transregional and global processes shaped social and economic relations internally and externally on the frontier.

Colonization in the Californias served three purposes: it incorporated local populations into the Spanish empire in order to consolidate imperial control on the frontier, it defended the

⁵ Baja California and Alta California were officially split administratively in 1804 in regards to the presidio system. From 1769 to 1804, a single governor-general ruled the province from Loreto and later Monterey. After 1804, each had a governor-general ruling in Loreto in Baja and Monterey in Alta. Additionally, documents typically refer to the respective provinces as Old and New California, denoting Dominicans' separation in the south and Franciscans in the north. The terms Baja and Alta did not emerge until the Mexican republican era, but most scholars tend to prefer these labels.

⁶ The Franciscans were the first to take charge of the Baja California missions after the Jesuit expulsion. They agreed to relinquish them to the Dominicans in 1772 to focus on missions in Alta California.

region from imperial rivals by creating a sustainable population of Spanish subjects, and it laid the foundation for a refreshing station for the Manila galleons and Spanish ships. I attempt to answer three critical questions about the relationship of the Californias to the Spanish Pacific: How did the Manila galleon and commerce with the Pacific Ocean influence Alta California's colonization? How was Alta California situated within cultural and economic exchanges in the Spanish Pacific? And, finally, what role does maritime history play within frontier societies like colonial Alta California? The dissertation argues that the Spanish Pacific played a prominent role, commonly overlooked, in the history of the Californias, particularly concerning colonization and cultural and economic exchanges. A different perspective emerges when shifting attention away from colonial encounters on land toward Alta California's shores and

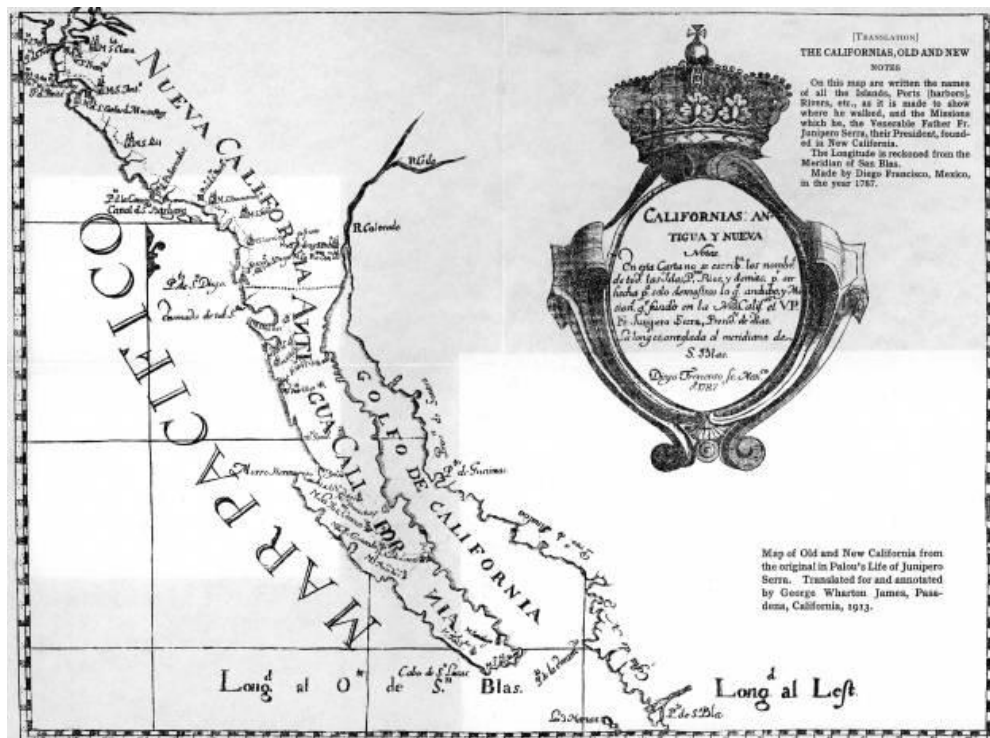


Figure 0.1. Diego Francisco, *Californias: Antiguas y Nueva*, 1787. From Francisco Palou, *Life and Apostolic Labors of the Venerable Father Junipero Serra, Founder of the Franciscan Missions of California*, translated by C. Scott Williams (Pasadena: George Wharton James, 1913).

waterscape. Viewing Alta California's history through the lens of maritime history thus allows us to see better how colonization transformed the Spanish Pacific and allowed coastal people to imagine Alta California as intimately bound within the Pacific through maritime commerce.

Spain's involvement in the Pacific Ocean is broad and multilayered. Historian Rainer F. Buschmann has aptly labeled Spain's cultural and political influence in the Philippines, the Mariana Islands, and Guam as "archipelagic Hispanization," recognizing Spain's partial and incomplete cultural integration of the Pacific Ocean into the Spanish empire. Though Spaniards managed to convert most island inhabitants to Iberian Catholicism, populations maintained much of their Indigenous culture and languages. According to Buschmann, the competing influences of local Malay polities and Spanish communities were the most significant reason for the Philippines' limited acculturation to Spanish culture. As a result, cultural assimilation ranged from brutal oppression to compromise and negotiation with Indigenous elites.⁷ What emerges from this context are various Spanish Pacific Worlds. The present dissertation seeks to disentangle one of these worlds, the *California-Pacific littoral*, and elucidate Alta California's complex connections to disparate regions linked by maritime routes. The Pacific Ocean was not a geographic barrier between distant coasts but the facilitator of interaction and exchange, which connected diverse people through cultural, economic, and political systems. The dissertation attempts to show how oceans and other water bodies became relevant historical places where various people lived, formed relationships, reaffirmed bonds, and engaged in personal and political contests. The goal is to reinterpret the colonial history of the Californias' missions and

⁷ Rainer F. Buschmann, Edward R. Slack Jr., and James B. Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake: The Pacific in the Iberian World, 1521-1898* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 13.

presidios with the Pacific in mind and assess how the Spanish Pacific took shape on the western coast of New Spain. By centering my analysis on Alta California, I show how Native and Spanish peoples and material goods circulated, giving coherence and consistency to the California-Pacific littoral. It shaped the lives of populations in the Californias while allowing them to re-envision a region unbounded by geographic borders. Alta California did not end at the coastline as sailors, soldiers, Indigenous peoples, material goods, and others filtered into and out of the region.

Research on the relationship between the Spanish Pacific and the Californias has received little attention from scholars. On the one hand, the literature on the Spanish Pacific tends to be dominated by scholarship on the economic history of the Manila-Acapulco trade. The Manila galleons, and to a lesser extent, exploration vessels, were the primary modus for Spain and New Spain's engagement with the Pacific Ocean. Trading silver mined in Mexico for Asian luxury goods in the Philippines was integral in shaping the cultural habits and commercial sensibilities of creole elites and popular classes in central Mexico. For instance, Chinese silk clothing was commonly consumed among broad sectors of society, popular drinks like chocolate was drunk in porcelain cups, and the Japanese folding screens, *biombo* (*byobu*), were highly sought-after luxury goods among elites. The popularity of Asian goods encouraged replications like Mexican *chocolateros*, used to store cacao beans, modeled on Chinese *guan* or Talavera, and Majolica pottery with designs inspired by Chinese porcelains or *chinescas* (*Chinoiserie*).⁸ However, historians' narrow focus on the economics of the galleon trade and its impacts in central Mexico

⁸ See, Mariano Bonialian, *China en la América colonial: Bienes, mercados, comercio y cultura del consume desde México hasta Buenos Aires* (Mexico City: Editorial Biblios, 2014); See, also, Meha Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico: The Material Worlds of an Early Modern Trade* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

tends to overlook the role the northern frontier played in the consumption and distribution of Asian goods in New Spain.

Furthermore, the Californias have been seen as negligible within the Philippine-New Spanish commerce because of the region's geographic distance from central Mexico and its late colonization in the eighteenth century. The seventeenth-century Manila galleon trade has received the most significant attention from scholars, occurring concurrently with Spain's Golden Century. Still, the near-exclusive focus neglects how commerce evolved in the following centuries. Scholars have long recognized that Manila galleons had frequented Alta California's coast from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century. Naos were known to unload contraband cargo in the region for transfer to the interior. Once colonization of Alta California commenced in the eighteenth century, they engaged in unsanctioned trade with missionaries and soldiers. Due to its clandestine nature, the archival evidence is relatively sparse on these exchanges, and the extent of it remains difficult to determine. However, by directing attention to how the circulation of material goods and people in the Eastern Pacific Basin cohered into a segment of the Spanish Pacific, I demonstrate the Pacific Ocean's importance within the Californias' history and elucidate the complexity of regional exchanges within New Spain.

This study problematizes using internally and externally fixed boundaries, or those imposed by a state, separating provinces and those boundaries between imperial states as units of historical analysis. Spaces and boundaries are not rigid; people continually create them through social interaction and material processes. These reflect the mental maps people use to understand their place within a given space and envision a future within them. The Californias provides an interesting case study of interregional interaction. This region is the only province in the eighteenth century whose border did not adjoin with others along the northern frontier of New

Spain.⁹ It was also located on the most northern extremity of the viceroyalty and the most distant and far-flung Spanish territory within continental North America.¹⁰ Although politically and spatially peripheral from central Mexico, when viewed from the perspective of the Pacific Ocean, the California-Pacific littoral formed the core for a continuously expanding Pacific World in the eastern basin. It became the center for Spain's explorations of the Pacific Northwest and later a significant center for the maritime fur trade and contraband trading in the Pacific Ocean. Although Alta California's coast was distant from central Mexico, the Philippines, the Pacific Northwest, and Asia, they were connected by routes on the Pacific Ocean. And interactions between territories primarily occurred among coasts, shores, bays, and harbors. Like other borderlands, these were sites of fluidity and accommodation and were contested places where colonial and Indigenous powers competed. Alta California was a multilayered borderland: to the north were Russian and English fur traders, the east was the Indigenous interior world, and to the west was the Pacific Ocean, where Russian, English, Anglo-American, and Spanish vessels plied the waters seeking trade and territorial acquisitions.¹¹ Considering these multiple contact areas, I aim to contextualize how Spanish and Native people living in the littoral borderland understood their place within the Pacific Basin and the Spanish empire and, more broadly, how they reconstructed daily life on this distant periphery of the empire.

⁹ Spanish maps from the eighteenth century depict the Californias extending from the coast to New Mexico and from the southern tip of the peninsula to the Pacific Northwest. The latter sometimes is referred to in documents as Nueva Galicia or *California Septentrional*. Although, based on maps, the Californias touch neighboring provinces Pimería Alta and New Mexico, Spanish colonization did not extend beyond a short distance from the west coast.

¹⁰ At the time, the Philippines was considered the most far-flung province. There was no direct route between the Philippines and Spain until 1785, when the Cape of Good Hope route was opened to Spanish ships through a treaty with England. The only route to the Philippines was via Acapulco in New Spain.

¹¹ For a thorough discussion of the interior Indigenous world, see Natale Zappia, *Traders and Raiders: The Indigenous World of the Colorado Basin, 1540-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).



Figure 0.2. Laureano Atlas and Vincente Memije *Aspecto simbólico del mundo Hispánico* engraved in Manila 1761. It depicts the Spanish kingdoms and their colonial possessions as a female figure. Spain forms the head and Crown, the Americas the body, and the Philippines the feet. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Laureano_atlas-aspecto_simbolico_del_mundo_hispanico.png

Finding a Pacific World

Spain's exploration of the Philippines commenced in the sixteenth century when Ferdinand Magellan led an expedition to the Moluccas and reached Cebu in 1521, which ended with the first circumnavigation of the world in the following year. Magellan began his journey from Seville in 1519, crossing the Atlantic Ocean and sailing around Cape Horn to reach the Pacific Ocean. Searching for a western route to the East Indies, the voyage traveled across the Pacific Ocean. The *Treaty of Tordesillas* (1494), established nearly three decades earlier, had divided the world outside of Europe between the Spanish and Portuguese empires, barring Spain from sailing vessels around the Cape of Good Hope. The Crown enlisted Magellan to identify an alternative route to Asia for the Spanish empire when he landed on islands along the Pacific Rim, later called the Philippines. Forty-four years later, following the same path across the Pacific Ocean, Miguel López de Legazpi departed Barra de Navidad in Nueva Galicia, New Spain, to conquer the islands of Cebu. The 1565 conquest of Cebu inaugurated Spain's colonization of the Philippines and established the Manila galleons. Portuguese critics insisted that Spain's colonial presence in the Philippines violated the *Treaty of Tordesillas* (1494). Spain, for its part, continued to push further into Asia from its base in Manila. Spanish expeditions arrived in Molucca, Formosa (Taiwan), and Vietnam but failed to take hold. Under pressure from the Portuguese, Spain agreed to cease expansion in Asia. However, it refused to surrender the Philippines, arguing that it was an extension of the Americas and thus within the treaty's bounds. For the next two-hundred-fifty years, the Philippines remained a dependency of the Kingdom of New Spain and figured prominently in its vision of the Pacific Ocean.

From the sixteenth century, Spain emphasized the interconnections between its territories in the Philippines, Marianas, the Americas, and the Pacific Ocean. Buschmann points out that the

Spanish divided the Americas into three constituent parts: the *Indias del Norte* (North America to Venezuela), the *Indias del Mediodía* (South America), and the *Indias del Poniente* (the Pacific Basin in Maritime Asia).¹² In Spanish maps, the Pacific was linked to the terrestrial holdings of the Americas and politically defended Spanish claims to the entirety of the Pacific Ocean. For Buschmann, the Pacific came into focus for the Spanish through the administrative centers bordering the ocean. William Lytle Schurz coined the term “Spanish Lake” in the monograph *The Manila Galleon* (1959) to describe the Pacific Ocean, the eminent domain of the Manila galleons, and a closed arena for the Spanish before the arrival of rival Europeans in the second half of the eighteenth century.¹³ Buschmann divides the Spanish Lake into its literal and imaginary parts. The literal being the Manila galleons, the focus of significant studies, and the imaginary one covering the Pacific islands and their surrounding continents. In the minds of Spanish contemporaries, the Pacific Ocean was not a region within its right but only an extension of its other imperial possessions. Spain’s influence in the Pacific Ocean seldom extended beyond its territorial holdings in the Philippines, the Marianas, and the Americas’ coastal regions.

The vastness of the Pacific Ocean gave rise to several interconnected localities. Maritime historians like David Igler describe the Pacific as less of a unified ocean and more of a waterscape where imperial and personal contests played out on isolated bays and coastlines. In these remote areas, Indigenous communities sought to control the terms of exchange, and maritime traders plied the ocean for profitable commodities.¹⁴ Igler’s “oceanic perspective”

¹² Rainer F. Buschmann, *Iberian Visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507-1899* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 20.

¹³ William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (Boston: E.P. Dutton, 1939).

places the Pacific Ocean at the center of historical analysis. Rather than seeing water bodies as separating peoples and polities, his framework shifts to demonstrate how oceans connect them. Historians' focus tends to predominate within nations, regions, and other locations enclosed by land. Such scholarship tends to relegate ocean voyages to "a flight from history and humanity," ignoring the historical processes taking shape at the open sea.¹⁵ Journeys from the Philippines to North America required at least six months at sea, while the return only needed an average of three. Merchants and sailors, especially those hunting pelts, may have spent several years traveling between ports throughout the Pacific Rim. Matt Matsuda adds to this discussion through his *trans-localism* framework or the specific linked spaces where direct engagements occurred and depended on the ocean.¹⁶ Contained within the Pacific Ocean were many sites of *trans-localism*, including Southeast Asia, the Chinese coast in Canton, Japan, Korea, Oceania, the Pacific Islands, and others. What comes into focus is not a vacant waterscape but spaces of movement and transit. The framework decodes the Pacific World's global, oceanic, and local histories by thinking outwardly from the islands and the local level. When attempting to understand the Pacific Ocean and the histories of different localities interconnected through maritime transits, historians must consider how the ocean mediated interactions between peoples and places.

¹⁴ David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.

¹⁵ David Igler, *The Great Ocean*, 8.

¹⁶ Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 5.

In the historiography of the Spanish Americas, the Pacific Ocean has traditionally received little attention from scholars outside the Manila galleon trade. However, a growing body of literature has emerged in the last decade. Mariano Bonialian refers to the Pacific Ocean and the Manila galleon trade as representing a *lago indiano* rather than Schurz's Spanish Lake concept. The former symbolizes the Pacific Ocean's domination by *criollos* in Mexico City, while the latter implies authority from metropolitan Spain. The term *Indiano* refers to a distinct identity among Spain- and New Spain-born elites who acquired substantial wealth from living in the Americas and a referential term to their origins in New Spain and South America.¹⁷ Bonialian insists that the motives, control, and development of mercantile trade between the Philippines and the Americas originated in Mexico and Peru. The merchants and agents opposed the Spanish Crown's interests and their peninsular counterparts' transatlantic monopolies.¹⁸ Most galleon merchandise arrived in New Spain and Peru for local consumption and operated under merchants' interests in the Americas; therefore, the Pacific could be more aptly called the *lago indiano*, as it primarily benefited *criollos*. Recent scholars have begun to recognize how the Philippines functioned more as an extension of New Spain, including Katherine Bjork, Meha Priyadarshini, Buschmann, Edward R. Slack Jr., and James B. Tueller.¹⁹ Bjork's emphasis on Mexican merchant interests in the Manila galleon trade rejects the Wallersteinian framework of

¹⁷ Philologist George Mariscal defines *indiano* as an identity constructed through wealth accumulated from commerce and an ethnicity built from contact with distant colonies; See, George Mariscal, "The Figure of the *indiano* in Early Modern Spanish Culture," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 2, 1 (2001), 55-68.

¹⁸ Mariano Bonialian, "Comercio y atlantización del Pacífico mexicano y sudamericano: la crisis del *lago indiano* y del Galeón de Manila, 1750-1821," *América Latina en la Historia Económica* (enero-abril 2017), 8-9.

¹⁹ Katherine Bjork, "The Link that Kept the Philippines Spanish: Mexican Merchant Interests and the Manila Trade, 1571-1815," *Journal of World History* 9, 1 (Spring 1998); Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico*; Buschmann et al., *Navigating the Spanish Lake*.

an emerging European world system's triangular dynamics. Instead, she sees the effects of a Chinese world system on New Spain and Spain itself. Transpacific trade was central to enmeshing the Spanish empire into a global economy driven by Asian products and the interaction of elite interests in the Philippines and New Spain.²⁰ Priyadarshini follows a different approach, examining how trans-local global history traces the direct engagement between local conditions and international forces within trade and empire. She determines that the transpacific trade was not solely based on imperial desires but on the quality of Asian goods and consumer demand in colonial Latin America.²¹ This dissertation situates itself within the broader discussions of Pacific exchanges, both material and cultural. By highlighting the circulation of material goods and populations between ports in New Spain and the Pacific Ocean, I attempt to reveal how a segment of the Spanish Pacific world cohered through these exchanges.

Networks of Empire and the Spanish Pacific

Studies on imperial networks inform this study on Colonial Alta California, and the Spanish Pacific. Imperial history has been centrally preoccupied with presenting insights into how power operated in multiple domains and times. However, it tends to focus on the impact of the imperialist agents' motivations and actions from a center-periphery standpoint. Overlooked within these assessments have been the colonial subjects and others in the periphery and how they exercised their agency within colonialization and colonial systems. Recent scholarship in imperial history, though predominately on the British empire, has approached this issue by

²⁰ Bjork, "The Link that Kept the Philippines Spanish," 28.

²¹ Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico*, 5-7.

dismantling the boundaries between top-down imperial history and area studies, looking at how particular geographic areas interacted with one another and created regional circulation networks. Tony Ballantyne examines the development of Sikh identity through the dual processes of colonialism and diaspora. He coined the notion of “webs of empire” to describe the production of a range of Sikh identities and how Sikhs extended their political and cultural domains within the empire’s structures.²² Imperial webs connected Sikhs to the British imperial world and migration networks, which allowed Sikhism to spread to communities in distant parts of the world. Alison Games discusses how English notions of cosmopolitanism developed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through commercial and colonial encounters in the Americas, the Middle East, and South Asia. Merchants and sailors developed, through their travels, transoceanic global perspectives. Knowledge of particular places was not solely driven by events and actions from a single center but by the men who circulated throughout the empire and continuously redefined it.²³ These two works emerge from how ideas spread throughout the empire, mainly through the individuals engaged in migration. They provide insight into the lived realities of colonists and colonial subjects outside the centers of power.

Extending these discussions further, Thomas R. Metcalf and Kerry Ward show how empires and colonies exercised imperial sovereignty through imperial networks. Metcalf examines India’s role in the Indian Ocean and how the British Raj made British imperial expansion, governance, and control possible in East Africa and eastern Asia. India was not solely

²² Tony Ballantyne, *Between Colonialism and Diaspora: Sikh Cultural Formation in an Imperial World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), xii.

²³ Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7-11.

a periphery or colony of the British Empire but a nodal point from “which peoples ideas, goods, and institutions—everything that enables an empire to exist—radiated outward.”²⁴ By centering India and the Indian Ocean within his analysis of the British Empire, he shows the contradictions of imperialism, which allowed Indians to become colonizers in Africa and Asia while also being colonized by the British. Adding to this discussion, Ward demonstrates how imperial control was exercised through imperial networks. She studies forced migration networks in the Dutch East India Company, arguing that the Dutch East India Company (VOC) manifested its empire through cultural, legal, administrative, transportation, territorial, military, and exchange networks. These networks “amalgamated spatially and over time into an imperial web whose sovereignty was effectively created and maintained but always partial and contingent.”²⁵ She elucidates the complexity and multilayered nature of imperial networks. These webs permitted empires to exercise sovereignty over colonial possessions and allowed colonial subjects to move across them and accommodate them to their own needs.

Imperial networks have received much less attention within the Spanish empire. A few scholars have written about the relationships between the Spanish empire and the Pacific Ocean, providing critical insights into how New Spain influenced colonial processes in the ocean and was influenced by it. Eva Maria Mehl analyzes forced migration networks between Mexico and the Philippines, demonstrating the connections between military discipline, administration, and penal labor. Mexican military recruits serving in the Philippines, multiethnic ship crews,

²⁴ Thomas R. Metcalf, *Imperial Connections: India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 1.

²⁵ Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 6.

merchants, and colonial agents created cross-cultural transpacific connections. She argues that the Spanish Philippines' history is best understood by including colonial Mexico's history. Convict transportation in the Pacific Ocean was also intimately bound with the Spanish Atlantic. Ships transporting penal labor to the Philippines were one of many circuits within a more extensive system of the imperial circulation of convicts, which included North Africa and the Americas.²⁶ Convicts were typically transported from Acapulco aboard the Manila galleons. Tatiana Seijas adds to Manila-Acapulco traffic's complexity by revealing the regional trade networks within central Mexico that emerged from the transpacific economy. The bureaucratic order required complex arrangements for staffing ships and embarking goods and provisions. Haciendas received substantial contracts to provision the galleons, while Indigenous communities along the China Road provided shelter and transport for officials, soldiers, and private traders. As a result, Acapulco became a regional center of commerce, providing economic opportunities for artisans, laborers, and small-scale producers.²⁷ The study highlights the importance of inter- and intra-colonial trade within local and regional economies.

Finally, Dení Trejo Barajas and Marie Christine Duggan examine the expanding economic influence of San Blas and the Californias in the Northern Pacific Rim. They argue that San Blas not only served as a base for expanding the northern frontier but also to counter the monopoly on Pacific commerce held by the merchant guild of Mexico City conducted in Acapulco.²⁸ Guadalajara, located near San Blas, received royal permission in the 1790s to create

²⁶ Eva Maria Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765-1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 14-15.

²⁷ Tatiana Seijas, "Inns, Mules, and Hardtack for the Voyage: The Local Economy of the Manila Galleon in Mexico," *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, 1 (2016), 57-58.

a competing merchant guild, the *consulado de Guadalajara*, to conduct Pacific trade between San Blas and the Californias. The Crown hoped to subordinate mercantile elites in Mexico City by placing the Naval Department in San Blas, where transpacific ships could be monitored. These studies show a Spanish Pacific taking shape during the eighteenth century and illustrate the importance of studying the Spanish Pacific beyond the Manila galleon traffic. This dissertation is situated within scholarship on imperial networks. A Spanish Pacific begins to take shape through the circulation of peoples and materials in the Pacific Ocean. The colonization of the Californias was the impetus for creating maritime links between regions of New Spain connected along Pacific maritime routes. A fuller understanding of how the Pacific exchanges shaped colonial society on the coasts shed light on the myriad ways interregional trade took place in eighteenth-century New Spain.

The Californias and the Spanish Borderlands

The northern reaches of New Spain have been understood as a frontier zone of contact between Spanish and Native people or a borderland where the Spanish competed for control against Indigenous nations, France, Britain, the United States, and Russia. Though partially and contingently, Spain controlled much of North America's western half until its collapse in 1821. Historian Eugene Bolton first popularized "Spanish Borderlands" in *The Spanish Borderland* (1921) to describe northern New Spain and later Mexico falling under United States control after 1848. He framed the borderlands as stretching from California to Florida, aiming to place a Spanish perspective on what had then been an Anglo-centric history of U.S. westward expansion

²⁸ Dení Trejo Barrajas and Marie Christine Duggan, "San Blas and the Californias: Hispanic Trade in the Northern Pacific Rim in a Time of Great Change," *Mains'l Haul* 54, 1-4 (2018), 28.

into an imperial frontier. Bolton's research underscored the importance of understanding the Spanish borderlands to grasp the history of the United States more firmly. Rather than view the formation of the nascent U.S. from the Atlantic coast and pushing toward the Pacific coast, it re-centered the analysis on the Spanish borderlands from northern Mexico. He broadened the scope of U.S. history, showing how nation-building originated from multiple points on the North American continent. Over the last century, this field of history has dramatically expanded and elucidated the borderlands' complexity. Scholarship has begun to recognize how Indigenous agency, gendered dimensions, environmental processes, questions of citizenship, racial structures, and many other aspects contributed to constructing the borderlands.

The California borderland has been the subject of much historical scholarship. Steven Hackel provides the most comprehensive study of Spanish and Indian interactions from the colonial to the early republican era. He analyzes the "dual revolutions" of demographic and ecological transformations that accompanied colonization.²⁹ These features structured the encounters and interactions between Spanish and Native communities. The dual revolutions resulted in considerable upheavals for Indigenous groups who entered the mission system seeking access to community regeneration and material subsistence. While within the mission walls, Indigenous society faced new restrictions on sexual relations, kinship, traditional modes of production, and spirituality. Erika Pérez takes a closer look at how Indigenous communities reconstituted themselves within the mission system and the structures of colonial society. She examines this through the lens of intimacy to elucidate how individuals and families resisted and coped with colonialism—according to Pérez, Spanish and Native people enacted intimacy

²⁹ 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), 31.

through formal marriage practices and informal unions between members of different ethnic, class, and racial groups from the colonial era to the early decades of U.S. control in California. Central to her argument is the traditions of Catholic godparenting, or *campadrazgo*, which she argues served as the social barometer in society. It allowed Indigenous groups to challenge colonial and racial hierarchies by crafting ambiguous racial identities and expanding kinship ties for family and community cohesion.³⁰ Lisabeth Haas also explores interactions between Spanish and Indigenous groups in the missions and colonization. She sheds light on how missions became sites of authority, memory, and identity for Indigenous groups, arguing that saints' names and images were integral to imposing Catholicism on Indigenous peoples.³¹ Stories and pictures may have conveyed Catholic beliefs, but Indigenous groups articulated their meaning in various ways, which became central to their knowledge and culture. These recent scholars have shown the complexity of the California borderland, illustrating how contradictions emerged in colonization and how Indigenous groups exerted agency within a dramatically transforming landscape.

Other recent research has disentangled the borderlands processes shaping the region's colonial history. Alta California was the site of various overlapping borderlands and territorial contests between the Spanish, Indigenous groups, Russians, and Anglo-American and English fur traders. Kent Lightfoot compares the legacy of colonial encounters in northern California between Spanish, Russians, and Indigenous groups. He shows how several Indigenous groups

³⁰ Erika Pérez, *Colonial Intimacies: Interethnic Kinship, Sexuality, and Marriage in Southern California, 1769-1885* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), 4-6.

³¹ Lisabeth Haas, *Saints and Citizens: Indigenous Histories of Colonial Missions and Mexican California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 1-2.

became caught between the Spanish missionary system and Russian maritime fur traders who began arriving in the early nineteenth century at Fort Ross. The Spanish and Russians depended heavily on native labor to build and maintain their colonies but employed it differently.³² The levels of Indigenous interaction with the Spanish and Russians had critical implications on Native identities, social forms, and tribal relations. Kathleen Hull and John Douglas's edited collection *Forging Communities in Colonial Alta California* (2018) builds on previous works by showing how Indigenous and non-Indigenous people reimagined communities. Chapters address the effects of colonialism, missions, and life outside the missions on settlement, marriage patterns, trade, and interaction. These processes had a differing impact based on geographic location and proximity to either Russian, Anglo-American/British or Spanish arriving in the region. Lightfoot and the contributors of *Forging Communities* re-orient our understanding of the colonial and early republican eras. It shows the dynamics and complexity of a borderland experiencing monumental change as fur traders, missionaries, and Indigenous communities contested for control and adapted to California's conditions. Spanish-Native relations were only one aspect of a multilayered panoply of regional encounters and interactions.

As a unit of analysis, Borderlands contribute a great deal to understanding the history of Alta California. However, borderlands history's focus on landed spaces tends to obscure colonialism's complexity in the Californias. Countless ships under the flags of more than twenty nations traveled along the California coast between 1786 and 1848. Crews aboard these vessels were multiethnic and multi-national and regularly encountered and interacted with Native communities to exchange resources. Most encounters before the colonial era and the first

³² Kent G. Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 11.

decades of colonization occurred on the coast or adjacent waters. Although borderlands fit neatly with northern interior provinces such as Sonora and New Mexico, the framework does not entirely suit Alta California's geography, which contains thousands of miles of coastline. David Igler points toward a much more nuanced assessment of Alta California, one called "littoral borderlands," which thinks beyond land-based histories and revises colonial encounters on the Pacific coast. Like Igler, maritime historians have recognized waterways as not rigid physical boundaries but included littoral spaces within assessments, demonstrating how oceans and lands shaped historical processes. This dissertation takes on these concerns from both borderlands and maritime history. It reads the Spanish Pacific and the coasts of the Californias as different types of borderlands, one shaped by oceanic and terrestrial processes.

Locating a Spanish Pacific Borderlands

Some studies from the past few decades have sought to engage with transpacific exchanges in California. Igler argues that a geographic construct like the Eastern Pacific Basin begins to cohere in light of European and American traders encountering Native communities in Hawaii, Nootka Sound, and the Marquesas and bringing international trade to Spanish ports in San Francisco in Alta California and Callao in Peru. According to him, this Pacific region cohered under the conditions that "an open and inclusive waterscape provided the primary connection between disparate borderlands."³³ Pacific ports connected through maritime trade, the nations undertaking commerce, and the Indigenous populations involved in these transactions

³³ David Igler, "Diseased Goods: Global Exchanges in the Eastern Pacific Basin, 1770-1850," *The American Historical Review* 109, 3 (June 2004), 695.

remained fluid from 1770 to 1850. Iglar studies this process from the perspective of disease transmission, which often accompanies material exchanges. The introduction of disease highlighted the links between individuals to local, regional, and global scale systems that enabled the transfer of natural resources, cargoes, personnel, and germs. He exposes how a firmer understanding of western North America must consider regional developments in a transpacific and international framework. Considering these concerns, J.M. Mancini advocates a transpacific approach to eighteenth-century California. Her primary subject is Franciscan Pedro Benito Cambón and the cargo of Asian goods he brought to California from his time in the Philippines. She insists that the Franciscan order is better understood as a “global polity whose representatives ventured from Europe to Asia” and the Americas.³⁴ For Mancini, the Franciscans were not limited to the Alta California missions but stretched worldwide. The transpacific and transnational ties between Franciscan missionaries have been neglected in scholarship.

Finally, Albert Lacson details the early encounters between the Spanish and Indigenous groups of coastal California from 1542 to 1769. He demonstrates the importance of cloth gifts for establishing diplomatic relationships between Spanish mariners, who sporadically visited California before colonization, and Native Alta Californians. By the time the Franciscan order arrived on the shores of Alta California, Indigenous people had already developed a penchant for European cloth goods from prior encounters with sailors.³⁵ These early interactions set the stage for friendly relationships once missionaries and soldiers arrived in 1769. In the early days of colonization, conversion programs relied on distributing goods like cloth. Textiles were not new

³⁴ J.M. Mancini, “Pedro Benito Cambón’s Asian Objects: A Transpacific Approach to Eighteenth-Century California,” *American Art* 25, 1 (Spring 2011), 35.

³⁵ Albert P. Lacson, “Making Friends and Converts: Cloth and Clothing in Early California History,” *California History* 92, 1 (Spring 2015), 7.

to Native people as interior traders from Sonora frequented the coast to exchange cloth goods for marine resources. However, clothing and textiles took on new meanings in the colonial era. Native people sympathetic to Spanish colonization preferred wearing cloth products, while those challenging the missions rejected those products. Lacson's study indicates how maritime exchanges in early California shaped later interactions between the Spanish and Indigenous groups. Iglar, Mancini, and Lacson reveal the relational aspects of Pacific processes in shaping California's colonial outcomes. I hope to elucidate how these processes took shape by considering the maritime exchanges along the coast.

Mental Mapping in the Borderlands

This dissertation also draws on scholarship within social history and cultural geography. Mainly social history's interest in reconstructing peoples' lived experiences in the past, examining the overarching processes of transformation, and how individuals confronted these shifts. And cultural geography's interest in the relationship between where people live and travel, how places and identities are produced, and how people in the past made sense of these places and built a sense of place. This dissertation investigates social and economic relationships in colonial Alta California from the perspective of *mental mapping*, or the latent maps formed within the minds of individuals or groups of people that organize spatial relations between features within a particular geography. The term "cognitive map" was first theorized by psychologist Edward C. Tolman in "Cognitive Maps in Rats and Men" (1948), where he researched the sense of direction among rats within mazes and applied the hypothesis on the representation of spatial knowledge in the human brain.³⁶ By the 1960s, developments in

geography and urban planning contributed to the concept as an interdisciplinary research tool for studying human spatial orientation capacity. Kevin Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960) is regarded as one of the pioneering works in mental mapping. It observes how Boston, Jersey City, and Los Angeles residents took in the city's information and used it to construct mental maps.³⁷ Mental maps provide invaluable insight into how groups of people orient themselves within spaces or geographic regions and how they perceive the world around them. Historian Frithjof Benjamin Schenk describes it as the subjective understanding of spatial reality determined by an individual's position, perspective, and range of movement. The world's representation as the respective observer conceptualized it comes into focus by studying mental maps.³⁸ Such practices allowed individuals and groups to position themselves within their spatial environment. As geographers Roger M. Downs and David Stea summarize, "[mental mapping] reflects the world as some person believes it to be; it need not be correct. In fact, distortions are highly likely."³⁹

Since the 1960s, mental mapping has entered the fields of the social sciences, geography, anthropology, and history, among others. According to Norbert Götz and Janne Holmén, although never explicitly using the concepts themselves, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979) have helped expand mental mapping

³⁶ See, Edward C. Tolman, "Cognitive Maps in Rats and Men," *The Psychological Review* 55, 4 (1948): 189-208.; although mental mapping and "cognitive mapping" are approximate synonyms, the latter is distinguished by its more neurological connotations.

³⁷ Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1930).

³⁸ Frithjof Benjamin Schenk, "Mental Maps: The Cognitive Mapping of the Continent as an Object of Research of European History," European History Online, Leibniz Institute of European History, July 8, 2013, <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/schenk-2013-en>.

³⁹ Quoted from Schenk, "Mental Maps."

in historical inquiry and other fields of the humanities. Anderson's and Said's examination of opposing socio-cultural processes of community-building and "othering" is of particular concern within research on mental mapping.⁴⁰ Historians have followed several lines of scholarship on mental maps, examining patterns of dominance and subalternity, how historical regions are constructed and dissolved, the creation of borders and nation-states, and other topics. To be sure, physical maps represent spatial features through symbolic representation that require inclusion and exclusion within depiction, in much the same way as mental maps. However, according to Götz and Holmén, there is a fundamental distinction between drawn and mental maps. Physical maps are "fixed cartographic manifestations of spatial relations," while mental maps "dwell latently in the minds of individuals or groups of people."⁴¹ One can examine the former to gain insight into underlying mental maps that shaped them and discuss how they shaped the mental maps in those who viewed them. The latter only exists within the minds of those who constructed them, requiring close examination of behavioral, textual, and graphical sources.

Mental mapping provides a valuable framework for studying borderlands and maritime history. Katherine G. Morrissey's *Mental Territories* (1997) probes regional identity formation in the U.S. Northwest at the turn of the twentieth century in modern-day Spokane, Washington. She employs mental mapping to show how regions were not merely physical spaces created on topography, survey lines, political boundaries, or economic relationships. They were a "mental landscape, a series of settlements tied together by mental concepts."⁴² Morrissey charts this

⁴⁰ Norbert Götz and Janne Holmén, "Mental Maps: Geographical and Historical Perspectives," *Journal of Cultural Geography* 35, 2 (2018), 159.

⁴¹ Götz and Holmén, "Mental Maps," 157.

“mental territory’s” formation and dissolution between the nineteenth and early twentieth century. The notion of the “Inland Empire” to describe Spokane originated in locals’ mental maps long before cartographers represented it. She contends that various groups struggled to define who and what belonged in this region, including Anglo-American settlers, Coeur d’Alene, and other Indigenous groups. Through this process, a regional identity formed based on a mental landscape called the Inland Empire. She charts the formation and dissolution of this regional mental map, which no longer exists in the present.

Ernesto Bassi’s *An Aqueous Territory* represents similar concerns about how individuals constructed mental maps to develop a sense of place and envision potential futures within their resided spaces. However, he applies this concept very differently, examining it from the perspective of *sailor geographies* and trans-imperial spaces. He argues that sailors frequently crisscrossed political borders in the Caribbean and Atlantic waters, gathering and spreading information obtained at ports and the seas. Through their travels between ports, they constructed spaces of social interaction or what he likes to call the “Transimperial Greater Caribbean.”⁴³ He conceptualizes regions as fluidly bounded and amorphously demarcated between spatial units. These were shaped and reshaped through everyday social interactions. The geopolitical imaginations of residents connected Caribbean New Granada to British, French, Dutch, Danish, and U.S. territories in the Caribbean and formed a malleable and flexible regional space. Morrissey’s and Bassi’s assessment of the formation of regional spaces and identities highlights

⁴² Katherine G. Morrissey, *Mental Territories: Mapping the Inland Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 7-8.

⁴³ Ernesto Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada’s Transimperial Greater Caribbean World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 3-5.

the advantage of mental mapping to re-evaluate how inhabitants of particular places were not bound within present-day regionalization schemes. People of the time could and did visualize alternative geographies within their lived spaces.

The dissertation's methodology draws on mental mapping to better understand the lived experiences of sailors, soldiers, settlers, Franciscans, and Native people and how they defined and participated in creating space. I define "space" as inherently social and cultural, embodied within people's everyday thoughts and behavior, and inhabiting the places where people live and create relationships with other people, societies, and their environments.⁴⁴ Space was embodied through social, cultural, and economic exchanges in Alta California, and it affected how Spanish and Native people came to view themselves and their place within the regional geography of the Pacific Ocean. As historian Alexander Samson points out, "Borders and frontiers between states in the early modern period emerged locally from custom and collective memory, expressed in myriad quotidian interactions between individual subjects and retracing their situation in sanctioned behaviors."⁴⁵ Borderlands are characterized as spaces of competing state power and overlapping cultural spheres. When people crossed these territorial divisions, they blurred and confused territorial divisions separating areas defined by political bodies like states, local authorities, and military jurisdiction. In Alta California, Native and Spanish people forged sustained and broad-reaching relationships with border-crossers like sailors, ship captains,

⁴⁴ See, Nigel Thrift, "Space: The Fundamental Stuff of Human Geography," in *Key Concepts in Geography*, edited by Nicholas Clifford, Sarah Holloway, Stephen P. Price, and Gill Valentine (London: Sage, 2003), 102-104.

⁴⁵ Alexander Samson, "Being Spanish in the Early Modern World," in *Literary Hispanophobia and Hispanophilia in Britain and the Low Countries, 1550-1850*, edited by Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 50; See, also, Tamar Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

merchants, and missionaries. They created enduring links to coastal spaces like San Blas, the Philippines, the Pacific Northwest, Peru, and Central America. These interactions continuously made, remade, and reimagined spaces in the littoral borderland. The dissertation traces how Spanish and Native people understood Alta California's regional geography and how their relationship to distant places affected their concerted actions, produced limitations, and allowed them to envision possible futures. People in Alta California constructed and defined spaces in various ways, sometimes cohering to boundaries established by colonial power and economic stakeholders, and at other times, in opposition to them. Landscapes and, more so, waterscapes were contested spaces. They were culturally and socially pliable and formed through contestation and accommodation. Clues to imagining these spaces are found within embodied action or how environment, context, and consciousness affect and constitute personal and interpersonal agency.

My research centers on analyzing various forms of cultural expression, including texts, images, material culture, and the spatial orientation of settlements, to gain insight into how the Spanish and Indigenous people perceived the Pacific Ocean and Alta California's place within it. Specifically, I am interested in understanding how individuals constructed mental maps and how these maps influenced their interactions with strangers arriving from the Pacific Ocean. To support my argument, I draw on the semiotics of culture, examining the encoded meanings of words, maps, and material objects to uncover how individuals perceived the world and created systems of meaning.⁴⁶ By examining personal and official correspondences, inventories, invoices, cartographic maps, journals, and official reports, I track the movement of people and material goods across territorial boundaries, especially maritime ones. Studying the words,

⁴⁶ Morrissey, *Mental Territories*, 18.

actions, and material culture of people living in Alta California allows us to understand their perceptions and motivations better and reveal the cultural meanings ascribed to the littoral borderland. By analyzing how individuals created mental maps and assigned meaning to them, I provide a more accurate geographical framework that aligns with people's lived realities and enables a better assessment of transregional, transnational, and global processes within the historical period.

Mental maps represent how individuals and social groups perceive and comprehend spatial relationships within and between different places. In essence, I seek to analyze the construction of mental maps and their underlying meanings to elucidate the impacts of Pacific Ocean exploration and the ocean's economy on colonization in Alta California. The dissertation explores the effects of waterways on the lifeways and perceptions of Spanish and Native people and how these maritime spaces influenced their economic and social relationships. The Pacific Ocean and the coastal regions of Alta California held significant importance during the colonial era, as various individuals with different cultural, social, and political loyalties interacted and competed with one another. This dissertation asserts that the convergence of competing groups like the Spanish, Native people, Anglo-Americans, English, and Russians was where definitions of space were most visible, highlighting the underlying mental maps and cognitive perceptions regarding Alta California's place within the larger Pacific World. Through this study, I aim to demonstrate how these interactions shaped the spatial definitions and identities of people in the region. By reframing the history of Alta California as a littoral borderland within the Pacific Ocean, I aim to recognize the complex social and economic relationships and networks within and beyond the region. This dissertation contributes to a deeper understanding of the process of

colonization in Alta California. It provides a more nuanced and comprehensive view of the historical, cultural, and economic forces that shaped Alta California within the Pacific World.

Chapter Overview

The following chapters focus on the various interwoven processes that helped shape the California-Pacific littoral and gave significance to the mental maps among diverse people. The sources employed include an analysis of material cultures such as pictorial representation and material goods and documentary sources like official and unofficial correspondences, reports, ship logs, inventories, and requisition reports. Through these documents, I attempt to interpret how the California residents and Pacific sailors constructed their mental maps of the region and reveal how the Spanish Pacific took shape and changed over time in the Eastern Pacific Basin. Chapter one examines the early encounters between sailors, missionaries, and Indigenous groups in Baja and Alta California. It addresses how these interactions on the coast shaped later colonization efforts and fixed the region within the geography of the Manila-Acapulco traffic. The chapter then discusses early Jesuit missionaries in 1697 to Jesuit expulsion and the start of the Franciscan era in 1769. I argue that this period set the stage for how Spanish colonists envisioned the Californias within the Spanish Pacific. Before the era, post-1769 witnessed considerable Spanish maritime activity in the Pacific Ocean; the Jesuit missions and royal presidios from 1697 to 1769 were actively engaged with the Manila galleons. They centered colonization efforts on creating a supply base for Pacific maritime traffic. This period led to an explosion in Spanish and other European interests in the Pacific Ocean.

The second chapter examines the presence of objects drawn from Asia, Europe, and Mexico within California's missions and presidios. It elucidates how soldiers and missionaries

used these goods to construct and perform colonial identities. The chapter examines the Manila-Acapulco traffic's influences on the Californias' coast and the annual supply ships from San Blas. These two circuits of exchange were the vital lifelines connecting the Californias to the Spanish Pacific. Chapter three analyzes how Indigenous responded to Spanish colonization and engendered Indigenous spaces within the missions. I discuss the persistence of Native mobility and how the Franciscan missions became a contact point between Spanish colonization and the Indigenous borderland. Chapters five addresses commerce in the Spanish Pacific and the Californias from the 1790s to 1821. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century witnessed a dramatic increase in maritime trading in the northern Pacific Ocean. This shift was prompted by Anglo-American, English fur, and Russian traders arriving on the western coast of North America searching for maritime animal pelts for profits in Canton. Precipitating these developments was a declining Manila galleon trade and a colonial system in the Californias that had primarily become agriculturally self-sufficient and desired an outlet for its expanding economy. While the Manila galleons lagged, the Californias engaged more heavily with San Blas. The creation of the *consulado de Guadalajara*, with its commercial base in San Blas for Pacific commerce, enmeshed the Californias more firmly within the Spanish Pacific.

Chapter four then addresses sailor geographies, and the creation of a Spanish Pacific centered in the Californias. In the first decades of colonization in Alta California, Spain relied on the knowledge of experienced sailors from the Manila galleons to explore the western coast of North America from Monterey Bay to modern-day Alaska and deliver supplies to aid the missions and presidios in the expanding California frontier. The newly founded ports in Alta California served as refreshing stations for maritime exploration in the Pacific and the Manila galleons. Sailors suffered from malnutrition, disease, and debilitating scurvy on extended

voyages. Vessels frequented ports and missions to recover the health of ailing sailors, often sojourning for several months. Sailors returned this favor by providing labor to missions and presidios in exchange for supplies. This chapter analyzes the shifting populations of sailors and soldiers aboard maritime vessels in the Californias as they traveled between Pacific Ocean ports.

Chapter six examines the expanding influence of contraband trading with foreign vessels in the Californias, especially with Russians and Anglo-Americans. The missions, presidios, and pueblos lacked any alternative. They turned toward illegal trading with foreign ships engaged in transpacific commerce to satisfy their needs for manufactured goods from Europe and Asia.

Chapter six examines how Native people confronted colonization and created an Indigenous littoral borderland in Alta California in the nineteenth century. Indigenous mobility and flexibility allowed them to carve out Indigenous spaces within the missions and reinvigorate Indigenous places within the central valley, *Los Tulares*. Within the Indigenous littoral borderland, Native people allied with other Indigenous groups and foreign Europeans like Anglo-Americans and Russians, engendering spaces of compromise, negotiation, and accommodation based on Native traditions of flexibility.

Chapter 1: the Spanish Pacific and the Littoral Frontier

In the fifteen-century fictional story *Las sergas de Esplandián*, author García Montalvo (1450-1505) describes a mythical kingdom on the western edge of the Indies, the Island of California, which was populated entirely by dark-skinned women and ruled by a powerful matriarch Queen Calafia. The kingdom was said to have vast wealth as no metal existed on the island besides gold.⁴⁷ Legends about distant, isolated lands containing copious riches and Amazon-like women were common among early modern Europeans. According to Dora Beale Polk, the mythological stories of Amazonians are some of the earliest in Europe, dating back to ancient Greece. For millennia, stories about fabulous islands on the edge of the known world invited challenge and fascination.⁴⁸ In 1522, dreams supposedly inspired by these ancient tales spurred Hernán Cortés (1485-1547), freshly off the violent conquest of Tenochtitlán, to continue seeking out other legendary lands of fortune. One of them, the Island of Ind, mentioned by Marco Polo, was believed to lie on the west coast of North America. Later in 1535, reports of rich pearl fisheries on the west coast of New Spain led Cortés to sail across the Gulf of California and anchor on the shore of a region, which he assumed to be an island, potentially Ind or another he later named California after Montalvo's epic. Although sixteenth-century explorations in the Gulf of California and Baja California revealed the region to be a peninsula rather than an island, the misrepresentation persisted on maps well into the eighteenth century. However, the Spanish never found their fortunes within the Californias; instead, they were located seven thousand

⁴⁷ Garcí Montalvo, *Las sergas de Esplandián* (Madrid: Doce Calles, 1998).

⁴⁸ Dora Beale Polk, *The Island of California: A History of the Myth* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 36-37.

miles across the Pacific Ocean in the Philippines. Nevertheless, the fantasy of an island filled with gold underscored a central characteristic of Las Californias, located along New Spain's vast northern frontier. This territory remained largely inaccessible by land for much of the colonial period. In large part, Spanish encounters with *Las Californias* and later colonization were primarily maritime, accomplished from the sea, making it practically and conceptually an island for nearly two centuries. Its connection to riches was only peripheral.

Similarly, since the sixteenth century, the main impetus for exploring and colonizing the Californias did not originate in mainland New Spain itself but rather from concerns about the broader security of the Philippines. Since the Spanish conquest of Manila in 1571 and the inauguration of the Manila-Acapulco trade later that year, Baja and Alta California's coast had figured prominently within the geography of the Manila galleon trade. Dennis Flynn and Arturo Giráldez point to the establishment of Manila and a permanent trade link between America and Asia as the foundation for a truly global trade system. Spain's American colonies produced an estimated 150,000 tons of silver from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, or perhaps 80% of world production. Authorities in New Spain diverted substantial portions of New Spain's silver to purchase Asian goods and finance the Manila galleon trade.⁴⁹ However, the long voyage from Manila to Acapulco contributed to worrying mortality rates from disease and malnutrition and increased the dangers of the Naos sinking or being captured by pirates, substantially threatening any profits from the trade. As early as the sixteenth century, authorities had identified Baja and Alta California as potential stopovers for the Naos, mainly to replenish fresh food and water, rest

⁴⁹ Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, "Born with a 'Silver Spoon': The Origins of World Trade in 1571," *Journal of World History* 6, 2 (Fall 1995), 214.

sickened crews, and repair badly damaged ships within safe harbors like Cabo San Lucas, Monterey, Santa Barbara, or San Diego.

Economic necessity and political expedience drove Spain's occupation of the Californias. The Spanish crown's desire to secure the Pacific Ocean by colonizing the Californias against imperial rivals overrode and, in some cases, contradicted other colonial policies. According to Art historian J.M. Mancini, Spain relied on the Franciscans in the eighteenth century to colonize Alta California. The Spanish crown invigorated the mission system while curtailing the crown's shared power elsewhere in the Americas; the policy overlooked the threat to state power posed by religious orders, municipal governments, and Indigenous polities.⁵⁰ Spain's contradiction regarding the Californias stemmed from the need to guard the province against potential foreign threats such as the Dutch, Portuguese, French, and English. Baja and Alta California lay along the maritime route between the Philippines and Acapulco, profoundly shaping their colonial history and Spain's role in the Pacific Ocean. For this reason, I argue that the Californias is better understood as a coastal province, straddling the maritime world of the Manila galleon trade and the terrestrial realms of New Spain's northern frontier. This conceptualization better recognizes the particularities of a space bordered by an ocean and a landed interior.

The Manila Galleons and the Spanish Pacific World

From the launch of the first Spanish treasure ship from Cebu in 1565, maritime commerce profoundly shaped the Philippines' relationship with New Spain and Asia. The

⁵⁰ J.M. Mancini, *Art and War in the Pacific World: Making, Breaking, and Taking from Anson's Voyage to the Philippine-American War* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 120.

Philippine trade allowed Spanish and Mexican merchants to access centuries-old trade networks linking China, Japan, Korea, and other kingdoms in Southeast Asia. The Chinese had long been



Figure 1.1. Dutch cartographer Joan Vinckeboons produced the sixteenth-century map depicting the Californias as an island. Joan Vinckeboons, *Map of California*, circa 1650. *Library of Congress*, accessed September 28, 2022. <https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3291s.mf000074/?r=-0.09,-0.04,1.18,0.793,0>.

drawn to the Philippines to acquire valuable resources like tortoiseshell, pearls, and wax. Raw silks, ivory, pearls, precious stones, spices, porcelains, and many other goods flowed into the Philippines from China, Siam, Cambodia, the Moluccas, Japan, and Korea. For nearly two-hundred fifty years, Manila annually dispatched two oversized galleons, each packed with several hundred tons of merchandise destined for markets in Acapulco. Accessing China, the world's largest economy at the time, offered unprecedented wealth and power for anyone able to control the flow of luxurious silks, porcelains, spices, and other goods.⁵¹ By the seventeenth

⁵¹ Cameron La Follette and Douglas Duer, "Views Across the Pacific: The Galleon Trade and Its Traces in Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 119, 2 (Summer 2018), 162.

century, Spanish colonialism in the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean came to be defined by uninterrupted commerce with New Spain. The enormous potential profits from trade made nearly all economic activity within the archipelago center around the annual departure and return of the Naos, from lumbering for shipbuilding to sailing them across tremendous distances. As a result, from the sixteenth century, Spain's activities in the Pacific Ocean principally revolved around mercantile extraction and the security of transpacific routes.

For Spain, the Philippines served as an essential defensive barrier against potential European threats in Asia and protected its territories in New Spain and South America. From the seventeenth century, Spain drew geographic boundaries tying terrestrial holdings in the Americas with the Pacific Ocean.⁵² The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) between the crowns of Spain and Portugal separated respective colonial spheres along a line of longitude that cut across the Atlantic Ocean. Still, it never clarified where that line extended when encompassing the globe into Asia and the Pacific Ocean. As a result, Spain's westward expansion from Mexico to locate the Spice Islands conflicted with the eastwardly moving Portuguese. Thus, it became necessary to determine where precisely the line of demarcation resided.⁵³ Spanish administrators reframed the archipelago as part of the Pacific Ocean against Portugal's claims to all of Asia to justify claims to the Philippines.⁵⁴ Commerce and financial support from New Spain, the *situado*,

⁵² Rainer F. Buschmann, Edward R. Slack Jr., and James B. Tueller, *Navigating the Spanish Lake: The Pacific in the Iberian World, 1521-1898* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 3.

⁵³ Ricardo Padrón, "A Sea of Denial: The Early Modern Spanish Invention of the Pacific Rim," *Hispanic Review* 77, 1 (Winter 2009), 11.

⁵⁴ The Treaty of Tordesillas established a line of demarcation from north to south one-hundred leagues west of Cape Verde Islands. Spain received exclusive rights to lands west of the line and Portugal to the east. The line of demarcation failed to account for the Pacific Ocean. See, Rainer F. Buschmann, *Iberian Visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507-1899* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

reinforced the idea that islands in the Pacific Ocean and the Philippines were extensions of the Americas. Since the sixteenth century, Nao commerce dominated Spain's colonial relationship with the Philippines. As Stephanie J. Mawson states, "Ever afterwards, the history of the archipelago was defined by its orientation towards the Pacific."⁵⁵ As a result of the emphasis on commerce, colonization on the islands differed markedly from other parts of the Spanish empire.

