



University of Pennsylvania
ScholarlyCommons

Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations

Spring 2010

Before We Were Chicanas/Os: The Mexican American Experience in California Higher Education, 1848-1945

Christopher Tudico

University of Pennsylvania, ctudico@dolphin.upenn.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations>

 Part of the [Chicana/o Studies Commons](#), [History Commons](#), and the [Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Tudico, Christopher, "Before We Were Chicanas/Os: The Mexican American Experience in California Higher Education, 1848-1945" (2010). *Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations*. 148.
<https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/148>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/148>
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.

Before We Were Chicanas/Os: The Mexican American Experience in California Higher Education, 1848-1945

Abstract

Mexican American students have a long and proud history of enrolling in colleges and universities across the state of California for nearly 160 years, since shortly after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Yet, inexplicably, historians of higher education have virtually ignored the Mexican American experience in California higher education. Based on the examination of primary sources such as the diary of Californio Jesús María Estudillo, the records of the University of California, and the college student-led Mexican American Movement's newspaper, *The Mexican Voice*, this study reconstructs the history of the Mexican American experience in California higher education from not long after statehood through World War II. The children of Californios (wealthy landholders who stressed their "Spanish" heritage) attended Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame from the early 1850s to mid 1870s, and Mexicans and Californios also took part in the preparatory program known as the Fifth Class at the University of California in the early 1870s. These members of the Mexican community participated in higher education in order to acquire the skills (such as mastering the English language) that best equipped them to maintain their station near the top of California society. By the 1930s, the sons and daughters of Mexican immigrants attended colleges and universities across California in numbers large enough to form student organizations such as the Mexican American Movement (MAM). This new generation of Mexicans viewed a college education as a means to have a better life for themselves, their family, and their community.

Degree Type

Dissertation

Degree Name

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Graduate Group

Education

First Advisor

Dr. Marybeth Gasman

Keywords

Mexican American History, Chicano Studies, Higher Education, College Students, California Colleges & Universities

Subject Categories

Chicana/o Studies | History | Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education

BEFORE *WE* WERE CHICANAS/OS: THE MEXICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
IN CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION, 1848-1945

Christopher Tudico

A DISSERTATION

in

EDUCATION

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania
in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2010

Supervisor of Dissertation:

Marybeth Gasman, Associate Professor of Education

Graduate Group Chair:

Stanton E. F. Wortham, Professor of Education

Dissertation Committee:

Marybeth Gasman, Associate Professor of Education

Shaun R. Harper, Assistant Professor of Education

John R. Thelin, Professor of Education, University of Kentucky

Before *We* Were Chicanas/os: The Mexican American Experience in California Higher
Education, 1848-1945

COPYRIGHT

2010

Christopher Louis Tudico

Acknowledgements

As my journey to earn a PhD draws to a close, I would be remiss if I did not thank those who have honored me with their support over the last several years. First, the chair of my dissertation, Professor Marybeth Gasman, single-handedly fought on my behalf to first enter the PhD program at Penn GSE. Without her courage and determination, none of this journey would have ever taken place. I cannot thank her enough for giving me a chance—I trust I have not let her down. Once at GSE, Marybeth served as my mentor and advisor, and has guided me throughout this entire process. Because of her, I know what kind of faculty member I want to be. I also owe a great debt of gratitude to the two other members of my committee, Professor Shaun Harper and Professor John Thelin. Since coming to Penn, Shaun has enthusiastically supported each and every one of my endeavors as I moved forward in my graduate career. Professor Thelin, my wise grand-mentor and Assistant Analytic Strength Coach, generously agreed to serve as an outside reader on my committee, despite all of his commitments at the University of Kentucky. Both Professor Harper and Professor Thelin provided me with helpful feedback during my proposal defense, suggestions I incorporated into my study as it reached fruition.

In addition, the Library of Congress, the Bancroft Library at the University of California, and the Santa Clara University Archive each housed primary sources that I based my study on. The rich stories of the Mexican American experience in California higher education are located within the walls of these outstanding libraries and archives, and I am thankful I had the privilege to draw upon their expansive primary sources.

I would also like to thank Penn GSE, for I have treasured each and every moment I have had as a student at this amazing school. The initial three years of funding Penn

GSE provided allowed me to begin my graduate career, as well this current project. In addition, the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation has generously funded my last two years as a PhD student. At Macy, I owe both Dr. George E. Thibault and Marc A. Nivet a great deal of thanks; as their understanding and flexibility not only gave me the opportunity to conduct research on behalf of the Foundation, but to complete my own study as well.

One friendship has been especially instrumental as I move closer to completing my time as a graduate student. Valerie Lundy-Wagner and I met fourteen years ago this summer, at LEAD, a summer enrichment program held at Columbia in New York City. Fast forward to the present, and we are still together. After encouraging one another for several years as we finished a number of other pursuits, I convinced Valerie to join me at Penn GSE four years ago, a decision I never regretted. What better way to go through an experience like this but to have one of your best friends by your side. We took classes, attended conferences, and stopped by many a happy hour over the last four years. And this May we will graduate at the same time. How about that?

I also believe in the following adage: behind any good man is an even better woman. For me, that woman is Marina Gritsik. Stealing her dart board two years ago is likely the best decision I have ever made. Spasibo Marina—te amo milaya moya.

Most importantly, I cannot express how much the love and support of my parents, Louis James Tudico and Emma Flores Tudico, has meant to me. They led our family by example, and provided my sister and I with the opportunities that they themselves never had. My parents instilled the value of education in me since I was a little boy, a thankless task that I took for granted until I grew into a young man. Consequently, when I walk across the stage at Franklin Field for commencement, I know I will have stood on the

shoulders of the two most influential persons in my life, my parents. They will each be right by my side. At that moment, the son of Italian immigrants and the daughter of the Rio Grande Valley will be the proud parents of not one, but two PhDs.

Finally, my older sister Angela is not only my best friend, but an incredible role model (having courageously earned her own PhD in history last year). Throughout my entire experience at Penn, first as a PhD student and later a PhD candidate, I have relied on her advice and humor again and again. Angela, with little regard for her own time and commitments, was my very own sounding board, critic, and cheerleader. She is a hell of a copy editor, and deserves the title of honorary co-chair of my study. I could never, ever thank Angela enough for her support.

ABSTRACT

BEFORE WE WERE CHICANAS/OS: THE MEXICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IN CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION, 1848-1945

Christopher Tudico

Supervisor: Dr. Marybeth Gasman

Mexican American students have a long and proud history of enrolling in colleges and universities across the state of California for nearly 160 years, since shortly after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Yet, inexplicably, historians of higher education have virtually ignored the Mexican American experience in California higher education. Based on the examination of primary sources such as the diary of *Californio* Jesús María Estudillo, the records of the University of California, and the college student-led Mexican American Movement's newspaper, *The Mexican Voice*, this study reconstructs the history of the Mexican American experience in California higher education from not long after statehood through World War II. The children of *Californios* (wealthy landholders who stressed their "Spanish" heritage) attended Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame from the early 1850s to mid 1870s, and Mexicans and *Californios* also took part in the preparatory program known as the Fifth Class at the University of California in the early 1870s. These members of the Mexican community participated in higher education in order to acquire the skills (such as mastering the English language) that best equipped them to maintain their station near the top of California society. By the 1930s, the sons and daughters of Mexican immigrants attended colleges and universities across California

in numbers large enough to form student organizations such as the Mexican American Movement (MAM). This new generation of Mexicans viewed a college education as a means to have a better life for themselves, their family, and their community.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
Abstract.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Rise of the <i>Californios</i>	29
Chapter 2: <i>Californios</i> Go to College: The Story of Jesús María Estudillo and Santa Clara College.....	57
Chapter 3: Aboard the Flagship: The Fifth Class and the University of California at Berkeley.....	86
Chapter 4: The “Decline” of the <i>Californios</i> and the Changing Faces of the Mexican Community in California.....	113
Chapter 5: “Education Is Our Only Weapon!.” The Mexican American Movement and California Higher Education, 1934-1945.....	144
Conclusion.....	175

Introduction

One population noticeably absent from the expansive literature on the history of higher education is the Mexican American people. This is the case, despite the fact that Mexican Americans have participated in American higher education for nearly 160 years—since shortly after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Often forgotten are the sons and daughters of Mexican landowners, called *Californios*, being among the first to matriculate at Catholic colleges such as Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame (now Notre Dame de Namur University). Often ignored is the enrollment of Mexicans and *Californios* at the University of California at Berkeley in the college preparatory program, known as the Fifth Class, in the early 1870s. Often overlooked is the Mexican American Movement (MAM)—an organization made up of college students that published a newsletter, *The Mexican Voice*, in order to promote the value of higher education among the larger Mexican American community of southern California from 1934 to roughly 1950. Each of these experiences occurred long before Mexican American professors, students, and activists pushed for and established the first Department of Chicano Studies at California State University at Los Angeles in 1968. Yet remarkably, each of these rich stories has yet to take their rightful place within the greater literature of the history of higher education.

Of course, this summary conflates events quite a bit. Still, it is a relatively accurate sketch of the Mexican American experience in California higher education from 1848 to 1945. The beginning and end points of my study are deliberate, with 1848 representing the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which formerly handed over Mexican territory to the United States, and 1945, the end of World War II. Within

this one century, I believe there is continuity in the story of the Mexican American experience in California higher education; an era characterized by limited access to higher education. The end of World War II and the implementation of the GI Bill fundamentally altered American higher education, marking a change from limited to mass access to higher education for Americans.¹

Until very recently, however, the Mexican American experience has been completely ignored by historians of higher education. Rather, when scholars discuss the challenges and opportunities of conducting research on race within the field of educational history, they often do so through the lens of the Black/White binary. And while in many ways the study of the Black/White dichotomy informs our understanding of how race is constructed in the United States, I believe the Black/White paradigm cannot serve as the only lens of inquiry employed by historians of higher education. Primarily focusing on histories bound within the Black/White binary ignores the past participation of Asian Americans, American Indians, and Latinos in American higher education. In this sense, I analyze the history of Mexican American experiences in California higher education in order to broaden traditional views of what scholars consider worthy of study but also to expand the general public's understanding of a largely ignored people.

We study the history of colleges and universities, and those students who have attended them, in order to garner a greater understanding of the past. Higher education itself is a microcosm of society: reflecting the complexities of American society, both opportunity and injustice. That is to say, college and university gates often opened and

¹ See John Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 262-268.

closed in concert with the social mores of the time. My goal is to document one people's experience in higher education in one state in order to contribute to the larger field of history of higher education. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine Mexican American experiences in California higher education from 1848 to 1945 in one cohesive narrative; to chronicle not only which members of the Mexican American community attended college (using criteria such as race/ethnicity, class, citizenship, and gender), but also to survey some of the reasons why these particular students participated in higher education as well. It is worth noting that my interest in this topic is in part prompted by an additional concern. Namely, I am interested in exploring how both religion and language impacted the educational experiences of Mexican Americans who enrolled in college. Finally, throughout this study, I examine whether a Mexican American identity developed among the students who attended college during this time period.

* * *

A note on usage: based on the philosophy espoused by Chicano historian Stephen J. Pitti, I attempt "to use terms in this study that carefully illustrate both the changing nature of social relations" in California "and the diversity of the Mexican-origin community" in the region.² "Mexican Americans" refer to residents of California of Mexican descent who were either born in the United States or became naturalized citizens. "Mexicans" generally refers to immigrant men and women from Mexico. The term "*Californio*," featured extensively throughout the first four chapters of this study, refers to Mexicans who traced their ancestry to Spain (both before and after statehood). *Californios* claimed their Spanish heritage through the beginning of the twentieth

² Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 6-7.

century. The aforementioned terms are not mutually exclusive. For example, “*Californios*” did become “Mexican Americans” when they were granted American citizenship after statehood.

I make a concentrated effort to omit the use of anachronistic terms. I generally avoid the use of both the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino,” since neither descriptor was in common use until well after World War II. Similarly, the terms Chicana/o are not utilized in this work except in the title, in reference to Chicano scholars in the literature review, and in the last sentence of the introduction and of the dissertation. As Stephen J. Pitti notes, ““Chicano” as an analytical term does little clarify the internal dynamics within the ethnic Mexican community until recently...since it was not used by Mexican-origin residents as a self-descriptor until the late-1960s.”³ And while I consider this a study of Mexican American history, in addition to a history of higher education, and I myself am Mexican American, I do not regularly employ the term “Mexican American” until chapter four and five.

Historiography

A major influence on the scholarship of Mexican American history has been Hispanophobia, a term introduced by David J. Weber in a number of his essays and books in an effort to integrate the Latino experience into the study of American history.⁴ Victoria-María MacDonald later defined Hispanophobia as “the historical profession’s neglect or outright bias concerning the history of the largely Roman Catholic Spanish

³ Ibid.

⁴ See David J. Weber, “The Spanish Legacy in North America and the Historical Imagination,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (February 1992): 4-24.

peoples and institutions.”⁵ The Mexican-American and Spanish-American War, along with expansion and manifest destiny fostered both an anti-Mexican and nationalistic political climate that “influenced the historical profession’s antipathy towards the study of the Spanish language and of Spanish-speaking peoples” well into the twentieth century.⁶ Hispanophobia was characterized by the American historical profession’s ignorance of the Spanish language during this time period, which created an over reliance on English-language primary documents.⁷ As a result, works such as Justin H. Smith’s *The War with Mexico* typified the early studies of the Spanish-speaking peoples within the American historical profession. In it, Smith portrayed Mexican settlers in soon to be California as “poorly educated...finding themselves in a situation where idleness and self-indulgence were their logical habits.”⁸

The evolution and growth of subfields within the discipline of American history provided an opening for scholars to break free from the symptoms of Hispanophobia and conduct more thorough research on the Mexican American experience. Frederick Jackson Turner’s 1893 essay, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” laid the foundation for the research of Western history.⁹ The acknowledgement of Western history as a distinct subfield worthy of inquiry allowed successive generations of historians that followed Turner, such as Herbert Eugene Bolton and John Francis Bannon,

⁵ Victoria-María MacDonald, “Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or “Other”?: Deconstructing the Relationship between Historians and Hispanic-American Educational History,” *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 367.

⁶ Ibid, 366.

⁷ Ibid, 371.

⁸ Ibid; Justin H. Smith, *The War with Mexico* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1919), 3-4.

⁹ MacDonald, “Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or Other,” 372; See Wilbur R. Jacobs, *On Turner’s Trail: 100 Years of Writing Western History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994); and Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations 1890-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).

to pioneer the field of borderlands history and to begin to chart the course of Mexican American history.¹⁰ Bolton and Bannon's work was significant because their research helped legitimize the use of Catholic religious documents and colonial Spanish archives as part of the field of American history, and it provided a counterbalance to the Hispanophobic "observations" of Mexican culture such as in the work of Justin H. Smith.¹¹

During the first half of the twentieth century, the University of Texas housed a number of significant scholars who fostered the growth of Mexican American history. Carlos E. Castañeda, influenced by the work of Bolton, was one of the first Mexican American professionally trained historians.¹² He worked to "correct the view of Texas history as one that began with the arrival of Anglo settlers in the mid nineteenth century," and replaced it with a rather more encompassing historical perspective that included the Spanish colonial legacy.¹³ George I. Sánchez, a fixture at the University of Texas from 1940 until his death in 1972, pioneered research on the Southwest and was also an advocate for the bilingual education of Mexican Americans. In his 1940 work, *Forgotten People*, Sánchez critiqued the United States treatment of Mexican American citizens after

¹⁰ MacDonald, *Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or Other*, 372. See also Russell M. Magnaghi, *Herbert E. Bolton and the Historiography of the Americas* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998); and David J. Weber, "John Francis Bannon and the Historiography of the Spanish Borderlands: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Establishing Exceptionalism: Historiography and the Colonial Americas* ed. Amy Turner Bushnell, vol. 5 of *An Expanding World: The European Impact on World History* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1995): 297-330.

¹¹ MacDonald, *Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or Other*, 373.

¹² See Mario T. García, "Carlos E. Castaneda and the Search for History," chap. 9 in *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, & Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 231-251.

¹³ MacDonald, "Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or Other," 373.

the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, foreshadowing the work of the Chicano and revisionist historians that followed him.¹⁴

Historian Leonard Pitt, an heir to Bolton and Bannon, took the studies of the borderlands and the Mexican American experience farther than ever before in his path-breaking book, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californios, 1846-1890*.¹⁵ Originally published more than four decades ago in 1966, Pitt crafted a rich history that exposed past White prejudice toward Mexicans. In nineteenth century California, the grand majority of Mexicans were *mestizo*, or of mixed patronage between Spanish and Indian ancestry, while a small segment of the population, *Californios*, traced their roots directly to Spain.¹⁶ Many *Californios* were wealthy and owned large rancheros. According to Pitt, however, *Californios* faced inevitable doom. Pitt argued that *Californios* represented “an instance of the worldwide defeat of the relatively static, traditionalist societies by societies that were oriented to technology and the idea of progress.”¹⁷ While he empathized with the plight of the *Californios* and chastised discrimination of Whites, Pitt ultimately wrote from the point of view that the *Californios* lost all their wealth, position, and power by the 1890. Interestingly, Pitt omitted the education of *Californios* from his work for all but a few pages, and did not

¹⁴ Sánchez was an instrumental figure beyond the field of Mexican American history, so much so that scholars today often focus on the remarkable accomplishments of the groundbreaking historian. For example, see Mario T. García, “George I. Sánchez and the Forgotten People,” chap. 10 in *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 252-272 and Carlos K. Blanton, “George I. Sánchez, Ideology, and Whiteness in the Making of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement, 1930-1960,” *The Journal of Southern History* 72, no. 3 (2006): 569-604.

¹⁵ Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californios, 1846-1890*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966).

¹⁶ For additional reading on racial and ethnic historical composition of Mexican Americans in California, see Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2001).

¹⁷ Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, viii.

mention higher education at all—a trend that continued in subsequent scholarship of the history of the Mexican American people in California. In this study of California higher education, I examine whether *Californios* and Mexicans attended college during the mid-nineteenth century. In doing so, I offer a revision of California and Mexican American history: *Californios* attended institutions such as Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame alongside Whites from 1851 to at least 1876. In my narrative of the Mexican American experience in California higher education, I aim to answer why *Californios* enrolled in both private and public colleges and universities in the state.

Following the precedent set forth by George I. Sánchez, Mexican Americans, by far the largest population among Latinos in the United States, were the most visible and politically active in their effort to garner political, social, and economic rights in the mid-twentieth century.¹⁸ This manifested itself in the birth of the Chicano Movement, which stressed the notion of “cultural pride as a source of political unity and strength.”¹⁹ On the vanguard of the Movement were a group of young Mexican American scholars who dedicated themselves to rewriting the Anglo-centric portrayal of Southwest American history. This new Chicano history represented a transformation, in more than name, of the field of Mexican American history.

Historian and activist Rodolfo “Rudy” Acuña is often associated with the field’s “conversion” from Mexican American to Chicano history. Acuña’s definitive work, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, challenged previous studies of the Mexican

¹⁸ F. Arturo Rosales, *Chicano!: The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Houston: University of Houston, Arte Público Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Alma M. García, *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 3.

American experience.²⁰ He sought to reconstruct the biased portrayal of Mexicans in American history, which he believed “was manufactured by scholars who take refuge in patriotism.”²¹ The book’s publication, and subsequent use in Chicano and Latino Studies departments at colleges and universities throughout the West and Southwest, reminds those both in and outside the Mexican American community of the “highly charged political context in which many early works on Chicano history appeared.”²² However, the Anglo versus Chicano cultural conflict model often constrained the scope of scholarly inquiry of this first generation. Subsequent historians such as Manuel G. Gonzalez, who wrote *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States*, critiqued the literature of this time period as one-dimensional, all too often portraying Mexicans as victims of Anglo treachery.²³

From the late 1970s to mid-1980s a new generation of Mexican American historians emerged that moved well beyond scholarship focusing on the victimization of the Mexican American community. Rather, these historians often portrayed Chicano agency, both individually and collectively, publishing a series of community histories that enriched and deepened our understanding of the Mexican American experience. In their books, the scholars argued that Mexicans and Mexican Americans liberated themselves from Anglo domination and moved to preserve their Mexican culture. One must read Albert Camarillo’s *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930*, Richard

²⁰ Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 4d ed. (New York: Longman, 2000).

²¹ Ibid, ix.

²² MacDonald, “Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or Other,” 376.

²³ Manuel G. Gonzales, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

Griswold del Castillo's *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History*, and Ricardo Romo's *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* alongside Leonard Pitt's *The Decline of the Californios* to fully appreciate the differences between wealthy *Californios* and the gap between them and the larger Mexican community.²⁴

In *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, Camarillo stressed the heterogeneity of the Mexican American population in Santa Barbara and southern California, challenging previous interpretations by both mainstream and Chicano historians that depicted Mexicans as a single, monolithic people. Camarillo's emphasis on the diversity within the Mexican American community was significant in that he portrayed Mexican culture as intricate and as varied as any other in the Southwest. Griswold del Castillo's *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890* provided the first detailed analysis of the changes that transformed one of the most important pueblos in the Southwest, Nuestra Señora Reina de los Angeles, into an urban city with a Mexican barrio. Weaving quantitative data and traditional secondary and primary sources, Griswold del Castillo traced the major socioeconomic, political, and racial phenomena that took place in the latter half of the twentieth century that fostered the growth of a subordinate Mexican American class. In *East Los Angeles*, Ricardo Romo built upon Griswold del Castillo's study by producing one of the first monographs of early twentieth century Los Angeles. According to Romo, nativist sentiment, labor turmoil, and wartime hysteria contributed to Los Angeles becoming a segregated city by 1930. Significantly, Romo rejected the concept of

²⁴ Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979); Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979); Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983). For an example of a similar monograph on Mexican Americans in another state such as Texas, see Mario T. García, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1890-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

barrioization, the view that the Mexican adjustment to urban life was largely negative and that the barrio was a source of vice, crime, and deviancy, instead depicting East Los Angeles as a “homeland” for the Mexican American community.²⁵ Each influenced by *The Decline of the Californios*, this cadre of historians complicated and expanded on the history Pitt told, focusing their collective efforts on researching racism, imperialism, and political empowerment in southern California and the American Southwest. They began to depart (although not completely) from scholarship that portrayed Mexican Americans as victims of Anglo deceit and subjugation. The three works embraced the concept of Chicano agency and represented a push toward action by progressive Mexican American historians. Their shared approach is based on the idea that although Mexican Americans labored under oppressive circumstances for generations, they have adapted, survived, and flourished to create diverse and strong barrios scattered throughout the United States. The diversity in approaches, topics, and scope described above signified a maturation of Mexican American historical literature.

However, Mexican American historians, including some of those noted in the preceding paragraphs, faced strong scrutiny from feminist historians who chided their colleagues for not including more voices of Mexican and Mexican American women.²⁶ For some scholars Chicano history was exactly that—*Chicano* history. Their accounts of the Mexican American experience, more often than not, excluded detailed histories and stories of women in California. When scholars did fold the stories of women into their research, they often did so without reaching the level of sophistication reserved for

²⁵ Romo, *East Los Angeles*, 9.