Creole and *peninsular* elites in New Spain typically obtained their wealth from agricultural exploitation rather than trade. The preference for commerce resulted from the Spanish authorities needing to acquire funds in specie to finance military defense against European and Asian rivals and social conflict between elites to access wealth in the Philippines.⁵⁶ Outside commercial opportunities afforded by the Manila galleon trade, Spain had limited success in attracting permanent Spanish residents to the Philippines. Forced deportations of criminals and military impressments from Spain and Mexico City to the Philippines formed a significant part of how the Spanish crown extended power into the Pacific Ocean by ensuring a steady stream of Spaniards to the islands.⁵⁷ Only the profits from the Nao trade, on which the entire Spanish community came to depend, could encourage people to reside on the archipelago permanently and voluntarily. Additionally, to fund military defense in the Philippines, administrators needed funds. Rather than extract tribute and taxes by goods paid in kind, Filipinos had to pay taxes in cash to fund military defense. The reliance on specie made

⁵⁵ Stephanie J. Mawson, "Convicts or *Conquistadores*?: Spanish Soldiers in the Seventeenth-Century Pacific," *Past & Present* 232, 1 (August 2016), 87.

⁵⁶ José L. Gasch-Tomás, *The Atlantic World and the Manila Galleons: Circulations, Market, and Consumption of Asian Goods in the Spanish Empire, 1565-1650* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 51-55.

⁵⁷ Stephanie J. Mawson, "Unruly Plebians and the *Forzado System*: Convict Transportation between New Spain and the Philippines during the Seventeenth Century," *Revista de Indias* 73, 259 (2013), 693-730.

commerce more appealing to Filipino farmers and residents as it was much more profitable than agriculture. As a result of the need for taxes paid in specie, economic activity in the Philippines primarily revolved around industries, directly and indirectly, related to transpacific commerce. As Tatiana Seijas summarizes, the Naos fostered manufacturing, promoted regional trade, and enabled diverse people beyond the Spanish to participate in a monetized economy. It was not only about trade but rather “an opportunity to profit from engaging in the work of empire.”⁵⁸ Underlying the Naos’ commerce was a complex, multifaceted system, requiring a bureaucracy to staff ships, embark goods and provisions, contract to farmers and merchants for provision ships, laborers to provide food and shelter to officials, soldiers, and private traders, and jobs within dockers, artisans, and small producers to outfit commercial centers like Manila and Acapulco.⁵⁹

Officials in the Philippines even modeled their colonial institutions on prior experiences in Mexico and adopted policies to suit the unique conditions of the islands. The crown, for example, retained Native elites as intermediaries and employed *Cabezas de barangay* (village heads) to exercise systems of personal service like *polos y servicios*, modeled on the *repartimiento*, or forty-day mandatory labor assignments.⁶⁰ For much of the early modern era, the islands were subject to administrators in Mexico City. At the same time, most colonial officials originated from New Spain or spent their early careers there. *Peninsular* residents of the Philippines never accounted for more than 4,000, while most Spanish speakers were individuals

⁵⁸ Tatiana Seijas, “Inns, Mules, and Hardtack for the Voyage: the Local Economy of the Manila Galleon in Mexico,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, 1 (2016), 56.

⁵⁹ Seijas, “Inns, Mules, and Hardtack for the Voyage,” 57-58.

⁶⁰ Eva Maria Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765-1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 38.

born in Mexico, primarily *creoles*.⁶¹ As Edward R. Slack, Jr. states, “Contrary to popular belief, the Philippines were more a colony of New Spain (Nueva España) than of ‘Old Spain’ before the nineteenth century.”⁶²

Historians have long emphasized how the Philippines functioned more as an extension of New Spain than as a colony of Spain. For instance, the viceroyalty of New Spain supplied financial resources, soldiers, and colonial administrators, while Mexican merchants assumed control over the Manila-Acapulco trade.⁶³ As a result, the Philippines was, notionally and practically, an extension of New Spain. The islands’ dependence on commerce made securing trade routes to and from the islands more necessary. The Manila-Acapulco route from the sixteenth century underpinned the economic and political life of the islands. As Katharine Bjork argues, the dynamics of the global trade of Asian products and the interactions between elite interests between the Philippines and New Spain was the primary factor that ensured the longevity of Spain’s presence on the islands.⁶⁴ The commercial relationship between merchants in the Philippines and New Spain was central to maintaining Spain’s continued presence in Asia. Early attempts at agriculture and mineral extraction failed because of the minor Spanish

⁶¹ Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World*, 40 and 53.

⁶² Edward R. Slack, Jr., “Orientalizing New Spain: Perspectives on Asian Influence in Colonial Mexico,” *Análisis* 15, 43 (January-April 2012), 98.

⁶³ Eva Maria Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765-1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Rainer F. Buschmann, *Iberian Visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507-1899* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014); Meha Priyadarshini, *Chinese Porcelain in Colonial Mexico: The Material Worlds of an Early Modern Trade* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018); Katharine Bjork, “The Link that Kept the Philippines Spanish: Mexican Merchant Interests and the Manila Trade, 1571-1815,” *Journal of World History* 9, 1 (Spring 1998); Stephanie Mawson, “Unruly Plebians and the *Forzado System*: Convict Transportation between New Spain and the Philippines during the Seventeenth Century,” *Revista de Indias* 73, 259 (2013).

⁶⁴ Katharine Bjork, “The Link that Kept the Philippines Spanish: Mexican Merchant Interests and the Manila Trade, 1571-1815,” *Journal of World History* 9, 1 (Spring 1998), 28.



Figure 1.2. Map of the Pacific Ocean and its surrounding territories in the Americas, Asia, and Oceania in the sixteenth century. Abraham Ortelius, *Maris Pacifici*, 1589, Wikimedia Commons, accessed April 27, 2021, <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4e/Ortelius - Maris Pacifici 1589.jpg>

population and the high transport costs to markets in Europe and the Americas. Instead, the Philippines shifted to Asian trade, becoming the broker between American demand for Asian commodities and Chinese demand for silver.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the intersecting interests among Mexican and Manila merchants and colonial officials on the archipelago fostered a close relationship between the islands and New Spain.

The Manila trade also significantly shaped colonial relationships within the Philippines itself. The crown supported commerce and permitted special exemptions for Chinese and Indian

⁶⁵ Bjork, “The Link that Kept the Philippines Spanish,” 36-37.

traders entering Manila but banned vessels sailing flags of non-Iberian European nations. Royal policies authorized junk traders from southern China to unload goods for sale in Manila, and the Chinese were allowed to maintain permanent residences outside the city's Extremadura in the *Parian*. For the next few centuries, a growing community of Chinese immigrants made the community their home and became an essential feature of commercial life in Manila. Merchants in the *Parian* issued credit to Spanish and Filipino residents and sold products at low prices, contributing to the thriving Manila galleon trade.⁶⁶ Counterparts to *Parian* can be found in provinces in New Spain like Guerrero, Jalisco, and Michoacán and cities such as Mexico City, Puebla, and Veracruz, where some 40,000 to 60,000 Asian people (*chinos*), primarily Filipinos but also Chinese mestizos (*mestizos de Sangley*), and ethnic Chinese, immigrated after work aboard the galleons. However, the foreign Chinese presence in New Spain often provoked tensions. In 1635, complaints to the viceroy against barbers utilizing enslaved Asians, which competed with apprentices, led authorities to banish Asian barbershops from the Plaza Mayor. Twelve *chino* barbers received shop licenses to conduct business outside Mexico City's Extremadura.⁶⁷ Armenian merchants, as well, were active in trade with the archipelago. Like the Chinese, Spanish policies granted favorable status to Armenian merchants and allowed them to settle in their district in Manila. English and Dutch traders regularly evaded trade prohibitions by employing Chinese and Armenian intermediaries or sailing under Asian and Portuguese flags.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Joshua Kueh, "Adaptive Strategies of Parian Chinese Fictive Kinship and Credit in Seventeenth-Century Manila," *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 61, 3 (2013), 371-372.

⁶⁷ Edward J. Slack, Jr., "Sinifying New Spain: Cathay's Influence on Colonial Mexico via the *Nao de China*," in *The Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Walton Look Lai and Tan Chee-Beng (Leiden: Brill Press, 2010), 8-9 and 14.

From the late seventeenth century, British trading companies in Madras conducted thriving commerce with Manila, using Armenian and Indian ships to import goods into the Philippines and evade Spanish restrictions on trade with European nations.⁶⁹ Authorities in Manila even arrested several Armenian smugglers found to have been illegally loading merchandise aboard the annual galleons.⁷⁰

The potential for excessive profits in trade with New Spain encouraged regular abuse of trade restrictions among diverse people. Royal regulations restricted imports to three hundred tons per ship, with the value of goods not to exceed 250,000 pesos imported into New Spain. Mexican, Spanish, and Philippine merchants regularly circumvented these limits by undervaluing their cargo on invoices or smuggling goods aboard the galleon. Financing the lucrative trade relied on the large quantities of silver extracted from mines in New Spain and Peru, which, according to crown policy, was restricted to 500,000 pesos annually. However, in 1743, the English privateer George Anson captured one of the Naos, the *Covadonga*, returning from Acapulco near Cabo de Espiritu Santo in the Philippines and took possession of 1,313,843 pesos in coined silver and 35,862 ounces of silver bullion, a value nearly four times the annual quota.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Raquel A.G. Reyes, "Flaunting It: How the Galleon Trade Made Manila, circa 1571-1800," *Early America Studies* 15, 4 (Fall 2017), 691.

⁶⁹ Serafin D. Quiason, *The English "Country Trade" with the Philippines, 1644-1765* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1966), 72-73; For a more complete analysis of India's trade with Manila, see, Weng Eang Cheong, "Changing the Rules of the Game: The India-Manila Trade, 1785-1809," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 1, 2 (September 1970).

⁷⁰ Treatise on state of the islands, Manila, August 30, 1788, Box 6, Document 79, Philippine Commerce and the Manila Galleon Collection, 1769-1830, BANC.

⁷¹ Nicholas P. Cushner, "Manila-Andalusia Trade Rivalry in the Early Bourbon Period," *Philippine Studies* 8, 3 (July 1960), 546-549.

The regular abuse of quotas and the massive outflow of silver from Mexico and Peru instigated numerous proposals from Spanish authorities to abandon the Philippines. In 1565, when the Spanish arrived in the archipelago, Spain had already established a thriving trade in the Atlantic Ocean with New Spain and South America. Ports in New Spain like Portobello and Veracruz and Peru's Cartagena exported tobacco, indigo, cacao, and precious metals to Spain in exchange for manufactured goods. Raw silk and non-luxury goods like cast-iron pots, iron sheets, and glass bottles manufactured in Asia and imported into Acapulco undersold similar merchandise shipped from Cádiz and Seville.⁷² All sectors of colonial society consumed Asian goods. According to Mariano Bonialian, Mexican elites considered European products more exquisite, better quality, and expensive, while Asian-made ones were perceived as cheap and for the "gente pobre." Although Chinese silks and other fabrics were consumed as luxury items, there were differing qualities among merchandise, making certain ones more accessible for diverse social groups. Some Chinese silks and fabrics were produced for the consumption of popular classes.⁷³ Established merchant guilds in Spain protested to the Council of the Indies and the crown and successfully lobbied for restrictions on the galleons to safeguard domestic manufacturers. In 1587, the crown banned Peru from trade in Acapulco and the importation, at least legally, of Asian goods brought by the Manila galleons.⁷⁴ According to Benito Legardo, Jr., New Spain remained a large market for silk, manufactured goods, and other products from Asia

⁷² Cushner, "Manila-Andalusia Trade Rivarly," 545-546.

⁷³ Mariano Bonialian, *China en la América colonial: Bienes, mercados, comercio y cultura del consumo desde México hasta Buenos Aires* (Mexico City: Editorial Biblios, 2014), 31 and 116.

⁷⁴ William Lytle Schurz, "Mexico, Peru, and the Manila Galleon," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 1, 4 (November 1918), 397.

despite protests from Cádiz and Seville merchants because Mexico ruled the Philippines, and sweeping prohibitions would sever the administrative link to the colony.⁷⁵ Katharine Bjork agrees, suggesting that the crown tolerated Manila's trade on the grounds of maintaining the strategically important Philippines and would have likely abolished the galleons if not for the non-compliance of New Spain.⁷⁶

Since the sixteenth century, merchants in Mexico City dominated trade aboard the Manila galleons. In 1604, the crown established laws regulating the distribution of lading space aboard the Naos or the *boletas*. Only Spanish colonists intending to remain in the Philippines for at least eight years could load cargo aboard the Naos. The Crown banned Mexican and Peruvian merchants from directly or indirectly trading in Manila.⁷⁷ The system divided the Naos's cargo holds into equal parts for distribution to Manila's *vecinos*, with the remaining spaces sold off to merchants. The royal treasury subsequently levied taxes on goods upon arrival in Acapulco. However, the system remained open to abuse. Since the early decades, a thriving market for *boletas* quickly emerged. Mexican, Peruvian, and Chinese merchants looking to profit off Asian trade dispatched agents to Manila to acquire cargo space aboard the Naos through purchase or annual allotment.⁷⁸ Impoverished *creoles* and soldiers regularly sold their *boletas* to agents to avoid the year-long delay for payment from goods sold in Acapulco, which contributed to the

⁷⁵ Benito Legardo, Jr., "Two and a Half Centuries of the Galleon Trade," *Philippine Studies* 3, 4 (December 1955), 354-355.

⁷⁶ Bjork, "The Link that Kept the Philippines Spanish, 39-40.

⁷⁷ Cushner, "Manila-Andalusia Trade Rivarly," 546.

⁷⁸ María del Carmen Yuste López, "La percepción del comercio transpacífico en el pensamiento económico español del siglo XVIII: Los escritos de fray Iñigo Abbad y Lasierra," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 1 (2015), 24.

Naos' subordination to Mexican merchant interests. Most of the profits from the Naos' trade were concentrated in the hands of a few traders in Manila and a substantially more significant number of merchants in New Spain. The most substantial profits were found in New Spain owing to the scarcity and higher rate of return for Asian products and manufactured goods there.⁷⁹ Mexican merchants held considerably more capital than their counterparts in the Philippines and had direct access to New Spain's market. Authorities in Manila frequently complained that commerce disproportionately benefited Mexico City.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the Philippines' economy and the Spanish population in the archipelago primarily depended on the successful departure and return of the annual Naos to and from New Spain.

The Philippines' central dependence on the Manila galleon commerce with New Spain resulted in heightened concerns about the security of the route, as unsuccessful voyages could usher in massive political and economic disruptions for the archipelago. From the sixteenth to nineteenth century, the Manila galleons were three-masted ships constructed from hardwoods lumbered from the Philippines, costing tens of thousands of pesos. They had a capacity of nearly 2,000 tons and carried up to five hundred crew members and passengers. At the same time, the value of the cargo averaged roughly 2 million pesos at the Manila galleon trade's height in the eighteenth century.⁸¹ The ships were expensive to construct, and the cargo was worth massive sums, meaning the loss of a single ship could be disastrous. Although the profits from the Philippine trade were enormous, the journey aboard the galleons took a considerable toll on passengers and

⁷⁹ Bjork, "The Link that kept the Philippines Spanish," 4.

⁸⁰ Treatise on the Decline of the Islands, Manila, October 1788, Box 6, Document 80m, Philippine Commerce and the Manila Galleon Collection, 1769-1830, BANC.

⁸¹ See, William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1939); Also, see, Oskar Hermann Christian Spate, *The Spanish Lake* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1979).

crews. The westward voyage followed the relatively stable trans-Pacific currents flowing along the globe's equator. Sailors could expect to reach landfall in the Mariana Islands in about two months before continuing a one-month trip to Manila. However, the eastward journey was a treacherous passage. After departing Cavité, the galleons passed through a maze of archipelagos, heavy currents, invisible shoals, and low-lying islands for nearly a month before passing the Embocadero, the modern-day Straits of San Bernardino, a route claiming the majority of the thirty shipwrecks throughout the trade's existence.⁸² From there, crews would not see land for months after catching the Kuroshio Current passing Taiwan and Japan. Once the ship reached the North Pacific Ocean, crews contended with high waves, torrential rainfalls, impenetrable fog, and massive sea swells. Severe weather damaged masts, sails, and other critical tools for navigating the open ocean, necessitating basic repairs far from any port. The luckiest ships arrived in Acapulco within four months, while the majority endured between six to eight months on average, sometimes longer.⁸³ The longer time spent at sea, the higher the risks for passengers on board. In 1657, the *San José* failed to arrive timely in Acapulco. Some months later, sailors spotted the galleon, which departed nearly a year ago, drifting off the coast north of Acapulco; the cargo was undisturbed, and all the crew and passengers deceased.⁸⁴ Disease, hunger, and unsanitary conditions aboard ships contributed to substantially high mortality rates. Crews and passengers consumed rancid, vermin-infested foods, drank stagnant water, and were often inadequately prepared for the frigid temperatures of the North Pacific Ocean.

⁸² La Follette and Duer, "Views Across the Pacific," 169.

⁸³ La Follette and Duer, "Views Across the Pacific," 169.

⁸⁴ Miguel Luque-Talaván, "Oceanic Deaths Aboard the Manila Galleon," *The MUA Collection*, accessed September 15, 2022, <http://www.themua.org/collections/items/show/1605>.

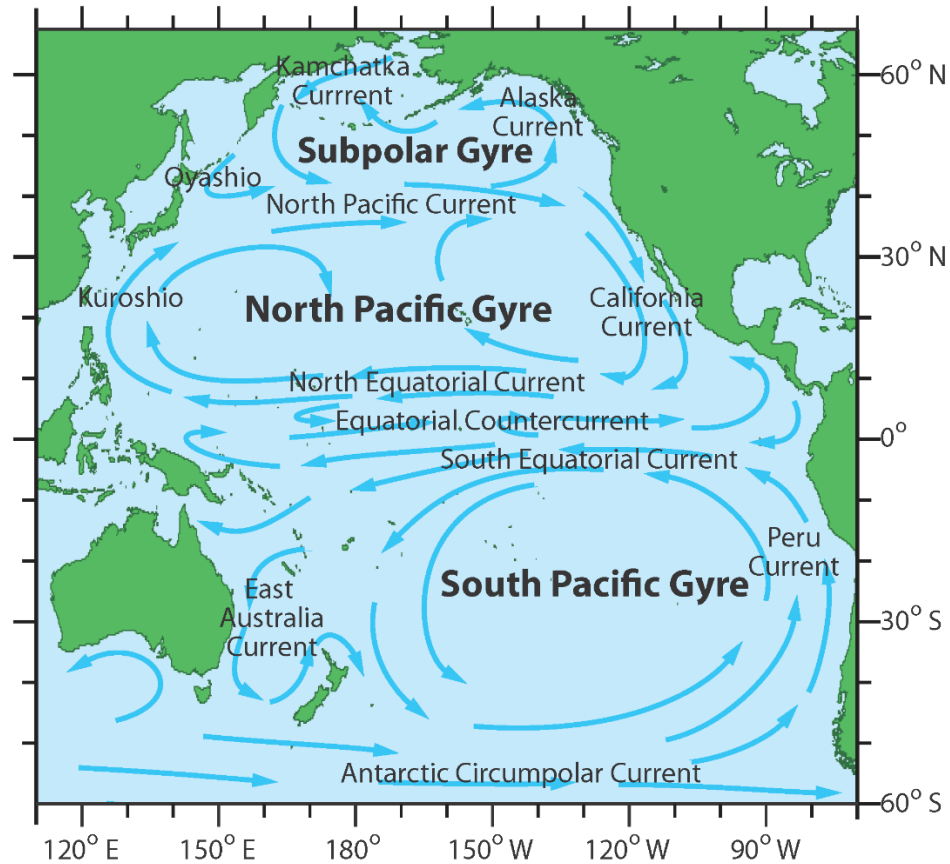


Figure 1.3. Map of Pacific Ocean currents. *Major Currents*, Ocean Tracks, accessed September 28, 2022. <https://oceantracks.org/library/the-north-pacific-ocean/major-currents>.

Alta California and the Defense of the Spanish Pacific

Authorities were concerned about the considerably high mortality rates, but the defensive security of the Manila-Acapulco route provided the main impetus for establishing a safe harbor. In the sixteenth century, European privateers lured by the potential fortune of capturing one of Spain's treasure ships began stalking the routes between the Philippines and New Spain. From 1577 to 1579, English privateer Francis Drake (1540-1596) sailed the Pacific Ocean from the Straits of Magellan and engaged in a campaign of seizing Spanish ships and raiding Chilean and

Peruvian ports. He later landed on an unidentified location on the Alta California coast, lying in wait to ambush the Manila galleon.⁸⁵ However, Drake failed to sight the Manila galleon, but the looming threat of piracy alarmed authorities in New Spain. In 1587, a decade later, the fears of the catastrophic loss of the ship were realized when the Englishman Thomas Cavendish (1560-1592) captured the *Santa Ana* near Cabo San Lucas. The haul amounted to over one million silver coins and a fortune in silks, jewelry, and other valuables. Cavendish reportedly debarked the crew, sending them ashore and setting fire to the ship before sailing back to England with a handsome prize via the Pacific Ocean.⁸⁶ The general dangers of the long-distance voyage from Manila to Acapulco and the vulnerability of the Naos to predatory English ships heightened the urgency to secure the Pacific Ocean. By the close of the eighteenth century, the Jesuits and later the Dominicans and Franciscans would establish a chain of forty missions along the coast from the peninsula in Baja California to San Francisco Bay in Alta California. Installing the mission system in the Californias was partly motivated by the necessity of supplying fresh fruits and vegetables to the galleons and resting ailing travelers and crews, but, most importantly, defending Spain's only route to Asia.⁸⁷ Transpacific trade was central to Spain's activities in the Philippines and profoundly influenced Alta California's relationship with the Pacific Ocean, situating the region within the geography of the Manila galleons.

⁸⁵ Scholars have identified several possible places Drake landed: Bodega Bay, Tomales Bay, San Francisco Bay, Trinidad Head, and the Channel Islands in modern-day California and Whale Cove and Coos Bay in Oregon; See, Harry Kelsey, "Did Francis Drake Really Visit California?," *Western Historical Quarterly* 21, 4 (November 1990), 444-462.

⁸⁶ Iris H.W. Engstrand, "Seekers of the 'Northern Mystery': European Exploration of California and the Pacific," *California History* 76, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1997), 89-90.

⁸⁷ Marcos A. Alamazán, "The Manila Galleon," *Artes de México* 143 (1971), 27-28.

The earliest voyages to explore the Californias were conducted from the Philippines and aboard the Naos. In 1587, Pedro de Unamuno and a crew of Spanish and Filipino sailors sailed from the Philippines. They anchored in Morro Bay near Santa Barbara, where he noted the large quantity of fish and trees suitable for masts and firewood.⁸⁸ In 1595, Portuguese navigator Sebastián Cermeño sailed again from Manila on the *San Agustín* with a disassembled longboat on the deck. He anchored at Point Reyes in northern Alta California and prepared to assemble the small ship on the beach to survey the coast. Later, a sudden storm caused the *San Agustín* to shipwreck, pulling the one-hundred thirty tons of precious cargo to the bottom of the bay. For over a month, the crew had interacted peaceably with the local Miwok people, but conflicts quickly emerged over the salvage of the *San Agustín* and its cargo. Cermeño states,

While they were there, there came twenty more Indians who lived on the beach near where the launch was being made at the camp. These had gone away because they had been deprived of some wood they had taken which had come from the wreck of the ship, and they defended themselves with their bows and arrows against the Captain and Don García de Paredes and the pilot, Juan de Morgana, who had gone to take the wood away from them and were running to the aid of our side.⁸⁹

The local Miwok salvaged parts of the ship and cargo washing near Port Reyes. Still, confrontations occurred as the Spanish sailors required material to re-outfit the longboat, the *San Buenaventura*, for the long voyage south. Cermeño continued to survey and map the coast, including Monterey Bay, while sailing to Acapulco, where authorities reprimanded him for losing the *San Agustín*. The cargo owners threatened to sue him for damages.⁹⁰ For some time,

⁸⁸ Pedro de Unamuno, "The Voyage of Pedro de Unamuno to California in 1587," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 2, 2 (July 1923), 148.

⁸⁹ Sebastián Rodríguez Cermeño, "The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño in 1595," edited by Henry R. Wagner, *California Historical Society Quarterly* 3, 1 (April 1924), 23.

⁹⁰ Engstrand, "Seekers of the 'Northern Mystery,' 90.

local Miwok and Pomo seemed to have used salvaged wood and iron spikes from the *San Agustín* and collected broken pieces of porcelain washing ashore.⁹¹

Later in 1602, Spanish merchant Sebastián Vizcaíno (1548-1624) returned to Point Reyes with Francisco Bolanos, a sailor who had been aboard the *San Agustín*. Bolanos claimed that a quantity of wax and several cases of silks recovered from the bay were hidden on the beach.⁹² Poor weather prevented Vizcaíno from landing on shore, and the treasure remained lost in the bay.⁹³ Heading south to Catalina Island, the expedition met a woman from a nearby Tongva village possessing fragments of Chinese silk. The villagers indicated the pieces were from a ship wrecked on the coast further north and agreed to take Vizcaíno to the location.⁹⁴ A strong headwind prevented the vessel from locating the wreckage, but the description matches the fate of the *San Agustín*. In Monterey, Vizcaíno noted that bay as an ideal harbor for the galleons with sufficient supplies of water, game, wild birds, and fish and plentiful varieties of trees for masts and shipbuilding, which had become an unofficial waystation for galleon sailors.⁹⁵ In 1611, the crown appropriated 20,000 pesos to outfit a port in Monterey. Vizcaíno rejected the plan and insisted on establishing one closer to the Philippines. Later that year, he used the funds to build

⁹¹ Robert Fleming Heizer, "Archaeological Evidence of Sebastian Rodriguez Cermeño's Visit in 1595," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 20, 4 (December 1941), 322-324.

⁹² Antonio de la Ascensión, *Relación del Descubrimiento que se hizo en la mar del sur, desde el Puerto de Acapulco, hasta mas adelantes del Cabo Mendocino, 1602*, Hill Collection of Pacific Voyages, Geisel Library, Special Collections & Archives, UC San Diego, La Jolla, California [SC&A].

⁹³ Antonio de la Ascensión, "A Brief Report of the Discovery of the South Sea, 1602-1603," in *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest, 1542-1706*, edited by Herbert E. Bolton (New York: C. Scriber's Sons, 1916), 120.

⁹⁴ Sebastián Vizcaíno, "Diary of Sebastián Vizcaino, 1602-1603," in *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest*, 85-86.

⁹⁵ Ascensión, "A Brief Report of the Discovery of the South Sea," in *Spanish Explorations in the Southwest*, 120.

the short-lived Spanish embassy in the Japanese port of Uruga in Kanagawa Prefecture. However, Vizcaíno's disregard for Japanese court etiquette led the shogun Tokugawa Hidetada (1581-1632) to sever the arrangement two years later summarily. Furthermore, Philippine authorities, threatened by the possible erosion of their monopoly on trade with Japan, opposed Vizcaíno's embassy from the onset.⁹⁶ Manila merchants preferred the more easterly port in Monterey as the geographic distance represented less of a threat to the galleon's monopoly on trade. However, with the threat of English piracy mostly abated, the crown abandoned plans to sponsor more expeditions to the Californias for nearly a century.

When renewed efforts to colonize the Californias commenced in the late seventeenth century, maritime routes continued to define how Spain interacted with its coastal province. In 1684, Isidro Antondo (1639-1689), then governor of Sinaloa, and Jesuit missionary Eusebio Kino (1645-1711) embarked on a schooner from Sonora, along with twenty-nine soldiers and nine Yaqui, to establish a permanent Spanish settlement on the Baja California peninsula.⁹⁷ The plan was two-fold: to evangelize the population of Native Californians and create a safe port for the passing Naos from the Philippines. The Jesuits aimed to develop a thriving agricultural community on the peninsula to supply fresh food and water to the galleons and augment the financial base for the developing mission system with regular trade with the Philippines.⁹⁸ Jesuit missions in Sonora developed in concert with their counterparts on the peninsula to one day

⁹⁶ See, James Main Dixon, "Early Mexican and Californian Relations with Japan," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 8, 3 (1911), 221-225.

⁹⁷ Eusebio Francisco Kino, "Eusebio Kino to Viceroy of New Spain," in *Kino's Plan for the Development of Pimería Alta, Arizona, and Upper California: A Report to the Mexican Viceroy*, edited by Ernest J. Burrus, S.J. (Tucson: Arizona Pioneer's Historical Society, 1961), 28-29.

⁹⁸ Kino, "Eusebio Kino to Viceroy of New Spain," 28-29.

facilitate communication among them by land. Kino hoped to establish a route from the Colorado and Gila Rivers to connect them to Pimería Alta.⁹⁹ Less than a year later, the colony was abandoned owing to the peninsula's aridity and insufficient supplies. Disappointed with the outcome, authorities in Mexico City refused to incur further expenses to colonize the Californias.¹⁰⁰ But, in 1697, Juan María Salvatierra (1648-1717) acquired a royal license to establish missions in Baja California, at the expense of the Jesuits and assisted by a generous donation from private individuals, the Pious Fund of the Californias.¹⁰¹ The same year, Salvatierra established the peninsula's first permanent mission, Nuestra Señora de Loreto Conchó, in Loreto, initiating Spain's enduring presence. Over the next six decades, the Jesuits would construct seventeen missions stretching from San José del Cabo in the south to San Fernando de Velicatá in the north. Throughout the period, the Jesuit presence in Baja California came to rely considerably on supplies from the mainland in Sonora, where the unreliability of weather patterns made voyages treacherous.¹⁰² David Weber estimates that an average of one ship per year disappeared or retreated due to the cyclonic winds present in the

⁹⁹ Julia Bendímez Patterson, Antonio Porcayo Michelini, and Lee M. Panich, "The Missions and Camino Real of Baja California: A Binational View," *Journal of the California Missions Foundation* 31, 1 (2016), 125.

¹⁰⁰ By 1685, the Crown had spent approximately 225,400 pesos on all previous expeditions to the Californias; See, Conde de Moctezuma, "The Mexican Viceroy's 1697 Authorization for Salvatierra's Conquest of California," in *Jesuit Relations: Baja California, 1716-1762*, edited by Ernest J. Burrus (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1984), 23.

¹⁰¹ Charles E. Chapman, "The Jesuits in Baja California, 1697-1768," *The Catholic Historical Review* 6, 1 (April 1920), 46-48.

¹⁰² Isidro Antondo, "Admiral Don Isidro Antondo to Viceroy de la Cerda y Aragón, 1683," *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain: The Californias and Sinaloa-Sonora, 1700-1765, Volume 2, Part 1*, edited by Charles W. Polzer and Thomas E. Sheridan (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997), 23-24.

Gulf of California.¹⁰³ The Spanish and Jesuit efforts in Baja California followed similar patterns exhibited in the previous centuries, where encounters with the peninsula and colonial expansion primarily related to Spain's maritime activities.

The Jesuit's relative success in creating a sustainable mission system situated Baja California within the geography of the Manila galleon traffic. As William Lytle Schurz indicates, during the late seventeenth century, the principal impulse for occupying the peninsula came from the Philippines.¹⁰⁴ The Philippine economy's near-exclusive dependence on the galleons' arrival and departure from Acapulco increased motivation to locate a secure port for repair and refreshment. The loss of a single ship could precipitate financial ruin for the colony, so dependent it was on the trade. In 1734, the Philippine governor directed the Nao captains to examine the Baja California coast for a potential port. One of the galleons, the *Cavadonga*, anchored at the Bay of San Bernabé, on the southern tip of the peninsula, where the Jesuits had built a mission, San José de Cabo, four years before. The ship arrived with only enough water for a single day and nearly devoid of any food, with most sailors being sick from nutritional disorders like scurvy and beriberi. The Jesuits granted the captain one hundred forty livestock, several game birds, fruits and vegetables, and other provisions.¹⁰⁵ The following year, the galleon, *San Cristóbal*, facing similar dire circumstances, landed in San Bernabé, unaware of the rebellion sweeping across the southern missions.¹⁰⁶ Gerónimo, the leader of the revolting Pericú,

¹⁰³ Francis J. Weber, "Jesuit Mission in Baja California," *The Americas* 23, 4 (April 1967), 418.

¹⁰⁴ William Lytle Schurz, "The Manila Galleon and California," *The Southwest Historical Quarterly* 21, 2 (October 1917), 120-121.

¹⁰⁵ Schurz, "The Manila Galleon and California," 121.

aware the sailors would essentially be defenseless, planned to capture the ship. He intended to trick the *San Cristobal's* captain into anchoring in the bay. The captain approached suspiciously, and a brief skirmish ensued on shore, killing thirteen sailors and injuring several Pericú.¹⁰⁷ In 1737, the Jesuits installed a presidio near Capo San Lucas to prevent another uprising and to protect future ships from danger.¹⁰⁸ Until the Jesuit expulsion in 1767, they regularly encouraged the Naos to stop in San Bernabé. According to Hubert Bancroft, the Jesuits created “quite a lively trade” with the Manila galleons and pearl-fishers on the coast.¹⁰⁹ A fellow Jesuit, Pedro Murillo Velarde (1696-1753), even commented that the motivation for supplying the Naos had less to do with Christian charity than the profits from the trade.¹¹⁰ The connections forged between the missions and the Manila galleons established a pattern that came to define Spain’s presence in the Californias, involving the lands contained within its terrestrial boundaries and the maritime spaces beyond its coast.

The trend continued to influence the new colonization phase when the Franciscans arrived in Alta California decades later. In 1767, the Spanish Crown, believing the Jesuits had acquired too much wealth and influence in New Spain and South America, ordered the expulsion of all Jesuits from Spain’s territories. In Baja California, Jesuit missions and property were

¹⁰⁶ From 1734-1737, Pericú and Guaycura staged a revolt against the Jesuits at the missions La Paz, Santiago, and San José del Cabo, killing two missionaries; See, Sigismundo Taraval, *Indian Uprising in Lower California, 1734-1737*, edited by Marguerite Eyer Wilbur (New York: Quivira Society Publications, 1931).

¹⁰⁷ Mateo de Zumalde, “Indian raid on the Manila Galleon, 1735,” in *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain*, 67-72.

¹⁰⁸ Sigismundo Taraval, *Indian Uprising in Lower California, 1734-1737*, 18-19.

¹⁰⁹ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States and Texas, 1531-1800* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Company, 1884), 407.

¹¹⁰ Schurz, “The Manila Galleon and California,” 122.

subsequently transferred to the Franciscans. In addition to taking charge of the peninsula, the Franciscans helped expand the California frontier northward into Alta California. Two years later, soldiers, sailors, missionaries, and Baja California auxiliaries departed Cabo San Lucas in Baja California to initiate a new thrust of colonization in Alta California, the so-called “Sacred Expedition.” Soldiers and sailors left the peninsula on a ship under Governor Gaspar de Portolá (1716-1786). Meanwhile, Junípero Serra, in the company of Franciscan missionaries and Native Baja Californians, traveled by land toward San Diego. However, both journeys were challenging due to inadequate supplies and an unforgiving environment. The sea expedition encountered storms and contrary winds while venturing out from peninsular California into the harsh and unpredictable waters of the Pacific Ocean. By arrival, significant numbers of sailors had perished on the route, and those who survived suffered from scurvy, leaving them near death. One of the ships, the *San Carlos*, misread the charts and fell off course, losing several weeks on the unfamiliar coastline.¹¹¹ Except for Captain Juan Pérez (1725-1775), only two crew aboard the *San Carlos* were healthy enough to make berth in the harbor upon arrival.¹¹² Most of the crew perished from scurvy and disease in the subsequent days. Among them were two Filipino creoles, Agustín Fernández, and Mateo Francisco, recent sailors transferred from Cavité in the Philippines to serve in San Blas.¹¹³ Portolá piloting the *Sonora* may have arrived with much less difficulty. Still, even then, most of the crew had shown symptoms of scurvy, which claimed the

¹¹¹ José de Gálvez to Junípero Serra, Enero 26, 1769, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 17, Documents Relating to the Missions of the Californias, 1768-1802, BANC, 1-2.

¹¹² Juan Crespí to Juan Andrés, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 26, Documents Relating to the Missions of the Californias, BANC, 2-3.

¹¹³ Vicente Vila’s Journal aboard the *San Carlos* in Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Diego Mission* (San Francisco: James H. Barry Company, 1920), 13; Fernández and Francisco were likely creoles from Manila.



Figure 1.5. D.M. Checkley and J.A. Barth, Diagram of California Current System, 2009. The map shows the path of the California current flowing from the Pacific Northwest to Baja California.¹¹⁴

lives of three Catalonian volunteers enlisted to serve at the future presidio in San Diego. Despite the financial and human costs, throughout the remainder of Spain's rule, colonization in Alta California depended heavily on maritime transport. Although the relative distance from Cabo San Lucas to San Diego was not extraordinary, contrary winds and the southward-moving California Current were better suited for ships navigating from the north toward Acapulco, as the Naos had done for centuries. Journeys northward required more effort, necessitating a swing

Indigenous populations in the Philippines were called *Indios* or *Indios Luzones*, whereas Spanish creoles on the islands were called *Philipinos*.

¹¹⁴ D.M Checkley and Barth J.A., "Patterns and Processes in the California Current System," *Progress in Oceanography* 104, 10 (2009).
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/a/a9/Diagram_of_California_Current_System.png/640px-Diagram_of_California_Current_System.png.

northwest into the open ocean and, from there, catching the North Pacific Drift, which pulled ships toward the California coast.

The defense of the western coast of North America was the paramount concern for colonization in Alta California. As Barbara Voss indicates, unlike other frontier outposts, the territory was intended to secure a new province from Indigenous resistance overland and maritime attacks from the Pacific. Authorities envisioned creating a parallel line of missions and presidios stretching along the coast from San Francisco Bay in the north to the southern tip of the peninsula in Cabo San Lucas. Each presidio was strategically situated along the coast near natural harbors attractive to passing ships.¹¹⁵ Another landed axis was also planned, stretching from Monterey in southern California, crossing Sonora, New Mexico, and Texas to the Gulf of Mexico. Authorities in Mexico City instructed Portolá and Serra to establish five new missions on the peninsula to connect the old settlements to the new presidios and missions from San Diego to northern Alta California.¹¹⁶ In addition, five other missions were to be established along coastal sites running to San Francisco Bay. The military founded each new presidio near a seaside harbor to guard against Russian, British, and Anglo-American ships. At the same time, the Franciscans constructed missions in the coastal zone near densely populated Indigenous settlements. Authorities in Mexico City instructed the Franciscans to build missions based on suitability for agriculture, accessibility of water supplies, and population density of Native populations, along with secondary criteria of the availability of timber and ocean access for

¹¹⁵ Barbara L. Voss. *The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis: Race and Sexuality in Colonial San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 57.

¹¹⁶ Carlos Francisco de Croix to Francisco Palóu, November 12, 1770, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 46, Documents Relating to the Missions of the Californias, BANC, 1-2.

commerce and transportation.¹¹⁷ Although the chain of presidios and missions along the coast went according to plan, the interior proved much more challenging.

Independent Native groups from the hinterlands and interior successfully resisted attempts by soldiers and missionaries to penetrate Alta California further than the coastal plains, leaving Alta California isolated along the landed route to neighboring Sonora. Although Franciscans had formulated plans to missionize the Central Valley (*Los Tulares*), the interior remained primarily controlled by Native groups like the Mojave and Yokuts.¹¹⁸ In a matter of decades, authorities effectively surrendered the interior, where Native populations continued to preserve their autonomy well into the nineteenth century. The abandoning of the interior firmly positioned Alta California in the Pacific Ocean and practically made the region an overseas province of New Spain. Resistance from the interior posed problems for colonization and remained a potential threat to Spain's tenuous hold on the coast.

Missionaries confronted Native hostility almost immediately after they arrived in San Diego. Six years after establishing Mission San Diego, on November 5, 1775, several hostile Kumeyaay surrounded the mission and set fire to the buildings. The revolt against the Spanish missionaries ended in the death of three people: Franciscan Luís Jayme, a blacksmith named José Arroyo, and a carpenter named Urselino, along with the destruction of the mission.¹¹⁹ As guards skirmished with the attackers and the buildings burned, Kumeyaay warriors raided the

¹¹⁷ R. Louis Gentilcore, "Missions and Mission Lands of Alta California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 51, 1 (March 1961), 47.

¹¹⁸ Native resistance in the Central Valley and Interior are treated more in-depth in Chapter 6.

¹¹⁹ Richard L. Carrico, "Sociopolitical Aspects of the 1775 Revolt at Mission San Diego de Alcalá," *The Journal of San Diego History* 43, 3 (Summer 1997), accessed November 11, 2022, <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1997/july/missionrevolt/>.

storehouses and the church, taking anything valuable. Since 1769, the Franciscans had baptized nearly five hundred Native people, mostly Kumeyaay, around San Diego, including local leaders (*kwaipai*) of several surrounding villages. The specific reasons for the revolt are unclear. Still, many scholars have suggested a combination of factors contributing to the violent assault on San Diego, such as disease, colonial violence, Spanish intrusions into their lands, and fears of forced removal from the missions.¹²⁰ The Kumeyaay even attempted to recruit Indigenous groups like the Quechan and Mojave from the Colorado-Gila River basin to aid in the rebellion, which they refused. The revolt exposed the vulnerability of the presidios and missions and convinced authorities of the necessity of strengthening Alta California from the sea. The remaining colonists and missionaries retreated to the presidio closer to the coast and only returned to rebuild the San Diego mission almost two years later.

The event led to significant shifts in Alta California's colonization. In the aftermath of the San Diego revolt, authorities shifted their focus from the interior toward the coast. Initially, authorities had envisioned supplying the province from a land route to Sonora through the Colorado River and ships crossing the Gulf of California from Sonora to Baja California. However, they abandoned the plan and ordered that the capital be moved from Real Presidio de Loreto in Baja California, positioned in the gulf, to the Monterey Presidio, located on a harbor facing the Pacific Ocean.¹²¹ The news of San Diego's destruction led authorities to conclude that colonizing new regions in the Californias would require more focus on supplying the province from the San Blas. In 1776, twenty-five soldiers recruited from Guadalajara arrived at Monterey

¹²⁰ Carrico, "Sociopolitical Aspects of the 1775 Revolt."

¹²¹ Antonio María Bucareli y Usúa to José de Gálvez, October 27, 1776, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 0935, *Archivo de Indias Records*, BANC, 1.

from the Naval Department to reinforce the presidios.¹²² Shipments of food, goods, arms, and ammunition arrived from San Blas annually to supply the military and missions until the end of the colonial era in 1821.

In the first decade of Alta California's colonization, authorities also established a land route crossing the Colorado River into Sonora, but Native resistance from the interior further isolated the province. The landed passage from Alta California to Sonora had been identified over a century before by Jesuit missionary Eusebio Kino.¹²³ He had surveyed Baja California during the failed attempt to colonize the peninsula in 1685. Juan Bautista de Anza used the route twice to transport settlers, soldiers, and large herds of cattle to Alta California, establishing San Francisco in 1775.¹²⁴ Serving as guides on both journeys was a Native person from Alta California who had fled Mission San Gabriel. Anza successfully established a friendly relationship with the local Quechan leader, Captain Palma. He promised regular trade and gifts to gain safe passage for the Spanish convoys traveling through the Colorado River basin.¹²⁵ Subsequently, the Franciscans established two missions in 1780, and Sonoran settlers founded a pueblo in the region. Captain Palma wrote to the viceroy about the treaty,

This alliance and the establishments in my country, not only serves to secure a route and free communication between the Californias and Sonora, San Francisco and New Mexico

¹²² Reports of Serra to Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, June 27-November 26, 1776, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 0933, *Archivo de Indias Records*, BANC, 3.

¹²³ Ernest Burrus S.J., *Kino and the Cartography of Northwestern New Spain* (Tucson: Arizona Pioneer's Historical Society, 1965), Plate IX.

¹²⁴ Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa to Jerónimo Grimaldi, Julio 28 to August 27, 1773, Carton 23, Folder 2099, MSS Z-E 1, in *Spanish Exploration and Settlement Related Materials*, circa 1530-circa 1820, BANC, 2-3.

¹²⁵ Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa to Julian de Arriaga, March 27, 1776, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 23, Folder 2127, in *Archivo General de Indias Records*, BANC, 3.

because it would be situated in the center of this province but it could also serve to pacify the neighboring regions with the assistance of Spanish arms.¹²⁶

Through an alliance with the Spanish, Palma hoped to expand his power by controlling the vital trade route, which connected coastal trading in Alta California to the interior of Pimería Alta. Unfortunately, authorities in Mexico City failed to uphold the promises of trade and tribute, and relationships with the Quechan deteriorated.¹²⁷ Conflicts over land and abuse from Franciscan fathers exacerbated tensions, bursting into a full-scale revolt that ended in the death of four Franciscan fathers, several settlers, and a few soldiers in 1781. The survivors were either displaced to Alta California or returned to Sonora.¹²⁸ Authorities launched small campaigns into the Colorado River to rescue enslaved settlers, but no further attempts were made to retake the region and secure the land route. The revolt ended discussions about extending the California frontier into the interior and shifted the focus exclusively to the coast.

Previously, in 1773, Mexican authorities began discussions about relocating the Department of San Blas to the sheltered bay of Acapulco, citing the considerable costs of maintaining a shipyard and royal naval base on the eroding banks of the Nueva Galician harbor. However, the plans met with pushback from merchants, missionaries, and military officers in the Californias, Guadalajara, and Nayarit, who insisted without San Blas, colonization in Alta California would fail. From the colonial to the republican era, goods, sailors, soldiers, settlers, and missionaries primarily arrived from the Pacific Ocean. For decades, supplies came to the

¹²⁶ Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa to José de Gálvez, November 26, 1776, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 0938, in Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 13.

¹²⁷ Voss, *Archaeology of Ethnogenesis*, 64.

¹²⁸ Account of the Massacre on the Rio Colorado of the Troops under Rivera y Moncada, 1781, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 30, Documents Relating to Missions of the Californias, 1768-1802, BANC, 1-3.

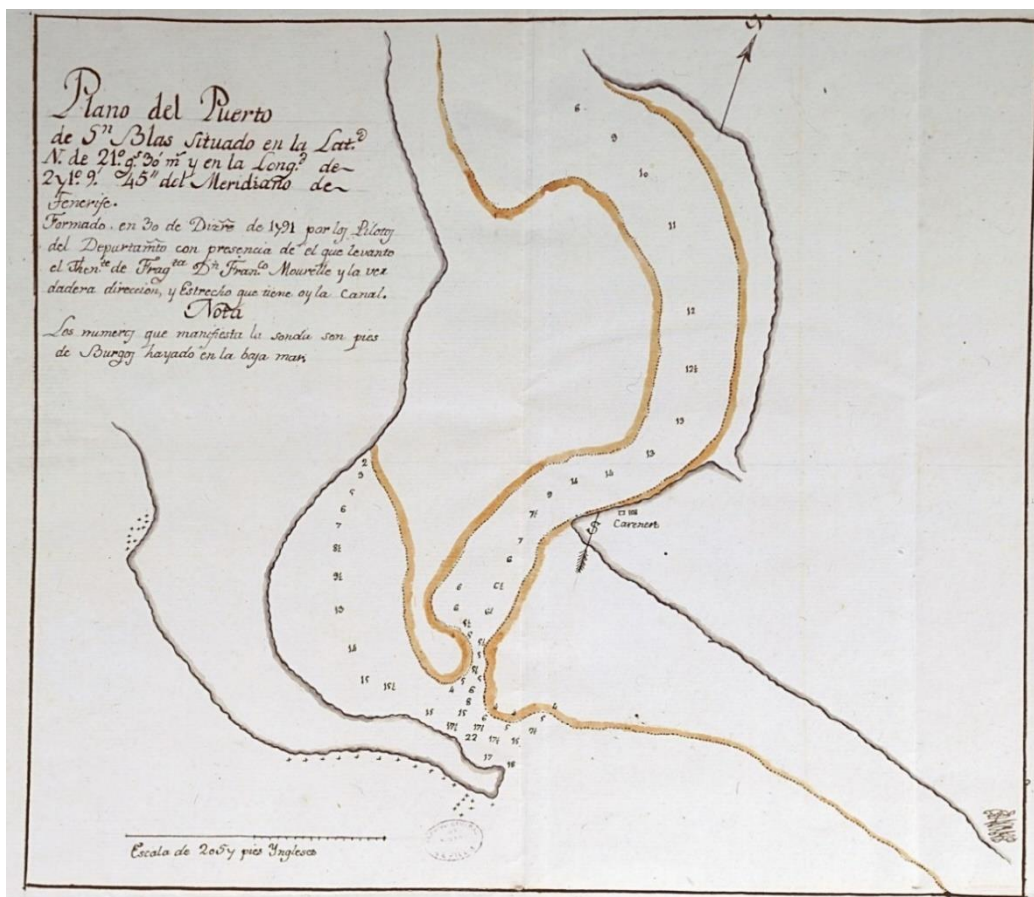


Figure 1.6. Francisco Antonio Mourelle, Plano del Puerto de San Blas, San Blas, 1791. Map of San Blas harbor situated on the coast of Nueva Galicia. From the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.

peninsula from the Gulf of California. They unloaded in Loreto, but the considerable costs and time required in transport from the peninsula dissuaded authorities from continuing the practice into Alta California. The missions in Baja California lacked enough pack mules to transport supplies overland from Loreto to San Diego, and the land route from Sonora was long and arduous.¹²⁹ Effectively severed and isolated from the northern frontier, Alta California remained dependent on trade and supplies from the Pacific Ocean.

¹²⁹José de Gálvez to Francisco Palóu, October 31, 1768, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 10, Documents Relating to the Missions of the Californias, BANC, 2.

California's intimate ties to the Naval Department of San Blas generated strong links to the Pacific Ocean. The high cost of transporting goods on land, the significant time required, and the need to secure the coast shifted Spain's attention away from the interior and turned attention to the coast. The destruction of Mission San Diego led authorities to move the capital from the peninsula to Alta California, in Monterey's harbor. Loreto's port faced the Gulf of California and had been supplied by Sonoran ships crossing the gulf for decades. Previously, Cabo San Lucas had been the main Pacific harbor for the occasional stops of the Naos. By relocating the capital from a gulf port to one in the Pacific Ocean, California's colonization had begun to rely much more considerably on maritime routes. The Yuma revolt in 1781 severed the land route to Sonora and convinced authorities to reposition their efforts on California's littoral borderland. The region's isolation from other provinces on the northern frontier left it dependent on maritime routes and the annual ships sent from the Naval Department in San Blas. By the 1780s, more foreign vessels had been entering the Pacific Ocean and increasing their presence in California's coastal areas. Alta California and Nueva Galicia supplied Spain's fleet in the Pacific Ocean with the labor, goods, and food supplies necessary for its maritime activities.

Conclusion

Spain's presence in the Californias was primarily accomplished by ship, and the maritime nature of its colonization defined the province. For this reason, Alta California can be better understood as a coastal province within the maritime geography of the Manila galleons and the northern frontier. Although the region was located within the vast territorial boundaries of New Spain's northern frontier, the Spanish expansion into the Californias complicated standard

frameworks about the northwardly moving Spanish frontier from central Mexico.¹³⁰ Expansion into the Californias did not primarily progress overland, neither following from the Colorado River region southward into the peninsula nor moving northwest to occupy Alta California; instead, both waves of colonization traversed maritime spaces. The primary goals of early voyages to Alta California were to facilitate commerce between the Philippines and New Spain by establishing a midway port to rest crews, repair ships, and prevent pirates from launching attacks from the coast.¹³¹ The decision to occupy the Californias reflected primarily maritime concerns such as issues of piracy, safety aboard the galleons, and the presence of European and later Russian ships in the Pacific Ocean.

¹³⁰ See, James M. Daniel, "The Spanish Frontier in West Texas and Northern Mexico," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71, 4 (April 1968), 481-482; Also, see, John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 3.

¹³¹ W. Michael Mathes, "The Expedition of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, 1542-1543: An Historiographical Reexamination," *Southern California Quarterly* 76, 3 (1994), 248-249.

Chapter 2: Material Exchanges, The Pacific World, and the Littoral Borderland

On April 20, 1774, Juan Bautista de Anza traveled from Presidio Monterey to Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo in central California to survey the newly founded mission and to repay a visit from Father President Junípero Serra the day before. While there, Serra recounted to Anza a recent discovery. The local Ohlone¹³² had found an artifact washed up on shore near the mission a few days earlier. The object was immediately recognizable to Serra and Anza as a broken mast. Anza described the object's condition in his diary: "It is entirely run through with very strong nails with long heads, and with two points which do not pass through to be clinched. Their iron has not rusted at all nor are the points blunt which projected where it was broken."¹³³ Anza took the recovered mast back with him to Monterey, where he consulted with "the few persons who are experienced in the matter of vessels," likely sailors. The conclusion was that the mast came from a recently wrecked vessel as neither the nails were rusted nor the points blunted from being submerged in the Pacific Ocean's salt waters. Although the conclusion of the investigation is unknown, this event illustrates the dilemma faced by Spanish authorities seeking to stake claim to the Pacific Ocean: its expanse was vast and difficult to contain. For centuries, materials and populations circulated within the Pacific Ocean, most famously aboard the Naos, sailing between Manila and Acapulco. But, by the eighteenth century, ships from other nations like Russia, England, the United States, and France began entering the Pacific Ocean. So, the

¹³² The Ohlone were a California Indigenous group who inhabited the coast from San Francisco Bay and Monterey Bay to the lower Salinas Valley. They consisted of the majority of the early Native population missionized in both Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo and Mission San Francisco.

¹³³ Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Anza's California Expeditions, Volume II: Opening a Land Route to California, Diaries of Anza, Díaz, Garcés, and Palóu* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1930), 108-109.

wreckage could have originated from any of these nations. The North Pacific Gyre is one of the most extensive oceanic current systems circulating peoples and materials from the Western Pacific Ocean to North America. Despite Alta California's considerable distance from other outposts of colonization and likely due to the vast scope of the Pacific Ocean's geography, Spain could not shield its territory from the growing presence of Spanish and foreign ships in the Pacific Ocean. Although royal regulations prevented the region from interacting with foreigners, authorities could not control what washed up on or approached the thousands of miles of coastline stretching from the Baja California peninsula to Alaska.

Consequently, because of its close relationship to the Pacific Ocean and its involvement in maritime commerce, Alta California can be best understood as a littoral borderland; to its west lay the expansive Pacific Ocean, and to its east was a hinterland that stretched deep into the continental interior. As David Igler describes, littoral spaces were permeable and historical, "shaped by the ocean, by terrestrial forces, and by human manipulation or both."¹³⁴ It was a multifunctional space for subsistence, commerce, and social interexchange. The space included the coastal zones and the submerged tidal area to the high-water mark of the seas. Gary Chi-Hung Luk expanded on the notion of littoral spaces within his study of the Opium War in the South China Sea. He incorporated borderlands studies within his investigation of the coastal zones of South China in the nineteenth century. He defined the "littoral borderland" as a watery fringe where the Qing and British empires collided. The "fluid, watery world" flourished without a dominant military power, where inhabitants used mobility and resistance to evade state

¹³⁴ David Igler, "The Northeastern Pacific Basin: An Environmental Approach to Seascapes and Littoral Places," in *A Companion to American Environmental History*, edited by Douglas Cazaux Sackman (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 586-587; See also. Kathleen L. Hull and John G. Douglas, *Forging Communities in Colonial Alta California* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), 96.

intervention.¹³⁵ Similarly, Alta California occupied both littoral and landed spaces. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the waters off the coast of Alta California were not rigid physical boundaries but fluid and shifting. By studying Alta California from the perspective of the Pacific Ocean and framed within a littoral borderland, this chapter attempts to transcend land-centered history and offer a new interpretation of the nature of frontiers and borderlands occupying coastal zones in North America.