²⁶ See Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

traditional male-centric historical accounts. Throughout the last two decades, historian Vicki L. Ruiz has championed Chicana studies, and urged her peers to research *all* those within Mexican American community, documenting the stories of men as well as women.²⁷

Two Mexican American historians, Miroslava Chávez-García and María Raquel Casas, have taken Ruiz's rallying cry to heart. In *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770s to 1880s* and *Married to a Daughter of the Land: Spanish-American Women and Interethnic Marriage in California, 1820-1880*, Chávez-García and Casas recount an inclusive history of *Californios*, both of men and women alike.²⁸ Both Chávez-García and Casas documented how women possessed property in their own name, which provided them with a powerful means to assert their independence within the family, as well as the larger community. Mirroring their fellow Mexican American historians, however, Chávez-García and Casas rarely mentioned whether the women in their studies earned an education. The reader is left to wonder whether *Californianas* received any education at all, let alone attended college. In this vein, I examine both the experiences of *Californios* and *Californianas*, as well as Mexican American men and women, in an effort to determine whether a person's sex limited members of the Spanish-speaking community to participate in higher education. This study reveals that both men and women of Mexican descent attended college from the mid nineteenth century through World War II.

²⁷ Vicki L. Ruiz, "Morena/o, Blanca/o y Café con Leche: Racial Constructions in Chicana/o Historiography," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 20, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 343-360.

²⁸ Miroslava Chávez-García, *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770s to 1880s* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004); María Raquel Casas and *Married to a Daughter of the Land: Spanish-American Women and Interethnic Marriage in California, 1820-1880* (Reno and Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, Nevada, 2007).

Several relatively recent works focus specifically on the history of California before the Gold Rush and statehood. Perhaps the best example of this strain of literature is Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi's *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush*.²⁹ Several of the chapters in the edited volume are pertinent to this study, including Douglas Monroy and Lisabeth Haas's examinations of the *Californio* experience in the region before statehood.³⁰

Two more examples of scholarship exploring the complexities of the Mexican American experience in California are Stephen J. Pitti's *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans*, and George J. Sánchez's *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*.³¹ Pitti's work is significant in that his study is an examination the Mexican American experience in northern California—in what would become the Silicon Valley. Nearly all the other monographs referenced in this introduction focus almost exclusively on the lives of the *Californios*, Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Indians in southern California. Similar to Pitti, the first three chapters of this study focuses on events that primarily took place in the San Francisco Bay area and its environs. In other ways,

²⁹ Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi, eds., *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Other works in this genre include Douglas Monroy, *Thrown among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Lisabeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); and Rosaura Sánchez, *Telling Identities: The California Testimonies* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

³⁰ Douglas Monroy, "The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society," 173-195, in Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi's *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Lisabeth Haas, "War in California, 1846-1848," 331-355, in Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi's *Contested Eden: California Before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

³¹ Stephen J. Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley: Northern California, Race, and Mexican Americans* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003); and George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

however, Pitti's findings fall more in line with his fellow scholars. For instance, Pitti joined numerous other Chicano historians, including Douglas Monroy and Rodolfo Acuña, in chastising the *Californios*' "creation" of their identity in early nineteenth century California. According to each scholar, the Spanish roots of the *Californios* were largely mythologized, an issue that will be further explored in chapter two of this study.³² While true in some respects, many *Californios*, including some of those featured in this study, could and did trace their roots to Spain.

Sánchez, meanwhile, examined the time period after the fall of the *Californios*, focusing on the first wave of immigrants who left Mexico and settled in and around Los Angeles shortly after the turn of the last century. In his work, Sánchez offered the reader a sophisticated view of the borderlands—a history of Mexican immigrants and their quest to forge a Mexican American identity in early twentieth century California. Sánchez put forth several noteworthy conclusions, including that ethnicity "was not a fixed set of customs that emerged from daily life in Mexico, but rather a collective identity that emerged from daily experience in the United States."³³ Throughout the book, Sánchez examined the fluidity of the borderlands between the United States and Mexico, offering an exceedingly rich and complex description of Mexican immigrants moving across the border. Sánchez's work culminated with an examination of the rise of a second generation of immigrants, who identified themselves as Mexican Americans by the 1930s and 1940s.

³² Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 14; Acuña, *Occupied America*, 132-133; Monroy, "The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society," 179.

³³ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 11.

Unlike the grand majority of his colleagues, Sánchez included a thorough examination of the role education played in the lives of the Mexican immigrants who settled in California. The last chapter of his work, “The Rise of the Second Generation,” features an intriguing examination of Mexican American participation in California higher education in the 1930s and 1940s.³⁴ According to Sánchez, “An important organization that mirrored the conflict and resolution of Mexican American identity during this period is the Mexican American Movement (MAM).”³⁵ This organization emerged from the YMCA and was led by young second generation Mexican Americans who attended colleges and universities in southern California. Sánchez’s examination of MAM is particularly insightful for a number of reasons. First, he noted that the organization was founded by and created for Mexican American students.³⁶ Second, Sánchez stated that the founders of MAM “emphasized the progress of Mexican American people through education.”³⁷ In fact, Sánchez examined how MAM published a newspaper called *The Mexican Voice*, using the periodical to impress upon others in the Mexican American community to take education seriously. Sánchez ultimately concluded that MAM members considered themselves Mexican Americans: they emphasized that they were full citizens of the United States, able to enjoy the rights and responsibilities White Americans took for granted.³⁸

In contrast to George J. Sánchez, well known Chicano scholars such as Rodolfo Acuña, Carlos Muñoz, Jr., Armando Navarro, and David G. Gutiérrez largely portrayed

³⁴ Ibid, 255-264.

³⁵ Ibid, 255.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid, 262.

MAM as an assimilationist organization.³⁹ Navarro, in particular, rebuked MAM as “a ‘want to be white’ social action type of interest group” formed during an epoch of adaptation politics.⁴⁰ This interpretation of MAM differed greatly from the student group portrayed by Sánchez. In a way, the very existence of MAM confounds Chicano scholars even today. The student group represents something difficult to define and pinpoint. For many Chicano scholars, MAM was an organization seemingly at odds with itself—both Mexican *and* American. In this sense, the Chicano scholars cited above often depicted Mexican and American cultures as impermeable, adversarial, and in opposition to one another. Moreover, when these scholars refer to Chicano culture and Chicano history, these phenomena were both honored and critiqued—honored because Chicano history represented a pathway “home” to El Aztlán, critiqued because they viewed Chicano culture as a temporary stop on the road to assimilation in the United States. Today, the language used to describe the experiences and backgrounds of individuals (race, ethnicity, class, citizenship, identity, and gender) is being challenged by a new generation of scholars. In *Becoming Mexican American*, George J. Sánchez stated that the “notion that individuals have occupied one undifferentiated cultural position—such as “Mexican,” “American,” or “Chicano”—has been abandoned in favor of the possibility of multiple identities and contradictory positions.”⁴¹ For example, the subjects of my study, both the *Californios* and the members of MAM, defy easy categorization.

Ultimately, in this study I seek to answer whether *Californios* were classified Mexican or

³⁹ Acuña, *Occupied America*, p. 2; Carlos Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*, Revised and Expanded Edition (London: Verso Press, 2007), 44-58; Armando Navarro, *The Mexican Political Experience in Occupied Aztlán: Struggles and Change* (Lanham, MD: Alamo Press, 2005), 205-206; David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican American, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1995.

⁴⁰ Navarro, *Occupied Aztlán*, 205.

⁴¹ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 8.

White (or both), and whether or not the sons and daughters of immigrants considered themselves Mexican American by the time they entered college in the 1930s and 1940s.

A few journal articles offer a snapshot of the Mexican American experience in higher education missing from monographs on the history of *Californios*. Collectively, the authors of the articles focused on the enrollment of *Californios* and Mexicans at California colleges and universities from 1851 to roughly 1876. Gerald McKevitt's article, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education: The Diary of Jesús María Estudillo, 1857-1864," chronicled the collegiate experience of one young *Californio* gentleman at Santa Clara College.⁴² McKevitt's article is informative for several reasons. First and foremost, McKevitt introduced the reader to the diarist Jesús María Estudillo.⁴³ The son of landholders, Estudillo broadens our understanding of a facet of *Californio* culture omitted from the monographs written by Leonard Pitt and the Mexican American scholars who followed him. The article sheds light on the personal thoughts of a young man, which in and of itself, is valuable to the greater historical literature (since journals left by *Californios* are practically non-existent).⁴⁴ McKevitt noted that from the school's founding in 1851 until 1876, Mexican American enrolled at the college in large numbers.⁴⁵ Estudillo was not alone, nor was he a pioneer. Rather, there were many more young *Californio* and Mexican gentlemen who participated in higher education in mid 19th century California. McKevitt also emphasized the role of the Catholic Church.

⁴²McKevitt, "Hispanic Californios and Catholic Higher Education," 320-331.

⁴³ Segments of Jesús María Estudillo's diary from 1862 have been published in Jesús María Estudillo, *Sketches of California in the 1860s: the Journals of Jesús María Estudillo*, edited and compiled by Margaret Schlichtmann and Marie Wilson (Fredericksburg, Texas: Awani Press, 1988).

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 322.

⁴⁵ See McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 322.

Finally, he took account of the affinity between *Californios*/Mexicans and members of the Jesuit Order (they themselves were new immigrants to the United States).⁴⁶

Two other scholars, David J. León and Dan McNeil, worked together on two articles that covered the same subject matter, “The Fifth Class: A 19th Century Forerunner of Affirmative Action,” and “A Precursor to Affirmative Action: Californios and the Mexicans in the University of California, 1870-72.”⁴⁷ The two scholars published the articles seven years apart in two separate journals. In each article, León and McNeil examine the college preparatory program known as the Fifth Class at the University of California in the early 1870s. The Fifth Class provided what amounted to a high school education that aided students in their preparation for the university entrance examination. From 1870 to 1872, approximately two dozen Mexicans and *Californios* took part in the Fifth Class.⁴⁸ What is provocative about León and McNeil’s two articles is how the authors drew a link between the Fifth Class and the contemporary construct of affirmative action. However, the authors’ main argument is not entirely convincing. The Fifth Class, ultimately, was not an affirmative action program, but rather, an initiative designed to attract students from all backgrounds to the young state institution. Looking beyond León and McNeil’s conclusion is a story that is more significant. I examine how the Fifth Class documents another instance where *Californios* attended college in the mid nineteenth century alongside of Whites, and provides further evidence that a blossoming

⁴⁶ For lengthier analysis of the role of Jesuits, culture, and education in the West, see Gerald McKeivitt, *Brokers of Culture: Italian Jesuits in the American West, 1848-1919* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

⁴⁷ David J. León and Dan McNeil, “The Fifth Class: A 19th Century Forerunner of Affirmative Action,” *California History* 64, no. 1 (1985): 52-57; David J. León and Dan McNeil, “A Precursor to Affirmative Action: Californios and Mexicans in the University of California, 1870-72,” *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies* 3 (1992): 179-206.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

state system of higher education existed in California alongside parochial colleges like Santa Clara.

More recently, León published “Manuel M. Corella: The Broken Trajectory of the First Latino Student and Teacher at the University of California, 1869-74” in *Aztlán*.⁴⁹ León bypassed a discussion of comparing the Fifth Class with modern affirmative action programs, but rather focused on the story of one individual, Manuel Corella, whom the author stated was the first Mexican American student and teacher at the University of California.⁵⁰ Included in the article is a more narrow view of Corella’s experience at the young state institution at Berkeley. León took note Corella’s teaching responsibilities and the manner in which the school paid the young Mexican professor for his services. Unlike Estudillo, however, Corella did not leave a journal. As a result, León’s article does not benefit from the critique of a personalized narrative. Rather, León relied upon other primary documents, such as notes from the university register and the minutes of the Regents of the University of California to inform his analysis.

Finally, Chicana historian Laura K. Muñoz has made one of the most significant contributions to the topic of the Mexican American experience in higher education in her sweeping study of the educational history of Mexicans in Arizona. In her dissertation, “Desert Dreams: Mexican American Education in Arizona, 1870-1930,” Muñoz charted how Arizona Mexicans claimed American citizenship and preserved their cultural heritage while actively pursuing a “bicultural bilingual educational agenda for their

⁴⁹ David J. León, “Manuel M. Corella: The Broken Trajectory of the First Latino Student and Teacher at the University of California, 1869-74,” *Aztlán* 26, no. 1 (2001): 171-79.

⁵⁰ León and McNeil first introduced Manuel Corella in their two earlier journal articles. See David J. León and Dan McNeil, “The Fifth Class,” 55-56; and David J. León and Dan McNeil, “A Precursor to Affirmative Action,” 190.

children in contrast to the Americanization goal of industrial workforce preparation.”⁵¹

In the fifth chapter of the study, Muñoz documents the enrollment of Mexican American college students at Temple Normal School from 1885 to 1936.⁵² In contrast, Mexican Americans largely did not attend California colleges and universities during this same time period, a topic that is revisited in the fourth chapter of this study. I examine why so few from the Mexican community participated in higher education in California both immediately before and after the turn of the twentieth century.

Unlike their colleagues within the discipline of American history, many historians of higher education are still afflicted with an acute case of Hispanophobia. Researchers and scholars have often focused on elite and traditional institutions, as well as the upper and middle class students who have attended them. For instance, in 1965, when Laurence Veysey published his highly influential *The Emergence of American University*, the bulk of the volume was littered with the names of institutions such as Harvard, Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Chicago, Michigan, and the University of California at Berkeley.⁵³ Veysey’s fascination with the history of elite universities, like other historians of higher education after him, obscured the stories of countless educational institutions in the United States—the grand majority of which are neither universities nor elite.

Two of the most popular monographs on the history of higher education are Frederick Rudolph’s classic *The American College and University: A History*, written in

⁵¹ Laura K. Muñoz, “Desert Dreams: Mexican American Education in Arizona, 1870-1930” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, 2006), iii.

⁵² The chapter is entitled ““Southwestern Class Exceptionalism”: Mexican American College Students at the Tempe Normal School, 1885-1936.” For further detail, see Muñoz, “Desert Dreams,” 187-242.

⁵³ Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965).

1962, and John Thelin's more recent *A History of American Higher Education*, completed in 2004.⁵⁴ By Thelin's own account, "Rudolph's work devotes most of its attention to established colleges and universities."⁵⁵ In contrast, Thelin's work is more inclusive. In the introduction, he informed the reader how his account of the history of American higher education attempted to include new analysis of the "historical significance of other understudied institutions, such as community women's colleges, and the historically black campuses."⁵⁶ He succeeded. Of most importance to this study, however, Thelin only mentioned the Mexican American experience indirectly. One line during the last chapter of his work linked Latinos to the growing diversity in contemporary American higher education.⁵⁷ In Thelin's defense, his work was "admittedly selective."⁵⁸ While Thelin made a valid point in claiming that "no author can succeed at narrating a wholly comprehensive chronology of American higher education in a single concise, volume," the reader still should question whether one line can be enough to encapsulate the Mexican American experience in American higher education, a people who have enrolled in one American college or another for the approximately the last 160 years.⁵⁹

In the only journal exclusively dedicated to the study of the history of higher education, *Perspectives on the History of Higher Education* (formerly known as *The History of Higher Education Annual*), no articles on Latinos have been published in its

⁵⁴ Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (1962; reprinted Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990); John Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, xx.

⁵⁶ Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, xx.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 349.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xxii.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

more than twenty-five years of being in print.⁶⁰ A second journal, *The History of Education Quarterly*, has provided a broader forum for scholarship since 1961. Yet, like *Perspectives*, it has not featured one article on the Mexican American experience in higher education.⁶¹ Likewise, the editors of the *ASHE Reader Series on the History of Higher Education* are handicapped by research produced within our own field. They struggle to include articles on Latinos, often relying upon an influential work such as Michael Olivas's "Indian, Chicano, and Puerto Rican Colleges."⁶² In a sense, the primary and most apparent symptom of the Hispanophobia that afflicts historians of higher education today is the omission of the Mexican American experience from peer-reviewed journals. These resources are generally recognized as forums for new research and scholarly discussion. Without the publication of articles in journals like *Perspectives on the History of Higher Education* and *The History of Education Quarterly*, the study of Mexican Americans in the history of higher education will remain on the fringe of scholarly inquiry.

Victoria-María MacDonald, an educational historian, has expanded her research agenda to include the Latino experience in higher education. She is the only scholar that has authored an overview on the subject of Latinos in American higher education, in a book chapter entitled, "Historical Perspectives on Latino Access to Higher Education,

⁶⁰ I examined the table of contents of each issue of *Perspectives on the History of Higher Education* and *The History of Higher Education Annual*. There is not a single article focused on any facet of the Mexican American experience in higher education.

⁶¹ I also looked at past issues of the *History of Education Quarterly*. While a number of articles detailed the experiences of Mexican Americans and other Latinos in primary and secondary school, the periodical does not contain any articles devoted to Mexican Americans in American higher education.

⁶² Lester F. Goodchild and Harold S. Wechsler, *ASHE Reader Series on the History of Higher Education*, 2nd ed. (Old Tappan, NJ: Pearson Custom Publishing, 1997); Lester F. Goodchild, Harold S. Wechsler, and Linda Eisenmann, eds., *ASHE Reader Series on the History of Higher Education*, 3rd ed. (Old Tappan, NJ: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2007).

1848-1990.”⁶³ MacDonald’s summary of Latino participation in higher education is brief. Still, MacDonald’s book chapter is significant because she put forth the argument that the history of Latinos in higher education warranted further study. MacDonald’s other major contribution to the discipline of educational history is *Latino Education in the United States: A Narrated History from 1513-2000*.⁶⁴ The grand majority of the sources included in the work shed light on the K-12 experience of Latinos—from the education of Mexican youth at Catholic missions in colonial California to desegregation cases in Texas in 1948. Primary sources related to Latino higher education are relatively scarce in the book. One source of note is an excerpt from the diary of Jesús María Estudillo.⁶⁵ Overall, while the primary source material in the monograph is exemplary, providing much needed documentation of the Latino experience in education in the United States, what is missing from MacDonald’s account is a comprehensive examination of the significance of each source and the recording of such conclusions in a detailed narrative.

Three institutional histories directly or indirectly inform my examination of the Mexican American experience in California higher education. John Aubrey Douglass’s highly thought of work, *The California Idea and American Higher Education, 1850 to the 1960 Master Plan*, chronicles the public California university system—using nearly

⁶³ Victoria-María MacDonald and Teresa García, “Historical Perspectives on Latino Access to Higher Education, 1848-1990,” in *The Majority in the Minority: Expanding the Representation of Latina/o Faculty, Administrators and Students in Higher Education*, eds. Jeanette Castellanos and Lee Jones (Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2003), 15-43.

⁶⁴ Victoria-María MacDonald, *Latino Education in the United States: A Narrated History from 1513-2000* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 88-92.

the exact same periodization featured in this study.⁶⁶ Douglass drew a link between the development of the California model for higher education and the political history of California. Interestingly, the experiences of students are seldom detailed in the monograph. More fascinating, there is no mention what-so-ever of the Fifth Class or the *Californios* who enrolled at the University of California in the 1870s.

Whereas John Aubrey Douglass overlooked the Mexican American experience in his study of the state university system of California, both Gerald McKeivitt and Sister Mary Dominica McNamee highlight the enrollment of *Californios* in their respective institutional histories of Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame (now Notre Dame de Namur University). In *The University of Santa Clara: A History, 1851-1977*, McKeivitt examined much of the same material that he would later rely upon in his article, “Hispanic Californios and Catholic Higher Education: The Diary of Jesús María Estudillo, 1857-1864.”⁶⁷ Similarly, Sister Mary Dominica McNamee took note of the *Californio* women who attended the College of Notre Dame not far from their brothers at Santa Clara. In fact, so many *Californio* young women enrolled at the institution that even report cards and bills were printed in Spanish.⁶⁸

Methodology

I rely on the historical method to inform my analysis and complete my study of the Mexican American experience in California higher education between 1848 and 1945. According to Martha C. Howell and Walter Prevenier in *Reliable Sources: An*

⁶⁶ John Aubrey Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education, 1850 to the 1960 Master Plan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

⁶⁷ Gerald McKeivitt, *The University of Santa Clara: A History, 1851-1977* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979); McKeivitt, “Hispanic Californios and Catholic Higher Education,” 320-331.

⁶⁸ Sister Mary Dominica McNamee, *Light in the Valley: The Story of California’s College of Notre Dame* (Berkeley: Howell-North, 1968), 86-91.

Introduction to Historical Methods, the historical method requires the following steps: (1.) The recognition and identification of a historical question; (2.) The gathering of relevant information about my research topic (and as a result, I will have a deeper contextual understanding of the problem I seek to solve); (3.) The rigorous collection and organization of historical evidence (and verification of the authenticity of the sources); (4.) An analysis of the evidence, the drawing of conclusions, and the recording of such conclusions in a meaningful narrative.⁶⁹

Following the principles of Robert Jones Shafer in *A Guide to Historical Method*, I analyzed the primary sources I located by answering the following questions: (1.) When was the source written or produced? (2.) Where was it produced? (3.) By whom was it produced? (4.) For whom was it produced? (5.) From what pre-existing material was it produced (analysis)? (6.) What was the original form in which it was produced (integrity)? (7.) What is the value of the sources contents (credibility)?⁷⁰

Chapter Overview

The chapters of this dissertation are laid out in roughly chronological order, in an attempt to follow Mexican American students through their own history as they would have experienced it. Whenever possible, I extend authority to the historical actors to frame this history of the Mexican American experience in California higher education. I do so in order to better explain their actions. The concept of voice, “situating the spaces in the text whereby narrators and historical subjects reveal themselves in their own words,” situates this history and suits it particularly well given that historians of higher

⁶⁹ Martha C. Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

⁷⁰ Robert Jones Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method*, 3rd ed. (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1980).

education have virtually ignored the experiences of Mexican Americans in higher education.⁷¹ Therefore, I placed a great deal of emphasis on locating primary sources that directly included the voices of the actors studied for this project.

After giving an overview of early California history, I trace the experiences of the Mexican American students who attended California colleges and universities from 1848 to 1945. Throughout the dissertation I document the changes that occurred in California society that affected the Mexican American community, and indirectly, who among the Mexican American population participated in higher education. The dissertation is subdivided in order to cover two time periods. In the first three chapters, I chronicle the rise of the *Californios* and the experiences of Jesús María Estudillo and the *Californios* enrolled at Santa Clara, the College of Notre Dame, and the University of California. In the last chapter of the dissertation I examine the collegiate experiences of MAM members, how they promoted the value of higher education among the larger Mexican American community of southern California, and eventually disbanded. I link the two distinctive stories by including a transitional chapter in the dissertation that recounts the decline of the *Californios* from the mid to late-nineteenth century and the arrival of the first wave of Mexican immigration in the first quarter of the twentieth century, an era when very few Mexican Americans enrolled at California colleges and universities.

Chapter one comprises a brief history of Spanish and Mexican California and those populations that inhabited the state on admittance to the Union. The chapter features an in-depth examination of the *Californios* who later were among the first to attend Santa Clara College and the University of California. I chronicle the experiences

⁷¹ Vicki L. Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol, *Latina Legacies: Identity, Biography, and Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 4.

of one *Californio* family, the Estudillos, as they lived under the flags of Spain, Mexico, and the United States. I am most interested in documenting how the *Californio* family viewed the changes that occurred around them, and how the Estudillos accumulated the fortune that led to Jesús María Estudillo attending college at Santa Clara. The description of early to mid-nineteenth century California lays the foundation for chapters two and three.