The Pacific Ocean played a significant role in shaping Alta California's colonial history. Several historians have noted the links between the region and the Pacific Ocean during the colonial era.¹³⁶ Some recent scholars have expanded on the Alta California-Pacific Ocean link and sought to understand the region within the broader history of the ocean and explore how it shaped regional developments.¹³⁷ However, scholarship on Alta California tends to overestimate the relative material self-sufficiency of the missions and analogously treat these colonial institutions as self-contained, wholly, if not partially, divorced from the landscapes (and waterscapes) beyond their walls.¹³⁸ Understanding how the missions came to depend on trade

¹³⁵ Gary Chi-Hung Luk, "Accommodating Foreigners in a Littoral Borderland: The Lower Pearl River Delta during the Opium War," *Modern China* 48, 1 (2020), 19-23.

¹³⁶ See. Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941); Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., "Alta California's Trojan Horse: Foreign Immigration," *California History* 76, 2-3 (Fall 1997); Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 178-187; David Iglar, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Arturo Giráldez, *The Age of Trade: The Manila Galleons and the Dawn of the Global Economy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 190.

¹³⁷ See. Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., "Alta California's Trojan Horse: Foreign Immigration," *California History* 76, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1997); David Iglar, "Diseased Goods: Global Exchanges in the Eastern Pacific Basin, 1770-1850," *The American Historical Review* 109, 3 (June 2004), 696; J.M. Mancini, "Pedro Cambón's Asian Objects: A Transpacific Approach to Eighteenth Century California," *American Arts* 25, 1 (Spring 2011), 33; Miguel Ángel Sorroche Cuerva, "The Pacific Ocean and the Californias: Power Relations and Trade on the Periphery of New Spain, 1565-1775," *Potestas* 6 (2013), 126.

¹³⁸ See, John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974); Benjamin Madley, "California's First Mass Incarceration System: Franciscan Missions,

from the Pacific Ocean and the impact that these exchanges had on social relationships within the missions and beyond situates Alta California within a complex, multilayered littoral borderland where interests among Franciscan missionaries, Spanish soldiers, and Native people intersected and diverged. Like other borderlands, the littoral borderland was based on competition, negotiation, and accommodation, but also, it was shaped by a vast ocean space off its coast.

The Pacific Ocean and the Littoral Borderland of California

In 1776, the Spanish created Mission San Francisco de Asís and its counterpart presidio with Pacific Ocean routes in mind. A painting that decorated the mission, titled *Our Lady of the Galleons* (Figure 2.1) and produced in the late-eighteenth Mexico century by an unknown artist, depicts the Madonna and Child arriving on the Nao in San Francisco Bay. The painting highlights the maritime nature of Alta California's colonization, one connected to the Nao traffic and the Pacific Ocean. The Madonna and Child sit as the centerpiece, while ships approaching from the north, south, and west were drawn to San Francisco by Mary's protective influences and the sheltered bay.¹³⁹ Voyages from Manila took an exhausting six months, and the sight of the Alta California coast was a welcome relief from the arduous journey.¹⁴⁰ Although no

California Indians, and Penal Servitude, 1769-1836," *Pacific Historical Review* 88, 1 (2019); Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in San Francisco Bay Area* (Banning, CA: Ballena Press, 1995).

¹³⁹ Juan Crespi described San Francisco's sheltered bay as more of a suitable port than San Diego. See Crespi to Andrés, February 8, 1770, MSS M-A :1, Box 2, Folder 42, Documents Relating to Missions of the Californias, 1768-1802, Bancroft Library, San Francisco, California.

¹⁴⁰ Naos expected to encounter shifting tides, heavy currents, severe storms, gals, squalls, and calms on route from the Philippines to Acapulco on the "longest voyage in the world." See, Cameron La Follette, "Views Across the Pacific: The Galleon Trade and Its Traces in Oregon," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 119, 2 (2018), 169-173.



Figure 2.1. "Our Lady of the Galleons, circa late 18th century." San Francisco: Mission Dolores, 2010. *Source:* Thatcher Gallery, University of San Francisco. <https://s.hdnux.com/photos/10/64/41/2312289/7/920x920.jpg> (accessed September 10, 2020).

documented instances of the Naos porting in San Francisco Bay have emerged; the inclusion of the painting at Mission San Francisco hints at the maritime dimensions of colonization and how transpacific trade shaped colonization in Alta California. Alta California was not as isolated as its geographic distance to other Spanish territories might make it seem, and an immense body of water separated the province from other lands. However, the Pacific Ocean sustained Spain's presence on its northern frontier and facilitated Alta California's interactions and exchanges with people beyond its shores.

As reflected by the image of the Madonna aboard the Manila galleon in San Francisco Bay, the Naos were to play an essential role in Alta California's colonization. Protecting transpacific Asian trade had initially been a vital part of Alta California's economy and had inspired colonization in the first place. Colonization was meant to ensure a safe harbor and provide food supplies to Naos to safeguard its southward route to Acapulco. The missions of Alta California were primarily intended to be agricultural enterprises providing foods to a growing Hispanicized Native population and galleon sailors. On June 22, 1773, a royal order decreed that the Manila galleons had to port in Monterey "for their good and for the welfare of the colony," or pay a four-thousand peso fine. William Lytle Schurz states that most galleons departing Acapulco preferred to pay the fine rather than delay arrival to Manila. The return from New Spain to the Philippines did not pass Alta California and, instead, followed a straight line parallel to the equator. Thus, galleons shipping from Acapulco required journeying off course, potentially delaying arrival to Manila by several weeks. Traveling from the Philippines was more difficult. The Manila galleons had to sail northward, passing Japan to the North Pacific Ocean before voyaging southward down the coast of North America to Acapulco. The outward journey from Manila was nearly twice the distance. It required a considerably longer five to six-month

journey, which left crews debilitated with scurvy and malnutrition and made stopovers more necessary. In the eighteenth century, eight Naos sailing from the Philippines stopped in Alta California: the *San José* in 1779 and 1780, the *San Felipe* in 1779, the *San Andrés* in 1786, and others in 1784, 1785, 1795, and 1797.¹⁴¹ However, in 1769, Viceroy Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa (1717-1779) banned commerce between the Naos and Alta California. Asian goods imported from Manila would reduce Alta California's dependence on Spanish- and European-made goods in favor of Mexican merchants. So, the Crown responded by limiting any trade detrimental to Spain's transatlantic importation of Spanish and European goods into Veracruz to strengthen Spain's merchants in markets in New Spain and Peru.¹⁴² Legally, missions and pueblos could only sell fresh foods to Manila galleons exchanged for credits from the royal treasury. Instead, sanctioned goods destined for Alta California mainly consisted of Spanish and European manufactures imported to New Spain from Veracruz. However, contraband trading with the galleons regularly occurred; Felipe de Neve, governor between 1775 and 1782, banned missionaries from boarding the Naos, finding that Franciscan fathers engaged in illegal trade. He also arrested the commandant of Monterey in 1786 on charges of smuggling merchandise from the Naos.¹⁴³

Despite not receiving sanctioned trade with the galleons, Alta California's colonization remained intimately tied to Spain's defense of the Pacific Ocean and the Manila-Acapulco route.

¹⁴¹ William Lytle Schurz, "The Manila Galleon and California," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 21, 2 (October 1917), 124-126.

¹⁴² Mariano Ardash Bonialian, *El pacífico hispanoamericano: política y comercio Asiático en el imperio español, 1680-1784* (México, D.F.: El colegio de México, A.C., 2012), 19, 53-55, and 65.

¹⁴³ Schurz, "The Manila Galleon and California," 124-125.

In 1769, Pedro Enríquez Calderón (1704-1781), a judge in the *Audiencia* in Manila, proposed colonizing Alta California with Spanish soldiers and *Indio* (Indigenous Filipinos) farmers from the Philippines. He outlined sending three hundred “men of all trades” with necessary supplies to Monterey. They would establish a presidio and pueblo to secure the Nao’s route and defend Spain’s sovereignty in North America. In return, the Philippines would provide Asian and European merchandise to the new settlers.¹⁴⁴ Ultimately, however, authorities rejected Calderón’s plan. Instead, they commissioned three hundred soldiers, sailors, and Indigenous people from Sonora, Nueva Galicia, and Baja California to colonize and occupy San Diego Bay. Authorities received instructions to recruit families and single men from impoverished families to resettle in California.¹⁴⁵ According to Barbara Voss, those enlisted were a diverse group of mixed Indigenous, African, and European ancestry whose relocation allowed them to reinvent themselves from a “pluralistic assemblage of displaced colonized subjects” to a “unified—but not uniform—colonizing force.”¹⁴⁶

The need to defend Spain’s claim to the Pacific Ocean emerged in the context of the maritime activities of rival nations. In the mid-eighteenth century, the potential for profits from furs and pelts on the North American coast attracted merchants and sailors from the United States to Europe. In the Pacific Northwest, the skin of the northern sea otter common along the

¹⁴⁴ Floro L. Marcene, *Manila Men in the New World: Filipino Migration to Mexico and the Americas from the Sixteenth Century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007), 17-19.

¹⁴⁵ File of reports and letters of Comandante General, Provincias Internas, to the Viceroy, Martín de Mayorga, 1779-1781, MSS C-A 368, Folder 21, Fernando Xavier Rivera y Moncada Papers, 1774-1781, BANC; Also see. Marques de Branciforte to Diego de Borica, January 28, 1796, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 31, Folder 2820, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC.

¹⁴⁶ Barbara L. Voss, “‘Poor People in Silk Shirts’: Dress and Ethnogenesis in Spanish-Colonial San Francisco,” *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8, 3 (2008), 406-407.

beaches was highly valued for its luxurious and vibrant coating. Jesuit missionaries in Baja California were the first to introduce northern sea otter pelts to international trade through sale to Chinese merchants in the Philippines.¹⁴⁷ Russians exploring the North Pacific Ocean since the 1740s began seeking new hunting zones for the fur trade by expanding from Kamchatka into Alaska.¹⁴⁸ The publication of travel journals from Russian expeditions led to a wave of interest among the British, Anglo-Americans, and French in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁴⁹ By the 1760s, Spain became increasingly preoccupied with foreign European activities in the Pacific Ocean. It launched expeditions from San Blas to determine the extent of European settlements in the Pacific Northwest.¹⁵⁰ James Cook's voyages in the late eighteenth century confirmed the riches offered by marine pelts in the Pacific Northwest. When Spanish soldiers captured deserters from Britain's attack on Manila in 1779, the soldiers attested to the high prices offered in Canton for sea otter pelts.¹⁵¹ The publication of Cook's third voyage in 1784 unleashed a wave of English and Anglo-American interest in the fur trade.¹⁵² From 1769 to 1793, Spain initiated thirteen

¹⁴⁷ Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1973), 43.

¹⁴⁸ Chief Minister Jerónimo Grimaldi related to Viceroy Antonio Bucareli that the minister of France had obtained copies of the Russian expeditions in North America and emphasized the immediacy of securing the Pacific Northwest; See Grimaldi to Bucareli, May 25, 1773, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 5, Folder 0397, Archivo General de Indias Records, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

¹⁴⁹ Grimaldi to Bucareli, May 25, 1773, Aranjuez, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 23, Folder 2098, Archivo General de Indias Records, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

¹⁵⁰ In the 1740s, the English George Anson had sailed across the Pacific Ocean landing on New Spain's west coast and Dutch vessels had been trading on the coast of Nueva Galicia; See John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 153-154.

¹⁵¹ Cited from Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 107; See, Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), 2.

¹⁵² Anya Zilberstein, "Objects of Distant Exchange: The Northwest Coast, Early America, and the Global Imagination," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 64, 3 (July 2007), 588-589.

expeditions to survey and assert its tenuous sovereignty in North America. The expeditions yielded scant evidence of a permanent presence of Russian, British, or Anglo-America in the region, but something else they found alarmed authorities in Spain. Juan Crespí, the chaplain of Juan Pérez's expedition in 1774, collected several interesting objects from Santa Margarita Island, modern-day Queen Charlotte's Island, including a "Chinese" carved box, ivory, and some metal instruments.¹⁵³ Junípero Serra related to viceroy Bucareli on these objects,

In this collection, also, are four small wooden pieces, ornamented as is customary with Chinese art. They were brought last year by the sea expedition from a place called Santa Margarita, in the latitude of 55 degrees, where the Fathers got them. I have kept them for this occasion. There is also something that looks as if it were an elephant's tooth. They seem to have started to carve it, but it is impossible to say what they intended to make of it. Also something like a handle to a key—and there is no saying from what being it came. We can only say that while it came from such far-distant parts, one may admire its beauty.¹⁵⁴

Native groups throughout Alta California and the Pacific Northwest were accustomed to trading with the passing Russian, British, Anglo-American, and French ships that stopped along their coast.¹⁵⁵ When Spanish explorers arrived, they found the remnants of these exchanges in the forms of textiles, iron and cooper tools, arms, and stories of bearded men coming on similar wooden boats. Authorities immediately set out proposals to expand the frontier north into Alta California. Following Spanish enlightenment ideals, authorities instructed naval officers in San

¹⁵³ Franciscan Tomás de la Peña commented that the Pacific Northwest's Native groups desired large pieces of iron with cutting edges, especially swords and knives, indicating their familiarity in trading with Europeans; Tomás de la Peña, "Diary of Tomás de la Peña on the Santiago," in *The California Coast: A Bilingual Edition of Documents from the Sutro Collection*, edited by Donald C. Cutter (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 160-161.

¹⁵⁴ Junípero Serra, "To Antonio Maria de Bucareli y Ursua, October 20, 1775," in *Writings of Junipero Serra*, edited by Antonine Tibesar (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1956), 349.

¹⁵⁵ Native people at Santa Barbara also mentioned trading with Europeans for knives, iron, and woven cloth. See Guardian and other authorities of college of San Fernando de México to Croix, July 26, 1770, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 43, Documents Relating to Missions of the Californias, 1768-1802, BANC.

Blas to entreat Indigenous groups by adopting “the method of other nations such as the French and the English” to attract them with gifts and “friendship.”¹⁵⁶ Authorities intended exchange to form the basis of diplomacy with Indigenous groups on the coast. Nevertheless, violent encounters between sailors and coastal Native groups in Alta California and the Pacific Northwest frequently occurred.

The preparations for the colonization of California and the voyages to the Northwest Coast revealed Spain’s relative weaknesses in the Pacific Ocean, especially on the Pacific Coast. Mexico lacked trained navigators, sailors, and ships in sufficient numbers for maritime exploration.¹⁵⁷ Authorities transferred small numbers of experienced naval officers and sailors from Veracruz and the Philippines to staff the newly built Naval Department in Nueva Galicia to apprentice sailors from Sonora, Baja California, and Nueva Galicia. The 1773 audit of the Baja California missions listed twenty-three Baja California Natives as commissioned sailors. It seems likely that Indigenous people like the Yaqui and Cochimí living in Baja Californians served aboard ships during Bruno de Heceta’s voyage to Nootka Sound in 1775 and Ignacio de Arteaga’s Alaska expedition in 1779.¹⁵⁸ However, a lack of vessels and crews strained resources

¹⁵⁶ Grimaldi to Bucareli, December 24, 1773, Madrid, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 23, Folder 2101, Archivo General de Indias Records, Bancroft Library, Berkeley, CA; Historian David Weber noted that following the enlightenment formula of the Bourbon reforms, military officers did court autonomous Native groups with gifts, trade, and friendly alliances, but the Spanish did not follow a uniform policy toward Native people. While some officers extended peace, others regularly employed violence to suppress raiding or resistance. See David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 9.

¹⁵⁷ Christon I. Archer, “Spain and the Defence of the Pacific Ocean Empire, 1750-1810,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 11, 21 (1986), 25-26.

¹⁵⁸ Eligio M. Coronado, editor, *Descripción e inventarios de las misiones de Baja California, 1773* (Palma de Mallorca, Spain: Institut d’Estudis Baleàrics, 1987), 30-31; also, see, Francisco Hijosa to Felipe de Neve, June 20, 1775, San Blas, Colonia, Aspecto político, 1744-1821, Volume 1, Document 20, Archivo Histórico de Baja California Sur, Pablo L. Martínez, La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico; For more information about Baja California and Indigenous sailors at the Naval Department of San Blas, see, Michael Mathes, “Baja California Indians in Spanish Maritime Service, 1720-1821,” *Southern California Quarterly* 62, 2 (Summer 1980).

and necessitated consolidating those the Naval Department had. As a result, exploratory expeditions to the Pacific Northwest were also supplying voyages to Alta California.

Despite the critical distinction between a warship and one suited for exploration, the same ships were often employed within both functions. Juan Pérez, who had sailed the frigate *Santiago* on the first expedition to Alta California, piloted the same vessel to explore the Pacific Northwest but found the ship too large to explore the many inlets on the coast and subsequently failed to take formal possession of the region. Before departing north, he had delivered the annual shipment to Monterey, along with settlers and sailors, necessitating one of such size.¹⁵⁹ The critical distinction between a warship and an exploration vessel was size. Exploration vessels were typically smaller, faster, and more maneuverable, designed to navigate shallower waters and river bays.

In contrast, galleon warships had multiple decks with mounted cannons and platforms for musketeers to fire at enemy ships, making them more durable but heavier and less mobile.¹⁶⁰ The *Santiago* was another type of warship, a frigate equipped with a single deck of cannons and outfitted for speed and maneuvers, but still too large for coastal exploration. It is also important to point out that the Manila galleons were, in fact, frigates like Juan Pérez's ship, but had a larger variation with the cannon decks being replaced with cargo holds.¹⁶¹ Both exploration and trade ships were lightly armed and were usually escorted by warships like frigates in hostile waters. San Blas's dual capacity as a supply station and naval outpost tied the colonization of Alta California closely with the exploration of the Pacific Northwest. Rather than divide limited

¹⁵⁹ Juan Pérez, "Juan Pérez Letter to Bucareli, November 2, 1774," in *Juan Perez on the Northwest Coast: Six Documents of His Expedition in 1774*, edited by H.K. Beals (Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1990), 56.

¹⁶¹ Timothy R. Walton, *The Spanish Treasure Fleets* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 165; See, also, René Chartrand, *The Spanish Main 1492-1800* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2006).

resources between the Alta California province and exploration in the North Pacific Ocean, authorities in San Blas merged the two, doubling exploration vessels as the annual supply ship to the new territories.

Moreover, the Naval Department's role in supplying Alta California and exploring the coast generated enduring links with the Pacific Ocean. Shortly after the port's foundation, its role in the Pacific Ocean dramatically expanded from being solely based on supplying Alta California and exploring the Pacific Northwest to a more extensive military and mercantile function. War broke out between Spain and England in 1779, and ships from San Blas convoyed the Naos from the California coast to Acapulco in 1780 and transported correspondences between Mexico and the Philippines through the 1780s. Ships often returned to San Blas loaded with Asian merchandise carried by officers and crews. They then sent the goods to Guadalajara, where customs officers levied taxes. The regular importing of Asian goods into San Blas forced the crown to regulate commerce in the Naval Department by the decade's end.¹⁶² Miguel Costansó commented in 1794 that California imported "every type of clothing" and "arms" from the Naos and exported food and goods produced in the province.¹⁶³ In 1796, the crown ended the Mexico City monopoly on selling goods in the Californias. Guadalajara merchants received rights to import and resell Asian and European merchandise from the Pacific Ocean through San Blas to the western coast of New Spain, including the Californias. As a result, San Blas hosted more significant quantities of good quality and lower-priced products from Asia, South America, and

¹⁶² Roberto Junco Sánchez, Guadalupe Pinzón, and Etsuko Miyata, "The Chinese Porcelain from the Port of San Blas, Mexico," in *Archaeology of Manila Galleon Seaports and Early Maritime Globalization*, edited by Chunming Wu, Roberto Junco Sánchez, and Miao Liu (Singapore: Springer, 2019), 241.

¹⁶³ Marie Christine Duggan, "Bourbon Imperialism: Fiscal Transfers and Contraband in Alta California, 1769-1809," *Terceras Jornadas de Historia Económica* (2015), 277.

Central Mexico.¹⁶⁴ Invoices also specify the manufacture, location, and quality of goods. Cargos included merchandise from Spain, France, Mexico, Morocco, Italy, England, and China.¹⁶⁵ San Blas transformed from a military outpost to a significant node within the exchange circuits of the Eastern Pacific Rim in the late eighteenth century.

However, problems with transport and trade did beleaguer the port in San Blas. Humid air in warehouses and leaky cargo hold aboard ships contributed to the spoilage or damage of goods destined for the Californias. In preparation for annual voyages, merchandise arrived from nearby Tepic and Guadalajara through a pack train. Storing goods to await transportation posed a challenge, as damage to goods in storage and transit was common. José Señán (1760-1823) complained in 1808 that seawater had discolored an image of Saint Michael sent to Mission San Buenaventura and mishandling during transport damaged an altar table. He continues, “The sailors and the muleteers alike protest their innocence, excusing themselves by claiming that the pieces were not properly packed or secured in the chests.”¹⁶⁶ In other instances, for lack of space aboard the annual vessel, goods destined for Alta California had to remain in San Blas in the hopes there would be cargo space the following year. Compounding these issues was that San Blas supply vessels were often late, sometimes never arrived with cargoes, or were delayed for years.¹⁶⁷ Franciscans often complained about the limited cargo space for transporting imports

¹⁶⁴ Duggan, 286.; Dení Trejo Barajas and Marie Christine Duggan, “San Blas and the Californias: Hispanic Trade in the Northern Pacific Rim in a Time of Great Change,” *Mains’l Haul* 54, 1-4 (2018), 44.

¹⁶⁵ See, Giorgio Persinotto, *Documenting Everyday Life in Early Spanish California: The Santa Barbara Presidio Memorias y Facturas, 1779-1810* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 1998).

¹⁶⁶ José Señán, “To José Viñals. November 13, 1808,” in *The Letters of Jose Senan, Mission San Buenaventura, 1796-1823*, edited by Lesley Byrd Simpson (Ventura, CA: Ventura County Historical Society, 1962), 34.

and exports between Alta California and San Blas. Missions produced abundant tallow, lard, and hemp, which overwhelmed available transport and resulted in economic loss when they could not be transported to markets.¹⁶⁸ In response, Franciscans and military authorities frequently explored other outlets, often illegal, to acquire the colonial goods they desired. Father Seán, for instance, formed an agreement with Esteban Escalante (circa 1800s), a Brother Syndic of the Franciscan Order, in 1808 to sell otter skins from San Buenaventura in Manila by loading them aboard the Naos. He instructed Escalante to purchase various goods from Mexico City and the Philippines. He stated, “The garments wanted in classic style are the processional robe, the two albs, and the vestments for High Mass. The others, even though they may vary somewhat from the conventional, are to be had in Manila at very reasonable prices.”¹⁶⁹ Through the relationship with Escalante, the Franciscans could purchase Asian goods at a quarter of the price offered by Mexico City merchants. Transport and freighting costs aboard government-subsidized San Blas ships inflated prices by nearly four times. Despite restrictive trade measures, imported goods continuously arrived in Alta California, through relationships with merchants beyond the shores of the province.

Beyond the Naos, San Blas’s naval activities helped open Alta California to broader participation in the Pacific Ocean. Franciscan Pedro Benito Cambón’s (1738-1792) voyage to the Philippines and return to Alta California from 1779 to 1782 illustrated the critical connections between Alta California and the ocean. His journey represented the confluence of Spain’s

¹⁶⁷ For example. See Palou to Verger, November 26, 1773, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 52, Documents Relating to the Missions of the Californias, 1768-1802, BANC.

¹⁶⁸ Julia G. Costello, “Purchasing Patterns of the California Missions in ca. 1805,” *The Archaeology of the Spanish Colonial and Mexican Republican Periods* 26, 1 (1992), 61.

¹⁶⁹ Seán, “To Father José Viñals. November 3, 1808,” *Letters of Jose Senan*, 36-37.

maritime activities in the sea in the late eighteenth century: the exploration of the Pacific Northwest, the San Blas supply line, and the Nao traffic between Manila and Acapulco. In 1779, two Spanish corvettes, *La Princesa* and *La Favorita*, appeared in San Francisco. The vessels were from the Ignacio de Arteaga (1731-1783) and Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra (1743-1794) expedition to explore the Pacific Northwest coast. Upon hearing the word of the outbreak of war between Spain and Great Britain, the ships reversed course and returned to San Francisco for supplies and to rest the crew before returning to San Blas. Cambón was ill and disembarked with the crew, serving as chaplain on the ship. He hoped to recover his health at the Naval Department before resuming missionary work in Alta California.¹⁷⁰ Cambón had only expected to be away for a year. However, the voyage to San Blas continued to Acapulco and later the Philippines. Cambón eventually returned to California in 1782, along with a cargo of Asian goods acquired during his sojourn in Manila. A tabernacle produced in the Philippines and housed in the mission church at San Francisco de Asís attested to the journey and will be explored in more detail in the following chapter. His voyage to the Philippines occurred in the context of Spain's expanded presence in the Pacific Ocean in the late eighteenth century. The period witnessed a significant expansion of maritime activity in the Pacific Ocean, principally by English, Anglo-American, French, Russian, and Spanish ships plying the west coast of North America. The fur trade brought vessels carrying material goods to North America's west coast to exchange with Spanish Californians and Indigenous groups for marine pelts.

Ushering in new developments in the Pacific Ocean and Alta California was the Nootka Crisis of 1789, the conflict over territorial claims in the Pacific Northwest between Spain and

¹⁷⁰ Francisco Palóu, *Historical Memoirs of New California Volume IV*, edited by Herbert Eugene Bolton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1926), 176, 186-187.

Britain. It led to increased interest in Europe and the Americas in the fur trade. The Spanish seizure of joint United States-British commercial ships engaged in the fur trade in Nootka Sound nearly provoked war between Spain, Britain, and the newly established United States. Naval officer Estéban José Martínez (1743-1798) seized the vessels in 1789, proclaiming Spanish sovereignty on the entirety of the west coast of North America. He impounded the two English ships, imprisoned the crews for transportation to San Blas, and attacked the local Nuu-chah-nulth engaging in trade with the British. It ended with Callicum's death, a British trade partner, ally on the Pacific Northwest coast, and leader of the Nuu-chah-nulth.¹⁷¹ The violent confrontation between Martínez and Callicum contrasted sharply with Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra, who reportedly invited the Nuu-chah-nulth leader Maquinna to dine at his table almost daily and sleep at his home.¹⁷² As David J. Weber states, following the Bourbon Enlightenment rationale of the late 1700s, military officers in borderland areas tried to court autonomous Native groups with gifts, generous trade, and alliances while simultaneously strengthening their military position. Spanish officials were inconsistent in following their convictions; more often, pragmatism and military power prevailed.¹⁷³ Once news of the events reached London, Britain prepared for war. Spain's closest ally, France, was embroiled in the French Revolution, and the National Assembly opted for neutrality. Spain decided to seek a diplomatic solution to the crisis rather than go to war without support from its ally. The result was a series of agreements between Spain and Great Britain signed in the early 1790s, tentatively settling the dispute over

¹⁷¹ Rainer F. Buschmann, *Iberian Visions of the Pacific Ocean, 1507-1899* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 158.

¹⁷² Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, 336-338.

¹⁷³ David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 3 and 8.

the overlapping claims to portions of the Pacific Northwest. Later in 1794, during the third Nootka Convention, Spain allied with Britain, Holland, Austria, and Prussia under the First Coalition against revolutionary France, deeming a defensive alliance more important than retaining claims to the Nootka Sound, a region of uncertain economic value.¹⁷⁴ Spain agreed to release the captured vessels' crews and compensated the English for impounded cargoes. Spain relinquished its claim to the Pacific Northwest, agreeing to Nootka Sound's mutual abandonment. British and Spanish vessels were free to port in the sound, and neither could establish dominion. Spain also agreed to guarantee British fishing rights and freedom of navigation in the Pacific Ocean.¹⁷⁵ The Nootka Conventions' outcome forced Spain to renounce exclusive claims over the Pacific Ocean, while wartime measures permitted free navigation of neutral ships like those from the United States. Britain agreed to take steps to keep its subjects from abusing free navigation as a pretext for illicit trade with Spanish settlements but, ultimately, never followed through on the promise. English merchants commenced contraband trading in Alta California ports after the Anglo-Spanish alliance dissolved and hostilities with Britain resumed from 1796-1808. The few warships at San Blas struggled to deal with a new influx of illicit trade on the Pacific coast and the growing presence of Anglo-American traders.¹⁷⁶

Accompanying the end of the Nootka Conventions was an increased presence of foreign ships in the Pacific Ocean and on the west coast of New Spain. In 1797, two U.S. whaling vessels arrived in the Bahía de Banderas near the Naval Department of San Blas. With exhausted supplies and afflicted with scurvy after sailing eight months from the Atlantic Ocean, the crew

¹⁷⁴ Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, 410.

¹⁷⁵ Buschmann, *Iberian Visions of the Pacific Ocean*, 158.

¹⁷⁶ Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, 235 and 425-432.

stopped on the coast searching for a port. The captain petitioned for emergency supplies from San Blas. Juan Matute (circa 1800s), the naval lieutenant at the Naval Department, agreed to provide the supplies and medicines, stating, “humanity and the law of people dictate it.”¹⁷⁷

Without money to pay, the whaling ships satisfied costs with the sale of goods. The increased presence of foreign vessels in the Pacific Ocean correlated with more significant numbers stopping on the western coast of New Spain, including Alta California. Posts advising on the illegality of trading with foreign vessels appeared more frequently at Alta California’s missions, pueblos, and presidios, warning of strict enforcement and punishment for violators.¹⁷⁸

Hermenigildo Sal (1746-1800), the Presidio Monterey's commandant, warned the Pueblo de San Jose commissioner that any officials, military officers, or soldiers engaging in contraband would be punished under the law and removed from their post.¹⁷⁹ Royal policies prohibited direct dealings with foreign ships, but Alta Californians often violated restrictions to acquire low-cost manufactured goods exchanged for agricultural products and furs. A friar at Mission Santa Clara, Esteban Tápis, observed in 1804 that U.S. vessels arrived regularly to Bahía San Pedro in Southern California with merchandise to trade for otter pelts with residents. He also noted that foreign ships had dealt with Native people along the coast.¹⁸⁰ Spanish soldiers and mariners captured several foreign sailors smuggling and poaching sea otters off the coast of Alta

¹⁷⁷ Orizaba Marqués de Branciforte to Manuel Godoy, July 25-30, 1797, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 31, Folder 2834, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 14.

¹⁷⁸ Jose Arguello to Comisionado de Pueblo de San Jose, June 17, 1795, Document 0059, Spanish-Mexican Records of the San José Pueblo: The Pueblo Papers, History San José Research Library, 1.

¹⁷⁹ Hermenigildo Sal to Comisionado de Pueblo de San Jose, November 2, 1795, Document 0078, Spanish-Mexican Records of the San José Pueblo: The Pueblo Papers, History San José, 2.

¹⁸⁰ Fray Esteban Tapias, Prohibicion de todo comercio con los extranjeros, June 4, 1804, Item 101, Father Viadar’s Miscellany Book, Santa Clara University Special Collections, Santa Clara, California, 1.

California. In 1798, Spanish soldiers arrested eleven Anglo-American sailors on smuggling charges and remitted them to San Blas for deportation.¹⁸¹ In the same year, soldiers from San Diego arrested four more Anglo-American mariners poaching and trading for sea otter pelts on the coast. The four also admitted to hunting seals and otters on the South American coast.¹⁸² For every foreign sailor captured, many others successfully evaded the military.

Alta California was essential to Spain's asserting sovereignty in the Pacific Ocean in the late eighteenth century. The province's relationship with San Blas and the Pacific Northwest ensured the Pacific Ocean would play a fundamental role in colonization. Russians, English, and Anglo-American traders seeking profits from marine furs on the west coast of North America forced Spain to defend its claims to the Pacific Ocean by expanding the frontier north. Alta California's dependence on supplies and trade with the Naval Department and its relationship to exploratory expeditions to the Pacific Northwest bound the province to the Pacific Ocean. The expanding role of San Blas in commerce allowed more significant numbers of Asian and European merchandise to enter New Spain's northern frontier. Spanish Californians had actively sought out sources of Asian and European goods seeking to participate in the broader exchange networks of the Pacific Ocean. Since the early decades of colonization in California, the goods arriving in the province demonstrated a mix of European, Mexican, and Asian origins. Material goods highlight how the Pacific Ocean shaped California's littoral borderland and how Spanish and Native Californians engaged with the world beyond their coastline.

¹⁸¹ Miguel Joseph de Azanza to Francisco de Saavedra, July 27, 1798, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 2839, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 2.

¹⁸² Diego de Borica to Miguel Joseph de Azanza, December 22 to June 26, 1798, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 2841, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 4.

Conclusion

The permeability of Alta California's littoral borderland confounded Spanish authorities. They struggled to contain a space surrounded by a vast ocean and an Indigenous interior on the other. Alta California was intimately bound with the maritime developments that spurred its colonization, while material exchanges tied the province to the Pacific Ocean and its hinterlands. A better understanding of Alta California should consider the maritime and coastal developments that shaped the daily life of its inhabitants. Alta California was part of Spain's broader strategy of asserting sovereignty in the Pacific Ocean and defending claims to the western coast of North America. Establishing and maintaining the presidios and missions was primarily accomplished by sending ships and supplies along maritime routes from San Blas. The expanding influence of the Naval Department in marine and coastal commerce on the coast of New Spain was tied to developments in Alta California and the broader Pacific Ocean. The agricultural economy attracted Spanish and foreign merchants who landed on the coast seeking pelts and provisions for their journeys to Asia. Spanish Alta Californians eagerly participated in commerce with passing ships against the wishes of authorities in Mexico City and Spain, who could do little to prevent contraband from entering the province. Foreign sailors even took advantage of the province's permeable coastal boundaries to trade with Indigenous groups. In the last decades of Spain's rule, missions played a much more active role in circulating goods between the Pacific Ocean and the hinterlands within Alta California. Franciscans trained Native people in trades and generated revenue from selling the fruits of their labors to the military and private merchants arriving on the coast. Alta California's relationship to the Pacific Ocean and the hinterlands reveals the practical challenges of containing the region within conceptual boundaries and points to new understandings about how land and sea shaped the region's history.

By treating Alta California as a littoral borderland, we can better recognize how the contested nature of territoriality among states and peoples impacted regional developments while acknowledging the complex interplay between maritime and landed processes. A Pacific perspective also potentially complicates the historiography of Alta California and the frontier, whether it be the northward of New Spain or the later westward expansion of the United States. From 1786 to 1848, 953 ships landed on the Alta California coast, the second most visited shore in the northeastern Pacific Ocean after Hawaii.¹⁸³ After the Yuma uprising in 1781 destroyed the two missions near the Colorado River Basin, Spain never attempted to rebuild the land route connecting Alta California to Sonora, leaving a vast swath of the Indigenous borderlands separating the province from the rest of New Spain.¹⁸⁴ Accessing Alta California required crossing the Sea of Cortes or traveling from the Pacific Ocean.

Additionally, foreign sailors, merchants, and whalers had been arriving in Alta California since the end of the eighteenth century, and the early decades of the fur trade spurred the development of markets for hides, tallow, and other agricultural products that later flourished under Mexican rule from the 1820s to 1840s. Along with commerce came Anglo-American merchants and maritime deserters who remained long after their ships departed.¹⁸⁵ Narratives about northward or westward expansion elide the dynamic maritime encounters on the North American west coast and high seas. Alta California's coastal and interior spaces were just as

¹⁸³ Iglar, "The Northeastern Pacific Basin," 587; Also, for an index of vessels stopping in California, see. Adele Ogden, *Trading Vessels on the California Coast, 1786-1848*, MSS 80/36c, BANC.

¹⁸⁴ Natale Zappia, "'The One Who Wheezes': Salvador Palma, the Colorado River, and the Emerging World Economy," Center for World History, University of California-Santa Cruz, accessed March 12, 2021, <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.ucsc.edu/dist/f/482/files/2017/08/SocialBio.Zappia.pdf>.

¹⁸⁵ Nunis, "Alta California's Trojan Horse," 303.

much the results of land-based processes as they were of the maritime developments in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 3: Indigenous Labor and Material Exchanges in the Littoral Borderland

During the colonial era, the missions and outposts of Spanish colonization served as both production sites and distribution points for locally produced and imported material goods. Not only did exchanges in the Pacific Ocean influence Alta California's littoral borderland, but also, the missions and presidios of Alta California occupied a liminal space within the circulation of material goods into the Indigenous hinterlands. Material exchanges had deep roots in interactions between the Spanish and Native people in Alta California. Early Spanish documents frequently reference Pacific encounters among European and Indigenous groups long before the arrival of the Spanish. Juan Bautista de Anza (1736-1788) recorded in 1776 a story told to him by the local Indigenous residents of El Buchón, a Chumash village near Mission San Lu s Obispo. The locals detailed the arrival of twelve people "like us [the Spanish] in whiteness, clothing, weapons, and other things they see" who arrived on the shore about twenty-three years ago, around 1753. The Chumash witnessed a vessel crashing onto the rocks, protruding some distance from the coast. On the launch, the twelve survivors headed ashore, providing glass beads, large knives, and pocket knives to local groups in exchange for food and shelter. Anza goes on to say, "There is no doubt that the vessel which they told of was wrecked, for besides the things given to them by the persons who were managing the vessel, they took advantage of its fragments."¹⁸⁶

Native people in Alta California had interacted and exchanged with foreigners for centuries before the Spanish established the first Franciscan mission in San Diego. For two centuries before Junipero Serra's arrival to Alta California in 1769, the Naos and other ships had

¹⁸⁶ Bolton, *Anza's California Expeditions, Volume II*, 163-164.

been sporadically stopping on the coast, trading manufactured cloth and metal goods for food and pelts with coastal Native people in Alta California. According to Albert Lacson, trade, more specifically the exchange of cloth, served as the foundation for establishing diplomatic relations during the early encounters between Spanish sailors and Indigenous groups. These early exchanges with Nao sailors facilitated early non-violent interactions with the Franciscans, who continued to offer cloth to entice Native people in Alta California to baptism to control and exploit their labor for agricultural and commodity production at the missions.¹⁸⁷ Traditional scholarship has generally portrayed the missions and presidios in Alta California as largely self-sufficient while treating them in isolation from the broader landscapes they occupied. As Kent Lightfoot succinctly summarizes, research on the Alta California missions tends to assume that when Native people entered the missions and became baptized, “the doors to the outside world closed.”¹⁸⁸ Rather than being relatively self-contained institutions, the missions were, in fact, a meeting space where the Pacific World converged with a pre-existing, long-standing Indigenous landscape and where Spanish colonial and Native people collided. By contextualizing the missions in light of the integration of Alta California within systems of exchange in the Pacific Ocean and the competing interests between Franciscan missionaries and Indigenous people, I show how and why the missions came to depend on transpacific trade and how Native Alta Californians forced the Franciscans to adopt a more open-ended program of conversion to attract converts and laborers, which allowed the missions to participate in Pacific exchanges.

¹⁸⁷ Albert P. Lacson, “Making Friends and Converts: Cloth and Clothing in Early California History,” *California History* 92, 1 (Spring 2015), 7.

¹⁸⁸ Kent G. Lightfoot, “A Cubist Perspective of Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish Missions,” in *Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish Missions: New Perspectives from Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Lee M. Panich and Tsim D. Schneider (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 200.

On the one hand, the Indigenous borderland persisted in the spaces between the Spanish missions, presidios, and ranchos. Here, Indigenous people maintained their traditional religions and cultures while also engaging in hunting, gathering, and horticulture. They could move relatively freely between their traditional territories and Spanish settlements, serving as a critical source of labor for presidios and missions while facilitating the exchange of imported and locally produced goods to Native villages. The success of the Spanish mission system relied heavily on the Indigenous borderland, which coexisted alongside the colonial spaces of the missions, presidios, and ranchos. Within these spaces, Indigenous people traveled to the missions to work in exchange for goods, which were often paid in kind. They also maintained their social bonds with other Indigenous people and Spanish speakers, adapting the mission system to fit their cultural and social landscape. The movement of Indigenous people within their traditional homelands and the colonial spaces within them led to the emergence of a unique meeting place between Indigenous and Spanish borderlands, which reflected Native people's resilience and resistance in the face of Spanish colonization. Despite the Franciscan missionaries' ongoing presence and influence, Indigenous people could practice traditional cultural and social practices. In this chapter, I aim to explore the mobility of Indigenous people and the crucial role their labor played in developing the littoral borderland.

I argue that what allowed Alta California's missions to trade and exchange with the Pacific World in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were the thousands of Native Alta Californians who labored daily to produce the manufactured and agricultural goods, which sustained the mission system productively and economically. The Franciscans sold agricultural goods to private merchants and passing ships to acquire imported goods, transforming the missions into sites of production and distribution of material goods from the Pacific Ocean and



Figure 3.1. The eight northern California missions and Indigenous groups. *Source:* Sherburne F. Cook and Woodrow Borah, *Essays in Population History: Mexico and California, Volume III* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 180.

the colonial hinterlands. The products of Indigenous people's labor fed, clothed, and generated revenue for the missions. The Franciscan missionaries struggled to create an entirely self-sufficient mission system, necessitating trade with Spanish and foreign merchants in the Pacific Ocean to survive. Native people living at the missions contributed most of the labor to grow and manufacture the goods exchanged for imported cloth, ceramics, tools, and cultivates. At the same

time, their strong ties to un-missionized friends and family facilitated the trade of imported and locally produced goods into the Indigenous hinterlands. The Franciscan's reliance on maritime trade and Native people's connection to Indigenous spaces transformed the coastal zones into an area where the maritime world of the Pacific Ocean and the Indigenous hinterlands converged, establishing the contours of the littoral borderland in Alta California.

Indigenous Mobility, Labor, and the Littoral Borderland

Firstly, missions were not isolated from the broader landscapes in which they resided, and Indigenous people adopted creative responses to colonialism. Early colonial interactions and the establishment of missions in coastal Alta California may have ushered in dramatic social transformations for Native societies and significantly altered the environment along the coast. As Steven W. Hackel points out, colonization forced Native Alta Californians to confront the “dual revolutions” of demographic collapse and environmental change.¹⁸⁹ Disease and disruptions of traditional subsistence patterns contributed to considerable mortality among Indigenous groups, especially in the early decades. And in turn, mortality undermined social structures within communities, hastening the collapse of village and subsistence economies. Hackel concluded that missions “offered the promise of individual and community salvation, but they destroyed nearly all those they intended to save.”¹⁹⁰ Much scholarship has focused on the missions as sites of refuge for Indigenous peoples displaced by colonial violence and rapid environmental changes, where Native people sought out the missions for food and shelter, revitalized

¹⁸⁹ 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), 10 and 74.

¹⁹⁰ Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 97.

community life, and reconstituted themselves. Another strand of research has examined missions as carceral institutions, meting out harsh and abusive treatment to confine and exploit Native people's labor.¹⁹¹

More recently, research has begun challenging views of Native people's confinement and limited options in the face of colonialism by looking more critically at how Native people understood the colonial experience. Anthropologist Tsim D. Schneider finds that the Coast Miwok in the San Francisco Bay area found "refuge and recourse" by reinforcing strong ties to culturally significant places and "embodied histories of mobility and engagement with meaningful landscapes." For the Coast Miwok particularly, social memory and material choices shaped enduring Indigenous cultural legacies and continue to influence them "long after their entanglement with short-lived missions." As he describes, mobility allowed Native people to make and unmake their communities, balancing tradition with the flexibility necessary to accommodate change.¹⁹² Aside from the missions, many Native people throughout Alta California successfully resisted and defended their autonomy and redetermined how they interacted and engaged with the colonial mission system. They created alternative sites of refuge in places like the hinterlands of the San Joaquin Valley, the Mojave Desert, the Sierra Nevada, and the coastal zones of the San Francisco Bay area in the Marin Peninsula.¹⁹³ Within these Indigenous spaces, they maintained deeply rooted traditions of mobility, affirmed a sense of

¹⁹¹ Benjamin Madley, "California's First Mass Incarceration System: Franciscan Missions, California Indians, and Penal Servitude, 1769-1836," *Pacific Historical Review* 88, 1 (2019), 16-17, 28.

¹⁹² Tsim D. Schneider, *The Archaeology of Refuge and Recourse: Coast Miwok Resilience and Indigenous Hinterlands in Colonial California* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2021), 8 and 36.

¹⁹³ Lisbeth Haas, *Saints and Citizens: Indigenous Histories of Colonial Missions and Mexican California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 38 and 49; Also, see. Schneider, *The Archaeology of Refuge and Recourse*.

place, and developed creative responses to the external threats of colonization.¹⁹⁴ Accordingly, Indigenous mobility held that neither the missions nor the hinterlands would be isolated but integrated into a broader pre-existing Indigenous landscape.

Recent research on colonial Alta California reminds us that the missions cannot be understood solely as colonial settlements or spaces of cultural domination but within the context of Native people's cultures and histories and the broader indigenous landscape. Native people who entered the missions preserved external connections to traditional trade networks and subsistence practices. Those who did not live in the missions continued to occupy the colonial hinterlands and, most importantly, refuge sites.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, Native people's experience with the missions extended far beyond the mission compound into un-missionized villages, mission stations, outlying ranchos, missionized villages, and the colonial hinterlands where Native people continued exploiting traditional resources traded colonial goods with their neighbors through broad-reaching exchange networks.¹⁹⁶ For instance, Indigenous groups, like the Chumash from the Channel Islands, continued to inhabit the southern California islands for over four decades after the Franciscans constructed the first mission in the Santa Barbara Channel region at Mission San Lu s Obispo in 1772.¹⁹⁷ In 1772, Governor Pedro Fages (1734-1796) described his impressions of the Chumash, "They [the Chumash] show great covetousness a certain inclination

¹⁹⁴ Tsim D. Schneider, "Placing Refuge and the Archaeology of Indigenous Hinterlands in Colonial California," *American Antiquity* 80, 4 (October 2015), 701-705.

¹⁹⁵ Tsim D. Schneider and Lee M. Panich, "Native Agency at the Margins of Empire: Indigenous Landscapes, Spanish Missions, and Contested Histories," in *Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish Missions: New Perspectives from Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Lee M. Panich and Tsim D. Schneider, 5-22 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 7.

¹⁹⁶ Schneider and Panich, "Native Agency at the Margins of Empire," 6.

¹⁹⁷ The Franciscans established five missions on Chumash lands: San Lu s Obispo (1772); San Buenaventura (1782); Santa B rbara (1786); La Pur sima Concepci n (1787); and Santa Ynez (1804).

to traffic and barter, and it may be said in a way they are the Chinese of California. In matters concerning their possessions, they will not yield or concede the smallest point.”¹⁹⁸ Centuries before Spanish contact, the Chumash lived in densely populated coastal villages and conducted intensive trade with neighboring groups living in the Channel Islands and interior.¹⁹⁹ The economy centered around producing and distributing shell bead money traded for natural resources and material goods. The Spanish naturalist José Longinos Martínez (1756-1802) describes how the Chumash traded with Native groups in the mountains for seeds, shawls, and blankets with similar fibers to cotton.²⁰⁰ By allying with the Spanish, the mainland Chumash dominated access to European manufactured goods and enhanced their power relative to other Indigenous groups. This relationship was replicated elsewhere in Alta California. Exchanges with the Pueblo of Los Angeles allowed the Kumeyaay to access cotton, metal tools like knives and axes, glass beads, and other goods.²⁰¹ Trade relationships enhanced the status of Indigenous groups and gradually entered their economy into world markets. According to anthropologists Lynn H. Gable and Irma Carmen Zepeda, the adoption of glass beads was the earliest example of how Native people acculturated to Euro-American material culture, which ultimately facilitated

¹⁹⁸ Pedro Fages, “An Historical, Political, and Natural Description of California,” edited by Herbert J. Priestly, *The Catholic Historical Review* 4, 4 (January 1919), 502.

¹⁹⁹ Deana Dartt-Newton and Jon M. Erlandson, “Little Choice for the Chumash: Colonialism, Cattle, and Coercion in the Mission Period,” *American Indian Quarterly* 20, 3-4 (Summer-Autumn 2006), 418.

²⁰⁰ José Longinos Martínez, *California in 1792: The Expedition of Jose Longinos Martinez*, edited by Lesley Bird Simpson (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1938), 45-46.

²⁰¹ William Marvin Mason, “Fages’ Code of Conduct Toward Indians, 1787,” *Journal of California Anthropology* 2, 1 (Summer 1975), 94; Adolph Van Hemert-Engert and Frederick J. Teggart, editors, *The Narrative of the Portola Expedition of 1769-1770 by Miguel Costanso* (Berkeley: The Academy of Pacific Coast History, 1910), 139.

their economic dependence on Spanish and later Anglo society.²⁰² Glass beads eventually replaced shell money and partially undermined traditional native economies.

Although the Chumash became economically tied to the missions, the Franciscan presence did not lead to an immediate or long-term abandonment of deep-rooted social organizations. For decades after colonization, the Chumash appropriated the missions into a preexisting cultural and social landscape and recontextualized them to suit their goals. Precolonial exchange networks had tied island and mainland communities together for more than a millennium. The presence of European goods in material assemblages on the Channel Islands reveals the persistence of these trade relationships for decades into colonization. It indicates enduring connections between Chumash living in the missions and the colonial hinterlands.²⁰³ Chumash continued to cross the Santa Barbara Channel aboard their plank canoes, or *tomol*, which had long been integral for maritime fishing and resource gathering and was the primary means for the cross-channel economic exchange system linking the islands to the mainland.²⁰⁴ Evidence for Chumash's reliance on plank canoes dates back centuries before contact, and its use developed alongside maritime fishing, especially swordfish, in the Santa Barbara Channel.²⁰⁵

²⁰² Lynn H. Gamble and Irma Carmen Zepeda, "Social Differentiation and Exchange among the Kumeyaay Indians during the Historic Period in California," *Historical Archaeology* 36, 2 (2002), 625.

²⁰³ Anthony P. Graesch, "Culture on the Channel Islands: Historic-Era Production and Exchange Systems," in *Origins of a Pacific Coast Chieftdom: The Chumash of the Channel Islands*, edited by Jeanne E. Arnold (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2001), 264.

²⁰⁴ John R. Johnson, "Ethnohistoric Reflections on Cruzeño Chumash Society," in *Origins of a Pacific Coast Chieftdom*, 54.

²⁰⁵ Michael F. Rondeau, Jim Cassidy, and Terry L. Jones, "Colonization Technologies: Fluted Projectile Points and the San Clemente Island Woodworking/Mircoblade Complex," in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, edited by Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, 63-70 (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2010), 69; See, also, Torben C. Rick, John R. Johnson, Jon M. Erlandson, and Lynn H. Gamble, "Style, Context, and Chronology of a Wooden Canoe Model from Santa Rosa Island, California," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 24, 2 (2004): 301-308; And, Demorest Davenport, John R. Johnson, Jan Timbrook, "The Chumash and the Swordfish," *Antiquity* 67, 255 (June 1993), 261.

Initially, many likely joined the missions seeking access to the material goods brought by the Franciscan missionaries and had little intention of remaining at the missions permanently. The first Chumash from the islands appeared to have been baptized as early as 1783. Still, most did not enter the missions until between 1814 and 1816, when the declining population from epidemics, the collapse of the Chumash economic exchange, and environmental changes pushed more significant numbers to migrate to the mainland.²⁰⁶ Economic dependence on the Franciscan mission likely exacerbated these disruptions. From 1810, the revolutionary war in Mexico disrupted the San Blas trade, halting the flow of manufactured goods.

Nevertheless, the entrance of Island Chumash into the missions was neither entirely permanent nor did it entail a wholesale abandonment of traditional lifeways. After the Chumash Revolt of 1824, hundreds of Chumash from Santa Barbara, La Purísima, and Santa Ynes abandoned the missions for the Yokuts village Tulamniu in the San Joaquin Valley, while several others returned to the Channel Islands and returned to a pre-mission community organization.²⁰⁷ For many decades, the Chumash from the mainland and the Channel Islands inhabited the littoral borderland as they had for centuries before colonization.

Exchange networks from the coast to the interior had long connected coastal people to groups in the interior through trading and raiding.²⁰⁸ Native people arrived to conduct peaceful

²⁰⁶ Douglas J. Kennett, John R. Johnson, Torben C. Rick, Don P. Morris, and Juliet Christy, "Historic Chumash Settlement on Eastern Santa Cruz Island, Southern California," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 22, 2 (2000), 212.

²⁰⁷ Julienne Bernard, David Robinson, and Fraser Sturt, "Points of Refuge in South Central California Colonial Hinterlands," in *Indigenous Spaces and Spanish Missions*, 157; Johnson, "Ethnohistoric Reflections on Cruzeño Society," in *Origins of a Pacific Coast Chiefdom*, 68.

²⁰⁸ See. Natale A. Zappia, *Traders and Raiders: The Indigenous World of the Colorado Basin, 1540-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

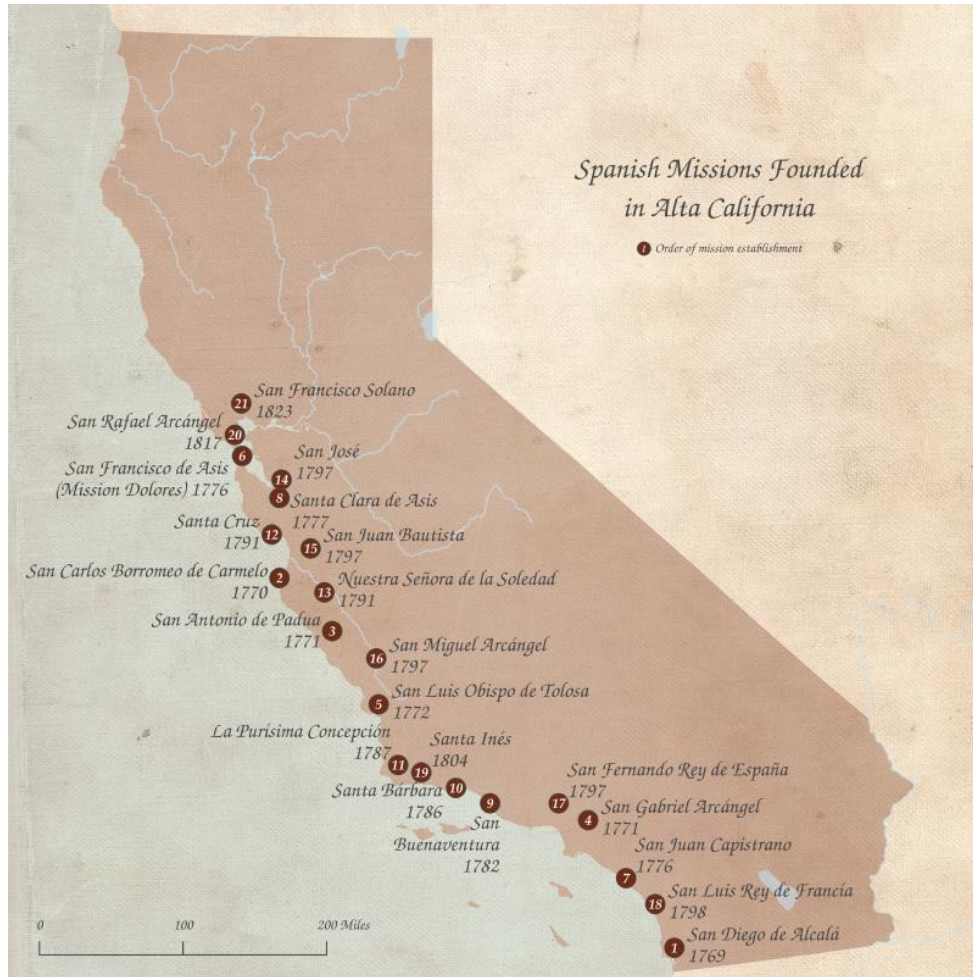


Figure 3.2. Map of the Camino Real and location of the 21 Franciscan missions in Alta California. *Wikimedia Commons*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Spanish_missions_in_California#/media/File:SpanishMissionsinCA.png

and sometimes violent exchanges with the Spanish and Native Alta Californians. In San Diego in 1775, several dozen Kumeyaay surrounded the mission, attacked the guards, and set fire to the buildings. The attackers ransacked the church and storehouse as the mission burned, running off with religious ornaments, liturgical vestments, food stores, and other goods of value. Serra complained in the months following the attack, “It causes us considerable pain to hear frequent rumors that various objects of the church and even images are to be found on the Rancherias not very far away, and yet we are not able to persuade them [the presidio command] that an attempt

be made to recover them.”²⁰⁹ Raids and attacks by hostile Native groups remained a looming threat throughout the period. Indigenous groups from the hinterlands and mountains frequently attacked missions like San Jose and San Juan Capistrano, killing several and stealing goods, cattle, and crops. The presidios responded by sending soldiers to attack and capture the raiders.²¹⁰ Those caught faced imprisonment, corporal punishment, and sentencing to hard labor. After the sentence, authorities remitted them to the missionaries for religious instruction and manual work. Many resisted and plotted their eventual escape. Alta California governors attempted to ban exchanges between Native people at the missions and those in the interior, stemming from their preoccupation with Indigenous raiders. Franciscan Francisco Garcés criticized the policy. He declared it illegitimate to deny commerce between coastal populations and the Colorado River, believing these contacts could help facilitate future evangelization efforts in the interior.²¹¹ Native traders seeking coastal products had been arriving in southern California for centuries.

However, in one instance, the arrival of twenty Mojave traders to San Buenaventura in 1819 ended in a deadly altercation killing two soldiers and several Mojave. Soldiers arrested the group and imprisoned them in the guardhouse. Two guards attacked one individual attempting to escape, leading other Mojave to club the soldiers to death.²¹² Soldiers pursued the fleeing Mojave, killed several, captured four, imprisoned them at the Santa Barbara, and later escaped.

²⁰⁹ Junípero Serra, “To Father Francisco Pangua, September 24, 1776,” in *Writings of Junípero Serra*, 31.

²¹⁰ Bryan James Clinch, *California and Its Missions: Their History to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Volume II* (San Francisco: The Whitaker & Ray Company, 1904), 175-176.

²¹¹ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California, Volume II* (Santa Barbara: Mission Santa Barbara, 1930), 218.

²¹² Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California, Volume III*, 33.

Many of those Mojave became raiders in the hinterlands, joined by other runaways from the missions.²¹³ Indigenous groups continued to maintain traditional exchange networks with others beyond the reach of the presidios and missions. These connections helped knit California with the indigenous interior.

The Franciscans might have been apparent within their goals to transition Native Alta Californians into compliant, Catholic laborers in agriculture and industry, whose methods included spatial confinement and regimented discipline, but, in practice, the level of control they were able to exert differed significantly across diverse Native people in the missions. Several anthropologists and ethnohistorians have pointed out that Native mobility between missions and Indigenous villages occurred at greater rates than scholars have generally recognized. Often as a condition of baptism, Native people insisted on permitted travel, or *paseos*, as a concession from missionaries, or rather the opportunity to engage in resource gathering and hunting traditions, visiting family and friends, and sojourning at distant villages in the colonial hinterlands.²¹⁴ According to Schneider, the mission reduction policy intended to limit and control mobility, but Native people regularly hunted and gathered traditional foods and accessed ranches, agricultural fields, and orchards where their labor supported the missions.²¹⁵ Lasuén describes the inability of Franciscan fathers to control Native mobility,

This [paseos] is a lesser evil than not permitting them at all. This is not due to the fact that at the present day they have the same need of doing it, but to the fact that ultimately they will have to go, even if they do not get permission. In that case they are slower to return, for their pagan relatives keep on inviting and entertaining them; and if they notice

²¹³ Indigenous autonomy and raiding is explored further in Chapter 5.

²¹⁴ See. Tsim D. Schneider, "Making and Unmaking Native Communities in Mission and Post-Mission Era Marina County, California," in *Forging Communities in Colonial Alta California*, edited by Kathleen L. Hull and John G. Douglass (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 89-91.

²¹⁵ Schneider, *The Archaeology of Refuge and Recourse*, 15.

that they do not come, or that they are slow in doing so, and they are told as an excuse that the Father does not like to give permission, they hesitate very much about becoming Christians. We must remember that the majority of our neophytes are so attached to the mountains that if there were an unqualified prohibition against going there, there would be a danger of a riot.²¹⁶

Sustained contact among Indigenous people at the mission and autonomous, un-missionized groups facilitated community maintenance and connected the missions to spaces beyond its walls. Illustrative of this mobility, Schneider locates Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo coastal foraging sites and shell mounds as refuge spaces in the Indigenous hinterlands, where Native people congregated, recalled traditional places, and returned to seek protection and empowerment in the context of on-going colonialism. Investigations at six archaeological sites near China Camp and Toms Point indicate colonial-era occupations layered above much older deposits, revealing shell mounds to be places with deep histories and points of refuge for Coast Miwok. According to Schneider, Indigenous hinterlands were “comprised of resilient exchange economies, technologies, and foodways, as well as dynamic mobilities, seasonal journeys to resource collecting areas, and purposeful trips to places of refuge.”²¹⁷ The Franciscans justified leave to attract Native people’s friends and families to the missions.

However, the Franciscans were not entirely indifferent to Native mobility. Although most missionized Indigenous people received permission to travel, missionaries meted severe punishment to those failing to return, timely or voluntarily. Missionaries readily employed the military to recapture them and administered corporal punishment and confinement to repeated runaways.²¹⁸ Nevertheless, granting furloughs complicated and even contradicted Franciscan

²¹⁶ Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, “Refutation of Charges,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, edited by Finbar Kenneally (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965),

²¹⁷ Schneider, *The Archaeology of Refuge and Recourse*, 153-155.

efforts toward evangelization. According to Adelbert von Chamisso, a botanist aboard the Russian *Rurik* visiting San Francisco in 1816, “On occasion of these journeys [furloughs], which are undertaken in companies, apostates fall off, and new converts come in. The first, some of whom become the bitterest enemies of the Spaniards.”²¹⁹ The Franciscans were seemingly aware of the problematic nature of *paseos* but continued the practice despite the inevitable problems. Ultimately, the need for labor compelled them to adopt the seemingly counterintuitive, or “lesser evil,” strategy to ensure a sustainable labor supply to support the mission’s economic activities.

The labor of constructing and maintaining the churches and buildings of twenty-one missions built in the colonial era fell primarily on Native people. Initially, soldiers and sailors trained them in various skills such as adobe-making, masonry, construction, and agricultural techniques. Later, artisans brought from Mexico City and Spain arrived to apprentice young boys in these occupations. Through labor at the missions, Native people exercised considerable influence in constructing the built environments of the mission. Art historian Kurt Baer states that in buildings where stonework was typical, Native artists were the ones who detailed the cornerstones, keystone arches, pillars, and posts supporting arches. An example included a pair of stone “gargoyles” used as water spouts and carved from granite at San Luis Rey Mission.²²⁰ The carving depicts a face with a furrowed brow, oval eyes, and an open mouth where the water poured out.

²¹⁸ Madley, “California’s First Mass Incarceration System,” 27-28.

²¹⁹ August C. Mahr, editor, *The Visit of the “Rurik” to San Francisco in 1816* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1932), 329.

²²⁰ Kurt Baer, “California Indian Art,” *The Americas* 16, 1 (July 1959), 39.

Additionally, Native crafters carved wooden objects like altar rails, furniture, cabinets, and doors found at the missions. They followed European designs while incorporating traditional motifs. Stone working and woodcarving were trades familiar to several Indigenous groups and practiced centuries before the colonial period. Friar Juan Crespí (1721-1782), on his journey from Baja to Alta California in 1769, observed that local Indigenous groups in southern Alta California “manufacture a great many bowls of wood and of stone, so smooth and glossy that especially those made of stone are like so many mirrors, having various inlay work very well set in place.”²²¹ Groups like the Kumeyaay traditionally produced finely crafted wood and stone bowls decorated with inlaid bone and shell and practiced pottery-making. Weaving ornate and intricate red willow or *Juncus* baskets continued to be practiced inside and outside the missions. Traditional pottery, stone-carved bowls, and baskets existed alongside the copper and ceramic vessels imported into the region.

The Franciscans also trained Native artists to decorate the buildings and churches of the missions. At Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, the mission’s first annual report in 1771 listed a manuscript, “Painting without an Instructor, or Similar Matter” (“Un libro intitulado Pintar sin Maestro, o cosa semejante”) and requested twelve paintbrushes from San Blas.²²² Surviving copies of the manuscript were not preserved into the present, but the title suggested it be an instruction manual for techniques in painting. Also, a copy of Vitruvius’s *De Architectura Libri Decem*, translated to Spanish in 1787, was present in the library of Santa Barbara Mission in

²²¹ Juan Crespí, *A Description of Unpublished Roads: Original Journals of the First Expedition into California, 1769-1770* by Juan Crespí, edited by Alan K. Brown (San Diego: San Diego State University Press), 395.

²²² Edith Webb, “Pigments Used by the Mission Indians of California,” *The Americas* 2, 2 (October 1945), 138.

early records. Vitruvius's work provides a study of pigments and ingredients to create paints. In 1777, missionaries at Santa Clara arranged for several Native people to travel to a nearby mine to collect cinnabar for pigments to decorate the newly built church. The local Tamiens utilized the substance for centuries to decorate bows and arrows with red hues.²²³ Native people worked with several minerals to create pigments for dyes and paints. Black, white, red, purple, and yellow were the primary colors employed in decoration.²²⁴ Aside from local minerals, the Franciscans also imported pigments to supplement what they lacked.

The missions abound with evidence of how Native people interacted with objects and artworks imported into the province. During the colonial period, the largest painting project undertaken in Alta California included a series of the *Stations (or Way) of the Cross* painted by the Tongva artist Juan Antonio (circa 1800s) between 1806 and 1807 for the San Fernando Rey Mission.²²⁵ Paintings of the *Via Crucis* were popular among Franciscans and became standardized into Fourteen Stations by the eighteenth century. The image was based on a woodblock print imported from Mexico City.²²⁶ Examples of Native-produced religious artwork appeared throughout the missions among various frescoes decorating the church walls. Other examples of the cultural exchanges between Native Californian and Spanish styles of representation included two tabernacles preserved in the missions. One from Santa Barbara fused

²²³ Webb, "Pigments Used by the mission Indians of California," 145.

²²⁴ Kurt Baer, "California Indian Art," *The Americas* 16, 1 (July 1959), 32.

²²⁵ Baer, "California Indian Art," 32-33.

²²⁶ Thomas O. Pelzel, "The San Gabriel Stations of the Cross from an Art-Historical Perspective," *Journal of California Anthropology* 3, 1 (1976), 115.

artistic styles crossing European, Asian, and Native California traditions.²²⁷ The *Chumash Tabernacle* was inlaid and lacquered with abalone shells, adapting the techniques of inlaying mother of pearl, more common in Europe, to a traditional Chumash style. The Indigenous artist adapted abalone shells to the lacquering process developed in China and Japan centuries ago.²²⁸ Europeans had adopted the technique since the early years of contact with Asian societies. Another interesting item can be found at San Juan Bautista. The revolving tabernacle imported to San Francisco from the Philippines by Pedro Benito Cambón had a reproduction, borrowing motifs of the original carving. A Native artisan in the 1780s replicated the Philippine tabernacle's design, illustrating how exchanges in the Pacific Ocean had entered the mission system and the daily lives of its residents.

For Franciscans, the conversion of Native people into a compliant, Hispanized workforce was as crucial as spiritual conversion itself as it generated revenue for the missions, permitted some economic self-sufficiency, and acculturated Native people to Spanish goods.²²⁹ Franciscans identified young boys who showed an aptitude or talent for particular labors to be trained in crafts needed at the missions. Under direct supervision, Native people received tutoring in trades like masonry, smithing, looming, and farming. They also selected certain Native people with musical talent who could be trained for the chorister. According to James Sandos, they afforded

²²⁷ Baer, "California Indian Art," 32 and 40.

²²⁸ John Zarobell, "Galleons and Globalization: California Mission Arts and the Pacific Rim," *Art Practical*, accessed March 11, 2020, artpractical.com/reviews/galleons_and_globalization/.

²²⁹ James Sandos, *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 8.



Figure 3.3. Franciscans and Kristina W. Foss. “Chumash Tabernacle, circa 1790.” Santa Barbara: Mission Santa Barbara, 2010. <https://s.hdnux.com/photos/07/21/72/1908359/11/920x920.jpg> (accessed September 10, 2020).



Left: Figure 3.4. “Pedro Benito Cambón’s Tabernacle, Manila, circa the 1780s,” Mission Dolores, *Thatcher Gallery*, University of San Francisco.

https://www.catholicvoiceoakland.org/2010/2010images/2010_1004_06CSFTabernacle.jpg (accessed September 10, 2020)

Right: Figure 3.5. Charles C. Pierce. “Richly carved tabernacle at Mission San Juan Bautista.” Los Angeles:

University of Southern California Special Collections, c. 1905. From *California Historical Society Collection, 1860-1960*.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/Richly_carved_tabernacle_at_Mission_San_Juan_Bautista%2C_California%2C_ca.1905_%28CHS-4426%29.jpg (accessed September 10, 2020).

some families better compensation than that received in agriculture or industry at the mission.²³⁰

Teaching Indigenous people in skilled labor served the religious and economic functions of creating a self-sustaining mission system. Pablo Tac, a Qéchnajuichom resident of Mission San Luis Rey in the 1820s, described daily life at the Alta California missions,

The son, if he is a man, works with the men. His daughter stays with the women, making shirts, and if these also have sons and daughters, they stay in the mission, the sons at school to learn the alphabet, and if they already know it, to learn the catechism, and if this also, to the choir of singers, and if he was a singer, to work, because all the musical singers work the day of work, and Sunday to the choir to sing, but without a book, because the teacher teaches them by memory, holding the book. The daughter joins with the single girls, who all spin blankets for the San Luiseños and for the robe of the Fernandino Father.²³¹

The passage elucidates the intimate connection between production, conversion, and the gendered division of labor within the conversion process. Men worked in the fields, construction, and productive trades while learning Catholic teachings. Meanwhile, women labored inside the mission, spinning fabric, sewing clothing, working in meal preparation, and attending daily religious instruction. Their labor fed, clothed, and generated revenue for the missions. The Franciscans then sold these goods to the military, merchants, and foreign sailors, and the profits purchased goods, tools, and textiles to sustain the missions. The Franciscans believed that founding a prosperous community would lure more Native people to the missions with material goods and food while economically supporting the mission system.²³² However, as Glenn Farris points out, increased agricultural yields and slaughtered animals did not necessarily translate to

²³⁰ Sandos, *Converting California*, 153.

²³¹ Pablo Tac, "Indian Life at San Luis Rey," in *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846*, edited by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2001), 336.

²³² Michael La Rosa, "Food Supply and Native American Conversion at Four Alta California Missions, 1810-1830," *Journal of the West* (January 1994), 108.

more available food since missionaries sold most harvested surpluses and butchered cattle for salable hides and tallow to the military, ranchos, merchants, and passing ships. The profits from Native people's labor paid for mission expenses like building materials, religious garments, and church decorations.²³³ Indigenous people's industrial and agricultural productivity had initially meant to provide for the local needs of the missions but later came to support the mission community economically through selling processed goods to merchants stopping on the coast. Their labor allowed the Franciscan missionaries to participate directly in the transpacific trade.

Through trade on the coast and pre-existing Native systems of exchange, the missions became points for the diffusion of material goods into Native communities within and beyond the mission walls. James Sandos points out two interesting personal musical artifacts identified in the historical and material record, including a Native-made wooden violin completed with a bone tailpiece and neckpiece carved into an animal, likely a pre-mission religious symbol. Additionally, a photograph from the San Buenaventura mission depicts a Native chorister with a flute fashioned from an old rifle barrel.²³⁴ The violin and flute illustrated the Franciscan's merger of religious instruction and mechanical arts. Native artisans appropriated the mechanical skills taught by the Spanish to generate new material forms by incorporating Indigenous motifs within their craft. Schneider argues distance and familiarity with new materials and ideas from non-Native people could be maintained without abandoning one's culture and identity. The uses of non-Native material goods, including "salvaged" goods as per the rifle barrel, can also be read as active recontextualizations within preexisting and highly adaptable Native technologies,

²³³ Glenn J. Farris, "Depriving God and the King of the Means of Charity: Early Nineteenth-century Missionaries' views of Cattle Ranchers near Mission La Purísima, California," *Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish Missions*, 135-136.

²³⁴ Sandos, *Converting California*, 141-142.

economies, and social practices.²³⁵ As well as being production sites, the mission community became important sites where Native people initially encountered and interacted with European/Mexican manufactured goods. Through the exchange, Indigenous people outside the missions eventually incorporated these material goods within their material culture. The missions became vectors for the transfusion of locally produced and imported manufactured goods along the Alta California coast.

Through furloughs, Native people aided in the diffusion of colonial goods beyond the confines of the missions. In the early decades of colonization, the Franciscans imported most material goods from merchants in Mexico City via the port of San Blas. Upon entering the missions, potential converts received a single sheet of cotton textile to be worn as a toga for men and as a skirt for women.²³⁶ In later decades, those who remained acquired an annual distribution of cloth and clothing, typically one blanket, two tunics, three breech-clouts for men, and one blanket, two tunics, and a skirt for women. After the Franciscans trained Native tailors, cotton and wool were processed into clothing and other fabrics for mission consumption or trade with local Indigenous villages. Mission San Juan Capistrano, for instance, had forty weavers who worked looms daily and tailors who produced plain shirts with trousers for men and skirts, bodices, and shawls for women.²³⁷ Franciscans required Native people to return their old clothes before receiving new ones. It was common for individuals to sell or trade their clothes, feign that they were lost, and ask for replacements.²³⁸ Franciscan fathers often complained about Native

²³⁵ Schneider, *The Archaeology of Refuge and Recourse*, 155 and 158.

²³⁶ Lacson, "Making Friends and Converts," 15.

²³⁷ John A. Berger, *The Franciscan Missions of California* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1948), 80-81.

people gambling clothes and other goods received at the missions with soldiers, sailors, and fellow Indigenous people at neighboring villages. Lasuén commented,

Card playing is one of the things they [Native Alta Californians] have picked up from the white people, and to this they have become inordinately addicted. In different places many packs of cards have been burned, packs long exposed to use and now almost worthless; yet these are the kind the old Christians sell them, and at a high price. By this time some of our neophytes, and even some pagans, have become so adept at cards that they win from their teachers.²³⁹

Native people, with and without permission from Franciscan fathers, visited family members, hunted, fished, and gathered traditional resources.²⁴⁰ They regularly returned to home villages with material goods from the missions, gifting them to friends and family. Other methods to acquire goods included gifts afforded by baptism from Franciscan fathers and godparents.²⁴¹ The theft was likely one of the more habitual methods for acquiring colonial goods. For instance, Franciscan Tomás de la Peña at Santa Clara discovered that Plácido, who managed the storehouse, had been stealing goods and using them to curry-favor with fellow Native residents at the mission.²⁴² Marie Christine Duggan indicates that gifts, especially in cloth, given to Native people dominated expenditures in the early decades.²⁴³ It appears evidence that a vigorous trade of colonial goods existed between Franciscan missions and hinterland villages in Alta California.

²³⁸ Lasuén, “Refutation of Charges, June 19, 1801,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 198 and 205.

²³⁹ Lasuén, “Refutation of Charges, June 19, 1801,” 211.

²⁴⁰ Clinch, *California and Its Missions*, 206.

²⁴¹ Erika Pérez, *Colonial Intimacies: Interethnic Kinship, Sexuality, and Marriage in Southern California, 1769-1885* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), 25.

²⁴² Lasuén, “Judicial Proceedings, May 26, 1786,” *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 110.

²⁴³ Marie Christine Duggan, “With and Without Empire: Financing the Empire Before and After 1810,” *Pacific Historical Review* 85, 1 (February 2016), 70.

By the 1790s, the missions had begun to shift away from primary dependence on agriculture to relying on material production and commercial trade. Early into colonization, the Franciscans recognized the need to create an economically self-sufficient mission system due to Alta California's relative isolation from the northern frontier. In response, the evangelization program merged agriculture and industry with spiritual evangelization.²⁴⁴ With financial support from New Spain's viceroy, the Franciscans contracted artisans from Mexico City and San Blas who trained Native people in weaving, smithing, masonry, construction, woodcarving, agriculture, and artistry.²⁴⁵ Religious instruction and mechanical training were meant to transform Native people into Catholic workers, supplanting Indigenous religions, cultures, political structures, and traditions with Hispanic ones.²⁴⁶ The Franciscans' dismissal of textile production as unsustainable and unprofitable and the decision to pursue industries more economically beneficial to the missions reveal missionary fathers' great importance on economic production. Fermín Lasuén relates,

I have not given any assignment to the tailors principally because, judging by what I have seen and heard, they are not what we are looking for. Furthermore, there is no need of that craft at the missions, and there is not enough work to justify conducting courses in it. Neither at the present time nor for some years to come are their prospects that the sales will justify the expense involved; and with such expenditure it would be possible to find something just as important, and more easy to attain.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ See. Arche to Bucareli, July 13, 1772, MSS M-A 5:1, Box 1, Folder 49, Documents Relating to Missions of the Californias, 1768-1802, BANC.

²⁴⁵ Agustín del Castillo, August 18, 1791, FILM 2311, REEL 1, Records of the Royal Treasury at Guadalajara, 1790-1797, BANC; See Steven W. Hackel, "Land, Labor, and Production: The Colonial Economy of Spanish and Mexican California," *California History* 76, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1997), 120-122.

²⁴⁶ Madley, "California's First Mass Incarceration System," 17-18.

²⁴⁷ Lasuén, "To Don José Joaquín de Arrillaga, December 21, 1792," *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 263.

To fulfill the mission's need for clothing, Native people received training in tailoring in the latter decades when the missions achieved relative economic stability. However, the clothing produced was primarily for use at the mission. The Franciscans in Alta California established close relationships with private merchants in Mexico City and Guadalajara in Mexico, and Callao in Peru to sell the goods produced by Native people. Nicolás Noé, a Peruvian merchant, agreed to transport goods from Alta California to Callao and Acapulco regularly.²⁴⁸ Several other private merchants from Mexico, Peru, and Central America began arriving on the coast to purchase tallows and hides from the Franciscans.²⁴⁹ By 1811, private merchants largely replaced the San Blas supply line captured by Mexican revolutionaries, and the Franciscans shifted to economically supporting the missions with maritime commerce.

Conclusion

The Spanish arrival to California significantly altered life for Indigenous groups. Demographic collapse and environmental change disrupted village life and traditional subsistence, compelling many to enter the missions. Once there, Native people entered a space structured by the Franciscans' religious doctrine and labor regimentation. Those failing to comply faced severe punishments like confinement, whippings, and forced labor. Conversion entailed transforming Native habits to Christian morality, self-discipline, and production. Artisans trained Native people in trades necessary to sustain the missions, and the products of these labors fed, clothed, and generated revenue exchanged for goods from the Pacific Ocean.

²⁴⁸ Señan, "To Fray José Guilez, April 18, 1812," *Letters of Jose Senan*, 66.

²⁴⁹ Señan, "Father Juan Norberto de Santiago, October 3, 1817," *Letters of Jose Senan*, 105.

Franciscans sold agricultural goods to private merchants to acquire imported goods, transforming the missions into sites of production and distribution points for the circulation of material goods to the Pacific Ocean and the hinterlands. How the Pacific Ocean entered California was multifaceted, but the flow of foreign goods from distant shores was a testament to colonization's engagement with developments beyond the coastline. Soldiers, missionaries, and Native people participated actively in the circulation of material goods, and authorities were often limited in how they responded. The littoral borderland in Alta California occupied various river systems, bays, and shorelines deeply rooted within the mobility of those inhabiting those spaces. Sailors, merchants, and Indigenous people shifted along the spatial gaps left open by colonial authorities, unable to assert adequate colonial power over the literal and figurative fluid spaces of the Pacific Ocean.

Chapter 4: The Pacific World of the Maritime Fur Trade

By the nineteenth century, the profits from Asian trade and sea otter pelts had been attracting Spanish merchants and others from Britain, the United States, France, and Russia to the North Pacific Ocean. Since the mid-eighteenth century, the Spanish crown had begun taking a greater interest in securing the Pacific Ocean from foreign rivals beginning with Alta California's colonization and expeditions to explore the Pacific Northwest. In the 1790s, to counter the growing presence of foreign fur traders, several Spanish merchants received licenses to conduct the trade from Baja and Alta California to the Philippines and mainland China. In 1794, Pedro de González Noriega (~1750s), a wealthy Mexico City merchant, received one of these licenses.²⁵⁰ What set Noriega apart from other Spanish contemporaries was his familiar ties to Alta California. Three years prior, Noriega's nephew José Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega (1779-1858) joined New Spain's military and obtained the *habilitado* (quartermaster) position in Alta California. In his early years, De la Guerra had lived his childhood in Cantabria, Spain, before moving to Mexico City to live with his maternal uncle.²⁵¹ While there, he became well familiar with business operations and overseas commerce. Commercial interests had long played a significant role in Spain's ambitious colonization program in the Americas and the Pacific Ocean. Even as far back as 1519, Charles I (1500-1558) instructed Ferdinand Magellan (1480-1521) to locate sources for the lucrative trade in spaces like clove, nutmeg, pepper, and cinnamon in the Spice Islands. In 1565, over four decades later, Miguel de Legazpi (1502-1572)

²⁵⁰ Marie Christine Duggan, "Bourbon Imperialism: Fiscal Transfers and Contraband in Alta California, 1769-1809," *Terceras Jornadas de Historia Económica* (2015), 275.

²⁵¹ Maynard F. Geiger, "History of the Santa Barbara de La Guerra Family Documents," *Southern California Quarterly* 54, 3 (Fall 1972), 277.

occupied Cebu in the Philippines to dominate the trade in wax, silk, ginger, gold, and cinnamon, for which the island had been well-known.²⁵² Months later, the first Nao departed the Philippines with a cargo of silks, porcelains, and spices for New Spain turning massive profits for Spanish and Mexican merchants. In Alta California, colonization's function initially was to safeguard Spain's main artery of commerce with Asia. The intersecting concerns of achieving military objectives and realizing profits in commerce underscore the intimate connections between colonization and mercantile exchange within Spain's empire in the Pacific Ocean in the late-eighteenth century.

The chapter seeks to examine how Spanish policies promoted the fur trade in the North Pacific Ocean by encouraging Spanish merchants, military officers, soldiers, Franciscan missionaries, and Native people to hunt, gather, and sell marine furs, as well as assess the relative impacts it had on the broader project of Alta California's colonization. The presence of domestic and foreign merchants, hunters, and smugglers within the maritime fur trade opened Alta California to increased international trade and disrupted the province's economic dependence on New Spain.²⁵³ By examining the maritime fur trade, the following sections seek to illuminate the broad-reaching and multilayered ways in which the coastal zones in Alta California represented meaningful spaces where Europeans, Anglo-Americans, Russians, Spanish-speakers, and Native people cooperated, competed, clashed, and negotiated economic and social relationships within the context of colonialism.

²⁵² Francisco Mallari, "The Mindanao Cinnamon," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 2, 4 (December 1974), 190.

²⁵³ For a more thorough discussion of Alta California's agricultural self-sufficiency, see, Robert Archibald, *The Economic Aspects of California Missions* (Washington D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1978), 22 and 141.

Scholars have long drawn attention to the well-documented and persistent Anglo-American contraband trade centered on marine furs and tallow in Alta California, which peaked under the Mexican Republic's more liberalized trade policies and period of provincial neglect.²⁵⁴ Less understood is its relationship to Spain's active promotion of commerce in the Eastern Pacific Basin in the decades leading to the era of liberal trade. The height of the Pacific fur trade occurred in the last decades of the colonial period in Alta California. Spanish officers, soldiers, and Franciscan missionaries were already well-established within commerce in the Pacific Ocean by the time the first smugglers landed on Alta California's shores. Before the nineteenth century, ports in San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Diego had been exporting grains, hemp, wool, hides, tallow, otter skins, and lumber in limited quantities to southern ports in Cabo San Lucas, San Blas, and Acapulco. Franciscan missionaries regularly sold agricultural products to Mexican merchants and purchased manufactured goods at inflated prices. By the 1800s, Peruvian, English, Anglo-American, and Russian ships largely replaced the annual supply ships from San Blas. I argue that the converging interests among Franciscan missionaries, Spanish merchants, Anglo-American smugglers, European traders, Russian company men, Asian buyers, and Native hunters in the maritime fur trade not only linked Alta California to globalized trade but also produced a multifaceted space of divergent political, social, and economic interests. Coastal areas like established ports, smuggling coves, fur trade posts, coastal islands, and sheltered bays were meeting places where processes of conflict and compromise played out,

²⁵⁴ See, Thomas J. Osborne, "Pacific Eldorado: Rethinking Greater California's Past," *California History* 87, 1 (2009), 27-30; See, also, John A. Hawgood, "The Pattern of Yankee Infiltration in Mexican Alta California, 1821-1849," *Pacific Historical Review* 27, 1 (February 1958); And, Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., "Alta California's Trojan Horse: Foreign Immigration," *California History* 76, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1997).

engendering and sustaining a broadly-defined and ever-shifting littoral borderland in Alta California.

The Pacific World of the Early Maritime Fur Trade

Since the early years of Spain's presence in Alta California, trading furs and pelts for cloth, glass, iron spikes, shell money, and beads had played a significant role in how Spanish sailors, soldiers, and missionaries interacted with local Indigenous people. Manila galleon sailors, most significantly, had been interacting with Native populations since the sixteenth century during their intermittent stops on the coast. For instance, in 1587, Pedro Unamuno (~1587) visited Alta California, stopping at either Monterey Bay or Morro Bay, where the Chumash gifted him various animal skins and some "trinkets." The sailors only accepted the skins and offered two handkerchiefs in exchange. The Chumash, insulted by Unamuno's refusal of the other gifts, later attacked the Spanish party, interpreting their rejection as a sign of hostile intentions. The Chumash understood the denial of a gift as one of the most disrespectful acts committable, especially between strangers.²⁵⁵ When Juan Pérez (1725-1775) explored the Pacific Northwest in 1775, he anchored near modern-day Prince of Wales Island and traded beads, cloth, and other objects for sea otter skins.²⁵⁶ Trade and exchange formed a central tenet for intercourse between Spanish and Indigenous people centuries before the Franciscans constructed the first mission in San Diego in 1769. Native people offered shellfish, fish, acorns, water, and pelts to

²⁵⁵ See, Albert P. Lacson, "Making Friends and Converts: Cloth and Clothing in Early California History," *California History* 92, 1 (Spring 2015), 10.

²⁵⁶ Juan Crespi, "Journal of Fray Juan Crespi, October 5, 1774," in *The California Coast: Documents from the Sutro Collection*, edited by Donald C. Cutter (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 227-229.

sailors who exchanged glass beads, silk, and cotton cloth for fresh food and water.²⁵⁷ The maritime fur trade, another critical trade item exchanged among the Spanish and Native people, has often been overlooked in scholarship on the Alta California colonial era.²⁵⁸ Except for the direct and short-lived government-subsidized plan to promote the harvest of sea otter pelts for sale in Asian markets (discussed further in the chapter), the Spanish crown only minimally intervened to encourage Franciscan missionaries to employ Indigenous hunters to exploit them readily. However, statistics reveal that most sea otter pelts leaving Alta California's shores occurred in the colonial period between 1786 and 1820, marking the height of the maritime fur trade in the region (Figure 4.1). Although the maritime fur trade never achieved a prominent, albeit still significant, role within colonization, it generated far-reaching social and commercial links across the Pacific Ocean and attracted steady numbers of profit-seekers to Alta California's coasts.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, increased imperial competition forced Spain to reexamine its role in the Pacific Ocean and the Philippines. Precipitating reforms was the unraveling of Spain's exclusive dominion over the western Pacific after a damaging defeat against Britain in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). During the war, Britain occupied Manila for nearly two years between 1762 and 1764 and halted the Manila-Acapulco trade vital to Spain's economic interests and political ambitions in the Pacific Ocean. The occupation was

²⁵⁷ Lynn H. Gamble and Irma Carmen Zepeda, "Social Differentiation and Exchange among the Kumeyaay Indians during the Historic Period in California," *Historical Archaeology* 36, 2 (2002), 73.

²⁵⁸ Adele Ogden provides the only comprehensive and complete monograph on Spain's involvement in the maritime fur trade; See, Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1748-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941).

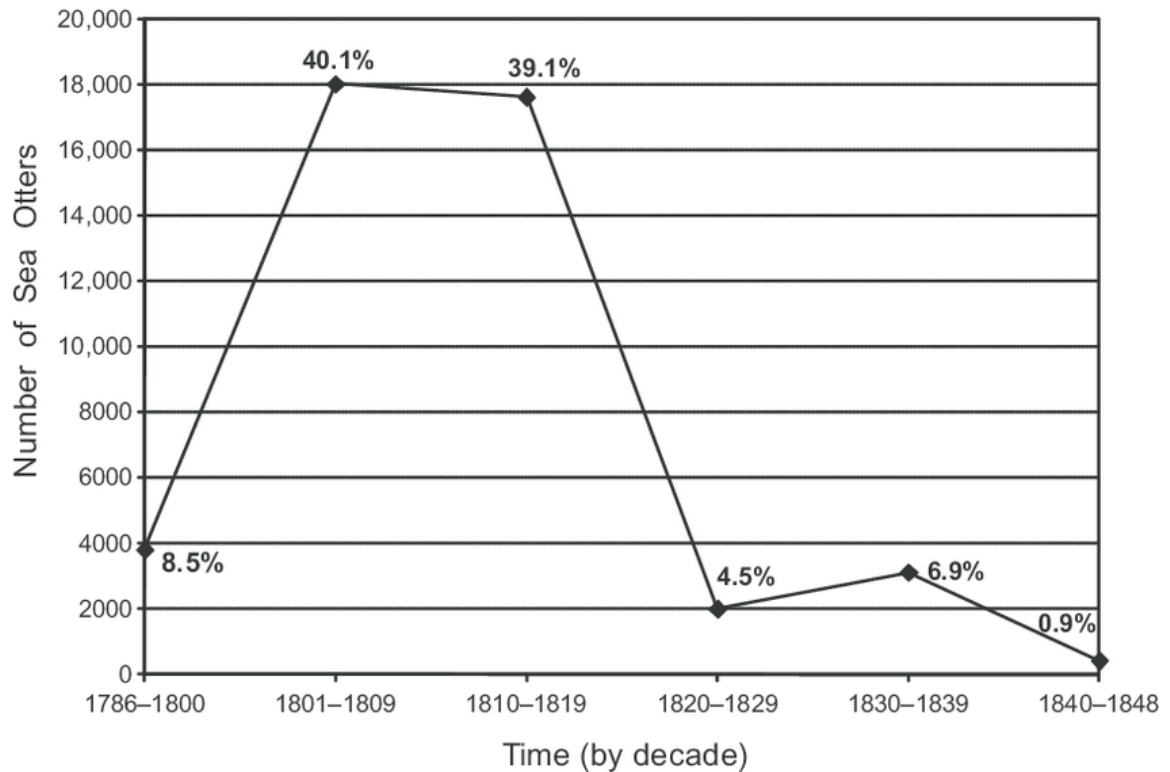


Figure 4.1. Total sea otters caught in Alta California from 1786 to 1848 with percentages of the total population (43,035). From Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848* (Berkeley: University of California, 1941).

militarily and financially costly, nearly destroying Manila's city-wide infrastructure and fortifications. According to J.M. Mancini, the British not only plundered wealth from the islands but, more importantly, extracted manuscripts, images, rare printed books, and other archival documents about the geography, hydrology, and history of the Philippines and the Pacific Ocean.²⁵⁹ With these materials, the British acquired more expertise in navigating the ocean and eroded Spain's superior knowledge. In the decades following, European rivals used their newfound knowledge to expand their influence in the Pacific Ocean. Their principal interest was the lucrative trade in sea otter pelts between the North American coast and Asia. Following the

²⁵⁹ J.M. Mancini, "Disrupting the Transpacific: Objects, Architecture, War, Panic," *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, 1 (2016), 40.

publication of journals from prominent English navigators like James Cook (1728-1779) in 1785 and George Vancouver (1757-1789) in 1801, and the French explorer Jean-François de Galaup (1741-1788) in 1799, British, Anglo-American, and French explorers began touching down on the shores of New Spain's west coast seeking fortune in the Pacific Ocean's maritime fur trade. Most significantly, British influence had expanded from the East Indies and Botany Bay on the Australian coast into North America's Pacific Northwest. Simultaneously, fur hunters employed under the flag of the Russian American Company poured across the Kamchatka Peninsula in Eurasia to Alaska, where they followed the coast south to Alta California, searching for new sources of the dwindling population of fur-bearing animals. Bostonian ships working alongside Russian merchants followed close behind.

The expanding influence of the maritime fur trade coincided with a relative uptick in commercial activity and the growth of commercial ports in the Eastern Pacific Basin. For Spanish authorities, colonization in Alta California was to play a pivotal role in defending Spain's claim to the Pacific Ocean and countering the steady southward movement of the Russian empire. J.M. Mancini points out that administrative reforms in the Philippines and the Manila galleons intersected with organizational and material transformations in the eastern Pacific. The most expansive was the establishment of the Naval Department of San Blas in 1767 and the Alta California's colonization two years later.²⁶⁰ These new administrative overhauls promoted Alta California's and San Blas's rise as critical commercial centers in Spain's empire in the Pacific Ocean. Colonizing Alta California did not solely achieve imperial ambitions but economic ones too. The Naval Department became not only a base for the royal navy but an

²⁶⁰ J.M. Mancini, *Art and War in the Pacific World: Making, Breaking, and Taking from Anson's Voyage to the Philippine-American War* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 120.

important maritime center for transporting commercial goods to the northern frontier. By the end of the eighteenth century, authorities built five supply ships, three frigates, and several smaller vessels to service traffic between the port and the missions and presidios in Baja and Alta California. However, locating sources for supplies to the relatively isolated port posed some problems. In 1775, the viceroy Antonio Bucareli (1717-1779) had to import tools, iron, and rigging from Spain and, two years later, purchased additional items from merchants in Peru.²⁶¹ Navy officers soon contracted local merchants from surrounding pueblos to outfit the new port.

In the 1770s, Mexican merchants resentful of San Blas's violation of their monopoly on trade in the Pacific Ocean called for closing the port and its relocation to Acapulco. Accordingly, transferring the Naval Department to Acapulco would have consolidated Mexico City's control over trade in the Pacific Ocean and undermined Guadalajara, Tepic, and Sonora merchants who had established a thriving business in the region. Fierce lobbying from Guadalajara, San Blas, and Alta California ensured the port's survival. In 1795, the crown chartered the *Consulado de Guadalajara*, which granted an official license for Guadalajara and Tepic to control trade between the Naval Department and the Californias, which helped solve supply issues in the port. According to Dení Trejo Barajas and Marie Christine Duggan, the charter was not a measure to promote trade between San Blas and the Californias but legitimized already established trade networks in the region.²⁶² In the first year, transactions in San Blas valued over half a million pesos, and goods shipped from Guadalajara to the Californias increased steadily. In 1795,

²⁶¹ William J. Barger, "Furs, Hides, and a Little Larceny: Smuggling and Its Role in Early California's Economy," *Southern California Quarterly* 85, 4 (Winter 2003), 384.

²⁶² Barrajas and Duggan, "San Blas and the Californias," 34.

invoices from Mission Santa Clara recorded seven percent of goods arriving from Guadalajara, but the amount doubled to fifteen percent by 1810.²⁶³

Presidio officers and Franciscan missionaries in Alta California contracted with merchants from Guadalajara, Tepic, and Sonora to ship food, aguardientes, clothing, and furnishings to presidios and missions in Baja and Alta California. And, in 1801, to subsidize agriculture in the new province, the viceroy ordered San Blas to carry sufficient provisions for outward voyages north and purchase grain and produce for the return from Alta California.²⁶⁴ Private merchants, naval captains, and crewmembers were allowed the limited ability to transport goods aboard vessels for trade in Alta California to supplement military stipends, which reduced financial burdens on the royal treasury. Presumably, however, naval officers and sailors regularly abused the privilege at the expense of private traders and virtually monopolized commerce on the San Blas-Alta California route. In 1803, the viceroy intervened, entirely revoking the navy's freedom to traffic goods, and ordered officers to no longer refuse to carry goods from private merchants.²⁶⁵ Officially, the crown prohibited San Blas and Alta California from trading with any Spanish, foreign, or private ship and only permitted official trade arranged aboard San Blas supply ships.²⁶⁶ Imports from the Pacific Ocean, the Crown feared, only strengthened the relative economic power of Mexican merchants against their counterparts in Spain by reducing dependence on Spanish- and European-made goods imported from the Atlantic Ocean.

²⁶³ Barrajas and Duggan, "San Blas and the Californias," 34.

²⁶⁴ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft Volume XIX: California Volume II, 1801-1824* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft & Company, Publishers, 1885), 184.

²⁶⁵ Viceroy to the Commissioner of San Blas, April 30, 1803, C-A 12, Provincial State Papers XIX, BANC, 80-84; also, see. Bancroft, *California Volume II, 1801-1824*, 185.

²⁶⁶ Archibald, *The Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, 115.

Limitations meant restricting all trade detrimental to Spain's transatlantic commerce and maintaining New Spain and South America's dependence on peninsular merchants and Spain itself.²⁶⁷

The Jesuits in Baja California were the first to introduce northern sea otter pelts regularly into international trade by selling pelts to Chinese merchants in the Philippines aboard the Manila galleons. In 1733, the Jesuit Sigismundo Taraval (1700-1763) described many sea otters off the coast of Baja California, on the Cedros Islands. Taraval dispatched several Spanish sailors and Native people to hunt them. They clubbed the sea otters with sticks and cured several pelts, which were later remitted to Mexico City to load on the next available Nao.²⁶⁸ Before the Jesuits were expelled from the peninsula in 1767, the fur trade gained only minor significance as they only shipped limited numbers of pelts in subsequent decades. The problem was that sea otters quickly learned to avoid people, and Native people in Baja California were not traditionally skilled in hunting them. Hunting for pelts only later took more significance in Baja and Alta California under Franciscan leadership. While administering Mission San Borja in Baja California in 1767, Franciscan friar Fermín de Lasuén (1736-1803) commented that sea otters were plentiful near the mission and stated, "Filipinos, San Blas, and French seem to be interested in purchasing pelts and the price seems to be increasing as visitors to the coast are purchasing them in large numbers."²⁶⁹ By the 1770s, Franciscans had begun encouraging local Native people

²⁶⁷ Mariano Ardash Bonialian, *El pacífico hispanoamericano: política y comercio Asiático en el imperio español, 1680-1784* (México, D.F.: El colegio de México, A.C., 2012), 19, 53-55, and 65.

²⁶⁸ Warren L. Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire: Spain and the Pacific Northwest, 1543-1819* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 43.

to bring pelts and furs to the missions in exchange for cloth and other goods. And in 1776, Franciscan Mariano Payeras (1769-1823) purchased two plank canoes (tomoles) from the Chumash on Santa Rosa Island for mission use to hunt sea otters and fish in the Santa Barbara Channel.²⁷⁰ Presidio soldiers also bartered with local Native villages for pelts. They remitted them to officers in Monterey and transported them aboard San Blas supply ships to sell to Mexican merchants who packed them aboard the Naos.²⁷¹ In 1782, Mexican and Filipino authorities discussed building ships in Manila to transport pelts from San Blas.²⁷² Marie Christine Duggan estimates that the Franciscans exported one hundred sea otter pelts annually aboard supply ships at six to eight pesos for each in the 1780s.²⁷³ Like their neighbors in Baja California, Native people in Alta California did not engage in large-scale exploitation of sea otters. In 1775, Franciscan Francisco Garcés (1738-1781) traveled to the Kern River in south-central Alta California. The local Native population informed him about hunting large sea otters in lagunas close by and selling them to neighboring groups to the west.²⁷⁴ Lasuén later observed

²⁶⁹ “To the Royal Governing Audiencia, September 24, 1787,” in Finbar Kenneally, *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén* (Academy of American Franciscan History: Washington, D.C., 1965), 156.

²⁷⁰ John R. Johnson, “Ethnohistorical Reflections on Cruzeño Chumash Society,” in *Origins of a Pacific Coast Chiefdom: The Chumash of the Channel Islands*, edited by Jeanne E. Arnold, 53-70 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2001), 16.

²⁷¹ Adele Ogden, “The Californias in Spain’s Pacific Otter Trade, 1775-1795,” *Pacific Historical Review* 1, 4 (December 1932), 447.

²⁷² Holden Furber, “An Abortive Attempt at Anglo-Spanish Commercial Cooperation in the Far East in 1793,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 15, 4 (November 1935), 452.

²⁷³ Marie Christine Duggan, “With and Without an Empire: Financing for California Missions Before and After 1810,” *Pacific Historical Review* 85, 1 (February 2016), 45-46.

²⁷⁴ Elliot Coues, *On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer: The Diary and Itinerary of Francisco Garcés in His Travels through Sonora, Arizona, and California, 1775-1776* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1990), 300.

that the Chumash near the Santa Barbara Channel offered sea otter pelts for almost nothing and, most of the time, were willing to give them away for free.

In the 1780s, Mexico City authorities began devising more detailed plans to systematize the fur and pelt exploitation in Baja and Alta California for trade in international markets. Vicente Vasadre y Vega (~ the 1700s), a Mexican merchant, proposed one in 1784 to purchase sea otter pelts from Dominican and Franciscan missionaries in the Californias and exchange them in China for quicksilver. The crown approved the plan due to the significant shortage of the metal necessary for processing silver from New Spain's mines.²⁷⁵ The purchased pelts would utilize the preexisting supply ships from the Naval Department in San Blas to transfer pelts from the Californias to Acapulco. The Manila galleons would then carry them to the Philippines. Vasadre y Vega would then arrange for their sale in Canton. In 1785, the *Hercules* arrived in San Blas, having traveled from Manila via Canton to collect and transport the pelts.²⁷⁶ The sea otter pelt-quicksilver plan was modestly successful during its operation. Baja and Alta California missions remitted 1,060 pelts in 1786 and 1,750 in 1787 to Manila.²⁷⁷ Over four years, from 1786 to 1790, the Baja and Alta California missions shipped 9,729 hides worth 87,699 pesos to Manila.²⁷⁸ Working through contacts from the newly established Royal Philippine Company (1785), Vasadre y Vega sold the pelts to the prominent Chinese merchant Kingqua (~1700s), one

²⁷⁵ In 1788, the crown suspended the Manila galleon because of the shortage of quicksilver and the closing of mines; See, Real Tribunal y Consulado de Manila, Decision, July 16, 1788, MSS 91/111 z, Box 6, Item 83, Philippine Commerce and the Manila Galleon Collection, 1769-1830, BANC.

²⁷⁶ Furber, "An Abortive Attempt at Anglo-Spanish Commercial Cooperation in the Far East in 1793," 452.

²⁷⁷ Ogden, "The Californias in Spain's Pacific Otter Trade," 445 and 452.

²⁷⁸ Millard F. Hudson, "The Battle of San Diego," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 7, 2-3 (1907-1908), 104.

of the heads of the famous Thirteen Trading Houses in Canton, with whom he signed a contract to continue to exchange sea otter pelts for Chinese quicksilver.²⁷⁹ Vasadre y Vega envisioned creating a triangular trade consisting of transporting furs from Baja and Alta California to San Blas, loading them for transshipment to Manila, and returning to New Spain with quicksilver.

Despite the initial success, his role in the fur trade remained short-lived. The directors of the Royal Philippine Company, founded in 1785, resented that the business violated their monopoly on direct trade with Asian ports and had been negotiating rights to import Chinese quicksilver into New Spain since 1785.²⁸⁰ The directorate also wanted to monopolize Alta California's fur trade, though ultimately, they abandoned the plan finding financing fur trade colonies too costly and risky. Instead, the company would purchase pelts from Mexican merchants or the royal treasury before forwarding them for sale in China. Opposition to Vasadre y Vega's plan also came from Alta California missions. The Franciscans complained to authorities about guaranteeing prices for pelts from individual sellers and assuming the inherent risks of transport, storage, packing, and crating the hides.²⁸¹ In 1787, the missions began remitting the pelts to presidio *habilitados* for immediate payment, which resolved the financial burden of ensuring price for pelts but did little to assuage criticisms of the fur trade system. The Franciscans complained that the goods received in exchange for sea otter pelts were often poor quality and excessively priced, having to sell pelts at prevailing rates in Mexico while receiving

²⁷⁹ Ogden, "The Californias in Spain's Pacific Otter Trade," 458.

²⁸⁰ Ogden, "The Californias in Spain's Pacific Otter Trade," 456.; for a more detailed look at the California sea otter trade see Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848* (Berkeley: University of Wisconsin Press, 1941).

²⁸¹ "Considerations submitted to Reverend Father Guardian, undated circa 1791," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén Volume 1*, 215

goods at the inflated rates in Alta California. They accused *habilitados* of enriching themselves at the expense of Native people under their charge.

Nevertheless, Vasadre y Vega's monopoly on the sea otter trade was never designed to benefit the missions but rather generate revenue for the Crown. Ultimately, the plan failed because the system was too inefficient and expensive. Pelts had to be shipped to San Blas, transported overland to Mexico City for tanning and treatment, transferred again on the mountainous road to Acapulco, and loaded on the galleon for transshipment to the Philippines. Merchants then sold them to Chinese junks for their final destination in mainland China.²⁸² The Philippine Company's petition passed in 1787, and the company acquired rights to monopolize the sea otter pelt-quicksilver trade in Manila.²⁸³ Word reached Vasadre y Vega later that year while in Canton, and by 1790, he abandoned his involvement and boarded a ship headed for Spain.

Nevertheless, despite its ultimate demise, the plan greatly stimulated the fur trade in Alta California. By the nineteenth century, Franciscan missionaries urged Native people to hunt otters to exchange for needed goods and trained mission populations to build boats and capture otters. Native people eventually became more adept at hunting, and the Franciscans rewarded hunters with goods in kind before sending them to San Blas to await shipment. Missionaries sold sea otter pelts to private Spanish merchants in Guadalajara, Mexico City, and foreign sailors.

²⁸² Archibald, *Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, 118.

²⁸³ Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, 109.

Table 4.1. Baja and Alta California Pelts shipped to the Philippines and Paid on Account of the Royal Treasury, 1789-1792

	Location	Number of pelts	Payment
January 27, 1789	Presidio de Loreto	592 sea otter	
June 30, 1789	San Blas	592 sea otter	76 pesos
July 16, 1789	San Blas	3,521 sea otters, 14 sea lion, 187 fox	359 pesos
July 18, 1789	Mission San Miguel		1,000 pesos
December 22, 1789	Mexico City	4,314 sea otter	2,267 pesos
February 9, 1790	San Blas	114 sea otter	857 pesos
March 12, 1790	Mission San Miguel	26 sea otter	270 pesos
March 15, 1790	San Blas	2,496 sea otter, 226 sea lion, 91 fox	24,780 pesos
November 16, 1790	Alta California Missions	237 otter pelts	1,410 pesos
March 31, 1791	Remitted to Governor of Philippines	3,356 sea otter	
July 7, 1792	Presidio Santa Barbara		430 pesos

Source: Cargas Generales 1789 to 1792, MSS E-Z 1, Gobierno V., Archivo General de Indias, BANC.

Accounts also continued to show payments to San Blas and the missions for sea otter pelts shipped to Manila. Most official transactions were concentrated in the Dominican missions in Baja California, especially Mission San Miguel de Borja. Still, many were addressed to missions and presidios in Alta California (Table 4.1).²⁸⁴ In 1791, The Father Guardian of the College of San Fernando instructed the Franciscans in Alta California, to continue collecting sea otter pelts from Native people. He informed them that private merchants in Mexico City had been inquiring about purchasing the furs and promised sizeable profits for continued trade. Father President of Alta California missions, Fermín de Lasuén, notified the missions of the following, "The statement above in regard to sea otters does not mean that you cannot look out for or take advantage of any opportunity of selling them to private individuals on sea or land if that is found to be expedient."²⁸⁵ He encouraged missionaries to take advantage of selling pelts to merchants aboard passing ships or private individuals in Alta California, possibly referencing Spanish sailors aboard San Blas supply ships.

By the close of the eighteenth century, the Crown had become acutely aware of the expense burden placed on the royal treasury to subsidize the supply ships and lost revenue from taxing private ship traffic.²⁸⁶ The royal engineer Miguel Costansó (1741-1814), while inspecting the Naval Department in 1794, discussed permitting more liberalized commerce on the Pacific Coast,

All considered, it would be of major importance to promote shipping on the coasts of Sonora, Nueva Galicia and the Californias and generally on all the coasts of the South Sea, embraced in the extension of this viceroyalty; encouraging their inhabitants in the

²⁸⁴ Cargas Generales 1789 to 1792, MSS E-Z 1, Provincial State Papers, Gobierno V., Archivo General de Indias, BANC.

²⁸⁵ "To the Missionaries, July 22, 1791," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 226.

²⁸⁶ Archibald, *The Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, 121.

construction of small ships conceding exemption from duties to them and free commerce among them, considering that all have a mutual need, that all are brothers and vassals of the same sovereign and that navigation and commerce ought to be the poles about which revolve the population and prosperity of the entire colony. It is sad to consider that in the whole length of the Pacific Coast of North America the King does not have a single vassal who is owner or proprietor of a sloop, schooner or other vessel.²⁸⁷

In the 1790s, the crown had opened Alta California to limited private commerce, beginning with Pedro de González Noriega, mentioned earlier in the chapter. The Noriega family had deep roots in transatlantic trade since the sixteenth century and presumably had commercial ambitions within commerce in the Pacific Ocean and Asia, which Mexico City's merchant guilds had dominated for centuries. These merchants had long been extracting massive profits from trade aboard the Naos. They frequently used military assignments to relocate family and agents in Manila to conduct such commerce on their behalf. It should not be a surprise that Noriega did the same for his nephew in Alta California to secure the family's place within the burgeoning Pacific fur trade.²⁸⁸ Family networks within trade relationships were standard in New Spain and elsewhere in the early modern period. Another merchant to benefit from the new trade policy was Nicolás Manzanelli (~1700s), an Italian silk merchant who had recently arrived in New Spain. In 1794, he moved to San Blas and obtained permission from the Crown to purchase a ship from the Naval Department to trade goods in Baja and Alta California.²⁸⁹ A year later, he petitioned authorities to permit him to transport sea otter pelts from the Californias to Macau and Canton to trade for quicksilver. Authorities approved the plan, and Manzanelli departed,

²⁸⁷ Quoted from Archibald, *The Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, 121; See, Miguel Costansó, "Sobre El Proyecto de Fortificar los Presidios de la Nueva California," in *Noticias y Documentos Acerca de la Californias, 1765-1795*, edited by José Porrúa Turanzas (Oro Valley, AZ: Sabino Books, 2017).