In chapter two I detail the experiences of Jesús María Estudillo and his fellow *Californios* at Santa Clara College. I also briefly introduce the reader to College of Notre Dame, where the daughters of the wealthy *Californios* enrolled at the school in large numbers, not far from their brothers at Santa Clara. I place particular emphasis on why Estudillo and his brethren attended college, and situate their participation in higher education within the larger *Californio* experience in mid-nineteenth century California.

In chapter three I explore the founding of the University of California and the origins of the California model of higher education. I examine how *Californios* and Mexicans enrolled in the college preparatory program known as the Fifth Class for a short time in the 1870s, and why their enrollment at the University of California came to an abrupt end. In the chapter, I document the experiences of Manuel M. Corella, the first Mexican student and lecturer at the University of California.

Chapter four chronicles the history of the decline of the *Californios* in the mid to late-nineteenth century and the rise of a new generation of Mexican Americans in the early quarter of the twentieth century. I revisit the lives of the Estudillo family, and look at the fate of Jesús María Estudillo following his time at Santa Clara College. I explore how the combination of Whites pushing Mexican Americans off their land, most

Californios losing their wealth and power through continued emigration to the West, and the legal immigration of approximately 678,000 Mexicans to the United States transformed the face of California society, and indirectly, who participated in higher education by the 1930s. Chapter four will conclude by providing an explanation of why so few Mexican Americans participated in higher educating during this roughly half-century—against the backdrop of a blossoming state system of higher education.

In the fifth and final chapter of the dissertation I chart the founding of MAM, its members the sons and daughters of the first wave of Mexican immigrants described in chapter four. I explore how the racial and ethnic backgrounds of these working class Mexican American students differed greatly from the *Californios* who attended college more than a half century before. I examine in detail whether MAM members identified themselves as Mexican, American, or Mexican American. The chapter will include an analysis of MAM's newsletter, *The Mexican Voice*.

In a short conclusion, I explain the significance of the Mexican American experience in California higher education—a story, at times, not all together different from the much larger tapestry of American higher education. After reviewing some of the key themes examined in this study, I explore further avenues of research. I also state whether the students who attended college (as of 1945, the end of my study) had begun to form a cohesive multifaceted Mexican American identity—at least two decades before *El Movimiento* of the 1960s, before *we* were Chicanas/os.

Chapter 1: The Rise of the *Californios*...

Around two hours before midnight on June 29, 1844, a wealthy *Californio* couple celebrated the birth of a baby boy with “exceptionally large dark eyes,” like those of his handsome father.⁷² A Catholic priest documented the infant’s birth in the Mission San José baptismal log below:

In the Church of this Mission San José, on the 11th day of November 1844, the Reverend Father Muro baptized solemnly a little boy born on the 29th of June of the same year and gave him the name Jesús María de la Trinidad. He is the legitimate son of José Joaquin Estudillo and Juana Martínez; his godparents were Victor Castro and Guadalupe Moraga to whom I gave notice of their responsibilities in the matter and signed below, Fray José de Jesús Gutiérrez.⁷³

That baby was Jesús María Estudillo, the *Californio* diarist who, as a teenager, recorded his experiences at Santa Clara College from the late 1850s to mid 1860s.

Jesús María’s forefathers and immediate family lived through the most turbulent period in the history of California. The Spanish virtually ignored California for well over a century before half-heartedly colonizing the northernmost region of Mexico with the establishment of a series of missions and presidios/garrisons in the late eighteenth century. Mexican California, from 1821 to 1846, bore witness to the zenith of *Californio* power: the secularization of the mission system, and the disbursement of that land among the Dons. The aftermath of the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and statehood led to a series of massive changes sweeping across California that directly impacted the lives of the *Californios*. Those changes are documented in this chapter, often through the experiences of one *Californio* family—the Estudillos. I detail what

⁷² Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 1.

⁷³ Fray José de Jesús Gutiérrez, November 11, 1844, Mission San José Baptismal Records, Entry No. 8312, Fremont, California.

events/steps occurred for the Estudillos to accumulate their fortune and send Jesús María to college. In this chapter I primarily maintain focus on northern California, and the San Francisco Bay Area in particular. For there, in the 1850s, the sons and daughters of *Californios* first participated in American higher education at Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame.

* * *

Spain neglected California for 166 years after Sebastián Vizcaíno's voyages along the coast in 1602 and 1603. On the Pacific Ocean, California represented the very north of Spain's North American empire. As such, Alta California was the most isolated province in New Spain, home to a large indigenous population that numbered around a half million.⁷⁴ 1769 represented the beginning of the Spanish colonial period, based on the establishment of the mission system. Missions were strategically placed along or near the Pacific Coast of California, often times fairly close to the indigenous *rancherías* (settlements). They stretched from Mission San Diego de Alcalá in southern California to Mission Dolores (San Francisco de Asís) in the north, with several in between.⁷⁵ The duty of the missions, according to Miroslava Chávez-García, was "converting indígenas and transforming them into the loyal Spanish subjects at the missions."⁷⁶ Chicano historian Rudy Acuña adds, "Purportedly it [the mission system] converted natives not only to the Christian God, but also transformed them into disciplined workers."⁷⁷ Most importantly, missions, like the pueblos and presidios that followed, helped to establish the frontier and to open Alta California to the settlement of Spanish and Mexican settlers.

⁷⁴ Acuña, *Occupied America*, 132.

⁷⁵ Eventually, twenty-one missions were established in Alta California.

⁷⁶ Chávez-García, *Negotiating Conquest*, 6.

⁷⁷ Acuña, *Occupied America*, 132.

Two of the northernmost missions were particularly successful, and each played pivotal roles in the lives Jesús María Estudillo and the Estudillo family. From the time of their respective establishments in 1777 and 1797, Mission Santa Clara de Asís (the future site of Santa Clara College) and Mission San José (located in present day Fremont, California) attracted numerous local Indians into the colonial settlements. Mission Clara de Asís (Santa Clara for short) began as the eighth link in the chain of missions, ideally placed on arable land and close to more than forty *rancherías*. Fray Francisco Palóu surmised that the mission occupied perhaps “the best place in all our conquered territory.”⁷⁸ Under stable and steady leadership, Mission Santa Clara grew. No mission recorded as many births, baptisms, and marriage ceremonies, nor as many deaths Santa Clara.⁷⁹ Aside from the occasional “jurisdictional joust” with the townspeople of nearby Pueblo San José, Franciscan rule over Mission Santa Clara remained unchallenged and unbroken for sixty years.⁸⁰

By 1824, the signs of Franciscan missionary success had become clear. Missions San José and Santa Clara de Asís were home to 1,806 and 1,450 residents, respectively.⁸¹ Mission San José’s land holdings grew so immense that its northernmost border included the area of El Rodeo de Arroyo de San Leandro (now San Leandro, California—just south of present-day Oakland), the future site of the Estudillo family’s rancho. With an immense amount of land, Californian missions became quite prosperous, a fact noticed by soldiers and *pobladores* (townspeople). At their height in the early nineteenth

⁷⁸ Maynard Geiger, O.F.M., ed. and trans., *Palou’s Life of Fray Junipero Serra* (Washington, D.C., 1955), 97.

⁷⁹ McKeivitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 9.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Robert H. Jackson, *Indian Population Decline* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 104-106.

century, California missions owned tens of thousands of heads of cattle and thousands more horses, sheep and mules.⁸²

Spain/Mexico balanced the interests of the missions with that of their military might—with the establishment of the presidios that “protected” Spanish (and later Mexican) interests. Soldiers accompanied Catholic missionaries to Alta California, setting up garrisons (the presidios) near the missions. Gradually, some civilian pueblos sprung up alongside the presidios, such as in Monterey and Santa Barbara. Some pueblos, like Los Angeles, were towns by design.⁸³ By the early nineteenth century, a rigid caste system came into being in California, mimicking elsewhere in the Spanish Empire in the Americas. Spaniards and descendants of Spaniards considered themselves *gente de razón*, literally meaning people of reason (Indians, meanwhile, were *sin razón*).⁸⁴ Both of Jesús María Estudillo’s grandfathers took part in the colonization effort as officers in the Spanish (and later Mexican) military. Both were considered *gente de razón*.

The founder of the Estudillo family in California was José María Estudillo, a native of the town of Antequera located in the region of Andalucía in southern Spain. José María Estudillo joined the Spanish military in New Spain (Mexico) on July 23, 1796.⁸⁵ Before deployment to Alta California, Estudillo married Ana María Gertrudis Orcasitas y Herrera, a native of Tlayacapa, a town outside of Mexico City.⁸⁶ By 1799

⁸² Gabriel Gutiérrez, “Bell Towers, Crucifixes, and Cañones Violentes: State and Identity Formation in Pre-Industrial Alta California” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1997), 62.

⁸³ Acuña, *Occupied America*, 132.

⁸⁴ Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 15-16.

⁸⁵ Hubert Howe Bancroft, *California Pioneer Register and Index, 1542 to 1848*, Vol. 2 (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1964), 542.

⁸⁶ June 11, 1799, Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo Baptismal Records, Entry No. 2279, Carmel, California.

José María Estudillo was stationed at the Royal Presidio of San Carlos of Monterey in Alta California, overlooking the beautiful bay that currently bears the same name. On May 5, 1800, María Gertrudis Estudillo bore a healthy baby boy named José Joaquin, the future grantee of Rancho San Leandro and the father of Jesús María Estudillo.⁸⁷

Jesús María Estudillo's maternal grandfather, Ygnacio Martínez de la Vega, was born in 1774—the son of a prominent family in Mexico City. After initially considering the priesthood, Ygnacio Martínez instead joined the Spanish Army. On March 30, 1805, while stationed at the Santa Barbara Presidio, he and his wife, Martina Arrellanes, welcomed their second daughter, Juana. As the future matriarch of the Estudillo family, Juana Martínez became the driving force behind her youngest son Jesús María Estudillo enrolling at Santa Clara College. In 1819, military leaders reassigned Ygnacio Martínez to the Presidio de San Francisco, which protected Mission San Francisco de Asís and the large harbor.⁸⁸ Initially unhappy with the reassignment since the area encompassing the presidio and the mission were quite underdeveloped in comparison to Santa Barbara or Monterey, Martínez delayed his departure. Ultimately, however, he accepted the orders of his superiors.⁸⁹

Neither the Spanish Crown nor its representatives appreciated the challenges of settling a new land like California. Once Spain established the missions and presidios, they were quickly forgotten, left to fend for themselves. While many missions faced little trouble fulfilling their goals of fostering ties with and “Christianizing” the indigenous population, the other permanent settlements of the presidio and the pueblo faced far more

⁸⁷ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 1-2.

⁸⁸ Bancroft, *California Pioneer Register*, 538

⁸⁹ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 3.

uncertainty. Life at this time was quite crude and primitive, as were most of the military installations. When Ygnacio Martínez and his family reached the San Francisco Presidio, he found a makeshift garrison with small adobe structures. Even though the presidio and Mission Dolores (Mission San Francisco de Asís) were well situated beside one of the finest harbors in the entire world, each were handicapped from the outset by lack of suitable space for agriculture, competition for that space from the citizens of the Spanish pueblo, and the damp and foggy climate.⁹⁰

Spanish law exacerbated the problems the soldiers and their families faced, as they were forbidden from trading with foreign vessels. However, the scarcity of provisions forced the inhabitants of the presidio to circumvent formal edicts from Spain, and a limited amount of trading took place with the Russian settlements north of present day San Francisco. In November 1822, three years after arriving at the presidio, Luis Antonio Argüello appointed Ygnacio Martínez commandant of the garrison.⁹¹ While the presidio still faced a litany of challenges, being placed in charge of the fort was indeed an honor. That same year José María Estudillo also received orders to take command of a presidio, Santa Barbara, where he continued to serve until his death in 1830.⁹² While both Martínez and Estudillo were relatively fortunate to earn promotions, the presidios remained ill-equipped in comparison to the better endowed missions. As a result of this

⁹⁰ Ibid, 3-4.

⁹¹ Ibid, 4.

⁹² Martha Schlichtmann, Ibid, 2, describes José María Estudillo as a “faithful officer,” yet a colorless character. According to Hubert Bancroft, José María Estudillo’s vanity and other objectionable characteristics lost favor with his troops and fellow officers. Military leaders in Mexico must have thought otherwise; as they were guided by orders from Spain to choose officers of good character to lead the presidios. For further detail, see Bancroft, *California Pioneer Register*, 538, 540, 542.

tension, a pseudo rivalry emerged amongst the two factions of the Catholic clergy and military officers.⁹³

That rivalry broke out into the open upon Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821—an event that fundamentally altered California society in the decade or two that followed. Both the Catholic Church and former military officers vied for power in Alta California, with the latter beginning to assert control of the land. The implications of Mexican independence (especially on the Estudillo family) will be explored later in this chapter.

* * *

While presidios faced challenges to survive in Spanish California, fate brought the Estudillo and Martínez families together. José Joaquin Estudillo followed in his father's footsteps, and joined the military as a cadet in 1815—stationed at the Monterey Presidio. A year later, José Joaquin Estudillo's superiors transferred the young man to a new post, the San Francisco Presidio. When Ygnacio Martínez arrived at the presidio as well, Estudillo was there to greet him. And in 1822, the talk amongst the wives of the officers at the presidio was the engagement of José Joaquin Estudillo to Juana Martínez.⁹⁴ On February 6, 1823, Fray Tomás Estenga presided over the ceremony that joined the young couple in marriage.⁹⁵

At the same time the Estudillo and Martínez families were joined with one another through marriage, many Mexican citizens in Alta California expressed growing frustration with both local and national decision making. Historian Stephen J. Pitti

⁹³ Acuña, *Occupied America*, 132.

⁹⁴ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 5.

⁹⁵ February 6, 1823, San Francisco de Asís (Dolores) Marriage Records, Vol. 1, Entry 1993, San Francisco, California.

argues that their sense of strong regional identity, nurtured by California's long isolation from Mexico (even while a part of Spain), conflicted with the nationalism articulated from and centered in Mexico City.⁹⁶ That by the 1820s and 1830s, Alta California's *gente de razón* increasingly identified themselves as *Californios* (and not Mexicans)—“trumpeting their distinctiveness” from others in the expansive territory.⁹⁷ *Californios* emphasized “a sense of reciprocity and obligation, at least with respect to other *gente de razón*,” and their increasing interest in the purity of their blood shaped the claim that, unlike Mexicans to the south, *Californios* had remained racially pure in northern New Spain.⁹⁸ They believed they were, purportedly, the “descendants of pure Spaniards.”⁹⁹ Whether *Californios* actually descended directly from Spaniards is another matter. Many were in fact *mestizo*. Most *Californios* were mixed-blood *mestizos* and *mulatos* who shared a Spanish, Indian, and African heritage.¹⁰⁰ Few could accurately claim *pureza de sangre* (pure Spanish blood).¹⁰¹

Unlike some of their fellow *Californios*, the Estudillo family could and did trace their family tree to Spain.¹⁰² Both José María Estudillo and Ygnacio Martínez were either born in Spain or descended directly from Spaniards. Ultimately, *Californio* families who claimed Spanish lineage (accurately or not) helped to further deconstruct

⁹⁶ Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 22.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Monroy, *Thrown among Strangers*, 139; Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 22.

¹⁰⁰ For additional reading on the racial and ethnic historical composition of Mexican American identity in the West and Southwest, see Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2001). In her work, Menchaca further delineates the *Californio* population among *peninsulares* (who were literally born in Spain) and *criollos* (those who could trace their descendants to Spain). The *Californios* featured in this study were the latter, if Spanish in origin at all.

¹⁰¹ Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 14; Jack D. Forbes, “Hispano-Mexican Pioneers of the San Francisco Bay Region: An Analysis of Racial Origins,” *Aztlán* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 175-189.

¹⁰² For details on the lineage of the Estudillo family, see Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 157-162.

traditional perceptions of Mexican ethnic identity. The “increased” diversity of the small settler population complicated local social divisions. As a result, Mexican California bore a new social order, one that further subdivided the Mexican people—between *Californios* and the larger *mestizo* Mexican population—with Indians a permanent underclass.¹⁰³

While Mexican California began to undergo a series of large-scale societal changes, the fortunes of the Estudillo and Martínez families continued to improve. José Joaquin Estudillo and his family moved around the San Francisco Bay area. In 1824, a year after his marriage to Juana Martínez, Estudillo became an aide to Luis Antonio Argüello (the first native born Governor of Alta California). After his father-in-law retired from military service in September 1831, the entire Estudillo/Martínez family moved to the San José/Santa Clara area—welcoming the opportunity to live outside the walls of the Presidio. These events did not occur without some loss. April 8, 1830 marked the death of Captain José María Estudillo, and the following day his family laid him to rest at the chapel of the San Diego Presidio. Estudillo did not leave an estate. Had he lived during the secularization of Alta California, he likely would have been awarded with land for his service protecting the Crown (and later Mexico).¹⁰⁴ The pueblo of San José grew at a rapid rate in the early nineteenth century, doubling in size approximately every twenty-five years. By the early 1830s, the pueblo possessed more than 500 inhabitants, and the town challenged the “economic and cultural practices of the

¹⁰³ For more detail, see Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*, 29-32; Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 12-15; and Acuña, *Occupied America*, 132-133;

¹⁰⁴ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 2, 6.

region's native demographic majority.”¹⁰⁵ José Joaquín Estudillo and his father-in-law remained in the growing town of San José, until called upon by their former comrades to help secularize the missions of Alta California.

* * *

Regarded as a sleepy backwater, initially the tumult in Madrid and Mexico City surrounding the declaration of Mexican sovereignty seldom reached Alta California. In general, however, life in Alta California was still not ideal—but particularly so in Yerba Buena (San Francisco), where the living conditions remained decidedly poor.¹⁰⁶ The transition from Spanish to Mexican rule did not alleviate the challenges, but rather, seemed to exacerbate them. Frustration continued to grow amongst the *Californios*, who envied the rich lands of the missions. The mission had remained the most pivotal institution in Spanish California for upwards of fifty years, and fewer than twenty private land grants were awarded to rancheros prior the founding of the Mexican Republic in 1821.¹⁰⁷ Mariano Vallejo, a military officer and future *Californio* landholder, bitterly complained, “It is just that twenty one mission establishments possess fertile lands of the peninsula...and that more than a thousand families of *gente de razón* possess only that which has been benevolently given them by the missionaries.”¹⁰⁸ Peruvian-born *criollo* Juan Bandini explained the impasse in the following manner:

Indeed the system of these missions is the most appropriate to retard their [the Indians'] mental development, but to change it suddenly would cause serious disturbance in the territory. The missions extend their possessions in one continuous line although not needing the land for their crops and herds and in this

¹⁰⁵ Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 12.

¹⁰⁶ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Monroy, “The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society,” 177.

¹⁰⁸ Mariano Vallejo, quoted in Daniel Garr, “Planning, Politics, and Plunder: The Missions and Indian Pueblos of Hispanic California,” *Southern California Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (Winter 1972): 297-298.

way they have appropriate nearly all this territory, their object being to keep private parties from coming between the mission grants. This is a system which the *gente de razón* should reform.¹⁰⁹

The *Californios'* dissatisfaction with the allotment of property provided the impetus for the *gente de razón* to seize control of the land—in the zealous pursuit of confiscating mission holdings.

Although the Mexican government authorized the secularization of California's twenty one missions in 1824, it was not until a decade later that the plans were finally put in motion. In 1834 Governor José Figueroa initiated the process of reclaiming the land that set the stage for a blossoming *Californio* society by transforming California into a region where *Californio* rancheros owned massive homesteads. And as a byproduct, missions converted into mere churches; stripped of their expansive estates. The most fertile lands in California and tens of thousands of Indians were “freed” from “monastic despotism.”¹¹⁰ The consequences for the missions were indeed dire.

For instance, three years after secularization began Mission Santa Clara de Asís became a parish church, and Mexican Franciscan priests replaced Spanish friars as custodians of a vastly diminished domain.¹¹¹ Villagers from nearby San José still attended mass at the church, but the Indians who previously resided in and around the mission dispersed. Disease was rampant: 6,565 Indians died between 1802 and 1833 at Mission Santa Clara de Asís from a combination of measles, smallpox, and other diseases. The four northern Alta California missions buried over 10,000 inhabitants by

¹⁰⁹ Juan Bandini to Eustace Barron, December 8, 1828, Stearns Papers, Box 4, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

¹¹⁰ Monroy, “The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society,” 179.

¹¹¹ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 9.

1840.¹¹² Many Indians who survived retreated from Mission life. A “chastened” Santa Clara endured the last decade of Mexican rule in California, poorly administered and short of funds.¹¹³ The California mission system was no more.

As noted above, secularization began in earnest in 1834. The dispersal of land directly benefited *Californios* such as José Joaquin Estudillo and Ygnacio Martínez. Douglas Monroy described the land grab in the following manner: “the *gente de razón* swarmed over mission lands just as energetically as did the flies over the cowpies in the mission pastures.”¹¹⁴ *Californios*, housed in powerful government positions, were free to redistribute the land as they saw fit. Of the administrators of the former missions, Angustias de la Guerra Ord stated, “some were incapable, others without morality, and some, a very few, were men of good faith who did everything possible to conserve the properties.”¹¹⁵ Consequently, the vast majority of the property in California passed from the Catholic missions to the *Californios*. The *gente de razón* paid little attention to the Indians’ rights to the land (according the law, Indians were entitled to fifty percent of the disbursed land—although this was seldom enforced) or to the *rancherías* of the Indians on or near the former missions. As a result, Indians who chose to remain in the San Francisco Bay Area after secularization were reduced to becoming *vaqueros* on the new ranchos, or day laborers in the pueblos.¹¹⁶

José Joaquin Estudillo and his father-in-law were major actors in secularization; they were given the complicated orders of secularizing the most northern missions. In

¹¹² Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 16.

¹¹³ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 9.

¹¹⁴ Monroy, “The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society,” 179.

¹¹⁵ Angustias de la Guerra Ord, *Occurrences in Hispanic California*, trans. And ed. from the Bancroft Library MS. By Francis Price and William H. Ellison (Washington, D.C.: Academy of Franciscan History, 1956), 25.