²⁸⁸ Duggan, "Bourbon Imperialism," 289.

²⁸⁹ Testimonio del Expediente 1794, MSS E-Z 1, Archivo General de Indias, BANC.

returning later to sell Chinese goods in Alta California.²⁹⁰ The trade seemed to have persisted until he died in 1799. After which, his wife relocated to Monterey along with his daughter, Catalina Manzanelli (~1800s), and she remarried to Manuel Quixano (~1800s), a Guadalajara merchant, suggesting a continuation of the trade. Catalina later married Esteban Munrás (1798-1850), a prominent Monterey trader, in 1822, and the two acquired several ranchos near Monterey.²⁹¹ Many wealthy Californio families' rise to prominence during the period originated within maritime trade between San Blas, Alta California, and Manila. Colonization in Alta California unleashed a wave of Spanish economic activity in the Pacific Ocean spurred by spending on military defense, missionization, and, most importantly, the emerging maritime fur trade.

By the first decade of the nineteenth century, the missions regularly collected sea otter pelts and sold them to private merchants operating on Alta California's coast. José Seán (1760-1823) relates to the procurator at San Fernando José Viñals (1759-??) in a letter written by Tomás de la Peña (1743-1806) in 1801 stating,

The Reverend Dominican Fathers annually send out from their missions a considerable quantity of otter pelts, from which they derive a good income. This year Father Mariano Gómez sold them at three pesos a pelt for the lot—that is, large or small, good quality or poor. This information I pass along for your consideration, together with our understanding that Don Esteban Escalante offers to ship the pelts to Manila and turn over the missions the total proceeds. If the pelts can be marketed over there, on terms similar to those mentioned above, I feel sure that the missions will receive larger profits.²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Branciforte al Gobernador de California, de una Real Orden sobre libertad de derecho a la extraccion de Acapulco de las pieles de nutrias que se embarquen, México, February 28, 1795, MSS CA-7, BANC, 12.

²⁹¹ Luther Ingersoll, *Memorial and Biographical History of the Coast Counties of Central California* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1893), 335.

²⁹² José Seán to Father José Viñals, January 5, 1808, in José Seán, *The Letters of Jose Senan, Mission San Buenaventura, 1796-1823*, edited by Lesley Byrd Simpson (Ventura, CA: The Ventura County Historical Society, 1962), 32-33.

He continued that otter pelts could be sold at Mission San Buenaventura for seven or more pesos, and the mission could acquire a consistent number of them annually. In 1808, for instance, he sent a shipment of one-hundred otter pelts to Esteban Escalante (~1700s), a Naval Department captain, who transported them to San Blas for forwarding to Mexico City. The mission, in return, received credit to spend on merchandise. Another shipment of one hundred and sixteen pelts departed in 1810 aboard Escalante's ship.²⁹³ Once the pelts arrived in Mexico City, Escalante agreed to provide them to the procurator in Mexico City, who would load them aboard the Manila galleon. Furthermore, several Franciscan missionaries had been selling otter pelts within the Californias, finding buyers willing to pay eight pesos each. Seán does not indicate the buyers but is likely referring to either Spanish sailors or foreign ones.

Additionally, missions sold pelts to private merchants in San Blas. Franciscan Martín de Landaeta (1760-1809) mentioned that a merchant in San Blas, Juan Bautista (~1700s), was willing to sell agricultural products on behalf of the missions in San Blas.²⁹⁴ The marine fur trade was modestly successful enough that by the 1790s, the viceroy declared an exemption of export duties on marine furs in the Pacific trade to encourage private individuals to continue the trade, permitting the continued introduction of pelts into Manila.²⁹⁵ The fur trade provided the missions extra revenue and opened Alta California to transpacific and international trade. Profits from the fur trade allowed Franciscan missions to purchase goods for local consumption.

²⁹³ José Seán to Father José Viñals, November 3, 1808, in *Letters of Jose Senan*, 35.

²⁹⁴ "To Fray José Gascol, September 23, 1801," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén Volume 1*, 247.

²⁹⁵ Adele Ogden, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941), 31.

However, the fur trade in Alta California might have been a highly profitable industry, but it provoked significant tensions between Franciscans and military authorities. Soldiers and settlers resented the Franciscan's official monopoly on selling sea otter pelts and began to engage in clandestine trade. The Franciscans' monopoly on trading furs was also unenforceable without the support of the military. Soldiers regularly purchased hides from Native people in exchange for low-quality goods, most commonly glass beads, or outright seized them. Trade was often underpinned by coercion, violence, and extortion. In a memorandum in 1787, Lasuén complained to Governor Pedro Fages (1734-1794) that the proclamation for the monopoly and prohibition on trade for sea otter pelts had not been published at the presidios and missions, and the sea and land commandants had expressed their opposition to the mission monopoly.²⁹⁶ Despite prohibitions, soldiers and settlers continued trading or robbing Native people of sea otter pelts from missions and neighboring Native villages. Señán described the situation in 1790,

The soldiers and settlers will buy or seize most of the pelts, and the best of the lot, from Indians who had been assigned by the mission to the task of collecting these pelts; and then they will come to us so that the missions may buy what was already theirs. And that is not all; it may happen that at the very time when the soldiers and settlers are receiving seven pesos for every pelt, paid from the mission account, some Indian from whom they took them is presenting himself to the missionary, begging for food and clothing, and perhaps nets and rafts for trapping.²⁹⁷

In some cases, they not only robbed Native people of their pelts but the raft and nets purchased by the missions to hunt sea otters. The poachers and thieves would also extort payment from the missions for pelts, which already technically belonged to the Franciscans.

²⁹⁶ “Memorandum, undated circa 1787,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 172.

²⁹⁷ “To Count de Revilla Gigedo, September 10, 1790,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 209.

By the 1810s, private Spanish vessels began arriving in the Californias to sell merchandise. The closing of the San Blas did little to stifle the Californias' integration into the circulation of maritime vessels in the Pacific Ocean. In 1811, the annual supply ship *Princesa* arrived in Monterey to unload goods and returned to San Blas with hides and agricultural products. However, the outbreak of the revolutionary war in New Spain complicated the matter. Insurgents had descended on San Blas and sieged the port. General José de la Cruz (~1700s) and the embattled Spanish soldiers at San Blas were forced to requisition the supply vessel and fled to Guadalajara. In response, Señán had this to say, "God forgive the General for making off with the property of this community [San Buenaventura] which has contributed a large share of its goods to the support of his troops, that is, shoes, blankets, serapes, corn, beans, lard, and other items—all of them more necessary than otter-skin caps!"²⁹⁸ The Franciscan father principally directed his anger at de la Cruz, who seized the mission's 160 otter pelts. Juan José Zestafe (~1700s), a merchant in Guadalajara arranging the sale of otter pelts, informed Señán that he could not recover the pelts. De la Cruz had distributed them to his troops to make caps, relieving the missions of a great deal of revenue. The occupation of San Blas by the insurgents interrupted the annual voyages of supply vessels from San Blas. Private ships later filled the void, principally arriving from Acapulco, Central America, and Callao in Peru and foreign ones from Boston and Russian Alaska.

The procurator at the College of San Fernando arranged for vessels to sail for Alta California with manufactured goods. He urged the missionaries to continue to collect otter pelts and agricultural products, especially tallow, to be carried aboard them for the return journey. The

²⁹⁸ "To Fray José Guilez, March 2, 1812," *The Letters of Jose Senan*, 64.

following year, the merchant ship *Flora* under Nicolas Noé (~1700s) arrived in Monterey from Peru, delivering manufactured goods and agreeing to transport tallow, hemp, and other goods to sell in Acapulco and Callao. Additionally, the Peruvian ships *Hermosa Mexicana* and *San Antonio* from Callao and the *Cazadora* from Panama arrived in Monterey seeking tallow in exchange for English-produced manufactured goods.²⁹⁹ José Seán at Mission San Buenaventura relates that vessels arriving from Peru and Panama permitted the missions to load agricultural goods and maritime furs aboard their ships for freighting to Acapulco for transfer to Mexico City. Seán comments on the state of trade in Alta California, relating,

This province no longer enjoys its former connections, which used to supply us with necessities for survival, by annual shipments, supplemented by goods brought in by foreign ships, some of them necessarily armed. During the past year the Peruvians charged us a premium of 15% for their goods, but this coming year they would not be satisfied with 50%. I do not expect that we shall see them again for a long time, for which, given the present state of affairs, I infer that this province will soon be abandoned.³⁰⁰

The Franciscan father lamented that the independence war had severed Alta California's connection to San Blas, which could no longer supply the province. He discusses how the prices of manufactured goods were excessive as merchants charged higher prices due to the dangers of sailing the coast of New Spain. Callao and Central American vessels replaced the San Blas supply line, expanding the geographic range of Alta Californians' trade in the Pacific Ocean. Illustrative of these developments was the diversity of currencies in Alta California following Spain's opening of the transpacific trade to independent merchants and Pacific ports to private vessels in the 1810s. Seán describes the following, "I can only point out that I have seen in this

²⁹⁹ José Seán to Fray José Guilez, March 2, 1812, *The Letters of Jose Senan*, 63.; José Seán to Father Juan Norberto de Santiago, October 3, 1817, *The Letter of Jose Senan*, 105.

³⁰⁰ José Seán to Governor Pablo Vincente de Sola, January 4, 1819, *The Letters of Jose Senan*, 113.

Province all sorts of pesos, some apparently Anglo-American in origin, some Portuguese, some Russian, some Mexican, and some Peruvian, as well as a wide variety issued by the insurgents, all of which circulate at their face value of one peso, or 8 reales."³⁰¹ United States, Portuguese, Russian, Mexican, and Peruvian currencies circulated in the Californias. The variety of coins exemplified the Pacific Ocean's transformations initiated by the revolutionary wars and the opening of transpacific trade to independent merchants.

The Littoral Borderlands and the Maritime Fur Trade

The nineteenth century witnessed a flourishing of maritime activity among several nations in the Pacific Ocean, principally for the exploration and exploitation of marine furs. Spanish, English, Anglo-American, and Russian merchants stopped all along the Alta California coast, poaching, bartering, and trading for furs, food supplies, and freshwater with the Spanish and Native people. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, marine furs fueled a lively transpacific exchange involving the Pacific Northwest, Alta and Baja California, the Philippines, and China. Ships transported pelts of the northern sea otter and harbor seals from North America's western coast to China and returned laden with European and Chinese manufactures. Historian David Iglar argues that the Eastern Pacific Basin emerged out of the international trade brought about by the maritime fur trade. European and Anglo-American merchants encountered Native communities in Hawaii, Nootka, and the Marquesas and brought international trade to Spanish ports in Alta California, and Peru. Nevertheless, the relationship between these ports remained fairly fluid throughout the period, making this region's existence based on an open and

³⁰¹ José Seán to Juan Norbeto de Santiago, November 19, 1815, *The Letters of Jose Senan*, 79.

inclusive *waterscape*, which provided the primary connection between disparate borderlands, according to Iglar.³⁰² The last century's opening of Chinese markets to sea otter pelts presented opportunities for Russians and European merchants to make fortunes within teas, silks, spices, porcelains, and other Asian-produced goods. By the nineteenth century, the maritime fur trade had become well-established, connecting Alaska, the Pacific Northwest, and the Hawaiian Islands into a vast commercial circuit driven by Asian demand for furs.³⁰³ The converging interest of diverse participants in the maritime fur trade engendered and sustained Alta California's littoral borderland into the nineteenth century. It produced spaces of conflict, compromise, and competition for access to marine furs within the coastal region's many islands, coves, bays, and shorelines.

From 1790 to 1822, licit and illicit trade in pelts and durable goods between smugglers and Spanish settlements helped to sustain the early maritime fur trade. Historian Robert Archibald suggests one reason for foreign smuggling into Alta California in this era was the inadequacy of markets in New Spain. He determined that mercantilist restrictions, low prices, the uncertainty of payment, and shipment hazards pushed missionaries toward illicit trade. Additionally, the official attitude of Mexico City between 1800 and 1810 was one of benign neglect, where authorities did little to prevent illegal trade.³⁰⁴ Since the foundation of San Diego,

³⁰² David Iglar, "Diseased Goods: Global Exchanges in the Eastern Pacific Basin, 1770-1850," *The American Historical Review* 109, 3 (June 2004), 695.

³⁰³ For more information about broader developments in the Hawaiian Islands, Australia, New Zealand, and Polynesia. See, Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³⁰⁴ Robert Archibald, "The Economy of the Alta California Mission, 1803-1821," *Southern California Quarterly* 58, 2 (Summer 1976), 230.



Figure 4.2. World Map of the Maritime Fur Trade from 1790 to 1840. *Source:* https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/c6/Maritime_Fur_Trade-WorldContext.png

policies obliged missions to contribute surplus agricultural yields to the presidios in return for credit entered into the account book of the *habilitado*. And by the 1790s, the crown required missions and pueblos to contribute a quota of hemp to the Naval Department of San Blas to produce rope necessary for maritime vessels, paid by the royal treasury. The credits could then be exchanged in Mexico City for merchandise. According to Archibald, two problems emerged within this credit and debit system. At least two years passed before the mission received payment for the grain sold to the presidio, if payment arrived at all. When balances mounted in the presidio account book, a draft was issued in Mexico City. However, few of these drafts were honored. For instance, by 1811, the presidios accumulated 14,000 pesos in debt to the missions. Six years later, the amount increased to 400,000 pesos with no money in the Royal Treasury to redeem the value. He argues, "An inadequate market for mission products was compounded by the uncertainty of payment which made illicit trade with its immediate and certain rewards more

attractive."³⁰⁵ Franciscans, in turn, shifted toward contraband trading to compensate for lagging trade with San Blas and central Mexico. Archibald also emphasizes that suggesting disloyalty among Spanish missionaries and soldiers is unwarranted. Their mission to Christianize and Hispanize Native populations was predicated on the ability to support and sustain independent communities. Providing shelter and food production alone did not suffice; they also needed materials and tools such as iron, clothing, church decorations, and medicines. For many, illegal trade enhanced their duty to evangelize Native populations, making illegal trade justified for the survival of the province.³⁰⁶

Russian, British, and Anglo-American maritime activity in the Pacific Ocean in the 1790s opened Alta California to greater participation within international markets and the maritime fur trade. Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the hunt for furs had partially motivated Russia's exploration and conquest of vast regions across Siberia. Stable supplies of furs and pelts enticed hunters and merchants with lucrative profits. By the early decades of the eighteenth century, Russian fur traders had shifted from Siberia's east coast to the Kurile Islands and the Aleutian Islands and eventually to mainland North America pursuing northern sea otters. In 1725, Peter the Great (1672-1725) launched expeditions to the North Pacific Ocean to determine whether Asia and North America were separated by water or connected by land via Siberia and Alaska. The Danish explorer sailing under the Russian flag Vitrus Bering (1681-1741) reached the Aleutian Islands and Alaska in 1741, where he died. Still, his crew successfully returned to Petropavlovsk in 1742 with a supply of sea otter pelts worth \$30,000. News quickly spread

³⁰⁵ Archibald, "The Economy of the Alta California Mission," 232.

³⁰⁶ Archibald, *Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, 140.

among fur hunters throughout Kamchatka.³⁰⁷ In the subsequent decades, Russian and Native Aleutian hunters shifted from Kamchatka and the Aleutian Islands to Alaska, searching for sources of valuable furs. It would be until 1799 that the Russians established a permanent presence in North America. The Russian-American Company (RAC) under Aleksandr Baranov (1747-1819) built Fort Saint Michael on Sitka Island near modern-day Alaska. The new fort was the base for expanding Russia's fur trade from the Kamchatka peninsula into North America. It was situated along prevailing wind patterns and ocean currents with easy access to Japanese and Chinese markets, the principal markets for harvested pelts.

However, by 1806, famine and scurvy had ravaged the mixed settlement of Russians, Aleuts, and the local Tlingit population. Nikolai Rezanov (1764-1807), imperial inspector of the RAC, hoping to establish regular trade with Spanish California and solve the food shortages in the Russian colony, purchased the *Juno* from a Boston merchant and sailed for San Francisco Bay. The prohibitive costs of supplying food from Russia to the Alaskan colonies convinced Rezanov that the fur trade posts could not survive without formal trade with the Spanish missions in Alta California or a permanent Russian settlement to grow food. He expected a hostile reception when he arrived, but to his surprise, the Spanish military welcomed the party. The fort in Sitka had provoked diplomatic disputes over Spain's sovereignty in North America, which the Spanish Crown claimed in its entirety. Resanov hesitated to disclose an interest in trade at the initial meeting with the then Governor of Alta California, José Joaquín de Arrillaga (1750-1814), fearing exposing Russian vulnerability in the North Pacific Ocean. He was likely aware that Anglo-American merchants had been engaging in illegal trade with Alta Californian

³⁰⁷ David E. Miller, "Maritime Fur Trade Rivalry in the Pacific Northwest," *The Historian* 21, 4 (August 1959), 394-395.

ports. Upon arrival, Rezanov remarked, "In our conversation with the missionaries there we touched upon the subject of trade, and their strong wish for it was very clear to us."³⁰⁸ Historians have suggested that the abrupt end of financial support from the Crown and the halting of supply ships from San Blas caused by revolutionary wars in 1810 forced Alta California to resort to contraband trade. However, smuggling had flourished in the region long before, since at least the 1790s, when foreign ships began appearing on the coast. The supply ships could not satisfy a burgeoning mission economy. By the time of the Russian ship's arrival, the missions and pueblos had achieved a relative oversupply of agricultural goods. At the same time, government-sponsored hemp production left little cargo aboard San Blas ships for mission products like tallow, animal skins, pelts, and grain. Franciscan missionaries frequently complained about storing these goods indefinitely, hoping for free space aboard the next annual ship.³⁰⁹

Foreign ships on the coast needing provisions and safe harbors for repairs began arriving when the missions and pueblos had acquired relative stability. Georg von Langsdorff (1774-1852), the surgeon aboard the *Juno*, observed,

The news of our arrival, and of the purpose for which we were come, spread in the meantime through the country... Before exceedingly in want of many articles which were reported to have for sale, one of the ecclesiastics of the institution, Father Pedro, was sent as a deputy to negotiate with us. He made us friendly offers of the services of himself and his mission; and when he had been shewn by the Commissary of the Russian-American Company many articles of our merchandise, he entered into a treaty with him... it appeared that this was by no means the first time of his being engaged in trade.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Nikolai Rezanov, "Letter of Rezanov to the Minister of Commerce, from New Archangel, June 17, 1806," *Rezanov Reconnoiters California, 1806*, edited by Richard E. Pierce (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1972), 4.

³⁰⁹ Señán, "To Fray José Guilez, November 6, 1810," in *Letters of Jose Senan*, 49.

³¹⁰ Señán, "To Fray José Guilez, November 6, 1810," in *Letters of Jose Senan*, 62-63.

The trade between the two colonies also had the potential to be mutually beneficial. Alta California's agricultural economy had expanded, and the Franciscans were eager for trade. At the same time, the Russians in Sitka contended with a cold, wet climate and a short growing season and needed food. Governor Arrillaga even complained to Rezanov about excessive prices for goods shipped from San Blas and the advanced payment required to move supplies from central Mexico.³¹¹ Inflated prices and high transport costs made illegal trade more appealing for the Spanish in Alta California. Rezanov and Arrillaga went as far as drafting a petition to their respective governments supporting regular trade between Russian settlements in Alaska and Alta California before the Russian ship's departure. However, Rezanov perished from illness in Siberia before making it to St. Petersburg, and further trade talks were shelved with the outbreak of the Anglo-Spanish War from 1804 to 1808.

Nevertheless, Arrillaga remained friendly to the Russians in Sitka until he died in 1814. An unsigned letter, likely written by Arrillaga on December 1, 1813, instructed the *comisionado* of San José Luis Peralta (1759-1851) to permit anyone from the pueblo to sell wheat to the Russian ship docked in Monterey.³¹² Russian ships continued to port in Alta California ports loading cargoes of grain, cattle, and sea otter pelts in exchange for manufactured goods and tools. Russians even packed aboard ships some goods specified by the Franciscans, such as ticking and durable clothing for Native people at the missions and candles for church decoration. Presidio soldier José María Amador (1794-1883) described arriving in Fort Ross in 1820. The

³¹¹ Rezanov, "Letter of Rezanov to the Minister of Commerce, from New Archangel, June 17, 1806," 24-25.

³¹² José Joaquín de Arrillaga to Luis Peralta, December 1, 1813, Document 0594, Spanish-Mexican Records of the San José Pueblo: The Pueblo Papers, History San José, San José, California.

Spanish soldiers and officers received a warm welcome and generous gift of mantas, Indiana/calico textiles, shoes, and silk shirts.³¹³

Under the Governor's approval, Alta California's trade with Russian ships remained an exclusive monopoly of the military. The Franciscans supplied payment as foodstuffs, while the presidio storehouse held the merchandise obtained from the ship. The missions received payments in drafts from the *habilitado*, which could be exchanged for goods.³¹⁴ The practice continued regularly throughout the remainder of the colonial period. In 1812, finding the commerce sufficiently lucrative, the Russians established Fort Ross, their base in Alta California, some sixty miles north of San Francisco Bay. The multiethnic settlement comprised Russian administrators, Aleut and Kodiak hunters, creole middle managers, and Kashaya Pomo artisans and laborers. One year later, the interim Governor taking over after Arrillaga's death, Luís Arguello, sold 14,000 pesos worth of goods to Fort Ross. When Pablo Vicente de Sola (1761-1826) arrived in Alta California, to assume office as Governor the same year, he remarked in shock at how Arguello had disobeyed prohibitions on foreign trade.

Notwithstanding, the Russian presence close to Spanish settlements remained contentious with the Spanish military in Alta California, and authorities in Mexico City. The Russians had purchased a parcel of land from the Kashaya Pomo, likely aware of the fort's isolation and continuous threat of punitive action from the Spanish military. According to Diane Spencer-Hancock, William E. Pritchard, and Ina Kaliakin, the Russians understood not to arouse hostility

³¹³ José María Amador, "The Life of Soldados de Cuera at the Presidio of San Francisco," in *Californio Voices: The Oral Memoirs of José María Amador and Lorenzo Asisara*, edited by Gregorio Mora-Torres (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2005), 51-53; For an expanded analysis on the significance of clothing and imported fabrics within the daily lives of Californios, see, Barbara L. Voss, "'Poor People in Silk Shirts': Dress and Ethnogenesis in Spanish-Colonial San Francisco," *Journal of Social Archaeology* 8, 3 (2008), 404-432.

³¹⁴ Archibald, *Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, 136.

from the Kashaya Pomo and that cooperation with local leaders was needed to strengthen the Russian presence. The Russian treaty with the Kashaya Pomo leaders also gave Fort Ross international legitimacy.³¹⁵ For the Kashaya Pomo, the alliance with the Russians was strategic for gaining political allies against interior rivals to the east and Franciscan missionaries to the south. From Fort Ross, the Russians engaged in stock raising and grain cultivation and constructed shipbuilding facilities, mills, a tannery, and a wine press. Particularly concerning for Franciscan missionaries was the Russians' active recruitment of coast Miwok, Kashaya Pomo, and Southern Pomo peoples from nearby coastal communities and interior villages to work in the fort. Native people worked in livestock raising, agriculture, and construction, receiving food, tobacco, clothing, and other goods paid in kind.³¹⁶ Although the Spanish governors tacitly approved of illegal trade with Fort Ross, poaching became a significant point of contention between Spanish and Russian settlements. Aleut and Kodiak hunters traveled up and down the coast hunting sea otters and soon began regularly being spotted in San Francisco Bay.³¹⁷ Anglo-American ships delivering supplies or transporting pelts from Russian Alaskan settlements and Fort Ross began entering Spanish waters, engaging in illegal trade with the Franciscan missionaries, and dumping poaching parties on islands off Alta California's coast. From 1812, the Russian colony's principal economic activities were exploiting sea otters and other marine pelts from nearby waters, producing grain and protein for the Alaskan colonies, and supplying imported goods for trade with neighboring Spanish missions and presidios.

³¹⁵ Diane Spencer-Hancock, William E. Pritchard, and Ina Kaliakin, "Notes to the 1817 Treaty between the Russian American Company and Kashaya Pomo Indians," *California History* 59, 4 (Winter 1980-1981), 310-311.

³¹⁶ Kent G. Lightfoot, Thomas A. Wake, and Ann M. Schiff, "Native Responses to the Russian Mercantile Colony of Fort Ross, Northern California," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 20, 2 (Summer 1993), 161.

³¹⁷ Taylor, "Spanish-Russian Rivalry in the Pacific," 123.

Boston traders had been sporadically arriving on the coast since the late-1780s and coming more consistently after the Russians were established in Alaska. In 1778, the English navigator James Cook landed in the Pacific Northwest, anchoring in a bay he named Nootka Sound. On Vancouver Island, he traded glass beads for sea otter pelts from local Nu-Chah-Nulth villages. Not recognizing their value, the crewmembers used the furs to patch worn-out clothing. When returning across the Pacific Ocean, Cook stopped in Hawaii, where he died in an altercation with the local Native Hawaiians. The surviving sailors sailed to Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka and learned that the Russians would purchase the skins for \$30 a pelt. They sold a large portion of the cargo, but when reaching Canton in 1779, the crew found that the Chinese were willing to pay twice that price and upwards of \$120 for prime furs.³¹⁸ The rumors quickly spread among ports in Asia. Later that year, English deserters from Britain's attack on Manila informed authorities in the Philippines about sailors on Cook's ship selling pelts from Nootka for high prices in China.³¹⁹ Spain had known the value of sea otter pelts since at least 1733 and Russia by 1741. Still, the most significant interest in the maritime fur trade emerged only later in the eighteenth century once knowledge of commercial opportunities in the North Pacific Ocean became more widely known.

The rumors about Cook's voyage and publication in 1784 unleashed a more significant wave of Europeans and Anglo-Americans seeking profits on the Pacific Coast of North America.³²⁰ In the late eighteenth century, United States merchants, newly independent from

³¹⁸ Miller, "Maritime Fur Trade Rivalry in the Pacific Northwest," 397-398; Barger, "Furs, Hides, and a Little Larceny," 386.

³¹⁹ Cook, *Flood Tide of Empire*, 107.

Britain, looked to expand trade to Asia. Despite the marketability of Chinese goods within the country, the Chinese had little interest in U.S. products outside of ginseng, a native herb to North America with limited availability.³²¹ The Chinese primarily desired payment in gold and silver from international traders in global trade. Accounts and rumors about James Cook's crew selling sea otter pelts in Canton soon reached the U.S. in the 1780s. Soon merchants began sending ships into the Pacific Northwest, lured by the lucrative fur trade. As a result, the 1790s witnessed increased maritime activities in the Pacific Ocean by Anglo-American and English vessels. In one instance, Diego de Borica (1742-1800), Governor of the Californias, wrote to Viceroy Branciforte (1755-1812) that a U.S. frigate named the *Boston* arrived near the Port of Nootka to trade for maritime pelts and raised concerns about Anglo-Americans in the Pacific Northwest.³²² He relented that very little could be done to address the increased presence of foreign vessels on the coast. Esteban Tápís (1754-1825) of Mission Santa Clara in 1804 indicated that U.S. vessels had been arriving at Bahía San Pedro in southern Alta California with merchandise to trade for otter pelts. He further discusses that local Indigenous groups have been trading with these vessels.³²³ Authorities in Mexico City took steps to prevent contraband trading on the Pacific coast but with little success. A resolution in 1795 permitted private Spanish merchants to freely traffic merchandise between Baja, Alta California, and San Blas but warned that any contraband

³²⁰ Anya Zilberstein, "Objects of Distant Exchange: The Northwest Coast, Early America, and the Global Imagination," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 64, 3 (July 2007), 588-599.

³²¹ Barger, "Furs, Hides, and a Little Larceny," 388.

³²² Diego de Borica to Marqués de Branciforte, July 13, 1796, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 31, Folder 2824, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 2.

³²³ Fray Esteban Tapias, Prohibicion de todo comercio con los extranjeros, June 4, 1804, Item 101, Father Viadar's Miscellany Book, Santa Clara University Special Collections, Santa Clara, California, 1.

foreign goods would be confiscated.³²⁴ The free trade agreement between the three provinces failed to curb contraband trading in the Pacific Ocean. In 1802, Philippine authorities even proposed free trade with Baja and Alta California to exchange clothing, food supplies, and tools for marine furs to counter English and Anglo-American smugglers and poachers on the coast.³²⁵

In 1798, two separate U.S. vessels landed on the coast, hoping to trade for maritime pelts with Spanish Californians and the Indigenous people. Instead, what they found was a hostile reception. Presidios soldiers arrested eleven sailors from the *Loter Boston* on smuggling charges and remitted them to Veracruz and Cuba for deportation.³²⁶ When the vessel witnessed the arrests, it quickly departed, leaving behind the sailors who went ashore. Another vessel, the *Bergantín Americano*, had four mariners arrested for disembarking near Presidio San Diego. The four individuals admitted to hunting for maritime pelts on islands off the coast of South America and were en route to sell them in Canton. The *Bergantín Americano* escaped leaving the sailors behind. The arrested crew related that the vessel was bound for the Sandwich Islands, where the English wintered and traded merchandise for provisions from the local population.³²⁷ Authorities suspected both ships of illegal trading in Alta California, but the arrested crew members denied the allegations.

³²⁴ José Arguello, Tratado comercial entre California, y San Blas, y Guatemala en el año de 1795, June 8, 1795, Spanish-Mexican Records of the San José Pueblo: The Pueblo Papers Volume 4, History San José, 413.

³²⁵ Real Consulado de Manila to King, December 24, 1802, MSS 91/111 z, Box 1, Document 17-18, Philippine Commerce and the Manila Galleon Collection, 1769-1830, BANC, 12-13.

³²⁶ Miguel Joseph de Azanza to Francisco de Saavedra, July 27, 1798, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 2839, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 2.

³²⁷ Diego de Borica to Miguel Joseph de Azanza, December 22 to June 26, 1798, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 2841, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 4.

One of the more prolific smugglers was the Bostonian merchant George Washington Eayrs (1775-1855). His career spanned over a decade of sailing the North Pacific Ocean between Russian settlements in Alaska, Fort Ross, Nootka Sound, Baja and Alta California, and China. Since the late eighteenth century, Anglo-American ships had worked alongside the Russian American Company (RAC), delivering supplies to Russian settlements and using Aleutian and Kodiak hunters to harvest sea otter pelts on the many islands off Alta California's coast.³²⁸ In 1803, the RAC began regularly contracting Anglo-American merchants to transport Native Alaskan hunters and Russian supervisors to Alta California aboard their ships in exchange for half the profits from successful hunts. Early successes convinced company directors to enter into nine more agreements with Anglo-American captains from 1806 to 1813.³²⁹ Eayrs was one of the first beneficiaries of these contracts. From 1803 to 1812, Eayrs ship, the *Mercury*, participated extensively in the early maritime fur trade, carrying sea otter pelts from the Pacific Northwest and Alta California to Hawaii and Canton and returning to North America ladened with Chinese manufactures. His smuggling career only ended when the Peruvian privateer Nicolás Noé captured the *Mercury* off Alta California's coast near Santa Barbara in 1813. Two years prior, the Franciscans had contracted the Limeño merchant to transport tallow, hides, and sea otter pelts from Alta California to Mexico and South America.³³⁰ Noé agreed to regular trade with the Franciscans and transported merchandise, tools, and other goods from Lima."³³¹ In 1813, when

³²⁸ See, Glenn Farris, "Otter Hunting by Alaskan Natives in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Mains'l Haul* 43, 3-4 (Summer-Fall 2007), 21-23.

³²⁹ Kent G. Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 119.

³³⁰ Señán, "To Fray José Guilez, April 18, 1812," *Letters of Jose Senan*, 66.

³³¹ Señán, "To Father Juan Norbeto de Santiago, December 7, 1813," *Letters of Jose Senan*, 75.

sailing from Alta California, Noé encountered the *Mercury* near the Santa Barbara coast, impounded the vessel, detained the crew, confiscated the cargo, and illicitly acquired sea otter pelts. The crew was imprisoned at the Santa Barbara presidio and interrogated. Investigations revealed that the ship had been involved in contraband trade throughout Alta California. The presidio commandant reported, "the officers in general, residents on the same coast, and priests of the missions have supported their [the *Mercury's*] commerce."³³² Eayrs even admitted to carrying specific merchandise the Franciscan fathers and military officers requested. Account books from the *Mercury* recorded visits to missions such as Santa Barbara, Santa Inés, San Gabriel, San Luís Obispo, and San Miguel, acquiring nearly 5,000 pesos worth of sea otter pelts and purchased provisions, about 3,000 pesos paid in cash and 2,000 in merchandise.³³³

Smugglers like Eayrs often worked alongside military commanders and Franciscan missionaries. Major smuggling ports in Baja and Alta California included Punta de la Limpia Concepción south of Santa Barbara, Santa Catalina Island, and Cabo San Lucas on Baja California's southern tip, along with several others up and down the coast.³³⁴ In 1794, José Francisco Ortega (1734-1798), the former presidio commander, received the land grant to Rancho Refugio, located adjacent to the Santa Barbara Channel. José de la Guerra y Noriega, mentioned previously, had served under him. According to Marie Christine Duggan, by the 1790s, Rancho Refugio became a smuggling port and the seat of the Guerra family's mercantile

³³² Josef Monzon to Felix Calleja, July 13, 1814, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 2863, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 8-9.

³³³ Julia G. Costello, "Purchasing Patterns of the California Missions in ca. 1805," *The Archaeology of the Spanish Colonial and Mexican Republican Periods* 26, 1 (1992), 62.

³³⁴ Jose Arguello, Declaración del Marinero de la citada Fragata Manuel Vinzente Navarro, June 19, 1813, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 2863, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 45.

business in the Pacific Ocean through a partnership with his former commanding officer Ortega.³³⁵ Military officers and Franciscan missionaries worked together to trade agricultural products and pelts with foreign ships in exchange for contraband merchandise. According to the *Mercury's* crew, at least five or six other Anglo-American ships were smuggling illegal imports into Alta California in exchange for food supplies and furs.³³⁶ In 1808, William Shaler (1773-1833), an Anglo-American smuggler, estimated that the total contraband trade with Baja and Alta California amounted to nearly 25,000 pesos annually during the nineteenth century.³³⁷

While illegal trade might have improved the ability of the Franciscan missionaries and Spanish soldiers to acquire much-needed imports, the persisting presence of foreigners on the coast destabilized Alta California. Russian and Anglo-American ships pulling out from Fort Ross routinely dispatched Native Alaskan hunting parties to poach sea otters on islands and coastal zones in Alta California. Fur hunters often provoked violent clashes with local Native Alta Californians and Spanish soldiers. In 1815, Natives of San Nicolas Island in the southern chain of the Channel Islands killed a Native Alaskan hunter, and the hunting party responded with a massacre. In another incident, the same year, Ivan Kyglaia (~1800s), a Kodiak hunter, reported a violent confrontation with Spanish soldiers, leaving one hunter with a severe head wound from an axe strike. Presidio soldiers seized their belongings and collected sea otter pelts before imprisoning them.³³⁸ The maritime fur trade unleashed waves of violence up and down North

³³⁵ Duggan, "Bourbon Imperialism," 275.

³³⁶ Jose Arguello, Conclusión, October 14, 1813, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 11, Folder 2863, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC, 48.

³³⁷ Costello, "Purchasing Patterns of the California Missions in ca. 1805," 62.

³³⁸ Susan L. Morris, Glen J. Farris, Steven J. Schartz, Irina Vladi L. Wender, and Boris Dralyuk, "Murder, Massacre, and Mayhem on the California Coast, 1814-1815: Newly Translated Russian American Company

America's Pacific coast. As historian Christon Archer points out, market competition drove fur trading merchants to negotiate quick deals to move onto the next port before their competitors. Reaching Canton before everyone else was essential as the massive influx of furs into the market depressed prices and turned profitable voyages into financial disasters. Native coastal populations had a strongly developed sense of trading and held a deep understanding of sovereignty on their homelands, which extended to grass, water, and even ballast stones. Violence between European/Anglo-American merchants and Native people occurred regularly over issues related to the fur trade.³³⁹ The flourishing international trade accompanied an increasing foreign presence in the province. In 1796, the Anglo-American captain Ebenezer Dorr (1739-1809) aboard the *Otter* dumped eleven convict stowaways from Botany Bay in Australia on the beach near Carmel Mission. The local presidio commander arrested the marooned British convicts, put them to work at Santa Barbara, and later had them deported to Spain.³⁴⁰ The Spanish military regularly imprisoned Russian, Aleutian, and Kodiak poachers captured in Alta California's coastal waters and islands, placing them in bondage labor. In 1814, Russian hunter Vassili Tarakanoff (~1800s) and eleven Aleuts landed in Alta California, to hunt for fresh meat. Still, Spanish soldiers quickly arrived to arrest the men and imprisoned them for over two years. Four Aleuts escaped the sentence by converting to Catholicism, marrying local Native Californian women, and agreeing to stay permanently at San Fernando Mission.³⁴¹ The maritime

Documents Reveal Company Concern Over Violent Clashes,” *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 34, 1 (2014), 87-88.

³³⁹ Christon I. Archer, “Spain and the Defence of the Pacific Ocean Empire, 1750-1810,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 11, 21 (1986), 32.

³⁴⁰ Doyce B. Nunis, Jr., “Alta California’s Trojan Horse: Foreign Immigration,” *California History* 76 2-3 (Fall 1997), 302-303.

fur trade in Alta California, invigorated sustained ties to the Pacific Ocean from the late eighteenth century. At the same time, the activities of diverse groups of European merchants, Anglo-American sailors, and Native hunters and traders generated violent conflict in numerous littoral spaces.

Conclusion

The convergence of Franciscan missionaries, merchants, foreign Russian and European traders, Anglo-American smugglers, and Native hunters onto coastal Alta California interwove the region into globalized trade. It engendered the littoral borderland through political and economic contests over access to marine furs. As a result, coastal spaces became meeting places where conflicts emerged and negotiations played out. When Spanish ships first arrived in Alta California, trade and exchange quickly became the primary mode of intercourse between sailors and Native Alta Californians. Desperate and hungry sailors eagerly offered glass beads, silk, and cotton cloth to Native people for shellfish, fish, acorns, and even marine pelts. Jesuit missionaries in Baja California were the first to regularly exploit valuable sea otter pelts for sale on international markets. Spanish sailors and Native people hunted and collected the hides from the nearby Cedros Islands and sold them to merchants in the Philippines via the Manila galleons. In subsequent decades, the Jesuits gathered sea otter pelts in limited numbers. After the expulsion, Franciscan missionaries resumed the practice, encouraged Native people to bring pelts to the missions, and sold them to passing Naos. The early successes encouraged the crown to

³⁴¹ See, Vassili Petrovitch Tarakanoff, "Captivity at Mission San Fernando, 1815," in *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846*, edited by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz (Santa Clara: Heyday Books, 2001), 293-297.

sponsor a short-lived government-financed fur trade industry in Baja and Alta California. By the nineteenth century, private traders from Mexico City had primarily replaced the state-sponsored fur trade. By the end of the eighteenth century, foreign ships began stopping on Alta California's coast seeking food supplies and profits from the maritime fur trade. Franciscan missionaries and Spanish soldiers were eager to evade the crown's restrictive trade policies and acquire alternatives to the inadequate government supply line shifted toward contraband trade. The thriving business with smugglers was primarily based on trading for agricultural products and lucrative pelts for commerce in Asia. Hunters in Alta California and the Pacific Northwest supplied pelts of the northern sea otter to Mexican, Russian, and Anglo-American merchants who transported them to markets in Asia and returned to North America with fabulous riches in silks, porcelains, spices, woven textiles, and many other goods. By the turn of the nineteenth century, licit and illicit trade in the Eastern Pacific Ocean had become a significant economic activity for people on the coast from Alta California, to South America.

Chapter 5: Sailor Mobility and the Spanish Pacific World

Most of the mariners who sail the sea are of two sorts. The first sort includes all those who commence to sail as a livelihood, such as poor men and sons of poor fathers. Seafaring is the most suitable occupation they can find to sustain themselves, especially for those born in ports and maritime areas. This sort is the most numerous among mariners. The other sort from whom mariners are made consists of those whose nature inclines them toward the restlessness and the art of sailing and military occupations.³⁴²

--Juan de Escalante de Mendoza
Itinerario de navegación de los mares y tierras occidentales, 1575

The late-sixteenth-century General of the Indies Fleet, Juan de Escalante de Mendoza (1529-1596), outlined the motives that compelled sailors to endure the hardships and dangers of life on the open seas. Most mariners undoubtedly joined crews out of economic necessity. They filled the various port cities of Spain and the Americas, servicing the ocean-faring ships transporting precious material and human cargo across half the globe. Few of these individuals likely had strong inclinations toward spending long, arduous months cramped aboard filthy and damp ships, spending most of their life at sea. Most mariners were not professional sailors but part of a floating population of skilled and unskilled workers who shifted between jobs and ports seeking economic opportunities in which sailing formed only a part of the various roles they filled. Escalante wrote about transatlantic sailors in the sixteenth century. Still, even into the eighteenth century, the description likely only painted a partial picture of the types of individuals who entered maritime service or worked within port cities across the Atlantic and Pacific Worlds. Sailing was a complex industry involving many people who worked to transport goods

³⁴² Juan Escalante de Mendoza in 1575 quoted from Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea: Daily Life on the Indies Fleets in the Sixteenth Century*, translated by Carla Rahn Phillips (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 26.

from the interior to the coast, dock workers to load ships, carpenters and caulkers to build them, and able-bodied crews to navigate across oceans. In the early modern period, sailors formed many of those who entered the expansive waterscapes of ocean bodies, facilitated transoceanic travel, and crossed boundaries separating lands, empires, and territories.

Focusing on the lived experiences of sailors and mariners forces historians to re-think national and land-centered stories as well as previous understandings of colonial and modern history. According to Niklas Frykman, Clare Anderson, Lex Heerma van Voss, and Marcus Rediker, the pervasive *terracentrism*, or belief that history is made exclusively on land, has rendered the world's oceans marginal or invisible within the historical narrative. As a result, bodies of water become "anti-spaces," or the blanks that lie in between, existing in the transitory spaces between landed and national spaces where history supposedly takes place.³⁴³ These authors challenge scholars to think beyond landed history to recognize how interactions at sea shaped social and political developments within and among territories. The lives of sailors are central to these narratives. They were a highly mobile group that crossed oceans and boundaries and facilitated long-distance exchanges. Maritime processes structured the lives of mariners and those who thrived within ocean ports. Indeed, life aboard ships were spaces within themselves. Sailors and other coastal people did not exist within geographically contained territories bordered and limited by bodies of water. Instead, they inhabited a world shaped by constant movement and unstable boundaries. Like other regions connected through maritime exchange and travel, the regional spaces bordering the Pacific Ocean were fluid and dynamic, created through social interactions at sea and on land by sailors, merchants, soldiers, Indigenous groups, and many

³⁴³ Niklas Frykman, Clare Anderson, Lex Heerma van Voss, and Marcus Rediker, "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: An Introduction," *International Review of Social History* 58, 21 (2013), 5.

others. In Alta California, sailor mobility in the Pacific Ocean both sustained colonization and destabilized its territorial boundaries, engendering a littoral borderland shaped by historical developments in maritime and terrestrial spaces.

This chapter examines the activities of mariners and others who made colonization of Alta California possible during the late-eighteenth century; those who crossed boundaries between New Spain's ports on the west coast, from ports like Acapulco and San Blas, and across the Pacific Ocean to the Philippines. The Naval Department of San Blas's interwoven relationship with Alta California is central to this history. Naval authorities and sailors facilitated the expansion of the mission frontier from Baja California northward, guarded the Manila galleon route, and sustained exploration into the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. Supplying new presidios and missions in Alta California often occurred jointly with the Pacific Northwest and Alaska explorations. Diverse people contributed to maintaining the Naval Department, from merchants and carpenters to those who crewed ships. Many others were already established in Alta California, and participated in Spain's maritime activities in the Pacific Ocean, including Franciscan missionaries, Native people, soldiers, and settlers. I maintain that these disparate groups and the mariners who came and went helped link Baja and Alta California to the broader Pacific Ocean, tying it with the coastal zones of Spain's territories in the Eastern Pacific Basin. From the early decades of colonization in the 1770s to the end of Spanish rule in 1821, these men and women created an enduring circulation of material goods and people, which laid the foundations for later expansions in Pacific commerce—for instance, the colonial period laid the foundations for the well-known Pacific tallow trade, which emerged in the 1830s and 1840s. The province's connections to commercial circuits in the Pacific Ocean had existed since the early decades of colonization. Sailors from diverse locations had long congregated in Alta California's

major ports like Monterey, San Diego, and San Francisco. Ship captains like Juan Pérez, who piloted supply ships from San Blas to Alta California and explored the Pacific Northwest, were veterans of the Nao trade before transferring to the Naval Department.³⁴⁴ By tracing the movement and activities of mariners and others employed in naval service, we can better recognize how maritime and landed histories intersected and engendered the littoral borderland in Alta California.

Sailor Mobility and the Littoral Borderland

In the late colonial period, Alta California occupied a significant segment of Spain's vast empire in the Pacific Ocean. Spanish authorities did not envision the province as an isolated frontier but one inseparable from the broader regional geography of *Las Indias del Poniente*, encompassing Spain's Pacific Islands in the Philippines and the Marianas and New Spain's and Peru's coastline. Alta California was central to Spain's policies to defend its territories from the steadily encroaching foreign powers like the Russians, British, and Anglo-Americans in the North Pacific Ocean and protect its navigation route to East Indies. Since the 1760s, officials in the Philippines had kept a close eye on North America. They delivered several petitions to the courts in Madrid and Mexico recommending that New Spain's expansion northward be committed from the islands.³⁴⁵ With Philippine sailors having the most familiarity with navigating the Pacific Ocean for centuries, the royal navy based in Cavité, and Manila being a commercial center, it was the most practical point to supply Alta California. The Philippines had

³⁴⁴ Juan Crespi, "Diario de Juan Crespi," in *The California Coast: Documents from the Sutro Collection*, edited by Donald C. Cutter (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 236.

³⁴⁵ Anda y Salazar to Arriaga, February 16, 1775, MSS Z-E 1, Carton 1, Folder 0008, Spanish Exploration and Settlement related materials, circa 1530-circa 1820, BANC.

been the center of Spain's mercantile and maritime activities in the Pacific Ocean for over two centuries. The Naos also had the most sustained contact with California's coast. Crews frequented its shores, often debilitated from hunger, malnutrition, and scurvy from their four to six-month journeys. The Naos regularly pulled ashore to gather food, water, and firewood, trading and interacting with local Indigenous groups. Alta California's coast was a considerable portion of the Naos' route and was an appendage of the broader regional geography of the Pacific Rim. Facilitating interconnections between New Spain and the Philippines were sailors whose own geographic mobility connected ports to distant places and created social and economic ties to the places they visited. Alta California's colonization, and Spain's presence in the Pacific Ocean, depended on a diverse group of young and inexperienced sailors from Nueva Galicia, Sonora, Baja California, Spain, and the Philippines, and their experiences highlight the transregional and maritime forces shaping the contours of Alta California's and New Spain's littoral borderlands.

In the early decades of colonization, authorities recruited captains and sailors from the Naos and the Atlantic Indies Fleet to work at the Naval Department of San Blas and crew the ships destined for California and the Pacific Northwest. One of these individuals was Juan Pérez, as mentioned before. He had served many years as a pilot aboard the Naos crossing the exhausting route from Manila to Acapulco before his final station in San Blas. In 1769, he was assigned an officer position at the newly built naval facility. He received command of the recently commissioned *Santiago*, constructed to explore and establish a presidio in San Diego. Later in 1774, he ventured north to survey San Francisco and Bodega Bay, explored the Pacific Northwest to modern-day Vancouver Island, and participated in a final expedition in 1775 to

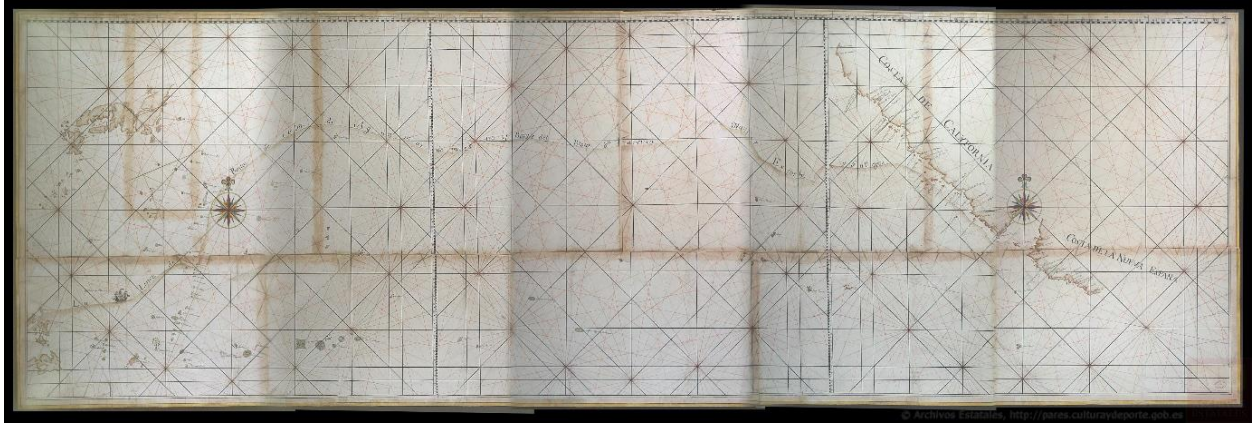


Figure 5.1. Francisco Javier Estorgo y Gallegos, Carta náutica con el derrotero del tornaviaje que hizo desde Manila a Nueva España, Manila, circa 1770. The illustration maps the return voyage (tornaviaje) from the Philippines to New Spain, chartering the coasts of California, the Philippines, Japan, and the islands of the Carolinas, the Ladrones (Marianas), Rica de Oro, Rica de Plata, and Barbudos. From the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.

Alaska. He died of unspecified illness on California's coast during his last voyage.³⁴⁶ Pérez's career was very similar to many that served in the department. Sailors were highly mobile, moving throughout different ports from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans. They spent much of their lives at sea and brought their experiences and expertise to the places they visited.

Sailor geographies connected Alta California's littoral borderland to the distant shores and broadened its connections to the Pacific Ocean. In *An Aqueous Territory*, Ernesto Bassi explores how sailors' geographic mobility constructed a *transimperial* Greater Caribbean World in the late colonial period. He defines the territory as an unfixed regional space configured within the geopolitical imaginations of residents of New Granada who interacted extensively with sailors from Caribbean territories controlled by the British, French, Dutch, and Danish.³⁴⁷

According to Bassi, sailors were "mobile actors par excellence" frequently crossing political

³⁴⁶ Charles Edward Chapman, *A History of California: The Spanish Period* (New York: MacMillan, 1921), 278.

³⁴⁷ Ernesto Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory: Sailor Geographies and New Granada's Transimperial Greater Caribbean World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 3-4.

borders and continuously circulating among Caribbean ports, islands, and coasts. They crossed imperial boundaries, gathered and spread information from one port to the next or on the high seas, and constructed space through everyday social interaction. Through mobility, they created an “amorphously bounded,” multicultural, and geographically unstable *aqueous territory* in the Caribbean.³⁴⁸ Similarly, sailors who crossed territorial boundaries from San Blas in Nueva Galicia to Alta California or the Philippines and even as far as Canton participated in forging a Pacific World. They circulated throughout the ports and coastal zones of the Pacific rim, interacting with a nationally and culturally diverse group of merchants, Indigenous peoples, and foreign and familiar sailors. Sailor’s geographic mobility helped create and sustain Alta California’s littoral borderland generated enduring links between New Spain and the Pacific Ocean, and constructed spaces connected through landed and maritime processes. Their lived experiences illustrated the complex social interactions grounded in the Pacific Ocean and shaped by mobility.

The Naval Department and Spain’s need for labor attracted people from diverse parts of New Spain and the Atlantic and Pacific World. One substantial issue plaguing Spain’s maritime activities in the Pacific Ocean was the scarcity of professional sailors and craftsmen skilled at ship construction and maintenance. In 1774, Mexican authorities contracted twenty experienced sailors and two boatswains from the Atlantic Indies Fleet in Veracruz to work in San Blas.³⁴⁹ San Blas hired two marine officers from Cádiz, a caulker, and two shipwrights alongside the

³⁴⁸ Bassi, *An Aqueous Territory*, 4-8.

³⁴⁹ Typographed passports for 20 sailors and 2 contra maestros issued by Palacio for travel to San Blas, January 28, 1774, Provincias Internas Volume 166, Folder 330, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico.

sailors.³⁵⁰ The sailors were too few to crew a ship of any significant size other than a small packet boat. Instead, authorities contracted the sailors to train recruits at the newly built naval department. Most of those enlisted at San Blas were not professionals and required instruction on the complex functions of seafaring from seasoned sailors. In addition to mariners from the Atlantic Indies Fleet, San Blas hired several from Manila and Acapulco to work aboard ships and supervise crews. In 1792, Malaspina hired Filipino sailors and a *sangrador*, a convict to be exiled in Manila, when in Acapulco before voyaging to the Pacific Northwest.³⁵¹ Aside from professional sailors, the central part of the crews consisted of impoverished mestizo farmers and Native people from the surrounding regions of Nueva Galicia.³⁵² Naval authorities recruited most sailors, soldiers, and laborers working in San Blas from Tepic, Guadalajara, and Alta California. Most had little to no experience in naval duty, shipbuilding, or sailing. Professional Shipwrights, caulkers, and sailors from Veracruz and Spain trained them and oversaw their work.³⁵³

However, limited experience and poor training of recruited sailors and laborers contributed to problems within maritime transport and working aboard ships. Captain Esteban José Martínez (circa 1700s) complained to authorities in 1779 that the sailors under his command were incompetent and mostly “old men” only suitable for eating the ship’s provisions. He continued, “The people I have aboard are so limited that between old men, healthy, and sick,

³⁵⁰ Secretaría de Estado y del Despacho de Indias to Antonio Bucareli, July 12, 1776, Guadalajara 515, 38, Audiencia de Guadalajara, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.

³⁵¹ Malaspina, “Voyage Narrative 1792, in *Voyage of the Sutil and Mexicana*, 59 and 62.

³⁵² Franciscan Tomás de la Peña mentioned a young Grumete Native boy, Salvador Antonio, from Nayarit among the crew on the *Santiago* voyaging to the Pacific Northwest in 1774; See. Tomás de la Peña, “1774 Diary of Fray Tomás de la Peña on the Santiago,” in Donald C. Cutter, *The California Coast: A Bilingual Edition of Documents from the Suro Collection* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 164.