¹¹⁶ Acuña, *Occupied America*, 134.

the wake of secularization, both Ygnacio Martínez and José Joaquin Estudillo reaped the rewards of dismantling the missions. They, along with other *Californios*, parceled out lands that formerly belonged to the missions. The Governor of California granted Martínez Rancho El Pinole (along the water in modern day Contra Costa County).¹¹⁷ To fulfill the requirements upon which grants were made by the government, Martínez occupied and cultivated a large portion of the land, and set out a vineyard and fruit orchards. By the time Juana Estudillo and her children arrived on Rancho El Pinole, an immense adobe dwelling had been built by her father and brothers—a few miles from San Pablo Bay and the Carquinez Strait (then known as La Boca del Puerto Dulce).¹¹⁸

José Joaquin Estudillo (well acquainted with the ramifications of secularization) was intimately familiar with the former lands of Mission San José. He set his sights on land on the eastern shore of present day San Francisco Bay. Ygnacio Martínez offered to assist his son-in-law in his endeavors of procuring land—an encouraging sign according to Juana Martínez Estudillo, who fervently believed in the Spanish proverb, “All is his who has the courage to wish.”¹¹⁹

In mid 1836, while serving as *alcalde* (mayor) of Yerba Buena, José Joaquin Estudillo received permission from the Department of California in Monterey to occupy the most northern portion of Mission San José’s former grazing lands. This area was known as El Rodeo de Arroyo de San Leandro, named for the stream that marked northern border of the mission’s holdings. Having been granted authorization to occupy the land, Estudillo immediately went about constructing a series of small dwellings near

¹¹⁷ Proceedings of Land Case No. 205, Northern District U.S. District Court, San Francisco, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

¹¹⁸ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 10.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 10-11.

the Arroyo de San Leandro.¹²⁰ Before too long, Estudillo cultivated a portion of the land, and an unknown number of horses and some 300 heifers grazed its earth.¹²¹

In the aftermath of the secularization, *California* landholders often bickered with one another over claims to the land. José Joaquin Estudillo was no exception. His interests and that of his neighbor (Guillermo Castro, a former lieutenant in the Mexican Army and a surveyor for the pueblo of San José) overlapped. Compounding the tension and confusion, the government lost Estudillo's first claim on San Leandro. In 1839 Governor Juan B. Alvarado's office agreed to examine the matter, and informed José Joaquin Estudillo that he could remain on the land. However, this outcome worried Estudillo, who feared government officials would favor Castro. Governor Alvarado undoubtedly hoped for a timely conclusion to the land disagreement, but wished to no avail—the land dispute continued.¹²²

Without a definitive resolution to the parcel of land, the Estudillos went about establishing a residence at San Leandro. Great bundles of hides and tallow (cow fat—used to make candles and soap) were being moved to the embarcadero—at a spot where San Leandro Creek emptied into San Francisco Bay. Trading vessels anchored off the shores, collecting as much of the trade goods as possible. Juana Estudillo and her children settled into their new home, now a comfortable adobe structure not far from the

¹²⁰ In accordance with Mexican law, which required grantees to improve the land and construct an abode within one year.

¹²¹ The cattle were a gift from José Joaquin Estudillo's father-in-law, Ygnacio Martínez. For more detail, see Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 12.

¹²² Proceedings of Land Case No. 256, 84-85, Northern District U.S. District Court, San Francisco, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

bay.¹²³ On April 15, 1840, Juana bore her first child, María Dolores, at Rancho San Leandro.¹²⁴

A short time later, José Joaquin Estudillo resubmitted the petition for his claim to Rancho San Leandro, explaining how he established his family on the rancho and made the land arable. He submitted the following plea:

Citizen José Joaquin Estudillo, a Mexican by birth, hereby appears before Your Excellency, saying that in order to procure his subsistence and enable himself to support a large family consisting of a wife and ten children, after having served in army 17 years, four months and some days, on the eighth of January, eighteen hundred and thirty-seven, he petitioned for the tract of land known by the name of Arroyo de San Leandro, containing four square leagues from east to west and having obtained your Excellency, who extends a generous and protecting patronage towards the inhabitants of this land, permission to settle himself and continue his labors, meanwhile the proper legal proceedings there upon should be concluded which has accordingly done.

Significantly, José Joaquin Estudillo stressed his background in the Spanish and Mexican military. Once secularization was under way, a history of having served for the Spanish Crown or the Mexican government provided the former officers with the means to earn a land grant. Estudillo added:

Your Excellency, during the space of five years, five months and some days, and his petition having been mislaid in the office of the Secretary of State, he renews his application only accompanying the assembled plot of the aforesaid land in order that in consideration thereof, you may determine what you may esteem proper. Therefore, he prays, Your Excellency, in the exercise of your goodness, to consider his petition favorably by which he will receive the kindness which he asks and expects, rendering with Your Excellency his everlasting gratitude.¹²⁵

¹²³ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 14.

¹²⁴ June 17, 1850, Mission San José Baptismal Records, Entry No. 7481, Fremont, California.

¹²⁵ Proceedings of Land Case No. 256, 48-52, Northern District U.S. District Court, San Francisco, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Estudillo family's land claim was formal, and fairly representative of the time period. In response, Governor Juan B. Alvarado granted José Joaquin Estudillo a portion of Rancho San Leandro October 16, 1842, stating in part:

I declare José Joaquin Estudillo to the owner in property of a part of the tract of land known by the name of "San Leandro," bounded on the north by the Arroyo of San Leandro, on the east by the places where the waters from the springs on the land which the Indians who now established there occupy, waste themselves, thence on the south side in a straight line to the Arroyo of San Lorenzo, and without embracing the land which said Indians cultivate, and on the west by the sea...Therefore, I order that this title being held as firm and valid, an entry be made thereof in the respective book [of registry] and that this be delivered to the interested party for his security and other ends.¹²⁶

Alvarado's grant of Rancho San Leandro to the Estudillos was ordinary in nature. The tract of line made up approximately 4,438 acres, a smaller plot of land than some of his neighbors. According to Mexican law, if Estudillo and his family did not conform to the conditions of the agreement, he forfeited his right to the land. However, the Estudillos, like most *Californios*, made use of their large rancho and raised a great deal of income. In effect, the money generated by Rancho San Leandro financed the education of Jesús María Estudillo at Santa Clara College. Less than two years after Governor Alvarado officially granted San Leandro to the Estudillos, the family welcomed Jesús María into the world. The baby boy was born on Rancho San Leandro on the night of June 29, 1844, at the zenith of *Californio* power and prosperity, and on the eve of events that dramatically altered California.

The golden age of *Californios*, an age so often mythologized (with dons, lavish fiestas, caballeros, expansive ranchos), only lasted a little over a decade in duration—from the secularization of missions in 1833/34 to the Mexican-American War in 1846.

¹²⁶ Proceedings of Land Case No. 256, 48-52, Northern District U.S. District Court, San Francisco, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

The Gold Rush in 1848 only intensified the seas of change that swept across California, with the *gente de razón* often in the wake. In the intermittent years, however, *Californios* dominated the northernmost region of Mexico. Their ascension to the top of California society sewed the seeds for the Catholic Church's eventual foray into higher education in the region in the early 1850s.

The Estudillo family thrived despite the legal wrangling surrounding the formal acquisition of the title to Ranch San Leandro. José Joaquin Estudillo brought aboard a number of *vaqueros* to take care of the herds of livestock on his prized land. Doña Juana Estudillo and her daughters especially liked buying expensive fabrics, elegant laces, fans, slippers, and other luxuries from trading vessels anchored off San Leandro in San Francisco Bay. They became accustomed to boarding the vessels upon invitation from the trader while the ship's captain and José Joaquin Estudillo sipped on brandy attended to business affairs.¹²⁷

The *Californios* excessive generosity—to family, friends, and guests—was legendary. One traveler through the region marveled at the hospitality of the *Californios*, writing that “they literally vie with each other in devoting their time, their homes, and their means to the entertainment of a stranger.”¹²⁸ The “munificence” of the *Californios* also reveals that in this culture, “the more a man gave away the more he increased his social stature.”¹²⁹ And for these *gente de razón*, nothing was more valuable than the honor bestowed by a fellow gentleman.

¹²⁷ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 15.

¹²⁸ Sir George Simpson, *Narrative of a Journal Round the World During the Years 1841 and 1842*, Vol. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1847), 387.

¹²⁹ Monroy, “The Creation and Re-creation of Californio Society,” 191.

Still, outward appearances were not always as it seemed. José Joaquin Estudillo and his family's lavish lifestyle strained their resources. Within a year or two of formally acquiring the title to Rancho San Leandro, cattle and horse thieves began to damage the Estudillo's ability to trade. Consequently, as early as 1844, the year the diarist Jesús María Estudillo was born, his father asked traders for understanding when San Leandro did not produce enough hides and tallow from their cattle. With Spanish pride, the family did not accept the reality of the financial adversity they faced. By all outward appearances, the Estudillos reveled in good fortune with the large rancho and an extravagant way of life. However, by conducting himself in this manner, José Joaquin Estudillo opened his family up to being indebted to creditors.¹³⁰ Ultimately, however, the 1830s and early 1840s were a time of plenty for most *Californio* landholders (the Estudillos included)—a characteristic that cemented the *gente de razón's* legacy in the annals of California history. The good fortune the *Californios* enjoyed prior to American rule allowed the *gente de razón* to amass riches that eventually enabled the wealthiest families to finance the college educations of their sons and daughters from the 1850s to 1870s.

* * *

The Bear Flag Revolt and the outbreak of the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and statehood forever altered California—each event occurring within rapid succession of one another. Alta Californians, including those in around the Estudillo's Rancho San Leandro, learned the United States and Mexico were at war in July 1846.¹³¹ By that time, however, the Bear Flag Revolt (led by U.S. Army officer John C. Fremont),

¹³⁰ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 15-16.

¹³¹ Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 29.

already took place with little bloodshed. In the revolt, a small number of Americans seized the garrison at Sonoma, and captured *Californio* leader Mariano Vallejo. While fighting did occur between *Californios* and American troops in southern California, in January of 1847, all *Californios* agreed to lay down their arms peacefully. While this episode created unrest and confusion from Mexico City to Monterey, the capital of Alta California, the events did not immediately affect the wealthy rancheros in northern California. Some *Californios*, like José Joaquin Estudillo, hoped the American presence in California would even bring stability to the region.¹³² However, Estudillo's wishes were not necessarily fulfilled due the outbreak of another even more significant event, the California Gold Rush.

In early 1848 word reached San Leandro that gold had been discovered on the American River. While James W. Marshall's discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill shocked the world, inspiring tens of hundreds of thousands of prospectors to rush to California in hopes of gathering riches and glory, José Joaquin Estudillo remained unimpressed. He knew of a similar event that took place in the foothills of the San Fernando Valley in 1842, a rush that dissipated as quickly as it began.¹³³ However, the California Gold Rush was no ordinary event. Quite the contrary, the thousands of settlers that flocked to northern California in the late 1840s did not leave, changing the future state practically overnight from a sleepy backwater into a carnival of peoples from all across America and the world.

Following the Mexican-American War and the Gold Rush, Whites quickly became the majority in California. Evelyn Nakano Glenn states in *Unequal Freedom*,

¹³² Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 16.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 16.

“Over 200,000 Americans and other foreigners poured into northern California between 1848 and 1850.”¹³⁴ The U.S. government moved to rapidly bestow political power to Whites, which directly led to limited citizenship for many former Mexican citizens.¹³⁵ In the opinion of Martha Menchaca, “the United States government abandoned its federal responsibilities to its new citizens” almost immediately after signing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.¹³⁶ Congress gave state legislators the right to define the citizenship status of the new “Mexican Americans.” Menchaca adds that “this move had a severe impact on Mexicans because the state legislators chose not to give most people of color the legal rights enjoyed by White citizens.”¹³⁷ The majority of the participants at the 1849 California state constitutional convention were White Californians (most of whom had settled in the region before hostilities broke out between the United States and Mexico), and a handful of the delegates were *Californios*. The convention granted only Whites full citizenship. American males and “White Mexican men” were given the right of suffrage; *mestizos* were ineligible to vote and gradually stripped of most of their political rights.¹³⁸ David Webber’s assessment of the fallout from statehood echoes Menchaca’s analysis, and is representative of numerous other scholars.¹³⁹ In *Foreigners*

¹³⁴ Evelyn Nakano Glenn, *Unequal Freedom: How Race and Gender Shaped American Citizenship and Labor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 145.

¹³⁵ For a more detailed interpretation of the racial and ethnic historical composition of Mexican Americans in California, see Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 145-147.

¹³⁶ Martha Menchaca, *Recovering History Constructing Race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2001), 217.

¹³⁷ Menchaca, *Recovering History Constructing Race*, 218.

¹³⁸ California Constitution, 1849, Article 2, Section I, 4

¹³⁹ For example, see Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*; Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*; Acuña, *Occupied America*; Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*; and Menchaca, *Recovering History Constructing Race*.

in their Native Land, he surmises, “At best, Mexicans became second-class citizens. At worst, they became victims of overt racial and ethnic prejudice.”¹⁴⁰

In some respects, however, the rights of the Spanish-speaking population did not significantly change when California switched from being under the control of Mexico to the United States. *Mestizos*, who represented the vast majority of the Mexican population in the new state, did not enjoy the full rights of being American citizens; nor did they during Spanish and Mexican California (as noted earlier in the chapter, *Mestizos* were considered second class citizens). Similarly, Indians possessed limited rights both before and after statehood. That leaves the complicated question of *Californios*. The aftermath of how statehood affected them is the most germane to this study, since *Californios* later attended college in California from the 1850s to 1870s. Were they considered Mexican, White, or somewhere in between?

Confusion stemmed from the fact that *Californios* earned the right to vote (because they were classified as White—at least under the letter of the law), but their property rights were later infringed as a result of land disputes with White squatters.¹⁴¹ Some historians integrate the experiences of *Californios* with those faced by the majority of the Mexican population. For instance, Stephen J. Pitti asserts that “White settlers easily conflated Californios, Mexican immigrants, and local Indians in ways that must have offended *gente de razón* who had long defined their own civility in contrast to *indios bárbaros*.” According to Pitti, Whites thought *Californios*, Mexicans and Indians

¹⁴⁰ David Weber, *Foreigners in their Native Land*, 143.

¹⁴¹ A discussion of this very important topic is in the next section of this chapter.

all shared a common inferiority.¹⁴² While historians like Pitti effectively combine the racial stigmatization of Mexicans with the White Americans' apparent desire to obtain the property and land of the *Californios*, this portrayal oversimplifies *Californio*/White relations. This topic will be further explored in chapter two, when I examine the experiences of Jesús María Estudillo at Santa Clara College.

Californios were “White” yet Mexican—a distinction they themselves fostered since at least the 1820s.¹⁴³ In any event, the newly minted American citizens garnered certain rights according to their background. *Californios* understood that “Mexican Americans” possessed increased citizenship and opportunity with the more Spanish blood that ran through their veins. Many of these same landholders still traced their ancestry to Spain, as it was even more vital to do so than before statehood. Ancestry, class, and wealth were still paramount to *Californios*, who hoped to maintain their station in California. While a small segment of the Mexican population, the *Californios*, remained in a relatively privileged position in the immediate aftermath of statehood, the grand majority of Spanish-speakers in California possessed very limited labor and educational opportunities.¹⁴⁴

As documented above, one of the byproducts of the Gold Rush and statehood was the massive influx of people who flooded into northern California. Don José Joaquín Estudillo and other rancheros initially benefited from the rapidly expanded population: *Californios* harvested agricultural produce such as beans, corn, onions, potatoes, and

¹⁴² Pitti relies on two newspaper articles produced by the *Santa Clara Register* prove his point. In the articles cited, the editor of the newspaper disparaged all the “Spanish races.” See Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 35; and *Santa Clara Register*, June 13, 1853, and September 23, 1853.

¹⁴³ Similar confusion exists even today. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, “Hispanics” are defined by their ethnicity—not race.

¹⁴⁴ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 147, 179-180.

squash to meet the skyrocketing demand for food and staples needed in the region. In addition, San Francisco merchants and mining communities (to the east) paid well for both beef and grain. Estudillo also produced hides from cattle, in high demand to be made into saddles, reins, buckets, and boots (among other valuable items).¹⁴⁵ At first, San Leandro reaped the rewards from lying under the Stars and Stripes.

But the Estudillo family's good fortune tempered as more ramifications of the Gold Rush and statehood came to bare. By the mid to late 1840s, squatters began to settle nearly all on the ranchos owned by the *Californios*. Rancho San Leandro was no exception. As a result, land disputes immediately erupted between the *Californio* landholders like José Joaquin Estudillo and squatters on their land.¹⁴⁶ While the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo technically protected the land rights of the former Mexican citizens, the United States Congress passed the California Land Act in 1851. In effect, "Each Spanish and Mexican land grant had to be reviewed and approved by a land court and the U.S. Attorney General before legal title could be acknowledged. Rancheros had to submit to the land court a map of their ranchos and all the documents that proved legitimate title."¹⁴⁷ Thus, the onus fell on the *Californios* to verify the boundaries of their own property. Litigation over the ranchos took years to complete, and legal proceedings were inordinately expensive. Consequently, some *Californios* were forced to sell their lands rather than defend the rightful ownership of their property. Other *Californios*, more fortunate than their neighbors, furiously fought for their ranchos and their livelihoods.

¹⁴⁵ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 17.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 19-23.

¹⁴⁷ Haas, "War in California, 1846-1848," 347.

To ensure his family's security, in May of 1852 a now very ill José Joaquín Estudillo filed his claim for Rancho San Leandro at the offices of George Fisher, Secretary of the United States Board of Land Commissioners in San Francisco. The terms of the claim followed very much in line with the application put forth and won by Estudillo from former Governor Alvarado in 1842.¹⁴⁸ On June 1, 1852 Juana Estudillo invited a priest to San Leandro to reside with the family and administer José Joaquín Estudillo's last rites. As José Joaquín's condition worsened, the family moved him to San Francisco for treatment. Estudillo died on June 7, 1852 at the age of fifty-two, his wife and family at his bedside. The Estudillo family buried their patriarch at Mission Dolores, not far from the chapel where José Joaquín Estudillo took Juana María del Carmen Martínez as his bride some twenty-nine years earlier.¹⁴⁹ After covering his debts, half of all José Joaquín Estudillo's holdings passed along to his wife Juana. The other half of Estudillo's estate was split amongst his nine children.¹⁵⁰

Most *Californio* landowners were men, yet a small, but significant, number of women also owned property. *Gente de razón* acquired ranchos predominantly through direct grants from governors; Ygnacio Martínez and José Joaquín Estudillo acquired their land in exactly this manner. However, women like Juana Estudillo, as illustrated above, secured their holdings through either inheritance or marriage. Despite some women's inability to read or write (Doña Estudillo was unique in that she was very well educated for the time period—she could both read and write), it is evident that *Californianas*

¹⁴⁸ Refer to page 45 for José Joaquín Estudillo's initial application for Rancho San Leandro.

¹⁴⁹ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 21.

understood the law and their property rights. In this manner, enterprising women like Juana Estudillo “took advantage of their privileged economic and social position.”¹⁵¹

After her husband’s death, necessity forced Juana Estudillo to become acquainted with recent American history and her laws. Consequently, she purchased the monograph, *Compendio de la Historia de los Estados: Ó, República de América* (Compendium of the History of the States: Republic of America). Indeed, her reputation as a businesswoman in and around San Leandro preceded her.¹⁵² Encumbered by dealing with squatters and subject to litigation over her family’s land, Juana Estudillo set about to curb some of the indulgences she and her children enjoyed prior to the legal disputes. Doña Estudillo also exercised increasingly more control in the sales and rentals of her properties on Rancho San Leandro. Juana Estudillo’s son-in-law, William Heath Davis, long noted his mother-in-law’s business acumen. But Davis was somewhat taken aback when Doña Estudillo demonstrated her shrewd and ambitious business policies, which included charging higher rents to the tenants of San Leandro.¹⁵³ Juana possessed complete control over her family’s finances, and as the reader shall see in the upcoming chapter, also her young son Jesús María’s education.

By 1856, merchants from San Francisco and its environs were again in demand for more cattle, hay, sheep, and other agricultural products. A year later, the Estudillos won their initial dispute with squatters who infringed on the *Californio* family’s land. On May 7, 1857, Judge Ogden Hoffman of the United States District Court “adjudged and decreed that the claim of the Board of Commissioners is a good and valid claim and the

¹⁵¹ Chávez-García, *Negotiating Conquest*, 85.

¹⁵² Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 24.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

same is hereby confirmed.”¹⁵⁴ However, legal disagreements with still more squatters and their neighbors continued—a final decision on Rancho San Leandro would not occur for some time to come. In order to further their income and pay for their mounting legal bills, the Estudillos built a two story hotel at the convergence of the two main roads connecting Santa Clara County and Oakland—a little south of San Leandro Creek. Named the “Estudillo House,” the well-appointed hotel filled with guests and became the social gathering spot in the area, particularly so in the 1860s.¹⁵⁵ For the time being, the Estudillo family had beaten back attempts by squatters to siphon off pieces of Rancho San Leandro. And despite the numerous ongoing legal battles, the family weathered the storms that had arrived with statehood.

* * *

In the seventy-four years between the establishment of Mission Santa Clara de Asís in 1777 and the founding of Santa Clara College in 1851, California transformed from an underpopulated frontier to a Spanish colony, to a semiautonomous region of Mexico, and finally to the 31st state in the Union. California changed from a land controlled by Franciscan priests to one dominated by *Californio* Dons and later White American settlers. The descendants of the diarist Jesús María Estudillo experienced nearly all of this transformative period in California history. Initially officers in the Spanish and Mexican military, Jesús María’s grandfather and father became wealthy rancheros after secularization of the missions. Later, José Joaquin and Juana Estudillo

¹⁵⁴ Proceedings of Land Case No. 256, 734, Northern District U.S. District Court, San Francisco, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

¹⁵⁵ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 28.

guided their family through the Bear Flag Revolt, the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush and statehood, keeping their property and much of their riches in tact.

Some *Californios* did not survive the immediate aftermath of the Gold Rush and statehood; they lost their property and their status. Chicano historian Rodolfo Acuña offers no sympathy to the *Californios* who lost nearly everything, stating that “their pretensions were pathetic.” Acuña rebukes *Californios* for claiming a Spanish heritage when he believed they were *mestizo*.¹⁵⁶ As noted above, while many *Californios* were *mestizo*, others (like the Estudillos) descended directly from Spaniards. *Californios* who were able to do so after statehood (in effect, corroborating their Whiteness) retained many of their rights, including the ability to vote. More importantly, at least in terms of the scope of this study, the wealth some *Californios* still possessed directly led to the enrollment of their children in college. In the Estudillo’s case, although the family’s hold on their land (and capital) was jeopardized by the upheaval followed in the wake of the Gold Rush and statehood, the family still retained sufficient funds to send three sons to Santa Clara College.

As the population exploded in northern California following the Gold Rush and statehood, the Catholic Church moved to establish a college in the region. Upon arriving in cosmopolitan San Francisco, one Jesuit priest reflected, “We were able to set foot on the longed-for shore of what goes under the name San Francisco, but which, whether it should be called a villa, a brothel, or Babylon, I am at a loss to determine.”¹⁵⁷ Largely confounded by San Francisco’s frenetic nature, Church officials instead looked farther

¹⁵⁶ Acuña, *Occupied America*, 137.

¹⁵⁷ Michael Accolti, “Osservazioni sopra una lettera dall’ Arcivo. Di San Francisco, Cal., al Rd. P. Felice Sopranis, S. J. Visitatore in data del 23 Dicembre 1863,” MS [1863], Archives of the California Province of the Society of Jesus (Santa Clara Materials), Los Gatos, California.

south to San José, where in 1851, nearly half of the pueblo's 6,664 inhabitants were either *Californios* or Mexicans.¹⁵⁸ Near the town, in the heart of the Santa Clara Valley, the interests of the Catholic Church and *Californios* would come together in unison: setting the stage for the first participation of “Mexican Americans” in American higher education.

¹⁵⁸ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 39.

Chapter Two: *Californios* Go to College: The Story of Jesús María Estudillo and Santa Clara College

From Santa Clara College's founding in 1851 until 1876, *Californios* enrolled at the institution in large numbers. During its first twenty five years of existence, Santa Clara enrolled a total of 1,650 students; between 350 and 400 of those students were either Spanish-surnamed or Spanish-speaking. In the 1867-68 school year alone, *Californios* and Mexicans constituted nearly one-fourth of the entire student body.¹⁵⁹ California pioneer James Alexander Forbes, himself Jesuit educated and married to *Californiana* Anita María Galindo, enrolled his sons at Santa Clara.¹⁶⁰ He stated that the College was "the best there is in California," with professors "concerned about the religious education of the students, without which there can be no true instruction."¹⁶¹ Early enrollment at Santa Clara included a "roll call" of prominent *Californio* families: "Alviso, Argüello, Bandini, Berryessa, Camarillo, Castro, Del Valle, Malarin, Pacheco, Pinero, Suñol, and Vallejo."¹⁶² Among those who enrolled at Santa Clara was the youngest son of Don José Joaquin and Juana Estudillo, the diarist Jesús María Estudillo.