³⁵³ Expediente sobre el establecimiento de un batallón de milicias para defensa del Departamento de San Blas, March 17, 1781, Guadalajara 517, 7, Audiencia de Guadalajara, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.

they do not amount to 30 of those capable of work and patience.”³⁵⁴ With the bulk of the crew being inexperienced sailors, the voyages could be dangerous. In 1775, Franciscan Benito de la Sierra, while accompanying Captain Bruno de Heceta’s expedition to the Pacific Northwest, commented that the *Santiago* had a forced return to San Blas. The reason was “the large number of men who were sick, and the fact that a considerable proportion of the remainder were useless, on account of being recruits and consequently incompetent for this kind of work.”³⁵⁵ Typically, young men joining crews entered as apprentices in their late teenage years and apprenticed for several years. After obtaining a certain level of expertise, apprentices received a document signed by the master, pilot, boatswain, and a notary certifying them as sailors.³⁵⁶ San Blas’s sailors were mostly recent recruits who received limited training before their first departure and had to fulfill many of the naval duties ordinarily assigned to seasoned mariners. The minimal level of training the sailors in San Blas received left them critically unprepared for the rigors of life at sea, and the confinement in cramped, cold, and damp quarters of the ship left many infirmed after weeks out at sea.

Substantial proportions of the recruited sailors comprised Native people from Baja California, Sonora, and Nueva Galicia. Since the early decades of Baja California’s colonization from 1697 to 1767, Native people had worked regularly within maritime service in the Pacific Ocean, owing to the shortage of able-bodied crews. In 1720, the Jesuit missionaries

³⁵⁴ Esteban José Martínez, *His Voyage in 1779 to Supply Alta California*, edited by Vivian C. Fisher (Berkeley: The Bancroft Library, 2002), 44 and 96.

³⁵⁵ Benito de la Sierra, “Fray Benito de la Sierra’s Account of the Hezeta Expedition to the Northwest Coast in 1775,” edited by A.J. Baker and Henry R. Wagner, *California Historical Society Quarterly* 9, 3 (September 1930), 227-228.

³⁵⁶ Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain’s Men of the Sea*, 78.

commissioned the construction of a brigantine on the peninsula for regular supply voyages across the Gulf of California to Sonora. Cochimí from Mission Santa Rosalía de Mulegé worked as loggers and carpenters to assemble the first ship built in Baja California, *El Triunfo de la Cruz*, completed the following year. In 1721, the ship explored the gulf and its coasts to locate a safe passage between the peninsula and the mainland. The crew consisted of four Spanish sailors and thirteen Native people from Baja California. The *Triunfo de la Cruz* was escorted by the longboat *Santa Bárbara* serviced by five other Native people from Baja California, one Yaqui, and two Filipino creoles.³⁵⁷ Under the Jesuits, Native people from Baja California worked in maritime service informally and irregularly. Indigenous groups from Baja California to San Francisco Bay had a well-developed seafaring culture long before the arrival of European ships to their shores. Coastal groups piloted tule reed rafts and canoes designed for venturing far off the coast and fishing in the deep waters of the North Pacific Ocean. Baja and Alta California's Indigenous population were experienced mariners who applied their skills toward naval service in the colonial era.

Native recruitment became regularized under the Naval Department of San Blas for the colonization of Alta California in 1767. The 1773 audit of the Baja California missions, drafted before the Franciscans transferred them to the Dominicans the following year, listed twenty-three Baja California Natives training or employed as sailors from several missions, including San Borja, Santa Gertrudís, San Ignacio, Mulegé, San Joseph de Comondú, Cadegomó, and San Xavier.³⁵⁸ In 1774, the Dominicans assumed control over the Baja California missions and,

³⁵⁷ Michael Mathes, "Baja California Indians in the Spanish Maritime Service, 1720-1821," *Southern California Quarterly* 62, 2 (Summer 1980), 115.

shortly after, complained to the Californias' Governor, Felipe de Neve, that several Native people working at the Naval Department had not returned to the peninsula. In 1775, the naval commissary Francisco Hijosa agreed to return several Baja Californians to Loreto but insisted that some had to remain under the orders of Lieutenant Ignacio de Arteaga due to a shortage of sailors at the port.³⁵⁹ Although documents seldom comment on the composition of crews, it seems likely that Native people were crewmembers aboard Bruno de Heceta's voyage to Nootka Sound in 1775 and Ignacio de Arteaga's voyage to Alaska in 1779. Historian Michael Mathes estimates that eighty to eighty-five percent of mariners, caulkers, and carpenters employed in Baja California were Native people, mostly Yaqui. Registers from 1781 to 1821 indicate that Native people regularly appeared in maritime roles at the Real Presidio of Loreto. Yaqui from Sonora and Baja California comprised the majority, but Cochimí and Guaycura were substantial proportions.³⁶⁰

Native people from Baja and Alta Californians and Sonoran Indigenous people were fundamental to Spain's maritime activities in the Northern Pacific Ocean. Under military regulations, Naval Department commissioners contracted Native people for short-term contracts as temporary detachments who could petition for release from service to return to the missions. However, the regulations were not evenly enforced. In 1802, Dominican Rafael Arviña

³⁵⁸ When the Crown expelled the Jesuits from Baja California in 1767, the Franciscans assumed control over the missions there. Later when the Franciscans transferred to Alta California, the Dominican Order received control over the Baja California missions in 1774; Eligio M. Coronado, editor. *Descripción e inventarios de las misiones de Baja California, 1773* (Palma de Mallorca, Spain: Institut d'Estudis Baleàrics, 1987), 30-31.

³⁵⁹ Francisco Hijosa to Felipe de Neve, June 20, 1775, San Blas, Colonia, Aspecto político, 1744-1821, Volume 1, Document 20, Archivo Histórico de Baja California Sur, Pablo L. Martínez [AHPLM], La Paz, Mexico; Also, see. Michael Mathes, "Baja California Indians in the Spanish Maritime Service," 118.

³⁶⁰ Mathes, "Baja California Indians in the Spanish Maritime Service," 120.

complained to the San Blas commissioner, José Pérez Fernández, that a fifteen-year-old Native youth named Vicente Fernandino had been flogged and placed in irons for requesting to return to the mission. He reminded Pérez that Native people should not be treated as enslaved people and were free to return to the missions if dissatisfied with working in maritime service.³⁶¹ Vicente Fernandino presumably returned to sailing five years later, as the 1807 payroll listed him as a “grumete” (cabin boy).³⁶² Many Native people, such as Vicente, served temporarily within the naval service, shifting between the missions and sailing. Others were able to acquire a substantial service record and ascend to officer positions above the rank of mariner, such as the Cochimí sailor Mátias Félix who Governor Gaspar Portolá appointed *arráez* (master) on the longboat *Guadalupana* commissioned to sail to Monterey in 1769.³⁶³ Most Native people from Baja California were sailors. Still, others like Mátias Félix, Rafael Cisneros, and Juan Rubio also ascended to the higher rank of *arráez*. At the same time, Juan Francisco, Andrés Careaga, Tomás Cortés, and Antonio Vallarta achieved positions of more significant rank, *guardíans* (boatswain’s mate).³⁶⁴ The shortage of trained sailors compelled naval authorities to rely increasingly on Native sailors. Though most were classified as temporary *marineros*, more than a few ascended to permanent positions within the officer corps aboard ships.

³⁶¹ Rafael Arviña to José Pérez Fernández, September 21, 1802, San Ignacio Kadakaamán, Colonia, Aspecto Religioso, 1744-1821, Volume 12, Document 54, AHPLM.

³⁶² Fernando de la Toba, Relación de los sueldos que han recibido los elementos de la Compañía de Caballería del Real Presidio de Loreto, December 31, 1807, Colonia, Aspecto político, Volume 6, Document 501, AHPLM.

³⁶³ Joseph Villa Vicencio, Certifica el recibo de mercancías, July 2, 1769, Colonia, Aspecto económico, Volume 9, Document 21, AHPLM.

³⁶⁴ See. Mathes, “Baja California Indians in the Spanish Maritime Service,” 121-122.

Contracting Native people for maritime service continued into Alta California's colonization. Although documentation on Native maritime service is incomplete, available evidence suggests that Native people informally entered naval service. In 1771, Junípero Serra granted four young Kumeyaay boys to apprentice as sailors aboard the annual San Blas vessel named Francisco, Buenaventura, Fernando, and Diego. He described the boys as having begun to understand Castilian and having an acute interest in ships and seafaring. Serra placed the boys under the charge of the ship captain and the quartermaster, hoping to cultivate the Spanish language and familiarize them with sailing.³⁶⁵ The two boys accompanied the vessel on its return voyage to San Blas and were instructed to return immediately to San Diego with the next supply delivery. They likely served as pajes (pages) or grumetes (cabin boys) on the journey, a position on the ship reserved for the youngest crew members, typically recruited between eight and ten years old. The role involved the minor specialized tasks of scrubbing and cleaning the vessel, preparing provisions for distribution, and putting away the table after meals. They also had to recite the tenets and principal prayers of Christian worship each afternoon with the chaplain.³⁶⁶ Pages were subject to the authority of all crew members and were often the first level of training youths received before entering apprenticeship aboard ships. Others included a young Ohlone boy Juan Evangelista in 1774, who sent a gift to the Franciscans in Guadalajara. Serra related that the child had visited the Franciscan College, suggesting he had undertaken a similar journey to San Blas and traveled to Mexico City.³⁶⁷ In another instance, an individual described as a

³⁶⁵ Junípero Serra, "Al Padre Francisco Palou, San Diego, June 21, 1771," *Writings of Junipero Serra Volume 1*, 243.

³⁶⁶ Pérez-Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 76.

³⁶⁷ Junípero Serra, "A Don Melchor de Peramas, Monterrey, Septiembre 11, 1774, *Writings of Junipero Serra Volume 1*, 180.

“teenaged” *Indio* from San Diego named Francisco de Asís disappeared from the mission. He was familiar with several sailors aboard the *Activo* and *Concepción*, which arrived in San Francisco in 1798, perhaps from previous service aboard supply ships or work at the port. The sailors had helped him stow away on board, where he traveled to San Blas. After arriving, he reportedly found employment in Tepic within the household of “a laborer from Río de Oton.”³⁶⁸ Native people also sometimes worked jobs involving maritime transportation and service to the presidio. For instance, Fermín de Lasuén approved fifteen to twenty Native people from various missions to travel by ship to Nootka Sound in the Pacific Northwest to help repair the recently burned presidio there.³⁶⁹ The regularity for which the Franciscans granted permission for them to work aboard ships was likely not entirely uncommon, given the shortage of personnel working at San Blas and the fact that many served as apprentices to carpenters.

Mariners and other crewmembers aboard Spain’s ships in the Pacific Ocean were the first Spanish-speakers to interact with the people and places along North America’s west coast. Unlike other provinces in northern New Spain, encounters in Alta California occurred principally at sea or within the coastal zones. Captains and sailors voyaging to the west coast carried specially designated cargoes of beads, shells, textiles, copper, iron, and other goods to trade with Native people, hoping these gestures of friendship could aid future colonization efforts in the region. Sailors collected brilliantly hued “Monterey shells,” or abalone, near Presidio Monterrey to exchange with Native people for animal furs and pelts to sell to merchants in San Blas.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁸ “To Don Diego de Borica, November 16, 1798,” in Finbar Kenneally, editor. *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, Volume 1* (Academy of American Franciscan History: Washington, D.C., 1965), 103.

³⁶⁹ “To Don Pedro Fages, August 14, 1789,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén Volume 1*, 196.

³⁷⁰ John Kendrick, editor, *The Voyage of Sutil and Mexicana 1792: The Last Spanish Exploration of the Northwest Coast of America* (Spokane, WA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1991), 128.

Interaction and exchange shaped early relationships between Spanish sailors and coastal Indigenous groups from California to Alaska. Francisco Antonio Mourelle, who sailed with Bruno de Heceta to Alaska in 1775, noted that the sailors would cut strips out of their shirts, trousers, and jackets bartering small rolls of fabrics with Native people for pelts.³⁷¹ Sometimes, sailors would strip the ship of any disposable metal, including old hoops from storage barrels and iron nails ripped from old chests, bartering them to Indigenous people for anything of value.³⁷² Native people in Alaska were adept hunters of otters, sea lions, and other marine animals. They processed furs and pelts into soft leather with ornate designs and weavings. Captain Juan Pérez, in 1774, compared them to goods produced in China and the Philippines.³⁷³ Juan Crespí vaunted similar praise for the processed pelts and intricately woven mats, recalling similarities to Asian goods shipped aboard the Manila galleons.³⁷⁴ Sailors turned small profits by selling the traded goods to merchants on their return to San Blas. Exchange and trade structured these early encounters between sailors and Indigenous people on the west coast of North America.

These early encounters were fueled by the mobilization of vast amounts of material and human resources connecting from the far northern shores of North America to the southern port

³⁷¹ Paul S. Taylor, "Spanish Seamen in the New World during the Colonial Period," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 5, 4 (November 1922), 637.

³⁷² Francisco Antonio Mourelle, *Voyage of the Sonora in the Second Bucareli Expedition: To Explore the Northwest Coast Survey the Port of San Francisco and Found Franciscan Missions and A Presidio and Pueblo at that Port*, edited by Daines Barrington (San Francisco: Thomas C. Russel, 1920), 28.

³⁷³ Brief account in Spanish of the Two Voyages of Juan Pérez to Explore the Coast of California to the Northwest in the Frigate Santiago, or Nueva Galicia, the First in 1774, the Second, under the Command of Bruno de Hezeta, in 1775, Followed by a statement of the Conditions in the Missions of Monterey, December 31, 1774 by Juan José Pérez Hernández, 1774, MSS M-M 1757, Document 51, Documents of Exploration of the California Coast, 1774-1779, BANC, 1-3.

³⁷⁴ Juan Crespí, "Journal of Fray Juan Crespí kept during the same voyage—dated 5th October, 1774," in *The California Coast*, 236.

of the Naval Department of San Blas. Spain's maritime activities in the Pacific Ocean were multi-layered and involved the participation of broad segments of colonial society. Franciscan missionaries who later founded missions in Alta California actively participated in the early explorations in the Pacific Ocean. Franciscan fathers Juan Riobó and Matias Noriega sailed with captain Ignacio Arteaga's expedition in 1779 before taking over missions in Santa Clara and San Francisco, respectively. Riobó served in the missions of Baja California from 1771 to 1773 before their ultimate transfer to the Dominicans that same year. In 1779, he and Noriega traveled aboard the *Princesa* and *Favorita*, exploring northern Alta California, the Pacific Northwest, and Alaska.³⁷⁵ Both Riobó and Noriega subsequently departed the voyage and remained in Alta California at the request of Junípero Serra. Chaplains played an essential role aboard ships, servicing the spiritual affairs and caring for the sick crewmembers. For instance, after Captain Ignacio de Arteaga departed from San Blas to explore Alaska in 1799, the vessel encountered a violent storm and crashing waves, nearly sinking the ship. The intense weather battered the ship an entire night, and officers and crewmembers turned to the Franciscan fathers for solace,

On the morning of the same day, I went with the Commandant to the quarter deck, and in the name of all the crew on the Frigate he made a vow to Our Lady of the Rosary, patroness of the frigate. He promised the foresail as an offering at her shrine and likewise that he would carry, barefooted, the mast in procession to the Church at San Blas, if the Blessed Virgin would obtain our delivery from this and other dangers which we might encounter and should we return safely to harbor. As if a reward of this promise, Our Lady favored us with her powerful protection.³⁷⁶

Alta California's early missionaries were heavily involved in Spain's maritime activities in the Pacific Ocean by serving aboard ships and charting the coasts of Alta California and the Pacific

³⁷⁵ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California: San Diego Mission* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1920), 318.

³⁷⁶ Juan Riobó, "An Account of the Voyage Made by the Frigates 'Princesa' and 'Favorita' in the Year 1799 from San Blas to Northern Alaska," *The Catholic Historical Review* 4, 2 (July 1918), 223.

Northwest. Chaplains provided spiritual comfort to crews on exploration ships and shared the rigors of life at sea. Franciscan missionaries built meaningful relationships with sailors, captains, merchants, and others through service aboard ships. On stops in Monterey or San Francisco, sailors regularly furnished donations from their pay or material goods to churches and missions to repay Franciscan fathers for aid to the sick or petition the divine for spiritual protection against the dangers they faced at sea.³⁷⁷ Spain's maritime activities involved individuals whose profession consigned them to a life at sea and a diverse group of ecclesiastics, soldiers, skilled laborers, and professionals, both Spanish and Native.

The Naval Department of San Blas played a critical role in Alta California's colonization and transformed New Spain's west coast into a center of maritime activity in the Pacific Ocean. Overseas transportation was a complex industry that mobilized substantial financial, material, and human resources. Alta California and Nueva Galicia benefited from massive eighteenth-century government subsidies for transportation and defense in the Pacific Ocean. San Blas's dedicated roles as both a shipbuilding facility and naval supply station involved the labor of diverse peoples, including colonial authorities, merchants, farmers, carpenters, caulkers, surgeons, sailors, soldiers, officers, missionaries, and Native people from Mexico City, Nayarit, Guadalajara, and California. Parallel industries emerged, ranging from lumbering, carpentry, and caulking to build and outfit ships to the agricultural sector supplying naval ships with rigging material, sailcloth, clothing, and food supplies. Maritime activities connected San Blas to colonization in Alta California and exploration in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, integrating the eastern Pacific Ocean within a multifaceted web of exchange.

³⁷⁷ Lasuén, "To Don Fray Francisco Rousset de Jesús, March 4, 1799," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 112.

Authorities and officers in San Blas contracted local farmers, merchants, and Indigenous groups to purchase food supplies, labor, and goods to outfit naval ships. In 1791, the commissioner in San Blas renewed a contract with a merchant named Juan Manuel Siniaga in Tepic to purchase bundles of flour to produce hardtack, a staple food made from dried and unleavened dough standard aboard ships in the early modern period. Additionally, second pilot Francisco Mourelle, who sailed to the Pacific Northwest in 1791, purchased several sacks of flour, chiles, onions, and garlic from another merchant, José Maria Luezada, in Tepic before departing north.³⁷⁸ Naval officers acquired most food supplies from local merchants in Tepic and Guadalajara to outfit ships for extended expeditions. Funds from the royal treasury purchased the goods and stimulated local agricultural industries dependent on producing goods for naval trips to Alta California and the Pacific Ocean.

Additionally, authorities contracted Tequepespan to cut and transport timber, construct and maintain ships at the port, and collect pitch and tar used as sealants aboard vessels.³⁷⁹ San Blas ships also regularly purchased large amounts of flour from Alta California's pueblos and missions. In addition to food supplies, the annual ships transported goods and diverse foods, leaving limited cargo space on outbound voyages. Typically, ships carried sufficient supplies to complete the journey one way, where they purchased a fresh set of supplies for the return. Orders to send flour to vessels anchored in Monterey appear regularly in documents from Pueblo San José, mandating settlers sell flour to cover taxes and debts owed to the royal treasury.³⁸⁰ San Blas

³⁷⁸ Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola to Francisco Hijosa, November 3, 1791, FILM 2311, Reel 1, New Spain, Real Caja de Guadalajara, Records of the Royal Treasury at Guadalajara 1790-1797.

³⁷⁹ Thurman, *The Naval Department of San Blas*, 38.

³⁸⁰ Raymundo Carillo to Comisionado del Pueblo de San Jose, August 11, 1801, Document 0303, *Spanish-Mexican Records of the San Jose Pueblo 1781-1870*, History San Jose Research Library, San Jose, California.

also contracted growers in Alta California's pueblos San José, Los Ángeles, and Branciforte to regularly load wheat aboard the returning supply vessels as a means to both subsidize agriculture in the province and produce hardtack for the naval department's ships.³⁸¹ For centuries, contracts to supply food and supplies to naval ships had existed in New Spain. Since the sixteenth century, the Manila galleons sold contracts to individual merchants to supply hardtack under the *asentista del bizocho*.³⁸² The naval department's maritime activities involved the participation of individuals beyond mariners and developed into a regional economy based on trade and transport.

In a more ambitious program connected to Spain's navy in New Spain, authorities embarked on a sizeable program to encourage and subsidize hemp production. In the 1780s, Spain's conflicts with Britain and efforts to increase naval capacity led to a relative shortage of hemp in New Spain and South America. Hemp was the raw material necessary to manufacture a sail's rigging, which required hundreds of yards of solid and reliable rope to hold it together. Mexican authorities offered to purchase all hemp produced in New Spain and permitted duty-free colonial hemp imports.³⁸³ Additionally, authorities sponsored surveyors to locate provinces with climates and soil conditions ideal for hemp exploitation. They identified several places in New Spain but determined Alta California to be well-suited. San Blas was the base for the royal navy in the Pacific Ocean. Alta California's established annual supply ship made it the most

³⁸¹ Josef Joaquin de Arrillaga to Unknown, Document 0291, *Spanish-Mexican Records of the San Jose Pueblo 1781-1870*, History San Jose Research Library.

³⁸² Tatiana Seijas, "Inns, Mules, and Hardtack for the Voyage: The Local Economy of the Manila Galleon in Mexico," *Colonial Latin American Review* 25, 1 (2016), 59-60.

³⁸³ Mosk A. Sanford, "Subsidized Hemp Production in Spanish California," *Agricultural History* 13, 4 (October 1939), 171.

practical candidate for the state-sponsored initiative. In 1795, the viceroy instructed the Governor of the Californias and the Franciscan colleges to promote hemp agriculture and processing in Alta California, to supply the naval department. Subsequently, hemp seeds and reaping tools necessary for cultivation arrived in San José in 1797.³⁸⁴ However, nobody in the province was familiar with hemp agriculture, and farmers only produced limited amounts of poor-quality rope.³⁸⁵ Naval authorities later complained that the hemp was useless for rigging. In 1801, they sent Joaquín Sánchez, a soldier from San Blas who had experience raising hemp in Granada, Spain, to Alta California to instruct missionaries and settlers on the cultivation and preparation of hemp from flax plants.³⁸⁶ Afterward, San José expanded its hemp productivity, with many pueblo residents engaging in cultivation.³⁸⁷ By 1809, Alta California produced over 100,000 pounds of hemp annually for the naval department.³⁸⁸ However, the Mexican Independence War in 1810 severely depleted the royal treasury, and San Blas halted subsidies for hemp cultivation. Despite the sudden end to the support, Alta California continued to harvest and process hemp in smaller quantities, selling rope to Peruvian and foreign ships. Hemp production in Alta California highlighted the economic impacts of Spain's maritime activities on the Pacific coast of New Spain and the influence of San Blas's naval department in the region's colonization.

³⁸⁴ Hermenegildo Sal to Ignacio Vallejos, August 14, 1797, Document 0147, *Spanish-Mexican Records of the San Jose Pueblo 1781-1870*, History San Jose Research Library.

³⁸⁵ Hermenegildo Sal to Comisionado del Pueblo de San José, August 22, 1800, Document 0273, *Spanish-Mexican Records of the San Jose Pueblo 1781-1870*, History San Jose Research Library.

³⁸⁶ Sanford, "Subsidized Hemp Production in Spanish California," 172.

³⁸⁷ Jose Joaquin de Arillaga to Comisionado del Pueblo de San José, July 18, 1806, Document 0459, *Spanish-Mexican Records of the San Jose Pueblo 1781-1870*, History San Jose Research Library.

³⁸⁸ Sanford, "Subsidized Hemp Production in Spanish California," 175.

Outfitting ships for voyages involved many people who contributed to building and provisioning ships, preparing and loading goods and food supplies, and skilled sailors who fulfilled the necessary functions of navigating immense bodies of water. Historian Pablo E. Pérez-Mallaína described maritime vessels as the “most complex machine” that showcased the incredible technological successes achieved by humans of the time. The reason for its complexity, he continues, was “precisely because [ships] had to conquer the immense desolate oceans and be subject to their menacing isolation, it constituted a small universe endowed with the highest possible degree of self-sufficiency.”³⁸⁹ Operating “sophisticated machinery” and the general rigors of ship life were a common thread uniting the experiences of sailors throughout the Atlantic and Pacific Worlds. Ports not only required a steady stream of crews to pilot the ship but also attracted merchants, farmers, dockers, and carriers whose livelihoods depended on supplying ships with food and goods related to maritime navigation. Sailors and others engaged in a complex web of social and economic interactions. Their labors were the engine that drove the mercantile, cultural, and political exchanges across vast oceans. The maritime world of ports and ocean navigation highlights the convergence of the terrestrial and oceanic within the littoral borderland.

Ships navigating the open ocean were, in some ways, societies within themselves, having defined hierarchies and social structures. The *Consulado de Mare*, or Spain’s maritime law, formed the basis of social relationships aboard ships, structuring interactions between captains

³⁸⁹ Mallaína, *Spain’s Men of the Sea*, 63.

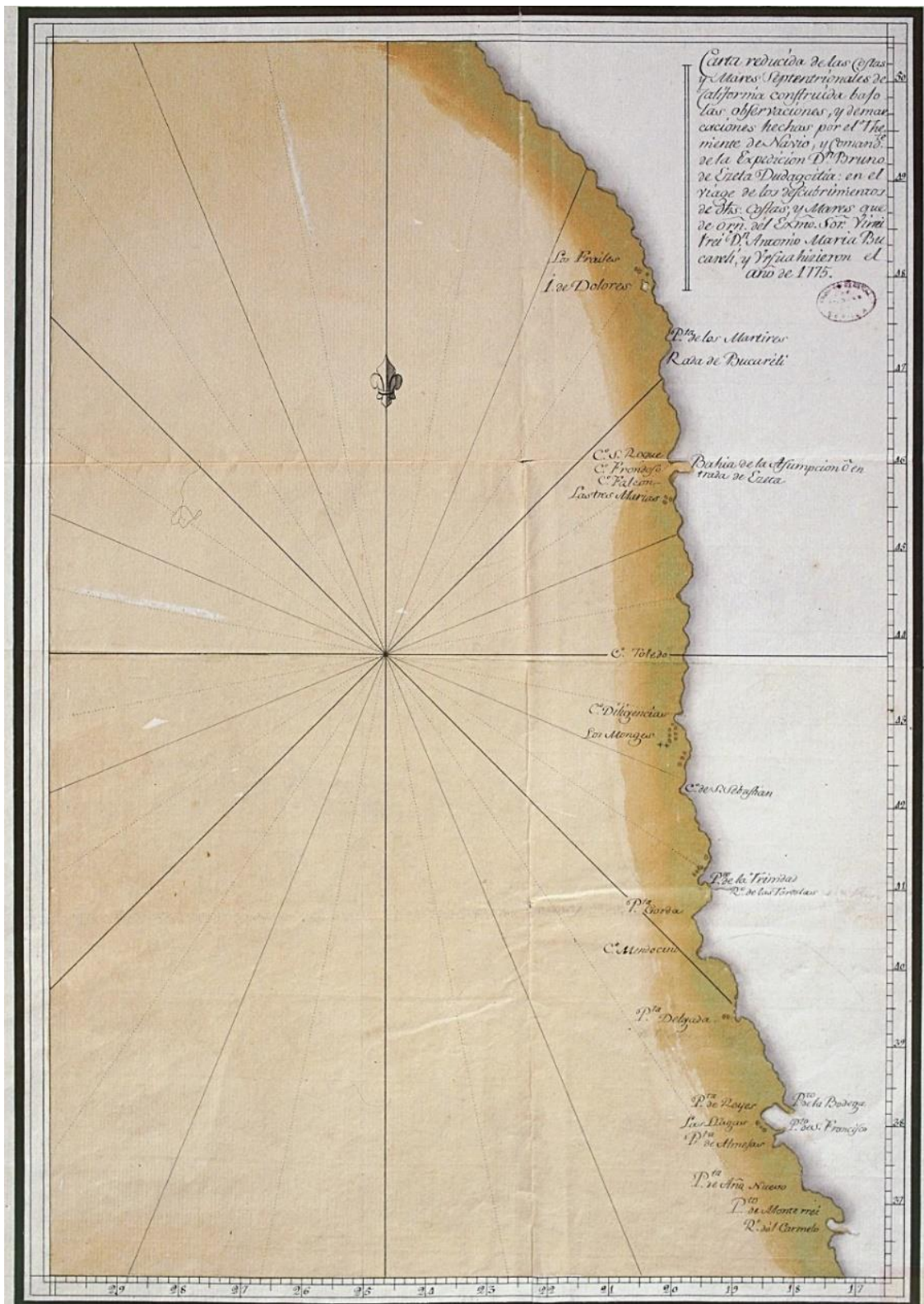


Figure 5.2. Bruno de Heceta, Carta reducida de las costas y Mares Septentrionales de California, San Blas, 1775. The map depicted northern Alta California and the modern-day Pacific Northwest and was drawn during Heceta's voyage in 1775. From the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.

and sailors and shaping sea life. These codified rankings meant that sailors and other crewmembers were subject to the captain's authority and officers who exercised their power with little chance for most to petition legal recourse while out at sea. Accordingly, the legal document outlined,

The mariner is bound in all things which pertain to the ship, to go to the forest and fetch wood, to saw and to make plants, to make spars and ropes, to bake, to man the boat with the boatswain, to stow goods and to unstow them; and at every hour when the mate shall order him to go and fetch spars and ropes, to carry planks, and to put on board all victuals of the merchants, to heave the vessel over, to go and fetch spars and ropes, to carry planks, and to aid to repair the vessel, and he is bound to do everything to improve the condition of the ship and of all which belongs to the ship whilst he shall be engaged to the ship.³⁹⁰

From enlistment to the return, sailors and crew had to obey the captain's orders. Duties involved everything dealing with the maintenance of the ship to the navigation. However, people found varying ways to resist their responsibilities or abuse from officers. Forms of resistance ranged from simple avoidance to direct challenges to authority. According to historian Niklas Frykman et al., crews commonly engaged in sea-lawyering, or appealing to laws and customary codes to protest control, and grumbled to indicate displeasure toward superiors in indirect ways.³⁹¹ The most extreme act was mutiny, which regularly occurred on Atlantic and Pacific Oceans ships. Sailors also frequently abandoned their duties entirely. For example, on Ignacio Arteaga's voyage to Alaska in 1779, two sailors deserted at Bucareli Bay and attempted to live among the locals. After Arteaga mistakenly surmised that the missing sailors had been kidnapped and held hostage by the neighboring Tlingit village, the episode escalated to an armed confrontation,

³⁹⁰ Travers Twiss, *The Black Book of the Admiralty*, quoted from Taylor, "Spanish Seamen in the New World during the Colonial Period," 632-633.

³⁹¹ Frykman et al., "Mutiny and Maritime Radicalism in the Age of Revolution: An Introduction," 1-14.

leaving one Tlingit warrior dead and several injured.³⁹² Soldiers managed to locate the sailors who confessed to desertion and punished them with twenty lashes. Arteaga did not record the reason for deserting, but it seemed the two sailors ran away to escape the severe conditions of life at sea.

Sailors endured backbreaking work and dangers particular to maritime transportation. Captains of vessels made arrangements weeks or even months before departure to ensure the survivability of crews and passengers on journeys ranging from weeks to months. Each voyage began with loading provisions and the goods transported aboard the vessel. Sailors and dockers provided the bulk of the labor. In San Blas, after the annual mule train arrived at the harbor with merchandise, grains, and other goods from Tepic, Guadalajara, and Mexico City, Native laborers spent days packing large barrels, boxes, and oversized bundles aboard the ship. Workers carted most lighter loads into the cargo hold, while heavier ones necessitated the working of pulleys and the capstan to leverage them onto the deck. Quartermasters meticulously inspected the work to ensure proper storage and fastened cargo to the wall. Any loose cargo shuffling in the hold could injure sailors or breach the hull. Sailors often lost limbs or their lives from being crushed by crates shifting aboard rocking ships. Breached hulls introduced water, which spoiled food supplies or damaged merchandise. Once storing goods and provisions concluded, the crew prepared for departure. Sailors untied the mooring rope and raised the anchors, which was a burdening task. The most oversized anchors weighed between five hundred and seven hundred kilograms, and the hemp ropes holding them weighed almost as much, requiring the use of the

³⁹² Relación del viaje que hizo el P.P. Fr. Juan Riobó en calidad de capellán en las fragatas de S.M. la Princesa y la Favorita, 1779, MSC Series 3-6, Mission Santa Clara Manuscript Collection, Santa Clara University Archives and Special Collections, Santa Clara, California.

capstan and the strength of several men to operate it.³⁹³ Then finally, sailors hoisted the yards, unfurled the sails, and the ship began its journey.

Once at sea, sailors experienced much hardship. Crews sailing from San Blas to the Californias or the Pacific Northwest endured contrary winds and currents, crashing waves, unexpected storms, and frequent calms for the next few months. Voyages lasted two to three months, heading north and roughly a month on return. Sailing south from Alta California was far easier than north from San Blas, owing to the southern flowing Californian Current. Ships had to sail west from San Blas toward the open sea before heading north to catch the North Pacific Current and circle back to San Francisco Port. Sailors in the Atlantic relied on the constant and favorable trade winds to carry the ships between Spain and the Caribbean. They could pass most days without changing the set of sails and limited their work to guiding the rudder or maintaining the vessel's seaworthiness, patching sails, caulking leaks, and lacquering the hull. Other crewmembers would be busy with monotonous tasks cleaning, inspecting cargo, and meal preparation.³⁹⁴ The days were often interrupted by storms battering the hull and, in some cases, causing breakages that allowed water to flow into the hold. Sailing in the early modern period was a near-constant battle for survival in the unforgiving open ocean. San Blas sailors endured much the same as their Atlantic counterparts and more. However, they did not have the luxury of consistent trade winds to propel them on course for most of the journey.

Calms in the Pacific Ocean were prevalent, necessitating constant labor adjusting sails to accommodate erratic wind patterns on the north voyage. Esteban José Martínez piloting the

³⁹³ Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 69.

³⁹⁴ Mallaína, *Spain's Men of the Sea*, 70.

Santiago in 1779 to deliver supplies to Alta California, recorded several instances when the vessel was becalmed for several hours or even several days. Calms were an almost daily occurrence for the *Santiago* on its northward journey. The ship departed San Blas on April 16 and arrived in San Francisco Bay on June 26. The trip lasted nearly two and a half months but arrived at its destination timely, despite the frequent lack of winds to sail. After only two weeks at sail, Martínez commented, “God has permitted that the sick crew have improved, as only one is in bed and is already out of danger. There remain only some who have some sores from knocks or blows, which they have received aboard in their work.”³⁹⁵ Crew members shuffling about the deck were prone to injury from sudden rock of the ship or swing of the boom. Other ships were not so lucky to arrive safely at their destination. The *San Jose* in 1769 departed San Blas to supply the Portolá expedition in San Diego but wrecked before reaching its destination.³⁹⁶ The ship had encountered an unexpected storm, and the winds blew it miles off course, and it wrecked near Santa Catalina Island. There were presumably no survivors as the location of its wrecking was never discovered.³⁹⁷ In a separate incident in 1773, the *San Carlos* sailing for Monterey abruptly encountered a storm while passing Cabo San Lucas. The crew was luckier than those aboard the *San Jose*, only losing the rudder and experiencing a leak, which forced the ship to port in Loreto and later return to San Blas for repairs.³⁹⁸ Later in 1797, the *San*

³⁹⁵ Martínez, *His Voyage in 1779 to Supply Alta California*, 56.

³⁹⁶ Recent archaeological findings have discovered Spanish artifacts on Catalina Island dated to the eighteenth century, possibly from the *San Jose*.

³⁹⁷ Archaeologist, Paul Schumacher, in the late-nineteenth century discovered Spanish colonial artifacts in Santa Catalina Island including a sword, knives, pieces of guns, cannon balls, iron axes, and other items within local Tongva burial sites. Cultural anthropologist and President of the Santa Cruz Island Foundation, Marla Daily, suggests that these items may have originated from the wreckage of the *San Jose*.

³⁹⁸ Charles E. Chapman, “The Alta California Supply Ships, 1773-76,” *The Southwestern Historical Review* 19, 2 (October 1915), 186.

Carlos departed San Francisco and encountered an abrupt gust of wind, catching those aboard off guard. As they passed the bay opening near Point Bonita, the vessel dashed against the rocks causing it to take on water. The crew turned the ship around and sailed back, making it as far as Yerba Buena before the *San Carlos* descended to the bottom of the bay. The captain and crew members managed to disembark and safely go ashore before sinking.³⁹⁹ Sailing in the Pacific Ocean to Alta California or the Pacific Northwest was hazardous and forced sailors to confront many dangers.

Along with an exhausting work regimen, sailors faced severe threats of drowning, bodily injuries, disease, malnutrition, and debilitating disorders. Sailors were often overworked due to the necessity of constant maintenance on the voyage. Escalante described the work of sailors, “in sailing one cannot make a certain rule nor a limited term, because ships sail in conformity to the winds and weather they find . . . which gave birth to the old proverb that says: ‘workdays at sea are not for counting.’”⁴⁰⁰ Working the sails and piloting the ship necessitated high mobility as sailors had to shift between different jobs to ensure proper maneuverings quickly. Voyages exposed sailors to significant dangers, as a sudden gust of wind or a powerful wave could result in one falling overboard or letting loose improperly stored cargo. On the *Santiago*, the boatswain concerned about the diminishing supply of firewood suggested a detour to the coast to collect wood. The boatswain’s mate and five sailors boarded the launch to go ashore, only to encounter high seas and surf, which nearly capsized the boat. In the panic, one sailor caught his finger in the rudder iron, almost losing it and needing treatment from the surgeon. In another instance,

³⁹⁹ “To Fray Pedro Callejas, March 28, 1797,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén Volume 2*, 15.

⁴⁰⁰ Quoted in Mallaína, *Spain’s Men of the Sea*, 74.

while operating the capstan to weigh anchor, it suddenly turned violently, throwing the men, leaving three seriously injured and several badly bruised.⁴⁰¹ Injuries happened regularly on ships leaving the bodies of sailors scarred, bruised, or even debilitated. The surgeon, assisted by a chaplain or barber, treated all manners of disease, traumas, and wounds inflicted on sailors and crewmembers.⁴⁰² However, medical care was constrained by the availability of remedies and the challenges of conducting delicate procedures aboard a moving ship. In 1799, a sudden gale caused the *Princesa* to sway violently. The medicine chest shifted in the hold, destroying most of its contents. The ship had to continue the journey to Alaska without any medicines, syrups, or medicines.⁴⁰³ The infirmary was located close to the ship's center under the main mast to provide the greatest stability. Still, the location at the vessel's center of gravity could not completely compensate for rough weather and unforeseen wind gusts. The surgeon's arsenal included a variety of plant-derived ointments, garglings, fumigations, syrups, and purgatives, along with tools like saws, trepans, palette knives, bandages, and dressings.⁴⁰⁴ Notwithstanding, the rudimentary methods for treating disease with enemas or bloodletting more often weakened patients and contributed to deaths.

Inadequate food supplies contributed to one of the greatest dangers for sailors.

Miscalculations or improper storage threatened the life and health of everyone on board. Naval

⁴⁰¹ Martínez, *His Voyage in 1779 to Supply Alta California*, 43-44.

⁴⁰² Manuel Gracia Rivas, "La Sanidad naval española: De Lepanto a Trafalgar," *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 5 (2006), 169.

⁴⁰³ Riobó, "An Account of the Voyage Made by the Frigates 'Princesa' and 'Favorita' in the Year 1799 from San Blas to Northern Alaska," 222-223.

⁴⁰⁴ Miguel Luque-Talaván, "Oceanic Deaths aboard the Manila galleons," *Academia.edu* (Accessed February 23, 2022), https://www.academia.edu/11208477/Oceanic_deaths_aboard_the_Manila_galleons.

officers in San Blas outfitted ships departing for the Californias or the Pacific Northwest with a diverse array of provisions acquired from Guadalajara and Tepic, including jerked beef, dried fish, hardtack, lard, beans, rice, wheat, lentils, onions, cheese, chili, salt, vinegar, sugar, pork, cinnamon, cloves, saffron, pepper, chocolate, brandy, wine, and several cases of fruits and vegetables.⁴⁰⁵ Sailors typically received limited rations in the forms of *galletas* (ship's biscuit or hardtack), water, grains, aguardiente, and weekly meat supplies. However, most fresh produce turned quickly and was the first supplies exhausted, leaving only dried meats and preserves for the remaining journey. The daily ration for most voyages included salted meats or the occasional fresh fish caught, dried vegetables, hardtack, rancid oils, cheese, and butter. Freshwater was prone to contamination and spoilage, leaving no alternative to distilled alcohol. According to Francis Cuppage, sailors relied on supplies of liquor that may have temporarily alleviated their burdens but contributed to dehydration and addiction, which also caused numerous accidents and poor health among sailors.⁴⁰⁶ Seawater also commonly found its way into food supplies, causing spoilages. For instance, the *San Carlos* in 1767 arrived in La Paz Bay in Baja California, taking on nearly six inches of water, destroying most of the flour and fresh produce.⁴⁰⁷ On Francisco Antonio Mourelle's expedition to the Pacific Northwest, cockroaches contaminated the *galletas* and burrowed through water casks, spilling out freshwater supplies. The crew suffered greatly from the infestation and damage, resulting in several sailors and soldiers dying before their

⁴⁰⁵ Antonio Sanchez, "Spanish Exploration: Hezeta (Heceta) and Bodega y Quadra Expedition of 1775 to Formally Claim the Pacific Northwest for Spain," *History Link*, Humanities Washington, published April 14, 2004. <https://www.historylink.org/file/5688>.

⁴⁰⁶ Francis E. Cuppage, "Scurvy's Conquest and Sailor's Health," *The Historian* 57, 4 (Summer 1995), 696.

⁴⁰⁷ Michael E. Thurman, "The Establishment of the Department of San Blas and Its Initial Naval Fleet, 1767-1770," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 43 (1963), 73-74.

emergency return to San Francisco. Sailors did devise elaborate ways to minimize or prevent the spoilage of perishable goods from vermin and water. They layered “bread lockers” with tarred canvas and lined them with tin to prevent moisture from tainting food supplies.⁴⁰⁸ However, cargo holds were prone to leakages, and vermin almost always found ways to board the ship. Preventative measures to protect perishable foods could only go so far. The crews typically loaded the boat with provisions sufficient for several months to a full year. But spoilage and exhausted supplies were a recurrent theme on voyages in the Pacific Ocean as elsewhere in the early modern period.

Exhausted supplies exposed sailors and crews to hunger and caloric deficiencies, making them susceptible to disease and nutritional disorders. Scurvy has long been associated with sailors but also affected broad groups in frontier society. An ascorbic acid deficiency caused it, with symptoms appearing after four weeks, causing ulcers, bleeding gums, and rotting teeth. As the illness progressed, bleeding pimples appeared on the skin, joints swelled, and chronic fatigue rendered the afflicted in severe pain. Symptoms also included weakness, exhaustion, and a low-grade fever, preventing sailors from fulfilling their duties. On Esteban José Martínez’s voyage to supply Alta California in 1779, he recorded that only twenty-one sailors out of fifty-one were healthy enough to work by the third week of sailing. The impoverished conditions from which many sailors derived likely left them with nutritional deficiencies long before departure.⁴⁰⁹ On longer voyages like those to the Pacific Northwest and Alaska averaged nine months to a year, leaving a third to three-quarters of the crew debilitated and unable to perform their duties. During

⁴⁰⁸ Alejandro Malaspina, “Voyage Narrative 1792,” in *the Voyage of Sutil and Mexicana, 1792: The Last Spanish Exploration of the Northwest Coast of America* (Spokane, WA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1991), 61.

⁴⁰⁹ Martínez, *His Voyage in 1779*, 46 and 56.

Bruno de Heceta's expedition in 1775, thirty-five of the ninety-member crew were afflicted with scurvy, forcing a return to Monterey as there were not enough healthy sailors to continue the voyage north. He speculated that the humid and cold climate of the Pacific Northwest was the likely cause of the sickness, as the crew had only seemed to have gotten worse since arriving in the region.⁴¹⁰ When sailors became infirmed, it placed heavier burdens on those remaining healthy who had to take on additional tasks.

The causes of scurvy were not widely known to sailors until the last decades of the nineteenth century, nor did there seem to be an agreed-upon treatment among Spanish mariners. Martínez, at the end of the journey, reported that none of the crew aboard the *Santiago* perished from scurvy. He further commented about giving Presidio Monterey a jug pitaya fruit syrup for the soldiers suffering from scurvy, suggesting that the crew used pitahaya to treat scurvy.⁴¹¹ The pitahaya fruit was native to Central America and high in ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Martínez does not comment on the syrup, nor does it seem to be a standardized practice among San Blas officers on scurvy treatments. Instead, authorities left it to the discretion of the naval captains. Nevertheless, scurvy and malnutrition ravaged crews aboard San Blas's maritime fleet and contributed to the dangers of sea life.

Disease outbreaks also caused concerns as vessels left port or docked at their destination. Ships traveling to the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, and the Californias carried fifty to one hundred

⁴¹⁰ Brief Account of Hezeta Expedition, circa 1775. MSS Z-E 1, Carton 23, Folder 2154, Archivo General de Indias Records, BANC.

⁴¹¹ Martínez, *His Voyage*, 105.; See. Cuppage, "Scurvy's Conquest and Sailor's Health," 696. James Lind published *A Treatise of the Scurvy* in 1753 in England showing that citrus had rapid beneficial effect on curing scurvy. And more famously James Cook's voyage across the Pacific Ocean between 1768 and 1771 tested Lind's thesis carrying lime juice and sauerkraut on board the ship and recorded no deaths from scurvy on the voyage. It is not known whether or not Martínez was aware of these findings. James Cook did visit Monterey in 1776, but his journals were not published until 1784.

crew members along with provisions and cargo. Overcrowding and filth from stagnant water, human waste, and spoiled food created an unhealthy environment aboard ships and created a breeding ground for infectious diseases. Psychological distress from extended confinement, the constant dangers of sea travel, and acute exhaustion weakened sailors' immune systems. Sailors also contributed to the spread of epidemics in the Californias. In 1798, a ship arrived in Monterey with several sailors afflicted with smallpox. Still, the captain discovered the disease only after the sailors had unloaded the cargo and contacted soldiers at the presidio, allowing the infection to spread:

As soon as Señor Matutue sent me notice of the smallpox on his ship, I sent word back that from that moment I would spare myself no work or effort so as to avoid the contagion, and to prevent it from spreading, in case it did appear. When it was suggested that someone should ask Your Lordship to dispense with some of your prudent precautions, I thought to myself that it was a very foolish request and made it clear to the person that it was absolutely inopportune and to no purpose. I still recall my astonishment the other day when I arrived at San Buenaventura and heard that the quarantine had been lifted. It is impossible, I said, that the Governor would have made such a decision, and that anyone would have done such a thing without orders.⁴¹²

Franciscans and military authorities took steps to prevent the spread of illness when discovered. Still, it was challenging to maintain uniformity among different missions in responding to potential disease outbreaks. The confined living spaces aboard ships contributed to the spreading of microbes, often afflicting many crew members due to the challenges of quarantine aboard vessels. Sailors also had to work in the rain and among the crashing waves that spilled onto the deck, leaving them soaked constantly. Living in damp and cold conditions for months left them vulnerable to disease, especially in the higher latitudes of the North Pacific.⁴¹³ Respite often

⁴¹² "To Don Diego de Borica, June 20, 1798," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén Volume 2*, 87.

⁴¹³ Taylor, "Spanish Seamen in the New World during the Colonial Period," 640.

came when the ship arrived in Alta California, where captains debarked the sick for care at a presidio or mission's infirmary presidio.⁴¹⁴ The sailors often remained in Alta California while the ship returned to San Blas. For instance, the Nao, the *Concepción*, in 1803, left behind seven infirmed crewmembers in Santa Barbara. They remained working at the presidio for several months before the annual supply ship returned to San Blas, and they transferred to Acapulco.⁴¹⁵ When Juan Pérez stopped in Monterey in 1775, he agreed to leave several crew members, including four soldiers, a muleteer, a leather-jacket soldier, and three sailors in Monterey to work at the presidio and mission.⁴¹⁶

Vessels typically carried thirty to fifty sailors, including the captain, chaplain, and surgeons. Although most only stopped for a few weeks to a month, several ships remained anchored for extended periods from four to nine months. During these extended periods, sailors had to labor at the missions and presidios, working construction and in other capacities. Some sailors remained at the presidio or mission after the ship departed. Martínez left six crew members to serve in Santa Clara and San Francisco missions, receiving six sailors from a previous voyage. Two other sailors boarded the *Santiago* in San Diego for return transport to San Blas.⁴¹⁷ The Santa Clara and San Francisco were sailors who had arranged to work in Alta California. Two others from San Diego may have been individuals left there by another ship, possibly to recover from illnesses acquired on the last voyage. It was typical for San Blas and

⁴¹⁴ Riobó, "An Account of the Voyage Made by the Frigates 'Princesa' and 'Favorita,' 229.

⁴¹⁵ Adele Ogden, "Trading Vessels on the California Coast, 1786-1848," Archival collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, 88.

⁴¹⁶ Beals, *Juan Pérez on the Northwest Coast*, 56.

⁴¹⁷ Martínez, *His Voyage in 1779*, 90 and 106.

Philippine ships to disembark ill crew members at ports to regain their health and await another vessel to return to San Blas. According to Miguel Costansó, “The sick sailors, as a result of the good care, healthful climate, air, and water, got well in a few days, became accustomed to the area, and applied themselves to fishing and other labor pertaining to their occupation that benefited the colony.”⁴¹⁸ Junípero Serra relates that the sailors were usually put to work helping construct the adobe buildings for the San Francisco mission and help bring in the harvest from the fields around the missions. Franciscans also recruited them to instruct Native people on agricultural techniques.⁴¹⁹ Sailors actively sustained Spain’s presence in Alta California through their labors aboard ships, loading and unloading goods, working at the presidios and missions, and were granted permission to remain in the province to pursue agriculture or seek employment at the presidios.

Terrestrial and oceanic processes shaped Alta California, illustrated by the lived experiences of the sailors and crewmembers who sailed Spain’s ships in the Pacific Ocean. The mobility of sailors highlighted the transregional and maritime forces that shaped the littoral borderland. The sailors’ profession was complex and dangerous, requiring various duties to ensure safe journeys and timely arrivals to their destinations. Due to the dangers of navigating in the open ocean, sailing was a near-constant battle for survival as ships encountered storms and calms on the route. At the same time, sailors endured the hardships of ship life, including disease and the frequent accidents entailed with navigation duties. Many mariners who crewed Spain’s ships in the Pacific Ocean were not professionals. San Blas authorities recruited agriculturalists,

⁴¹⁸ Manuel Servín and Miguel Costansó, “Costansó’s 1794 Report on Strengthening New California’s Presidios,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 49, 3 (September 1970), 227.

⁴¹⁹ Cutter, *The California Coast*, 124.

ranchers, and impoverished *mestizos* and Indigenous people from Nueva Galicia and the Californias inexperienced in ship navigation. Sailors from the Indies Fleet in the Atlantic Ocean and the Manila galleons arrived in San Blas to instruct them in sailing duties. However, the minimal training left many sailors unprepared for the rigors of daily life in the open ocean, contributing to the hazards of navigating the dangerous waters to Alta California and the Pacific Northwest. Sailors endured disease, nutritional deficiencies, and injuries, costing many lives and leaving many more permanently debilitated.

Nevertheless, sailors contributed extensively to Alta California's colonization. San Blas and ports in the Californias housed a floating population of sailors and other mariners who rotated and traveled throughout the Pacific Ocean in the colonial period. Ships stopping in the Californias often remained to rest crews for several weeks to months. Presidios and missions frequently enlisted sailors for construction projects and other labor. In many cases, mariners remained there long after ships departed and contributed to the Spanish population of the littoral borderland. Sailors were a highly mobile group engaged in a complex web of social interaction among the places they visited. They interacted with a nationally and culturally diverse group of people on both land and sea, creating sustained interactions between Alta California and the broader Pacific Ocean. They were often the first to encounter the shores connected to the vast waterscape and engaged in exchanges and interactions with Indigenous groups and foreign Europeans inhabiting the littoral borderlands bordering the Pacific Ocean in the early modern period.

Conclusion

The geographic mobility of sailors invigorated links between Alta California and the Pacific Ocean, creating a fluid and dynamic regional space on the edges of the empire and the fringes of Spain's terrestrial lands. The activity of mariners destabilized the boundaries between the landed and maritime, propelling the development and maintenance of the littoral borderland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. From the Department of San Blas, colonization relied on their labors to crew the annual supply ships and charter the northern reaches of the empire. The colony was intended to secure the province from Indigenous resistance from the interior and maritime attacks from the Pacific Ocean. Although Spain pushed into Alta California from the south, colonization does not fit neatly within chronological models of a south-to-north frontier expansion. When approaching the region from the Pacific Ocean and the coastal zones, a more nuanced understanding arises. The dominant narratives of continental expansion render Alta California's colonization and its relationship to the Pacific Ocean invisible. A more nuanced approach should also consider the dynamic maritime world emerging in the late eighteenth-century Pacific Ocean. During this era, Spain's activities in Alta California can be traced to its preoccupations with other imperial powers making their way into the coastal spaces of the North American west coast, Russians intruding from the north, and the British from the west. Alta California's colonization occurred in the context of imperial rivalry in the Pacific Ocean, with the interior primarily being aforesight to Spain's broader objectives to secure coastal New Spain. Countering foreign Europeans required authorities to locate Alta California in the Pacific Ocean and identify strategic points on the coast, especially major riverways, and coastal harbors, to build presidios and missions, creating a littoral borderland. Repositioning the region within the Pacific Ocean complicates conventional frameworks that suggest a unidirectional expansion of frontiers and shows how oceans were dynamic spaces of social

interaction that shaped historical developments on the land. After authorities began to focus attention on the coastal zones of Alta California exclusively, the Department of San Blas became the center of Spain's activities in the Pacific Ocean. Naval authorities recruited laborers and sailors from the surrounding pueblos like Tepic and Guadalajara. Industries emerged on the coast to supply naval activities, exploration, and supply ships. San Blas stimulated food production, hemp processing, lumber extraction, and commerce to provide goods to Alta California and supply the naval base. Maritime colonization mobilized diverse resources and peoples, generating social, political, and economic links between littoral zones connected by the Pacific Ocean.

Chapter 6: Indigenous-Colonial Spaces and the Indigenous Littoral Borderland

In 1813, the Secretary of the Department of Overseas Colonies, Ciríaco González Carvajal, forwarded from Cádiz a list of thirty-six questions to the Alta California province. The questionnaire asked the missions about the progress of Christian conversion among Alta California's Native population. They covered various topics, including Indigenous religious practices, beliefs, and social structures among the more than one hundred ethnolinguistic groups within the missions. The collection of documents provides valuable information on the ethnohistory of Alta California's Native population (from the Franciscan's point-of-view), but, most importantly, it revealed the Franciscan's limitations and short-comings within their so-called program of transforming the local native population from "gentile" hunter-gatherers to Christianized agriculturalists. After forty-five years and more than a generation of Native people living within the missions, almost all responded that only narrow progress had been made to create a "flourishing Christian community" in Alta California. Despite limited progress, traditional religious beliefs prevailed within the mission walls and the outlying missionized villages. For instance, Mission Santa Cruz recorded that the Indigenous groups continued to hold secret gathers at night to avoid detection, dancing in the fields and forests until dawn. They erected long sticks crowned with bundles of tobacco leaves or tree branches, placing offerings of seeds, food, and colored bead in honor of their ancestors. Many continued to use native plants, roots, and feathers to cure illnesses and practiced witchcraft with herbs and thorns to ward against or redirect curses.⁴²⁰ The persistence of Native culture within the missions was evidence

⁴²⁰ Maynard Geiger, editor, *As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries, 1813-1815* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library, 1976), 47-51

of how uneven and incomplete colonization was within Alta California's littoral borderland and how processes of negotiation and compromise more often prevailed within the mission walls.

Alta California's Native people and those across North America exercised greater autonomy than scholarship had traditionally recognized. Indigenous people actively pursued diverse survival strategies, extensively shaping their relationship with European newcomers. In New Spain's northern frontier, scholars, in the past, portrayed the colonial missions as spaces in which Indigenous people were inextricably bound under the increasingly tightening control of missionaries. However, more recent scholarship has recognized that Spanish hegemony was neither completely developed nor uniformly imposed throughout the Americas or within a single geographic region. According to anthropologists Lee M. Panich and Tsim D. Schneider, Spanish missionaries interacted with mobile hunter-gatherers and sedentary agriculturalists in different ways across different geographies in the borderlands. The variability implies that Native political economies had a more significant impact on the structures of colonialism and missionization than formerly appreciated.⁴²¹ Researchers find differences in how missionaries organized life in the missions and notable distinctions in the degree of control missionaries exerted over particular Indigenous groups. The reason was that missions were not solely colonial sites but also spaces ordered by Indigenous people. Interactions played out differently depending on the regional particularities of geography and local cultures. For instance, Lisbeth Haas shows how Native people turned the missions into "Indigenous colonial spaces" and employed strategies and traditional forms of authority to retain control over their cultures, languages, economies, and

⁴²¹ Lee M. Panich and Tsim D. Schneider, "Expanding Mission Archaeology: A Landscape Approach to Indigenous Autonomy in Colonial California," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 40 (2015), 50.

social organization.⁴²² Recent scholarly shifts have led to greater attention on Native agency and how Native people grappled with the profound changes rather than simply what happened to them in response to colonization. Indigenous people adapted their settlement patterns, economic activities, and subsistence strategies to accommodate or resist efforts at control. Even when they entered the missions, their cultural and social practices partly structured living and working arrangements as traditional leaders assumed elected or appointed authority positions. The missions were not spaces based on the dichotomy of Native and colonizer but were porous spaces where negotiation and accommodation structured daily interactions.⁴²³

The chapter examines how the activities of Native people destabilized the frontier and constructed Indigenous spaces inside and outside the missions and charts the creation of an Indigenous littoral borderland in Alta California's Central Valley. As David Iglar describes, Alta California's coastal zones were multifunctional places for food, commerce, and social interexchange.⁴²⁴ Long before the Franciscan arrival, Native people had acquired extensive knowledge of the coastal and hinterland spaces, understanding how to exploit its natural resources to maximize their ability to survive. Interior groups from the Central Valley had long interacted with coastal populations and traded mountain and forest produce with their neighbors for seashells and aquatic food sources. Long after joining the missions, Native people remained highly mobile and retained strong connections to the Indigenous hinterlands. I argue that Native people utilized the nebulous contours of Alta California's littoral borderland to evade, negotiate,

⁴²² Lisbeth Haas, *Saints and Citizens: Indigenous Histories of Colonial Missions and Mexican California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 6-7.

⁴²³ Panich and Schneider, "Expanding Mission Archaeology," 50.

⁴²⁴ Cited from Kathleen L. Hull and John G. Douglas, *Forging Communities in Colonial Alta California* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009), 96.

and accommodate Spaniards and the Franciscan fathers. The flexibility and fluidity of the Indigenous littoral borderland and its overlapping space of power and authority allowed Native people to assert themselves in both Indigenous-colonial spaces of the missions and within a broader Indigenous littoral borderland.

Indigenous Colonial Spaces on the Mission Frontier

In Santa Clara in 1786, a Native person named Plácido Ortiz and two witnesses, Anacleto Valdez and Antonio, accused Santa Clara's Franciscan father, Tomás de la Peña, of murder. The three Native people reported to San Francisco Presidio's commander that the father had violently struck a Native irrigation worker named Sixto with a hoe for accidentally flooding the ditch and destroying a grain field. Days later, Sixto died. A soldier who formerly served there, lieutenant Nicolás Soler, attested to witnessing similar abuses against Native people and insinuated that Peña had become demented and turned his anger toward him. He continued by describing how the missionary had frequently abused the Native people, "inflicting on them one hundred or two hundred lashes, and this he did after he had exhausted himself by administering buffetings, and thrashings, and kicks to them."⁴²⁵ Soler described the excessive punishment and arbitrary abuses endured by Indigenous people at the mission. Peña denied murder, citing that Sixto had died from an illness but did not try to defend the harsh treatment. Fellow Franciscan Diego Noboa reportedly treated Sixto and corroborated Peña's innocence.⁴²⁶ After further inquiry, Anacleto and Antonio later recanted their testimonies. They admitted that a combination of anger toward

⁴²⁵ Lasuén, "Report on Judicial Proceedings, May 26-31, 1786," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 121.

⁴²⁶ Lasuén, "Judicial Proceedings, June 28, 1786," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 111.

Father Peña and pressure from Plácido caused them to lie about the incident.⁴²⁷ For years, Plácido had managed the storehouse and controlled ration distributions at the mission.⁴²⁸ Previously, Peña had removed Plácido from the storehouse duty for stealing goods and trading them to friends for favors. Anthropologist Randall Milliken suggests that the incident resulted from a power struggle over control of the mission community in Santa Clara.⁴²⁹ The event underscored the tensions and contradictions of mission communities during the colonial era. Franciscan missionaries recruited traditional Native leaders and granted limited self-governance to maintain order and ensure compliance, employing Indigenous *alcaldes* who held positions of relative power within the mission community. As Stephen J. Pitti points out, the Santa Clara event illustrated the fraught and often messy social relationships between the Franciscans and Indigenous people.⁴³⁰ Accordingly, Alta California should not be understood as a space solely ordered by colonialism but also one in which Indigenous peoples played a part in shaping. Alta California's littoral borderland was an unstable and fluid space where Native people like the Spaniards approached opportunities and influenced the rapidly transforming landscape.

Although direct confrontation with colonization through armed resistance against the missions and presidios rarely occurred in Alta California during the colonial era, Indigenous people were not powerless in the face of missionization. Certain Native people, like Plácido, secured significant authority within mission communities and held some stake in the evolving

⁴²⁷ Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area* (Banning, CA: Ballena Press, 1995), 93-94.

⁴²⁸ Lasuén, "Judicial Proceedings, May 26, 1786," in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 109-119.

⁴²⁹ Milliken, 94.

⁴³⁰ Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 9.

dynamics of power since the early years of missionization. According to Steven Hackel, Native leadership helps to explain how the mission achieved stability for much of the mission period. He states, “Indians and missionaries both exerted power through their own means and through each other, leading, most of the time, to relative political stability.”⁴³¹ More often, Indigenous people pursued strategies of individual resistance or noncompliance rather than open and collective rebellion. The porous boundary between missions and the countryside provided a temporary or permanent outlet for most grievances. When uprisings against the missions occurred, “they were as much the result of absolute oppression as of accommodations denied.”⁴³² More broadly, the missions were spaces in which borderland processes of negotiation and compromise played out in ordinary interactions.

Native people negotiated their relationship with the mission by utilizing mobility. For instance, Father President Francisco Lasuén stated that Indigenous people had such strong inclinations for the mountains and coasts that “were there an unqualified prohibition against going there, there would be danger of a riot.” He mentioned that a Native person, who had taken part in the revolt at San Diego in 1775, explained how he joined the attackers, fearing that there would be no one in the mountains to greet him when he returned to take time away from the mission.⁴³³ Mobility played a fundamental role in how Native people inhabited the landscape. As Juliana Barr points out, how Indigenous people defined territoriality continuously reformed and overlapped based on seasonal occupation and subsistence. When entering the missions, they

⁴³¹ Steven Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 258.

⁴³² Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 258.

⁴³³ Francisco Lasuén, “Refutation of Charges,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén Volume II*, edited by Finbar Kenneally (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1964), 215.

“neither left their homelands nor lost their sovereignty” as the scope of how they understood their homeland's boundaries extended beyond the singular site of the missions.⁴³⁴ Most of Alta California's one hundred ethnic groups were organized into village-communities contained within an eight-to-twelve-mile diameter territory centered around a permanently settled village where local chiefs resided. Surrounding them were semi-sedentary villages of two to five hundred people who supported the central village with hunting and gathering activities.⁴³⁵ During harvest seasons, Indigenous communities relocated to new areas to collect wild seeds and acorns, hunt game, and collect other locally available food sources. During the colonial era, through mobility, Native people fixed the missions within a broad and flexible Indigenous landscape. They retained connections to culturally significant places through travel and selectively engaged with the mission system, enabling them to locate a future within a changing world. Borderland spaces were not the sole construct of Spaniards but the multitude of Indigenous groups who engendered them through their mobility between colonial sites and the Indigenous landscapes of the hinterland.

Despite the continuity of Native mobility, missionization had dire consequences for Alta California's Indigenous population and contributed significantly to the dramatic demographic decline witnessed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The severe conditions of mission life played a significant part in Native mobility to and from the Indigenous hinterland. In 1820, toward the end of the colonial era, Padre president Mariano Payeras described the deplorable state of the missions and their costs for Native residents,

⁴³⁴ Juliana Barr, “Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the ‘Borderlands’ of the Early Southwest,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, 1 (January 2011), 21.

⁴³⁵ William S. Simmons, “Indian Peoples of California,” *California History* 76, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1997), 56-58.

Every thoughtful missionary has noted that while the gentiles procreate easily and are healthy and robust (though errant) in the wilds, in spite of hunger, nakedness, and living completely outdoors almost like beasts, as soon as they commit themselves to a social and Christian life, they become extremely feeble, lose weight, get sick, and die. This plague affects the women particularly, especially those who have recently become pregnant.⁴³⁶

He continued that he seldom found a Christianized Native he recognized from twenty years ago within any of the twenty-one missions in Alta California.⁴³⁷ Mortality rates were particularly deadly for young women who faced sexual violence from abusive soldiers and *alcaldes*, along with high rates of sexually transmitted diseases and resulting birthing complications. Payeras later lamented the sizeable gender imbalance in Mission Soledad, having close to two-hundred widowers and single men with no prospect for marriage. The leading contributor to death, especially the young and pregnant women, was the poorly ventilated and overcrowded *jayuntes* and *monjerios* for single men and women, respectively, along with the generally poor sanitation practiced at the mission, contributing to polluted water and overall poor health for inhabitants.⁴³⁸ In 1878, Antonio María Osio, a former missionized Native person, recalled living conditions within the *jayuntes* and characterized them as a “confinement between infected walls” where missionaries locked single men and women in crowded buildings containing only two large rooms. Most had to sleep on the door floors next to the sick.⁴³⁹ Compounding these conditions was dehydration and inadequate nutrition, which weakened immune systems further and

⁴³⁶ “Mariano Payeras to Reverend Father Guardian and Venerable *Discretorio* of Our Apostolic College of San Fernando de México, February 7, 1820,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, edited by Donald C. Cutter (Santa Barbara: Bellerophon Books, 1995), 225.

⁴³⁷ “Mariano Payeras to Reverend Father Guardian,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 227.

⁴³⁸ Robert H. Jackson, “The Dynamics of Indian Demographic Collapse in the San Francisco Bay Missions, Alta California, 1776-1840,” *American Indian Quarterly* 16, 2 (1992), 145.

⁴³⁹ Antonio María Osio, *Historia de la California*, 1878, MSS C-D 12, Reminiscences Concerning Life in Monterey and San Francisco, BANC, 216-218.

facilitated disease outbreaks like diarrhea, syphilis, chronic respiratory ailments, and smallpox. The psychological distress caused by epidemics, losing family members and friends, and adapting to a rapidly transforming world also added to the general traumas faced by Native people within the mission walls.

Living conditions in the missions contributed the most to mortality rates. The cooler, wetter months in winter and the hotter, humid summers caused the highest concentration of illness and death, making the adobe brick dormitories breeding grounds for disease. One soldier, José Raymundo Carrillo, described the summer conditions, “from April are more frequent winds from the Northeast and North, they are more dry and sick, causing strong stomach pain with fevers, headaches, and other evils, of which many children have died among the Indians.”⁴⁴⁰ In his study of Native mortality rates in the San Francisco Bay area, Historian Robert H. Jackson indicates that the cold, damp environment around San Francisco may have exacerbated unhealthy conditions in the mission. Still, the downward trend in mortality rates and increased life expectancy after 1823 emphasized how over-crowding and unsanitary living conditions primarily contributed to the dangers and deadly consequences of missionization.⁴⁴¹ For instance, the Santa Clara Mission’s 1823 annual report recorded a total of 5,694 deaths since its foundation in 1777, mostly from epidemics.⁴⁴² Based on statistics from Santa Clara’s burial records, between 1777 and 1810, there were 4,031 burials. More than seventy percent of the mission’s mortality occurred in the first three decades after the foundation, peaking from 1796 to

⁴⁴⁰ José Raymundo Carrillo, June 30, 1805, MSS C-A 18, Provincial State Papers: Benicia, Military, 1767-1845 34, BANC, 27.

⁴⁴¹ Jackson, “The Dynamics of Indian Demographic Collapse in the San Francisco Bay Missions,” 145.

⁴⁴² Informe del estado de esta Misión de Santa Clara, 1823, MSC Series 2-2, Mission Santa Clara Manuscript Collection, Santa Clara University Special Collections, Santa Clara, California.

1808.⁴⁴³ Burial records indicate that most deaths were children born at the missions, many of whom died within months of birth.⁴⁴⁴ Historian Steven Hackel points out that, in the first decades of missionization, most Native people entering the missions were the most vulnerable members of Indigenous communities, primarily unmarried women, children, and the elderly, who comprised nearly seventy percent of baptism at Mission San Carlos from 1770 to 1808.⁴⁴⁵ Mortality and the disruptions of family and community were some of the most devastating consequences of missionization.

And finally, physical abuse from soldiers, missionaries, and appointed Native civil leaders contributed to the generally poor conditions of life within the missions. In 1796, Franciscans Diego García and José María Fernández complained to the governor about the inappropriate conduct of their colleagues Martín Landaeta and Antonio Dantí who administered Mission San Francisco. They accused the two of withholding food, overworking, and meting out cruel punishments to those who disobeyed orders.⁴⁴⁶ Since the previous year, drought had been affecting central Alta California, leading to a large influx of over two-hundred Ohlone into Mission San Francisco from the surrounding Bay Area, straining the mission's resources already struggling due to crop failure. For the next year, newcomers and established Christianized Native people had been abandoning Mission San Francisco in masse from a combination of hunger, an

⁴⁴³ See. Appendix 2, Table 6, in Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice*, 267.

⁴⁴⁴ See. Records of burials performed at Mission Santa Clara between 1777 and 1850, Mission Santa Clara Manuscript Collection, SCUSC.

⁴⁴⁵ Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 67.

⁴⁴⁶ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1908), 2: 501.

epidemic spreading between the northern missions, and physical violence. Governor Diego de Borica, concerned about the situation, wrote to Father President Fermín Francisco Lasuén,

There have occurred two hundred and three deaths in 1795, and about two hundred Indians have run away. This is a blot which will scandalize the secular as well as the monastic authorities. For God's sake I beg Your Paternity to reform this entirely, so that at once and forever these wretched people may be placed in a condition in which they may live pleasantly." Citing hunger, abuse, and the spreading sickness, over two-hundred eight Indians fled from San Francisco across the bay to live with friends and relatives.⁴⁴⁷

Dantí and Landaeta responded by sending eight Christianized Native people to return runaways who had fled to outlying villages across the bay. When the eight located them, several Native people ambushed them, leaving seven dead and one who managed to escape unharmed.⁴⁴⁸

According to testimony, they assumed "there was no risk, because every day they [Native people] go and come and deal with the Indians across the bay."⁴⁴⁹ One of the eight might have been a Native *alcalde* toward whom the Indigenous people held resentment, though that fact is not stated. A year later, Landaeta instructed another group to cross to the East Bay and demand their return. In charge of the expedition was a Native person from Baja California named Raymundo, who had a reputation in San Francisco for executing the severe punishments ordered by Dantí and Landaeta. When Raymundo and thirty others arrived on the opposite bay, the fugitives and their allies attacked them. According to Fernández, the runaways harbored animosity toward Raymundo and attempted to kill him as revenge for past abuses.⁴⁵⁰ In 1797,

⁴⁴⁷ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, 2: 502.

⁴⁴⁸ José Pérez-Fernández to Gobernador Borica, May 29, 1795, MSS C-A 7 FILM, Provincial State Papers XII, BANC, 489-90.

⁴⁴⁹ Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, 2: 504.

⁴⁵⁰ José María Fernández, "Treatment of the Indians at Mission San Francisco, 1797," in *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846*, edited by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz (Berkeley, Heyday Books, 2001), 262-264.

less than half of the two-hundred runaways returned voluntarily. Governor Borica dispatched soldiers to the Native villages to arrest the remaining ones and return them to the presidio for trial. San Francisco commandant José Arguello subsequently took testimony from each. Liberato, one of the escapees, testified that he had left because his mother, two brothers, and three nephews had died of starvation, and he fled so that he would not also die.⁴⁵¹ Other reasons included those given by Timoteo and Próspero, who recounted episodes of unjustified abuses from the Franciscans and Native *alcaldes* who arbitrarily struck them with cudgels and ordered whippings for mourning dead family members. Some even received beatings for leaving without permission to collect native foods despite the scarcity of rations at the mission.⁴⁵²

The most commonplace form of resistance to missionization and abuse was mobility, which was both a destabilizing force within the mission frontier and engendered the porous boundary between the missions and the Indigenous hinterlands. Native people frequently abandoned the missions and many times voluntarily returned later. The continual departure and return of runaways helped to maintain persistent connections to villages and Indigenous spaces outside the mission walls, blurring the boundaries between Alta California's colonial and Indigenous spaces. As Padre President Fermín Francisco Lasuén describes, Native absenteeism posed problems for the missions and occurred with regularity,

Two years ago, this Mission of San Carlos sustained the loss of more than three hundred fanegas of corn which had been sundried in the plaza and should have been stored in the granary within two or three days. The following day was Sunday, and the Indians began to show signs of the urge just described [invincible call of the wild]. They disappeared; and on Monday and the following days it rained, as had been feared. As a consequence, the corn became saturated, for there was no one to save it from damage. Last year at San

⁴⁵¹ José Arguello, "Military Interrogation of San Francisco Indians, 1797," in *Lands of Promise and Despair*, 267.

⁴⁵² Arguello, "Military Interrogation of San Francisco Indians, 1797," in *Lands of Promise and Despair*, 268-269.

Luis Obispo the thrashing of the corn had already begun, and should have been continued; but it had to be suspended for two weeks for the same reason.⁴⁵³

Indigenous people deserted the missions in groups, disrupting the agricultural regimens of missions across Alta California. According to Lasuén, abandoning the mission was a natural tendency toward “retrogression,” compelling them to return to old habits in the mountains and forests. He contemplated, “by enjoying once more their old freedom, the Indians remain attached to it, and so they lose in a few weeks the progress in knowledge and civilization gained in many months.”⁴⁵⁴ Native mobility caused some concern because they maintained ties to traditional culture and retained social relationships to the un-missionized hinterlands through their movement.

Even after entering the missions, Native people upheld deep-seated traditional practices like mobility long after baptism. The continuous flow of non-Christianized Native people to the missions and missionized Indigenous people to villages allowed traditional culture to flourish, despite Franciscan attempts at constraint. One of the more salient ways to gauge the persistence of Native culture is the quotidian aspects of food consumption. Despite the availability of agricultural products produced at the missions, Native people persistently pushed for opportunities to exploit native plants and resources like acorns, pine nuts, wild berries, and bulbs, which matured in the same season as the mission’s legumes and maize.⁴⁵⁵ Supposedly to minimize conflict and reduce compulsions for flight, the Franciscans granted *paseos* or permitted

⁴⁵³ Lasuén, “Refutation of Charges, June 19, 1801,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 215-216.

⁴⁵⁴ Lasuén, “Refutation of Charges, June 19, 1801,” in *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, 215.

⁴⁵⁵ California Native people managed hundreds of favored plant species and habitats. They practiced horticultural techniques and controlled burning to encourage desirable traits in plants and had carefully determined harvest seasons; See. M. Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California’s Natural Resources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

seasonal leaves, usually several weeks per year depending on the mission, to allow Native people to return to their villages or take advantage of traditional food sources.⁴⁵⁶ Too much constraint on mobility, the Franciscans feared, would dissuade additional converts among their family and friends from neighboring villages.

Paseos persisted throughout the mission period, despite the inevitable problems it created. The Franciscans knew that *paseos* complicated conversion and some Native people would not return, but the practice continued until secularization in 1832. Permitting them temporary leave from the missions for periods ranging from a few weeks to a month served little function within the Franciscan's program of conversion. It seemed to, in many instances, jeopardize the mission's control over Native people. Its persistence stemmed mainly from how Native people negotiated their relationships with the mission system and the realities of how particular missions fit within the broader Indigenous landscape.

The duration and organization of permitted travel varied from mission to mission and across Alta California's diverse geography. Esteban Tápis noted that the custom at Mission Santa Barbara was that every Sunday, priests read the names of one-fifth of the Native population allowed to go on one to two-week "excursions." The length depended on the distance from their home village, and each name was logged to ensure all had the opportunity. Tápis continues, "During the week many ask for a day off, to go fishing, or to visit the presidio, or to go to the beach. These, too, are gratified."⁴⁵⁷ Environmental constraints in the more arid regions of southern Alta California compelled the Franciscans to adopt greater flexibility in granting

⁴⁵⁶ Francis F. Guest, "An Examination of the Thesis of S.F. Cook on the Forced Conversion of the Indians in the California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 61, 1 (Spring 1979), 11.

⁴⁵⁷ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Santa Barbara Mission* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1923), 79.

paseos. For Mission San Miguel, water scarcity and less abundant agricultural yields allowed Native people to have more time to leave the mission to collect wild seeds and other native foods in the mountains, valleys, and coast.⁴⁵⁸ The proximity of home villages also dictated how Native people related to the missions. Those who originated from closer distances tended to be more inclined to remain after baptism, while those from greater distances tended to pose a greater risk of flight.⁴⁵⁹ In 1817, fifty-five un-missionized Indigenous people arrived at Mission San Buenaventura from “a considerable distance” and, according to Franciscan José Seán, were content but expressed their desire to have one in their territory, suggesting their unwillingness to remain for long so far from home.⁴⁶⁰

Paseos increased in prevalence due to the acute environmental disruptions caused by mission activities like agriculture and livestock production. The Franciscans altered Alta California’s landscape with non-native plant and animal species, creating new agricultural communities on top of lands previously controlled by Native people who had carefully managed resources and tended the land using precise horticultural techniques for generations. Missionaries replaced native plants by cultivating elaborate gardens composed of foreign fruits and vegetables, which expanded farther from the missions into the grasslands and transformed into pastures for livestock and fields for varieties of grains and legumes. Contemporary French and English visitors arriving on the Alta California coast were often most impressed by the neatly

⁴⁵⁸ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Miguel, Arcangel* (Santa Barbara: Mission Santa Barbara, 1931), 28.

⁴⁵⁹ Guest, “An Examination of the Thesis of S.F. Cook on the Forced Conversion of the Indians in the California Missions,” 11-12.

⁴⁶⁰ José Seán, “To Governor Pablo Vincente de Solá, August 14, 1817,” in *The Letters of Jose Senan, Mission San Buenaventura, 1796-1823*, edited by Lesley Byrd Simpson (Ventura, CA: Ventura County Historical Society, 1962), 102; also, cited in Guest, “An Examination of the Thesis of S.F. Cook,” 12.

tended and manicured gardens. George Vancouver, who visited in 1792, commented about the garden at San Buenaventura,

The garden of Buena Ventura far exceed any thing of that description I had before met with in these regions, both in respect of the quality, quantity, and variety of its excellent productions, not only indigenous to the country, but appertaining to the temperate as well as torrid zone; not one species having yet been sown, or planted, that had not flourished, and yields its fruit in abundance, and of excellent quality.⁴⁶¹

Lapérouse granted similar praise after visiting Monterey in 1786 when he gifted various seeds from Paris and potatoes from Chile to the Alta California governor.⁴⁶² The gardens and orchards acquainted Native people with a new diverse source of ingredients, which they readily incorporated within their diets, making theft of fruits from the mission gardens common. Pablo Tac, a Christianized Native person who lived in Mission San Luis in the 1820s, described an incident in which an Indigenous person climbed into the gardens and quickly consumed some ripe figs before being chased over the wall before the gardener could notice.⁴⁶³ He continued by recounting that the orchards were expansive and filled with fruit trees like pears, apples, peaches, quinces, sweet pears, pomegranates, figs, watermelons, melons, and vegetables like cabbages, lettuce, chilies, radishes, mint, parsley, and many others. Native gardeners tended the fruits and vegetables while keeping vigilant watch for intruders. Anything picked from the gardens had to be brought to missionary fathers, and Native people could only pick fruits with permission.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶¹ George Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean, and Round the World: Volume II* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, Paternoster-Row, and J. Edwards Pallmall, 1798), 494.

⁴⁶² Comte de La Pérouse, Jean François de Galaup, *The Voyage of La Pérouse round the world, in the years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788 with nautical tables Volume I* (London: John Stockdale Publishers, 1798), 201.

⁴⁶³ Pablo Tac, *Pablo Tac, Indigenous Scholar: Writing on Luiseño Language and Colonial History, c. 1840*, edited by Lisbeth Haas (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 179.

⁴⁶⁴ Pablo Tac, *Pablo Tac, Indigenous Scholar*, 177-179.

Though likely limited, the Franciscans spread seeds of non-native plants in the mountains and valleys far from the missions.⁴⁶⁵

Missionization not only dramatically altered Native communities near the missions, but those even far away felt their effects. Agriculture and livestock raising significantly altered Alta California's environment and disrupted traditional subsistence patterns practiced among Native groups for centuries. The impact of domesticated plants and invasive species, which soon replaced native grasses and tubers, was especially pronounced on lands immediately near the coastal mission chain but soon spread farther. Initially, the Franciscans selected new sites for missions based on various considerations such as arable land, water sources, availability of resources, and population density. Royal instructions dictated the availability of timber and access to the ocean for trade and transportation as secondary requirements for approving new missions. The first activity after establishing the mission was planting a small, hand-irrigated vegetable garden. The Franciscans then directed Native people to construct aqueducts fed by ground wells or streams, which channeled and stored water for irrigation.⁴⁶⁶ After the garden, they planted small grain fields, gradually growing to feed the growing mission population. Ranches expanded further outward and rapidly grew alongside grain production.⁴⁶⁷ Agricultural plots, livestock grazing, and diverting water sources destroyed local grasslands and disrupted habitats for native plants and animals. In 1788, for instance, Franciscans Diego Noboa and

⁴⁶⁵ Eulalia Pérez mentioned that Franciscan José María de Zalvidea planted fruit trees in the mountains and near villages; See. Eulalia Pérez, "An Old Woman and Her Recollections," in *Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women, 1815-1848*, edited by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 102.

⁴⁶⁶ Vancouver, *A Voyage of Discovery to the North Pacific Ocean*, 494.

⁴⁶⁷ R. Louis Gentilcore, "Missions and Mission Lands of Alta California," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 51, 1 (March 1961), 60.

Tomas de la Peña reported that *vecinos* from San José had cleared neighboring fields for their houses, grain fields, and irrigation ditches, which destroyed the local grasslands. They stated that, as a result, the Native people at Santa Clara, who had depended on the winter grass seeds and tubers, which grew there, could no longer.⁴⁶⁸ Non-native plants eventually displaced traditional plant resources along the coastal zone, forcing Native people at the mission to travel farther distances to locate native food sources.

Despite the diversity of introduced cultivates, Indigenous people's meals at the mission were strikingly less varied and were often monotonous and nutritionally insufficient. The Franciscans customarily offered missionized Native people three meals per day. Each typically consisted of grains like barley, wheat, or corn and animal proteins like beef, mutton, or pork, depending on the season and what was abundant at a given mission. The typical morning and evening meals typically consisted of *atole* made from boiled grains. Eulalia Pérez, a cook at Mission San Diego, recalled that the Franciscans served *champurrado*, or *atolé* mixed with chocolate, on feast days for breakfast and bread and sweets with meals.⁴⁶⁹ Mid-day meals usually consisted of *pozole*, a soup made with grains and meat, cooked in a large kettle or copper pots. The earliest mission inventories from Mission Carmelo confirmed that *atole* and *pozole* were regular meals since the earliest years, listing "a large pail, or a large pozole pot for meals for the Indians" and "two large dippers in the shape of half an orange."⁴⁷⁰ The pots were used with such regularity that their sanitation caused some concern. In 1818, Franciscan Luis Gil de Taboada

⁴⁶⁸ Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice*, 99.

⁴⁶⁹ Eulalia Pérez, "An Old Woman and Her Recollections," in *Testimonios*, 107.

⁴⁷⁰ Junípero Serra, "Memoria: Lista de requisitos para una mission que no se nombra," in *Writings of Junípero Serra Volume 2*, 278.

complained to the Governor that the fathers at Mission San Francisco needed to take greater care in cleaning the kettles and copper pots used to make *atolé* and *pozole* because many had been becoming sick. He also voiced concerns about the blandness of meals as the fathers refused to prepare meals with salt or other seasoning and offered no bread or tortillas to the Native people.⁴⁷¹ In addition to daily meals, the Franciscans distributed weekly grain and meat rations each Saturday when one hundred livestock were slaughtered and butchered.⁴⁷² According to Father President Mariano Payeras, it was common for missions to give weekly rations and allow Native people to supplement them with local Native foods. He states, “To obtain additional provisions the neophytes in the proper season gather wild seeds and berries, or go fishing at the seashore and in the streams.”⁴⁷³ Grains and livestock provided as daily meals and weekly rations to mission residents were repetitive and inadequate. However, weekly rations allowed Native people to consume meals privately within their homes in customary ways and indulge in native foods out of sight of missionaries. Franciscan José Seán described,

The neophytes in their houses have plenty of fresh and dried meat. In addition in their homes they have quantities of acorns, chia, and other seeds, fruits, edible plants and other nutritious plants which they do not forget and of which they are very fond. They also eat fish, mussels, ducks, wild geese, cranes, quail, hares, squirrels, rats, and other animals which exist in abundance.⁴⁷⁴

Native women from the coastal villages near Mission San Francisco collected wild seeds, acorns, wild strawberries, and hazelnuts from the nearby mountains. At the same time, men fished the ocean aboard tule rafts or hunted deer, rabbits, geese, ducks, quails, and thrushes. They also took

⁴⁷¹ Sola to the Viceroy, April 3, 1818, MSS C-A 25, Provincial Records 9, 1775-1822, BANC, 177-178.

⁴⁷² Mora-Torres, editor, *California Voices*, 203-205.

⁴⁷³ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1921), 41.

⁴⁷⁴ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 86.

advantage of beached whales and seals.⁴⁷⁵ When eating foods within their homes, Native people consumed them in traditional ways. Lorenzo Asisara, a Native person baptized in 1819, recalled that Native people at the missions ate foods using shells or their fingers within *cora*, small native woven baskets, and small gourds.⁴⁷⁶

Conversely, the meals the Franciscan fathers provided to Native people at the mission contrasted sharply with the daily ones they consumed within their quarters. José María Amador, a soldier at Mission San José in the 1810s, described the typical missionary father's meal,

His meals consisted of noodles, rice, or bread soup; a dish of lamb or beef with its ham; and plenty of vegetables and other items. This was the main dish of the day and it was never skipped. Sometimes they ate beans, lentils, or garbanzo beans separately but almost always these stews could be found in the pot. The priest would finish his meal with either fresh or dried fruit, according to his desire, and fruit preserves, and cheese. He would wash his meals down with generous glasses of good wine.⁴⁷⁷

He recalled that the Franciscan fathers employed two cooks, a baker, and five pages each attending to his service or to fulfill another function for the church. Indigenous people provided most of the labor within meal preparation at the missions overseen by the kitchen manager, typically the wives of soldiers or settlers. Eulalia Pérez, born to a Baja Californian soldier in 1768 and later served as *mayordoma* at Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, recounted that the Franciscans often employed two women from the presidios or pueblos to prepare large meals consisting of meats, sweets, and other things on important feast days. She continues that the

⁴⁷⁵ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Francisco or Mission Dolores* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1924), 62-63.

⁴⁷⁶ Full quote from Lorenzo Asisara, "Narrative of a Mission Indian, etc," in *History of Santa Cruz, California*, by E.S. Harrison (San Francisco: Pacific Press Publishing Company, 1892), 47.

⁴⁷⁷ José María Amador, "José María Amador's Other Remembrances," in *Californio Voices: The Oral Memoirs of José María Amador and Lorenzo Asisara*, edited by Gregorio Mora-Tores (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2005), 213.



Figure 6.1 “Ohlone Indians in a Tule Boat in the San Francisco Bay, 1822.” Illustration drawn by Louis Choris, who visited Alta California aboard the Russian ship the *Rurik* with Otto von Kotzebue in 1816. The image shows three Ohlone aboard a tule reed raft fishing with spears in San Francisco Bay.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ohlone_Indians_in_a_Tule_Boat_in_the_San_Francisco_Bay_1822.jpg.

missions also hired women to teach Native people how to cook. Pérez trained two Native people, Tomás and El Gentil, in cooking, and both became the “best cooks in this whole part of the country.”⁴⁷⁸ The annual supply ships from 1769 to 1812, and the merchant ships that replaced them imported a variety of staple and processed foods. Invoices from San Blas reported regular shipments of rice, garbanzos, and lentils and preserved goods like olive oil, ham, biscuits, and sugar. According to Pablo Tac, San Luis Rey Mission had five gardens used to produce wine sold to English and Anglo-American ships along with brandy, oil, grains, tallow, chamois

⁴⁷⁸ Pérez, “An Old Woman and Her Recollections,” in *Testimonios*, 103-104.

leather, bearskins, and hides in exchange for coffee, tea, sugar, textiles, muskets, and other things.⁴⁷⁹ Also arriving were spices like pepper, cinnamon, cloves, chocolate, wine, and aguardiente. Annual ships and Pacific trade allowed greater and steadier supplies of foods not grown locally to enter Alta California. As a result of imported foods, the Franciscans and the soldiers were less inclined to incorporate native ingredients into their diet. Fish and marine mammals likely appeared on their plates occasionally, but Native foods were largely avoided. According to naturalists William W. Dunmire and Evangeline L. Dunmire in their comparative study of foodways in New Spain, the Alta California colonists' diet was not the traditional "frontier cuisine," which blended Native and colonial ingredients. Instead, it was primarily transplanted crops and livestock or imported foods.⁴⁸⁰

Despite Native people incorporating domesticated foods into their diets, the persistence of traditional Indigenous foods at the missions helped them reaffirm connections to Native culture and identity. Anthropologist Brooke S. Arkush estimates that native plant foods may have accounted for about ten percent of the diet for the average Native person residing at Alta California's missions.⁴⁸¹ However, some archival evidence suggests that Native people retained a preference for traditional foods, which they procured more frequently and in larger quantities than the Franciscan fathers reported to officials. Missionaries established missions within the fertile coastal plains where native plants thrived and close to the valleys and tule marshes where

⁴⁷⁹ Pablo Tac, "Indian Life at San Luis Rey, 1820s," in *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846*, edited by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz (Berkeley: Heydey Books, 2001), 335.

⁴⁸⁰ William W. Dunmire and Evangeline L. Dunmire, *Gardens of New Spain: How Mediterranean Plants and Foods Changed America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 299-300.

⁴⁸¹ Brooke S. Arkush, "Native Responses to European Intrusion: Cultural Persistence and Agency among Mission Neophytes in Spanish Colonial Northern California," *Historical Archaeology* 45, 4 (2011), 64.

Native people traditionally hunted wild game and sea birds, fished rivers and the seas, collected shellfish, and gathered a variety of local resources. At least, initially, Native foods would have been readily accessible. Although the missions profoundly disrupted Indigenous subsistence and resource management during the period, Seetha N. Reddy finds that based on macro-botanical remains from villages in southern Alta California, the consumption of native plants in Indigenous villages persisted for decades after missions appeared in the region. Local Tongva groups primarily relied on native plants within mortuary rites, mourning ceremonies, and feasting. Accordingly, consuming certain foods symbolized cultural identities, especially during a period of rapid, dramatic change. The evidence suggests that the Tongva and other groups made conscious decisions about using non-native domesticated plants within ceremonies and rituals.⁴⁸² Despite Spanish-introduced pottery and metal cooking vessels, Lynn Gamble discovered similar results among the Chumash, who used specially crafted steatite vessels and tule reed woven baskets. These objects had strong associations with traditional feasting and ceremonies, which the Chumash used to affirm cultural identity.⁴⁸³ Although diets varied across regions, Native people were more accustomed to diverse food sources. Estimates suggest that between sixty and seventy percent of pre-colonial Native diets consisted of edible plants for most groups. Plant foods comprised hundreds of seeds, bulbs, tubers, leaves, and fruits. Coastal groups consumed dozens of species of shellfish and ocean fish. At the same time, those in the hinterlands ate rabbit, elk, bighorn sheep, rattlesnake, bear, deer, gopher, squirrel, pronghorn, and several

⁴⁸² Seetha N. Reddy, "Feeding Family and Ancestors: Persistence of Traditional Native American Lifeways during the Mission Period in coastal Southern California," *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 37 (2015), 48.

⁴⁸³ Lynn H. Gamble, "Subsistence Practice and Feasting Rites: Chumash Identity after European Colonization," *Historical Archaeology* 49, 2 (2015), 118.

species of birds, along with lizards, amphibians, and insects.⁴⁸⁴ Every Native group had distinct culinary tastes and cultural sensibilities about food consumption. For this, the Franciscan's homogenous and ordinary meals would have seemed meager and unsatisfying in comparison. The lack of diverse food choices might help explain why Indigenous foods persisted despite the introduction of domesticated plants and animals within Indigenous diets.

Since the early years of missionization, the Franciscans readily employed Native knowledge of plant and animal resources. Indigenous people provided missions with native seeds, fruits, tubers, fish, and game collected from local sources when agriculture failed. The Franciscans readily conceded time to them for harvesting nearby plant and animal resources. In 1773, nearby Indigenous people had gathered at Monterey Bay in late summer to take advantage of the seasonal spawning of sardines, and the sea birds gathered to feed on the schools of fish. Indigenous groups had long gathered to catch sardines, collect bird eggs, and capture the various sea birds converging on the bay. Native people at Mission Carmelo demanded that the Franciscan fathers permit them to divide their time between agricultural production, hunting, and fishing in the bay. Serra allowed them and related that they had prepared twenty barrels of preserved sardines, and when salt and barrels were exhausted, they removed the spines and dried the remaining in the sun "as their people do."⁴⁸⁵ The following year, Serra reported purchasing a canoe and net from San Blas "so that the new Christians might subsist on fish," granting tacit approval for Native people to continue fishing the bay.⁴⁸⁶ Indigenous people pushed for

⁴⁸⁴ Anderson, *Tending the Wild*, 242.

⁴⁸⁵ Serra, "A Don Antonio Maria de Bucareli y Ursúa, Monterrey, August 24, 1774," *Writings of Junipero Serra Volume 2*, 144.

⁴⁸⁶ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Diego Mission* (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1920), 51.

opportunities to gather and consume native resources, which continued throughout the colonial period.

Food culture and the seasonal harvests of native plants played a central role in Native life and helped preserve cultural identity within Alta California's rapidly transforming landscape. The questionnaire responses from eighteen missions between 1813 and 1815 provide valuable insights into cultural perseverance and how Native people understood themselves within a transformed world. Most missions responded that Native people continued to recognize the seasons by harvesting wild plants like grass seeds collected in springs, acorns ripening in the fall, and other vegetation maturing at various times of the year.⁴⁸⁷ Harvesting, processing, and storing plant foods structured the lives of Native people decades after missionization. The Franciscan missionaries' responses confirmed that all missions permitted Indigenous people to collect and hunt for food resources in the surrounding regions to varying degrees. When discussing Indigenous people's attachment to traditional foods, Mission Santa Barbara reported, "Besides the mission food, the Indians are also very fond of the food they enjoyed in their pagan state: those from the mountains, venison, rabbits, rats, squirrels or any small animal they can catch; those from the seashore enjoy every species of sea food."⁴⁸⁸ In another response, the Franciscans said they ate the same food as the Spaniards but also exploited traditional foods like *pinole*, wild seeds, acorns, deer, coyote, antelope, jackrabbit, rabbit, squirrel, fish, whale, and others, and that many even preferred them.⁴⁸⁹ Native people also selectively incorporate certain domesticated plants within the types of foods enjoyed. Two missions, San Buenaventura and San Carlos,

⁴⁸⁷ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 82.

⁴⁸⁸ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 86.

⁴⁸⁹ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 85.

recorded that the fathers granted allotments for private kitchen gardens to some families in the mission village where Native gardeners grew pumpkins, watermelons, sugar melons, corn, grains, and squash.⁴⁹⁰ The persistence of Native foods within the missions indicates that Indigenous people exercised considerable autonomy within their foods and how they ate them. Despite introduced plants and animals, they continued to show a clear preference and actively sought out traditional native plants, which readily and consistently entered the missions.

The Franciscans initially believed that thriving agriculture could attract Indigenous people to baptism and dismissed hunting and fishing as a critical food source. According to Michael LaRosa, food production was central to missionization because Native people needed food to survive, and the Franciscans could use food as a tool or weapon against them.⁴⁹¹ However, LaRosa finds that food production and recruitment were not statistically correlated at any of the four missions he surveyed; increased yields did not correspond to more converts. Indigenous people continuing to consume Native foods at the missions and villages indicate that scholars have overestimated the immediate impacts of missionization and the Spanish presence on the coast on native subsistence patterns. Even after baptism, Native people repeatedly engaged in traditional cultural practices and insisted on gathering Indigenous plants and exploiting traditional resources.

Native mobility between the missions and un-missioned villages engendered the Indigenous littoral borderland in Alta California, creating sustained links between the missions and colonial hinterlands. Native resistance included overt acts of rebellion and murder, but more

⁴⁹⁰ Geiger, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 109-110.

⁴⁹¹ Michael LaRosa, "Food Supply and Native American Conversion at Four Alta California Missions, 1810-1830," *Journal of the West* (January 1994), 108-109.

commonly, Native people used mobility to resist abuse, punishment, disease, and death at the missions. Those from the colonial hinterlands offered refuge to fugitives and allowed them to pursue Native culture and subsistence away from the supervision of the Franciscan fathers. Indigenous people continuously pushed the Franciscans for opportunities to exploit traditional foods and reaffirm connections to families and friends who resided in the un-missioned villages extending from the mission's coastal zone to the interior valleys. The Franciscans reluctantly granted *paseos*, or seasonal leaves, for weeks to months, which allowed native culture and social relationships to flourish within limited constraints. By looking at how native culture penetrated the missions, the missions can be better understood as part of a vast Indigenous landscape extending from the coast to the interior. The missions, therefore, become less a colonial space defined solely by the dictates of Franciscan fathers but instead one of constant interaction between Native people and the Spanish, where the borderland processes of negotiation and accommodation played out through quotidian interactions. What helped to sustain these spaces of compromise was an interior space dominated by independent, un-missionized Indigenous people who occupied a vast Indigenous borderland within Alta California's Central Valley.

The Indigenous Littoral Borderlands

Alta California's coastal geography allowed Native people to pursue alternatives outside the mission system. The Central Valley stretching for miles along the coastal hinterland of Alta California occupied a particularly prominent place of refuge for Indigenous groups who pursued independent activities unrestricted by the Franciscan fathers. The region was enclosed within a coastal mountain range stretching across Alta California's interior, which contained a coastal valley stretching some twenty-thousand square miles. It is a diverse environment of prairies, oak

savannas, riparian forests, marshes, and southern desert grasslands. Before the mid-nineteenth century, when Anglo-American settlers constructed levees, dammed, and drained the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, the valley was home to a vast “inland sea.”⁴⁹² Snows atop the Sierra Nevada accumulated in the winter and melted in the spring, flooding the rivers and lakes that turned the prairies and valleys into a vast tule reed swamp.⁴⁹³ An estimated four million acres turned into partially salinized wetlands from the summer to fall.⁴⁹⁴ Closer to the coast, the elevation rose only sixty feet from sea level, in which fresh and seawater mixed to create salt marshes.⁴⁹⁵ During the colonial era, the Spanish referred to the hinterland valley as *Los Tulares* (the modern-day California state’s Central Valley) for the abundant tule reeds growing across its expanse, making the environment difficult to navigate and traverse. Native fugitives seeking to escape the missions found refuge within the tule reed forests and its vast water systems. The location had long been home to a diffuse Native population who fugitives and refugees from the coast now joined. Here, they pursued autonomy from the mission system. Through the colonial period, *Los Tulares* became an Indigenous littoral borderland where Native people successfully resisted missionization and generated enduring links to the coastal mission communities.

⁴⁹² See. Robert Kelly, *Battling the Inland Sea: Floods, Public Policy, and the Sacramento Valley* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 4-6, and 148.

⁴⁹³ The *Comisionado* of Villa Branciforte Gabriel Moraga who explored the Sacramento-San Joaquín River delta between 1806 and 1808 described that the rivers overflowed from May and can be crossed after the low point in September; See. Mariano Payeras, “News since departure from the Presidio of San Francisco until returning to it, July 3, 1819,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, edited by Donald C. Cutter (Santa Barbara: Bellerophon Books, 1995), 191.

⁴⁹⁴ Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Department of the Interior, Report on the Refuge Water Supply Investigations: Central Valley Hydraulic Basin, California (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Reclamation, 1989), 4.

⁴⁹⁵ Kelly, *Battling the Inland Sea*, 4.

Traditionally, historians had assumed that entrance into the missions was irreversible, and Franciscans exerted substantial control over Native mobility, spatially confining them to the missions. These assumptions hinge primarily on how missionaries interpreted baptism, which entailed transitioning Native groups from village autonomy to wards of the church and the forfeiture of their freedoms it implied. More recently, scholars have better recognized how the mission experience extended beyond the missions into surrounding villages, ranchos, un-missionized villages, and the colonial hinterlands. Native people insistently negotiated the spatial constraints dictated by the Franciscans and successfully posed challenges to missionization. As previously mentioned, there was a significant degree of flexibility in how Indigenous people interacted with missions across North America. Themes of domination and resistance tend to reflect the “deeply ingrained notion that Spanish mission was highly structured spaces that left little room for Native agency except for revolt, the murder of padres, sabotage, and delinquency.”⁴⁹⁶ The view relegates Indigenous peoples to the margins, seeing them as reactionary agents rather than active participants in defining the circumstances of the colonial period. From another perspective, it is essential to recognize how Native persistence involved changes and adjustments to survive the dramatic transformations occurring around them.

The Franciscans never overlooked *Los Tulares* as a potential site for new missions, but plans ultimately never materialized. Except for a few excursions, the coastal hinterland largely remained out of reach to missionization and colonization until Anglo-American settlement in the mid-nineteenth century. Discussions about expanding the mission frontier into the interior

⁴⁹⁶ Tsim D. Schneider and Lee M. Panich, “Native Agency at the Margins of Empire: Indigenous Landscapes, Spanish Missions, and Contested Histories,” in *Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish Missions: New Perspectives from Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, edited by Lee Panich and Tsim D. Schneider (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 9-10.

originated since the early years of colonization but took on greater immediacy by the first decades of the nineteenth century. Mariano Payeras, shortly after being elected Father president, explains the necessity of expanding into the interior valley,

Some missions of the north have suffered incursions and raids from frontier heathen Indians, joined by fugitive neophytes of the missions of their respective neighborhoods. Although it seems that these evils have diminished because of the continual vigilance of the government of the province and the care of the priests, nevertheless establishments in the Valley of the *Tular* to the northeast of these missions from San Fernando to San José seem very necessary.⁴⁹⁷

Since the 1790s, un-missionized Indigenous people aided by fugitives raided nearby missions. *Los Tulares* had long been home to diverse un-missionized groups connected to coastal groups through complex material and social exchange. One of the earliest descriptions of the region comes from a presidio officer and *habilitado* from San Francisco, Hermenegildo Sal, who described that one-hundred or more Native villages were located on elevated pockets of land within the tule reed wetlands near the Sacramento River.⁴⁹⁸ In 1816, the Franciscans planned to establish a mission fifty leagues east of Mission San Miguel in a region called Telame near Buena Vista Lake, where there was an estimated population of 4,000 Native people.⁴⁹⁹ Mission and presidio authorities looked at the region with apprehension as un-missionized groups aided by mission fugitives staged rebellions, raided Spanish ranchos, pueblos, and missions, attacked Christians, stole livestock and horses, plundered storehouses, and burned grain fields. Payeras proclaimed the region a “republic of Hell” and commented that the alliance among runaways and

⁴⁹⁷ “Mariano Payers, Annual Report, May 2, 1817,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 131.

⁴⁹⁸ Hermenegildo Sal to the Governor, January 31, 1796, MSS C-A 7 FILM, Provincial State Papers XII, BANC, 14-16.

⁴⁹⁹ “Payeras to My Venerable Superior [Sarría], October 10, 1816,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 108; also, see. “Mariano Payeras, Annual Report, May 2, 1817, in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 131.

independent villages was a “diabolical union,” which threatened to disrupt the entire mission system.⁵⁰⁰ *Los Tulares* became an Indigenous littoral borderland where Indigenous people pursued diverse survival strategies and created a distinctly Indigenous space independent of the mission system.

Un-missionized groups in *Los Tulares* lived within diffuse villages connected through close-knit exchange networks both within and outside the region. In 1811, Franciscan father Ramón Abella journeyed into *Los Tulares*, exploring the lower Sacramento and San Joaquin River valleys. While there, Abella recounted arriving at a village where he estimated nine hundred people lived across three smaller villages. Still, only one-hundred-fifty greeted him and the party. A Native person explained that they had heard about the Spaniards’ appearance the previous night, and the majority had fled. Several hours later, Abella and the party arrived at another village almost wholly abandoned with only two elders remaining, he described,

We started out again about two o’clock in the afternoon and went about five leagues and at the halfway point we found a village which had no more than two persons. They said that the rest of the people had fled because they had heard that we were coming that way. They had taken up the houses, which are of straw, and all their personal belongings...Father down we came onto another village which had been completely removed at the same time. We even caught them going ashore, whereupon they threw away their possessions, abandoned their boats, and hid in the tule swamp. No matter how hard we tried we could not succeed in finding more than four persons and two dogs. They said they had done this on account of the fear which they had for us.⁵⁰¹

After the incident, Abella recorded that the soldiers camped in the tule swamp and heard yelling throughout the night as people called to one another to inform them that the Spanish party had left. News of the Spanish visitors had met with apprehension among surrounding Native

⁵⁰⁰ “Mariano Payeras to Captain José de la Guerra, May 4, 1818,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 149.

⁵⁰¹ “Father Ramón Abella’s Expedition, 1811,” in *Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1800-1820*, University of California Anthropological Records 16, 6 (1958), 263.

populations and prompted entire villages to abandon their homes and belongings. The Native people were aware of the rumors circulating throughout *Los Tulares* of bands of Spanish soldiers forcing whole communities to the coastal missions. Stories of capture, oppressive labor, hunger, whippings, disease, and death at the missions were well-known among the villages brought by fugitives and those permitted by the Franciscans to visit. Since the 1800s, Spanish soldiers entered the tule reed marshes east of San Francisco Bay to capture baptized Native people, warning villagers that all inhabitants would be arrested and forced into baptism if they sheltered runaways or contributed to hostilities against the Spanish.⁵⁰² In 1805, Father Pedro Muñoz, while traveling in the valley, noted that villagers from Taulamne had refused to meet with him because, as one Native person voiced, “the soldiers killed and captured people.”⁵⁰³ Rumors of the coastal missions and Spanish soldiers’ activities circulated in *Los Tulares*, illustrating the interwoven social relationships tying together villages in the valley.

Native people continued to occupy the coastal and colonial hinterlands of the littoral borderlands, maintaining intimate contact with the missions and forging an Indigenous space within *Los Tulares*. Examining the Indigenous littoral borderland shows how Native people exercised agency over the landscape and inhabited Alta California based on firmly held traditions of flexibility. Some scholars like ethnohistorian Randall Milliken have pointed out that Indigenous fugitives who fled the missions could not simply disappear into the surrounding Indigenous populations, making it impossible or exceedingly challenging for fugitives to hide from Spanish missionaries and soldiers very long. Accordingly, Franciscan fathers relied on an

⁵⁰² José Canuto Boronda, “Notas Históricas sobre California, 1878,” in *Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1800-1820*, University of California Anthropological Records 16, 6 (1958), 281.

⁵⁰³ Pedro Muñoz, “Lieutenant Gabriel Moraga’s Expedition, 1806,” in *Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1800-1820*, University of California Anthropological Records 16, 6 (1958), 250.

expansive informal network of Native informants linked to missions and Christianized villages to un-missioned hinterland villages. Furthermore, traditional animosity among and between coastal and hinterland Indigenous groups likely left runaways with limited hiding places.⁵⁰⁴ Traditional intra-ethnic group hostilities certainly shaped the landscape of Indigenous refuges. Still, throughout the colonial period, Franciscans complained to military authorities about the frequent abandonment of the mission, even among long-established baptized Native people. Numerous missionized Indigenous people successfully evaded pursuit and forcible return throughout the period. The interior marshland valleys or the “inland sea” of *Los Tulares* occupied a vast hinterland refuge for un-missionized groups and fugitives who used its geography to elude detection and frustrate Spanish attempts to capture them. In 1785, a baptized Native person named Sebastian Albitre fled Santa Clara Mission in 1785 with his wife and a presidio soldier named Mariano Yopez to *Los Tulares*. Two search parties failed to locate the fugitives looking as far as the Sierra Nevada Mountains.⁵⁰⁵ In 1793, a baptized Native person named Charquin fled from Mission San Francisco to *Los Tulares*. He successfully dodged Spanish pursuers twice. He later mounted armed resistance against soldiers searching for runaways who entered the tule reed marshes east of San Francisco Bay. Charquin later banded with twenty other Christian converts. According to the Spanish soldier Hermenegildo Sal, after taking up arms against the Christians, it “caused him to become insolent, inasmuch as he is increasingly fearsome in the eyes of the Indians.”⁵⁰⁶ Independent groups and fugitives joined together to sustain the Indigenous littoral borderland and a place of refuge.

⁵⁰⁴ Milliken, *A Time of Little Change*, 96-97.

⁵⁰⁵ Governor Fages, November 7, 1785, MSS C-A 7 FILM, Provincial State Papers II, BANC, 348.