At the same time as *Californios* matriculated in large numbers at Santa Clara, a number of the sisters of those young men attended the nearby College of Notre Dame. In

¹⁵⁹ Data was drawn from the catalogs and student rosters of Santa Clara College for the years 1851-1876. Those primary sources are preserved in the Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California. Students were identified from the Santa Clara College records by their place of origin and/or their surname. 60% of those students with Spanish surnames were from California, 12% from out of state, and around 27% were from Mexico and other Latin American countries. For additional detail, see McKeivitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 322.

¹⁶⁰ McKeivitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 322.

¹⁶¹ James Alexander Forbes to José Antonio Aguirre, 13 December 1852, "Letter Book of James Alexander Forbes," vol. 1, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

¹⁶² McKeivitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 322.

1851, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur founded the women's college in San Jose.¹⁶³ For a time, the population of Spanish-speakers enrolled there grew sufficiently large that a Spanish-only division was created on their behalf.¹⁶⁴ Taken together, the enrollment of *Californios* at Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame provide proof of participation in higher education by the Spanish-speaking community in northern California in the mid-nineteenth century. The matriculation of *Californios* at the aforementioned higher education institutions occurred during a transformative age (for Jesús María Estudillo and his fellow *Californios*)—higher education represented a place where these young men and women attempted to acquire the skills, such as learning English, best needed to adjust to life in the new state of California.

* * *

The Jesuit order established Santa Clara College in 1851 on the site of the old Mission Santa Clara de Asís.¹⁶⁵ Church leaders also considered San Francisco for the site of the first Catholic college in California, but feared the city was not “well suited for a college in view of the ebb and flow which prevails there,” instead choosing a location convenient to San Jose, “one of the oldest cities in California.”¹⁶⁶ Prior to the founding of the college, Mexican Franciscans were stationed at the former mission (by then a parish), where they received worshipers predominantly from the local population of *Californios*, Mexicans, and Indians.¹⁶⁷ The mission-turned-parish was the religious

¹⁶³ For additional detail on the founding of the College of Notre Dame, see McNamee, *Light in the Valley*, 1-32.

¹⁶⁴ McKeivitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 324.

¹⁶⁵ Mission Santa Clara de Asís was the eighth of the original 21 California missions established by the Catholic Church and the Spanish Crown.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Accolti, “Osservazioni,” Archives of the California Province of the Society of Jesus (Santa Clara Materials), Los Gatos, California.

¹⁶⁷ McKeivitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 8-14.

epicenter of the Santa Clara Valley when Bishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany oversaw the transfer of the former mission from the Franciscans to the Society of Jesus.¹⁶⁸ In March of 1851, he formally appointed an Italian-born Jesuit, John Nobili, as permanent pastor of Santa Clara and administrator of “all belonging to said mission.”¹⁶⁹ The inhabitants of the greater San Jose area keenly desired educational facilities, and were very receptive to the opening of the school “as soon as possible.”¹⁷⁰ In May, after only a few short weeks of preparation, Santa Clara College (with Nobili as its president) began to instruct local students.¹⁷¹

Interestingly, the founding of Santa Clara and other Jesuit institutions like it played a role in a sectarian rivalry with Protestant educators. In 1856, one Protestant pamphleteer wrote:

The main consideration to excite our fears...is the calm, shrewd, steady, systematic movement of the Jesuit order now attempting to do in California and in the Mississippi Valley what it once did in Austria; by the unobtrusive, by the unobserved power of the College, to subvert the principles of the Reformation, and to crush the spirit of liberty. There, Brethren, there our great battle with the Jesuit, on Western soil, is to be waged. We must build college against college.¹⁷²

On the other hand, the Catholic clergy were motivated to create Santa Clara College (in part) to “offset” the “growing Protestant influence in “Catholic” California.”¹⁷³ Given the scarcity of schools in the state, the young Jesuit College flourished.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 8.

¹⁶⁹ Joseph Alemany to John Nobili, 4 March 1851, Presidential Papers, Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

¹⁷⁰ Accolti, “Osservazioni,” Archives of the California Province of the Society of Jesus (Santa Clara Materials), Los Gatos, California.

¹⁷¹ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 27.

¹⁷² E. N. Kirk, Discourse Before the S.P.C.T.E.W. (pamphlet, 1856), quoted in Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War* (New York, 1969), pp. 74-75.

¹⁷³ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 2.

The founding of Santa Clara was not all together different from colleges in the East and South. The grand majority of colonial and antebellum colleges were religious in origin: from Congregationalists at Harvard and Yale to Presbyterians at Princeton.¹⁷⁴ In this vein, five of the earliest higher education institutions in Alta California were either denominational colleges or church-related in origin: Santa Clara College; Notre Dame College, California Wesleyan College (later renamed the University of the Pacific); St. Ignatius College (later the University of San Francisco); and the University of California (originally known as the Congregational-Presbyterian College of California).¹⁷⁵ Initially, Santa Clara operated as a preparatory school and did not offer courses of collegiate rank until 1853. Within ten years, though, Santa Clara enrolled more than 200 students—no small number for a fledgling mid-nineteenth century American college.¹⁷⁶

A wide variety of students enrolled at Santa Clara in this age; the sons of diplomats and a number of students from Australia and France were among the student body. Native Californians, mainly the sons of well-to-do farmers and merchants, were also able to cover the cost of the rather expensive \$350 yearly charge for tuition, room, and board.¹⁷⁷ Several families who settled in Mexican California shortly before statehood were among the first to send their sons to Santa Clara as a remedy to the lack of formal education available to the local population prior to the founding of the college. Among them were the “children and wards of such pioneers as James Alexander Forbes, Martin Murphy, Jr., Abel Stearns, Job F. Dye, William M. Keith, and Alpheus

¹⁷⁴ Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, 13-14.

¹⁷⁵ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 1.

¹⁷⁶ 1863-64 Santa Clara College Annual Bulletin, Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

¹⁷⁷ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 39.

Thompson.”¹⁷⁸ Still, most of the students who attended Santa Clara were from families that settled in California after the discovery of gold.¹⁷⁹

Most germane to this study, notably, was the enrollment of large numbers of *Californios* at Santa Clara College between the founding of the institution and 1876. The link between *Californios* and Santa Clara was so great that the fledgling college actively recruited Spanish-speaking students, and published a Spanish-language edition of its yearly bulletin.¹⁸⁰ Santa Clara was a young institution, eager to attract students to help pay for the College’s large debt brought on by investment in physical plant. As a result, in order to generate capital and facilitate the growth of the school, Santa Clara raised its fees for tuition, room, and board to \$400 a year in 1859.¹⁸¹ Among those who could afford the expensive cost of attending Santa Clara College were *Californio* families such as the Estudillos. The fourth President of Santa Clara, Burchard Villiger (Jesús María Estudillo attended the College during Villiger’s presidency from 1861-1865), applauded the patronage of Santa Clara by *Californios* and their wealthy neighbors in and around the San Francisco Bay Area. The pragmatic Villiger confided in a friend that the sons of “three Governors and rich farmers and rich merchants of San Francisco...kept up the frame of the College,” and allowed the faculty to “live decently.”¹⁸² Archbishop Alemany disagreed, and wrote, “A good solid Christian education” should be “almost within the reach of all.” He lamented, “Very, very few of my Catholic people” could

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ The Spanish language edition of the bulletin was named the following: Prospecto del Colegio de Santa Clara, La Sociedad de Jesus (the Society of Jesus), En la Alta California. Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

¹⁸¹ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 63-64, 75.

¹⁸² Burchard Villiger to John P. Frieden, 14 December 1900, Archives of the California Province of the Society of Jesus (Santa Clara materials), Los Gatos, California.

attend Santa Clara because of the “high prices of the College.”¹⁸³ Consequently, Archbishop Alemany established Saint Mary’s College in 1863 as a result of the disagreement; in an attempt to make available a Catholic education to a wider segment of the population.¹⁸⁴

While both Villiger and the bulletins of the College offer clues to the value the Santa Clara administration placed on the enrollment of *Californios*, the students’ thoughts and perceptions of the young Jesuit college (and higher education in general) are a bit more difficult (although not impossible) to ascertain. As noted in the introduction of this study, one of those students, Jesús María Estudillo, wrote of his experiences at Santa Clara—giving the reader a unique look into the thoughts of a *Californio* young man in college. In all, Estudillo’s extant journals cover just about three and a half of the six years Jesús María was a student at Santa Clara.¹⁸⁵ Jesús María Estudillo’s experience sheds light on the lives of second generation *Californios* as they attempted to lead a bicultural and bilingual existence in a rapidly changing California.

Written during a time of upheaval for *Californios*, Jesús María’s life history offers critical insight on how an upper-class young man coped with the challenges associated with adapting to a new cultural, economic, political, and ethnic/racial order—all while the state of California moved from being dominated by Spaniards/Mexicans to a White American majority. The diaries provide a lens to view, as Gerald McKevitt notes, an

¹⁸³ Alemany to Felix Sopranis, 23 December 1862, quoted in John Bernard McGloin, S. J., *California’s First Archbishop, the Life of Joseph Sadoc Alemany, O.P., 1814-1888* (New York, 1966), 203.

¹⁸⁴ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 77.

¹⁸⁵ The years 1861, 1862, 1864 and 1867 are housed at Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.

“evolving *Californio* consciousness,” exhibited in Jesús María’s thoughts on language, religion, gender, acculturation, friendship, and a changing daily life.¹⁸⁶

Jesús María was tutored from about the age of six or seven. He also spoke English proficiently, as he was often in the presence of his brothers-in-law—John B. Ward and William Heath Davis, but never in the presence of his mother Juana. A priest from an eastern college visited the Estudillos in spring of 1856 to recommend sending Jesús María to the institution he represented. According to the representative of the college, the boy would be able to befriend American students. If he became lonesome or homesick, there were other boys from southern California who were also descendants of Spanish families. The priest also assured Juana Estudillo that her son would receive spiritual guidance, a rigorous education, and care in the event of any illness. Ward and Davis favored sending Jesús María to a college in the East, where the boy could benefit from interacting with students from a variety of different backgrounds.¹⁸⁷

Juana Estudillo summarily dismissed the idea of sending Jesús María to a college on the eastern seaboard, for she could not bear the thought of being so far away from her youngest child. Rather, Juana Estudillo had heard of nearby Santa Clara College and its preparatory program, and knew that boarding students there were permitted to return home for holidays and vacations. Jesús María’s journey to and from Santa Clara on a horse-drawn omnibus and stagecoach would only last five to six hours. Plus, the idea of occasionally visiting her youngest child at college (on Sundays as well as during the holy season) greatly appealed to the matriarch of the Estudillo family.¹⁸⁸ Her concerns not all

¹⁸⁶ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 322,

¹⁸⁷ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 29.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

together different from anxious parents today, on the eve of dropping their children off at college.

As a result, Jesús María and his mother visited Santa Clara toward the end of the spring semester of 1856 to arrange admission as a boarding student in the preparatory department of the institution. While there, they met with the president of the College, who personally screened those interested in matriculating at the school. If enrolled, Jesús María would have to strictly adhere to the rules of the Jesuit institution and the doctrine of the Catholic faith. Juana Estudillo was confident Jesús María would adjust to the rules and regulations of being away from home at Santa Clara, since he was deeply religious and accustomed to obeying his mother and the elder members of his family.¹⁸⁹ Thirteen-year-old Jesús María enrolled in the preparatory department in fall of 1856. Two of his older brothers, twenty-two year-old Luis and twenty-three-year-old Vicente (as well as his cousin from San Diego, José Guadalupe Estudillo), joined the young *Californio* boy the following autumn at the Jesuit college.¹⁹⁰

* * *

The sensibilities and events recorded in Jesús María Estudillo's diary were those of a privileged young man. Not surprisingly, Jesús María's interests, outlook, and point of view were that of a member of the elite landowning class. As the son of wealthy rancheros, he shared as much, if not considerably more in common, with the White students he attended Santa Clara with than the poorer Mexicans who worked on his family's land. For *Californios*, going to college and getting an education was an indispensable tool used in protecting eroding family fortunes—a key to surviving the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 29-30.

¹⁹⁰ McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 322.

transition from Mexican to American hegemony. By attending college, *Californio* families believed their sons would be better prepared to defend against the growing encroachment on *Californio* life. Recognizing the importance of this endeavor and concerned about their future, the parents of young men like Estudillo dutifully supported their children. For instance, the mother of Napoleon Vallejo urged her son, “Study, study as much as you can. Don’t waste time.”¹⁹¹ Similarly, Romualdo Pacheco of Santa Barbara sent two sons, one of whom later became governor of the state, to Hawaii for “an Anglo Saxon education.”¹⁹² Sometimes, *Californios* were not quite successful instilling the value of higher education in their children. In fact, one of Mariano G. Vallejo’s own sons, Uladislao, did not take to college. In 1860 the young fifteen-year-old Uladislao traveled from California to attend St. John’s College (now Fordham University) in New York. Uladislao’s elder brother accompanied him on the trip, and informed their father that Ula was “peeved to go because it was a Jesuit institution and it looked so much like a prison.” After several months, Uladislao changed his mind: “he likes it first rate; he likes his professors; the rules are not too severe;” but a year later he lost interest in his studies and dropped out of school.¹⁹³

In general, however, *Californios* had become “acutely conscious of the consolidation of a new order.”¹⁹⁴ While a student at Santa Clara College, Jesús María Estudillo became more and more aware of the changes taking place around him and his family, and he expressed the desire to confront the challenges that abruptly arrived with

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 322; Madie Brown Emparan, *The Vallejos of California* (San Francisco: The Gleeson Library Associates, 1968), 366-367.

¹⁹² See Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, “Historical and Personal Memories Relating to Alta California,” translated by Earl R. Hewitt, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, vol. 4, p. 80.

¹⁹³ Quoted in Emparan, *The Vallejos of California*, 366.

¹⁹⁴ Pitt, *Decline of Californios*, 250.

the end of the Mexican-American War, the California Gold Rush, and statehood. Jesús María faced this situation head on, determined to formally master the English language and immerse himself in an increasingly cosmopolitan California society. Santa Clara College provided Estudillo with the skills and contacts needed to successfully navigate the pathway he was about to embark upon.

In all, Jesús María spent nearly seven years on Santa Clara's campus, the first four years of which he spent in the preparatory department taking high school level courses in history, geography, French, English, Spanish, mathematics, bookkeeping, and elocution. In the latter three years of his education, Jesús María enrolled in collegiate classes such as literature, rhetoric, philosophy, English, French, Latin, Greek, astronomy, chemistry, and mineralogy.¹⁹⁵ He also took a number of classes on bookkeeping, perhaps indicating an interest in a postgraduate career in business. Several of Estudillo's classmates also approached course selection in a similar manner. James, Robert, and Patrick Watson, of Los Angeles's powerful Watson-Domínguez family, took classes "to prepare...for the commercial world."¹⁹⁶ Most *Californios*, like their fellow White students at Santa Clara, sought both a practical and classical education.

Many *Californios* enrolled at Santa Clara in hopes of perfecting their English, the language's importance readily apparent to the greater Mexican community even before statehood. Mariano G. Vallejo of Sonoma and San Diego merchant Miguel Pedorena

¹⁹⁵ The enrollment data of Jesús María Estudillo at Santa Clara (along with his brothers) is contained in "Student Finance, 1856-1867," Ledger 150(1), Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California. For additional detail, see McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 323.

¹⁹⁶ Judson, A. Grenier, *California Legacy: The James Alexander Watson-María Dolores Domínguez de Watson Family, 1820-1980* (Los Angeles: Watson Land Company, 1987), 246, 265-66; McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 323.

“spoke English fluently by the 1840’s.”¹⁹⁷ Learning the language was an essential skill for the *Californios* attempting to remain among the elite of the state. Both Vallejo and Pedronena sent sons to Santa Clara for that explicit purpose.¹⁹⁸ The parents of other Spanish-speaking students were also eager for their sons to “master English and the basic subjects crucial for success and survival in the world that had burst upon them” with the arrival of the large White population after the California gold rush and statehood.¹⁹⁹

Many *Californios* were not necessarily well versed in English—Spanish still was the “prevailing language” amongst *Californios* and elite Mexicans throughout California particularly the southern end of the state.²⁰⁰ Not surprisingly, several *Californio* students arrived at Santa Clara in the 1850s speaking only Spanish. As a result, Spanish language classes were offered at the college to meet demand.²⁰¹ For instance, President John Nobili discovered that the son of William Keith did not speak English, once he met the young man after enrollment.²⁰² Likewise, José Guadalupe Estudillo, the future state treasurer and cousin of Jesús María Estudillo, only spoke Spanish when he arrived at Santa Clara from his hometown of San Diego.²⁰³ José Guadalupe Estudillo once asked his cousin-in-law, William Heath Davis, “to overlook all my mistakes in writing because it is very short time since I commenced to learn English.”²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷ David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982).

¹⁹⁸ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 323.

¹⁹⁹ McKevitt, *The University of Santa Clara*, 40.

²⁰⁰ Judson, A. Grenier, *California Legacy: The James Alexander Watson-María Dolores Domínguez de Watson Family, 1820-1980* (Los Angeles: Watson Land Company, 1987), 129.

²⁰¹ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 323.

²⁰² John Nobili (Santa Clara) to W. M. Keith, 10 June 1853, Nobili Papers, Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

²⁰³ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 323.

²⁰⁴ José Guadalupe Estudillo to William Heath Davis, 8 May 1859, William Heath Davis Collection, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

Other students were inadequately prepared for formal schooling. One Jesuit instructor at Santa Clara informed Abel Stearns that his ward, Alfredo Bandini, was “very deficient in his preparatory instruction.”²⁰⁵ Santa Clara offered bilingual instruction in order to accommodate students such as Bandini, a telling sign that demonstrated the young College’s commitment to meeting the needs of its diverse student population. For instance, records show that “Spanish Christian doctrine classes” were offered by the College, as well as reading and spelling classes for “foreigners.”²⁰⁶ The majority of the students enrolled in the courses were from northern Mexico, while several more were *Californios*. By the late nineteenth century, Santa Clara required Spanish-speakers to abstain from conversing in Spanish except in the first month after arriving on campus.²⁰⁷ By in large, however, the majority of incoming *Californio* students arrived at Santa Clara with at least a passing familiarity of the English language, and chose their coursework accordingly.²⁰⁸

In contrast, faculty taught more classes in Spanish at the nearby College of Notre Dame. The greater number of courses conducted in Spanish suggests young *Californio* women may have had less exposure to English prior to enrolling at the College. In fact, so many Spanish-speakers attended the College of Notre Dame in this time period that report cards and bills were printed in Spanish. For instance, the report card of Carlota de Haro featured marks in Ciencia (science), Gramatica (grammar), Geografia (geography),

²⁰⁵ Gregory Mengarini (Santa Clara College) to Abel Stearns, March 26, 1862, Abel Stearns Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

²⁰⁶ The Spanish catechism class enrolled 33 students in the 1867-1868 year. “Grade Book, 1866-1867,” 1 vol.; “Grade Book, 1868-69,” 1 vol.; “Credits for the Year 1873-74,” 1 vol., Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

²⁰⁷ See Joseph W. Riordan, S.J., “Notes for the History of Santa Clara College,” Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

²⁰⁸ McKeivitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 324.

Arithmetica (arithmetic), and Dibujo (drawing), among many other courses.²⁰⁹ The parallel courses in English and Spanish offered at the College of Norte Dame points to the varied approaches taken by Catholic higher education institutions to keep *Californios* and Mexicans as faithful members of their student body.

In contrast with some of his peers at Santa Clara and Notre Dame, Jesús María Estudillo was already fairly adept at conversing in English by the time he enrolled in the preparatory department of Santa Clara. He composed his diary, beginning at the age of just thirteen, entirely in English—an impressive accomplishment in and of itself for the young *Californio*. Jesús María fervently desired to master the language, and his diary entries faithfully charted his odyssey. At seventeen, he still noted the number of times he used Spanish outside of class at Santa Clara.²¹⁰ On one such occasion, Jesús María proudly recorded that, “Today I did not speak two words of Spanish,” despite numerous opportunities to do so (with other *Californio* classmates).²¹¹ Several months later, Estudillo wrote in his diary, “This afternoon I had a long conversation with [Juan] Solari, as it is seldom that I speak Spanish to anybody,” again signifying the commitment of Jesús María to become fluent in his second tongue.²¹²

Juana Estudillo sent Jesús María to Santa Clara, in part, to perfect his English—chiding her youngest child when letters the young man sent home showed insufficient improvement in the mastery of his second language. In early 1862 Jesús María wrote in his journal:

²⁰⁹ Report Card, Carlota de Haro, 1853, Norte Dame de Namur Archives, Belmont, California.

²¹⁰ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 324.

²¹¹ Estudillo, “Diary,” April 19, 1861.

²¹² Estudillo, “Diary,” December 7, 1861.

When I came to the study room for Chemistry class, I found two letters in my desk, one from my mother and another from [my sister] Dolores. Lola [Dolores] tells me that Dona Estudillo [is] not pleased with my epistolary style, that I have not improved my English. Indeed, I am very sorry that she has such a bad opinion of me...²¹³

For students like Estudillo, there were plentiful opportunities to formally learn English, since it was the language of instruction in nearly all the courses offered at Santa Clara — from mathematics to bookkeeping to the sciences.²¹⁴ For example, Jesús María wrote of a geography class where the professor assigned the students to write an essay describing the terrain over which the transcontinental railroad passed from San Francisco to Jefferson City, Missouri.²¹⁵ According to Gerald McKevitt, Jesuit pedagogy also “placed a high priority on *eloquentia perfecta*, or the cultivation of style,” so school faculty and administrators at Santa Clara promoted extracurricular activities such as literary societies, debate, and drama.²¹⁶ While his classmate Napoleon Vallejo chose drama to hone his English, Jesús María Estudillo preferred “to improve his English through elocution and debate.”²¹⁷

Jesús María often recorded the ups and downs of becoming completely fluent in the English language. A high was reflected in a passage of his diary from the spring of 1861 in which he triumphantly wrote, “This evening was the first time I ever composed two lines of poetry.”²¹⁸ Earlier in the term he lamented his exam marks, acknowledging

²¹³ Estudillo, “Diary,” February 28, 1862.

²¹⁴ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 325.

²¹⁵ Estudillo, “Diary,” March 26, 1861.

²¹⁶ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 325; McKevitt, *University of Santa Clara*, 99.

²¹⁷ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 325. The experiences of Napoleon Vallejo are documented in Emparan, *The Vallejos of California*, 382-83.

²¹⁸ Estudillo, “Diary,” April 25, 1861.

that his grade in English was “bad,” which he noted “with the greatest regret.”²¹⁹ A year later, an angry Jesús María wrote of his strained relationship with his English professor, Edmond Young:

Of all my College days, this has been the wretchedest, no peace has dwelled within this troubled bosom in the whole day since grammar class to the hour of writing these few lines, seven o'clock in the evening. I have wished that I would not have had to come back this session and I declare that if I am kept in the same English class after Christmas, I will not come back, at least if the same teacher teaches the class. After the class was over this morning, I took out my grammar to the study room to have Father Young explain something I did not understand, when some three or four boys called him and he commenced to speak to them. They told him some trifles, the fact was, that he left me standing with my book in my hand and did not finish his explanation, the small boys were more important to him; this I considered the worst kind of insult and I hope I shall see the time when I can have an explanation of this act of my teacher.²²⁰

This episode also reflects upon the sensitivity of the proud Jesús María (who the reader must remember, was still a young man). He very much retained the pride and honor synonymous with the Spanish character of which he directly descended. Aggravated by Professor Young's incessant reliance on learning proper pronunciation through repetition, while also unhappy with his grades, Estudillo lamented “how contemptible he is treating me.”²²¹ On another occasion, Jesús María convinced himself that his teacher had not called upon him to recite in a chemistry class because of inability “to pronounce well.”²²² In spite of his anger toward some of his instructors, Jesús María adhered to his cultural upbringing of respecting elders and those in authority, treating his teachers with the utmost respect.

²¹⁹ Estudillo, “Diary,” February 27, 1861.

²²⁰ Estudillo, “Diary,” October 13, 1862.

²²¹ Estudillo, “Diary,” April 8, 1864.

²²² Estudillo, “Diary,” June 14, 1864.

Estudillo's behavior stood in marked contrast to some of his White classmates—who often rebelled against the faculty and the administration.²²³ Jesús María wrote of some of the rules of the College (and how they were broken by his peers) in the following passage of his diary:

Father Caredda this morning reminded us of a few points in the rules of the College and during the forenoon the principal rules of the College were hung in the windows of the study room...After he read the rules, he said that there were four or five different spirits in the College but how they came in, he did not know—Spirit of Novel Reading, 2nd, Spirit of Gambling, 3rd, Spirit of Laziness, 4th, Spirit of Destruction, by which different kinds of furniture had been spoiled, such as doors, and desks disfigured in the like manner.²²⁴

Estudillo furnished himself as a gentleman; he did not dare disrespect his teachers or the administrators of the College. In fact, Jesús María was a model student. His superior marks in both speech and history earned him recognition in the Santa Clara College's end-of-the-year exhibitions.²²⁵ The college's prestigious Philhistorian Debating Society later invited Jesús María to become a member; the group's purpose was "to promote in its members the knowledge of history and literature by useful discussions, and, by accustoming them to speak with ease and fluency, to prepare them for debates of a higher order."²²⁶ Although Father Young's critique of Jesús María's oratory left the young *Californio* exasperated on more than one occasion, "wishing almost never to speak

²²³ For instance, a classmate and close friend of Jesús María Estudillo, Edward Palmer, was expelled for breaking the rules of the College. Estudillo described the affair in his diary: "Palmer this evening was caught making a cigarrito in the Refectory and Father Caredda has given him punishment, but Palmer would not submit and proposes to leave the College tomorrow." See Estudillo, "Diary," May 18, 1862. For a history of some of the antagonism between students and faculty at early colonial colleges, see Leon Jackson, "The Rights of Man and the Rites of Youth: Fraternity and Riot at Eighteenth-Century Harvard," *History of Higher Education Annual* 15 (1995): 5-49.

²²⁴ Estudillo, "Diary," April 21, 1862.

²²⁵ McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 325, Estudillo, "Diary," April 26 and June 24, 1862. The annual awards are documented in *Prospectus of Santa Clara College, S.J., Cal.* For the years 1856-1864, Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

²²⁶ "Constitution of the Philhistorian Debating Society of Santa Clara College, 1859-1872," 1 vol., Archives of the University of Santa Clara.

another speech,” Estudillo persevered and thrived.²²⁷ By the end of the 1862 school year, he received an invitation to give a speech at commencement (“my first speech,” he proudly wrote).²²⁸ Jesús María’s accomplishments, including his selection as a member of the Philhistorian Debating Society and as a speaker at graduation, suggests Estudillo’s background as a *Californio* did not adversely affect his standing amongst his peers.

* * *

While Jesús María Estudillo and his fellow *Californios* faced the challenges of mastering another language and attending to their studies, in other respects, Santa Clara offered the young gentlemen a variety of activities that made College far more agreeable. Students enjoyed close relationships with their professors. Many of Jesús María’s Jesuit and lay faculty were immigrants, and dealt with some of the same issues of acculturation their students faced.²²⁹ Since Santa Clara was effectively a small boarding school, students and faculty often interacted with one another. Estudillo documented numerous instances of spending time with his professors outside the classroom. On one Sunday evening, Jesús María and one of his friends stopped by to call upon one of their favorite teachers, “Before supper [Edward] Palmer and I went to Fr. Guerrieri’s room and smoked cigars.”²³⁰ On another Sunday about two months later Estudillo went out for a walk with Mr. Pascal, his bookkeeping professor. They “went to his house and [he] showed me the garden and dranked [*sic.*] some wine. Then commencing home [we] called at Mr.

²²⁷ Estudillo, “Diary,” May 16, 1862. About a month later, Jesús María displayed his emotional and sensitive nature in another frustrating encounter with Father Young: “At half past four or thereabouts, I rehearsed my speech in the theater before Father Young and his remarks were that I did not know it as well as he expected. I said nothing, but within me I felt the kind of madness to see with what scorn he talked to me.” Estudillo, “Diary,” June 17, 1862.

²²⁸ Estudillo, “Diary,” June 25, 1862.

²²⁹ McKeivitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 326.

²³⁰ Estudillo, “Diary,” March 31, 1861.

Lawrie's, a professor of music. I was introduced to his...fine lady. Fr. Accolti was there...Mr. Lawrie gave me some cherries."²³¹ School picnics, featuring both students and faculty, were also the norm. Estudillo thoroughly enjoyed one such event shortly before commencement in spring of 1861: "We stopped at Cook's grove to hear the speeches of the boys that were going to be graduated," traveling later to Parrot's Garden, where "we had a very good dinner made at the restaurant, plenty of wine, champagne" and lager beer by the barrel.²³²

Besides spending time socializing with professors, Jesús María and his fellow *Californios* spent a great deal of time enjoying the outdoors, much like they did at home on their ranchos. For instance, Estudillo and his friends frequently hunted, often along the creeks and streams of the Santa Clara Valley. He wrote of one such excursion, "We went through the woods and I killed good many rabbits and robbins...we stayed there about two hours" to cook dinner, "two robbins, one rabbit roasted in the fire."²³³ Sometimes, Jesús María and his friends would bring the game back to the dining hall at Santa Clara, for his fellow classmates to also enjoy.²³⁴ Another favorite pastime readily available to *Californios* in around Santa Clara was horseback riding. The Estudillo brothers, in particular, were well known for riding their horses to near exhaustion.²³⁵

As Jesús María grew older and (a bit) more mature, courting young women replaced hunting and horseback riding as his chief leisure time activity. Estudillo often

²³¹ Estudillo, "Diary," May 26, 1861.

²³² Estudillo, "Diary," June 13, 1861.

²³³ Estudillo, "Diary," January 31, 1861.

²³⁴ McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 326.

²³⁵ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 48.

encountered the young women who studied at the nearby College of Notre Dame.²³⁶ For instance, on an enjoyable voyage aboard a vessel from San Francisco to Alviso, the port near Santa Clara/San Jose, most pleasing to Jesús María were “the occasional coy glances” from the young ladies who attended Notre Dame.²³⁷ In this instance, because the young women were properly chaperoned, “good breeding demanded” that Estudillo “ignore their flattering attention.”²³⁸ During a trip to San Diego, southern California, and Baja California, Jesús María recorded that he “had a good time with all the girls.”²³⁹ He elaborated further, “At half past four I took Maria Antonia and Refujia to the sea shore and there we walked up and down the beach, we enjoyed the ride very much.”²⁴⁰ Jesús María joyfully recorded a picnic he went on with several friends from Santa Clara. After a buggy ride from the College, Estudillo wrote of reaching the desired spot of the picnic, describing the frivolity that ensued:

For a picturesque scene, this spot can hardly be surpassed. Here indeed the work of Nature has displayed its wondrous hand in the landscape of the country around the spot of the pleasure enjoyment. Flowery green meadows with a beautiful running stream was a sight for a poet to contemplate upon. The fair sex, among whom there were many handsome ones, seemed to enjoy themselves under the shade of an alder tree whose branches covered us from the sun...my acquaintances were, I mean in the female line, were Miss Sunol, Miss Bascom, to the latter I did not speak.”²⁴¹

Jesús María did not speak with the aforementioned Miss Bascom because she was from a Methodist background, a religious practice he disdained. Estudillo’s intolerance of Protestantism “no doubt reflected Catholic attitudes of the day and the influence of his

²³⁶ Estudillo, “Diary,” Aug. 16, 1862.

²³⁷ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 46.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Estudillo, “Diary,” August 16, 1862.

²⁴⁰ Estudillo, “Diary,” August 16, 1862.

²⁴¹ Estudillo, “Diary,” May 1, 1862.

Jesuit mentors.”²⁴² On another occasion, a coach trip from Santa Clara to San Jose with María Antonia Argüello was made much more pleasant because she and Jesús María shared “the back seat of the stage...very close together.”²⁴³ Thinking of one female acquaintance confounded the young Estudillo; however, “Last night I did not sleep but very little dreaming of H[arriet] C[obb].”²⁴⁴ The notations in Jesús María’s later journals reveal his observations of the opposite sex, and his critical character. He described one young lady, “...at the piano she puts on too many airs,” and another as “very pleasant, rather good looking and converses well.”²⁴⁵ In many respects, though, Jesús María’s interactions with the opposite sex were fairly typical of the time, and are still quite commonplace, even today.

While Jesús María Estudillo thoroughly documented the challenges of becoming completely fluent in English, and included a number of colorful accounts of his interactions with the fairer sex, noticeably absent from his journal entries are similarly rich descriptions of race relations. Still, Gerald McKevitt notes there was at least one account of strife between *Californios*/Mexicans and White students at Santa Clara during this time period.²⁴⁶ In 1859, College officials disbanded a student drill company because, as one student reported, “the American boys did not want to march with the Greasers.”²⁴⁷ Estudillo’s point of view on the incident is not known, since his diary of 1859 no longer exists. On a separate occasion, Jesús María overheard one classmate ask Father Young

²⁴² McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 327.

²⁴³ Estudillo, “Diary,” Jan. 7, 1861.

²⁴⁴ Estudillo, “Diary,” Oct. 30, 1861.

²⁴⁵ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California in the 1860*, 98.

²⁴⁶ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 328.

²⁴⁷ Frederic William Macondray (San Francisco) to Julian [P. Lee], Nov. 1, 1859; Macondray to Pierre [Combs], Nov. 2, 1859; in Frederic William Macondray [Letterpress Copybook, Jan. 1859-May, 1860], 1 vol., Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

what a Greaser was. The priest replied, “One that is born in this state, like Estudillo.” Jesús María wrote in response that he “could not be offended by this comparison of his,” because he thought the term referred to persons of a “greasy” or “copper” color, which he stated, “I do not think I possess.”²⁴⁸ This entry in the diary suggests Estudillo believed his station was at the top of the California society hierarchy. Jesús María did not associate himself with Spanish-speakers he viewed as inherently inferior—such as the lower class Mexican immigrants who mined in California or the Mexican and Indian laborers that worked on his family’s rancho. Most significant, Estudillo did not seem to experience strife or prejudice due to his *Californio* background. Given how incredibly animated Jesús María became when critiqued by Father Young (Estudillo faithfully writing of each stressful encounter in his journal), the reader would likely know whether someone (White, *Californio*, or otherwise) wronged him. Much more apparent at Santa Clara were the bonds formed amongst faculty and students of all backgrounds at the College.

The general impression the reader gathers from reading Jesús María Estudillo’s diary is the relative camaraderie among the *Californios* and White students at the College. For example, Jesús María’s peers nominated him 2nd corporal of the military drill company of the College, an office he apparently did not hold in high regard. He remarked on the honor, “...at first I did not wish to accept the office but afterwards I consented, not that I cared for the office.”²⁴⁹ Estudillo also forged deep friendships with his classmates, *Californio* and White alike. This is revealed in the anguish Jesús María felt from seeing one of his best friends, Edward Palmer, expelled from Santa Clara:

²⁴⁸ Estudillo, “Diary,” February 14, 1864.

²⁴⁹ Estudillo, “Diary,” February 8, 1862.

It is sad to record, that a friend, whose friendship I always kept sealed with the truest bond of affection, was turned out of the College last night, he was not even permitted to pass the night at the College. Father Caredda spoke to us in the Refectory and for many other reasons, better known to them [the faculty], Edward Palmer was expelled after dinner. I heard Palmer had been in the College last night but did not see him...²⁵⁰

In happier times, Estudillo and Palmer gallivanted around much of the greater San Francisco Bay area together. Jesús María spent New Years 1862 in the city of San Francisco, where he met up with his chum. He wrote, “All day in the city. This evening I went to the theater with Edward Palmer, we had a splendid time.”²⁵¹ That same day, Palmer, Thomas Duffy (another acquaintance from Santa Clara), and Estudillo visited the Willows, the city’s most popular gathering place for young people and families.²⁵² Likewise, Jesús María socialized with his fellow *Californios*. For instance, he frequently visited the Santa Clara home of Luis Argüello, the son of California’s first Mexican governor.²⁵³ In many ways, Estudillo’s testimony of his life while a student at Santa Clara suggests he integrated into both the upper class world of *Californios* and Whites.

In his journal, there are numerous other accounts of Jesús María interacting with non Spanish-speakers, besides his classmates like Edward Palmer, and beyond the campus of Santa Clara College. Estudillo reflected, for example, on a trip to the new state capital:

My first visit to the Queen City! This afternoon I started to Sacramento on the steamer Antelope. I took two letters of introduction to Capt. Poole, one from Mr. [John] Ward and another from Mr. [Charles] Judah [of Judah, Attorneys at Law in San Francisco]. The Captain treated me very well on the trip...had breakfast with the Captain and two other officers of the Steam Navigation Company after which I hired a small boat and went to the Capitol. I visited most of all the Chambers of

²⁵⁰ Estudillo, “Diary,” May 19, 1862.

²⁵¹ Estudillo, “Diary,” January 2, 1862.

²⁵² Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California in the 1860*, 39.

²⁵³ McKeivitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 328.

the Legislature, and as a matter of course, the Senate and Assembly chambers...I was very delighted with my trip.²⁵⁴

Jesús María also fraternized with “good looking” young ladies from both backgrounds—seemingly preferring women who were “very accomplished...and perfectly lady-like in her actions,” possessing “very much...the Spanish character.”²⁵⁵ That the women were White or *Californio* seemed inconsequential, as long as they exhibited the feminine ideal (at least, according to Jesús María).

In comparison to the experiences of Jesús María Estudillo and his fellow *Californio* young men at Santa Clara, a relative “state of cold war” raged between the *Californianas* and White students at nearby Notre Dame College.²⁵⁶ Raised in rather protected home environments, some of the *Californianas* felt “ill at ease” among the less restrained “Yanquitas.”²⁵⁷ While the majority of the women presented an “angelic front” when confronted by behavior that they disapproved, others were reluctant to share living quarters with White women.²⁵⁸

In contrast, Jesús María Estudillo and his fellow *Californios* had much in common with their White classmates. No sharp contrast existed between the upbringing of *Californio* and White gentlemen. Both were from similar backgrounds that valued the ownership of land, and each held a dominant place in their respective cultures. In several ways, Estudillo’s movement within a *Californio* and White world denotes some of the advantages afforded to men of primarily Spanish ancestry in attempting to acclimate to

²⁵⁴ Estudillo, “Diary,” January 21-22, 1862.

²⁵⁵ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 98.

²⁵⁶ McKeivitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 328.

²⁵⁷ McNamee, *Light in the Valley*, 77-79.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.* More details of the conflicts between the *Californianas* and the White students were not recorded in the history of the College.

mid-nineteenth century California society, a privilege most Spanish-speakers were not afforded. Jesús María's experiences shed light into the relationships created between *Californios* like Estudillo and his White compatriots at Santa Clara College, and very may well have reflected the interaction among the wealthy *Californios* and Whites in the state.

While the experiences of the *Californio* young men at Santa Clara and the *Californianas* at Notre Dame were distinctive, all *Californios* shared an overarching and unflinching belief in their Catholic faith. Jesús María Estudillo, in particular, emphasized his Catholic identity. He wrote that theology is “so necessary to know,” so that “when you go out in the world you may be able to hold fast to our religion [Catholicism].”²⁵⁹ Just as at home, Jesús María faithfully attended religious services while at Santa Clara. Particularly moved after listening to the oration of the president of the College, Estudillo wrote, “He has charmed me...by his eloquence and convincing lecture. May his words not be lost.”²⁶⁰ Reflecting on a three-day spiritual retreat sponsored by Santa Clara, Jesús María spent his time “reading and meditating in the vineyard...on hell, the glory of God, and of eternity, eternity, eternity.”²⁶¹ At the end of the same retreat, Estudillo wrote of committing himself to making “good resolutions for the future.”²⁶²

In a way, religion remained the one constant in the lives of *Californios*, whose fortunes rapidly changed with the onslaught of White settlers following the gold rush and statehood. The *Californios* needed Santa Clara and Notre Dame, and Santa Clara and Notre Dame needed the *Californios*. For *Californios*, the two Catholic denominational

²⁵⁹ Estudillo, “Diary,” April 5, 1861.

²⁶⁰ Estudillo, “Diary,” January 9, 1864.

²⁶¹ Estudillo, “Diary,” March 22-24, 1862.

²⁶² Estudillo, “Diary,” March 24, 1862.

colleges represented a strong link with their cultural and spiritual past. And one must wonder whether Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame would have survived their infancy without the generous patronage of the still wealthy *Californio* families.

* * *

In spite of excelling in his classes at Santa Clara, and displaying an increasing mastery over the art of the English language, Jesús María often worried about his family's finances. These concerns undermined his commitment to completing his education at the College. He became more and more anxious over the debts his family accumulated, lamenting "the great debts we have at present."²⁶³ As early as 1862, Jesús María contemplated leaving school:

After supper I went down and sat by myself on the last bench by the corridor of the dormitory and contemplated for a good while what course in life I should follow when out of College. Sometimes I thought of remaining till I would graduate; at others, I thought of not coming any more after this session and if circumstances would not permit, I would not come back after Christmas. For a long while these thoughts were in my mind...²⁶⁴

Although Estudillo continued his studies for two more years, at the beginning of each semester he anxiously awaited the arrival of funds from home to pay for Santa Clara's rather hefty price for room and board. He traveled from the campus to San Jose on more than one occasion to greet the stagecoach that sometimes carried the funds. "I waited till the stage arrived; but I was disappointed, nothing was sent."²⁶⁵ After returning to campus empty handed, Jesús María expressed, "I have been very uneasy about the money that Mr. Ward promised to send."²⁶⁶ His concerns were assuaged just a day later when he

²⁶³ Estudillo, "Diary," October 8, 1861.

²⁶⁴ Estudillo, "Diary," October 20, 1862.

²⁶⁵ Estudillo, "Diary," October 22, 1862.

²⁶⁶ Estudillo, "Diary," October 23, 1862.

received a letter from his brother-in-law, John Ward, containing two hundred dollars.²⁶⁷

Buying school supplies with the money, Jesús María carried on with his studies. A few years later, reflecting back on enrolling in classes each semester, Estudillo recorded, “My time at College used to be every year so uncertain.”²⁶⁸

The following year, on July 15, 1863, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Estudillo family’s claim of Rancho San Leandro.²⁶⁹ On the same day, the United States government issued a patent to the family for 6,829.58 acres.²⁷⁰ Still, the arduous court fight had taken its toll on the finances of the Estudillo clan. By 1864, Jesús María painfully noted, “The family owes now one hundred and seven thousand dollars at interest.”²⁷¹ Instead of putting undue additional strain on his family’s finances, Jesús María withdrew from Santa Clara after the spring term of 1864. He reflected of the sad turn of events, “I will never recall happier and sweeter days than my College time.”²⁷² He added: “If at this moment I was asked, ‘Would you like to go back to Santa Clara? Here, take five hundred dollars,’ I would not hesitate for a moment, but would this very day start; but alas! Fare thee well long-loved spot.” His mother Juana pleaded with Jesús María to reconsider. She hoped her son would continue college and earn a degree. Once the summer of 1864 ended, however, Jesús María did not revisit his decision, mainly because his mother and sister insisted he study the law.²⁷³

Jesús María Estudillo leaving college, short of earning his degree, was not an uncommon practice during the time period—at Santa Clara, or any other institution for

²⁶⁷ See Estudillo, “Diary,” October 24, 1862.

²⁶⁸ Estudillo, “Diary,” October 7, 1864.

²⁶⁹ *United States v. Estudillo*, 68 U.S. 710 (1863).

²⁷⁰ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California in the 1860*, 31.

²⁷¹ Estudillo, “Diary,” August 17, 1864.

²⁷² Estudillo, “Diary,” April 29, 1864.

²⁷³ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California in the 1860*, 32.

that matter. No matter what one's background, whether *Californio* or White, rich or poor, the grand majority of college students did not complete their studies in the mid-nineteenth century. More significant is the larger legacy of Estudillo and his fellow *Californios* at Santa Clara. Not that some *Californios* left prior to graduating, but rather that Jesús María and his peers were there—period. Equally as noteworthy, officials at Santa Clara actively recruited Spanish-speakers to enroll at the College, and attempted to accommodate the unique needs of *Californios* and Mexicans once on campus.

The educational experiences of *Californios*, like others in this time period, were indeed extraordinary. The possession of a college degree or even any semblance of a collegiate experience in mid-nineteenth century America was rare for anyone regardless of race, gender, or class. In fact, college graduates represented only around one percent of the male workforce on the eve of the Civil War. The opportunity to go to school of any kind, let alone college, was far beyond the realm of possibility for the grand majority of people who called California their home.²⁷⁴

From the experiences of Estudillo, and other *Californios* like him, researchers and scholars can better understand the role of higher education in the nineteenth century American West. Jesús María Estudillo and the *Californios* enrolled in denominational Catholic colleges alongside a burgeoning White majority—during a time of tremendous upheaval. A part of a new country and wildly outnumbered, *Californios* attended college largely to acquire the skills that best equipped them to acclimate and adjust to life in the new state of California. They did so in a proactive effort to maintain their status, land,

²⁷⁴ See MacDonald, "Historical Perspectives," 19; and Roger Geiger, "New Themes in the History of Nineteenth-century Colleges," in *The American College in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Roger Geiger (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), 1-36.

and power. Jesús María Estudillo and the *Californios* pursued these goals all the while accompanied by an undivided loyalty to their Catholic faith, a stabilizing force in an otherwise unfamiliar time of change.

While in college *Californios* befriended one another and their White classmates, and they took classes that enhanced their proficiency in English. For *Californios* such as Estudillo, mastering the English language was the result of both parental mandate and the educational policy at Santa Clara.²⁷⁵ More importantly, fluency in English equipped young men like Jesús María Estudillo with the skill set most needed for them to maintain their station in California. The ability to readily converse with White Americans would be paramount for *Californios* attempting to keep their land and power. But would it be enough?