By the nineteenth century, Native people had abandoned traditional coastal villages to enter the mission system or relocate to the hinterland valleys in interior Alta California. Milliken's work charts the disintegration of tribal groups in the San Francisco Bay area from 1769 to 1810, showing how Indigenous villages gradually moved closer to the missions for protection or became wholly absorbed. As native food sources dwindled from the introduction of new plants and cattle, mission lands encroached into traditional lands, and the forces of Spanish occupation unleashed dramatic transformations on the landscape, Native people continuously found more limited choices in the face of missionization. The Saclans, for one, staged prolonged resistance but ultimately faced epidemics and environmental disruptions, leaving them with limited options outside of entering the missions.⁵⁰⁷ Most Indigenous people from the bay area were forced into the missions either due to the disintegration of traditional subsistence patterns and social structures or forced relocation. However, significant numbers also fled into the hinterland of *Los Tulares*. In 1794, the Pueblo San José commissioner reported that Native people from Laguna Seca village and others in the bay area had abandoned their villages toward the mountains to the east. According to two informants, an unbaptized Native person from *El Mocho*, near Mission Santa Clara, had refused to go to the mission and dissuaded fellow villagers from going also. In response, Franciscan Manuel Fernández whipped him, causing severe swelling and leaving him unable to walk without support. News spread among the villages of the beating and father Fernández's threats of violence to villages who refused baptism, prompting Indigenous people from surrounding villages to abandon the coast to the

⁵⁰⁶ "Excerpt from a paraphrase of the Report of Hermenegildo Sal to Governor José Joaquín de Arrillaga, February 27, 1793," transcribed in appendix, Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice*, 277.

⁵⁰⁷ Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice*, 1-2.

“mountains.”⁵⁰⁸ By the 1810s, independent villages largely disappeared from the Alta California coast as survivors of epidemics and military violence were absorbed into the missions or fled into the Central Valley. In 1820, Payeras reported that there was hardly one un-Christianized Native person near the 220-league chain of missions.⁵⁰⁹ Baptismal records indicate that most may have entered the mission. Still, sizeable numbers also fled into *Los Tulares*, which had become a refuge for fugitive and un-missionized groups by the nineteenth century.

Native mobility linked the mission population to un-missionized communities within *Los Tulares*. In 1795, Franciscan Martín Landaeta reported that approximately two-hundred eighty baptized Native people had deserted Mission San Francisco, “slipping off in various directions.” The mass exodus was so severe that some “long-time Christians” who had never previously run away were also missing. Seven of the long-time Christians had found refuge in the village of Pucac under the Native leader Oclese.⁵¹⁰ By the nineteenth century, the Central Valley had become a well-known haven for mission fugitives. Ramón Abella reported that the tule reed marshes had become a haven for runaways, and baptized Native people had established several villages in the region known as Omíomi near the Sacramento-San Joaquín River delta.⁵¹¹ Periodically, the Governor authorized incursions to search for runaways and warn local village leaders of punishment for granting refuge to Christianized Native people. According to

⁵⁰⁸ “Paraphrase of a Letter from Commissioner Gabriel Moraga to Lieutenant José Arguello at Monterey Presidio, Pueblo San José, October 30, 1794,” transcribed in appendix, Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice*, 281-282.

⁵⁰⁹ “Mariano Payeras to Reverend Father Guardian and Venerable Discretorio of Our Apostolic College of San Fernando de México, February 7, 1820” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 225.

⁵¹⁰ “Paraphrase of a Letter from Second-Lieutenant Pérez-Fernández to Governor Borica, San Francisco, September 13, 1795,” in appendix, Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice*, 288.

⁵¹¹ “Letter from Father Ramón Abella to Governor José Joaquín de Arrillaga, Mission San Francisco, February 28, 1807,” in appendix, Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice*, 316.

Franciscan Juan Martin, by 1815, “fugitives from the north” arrived in the Tulares near San Miguel Mission, informing villages that the missionaries would “simply kill the Indians.”⁵¹² When Franciscan José Viadar ventured into the valley in 1810, Native people from Cholvones reported that Christians from San José lived nearby between a river and a lake. Other fugitives from Santa Clara and Santa Cruz resided in Tationes close to Buena Vista Lake.⁵¹³ In 1819, Payeras wrote to Governor Pablo Vincente de Solá that 210 warriors had gathered in *Los Tulares* to attack La Purísima and Santa Inés missions after being told by two Christians from San Buenaventura about military plans to attack villages helping runaways. Later they reportedly “embarrassed the [Spanish] troops and vaqueros, and with the greatest boldness and impudence, they vilely took from them five [Native prisoners] whom they tied up.”⁵¹⁴ Native people mounted armed resistance against Spanish soldiers and threatened missions with raids.

In the early nineteenth century, several villages in the region had become well known at the missions for being refuges for Christian fugitives. The most well-known was the Yokut village of Tulami which had emerged by 1817 as a community of former missionized Indigenous people from the coast and un-missioned Tulareños, mostly Yokuts. According to Paul Albert Lacson, Faciats, the Yokut leader, had acquired a reputation as an influential leader. He helped fugitives escape search parties and utilized his geographic knowledge of wetlands between the Kern River and Buena Vista Lake to avoid capture. Tulami became the most well-known and

⁵¹² “Fray Juan Martin to Padre President José Señán, April 26, 1815,” in *Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1800-1820*, University of California Anthropological Records 16, 6 (1958), 243

⁵¹³ *Exploration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, 1810-1813: Father Viadar’s First Trip*, in *Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1800-1820*, 258.

⁵¹⁴ “Mariano Payeras to Lord Governor Solá, September 28, 1819,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 211.

influential interior community of coastal and interior Native people, becoming a place where fugitives and un-missionized groups forged a future in an exclusively native community that persisted into the later Mexican era.⁵¹⁵ The Yokuts had long-established relationships with coastal communities to acquire coastal resources unavailable within Los Tulares, and the relationships developed more significant meanings later in the colonial era. Franciscan Juan Cabot described, “In the village of Tulame there are at present thirty-three Christians from several missions; as a rule, this is the place of refuge...from the direction of Santa Barbara there is no access because everything is surrounded by water.”⁵¹⁶ Tulami offering refuge for fugitives was not an isolated phenomenon. In 1808, Spanish officer José Palomares (circa the 1800s) reported that a Native leader named Quipagui in the central valley near the San Bernardino Mountains had become “the most feared Indian in that entire country” and “gives refuge to Christian fugitives.” His reputation had become so notorious that “neither Christian nor heathen will go to look for them [fugitives] there on account of the terror which he inspires.”⁵¹⁷ In 1818, Payeras reported to the San Francisco commandant José de la Guerra about the Native people at Tulami, stating, “previously they respected a Christian and controlled their arrogance at the mere voice of the missionary, they have now given greatest example of scorn for the name of the captain, the corporal, and the Father, in the matter of both the recovery of runaways and the baptism of gentiles.”⁵¹⁸ He continues by recounting how a Native emissary had gifted beads to a

⁵¹⁵ Paul Albert Lacson, “‘Born of Horses’: Missionaries, Indigenous Vaqueros, and Ecological Expansion during the Spanish Colonization of California,” *Journal of San Diego History* 60, 3 (Summer 2014), 223-224.

⁵¹⁶ “Juan Cabot to Captain de la Guerra, May 23, 1818,” *Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1800-1820*, University of California Anthropological Records 16, 6 (1958), 280.

⁵¹⁷ Gabriel Moraga, “Report on the Expedition to the Tulares,” in *Colonial Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1800-1820*, University of California Anthropological Records 16, 6 (1958), 257.

local leader named Ecsanonaut who “scornfully” threw the gifts back at him, the gesture implying that Ecsanonaut rejected the Franciscan’s offer of friendship and refused to turn over any Christian fugitives harbored in Tulami. Later Payeras sent others to threaten the runaways with punishment for their refusal and tell them that soldiers would soon arrive to force them to return. However, instead of convincing the fugitives, one of the messengers decided to join the other Christian runaways.⁵¹⁹ In the following months, several more Christians reportedly abandoned the missions for Tulami.

In the 1810s, Tulareños entered the missions, destabilizing the boundaries between the coastal mission chain and *Los Tulares* through sustained mobility. Although it is difficult to determine the extent, documents indicate an epidemic had spread into the Central Valley in 1815, claiming many lives. In Telame, near Buena Vista Lake east of Mission San Miguel, there was an estimated 4,000 un-missionized Native people. The first large wave of Yokuts entered the missions between 1813 and 1816, consisting of a small 138 Yokuts from the Telame region in the Central Valley who arrived at Mission San Miguel Arcángel and San Luis Obispo.⁵²⁰ From 1819 to secularization in 1834, thousands of Yokuts from *Los Tulares* would enter Mission Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and San Juan Bautista, most arriving after 1822.⁵²¹ In the 1819 annual report, Payeras states that various missions had been baptizing Native people from the *Tulares* with

⁵¹⁸ “Mariano Payeras to Captain José de la Guerra, May 4, 1818,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 148.

⁵¹⁹ “Mariano Payeras to Commandant of the Presiio and Jurisdiction of Santa Bárbara José Antonio de la Guerra y Noriega, May 5, 1818,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 149.

⁵²⁰ Randall Milliken and John R. Johnson, “2005, An Ethnogeography of Salinan and Norther Chumash Communities, 1769 to 1810, *Government Documents and Publications* 4 (2017), 45.

⁵²¹ See. Randall Milliken, Laurence H. Shoup, and Beverly R. Ortiz, *Ohlone/Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Peninsula and their Neighbors, Yesterday and Today* (San Francisco: National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, 2009), 136.

limited success. He explains, “the extreme fickle Tulareños are here today and gone tomorrow, not on foot like they come, but rather on horseback, so that with such visitors no animal is safe in all the northern valley.”⁵²² The willingness of the Tulareños to be baptized seemed to have been a feint pretense to gain access to the mission to steal horses and other goods from the Franciscans. The problem became so pronounced that the Franciscans complained to the Father Guardian of San Fernando College, Baldomero López, that “any small alter boy grabs horses; kills cattle; goes about the mission chain terrorizing; steals tame and castrated herds, taking and selling them in the *Tular*; shoots and kills and upsets the entire province.”⁵²³ As more runaways joined with un-missionized groups in *Los Tulares*, the missions were thrown into chaos with thefts and raids, which Payeras feared would become another “Apachería” if steps were not taken to establish a presidio and mission within the region. Expeditions had been being launched to locate suitable places for missions, but only distant ones located great distances on the other side of the Central Valley showed promise. The Franciscans abandoned plans to expand into the interior, citing that “an immense number of warlike pagans who, when they have lost a fight and are in difficulty, flee to their hiding places in the tule-covered lagoons, which are from them a fortress as secure as it is impenetrable to our calvary troops.”⁵²⁴ Except for the occasional expedition of soldiers sent to search and forcibly return runaways, the Franciscans and military

⁵²² “Mariano Payeras, Annual Report, May 4, 1819,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 184.

⁵²³ “Mariano Payeras to Reverend Father Guardian Baldomero López, August 4, 1819,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 197.

⁵²⁴ “Mariano Payeras to Reverend Father Apostolic Preachers and Ministers of the Missions From La Purísima to San Diego and from the latter via La Purísima to Our Father San Francisco and its Asistencia of San Rafael, June 25, 1820,” in *Writings of Mariano Payeras*, 263.

relinquished the wetland valleys of *Los Tulares* to Native people whose mobility and constant motion tied it with the coast within an Indigenous littoral borderland.

Los Tulares had long been home to a diffuse community of autonomous groups and later fugitives and raiders. Their relationship with the coastal missions engendered the Indigenous littoral borderland based on mobility, accommodation, and flexibility traditions. In Alta California, Native people actively pushed for opportunities and devised excuses for leaving the missions. Sometimes with the consent of missionaries and other times illicitly, they visited friends and family in nearby villages, the hinterlands, and further away into the interior and maintained ties with un-missioned groups. Mobility beyond the mission walls and the continued inflow of new converts allowed communities to retain features of traditional Indigenous practices and knowledge of food sources from native plants and animals long after baptism. At the missions, Native people continued to participate in traditional religious ceremonies and dances, invigorate Indigenous social relationships, and practice established fishing, hunting, and gathering native foods. Sanction and unsanctioned travel allowed Indigenous people to maintain strong ties to traditional culture. For this, the missions are better understood as places of sustained social and cultural contact between Native people and the Spanish, which the Franciscans did not wholly define, but also Indigenous people who pursued their own goals and agendas or a space of conflict, negotiation, and accommodation. The persistence of Indigenous mobility and native foods in the Alta California missions indicate how Indigenous people adapted to the dramatic transformations of missionization. Through the continuous movement between the missions and Indigenous spaces, Native people reaffirmed connections to traditional culture. They creatively adapted the missions within an Indigenous littoral borderland extending from the coast to the colonial hinterland.

Conclusion

Native people persistently presented challenges to missionization through deep-seated traditions of mobility that engendered spaces of negotiation and accommodation based on the fluid and flexible nature of Alta California's littoral borderland. By crossing the colonial spaces of the coastal missions to the Indigenous ones of *Los Tulares*, they created an Indigenous littoral borderland encompassing the coastal strip of missions and crossing into hinterland valleys. An understanding of Alta California during colonization must consider how the mission system fit within the broader Indigenous borderlands, which dominated the landscape. Scholars had previously understood Native people's entrance into the missions and baptism as an irreversible process in which they transformed from autonomous groups into dependents of the missionaries. Once they entered the missions, Franciscan fathers confined and limited their mobility, imposing strict measures to transition into a Christian and Hispanized workforce. However, the mission experience was seldom restrained to the mission walls and more often extended far out into the missionized and un-missionized villages, ranchos, and colonial hinterlands. Native people continued to maintain deep-seated traditions of mobility with and without the permission of the Franciscan fathers, where they entered and engendered much broader geography within Alta California's littoral borderland. They engendered the missions as Indigenous-colonial spaces and created sustained connections with the Indigenous littoral borderland of *Los Tulares*'s hinterland.

The constant inward and outward flows of Native converts and fugitives connected Alta California's mission chain to the diverse colonial hinterland spaces of outlying Indigenous villages. The Franciscans reluctantly granted seasonal leave permitting Native people to return to villages and tacitly allowed them to retain strong connections to un-missionized relatives and

friends. Within the Indigenous spaces of the hinterlands, they continued to pursue traditional subsistence strategies like hunting, fishing, and gathering native foods and practiced traditions of dances, feasts, and ceremonies without the supervision of the Franciscan fathers. In *Los Tulares*, independent groups and fugitives created an Indigenous space of flexibility and adaptability and successfully mounted challenges to missionization. At the missions, Native people faced abuse from Native *alcaldes*, soldiers, missionary fathers, death from disease, poor health from unsanitary living conditions, and inadequate nutrition. Fugitives continued to complicate efforts toward missionization, fleeing the missions for many reasons, including the death of family and friends, fears of punishment, hunger, arbitrary abuse, and desires to reunite with extended kin from Native villages. Fugitives and new converts continuously entered the missions, reaffirmed connections to the hinterland, and engendered the Indigenous littoral borderland.

Conclusions

In 1874, twenty-six years after Mexico's forced cession of Alta California, historian Henry Cerruti (1836-1876) visited the aging Rosalía Vallejo (1809-1892), sister to prominent Californio statesman Mariano Vallejo (1807-1890), to interview her about life in Alta California under the Mexican Republic. The meeting was one of many conducted among the state's Californios under the direction of historian Hubert Bancroft (1832-1918), which would aid in completing a historical compendium on life in early Alta California, what became the *History of California* in 1883. While seated in Rosalia's salon, Cerruti looked with fascination at her immaculately kept collection of Chinese lamps, tables, pictures, and boxes. Out of curiosity, he asked the woman why she preferred Chinese furniture over French or American manufacturers. She replied that in the "olden times," only articles of Chinese make existed in the country, and she did not have a choice on whether to decorate with French or American furniture.⁵²⁵ Rosalía's decades-old furniture reflected an older period in Alta California's history, when the availability of goods, especially luxury items, was mostly limited to those produced in Asia rather than North America or Europe. It underscored an often-neglected aspect of colonial and later Mexican Republic rule in Alta California, one deeply entrenched within cultural and social forces radiating throughout the Pacific Ocean and commencing many centuries ago when the first Manila galleon departed the Philippines in 1571. Long before the Gold Rush (1848-1855) attracted miners and settlers from the United States, Europe, Mexico, Australia, China, and Japan to Alta California seeking riches, the region was already well integrated into a global circulation

⁵²⁵ The United States annexed California under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848; Henry Cerruti, "Rosalía Vallejo," in *Testimonios: Early California Through the Eyes of Women, 1815-1848*, edited by Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 18-19.

of material goods and people crisscrossing the Pacific Ocean. Transpacific exchanges had been shaping the history of the area of California for centuries before the first Anglo-American settlers poured into the territory in the mid-nineteenth century.

The occupation of Alta California was deeply rooted within Spain's broader activities in the Pacific Ocean. When Italian traveler Giovanni Gemelli Careri departed the Philippines in 1699 aboard Spain's treasure ships, dramatic transformations had already begun to take shape within the Spanish Pacific World and the Californias. In 1697, after several failed attempts in the seventeenth century, Spain finally established a permanent presence in Baja California under the Jesuit missionary Juan María de Salvatierra. In the region of the local Moquí called Conchó, the Jesuits constructed Spain's first permanent settlement on the peninsula, the Mission and Royal Presidio of Our Lady of Loreto. The site served as the basis for expanding New Spain's frontiers into the arid and rocky regions of Baja California. After the Jesuit expulsion in 1767, the Franciscans undertook rapid expansion along the coast northward. Colonization in the Californias, especially Alta California, occurred at the twilight of Spain's rule in New Spain and represented the final thrust of colonization in the northern frontier. Unique motivations invigorated aims to occupy such a remote province on New Spain's fringes. Rather than locating riches in precious metals and extractable resources, the security of the profitable Manila galleon trade motivated colonization, which came to define the occupation of the Californias for decades after. Alta California became a bulwark against foreign European and Russian expansion on North America's west coast and guarded the Manila-Acapulco route for fifty-two years under Spanish rule. During the colonial period, the region interacted extensively with ships of diverse nations like Spain, France, England, Russia, and the United States, making it an essential feature of a developing Pacific World in the early nineteenth century.

The chapters in the dissertation reexamine the history of colonization in Alta California and consider the broader developments within the Pacific Ocean during the late-colonial period. It recasts Alta California as not solely a landscape within New Spain's vast and complex northern frontier but one intimately bound within an equally expansive and multidimensional ocean-scape. The study is situated within the intersecting concerns of borderlands and maritime history, principally examining how waterways like the Pacific Ocean and coastal zones became meaningful spaces where diverse people with competing cultures, social frameworks, and political systems negotiated and accommodated one another on the edges of empire. The study mainly concerns how waterways affected and influenced coastal people's lifeways and points of view and how people orientated culture and society around these maritime spaces.⁵²⁶ By looking at the borderlands from a maritime historical perspective, the dissertation seeks to understand the transregional and social history of the province. Through each section, I have argued that the Pacific Ocean has played a relatively overlooked role in the colonization of Alta California. By shifting attention away from land-centric perspectives, we can better understand how Spanish and Native people inhabited a complex, multilayered littoral space where competing interests not only played out on land but also within the maritime geography of the seas surrounding it.

The first chapter analyzed Spain's early interactions with Baja and Alta California and its connections to the lucrative trade between Manila and Acapulco from the sixteenth century. When the first Naos launched from Manila in 1571, it inaugurated nearly two hundred fifty years of uninterrupted trade across the Pacific Ocean between Asia and the Americas. The Philippines, under Spanish rule and Mexican domination, came to depend entirely on the trafficking of Asian

⁵²⁶ Craig A. Lockard, "'The Sea Common to All': Maritime Frontiers, Port Cities, and Chinese Traders in the Southeast Asian Age of Commerce, ca. 1400-1750," *Journal of World History* 21, 2 (June 2010), 220.

products like luxury and ordinary silks and porcelains, exotic spices, and natural resources exchanged for silver from New Spanish and Peruvian mines. The long, arduous six-month crossing from Manila to Acapulco endangered or claimed the lives of many sailors and passengers. Additionally, the success or failure of a single ship to and from Manila threatened the economic vitality of commerce. The Spanish Crown sought to locate a suitable safe port to ensure the safety of the Manila galleon and minimize the inherent risks of transoceanic commerce. The exploration and eventual colonization of Baja and later Alta California placed these frontiers firmly within the geography of the Manila galleon commerce. Chapter two continues by examining the creation of Alta California's littoral borderlands and the influence of the Manila galleons within the missionization program in the late eighteenth century. Here, I argue that scholars have tended to overestimate the relative material self-sufficiency of the mission system under the Franciscans. Although most missions created stable agricultural communities and engaged in production to some degree, they never achieved the productive capacity to meet their material needs completely. Chapter three examines how missionization primarily relied on Native labor to feed and clothe the community. Franciscan fathers sold most agricultural surplus to Spanish and foreign ships for manufactured goods. Jesuits and Franciscans alike understood trade with the Manila galleons as beneficial and necessary for the success of their respective missions.

The following chapter discusses the height of the maritime fur trade in the Pacific Ocean, which coincided with the increased presence of foreign ships on the Alta California coast. Spanish and Native people entered globalized trade by procuring sea otter pelts for transpacific commerce in exchange for manufactured goods. They accommodated foreigners through illegal trade activity and created multifaceted spaces of conflict and compromise within diverse coastal

spaces. Chapter five examines how sailors created enduring material and population circulations within the Eastern Pacific Basin and how their experiences of geographic mobility shaped the maritime history of Alta California. Native and Spanish sailors were the foundation of the littoral borderlands, physically crossing between the marine and terrestrial worlds. And finally, the last chapter deals with Indigenous responses to missionization and how Native people used traditions of flexibility and fluidity to navigate the littoral borderland. Both within the missions themselves and outside of them in *Los Tulares*, Native people continuously created and recreated Indigenous spaces. For them, the littoral borderland was a multifunctional space for acquiring food, allying with foreigners and other Indigenous groups, and trading. Alta California's coastal landscape afforded opportunities for diverse people to confront colonization in an assortment of ways and assert themselves within spaces beyond the reach of the empire.

The dissertation contributes to studies on borderlands by expanding the framework to include spaces not solely within landed boundaries but also those intimately bound within maritime spaces. It attempts to show how the conceptual framework of borderlands can also be applied to expansive oceans and seas, where boundaries and state power were often ambiguous and uncertain. Maritime history provides an ideal framework for assessing the impacts of transregional and global processes within the local and regional context. Additionally, the overemphasis on history taking place exclusively in terrestrial spaces often obscures the lived realities of people whose livelihood depended on the sea. By examining the maritime history of Alta California, the dissertation hopes to elucidate the complicated ways in which water bodies influenced how coastal people lived, both culturally and socially. Additionally, it seeks to point to new understandings about how geographically peripheral regions influenced more significant trends on a regional and global level. The study invites further discussion on how maritime

systems like oceans and seas, marine commerce, shipbuilding, seafaring, port cities, and coastal communities affected the possibilities and limitations of empire-building on the margins. Further inquiry is needed to investigate other coastal zones within colonial Latin America on both Pacific and Atlantic coasts, which were similarly tied to maritime traffic lanes, and assess the impacts of broader trends in world history on regional developments.

Glossary

Key Terms and Concepts

Alcaldes: Municipal officer with judicial and administrative functions.

Boletas: Cargo space allocations aboard the Manila galleons.

Cabezas de barangay: Municipal officers with judicial and administrative functions in barangays or barrios in the Philippines.

Chino: Denoted a person from South Asia or Southeast Asia.

Consulado: A tribunal and guild of merchants.

Crillos: Denoted a person born in New Spain or South America of pure Spanish descent.

Filipinos: Denotes a person born in the Philippines of pure Spanish descent.

Habilitado: Paymaster or presidio quartermaster.

Indiano: Denoted a Spanish person who lived in New Spain or South America or had returned to Spain wealthy from the Americas.

Indios Luzones: Denoted a Christianized Indigenous person from the Philippines, particularly from the Island of Luzon.

Jayuntes: A dormitory for Indigenous men in the Alta California missions.

Los Tulares: The central valley of Alta California, literally “the place of tule reeds.”

Manila Galleon/Naos de China: The Spanish galleons, or later frigates, carried Asian goods and Mexican silver across the Pacific Ocean from the 16th to 19th centuries.

Mestizos de Sangley: Denoted a person of mixed Chinese and Spanish ancestry or Chinese, Spanish, and Indios Luzones ancestry.

Monjerios: A dormitory for Indigenous women in the Alta California missions.

Paseos: Travel passes for Indigenous people at the Alta California missions.

Polos y servicios: Forced conscription for projects involving building or working on the Manila galleon; based on the repartimiento, or the conscription for work projects under the New Laws of 1542.

Sangley: Denoted a person of pure overseas Chinese ancestry, literally meaning “merchant traveler” or “frequent visitor.”

Tomol: A wood plank canoe among Indigenous coastal communities.

Vecino: Denoted a citizen of a city or town.

Key Naval Terms

Arráez: The Skipper or master of a sailing launch.

Asentista del bizocho: A contractor supplying galletas/bizocho (hardtack) for the Manila galleon.

Cápellan de barco: A priest who has chaplaincy aboard ships. Responsible for mass.

Consulado de Mare: The judicial and mercantile institution that governs maritime law on Spanish ships.

Frigate: A fully-rigged ship built for speed and maneuverability with one armed deck.

Galletas: A dense biscuit or cracker made from flour, water, and salt for long sea voyages.

Galleon: A square-rigged ship with three or more decks and masts for war and trade.

Grumete: The cabin boy and the lowest-ranking member of a crew responsible for waiting on officers and passengers.

Guardían: The Boatswain’s Mate, or a master of seamanship. Responsible for performing all tasks connected to deck maintenance, small boat operations, navigation, and supervising all crewmembers.

Marinero: A sailor, responsible for performing all tasks related to deck maintenance and sailing.

Pajes: The page, one of the lowest ranks aboard ships. Responsible for cleaning, distributing provisions, and assisting the Chaplain with reciting the prayer.

Piloto: The captain, the highest rank aboard ships. Responsible for supervising all crewmembers and navigating the ship.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Spanish Vessels on the Alta California Coast, 1786-1809: Cargo, Destination, and Time in Port from Adele Ogden, “Trading Vessels on the California Coast, 1786-1848,” BANC MSS 80-36c.

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Favorita</i> (with <i>Princesa</i>)	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara	Memorias	-----	1786	3	1 month
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	1060 sea otter	1786	4	1 month
<i>San Andrés</i>	Manila	Monterey (repairs), San Blas	-----	-----	1786	5	Vessel repairs, unknown
<i>Favorita</i> (with <i>San Carlos</i>)	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	1750 sea otter, joint <i>San Carlos</i>	1787	6	2 months
<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	Monterey	Memorias	<i>Favorita</i> cargo	1787	7	2 weeks
<i>San José de Gracia</i>	Cavite	Monterey	---	---	1787	8	9 days
<i>Aránzazu</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	116 sea otter, tallow	1788	9	4 months
<i>Princesa Esteban Martínez</i>	San Blas	Northwest Coast, Monterey, Santa Barbara	-----	Lumber from Santa Barbara to Monterey	1788	10	2 months
<i>Aránzazu</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Santa Barbara	Memorias	234 otter skins, 32 fox skins	1789	11	19 days

<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Santa Barbara, Monterey, NW Coast	----	----	1789	12	1 month, 12 days
<i>Aranzazu</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Monterey	----	----	1790	13	2 months
<i>Princesa real</i>	San Blas	Nootka, NW Coast, Monterey	----	----	1790	14	1 month, 25 days
<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	Nootka, NW Coast, Monterey	----	656 otter skins	1790	15	1 month, 10 days
<i>Aránzazu</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Monterey, Nootka, Monterey	Memorias	Grain and supplies from Monterey to Nootka	1791	16	17 days
<i>Atrevida</i>	Acapulco	San Blas, NW Coast, Nootka, Monterey	----	2326 pounds kidney beans, 973 pounds peas, lentils	1791	17	15 days
<i>Descubierta Malaspina</i>	Acapulco	San Blas, NW Coast, Nootka, Monterey, San Blas	----	-----	1791	18	15 days
<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	Nootka, NW Coast, Nootka, Monterey	----	----	1791	19	16 days
<i>Santa Saturina</i>	San Blas	Nootka, NW Coast, Monterey	----	-----	1791	20	1 month
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Neah Bay, Monterey	----	----	1792 -93	21	3 months, six days
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	-----	1792	24	3 months, 24 days
<i>Santa Gertrudis</i>	Callao	Acapulco, San Blas,	----	----	1792	27	2 months, 16 days

		Nootka, Monterey, San Blas					
<i>Santa Saturina</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey	-----	-----	1792 - 1793	28	4 months, 6 days
<i>Sutil</i>	San Blas	Acapulco, Nootka, NW Coast, Monterey	-----	-----	1792	29	1 month, 13 days
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	NW Coast, Trinidad Bay, Bodega Bay, San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	-----	Timber, Monterey to Santa Barbara	1793	30	2 months, 15 days
<i>Aránzazu</i>	San Blas	Bodega Bay, San Francisco, Monterey, San Diego	-----	-----	1793	31	3 months
<i>Mexicana</i>	San Blas	NW Coast, Neah Bay, Trinidad Bay, Bodega Bay, San Francisco	-----	-----	1793	36	1 month, 15 days
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Nootka, San Francisco, Monterey, San Diego	5 deserters from Vancouver, Monterey to San Blas	Timber, Monterey to San Diego	1793	39	4 months, 3 days
<i>Sutil</i>	San Blas	Bodega Bay, San Francisco	-----	-----	1793	40	4 months, 23 days
<i>Aránzazu</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Monterey	-----	-----	1794	41	1 month
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey,	5 padres, San Blas	5 deserters from	1794	42	3 months?

		Santa Barbara, San Diego	to San Francisco	Vancouver's vessel			
<i>Orcasitas</i>	Cavite	Monterey, San Blas	-----	-----	1794	44	21 days
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Nooka, Monterey	-----	Sardines	1794 - 1795	45	5 months
<i>Valdés</i>	Cavite	Monterey, San Blas	-----	-----	1794	46	28 days
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Nootka	-----	-----	1795	47	16 days
<i>Aránzazu</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara	Memorias	-----	1795	48	3 months
<i>San Carlos</i>	Nootka	Monterey, San Blas	21 Nootka natives	-----	1795	51	1 month
<i>Activo</i>	Macao?	Monterey	-----	-----	1796	52	July 21 to August 2, unknown
<i>Aránzazu</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey	7 padres, San Blas to San Francisco and Monterey, Memorias	-----	1796	53	3 months
<i>Concepción</i>	Acapulco	Manila, Santa Barbara, San Blas	-----	-----	1796	54	7 days
<i>Sutil</i>	San Blas	Nootka, Monterey	5 English seamen, Nootka to San Blas	-----	1796	58	16 days
<i>Valdés</i>	San Blas	Monterey	Soldiers, San Blas to Monterey	-----	1796	59	20 days
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	Manila, Monterey	-----	-----	1797	60	3 days
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey, San Diego	5 soldiers, 9 settlers, 2 smiths, 7 padres to San	-----	1797	61	5 months, 24 days

			Francisco and Monterey, 4 padres to Monterey, Memorias				
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	La Purísima, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	-----	1797	62	5 months, 15 days
<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	San Francisco (ran aground)	Memorias	-----	1797	63	7 months, 19 days
<i>San Fernando de Magallanes</i>	Cavite	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Blas	-----	-----	1797	64	18 days
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	Monterey, San Francisco	Memorias	-----	1798	65	June, Unknown
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	Santa Barbara, Monterey, San Francisco	Memorias, 8 padres, 24 convicts to Monterey	25.5 arrobas hemp	1798	66	2 months
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey, San Diego	Memorias, 9 padres, Diego Borica's family	4 padres to San Blas	1799 - 1800	69	8 months
<i>Concepción (with Princesa)</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	842.5 pounds hemp	1800	74	3 months
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias, soldiers, 4 padres, 20 individuals	-----	1800	75	3 months
<i>Sutil</i>	San Blas	Monterey	-----	Flour	1800	76	November unknown

<i>Concepción</i> (with <i>Princesa</i>)	San Blas	Bodega, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	1836 arobas flour, cattle	1801	77	3 months
<i>Princesa</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	80	-----
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey	Memorias	-----	1802	81	10 days
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias, 7127 pesos in silver	-----	1802	82	4 months
<i>Activo</i> (with <i>Princesa</i>)	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias, Company of volunteers	-----	1803	83	3 months
<i>Concepción</i>	Manila	Santa Barbara	7 sick men left at Santa Barbara	15 arobas and six pounds hemp	1803	88	July 25, unknown
<i>Horacitas</i>	San Blas	San Diego	-----	-----	1803	91	July 16, unknown
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	G.W. Eayrs, Monterey to San Blas	1803	97	3 months
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	11 Indian prisoners, San Diego/San Francisco to San Blas	1804	97	3 months
<i>Concepción</i>	Manila	Santa Barbara, Monterey, San Blas	-----	-----	1804 - 1805	98	2 months?
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	6630 arobas tallow, 411 fanegas grain, 42 arobas wool, 25	1804	103	4 months, 6 days

				arrobas tanned cattle hides, 7 bundles of otter skins, 4 bundles sheepskins, 6 arrobas soap, 18 arrobas and 13 pounds hemp, 5 mules, 850 pesos			
<i>Activo (with Princesa)</i>	San Blas	San Francisco	Memorias	292 otter skins, 2 bundles shammy skins, 2 bundles undressed sheepskins, 300 undressed sheepskins, 1 bundle and 310 tanned cattle hides, 3 barrels salt, 1 barrel sardines, 1 barrel flour, 13 arrobas wool, 23 fanegas beans, 5 mules	1805	105	1 month
<i>Princesa (with Activo)</i>	San Blas	Monterey	Memorias	5 arrobas hemp, 3 bundles otter skins, 1 bundle wool, 5	1805	108	1 month

				bundles shammy skins, 880 hides, 6 goat skins, 3 barrels salted fish, 8 barrels flour, 1 barrel vinegar, 853 botas tallow, 4.5 bundles soap, 3 barrels grease, 10 mules, 3000 pesos silver coins			
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	74.7 arrobas, 2 Russian sailors, 3 Anglo- American sailors, 2 NW coast Indians, deserters from the <i>Juno</i> , San Francisco to San Blas	1806	109	2 months, 21 days
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias, 4 friars	Tallow, flour, soap, hemp, aguardiente , 2 NW Coast Indians to San Blas	1806	120	7 months
<i>Activo</i>	San Blas	Monterey, San Francisco, Santa	Memorias	Planks from Santa Barbara to San Diego	1807	124	8 months, 14 days

		Barbara, San Diego					
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey	Memorias	-----	1807	127	4 months
<i>Princesa (with Activo)</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego, Monterey	Memorias, planks from Santa Barbara to San Diego	451 arrobas and 10 lbs hemp, 1138 botas tallow and Manteca, 535 tanned hides and sole- leather, 24 tanned deerskins, 193 arrobas wool, 9 barrels salmon, 486 undressed sheepskins, 273 otter skins, 31 barrels sardines, 60 pairs shoes, 9 bearskins, 3 bundles flax, 48 oak planks, 6 mules	1807	134	6 months, 10 days
<i>Concepción</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	Materials for Fort Gujarros, Monterey to San Diego	1808	138	6 months
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	Memorias	-----	1808	143	6 months
<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	Monterey, San	Memorias	-----	1808	144	5 months

		Francisco, Santa Barbara, San Diego					
<i>Princesa</i>	San Blas	Monterey, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, San Diego	-----	3329 arrobas and 20 lbs hemp, 5 Anglo- Americans, 2 NW Coast Indians, deserters from Mercury, San Francisco to San Blas	1809	150	5 months
<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	Monterey, San Diego	Memorias	800 arrobas and 23 lbs hemp	1809	152	7 months

Appendix 2. Spanish Vessels on the Alta California Coast, 1810-1819: Cargo, Destination, and Time in Port from Adele Ogden, "Trading Vessels on the California Coast, 1786-1848," BANC MSS 80-36c.

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in Port
Activo	Manila, San Blas	Monterey	Memories	-----	1810	153	??
Mosca	Manila	Monterey, San Blas	-----	-----	1810	161	2 weeks
Princesa	San Blas	San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Francisco	Memorias	3,820- and 7-pounds hemp, 160 sea otter skins; Indian neophytes San Francisco to Monterey, 3 deserters from Mercury to San Blas	1810	164	2 months, 19 days
Mexicano	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, Acapulco	-----	Tallow	1811	168	3 weeks
Flora	San Blas	Monterey, San Buenaventura, San Pedro, Acapulco	-----	Tallow; 500 bots lard, 1500 cattle hides, 1000 tallow from San Buenaventura	1812	174	2 months
Flora	San Blas	Monterey, Point Conception (captured Mercury), Santa	-----	16394 arrobas tallow, 234 tanned cowhides, 120	1813	180	7 months

		Barbara, San Juan Capistrano		blankets, 3 packages coarse woolen cloth, 4 packages sheepskins, 6 barrel sardines, 2 barrels salmon, 8 barrels aguardiente, 1 barrel wine, 3 packages seeds			
<i>Santa Catalina</i>	Lima, Acapulco, San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Pedro, San Juan Capistrano	-----	Tallow	1813	186	1.5 months
<i>San Carlos</i>	Manila	Monterey, San Blas	-----	-----	1814	203	~2 months
<i>Santa Catalina</i>	Monterey	San Francisco, Santa Barbara, San Diego, San Blas, Callao	-----	Eayrs and 4 crew from Mercury to San Blas	1814	204	4 months
<i>Santa Eulalia</i>	Manila	San Francisco, Monterey, San Diego, San Quentin, San Blas	-----	500 arrobas tallow, 3 barrels wine, Manila cargo	1814	206	~3 months
<i>Paz y Religión</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Diego	-----	1087 bots tallow	1815	216	7 months
<i>San Carlos</i>	Acapulco	San Blas, San Diego, Santa Barbara, San Pedro	Memorias	Tallow	1815	218	10 months

<i>Cazadora</i>	Panama	Monterey, San Pedro, San Diego (wintered), San Diego, Santa Barbara, San Juan Capistrano, Acapulco, Callao	-----	2336 botas tallow, 619 arrobas soap, 150 cattle hides, meal	1817 - 1818	242	10 months
<i>Hermosa Mexicana</i>	Callao	Monterey, Santa Barbara	-----	Tallow	1817	248	2.5 months
<i>San Antonio</i>	Callao	Monterey, San Pedro, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara	-----	Tallow	1817	252	1.5 months
<i>Hermosa Hermosa</i>	Callao	Santa Barbara, Monterey, Refugio, Santa Barbara	-----	Tallow	1818	258	2.5 months
<i>San Francisco de Paula</i>	Mazatlan	California coast	-----	----	1818	263	??
<i>San Ruperto</i>	Manila	Monterey, San Pedro, San Blas	Merchandise valued 14192 pesos, including amount for supplies, repairs	-----	1818	264	2 months
<i>Nuestra Senora Reina de los Angeles</i>	San Blas	Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Pedro	Military supplies and a few commercial goods	-----	1819	267	2 months
<i>San Carlos</i>	San Blas	Monterey, Santa Cruz,	-----	Tallow	1819	269	1 month

		Santa Barbara, San Pedro					
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Appendix 3. Foreign Vessels on the Alta California Coast, 1786-1809: Cargo, Destination, and Time in Port from Adele Ogden, "Trading Vessels on the California Coast, 1786-1848," BANC MSS 80-36c.

France

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Astrolabe</i> (with <i>Boussole</i>)	Breat, France	NW Coast, Lituya Bay, Monterey, Macao, Cavite	-----	2600 otter pelts, mostly from NW Coast (joint cargo)	1786	1	10 days
<i>Boussole</i>	----	----	----	----	-----	2	-----

Britain

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Butterworth</i>	Nootka	Santa Cruz, Maui, San Francisco, Chatham Strait, California Coast, Galapagos, Englad	-----	100 tons sea lion and sea elephant oil, obtained on California coast 1794	1793- 1794	32	3 days near San Francisco, April Unknown on California coast
<i>Jackal</i>	Nootka	Hawaii, Bodega Bay, Monterey, Chatham Strait, Hawaii, Canton, Yakutat Bay, Port Mulgrave,	-----	-----	1793- 1795	34	March, unknown days, arrived in Chatham Strait July 20

		Nootka, Hawaii, China					
<i>Prince Lee Boo</i>	Nootka	Bodega, Monterey, Chatham Strait, Hawaii, Canton, Nootka, Hawaii, Canton	-----	-----	1793	37	March, unknown, arrived Chatham Strait July 20
<i>Jenny</i>	Bristol	California Coast, Columbia River, Kaigahnee, Queen Charlotte Islands, Nottoka, Hawaii, Canton	-----	-----	1794	43	April, unknown
<i>Phoenix</i>	Bengal	Sitka, Queen Charlotte Islands, Nootka Sound, Columbia River, NW Coast, Santa Barbara, Hawaii, Canton	-----	-----	1795	49	7 days
<i>Resolution</i>	-----	Todos Santos, San José del Cabo	-----	-----	1795	50	August 23, unknown
<i>Otter</i>	-----	-----	-----	-----	1796	55	-----

United States

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Garland</i>	Boston	NW Coast, Hawaii, Islas Juan Fernandez, Hawaii, California Coast, Todos Santos, Santo Tomas, detained in Acapulco	-----	-----	1798 - 1799	67	10 days
<i>Eliza</i>	Boston	Hawaii, NW Coast, San Francisco, San Blas, Hawaii, Macao, Canton	Otter skins	-----	1799	70	7 days
<i>Betsy</i>	Boston	Chile, NW Coast, San Diego, Cabo San Lucas, San Blas, Canton	-----	-----	1800	70	7 days
<i>Enterprise</i>	New York	San Blas, San José del Cabo, Kodiak, San Diego, Hawaii, Canton	-----	-----	1801 - 1802	78	5 months, 3 days
<i>Alexander</i>	Boston	San Diego, Todos Santos, San Quintin, San Juan Capistrano, San Francisco, NW Coast	-----	491 otter pelts, confiscated in San Diego	1802 - 1803	84	3 months ?
<i>Alexander Eayrs</i>	Boston	NW Coast, San Francisco,	-----	-----	1803	86	7 days

		Monterey, San Juan Capistrano, San Quintin, Canton					
<i>Hazard</i>	Providence , RI	Hawaii, China, Juan de Fuca Strait, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, San Juan Capistrano, San Diego, Monterey	-----	-----	1803	89	1 month, 7 days
<i>Lelia Byrd</i>	Hamburg	San Blas, San Diego, San Quentin, San Borja, San José del Cabo, Cabo San Lucas, Hawai, Whampoa	-----	1600 California sea-otter skins (purchased at San Blas, January 1803, 3 horses	1803	92	1.5 months
<i>O'Cain</i>	Boston	San Diego, San Quentin, todos Santos, Whampoa	-----	1100 sea otter skins (700 skins sold to Californians) , John Brown and Negro left vessel in San Quintin 1804	1803 - 1804	94	3 months, 13 days
<i>Hazard</i>	Providence	Hawaii, Maui, San Francisco, Queen Charlotte Islands	-----	-----	1804	99	20 days
<i>Hazard</i>	Providence	San Buenaventur a, San Juan Capistrano,	-----	-----	1804	101	9 days

		San Diego, San Miguel Mission, San Rafael, Whamboa					
<i>Leila Bird</i>	Whamboa	San Francisco, San Buenaventur a, Islas Cedros, Guaymas, Rio Yaqui, Mazatlan, Ampala	-----	Furs	1804	102	12 days
<i>Leila Bird</i>	Ampala	California coast, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbarra, etc. to Hawaii	-----	Sea-otter skins	1805	106	5 months, 6 days
<i>Eclipse</i>	Boston	Hawaii, San Juan Capistrano, San Diego, Cabo San Lucas, Sitka, Kagasaki, Kamchatka	-----	-----	1806	110	1 month
<i>Mercury</i>	Boston	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Pedro, Santa Catalina Island, El Rosario, Todos Santos, Santa Tomas, Hawaii, Canton	-----	2848 otter skins	1806 - 1807	114	9 months
<i>O'Cain</i>	Oahu	Sitka, Isla Cedros, San	-----	Otter pelts, fur seal skins	1806	116	1 month

		Borja, San Quentin					
<i>Peacock</i>	Boston	Hawaii, San Pedro, San Juan Capistrano, San Diego	-----	Seized at San Juan Capistrano	1806	118	1 month
<i>Tamana</i>	Hawaii	San Luis Obispo, Refugio, San Buenaventura, Santa Catalina, Cabo San Lucas, more	-----	2427 otter pelts	1806	122	5 months, 17 days
<i>Amethyst</i>	Boston	Isla Cedros, Isla San Benito, Isla Guadalupe, Isla Cedros, Sydney	-----	-----	1807	126	11 days
<i>Derby</i>	Boston	Canton, Kodiak Island, Bodega Bay, NW Coast	50 kodiak hunters, 25 baidarkas	-----	1807	128	4 months
<i>Maryland</i>	New York	San Jose del Cabo	----	----	1807	129	1 month
<i>O'Cain</i>	Hawaii	San Pedro, Santa Catalina, Todos Santos, San Quintin, Santo Domingo, Isla Cedros, Sitka, Canton	120-150 kodiak hunters, 12 indian women, 2 Indian boys, 3 Russians	4819 otter pelts, sealskins	1807	130	8 months
<i>Peacock</i>	Boston	Kodiak Island, Bodega Bay, San Quentin, Sitka, Hawaii,	-----	1231 otter skins	1807	132	1.5 months

		Macao, Batavia					
<i>Tamana</i>	Hawaii	Refugio, Santa Catalina Island, Santa Cruz Island, San Miguel, San Quentin	----	613 otter skins, sealskins	1807	136	6 months
<i>Mercury</i>	Canton	Kodiak, Queen Charlotte Islands, Bodega, San Francisco, San Diego, San Pedro, San Juan Capistrano, NW Coast	-----	2300 otter skins	1808 - 1809	143	11 months
<i>Blurry</i>	Boston	Alaska, California	----	----	1808	145	??
<i>Blurry</i>	Boston	---	---	---	1809	---	--
<i>Mercury</i>	NW Coast	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Sitka	-----	Sea otter skins, provisions	1809 - 1810	148	6 months

Russia

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Juno</i>	Sitka	San Francisco	-----	381 arrobas and 15 pounds flour, 671 fanegas wheat, 117 fanegas barley, 140 fanegas	1806	112	3 months, 3 days

				peas, 14 fanegas chickpeas, 60 fanegas beans, 26 arrobs and 14 pounds dried beef, 797 arrobas tallow, 105 arrobas salt, 25 arrobas wool			
<i>Kodiak</i>	Sitka	Trinidad Bay, Bodega Bay	-----	2350 otter skins	1808	139	8.5 months

Appendix 4. Foreign Vessels on the Alta California Coast, 1810-1819: Cargo, Destination, and Time in Port, from Adele Ogden, "Trading Vessels on the California Coast, 1786-1848," BANC MSS 80-36c.

France

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Bordelais</i>	Bordeaux	Callao, San Francisco, Nootka, Fort Ross, San Francisco, Sitka	-----	Otter skins, produce; produce	1817, 1818	240	2 weeks

Britain

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
??					1814		
<i>Isaac Todd</i>	Portsmouth	Monterey, San Francisco, Baker's Bay	-----	4 cattle, tallow, hides	1814	195	3 months
<i>Columbia</i>	??	Monterey, Sitka, Columbia River, Hawaii, Macao	-----	Provisions (beef, flour, corn, beans, peas, tallow)	1815	209	~2 weeks
<i>Colonel Allan</i>	??	Columbia River, Monterey	-----	Flour, tallow, Manteca, wheat, corn	1816	225	1.5 months
<i>Columbia</i>	Columbia River	Hawaii, Sitka, Bodega,	-----	Fur-seal skins	1817	245	??

		Brake's Bay					
<i>Columbia</i>	England	Monterey	-----	30 arrobas flour, 3 steers	1818	255	4 months

United States

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Albatross</i>	Boston	Santa Barbara Island, Sitka	-----	-----	1810	154	2 months
<i>Albatross</i>	Sitka	Drake's Bay, Santa Barbara Island, Baja California	-----	1190 otter skins, 1220 tails, beaver skins, land otter skins	1810-1811	156	Few days
<i>Isabella</i>	Sitka	San Francisco Bay, Drake's Bay	-----	2976 otter skins	1810-1811	158	2.5 months
<i>Mercury</i>	Sitka	Drake's Bay, Baja California, Canton, Macao	----	----	1810	160	Few months
<i>O'Cain</i>	Boston	Sitka, Drake's Bay, Baja California coast, Hawaii, Canton	1600 otter skins, 18509 sealskins from Farallon Islands	-----	1810-1811	162	A few months
<i>Albatross, 1811</i>	Kaighnee	Farallon Islands, Hawaii	-----	56017 seal skins, 1124	1811	165	??

				from Baja California			
<i>Albatross</i>	Hawaii	Farallon Islands, Drake's Bay	-----	8000 fur seal skins	1812	169	Couple weeks
<i>Amethyst</i>	Canton, Sitka	San Quintin	-----	1442 otter skins	1812	170	??
<i>Charon</i>	Boston	NW Coast, Farallon Islands, Hawaii	-----	1792 otter skins	1812	171	??
<i>Mercury</i>	Sitka	Bodega Bay, San Luis Obispo, Refugio, San Quentin, Cabo San Lucas	-----	500 otter skins, 60,000 pesos	1812	177	3 months
<i>Katherine</i>	Boston	Hawaii, San Quentin	-----	1516 otter skins	1812	175	??
<i>Albatross</i>	Whampoa	Hawaii, Astoria, California Coast	-----	-----	1813	179	??
<i>Mercury (seized by Flora)</i>	Sitka	Bodega Bay, San Luis Obispo, Point Conception, Santa Barbara, Monterey, San Juan Capistrano	1603 otter skins, 947 otter tails, Chinese goods, pesos	-----	1813	182	7 months
<i>O'Cain</i>	Whampoa	Hawaii, California Coast	-----	-----	1813	185	??
<i>Albastross</i>	Hawaii	Hawaii, Santa Barbara, California Coast	-----	-----	1814	187	1 month

<i>Charon</i>	Hawaii	California coast	----	----	1814	187	1 month
<i>Forester</i>	Hawaii	Bodega Bay, San Luis Obispo	----	3400 seal skins	1814	191	2 months
<i>Forester</i>	Sitka	Baja California, near Loreto, Point Conception, Bodega Bay, Kamchatka	-----	3 Japanese castaways from California Coast, to Sitka	1814-1815	192	4 months
<i>Isabella</i>	Whampoa	Hawaii, California Coast, Sitka, Canton	-----	-----	1814	197	1 month
<i>O'Cain</i>	Hawaii	California Coast, NW Coast, Norfolk Sound	-----	-----	1814	199	1 month
<i>Pedler</i>	Hawaii	Columbia River, Sitka, Bodega, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, New York	-----	252 bushels wheat (from San Francisco, for RAC)	1814	201	2 months
<i>Forester</i>	Kamchatka	San Luis Obispo, Hawaii	-----	-----	1815	211	~2 weeks
<i>Albatross</i>	Sitka	Santa Barbara, Refugio, Hawaii	-----	-----	1816	221	3 days
<i>Atlas</i>	Boston	New Holland, Hawai, Sitka, Santa	-----	-----	1816	223	9 months

		Barbara, Monterey, Canton					
<i>Enterprise</i>	New York	Hawaii, Sitka, Bodega Bay, Canton	-----	-----	1816	226	3 days
<i>Lydia</i>	Canton	Sitka, Fort Ross, Sana Barbara, Monterey, Santa Barbara, Hawaii	-----	-----	1816	228	2 months
<i>O'Cain</i>	Sitka	Isla Cedros, Hawaii, Canton	-----	-----	1816	229	??
<i>Sultan</i>	Boston	Sitka, San Luis Obispo, Monterey, NW Coast, Hawaii, Canton	-----	-----	1816	232	4 months
<i>Traveller</i>	Canton	Bodega Bay, Santa Barbara, San Pedro, San Diego San Jose del Cabo, -- --	-----	40 beams, 30 planks, Monterey to Santa Barbara; wood, Santa Barbara to Santa Cruz; 200 fanegas corn, 100 fanegas beans, San Diego to Loreto	1816	234	10 months
<i>Avon</i>	Boston	Hawaii, Sitka, San Pedro,	-----	-----	1817	236	1 month

		Channel Islands					
<i>Bordeaux Packet</i>	Boston	Hawaii, Cabo San Lucas, Todos Santos, San Juan Capistrano, San Luis Obispo	----	-----	1817	238	2 months
<i>Eagle</i>	Boston	Hawaii, California Coast, Sitka, Canton	-----	-----	1818	256	Few weeks

Russia

Vessel	Origin	Destination	Inward Cargo	Outward Cargo	Year	Page Number	Time in port
<i>Chirikov</i>	Sitka	Bodega, Farallon Islands	-----	123 otter skins, sea-lion meat	1811	167	2 months
<i>Chirikov</i>	Sitka	Bodega Bay	-----	-----	1812	173	6 months
<i>Il'Mena</i>	Sitka	Bodega, San Francisco, Santa Barbara Chanel Islands, San Pedro	-----	392 otter pelts, 10,000 piastres, provisions	1814	193	11 men seized on California coast
<i>Chirikov</i>	Bodega	San Francisco, Sitka	-----	431.75 fanegas wheat, 25.5 fanegas flour, 7 fenegas tallow, dried beef, 8 otter skins,	1815	207	~2 months

				2630 bushels wheat			
<i>Il'mena</i>	San Nicolas Island	San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Pedro	-----	955 sea otter skins from Santa Barbara Channel Islands, salt, wheat	1815 - 1816	212	3 months
<i>Suvorov</i>	Sitka	San Francisco, Callao, Kronshtadt	-----	Provisions	1815	219	9 days
<i>Chirikov</i>	Sitka	Monterey, Santa Barbara	-----	Provisions , 15 prisoners, Russian and Aleuts, Santa Barbara to Sitka	1817	244	3 weeks
<i>Cossack</i>	Boston	Hawaii, Sitka, Canton, San Jose del Cabo, Bahia de los Muertos, Loreto	-----	-----	1817	246	2 months
<i>Kutuzov</i>	Kronshtadt	Callao, Bodega, San Francisco	-----	358 fanegas wheat, 256 fanegas barley, 109 fenegas peas and beans, 180 arrobas flour; 203 arrobas tallow and lard, 808	1816, 1817	250	25 days

				bushels wheat, 578 bushels barley, 4590 pounds flour, 263 bushels beans and peas, 5177 pounds tallow and lard			
<i>Clarion</i>	Boston	Cape of Good Hope, Santa Barbara, Tasmania, Sitka, Hawaii, Canton	----	Otter skins	1818	253	5 days
<i>Kamchatka</i>	Portsmouth	Kamchatka, Kodiak, Farallon Islands, Monterey, Fort Ross, Hawaii, Manila, Kronshtadt	-----	-----	1818	259	1 month
<i>Kutuzov</i>	Sitka	Monterey, Santa Cruz, Monterey	-----	72 otter skins, 3140 wheat, 500 fenegas barley, 1083 arrobas tallow and lard, 540 arrobas dried beef; Monterey and Santa Cruz, 7091	1818	261	1.5 months

				bushels wheat, 1128 bushels barley, 2907 lbs flour, 2177 bushels beans and peas, 13770 lbs dried and salted meat, 27617 tallow and lard			
<i>Ship</i>	??	San Pedro	-----	Seals	1818	265	4 days

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Curriculum Vitae

Chantra Vanna Potts received his bachelor's degree in European history from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L) in 2015. He later obtained a master's degree in borderlands history from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) in 2018. He has served as a Teaching Assistant and Instructor at UTEP and a teaching fellow at the Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. He has presented his work at various historical conferences in Texas and the Southwest. Previously, he has worked as a history tutor for the UW-L history department and as a volunteer at the Sin Fronteras Bracero Archive in El Paso.

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