* * *

Not long after leaving Santa Clara College, Jesús María Estudillo celebrated his twentieth birthday at home in San Leandro. That evening the reflective young man wrote the following diary entry:

This is my birthday, tonight at ten o'clock I am twenty years old. Twenty summers have passed over his head, and oh, how shall I look to this past time, could I regret it, or am I glad that it has passed never to come back?²⁷⁶

What Jesús María could not know was that, in many respects, the best of times for he, and many other *Californios*, had passed. By the time Estudillo left Santa Clara, the walls were continuing to close in on the *Californios* and their way life. The collective fate of

²⁷⁵ McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 324.

²⁷⁶ Estudillo, "Diary," June 29, 1864.

the *Californios*, and the Estudillo family in particular, will be revealed in chapter four of this study.

Aside from men like Jesús María Estudillo, scores more *Californios* still remained in college until at least the mid-1870s (if not a bit longer)—at both Santa Clara and the College of Notre of Dame. These young men and women did so despite being unsure of what awaited them when they left the sanctuary of the wrought iron gates of the college campus. And they were not alone. Rather, a handful of young men, both *Californio* and Mexican in origin, participated in higher education not far from the Santa Clara Valley: at the fledgling University of California, in nearby Berkeley.

Chapter Three: Aboard the Flagship: The Fifth Class and the University of California at Berkeley

At roughly the same time young men such as Jesús María Estudillo attended Santa Clara College and *Californianas* matriculated at the College of Notre Dame, a handful of other *Californios* and Mexicans enrolled in the college preparatory department at the University of California. The institution named the preparatory department the Fifth Class. Although short in duration, the Fifth Class documents another instance where *Californios* and Mexican students attended college in mid-nineteenth century California alongside of Whites, and it provides further evidence that a blossoming public higher education system existed in the state parallel to parochial colleges like Santa Clara and Notre Dame. The upcoming chapter features a short of history of the founding of the University of California; the creation, design, and impact of the Fifth Class on the school; and the preparatory department's rather hasty demise only two years removed from its creation. Finally, the experiences of Manuel M. Corella, both the first Mexican student and instructor at the University of California, will be explored.

* * *

The constitution of the state of California, largely written in 1849, provided for the establishment of a state university—assuming public or private lands would be given to the state, ostensibly on which to eventually build a campus. California's legislators wrote:

Funds accruing from the rents or sale of such lands, or from any other source for the purpose of aforesaid, shall be and remain a permanent fund, the interest of which shall be applied to the support of said University, with such branches as the

public convenience may demand, for the promotion of literature, the arts and sciences, as may be authorized by the terms of such grant.²⁷⁷

But in the years following the Gold Rush, the development of public higher education in California took a backseat to more pressing matters, like the challenge of defining the rights of *Californios* and Mexicans (noted in chapter one) in the new state.²⁷⁸ In addition, competition and differences with private colleges such as Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame, resistance to public funds supporting sectarian institutions, confusion and financial troubles within the state government, and warnings from skeptical California leaders such as Congregational clergyman and theologian Dr. Horace Bushnell delayed the University of California's inception.²⁷⁹ But after Congress passed the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, in which the federal government gave lands to states in order to create public educational institutions, state legislators recognized that establishing a university was indeed a more feasible endeavor. However, as John Aubrey Douglass notes, “competing visions regarding the primary purpose of a new state university” complicated efforts to establish a flagship institution in the state—even after the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862.²⁸⁰ In fact, Governor Henry Heigh would not sign legislation formally creating the University of California until March 23, 1868. Before then, colleges such as Santa Clara (highlighted in chapter two), as well as other institutions, filled the void of providing higher education to the young people of California.

²⁷⁷ *Constitution of the State of California, 1849*, Article IX, section 1.

²⁷⁸ John Aubrey Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education*, 20-21, notes the large task the California legislature faced upon statehood, including the state “defining its boundaries, deciding on the volatile issue of slavery, determining the rights of its Mexican and American citizens, forming an elected and representative legislative body, defining the state government’s powers of taxation and debt, and finally, inaugurating a system of public higher education.”

²⁷⁹ Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education*, 30-33; León and McNeil, “A Precursor to Affirmative Action,” 180.

²⁸⁰ Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education*, 34.

One education institution founded in the wake of statehood was the College of California, located in Oakland. Congregationalist Reverend Henry Durant established the Contra Costa Academy in 1853, and the school became the College of California two years later. Durant and his followers designed the College in order “to furnish the means of a thorough and comprehensive education under the pervading spirit and influence of the Christian religion,” its mission to secure the “highest educational privileges for youth, the common sympathy of educated and scientific men, and a common interest in the promotion of the highest welfare of the State, as fostered and secured by the diffusion of sound and liberal learning.”²⁸¹ The idealistic Durant fashioned the young college in hopes of creating the Yale of the West.

The Fifth Class originally served as the preparatory department the College of California under the name the College School. Together, the College of California and the College School offered their students classrooms, student residences, a gymnasium, and recreational facilities.²⁸² By the 1867-68 academic year approximately 300 students enrolled in the College School; the College of California but 21. Significantly, 30 out of 301 students matriculating at the College School possessed Spanish surnames, around ten percent of the student body.²⁸³

Similarly to Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame, the College School actively recruited *Californios* and Mexicans to attend. For example, an advertisement aimed at Spanish-speakers lauded the qualities the institution offered, “Su situación

²⁸¹ William Warren Ferrier, *Ninety Years of Education in California, 1846-1936: A Presentation of Educational Movements and Their Outcome in Education Today* (Berkeley: Sather Gate Book Shop, 1937), 181, quoted in Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education*, 39.

²⁸² León and McNeil, “The Fifth Class,” 52-53.

²⁸³ *College of California Catalogue, 1867-1868*, 23-29, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

central, accesiable, saludable y hermosa en escena natural, presenta grandes ventajas morales y sociales,” meaning [the school’s] central, accessible, healthful, and attractive location, in a natural setting, presents great moral and social advantages.”²⁸⁴ As noted in the preceding two chapters, *Californios* were fairly well-situated to take advantage of the new higher educational institutions founded in the San Francisco Bay Area throughout the 1850s and 1860s. Although some *Californios* lost much of their wealth in the two decades immediately following statehood, a sufficient number of them still had the ability to send their children to college (at least through the mid 1870s). The newly-formed colleges understood that and proactively recruited *Californios* to make up their student body.

In 1858, Durant and his ambitious colleagues at the College of California sought out a new site for the fledgling institution. To this end, they formed the “College Homestead Association,” and purchased 160 acres of land north of Oakland on a site near Strawberry Creek—in present day Berkeley.²⁸⁵ While newspaper editors, politicians, and other elites lauded the promise of creating a higher education institution atop a hill overlooking the San Francisco Bay, seemingly ignoring the state’s half-hearted attempt at establishing a flagship public university, the reality of dwindling finances tempered Durant’s dream of transforming the College of California into the Yale of the West Coast. Durant planned to finance this expansion by selling land in the vicinity of the prospective college site, but sales of lots were less than had been hoped for. Wracked by

²⁸⁴ *College of California Catalogue*, 1861-1862, inside cover, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

²⁸⁵ Report No. 54 of the College of California, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

money problems and debt, the main hope for the College of California became the idea that the future University of California would absorb the struggling institution.²⁸⁶

At the same time that Durant struggled with the finances of the College of California, state officials continued to haggle over the creation of a public state university. The passage of the 1866 Organic Act only further complicated matters, since the legislation “sanctioned the formation of a single and secular new institution,” one that should “not be united to or connected with any other institution of higher learning” in the state of California.²⁸⁷ Yet without a detailed plan of where to locate the new university, nor concrete ideas on how to organize the College of California's Agricultural, Mining, and Mechanical Arts, advocates for the institution reassessed their options.

Durant and the State needed one another. The College of California offered the state leaders some of the finest land in the Bay Area on which to build a beautiful campus and the core of a college, while the State of California could fulfill Durant’s dream of building a preeminent institution in the West. Consequently, Durant and the State of California collaborated with one another to establish a public university, and the College of California became a part of the University of California with the passage of the second Organic Act. Initially proposed as Assembly Bill No. 583, the second Organic Act formally created the University of California on March 23, 1868. Below is an excerpt of section 1 of the transformative legislation:

The People of the State of California, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows: A State University is hereby created, pursuant to the requirements of Section four, Article nine, of the Constitution of the State of California, and in order to devote to the largest purposes of education the benefaction made to the State of California under and by the provisions of an Act

²⁸⁶ Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education*, 39-40.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 37; “Act to Establish an Agricultural, Mining and Mechanical Arts College,” 1866.

of Congress passed July second, eighteen hundred and sixty-two, entitled an Act donating land to the several States and Territories which may provide Colleges for the benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts. The said University shall be called the University of California, and shall be located upon the grounds heretofore donated to the State of California by the President and Board of Trustees of the College of California. The said University shall be under the charge and control of a Board of Directors to be known and styled “the Regents of the University of California.”²⁸⁸

Of most importance to this study, the union of the College of California and the State ensured that *Californios* and Mexicans would be among the first students to eventually enroll at the new state flagship institution. The newly created Regents of the University of California, one of the most powerful forces in California higher education today, proved to also be instrumental to the creation of the preparatory department the Fifth Class.

The University of California opened its doors in fall of 1869 on the former physical plant of the College of California in Oakland. The new institution severed its ties with the College School, although the latter still enrolled a number of *Californios* and Mexicans in the 1869-1870 school year.²⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the University of California encountered a rather significant problem—enrollment. In the burgeoning institution’s inaugural year, only forty students matriculated at the college.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ The second Organic Act also created the requisite departments of the new university. In part, the piece of legislation read, “The University shall have for its design, to provide instruction and thorough and complete education in all departments of science, literature, art, industrial and profession pursuits, and general education, and also special courses of instruction in preparation for the professions of Agriculture, the Mechanic Arts, Mining, Military Science, Civil Engineering, Law, Medicine and Commerce, and shall consist of various Colleges, namely: *First--*Colleges of Arts. *Second--*A College of Letters. *Third--*Such professional and other Colleges as may be added thereto or connected therewith.” See “An Act to Create the University of California,” March 5, 1868.

²⁸⁹ *State University Catalogue*, 1869-1870, 7-12, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California. 36 out of 327 students at the State University School were Spanish surnamed. Some of the young men were among the most prominent students of the class. See León and McNeil, “The Fifth Class,” 53.

²⁹⁰ The University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Two main issues fostered the low enrollment, each identifiable in the subtext of the first official college catalogue. In the 1870-1871 edition of the University of California *Register*, the school proudly announced that its gates opened “without charge, to all of both sexes, who are qualified to profit by its advantages.”²⁹¹ There were two problems with this statement. First, while tuition was indeed free (unlike at Santa Clara College, for instance), room and board was not. The University of California *Register* itself stated that the approximate expenses for board, lodging, fuel, lights, washing, books, and stationary at the institution totaled between \$260 to \$400 (not including expenses for extracurricular and social activities, traveling, and the like).²⁹² These expenditures represented a substantial amount of funds in 1869, more than all but a very few could afford—whether for White Californians, *Californios*, or anyone else who called the state their home. Like many other institutions across the United States, the privilege of attending the University of California was reserved almost entirely for the upper classes of society.²⁹³

Second, becoming “qualified” for enrollment was indeed a challenge for many in the population seeking to enroll in the new state institution. The admittance requirements were quite strict. The University of California’s College of Arts required candidates for admissions to satisfactorily pass exams on the subjects of Higher Arithmetic, Algebra,

²⁹¹ The University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 64-65, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ Administrators encouraged students enrolled at the University to defray the costs of room and board by taking part-time jobs. For instance, students could take jobs “on Saturdays, and in vacations away from the University.” However, the University also cautioned its students, “It should be born in mind, to avoid disappointments, that hard mental work is not often compatible with hard manual labor; and that the tact to earn something, while pursuing a course of study, varies much with individuals.” For more detail, see the University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 29, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Geometry, English Grammar, Geography and History of the United States before entering the Fourth Class (the first year). Meanwhile, the University of California's College of Letters, based on the classical curriculum, required all the above as well more than a passing familiarity with Latin and Greek. The University required that each candidate for admission to the College of Letters know Caesar, Virgil, Cicero, Greek Grammar, and Xenophon's *Anabasis*.²⁹⁴ Needless to say, most in the young state of California were inadequately prepared to pass the aforementioned exams needed for admission to the University. Public schools in California were still very much in their infancy, and only the privileged few were taught by private tutors.²⁹⁵ The grand majority of Californians had little education, much less the ability to complete algebraic and geometric problems or speak Latin or Greek. As a result of the high costs for room and board and the strict admissions requirements, only the absolute most privileged young men and women could attend the University of California. As noted above, just forty students enrolled in the university the fall of 1869.

* * *

The most prestigious colleges and universities in the country enrolled students in the hundreds.²⁹⁶ Closer by at Santa Clara, over 200 young men were enrolled at the Jesuit College.²⁹⁷ A low enrollment at the University of California also betrayed the institution's mandate to educate its citizens. Rather than rely on the fledgling public education system in the state, the Regents of the University of California requested that

²⁹⁴ University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 30-31, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

²⁹⁵ Sara Lundquist, "Achieving Equity and Excellence in 21st Century American Higher Education: The California Master Plan and Beyond" (Ph.D. dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 2003), 48-51.

²⁹⁶ Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 219, 267.

²⁹⁷ 1869-1870 Santa Clara College Annual Bulletin, Santa Clara University Archives, Santa Clara, California.

the state legislature appropriate funds to create a preparatory department, much like the College School and its affiliation with the College of California. After the legislature promptly complied, the Regents passed the proposal on to the faculty for their approval. On January 17, 1870, the faculty of the University of California rejected the idea, much to the chagrin of the Regents. Professor John LeConte, interim President of the University, explained that creating a preparatory department would not be expedient. In the opinion of the faculty and the administration, the responsibility of college preparation belonged to the public school system. The faculty believed a preparatory department was only a stop gap measure, and such an initiative was necessary since they believed a high school system would develop in a timely manner (the latter assertion a dubious claim).²⁹⁸

The Regents did not relent. On April 12, 1870, the Board of Regents ordered the faculty of the University of California to develop a structural framework in order to create “a fifth class or otherwise, which shall bring the different University schools into direct relation with the Grammar schools of the State.”²⁹⁹ The Academic Senate answered grudgingly, stating that the creation of a preparatory department was now expedient, but that any Fifth Class be temporary in nature and should not lower the admission standards of the institution. The faculty also suggested that students in the preparatory department be at least fifteen years of age, and any distribution of funds must wait until the needs of the Fifth Class are ascertained.

²⁹⁸ Minutes of the Academic Senate, January 17, 1870, 3, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California; Minutes of the Board of Regents, February 5, 1870, 127, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

²⁹⁹ Minutes of the Board of Regents, April 12, 1870, 134, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

In the meantime, on August 16, 1870 the Regents selected Henry Durant as the first President of the University of California. Durant, the man so instrumental in the “founding” of the University, was neither the Regent’s first or second choice to assume the position. Interestingly, both former General George B. McClellan and Yale’s Daniel Coit Gilman turned down the position before the Regents turned to Durant.³⁰⁰ Most germane to this study, Durant was intensely committed to making the University of California a great public institution, and he also supported the idea of converting the State University School into a preparatory department for the new university.³⁰¹

Throughout the spring and summer of 1870, the Regents waited for a specific and practical plan to implement the preparatory department. But no plan for administering the Fifth Class appeared.³⁰² On August 29, 1870, Regent John W. Dwinelle addressed the Faculty Senate.³⁰³ Determined, Dwinelle reminded faculty of the “the necessity of “popularizing” the institution,” urging the professors to formally sign off and implement the creation of a preparatory department (designed to increase enrollment at the young University).³⁰⁴ In response, the faculty issued the following statement: “In pursuance of the power conferred by the Board of Regents, the faculties of the University hereby establish a Fifth Class in the nature of preparatory class to continue during the pleasure of

³⁰⁰ Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education*, 43.

³⁰¹ *State University Catalogue*, 1869-1870, 24, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁰² León and McNeil, “The Fifth Class,” 54; León and McNeil, “A Precursor to Affirmative Action,” 188.

³⁰³ Dwinelle, a prominent San Francisco attorney, authored the Organic Act of 1868—which created the University of California and designated 160 acres of land in Berkeley for its use.

³⁰⁴ Minutes of the Academic Senate, August 29, 1870, 16, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

the Board of Regents.”³⁰⁵ The Fifth Class, its student roster eventually including the names of both a number of *Californios* and Mexicans, was officially born.

* * *

However, with less than a month until the beginning of the fall term, faculty members were still not adequately prepared to begin the instruction of the Fifth Class. In reality, the professors had done little if anything to organize the new preparatory department. Unable to procrastinate any further, the task of creating the structure of the Fifth Class fell on the Regents’ Committee on Instruction—its members included Dwinelle, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Oscar P. Fitzgerald, John Hager, and Richard Hammond. The Committee on Instruction undertook fundamental issues such as setting class hours and establishing an attendance policy. They chose September 21 and 22 as the dates for entrance exams, as well as a later date for those applicants inconvenienced by the brief notice.³⁰⁶

In addition the Regents selected George Tait, formerly of the State University School, as Master (Dean) of the Fifth Class. Tait’s responsibilities as Master included recruiting potential enrollees, providing academic advising to boarders in the evenings, and locating competent professors in the modern languages. He received a salary of \$200 per month for his services, a healthy sum for the time period. Tait promised the Regents of the University of California that the preparatory department would end whenever the

³⁰⁵ Ibid, August 29, 1870, 17, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁰⁶ Minutes of the Board of Regents, September 6, 1870, 24, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

“Honorable Body shall determine that the Fifth Class is not flourishing, but is, on the contrary, an incubus on the University.”³⁰⁷

The Fifth Class charged expenditures that exceeded or equaled those of attending the higher grades of the University.³⁰⁸

Members of the Fifth Class, or Preparatory Department, who do not reside with their parents or guardians, are expected to room and board in the buildings belonging to that Department. Boarding and lodging, with suitable supervision, will be provided at \$30.00 per month for students of this Department; and \$27.50 for others. Tuition for day scholars in the lower grades of the Fifth Class will be at the usual rate; in cases of need, it may be free.³⁰⁹

Despite the expense of attending the preparatory academy, a number of factors promoted the enrollment of *Californios* and Mexicans in the University of California’s Fifth Class. Namely, the University of California implemented less stringent entrance requirements for the students seeking to enroll in the preparatory program. “Candidates for the advanced grade of the Fifth Class must not be less than fourteen years of age, and must pass a satisfactory examination in English grammar, arithmetic, geography, and United States history.”³¹⁰ In contrast to admittance to the College of Arts, prospective students did require as much knowledge of English, Geography, and History, and none of the mathematic disciplines of Algebra or Geometry. Less strict entrance examinations facilitated not only the enrollment of *Californios* and Mexicans, but many other students as well. In addition, the Regents of the University of California waived the requirement

³⁰⁷ Quoted in León and McNeil, “The Fifth Class,” 54.

³⁰⁸ The University of California structured its student body in much the same way higher education institutions currently do today. Students in the Fourth Class were first years (freshman), students the Third Class were second years (sophomores), students in the Second Class were third years (juniors), and students in the First Class were fourth years (seniors).

³⁰⁹ University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 65-66, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³¹⁰ University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 31, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

for students outside of the state to take and pass exams in order to be admitted to the Fifth Class.³¹¹ Potential enrollees from Mexico fell neatly into this category. Both measures allowed the University of California to recruit students who otherwise may have had difficulty gaining entrance to the institution.

Eighty eight students matriculated as members of the University of California's inaugural Fifth Class during the 1870-1871 school year. Of the eighty eight who enrolled in the preparatory academy, sixteen were either *Californios* or from Mexico.³¹² In total, nearly twenty percent of the class possessed Spanish surnames. Twelve of the sixteen previously enrolled at the State University School, perhaps a mitigating effect of the sudden inception of the program.³¹³ Twelve of the sixteen Spanish surnamed students in the Fifth Class were Mexican citizens, mostly from the nearby regions of Sonora and Baja California.

The other four were *Californios*, remnants of some the most powerful families in Mexican California.³¹⁴ Fred Alvarado was the son of former Governor Juan Bautista Alvarado, the same man who granted José Joaquin Estudillo the rights to Rancho San Leandro in 1842. Since then, Alvarado's fortunes had waned considerably. Yet Alvarado still possessed the funds to enroll one of his children in the Fifth Class. Ynes Pacheco, of the powerful Pacheco family, also matriculated in the Fifth Class. Romualdo Pacheco served as Lieutenant Governor in 1871 and briefly as interim Governor in 1875 before winning election to the United State House of Representatives as Congressman for

³¹¹ Minutes of the Board of Regents, December 22, 1870, 187, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³¹² University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 25, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³¹³ León and McNeil, "The Fifth Class," 55.

³¹⁴ University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 25, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

two successive terms in the late 1870s and early 1880s. A third student, listed as B Peralta, was a member of the *Californio* family that once held the very land where the University of California stood. The Peralta family owned Rancho San Antonio, which covered present day Oakland and Berkeley.³¹⁵

In the first year of the Fifth Class, students enrolled in the preparatory program outnumbered those at the rest of the University of California by ten, eighty eight to seventy eight.³¹⁶ The breakdown of the classes at the University shows that the grand majority of the students were underclassmen from the greater San Francisco/Oakland area or northern California. Seven of the seventy eight students were women.³¹⁷

Of those enrolled in undergraduate courses, one was a native of Mexico, Manuel M. Corella. A Special Category/part-time student, Corella grew up in the region of Sonora before moving to the San Francisco/Oakland area for schooling. Prior to being admitted to the University of California as a student in the Fourth Class, he attended the aforementioned State University School where he was vice president of the literary-focused Philomathean Society.³¹⁸ A gifted student, Corella passed the entrance exams to the University of California in 1870. Corella's University of California 1870-1871 class picture reveals a young man with dark eyes and hair, a thin mustache, and an imperial.³¹⁹ He wears a dark dress coat, vest, and a white shirt with a black bow tie. Based on his attire, Corella likely came from a family of means. He was probably the first person of

³¹⁵ Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, 97, 139.

³¹⁶ University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 25, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³¹⁷ The breakdown of the 1870-1871 student ledger was as follows: First Class, 5; Second Class, 2; Third Class, 13; Fourth Class, 32; Part-time/Special Category, 26. See University of California *Register*, 1870-1871, 26, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³¹⁸ León, "Manuel M. Corella," 172.

³¹⁹ Photo of Manuel M. Corella, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Mexican descent to enroll at the University of California. More details of Corella's experience at the University are detailed later in the chapter.

Similar to other boarding schools, administrators designed the Fifth Class to have a fairly regimented schedule. Its students, named "Fifers," woke at 7 a.m. to dress themselves in military-style uniforms (designed for the students by their two professors—West Point graduates). After breakfast in the dining hall, students attended classes from 9 a.m. to noon and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. The Fifth Class offered its students a variety of courses in the foreign languages (chosen from French, German, Greek, Latin, and Spanish), mathematics (such as arithmetic, algebra, and geometry), English, geography, and history, as the curriculum was designed to aid the "Fifers" in passing the entrance exams to the University.³²⁰ During the break for lunch, and after classes, students were free to study or fraternize in the recreational area. However, prep students were not encouraged to travel beyond the boundaries of the school. For instance, The Academic Senate declared that faculty members must "report students found in public drinking-house and billiard saloons." Most students boarding at the school ate dinner and returned to their rooms to study—under the guidance of Master Tait. Administrators designated bedtime between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m.³²¹

Enrollment in the second year (1871-1872) of the Fifth Class increased rather significantly from 88 to 262 students.³²² This swell in attendance likely occurred due to prospective students having adequate time to prepare for the entrance exam to the

³²⁰ Minutes of the Academic Senate, December 31, 1870, 44-46, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³²¹ Minutes of the Academic Senate, February 3, 1871, 62, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³²² *University of California Register*, 1871-1872, 25, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

University. For reasons unknown to the author of this study, the number of *Californios* and Mexicans in the Fifth Class dropped from sixteen to twelve.³²³ Both Ynez Pacheco and B. J. Peralta remained in the preparatory program, while Fred Alvarado and another *Californio* student from San Diego left the school. Pacheco and Peralta were joined by two members of another prominent *Californio* family, the Bernals, for the new school year.

While 262 enrolled in the Fifth Class during the 1871-1872 school year, a total of 153 matriculated in the rest of the student population of the University (First through the Fourth Classes). After the preceding school year ended, the majority of students in the Fifth Class took the entrance exams to the University of California. Mexican Francisco Urriolagoitia was among the fifty-four who passed and entered the Fourth Class for the 1871-1872 year. A native of Sonora, he joined Manuel M. Corella as the second student of Mexican descent to matriculate at the University of California as an undergraduate. However, for reasons unknown, in fall of 1871 Urriolagoitia requested and was granted an honorable dismissal from the University of California.³²⁴

* * *

Based on the high percentage of “Fifers” who passed the entrance exam to the University of California, and the subsequent increase in enrollment at the institution the year after the Regents and administration implemented the Fifth Class, the preparatory program was an unqualified success. But not even midway through its second year of

³²³ Seven of the twelve students with Spanish surnames were from Mexico, while five were *Californios*. For further detail, see *University of California Register*, 1871-1872, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³²⁴ Minutes of the Academic Senate, December 20, 1871, 86, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

operation, a handful of University officials raised concerns that threatened to terminate the program while still in its infancy. Faculty members, still unenthusiastic about the Fifth Class, crafted a proposal before the school year even commenced that would initiate the transfer of college preparatory education to local school districts with the University of California overseeing their quality. John W. Dwinelle and the other regents offered their support to the proposal, and authorized and the plan in the following passage from the 1871-1872 *University of California Register*:

- 1) Applications for the establishment of such a Fifth Class branch must come through the highest local board of education.
- 2) The applicant for license to teach a branch must furnish satisfactory testimonials as to character, and also credentials of competency from the County and State Superintendents of Public Education.
- 3) He shall be subject to examination by the Faculty of the University. Undoubted evidence of high literary standing and ability to teach may be accepted in lieu of a personal appearance before the Faculty.³²⁵

However, local officials were unimpressed with the proposals made by the faculty and the Regents of the University of California. The “dispersal” of the Fifth Class from the University to regional school districts did not move forward due to lack of interest from local leaders.³²⁶

More problematic, Master George Tait requested \$1,590 from the Regents of the University in order to cover the costs associated with the nonpayment of fees by some Fifth Class students.³²⁷ An investigation began immediately. When the Committee on Instruction formally met on January 5, the Regents declared that all student fees be paid in advance of the start of each semester:

³²⁵ *University of California Register*, 1871-1872, 34-35, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³²⁶ León and McNeil, “A Precursor to Affirmative Action,” 192.

³²⁷ Minutes of the Board of Regents, September 5, 1871, 224, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Mr. Dwinelle, from the Committee on Instruction, presented a Report in writing. The Report was accepted and order [*sic.*] on file. The Committee recommend [*sic.*] that tuition in the Preparatory Department, including the Fifth Class, be payable by term invariably in advance. On the motion of Mr. Merritt this recommendation was adopted.³²⁸

The pragmatic decision did not alleviate the growing concerns of the administration and the Regents of the University of California concerning the finances of the Fifth Class.

Less than a month before issuing the proclamation to have students pay their bills before the semester began, the Regents adopted the following provision on December 12, 1871:

That it is expedient to discontinue the system of boarding students in the Preparatory Department, and that it be referred to the Committee on Instruction to make the necessary arrangements for that purpose, at as early a date as practicable, with power.³²⁹

The move to discontinue offering room and board to students enrolled in the Fifth Class directly impacted Mexicans in the preparatory department. In fact, the Regents of the school specifically singled out students from abroad:

That the manner of admitting students, to the University of California, who are not citizens of the United States, and not already provided for, be referred to the Committee on Instruction, to report to the Board, at its next meeting.³³⁰

Students from outside of the East Bay, including those from Mexico, were the most adversely affected by the decision of the Regents of the University of California.

Without having room and board provided for them, young students (from abroad or elsewhere in California) would have no recourse but to leave the preparatory program.

³²⁸ Minutes of the Board of Regents, January 5, 1872, 243, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³²⁹ Minutes of the Board of Regents, December 12, 1871, 239, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³³⁰ Minutes of the Board of Regents, December 23, 1871, 241, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

However, the proposal never went into effect. As the reader shall see, however, the entire Fifth Class faced increasing uncertainty.

In addition, one of the biggest proponents of the Fifth Class, President Henry Durant, resigned from his leadership post on April 30, 1872.³³¹ Replaced by Daniel Coit Gilman, the preparatory lost a powerful advocate in Durant. Shortly thereafter, the Board of Regents asked the Committee on Instruction to assess the state of the Fifth Class preparatory department. On May 24, 1872, “Mr. Dwinelle moved that the Committee on Instruction be authorized to inquire into the condition of the Preparatory Department of the University, to report at the next meeting of the Board.”³³² Two and a half weeks later, on June 10, Dwinelle formally asked the Academic Senate whether the Fifth Class should be terminated. The faculty responded by saying that the preparatory department should continue for one more year, or possibly for a shorter timeframe due to financial exigency. At the same meeting, George Tait reported the finances of the Fifth Class.³³³ It marked the last time Tait appeared at a meeting of the Academic Senate—he resigned from his position as Master of the Fifth Class on July, 23, 1872.

On July 16, 1872 the Committee on Instruction reported back to the Regents of the University of California. They recommended the Fifth Class be disbanded. Regent Samuel McKee countered with a motion for the preparatory department to continue under the direct supervision of the Academic Senate of the University. An excerpt from the minutes of the Board states the following occurred:

³³¹ León and McNeil, “The Fifth Class,” 56.

³³² Minutes of the Board of Regents, May 24, 1872, 257, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³³³ Minutes of the Board of Regents, June 10, 1872, 103-104, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

First recommendation: To abolish the Preparatory Department at the close of this term. Mr. McKee moved, as a substitute, that the Preparatory Department be continued from and after this term, under the direct control of the Academic Senate, and that the tuition fees be exacted invariably in advance. Lost on a division—Ayes, 6 Noes [*sic.*], 8. The first recommendation was adopted...On motion it was ordered that the Committee on Grounds and Buildings be authorized to dispose of so much of the furniture of the Preparatory Department, as may not be needed.³³⁴

The split vote suggests the issue of terminating the Fifth Class generated a fair amount of controversy and disagreement amongst the Regents. However, more revealing details of the arguments and conversations between the Regents at the meeting were not included in the public record.

A number of factors facilitated the end of the preparatory program at the University of California. First, a different set of Regents were in place than a couple years earlier when the body initially sanctioned the Fifth Class. Second, the faculty never warmed to the idea of having an in-house preparatory program. The administration and instruction of the Fifth Class translated into bigger workload for professors. Third, the University was in the process of moving from Oakland to Berkeley—having a program still housed in Oakland was problematic. Accommodating the needs of a Fifth Class in Berkeley would have been a costly expenditure. Perhaps most importantly, the Fifth Class was a victim of its own unadulterated success. As noted above, many “Fifers” successfully transferred from the program to the “Fourth Class” of the University of California. And overall enrollment at the University increased in the two short years following the establishment of the Fifth Class. That said, the effect on the enrollment of

³³⁴ Minutes of the Board of Regents, July 16, 1872, 262-263, 265, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

Californios and Mexicans in the institution was dire, as detailed in the conclusion of this chapter.

* * *

While the Fifth Class preparatory department disbanded after two short years of operation, Manuel M. Corella remained affiliated with the University of California. He not only took classes at the University of California, but Corella also instructed Spanish classes for the Fifth Class. In September of 1871, George Tait informed the Academic Senate that Corella (and two others, Louis Armand and Julius Grossman) taught foreign languages as part of the preparatory program. The faculty decided to recommend to the Regents that Corella be formally hired.³³⁵ In the same month Corella asked the Regents “that he be paid for his services as Instructor of Spanish during the past year,” meaning the young Mexican taught courses at the school since as early as January 1871.³³⁶

Despite the public display of confidence, repeated requests for lost wages and a fluctuating salary marked Corella’s career as an instructor at the University of California. Corella asked the Regents to settle the issue of his salary in October of 1871.³³⁷ Just a month later the Regents, based on the recommendation of the Committee on Instruction, decided to pay Corella \$50 per month for his teaching services.³³⁸ However, at their very next meeting five days later, the Regents reconsidered the salary of Corella and his fellow

³³⁵ Minutes of the Academic Senate, September 22, 1871, 73, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³³⁶ Minutes of the Board of Regents, September 5, 1871, 224, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³³⁷ Minutes of the Board of Regents, October 16, 1871, 226, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³³⁸ Minutes of the Board of Regents, November 17, 1871, 227-228, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

foreign language instructors.³³⁹ However, discussion about Corella's pay did not proceed further for around five months. Then, in April of 1872, the minutes of the Board of Regents again reveal the back wages the University of California owed Corella and his two colleagues in the language department:

On motion of Mr. Hammond, the bill for the back salary due Louis Armand, M. M. Corella, and Julius Grossman, Instructors respectively of French, Spanish, and German were referred to the Committee on Instruction with power to act.³⁴⁰

Corella sought \$956.66 in back pay, while Armand and Grossman asked for \$550 and \$725 respectively.³⁴¹ Three weeks later the Committee on Instruction responded back to Corella and his fellow instructors. The Regents approved Corella's salary at \$80 per month, although "said salaries" were "not to be construed as fixed."³⁴² Indeed, a short time later the Regents again readjusted the young Mexican instructor's pay: "On motion of Mr. Dwinelle, the sum of \$150 was audited and ordered to be paid to M. M. Corella on a/c for services as Instructor of Spanish."³⁴³ The amount, for two months of work, meant Corella now received \$75 per month for his teaching services rendered.

As noted earlier in the chapter, the University of California terminated the Fifth Class in July of 1872. For Corella, instructing college rather preparatory courses would seem to have warranted more lucrative compensation, but events did not bare out in that manner. At the start of the 1872-1873 academic year, Corella, Armand, and Grossman asked the Regents to reconsider their compensation as University foreign language

³³⁹ Minutes of the Board of Regents, November 22, 1871, 235-236, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁴⁰ Minutes of the Board of Regents, April 8, 1872, 250, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Minutes of the Board of Regents, April 30, 1872, 252, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁴³ Minutes of the Board of Regents, July 23, 1872, 268, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

instructors. The “whole subject” of pay was “laid on the table.”³⁴⁴ The following spring the Regents definitively stated that “M. M. Corella be paid \$75 per month for instruction in Spanish, for the academic year from Sept. 19th to July 19th, 1873.”³⁴⁵ His pay finally determined, Corella continued to teach Spanish at the University through the 1873-1874 school year.

When Francisco Urriolagoitia withdrew from the University of California in fall of 1871, Manuel Corella became the only Mexican to remain the institution beyond those in the Fifth Class. In addition to instructing Spanish classes and studying for coursework, Corella was actively involved in extracurricular activities at the school. While on campus, he trained and marched regularly in the University military/drill unit. Like Jesús María Estudillo at Santa Clara, Corella’s peers honored him as an officer of the cadets. According to the University of California Register, Corella served as sergeant in 1871-1872, second sergeant of Company C in 1872-1873, and second lieutenant of Company B in 1873-1874.³⁴⁶

The monthly student newspaper, the *Echo*, first took notice of Corella’s exploits in the November 1871 edition of the paper, “We are pleased to notice the organization of a new literary society in the University. The following efficient officers have been elected for the ensuing term...Treasurer, M. M. Corella. The Society has not yet chosen

³⁴⁴ Minutes of the Board of Regents, September 3, 1872, 273, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁴⁵ Minutes of the Board of Regents, March 4, 1873, 303, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁴⁶ *University of California Register*, 1871-1872, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California; *University of California Register*, 1872-1873, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California; *University of California Register*, 1873-1874, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

a name.”³⁴⁷ In the next issue of the newspaper, the organization Corella was a member of settled on a name, the “Nelaen Debating Society.”³⁴⁸ During following spring semester, the student organization, now known as the “Nelaen Literary Society,” reasserted its choice of Corella as its treasurer.³⁴⁹ Corella’s participation as a cadet in the University’s drill unit and membership in the “Nelaen Literary Society” suggests the young Mexican did not face the ill will of his peers due to his background. Quite to the contrary, Corella was just another student.

The University of California moved from downtown Oakland to the rolling hills and pastureland of Berkeley in fall of 1873. The move represented a fundamental change for the institution and its professors and students. A student as well as an instructor, Corella moved with the University of California to Berkeley, on course to graduate in spring 1874 and to teach Spanish (as documented above). Someone, perhaps Corella himself, wrote that he would be a member of the graduating class of 1874 on the back on his class photo.³⁵⁰ But such speculation was premature, as the University of California did not include Manuel M. Corella as a graduate at spring commencement.³⁵¹ He was not a member of the 13 person graduating class of 1874. Unlike Jesús María Estudillo, who left college because he felt the cost of tuition was an unneeded burden on his family, researchers are at a loss to explain why Corella did not complete his studies. The variety of ideas offered by David J. León and Dan McNeil in their series of articles on the Fifth Class and Corella are only conjecture—they speculated that Corella may have left due to

³⁴⁷ *Echo*, November 1871, 3, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁴⁸ *Echo*, December 1871, 3, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁴⁹ *Echo*, May 1872, 3, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁵⁰ León and McNeil, “A Precursor to Affirmative Action,” 197.

³⁵¹ *University of California Register*, 1873-1874, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

discrimination, injury or illness, or a better offer.³⁵² León posited, “Was he called home by his parents? Was he offered a position in Mexico, or did he live out his life in California?”³⁵³ Whatever occurred, the reasons for Corella’s sudden departure from the University of California will remain unknown. More importantly, however, Manuel Corella’s experience at the University of California in the early 1870s definitively documents the enrollment of a Mexican young man at the institution. In addition, despite the inconvenience of a fluctuating salary as a Spanish instructor, Corella served as the first non-White to teach at the University of California.

* * *

Ultimately, the Fifth Class and Manuel M. Corella provide another example of *Californio* and Mexican participation in California higher education in the mid nineteenth century. And like at Santa Clara, *Californios* and Mexicans shared the same classrooms as their White peers. Unlike Jesús María Estudillo, the voices of Corella and his fellow classmates are largely muted, since neither he nor any other Spanish speaker left a diary of their experiences at the University of California. However, that detail should not diminish the importance of the enrollment of *Californios* and Mexicans in the Fifth Class and Corella at the University of California. In fact, Corella’s experience at the University of California mimics that of Jesús María Estudillo at Santa Clara College in key ways. Both Estudillo and Corella participated in a variety of extracurricular activities, and appeared to face little if any prejudice due to their respective backgrounds as a *Californio* and a Mexican. Equally important, their inclusion in clubs and organizations alongside

³⁵² León and McNeil, “A Precursor to Affirmative Action,” 197.

³⁵³ León, “Manuel M. Corella,” 178.

their White peers negated the need to form separate student organizations—such as those later founded by Mexican American students in the 1930s and 1940s.

As noted throughout this chapter, Manuel M. Corella and the *Californios* and Mexicans who took part in the University of California's Fifth Class did so at roughly the same time members of Spanish-speaking community enrolled at Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame. The *Californios* and Mexicans who attended these higher education institutions in the mid-nineteenth effectively formed a symbiotic relationship with the young California colleges and universities. The *Californios*, in particular, needed a college education in order to maintain their status in California society; while the schools themselves needed the *Californios* and Mexicans to fill their seats and earn revenue.

While the Regents of the University of California deliberately ended the Fifth Class (and, apparently, brought to an end *Californios* and Mexican attending the school in meaningful numbers), no such edict took place at Santa Clara. Perplexing is the fact that no *Californios* or Mexicans followed Corella into the undergraduate program at the University of California. Moreover, evidence suggests that members of the Mexican community did not attend the University of California in appreciable numbers until well after the turn of the century. Chapter four answers why this phenomenon occurred, what happened to Jesús María Estudillo and the *Californios*, and how events in the first quarter of the twentieth century in California shaped what members of the Mexican American community attended college in the state by the 1930s.

Chapter 4: The “Decline” of the *Californios* and the Changing Faces of the Mexican Community in California

When Jesús María Estudillo passed away from illness at the age of sixty six in August 1910, the *San Francisco Call* penned an obituary honoring the eventful life of the diarist and former Santa Clara College student. They hailed the lifelong San Leandro, California resident as a “pioneer” and the “oldest Native Son” in the state.³⁵⁴ Recounting the history of the Estudillo family, the newspaper marked Jesús María’s death as an end of an era. And in many respects, it was. Jesús María Estudillo witnessed the aftermath of the Gold Rush and statehood, attended college alongside other wealthy young men, and saw the loss of land and prestige of many of his fellow *Californios*. He lived through the latter quarter of the nineteenth century when the *Californios* and their way of life were largely extinguished. While Jesús María spent his latter years in San Leandro, the turn of the century marked the beginning of a new age in California.

Jesús María Estudillo died just as the first wave of Mexican immigrants settled in California—a migration so large that the demographics of the state changed forever.³⁵⁵ In the aftermath of the first wave of Mexican immigration, a second generation of Mexican Americans were born, reared, and educated in the United States. During the same time period, higher education institutions in the state of California matured, and the University of California grew larger than ever. However, astonishingly few Mexicans enrolled in California colleges and universities at the same time as this remarkable

³⁵⁴ “Pioneer of San Leandro Buried,” *The San Francisco Call*, August, 18, 1910, 11.

³⁵⁵ Approximately 678,000 Mexicans immigrated to the West—many of them to California. The census data is drawn from Rogelio Saenz, *Latinos and the Changing Face of America: The American People Census 2000* (New York and Washington: Russell Sage Foundation and Population Reference Bureau, 2004), 2.

growth in higher education occurred. This chapter reinterprets what historian Leonard Pitt described as “the decline of the *Californios*,” and examines what happened in California (particularly within the Mexican community) between roughly 1900 and 1930 that fostered Mexican American participation in higher education in the decade preceding World War II.

* * *

While upper class *Californios* and well-to-do Mexicans enrolled in college from the early 1850s to mid 1870s, profound changes continued to sweep from one end of the state of California to the other. As noted at the end of chapter one, squatters increasingly settled on lands owned by *Californios*—overtly challenging the interests of the elite landowning *Californios*. The land disputes in northern California directly threatened the *Californio* way of life, as the last vestiges of the *gente de razón* faced mounting legal bills in an effort to prove the ownership of their expansive ranchos.³⁵⁶ Recognizing that a new era commenced with statehood, those *Californios* with the means to do so sent their sons and daughters to college. Young *Californios* like Jesús María Estudillo attended college largely to acquire the skills that best prepared them to acclimate and adjust to life in the new state of California. The capacity to send their children to Santa Clara College, the College of Notre Dame, or the Fifth Class preparatory program at the University of California signified the wealth some *Californios* still possessed—in some cases, more than two decades after statehood.

However, as Jesús María Estudillo documented in his journal entries while at Santa Clara, the young man recognized the challenges his family and other *Californios*

³⁵⁶ Haas, “War in California, 1846-1848,” 347; Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 32-40.

faced in managing their properties and large ranchos while engrossed in lawsuits. While the Estudillos persevered despite the initial onslaught of litigation, many *Californios* were not as fortunate. Several of the Estudillos neighbors could not withstand the pressure and fell from grace. For instance, the neighbor and sometimes rival of the Estudillos, Don Guillermo Castro, suffered from self-inflicted wounds. At one time, Castro's Rancho San Lorenzo was four times larger than the Estudillo's Rancho San Leandro—the United States government issued a patent for the land of over 26,000 acres.³⁵⁷ Rancho San Leandro included those areas now known as Hayward, San Lorenzo, Castro Valley, as well as Cull, Crow and Palomares canyons. The sprawling grant encompassed about forty one square miles. In spite of Castro's magnificent holdings and connections, the *Californio* gambled away his riches. Selling off portions of his land to pay gambling debts and mortgaging property finally cost Guillermo Castro Rancho San Lorenzo. Eventually, his debts culminated in a sheriff's sale in 1864. A wealthy New Englander, Faxon Dean Atherton, bought the remaining acres for \$400,000. His reputation ruined, Castro took the younger members of his family and moved to Chile; where he spent the remainder of his life.³⁵⁸

In nearby Santa Clara County, only a very small number of the wealthiest *Californios* managed to maintain their holdings. The number of landholders of Mexican descent who owned a "personal estate" declined precipitously from 129 to 63 between 1860 and 1870. The value of their property dropped roughly fifty percent throughout the

³⁵⁷ Proceedings of Land Case No. 29, Northern District U.S. District Court, San Francisco, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

³⁵⁸ "Don Guillermo Castro," *Sunday Tribune*, August, 1969.

same time period.³⁵⁹ Likewise, in 1868 the *San José Mercury* reported that 12 of the 172 residents of Santa Clara County with an income of over \$2,800 a year were “Mexicans.” The majority were White.³⁶⁰ According to Stephen J. Pitti the “deleterious effects of economic, legal, and other changes in the [Santa Clara] Valley were broadly visible, and they anticipated developments that would soon engulf Southern California.”³⁶¹ However, Pitti’s assessment of this effect on the educational attainment of *Californios* deserves further scrutiny. The historian’s claim that “few” *Californios* and Mexicans “completed more than six years of school in the five decades following the California Gold Rush” is misleading and inaccurate.³⁶² Public schools were still in their infant stages until at least the 1870s, and are not an accurate barometer to analyze educational status in the immediate aftermath of the Gold Rush and statehood. As this study clearly shows, numerous *Californios* from San José and its environs attended Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame until at least the mid 1870s. The experiences of Jesús María Estudillo and his peers were clearly overlooked by the historian.

Californios were tormented by not only squatters (and sometimes their own missteps), but by bad luck as well. In the early 1860s an economic downturn and poor weather devastated the holdings of *Californios*—initially in the southern end of the state, and then in the north. A drought devastated California from 1863 to 1864. By December 1863, the Estudillo’s friends and family in southern California had already lost thousands of head of cattle, sheep and horses due to lack of water. Don Abel Stearns lost 7000 head

³⁵⁹ Federal Manuscript Census, 1860 and 1870, San José, California.

³⁶⁰ *San José Mercury*, June 18, 1868.

³⁶¹ Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 39.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

of cattle, and thousands more were butchered solely for hides and tallow.³⁶³ The cattle at San Leandro suffered less severely, at least through 1863 (while Estudillo still enrolled as a student at Santa Clara). But not one drop of moisture fell from the sky on Rancho San Leandro from January through March of early 1864. Light rain began to fall in March, but not enough to benefit the crops or for grazing. Heavy rain followed in May that did more damage than good due to massive flooding.³⁶⁴ Ultimately, the combination of floods and drought of the early 1860s crippled the cattle industry—one of the very last lucrative ventures of many of the *Californios*.³⁶⁵

Demographic changes rapidly transformed California from a state populated by Mexicans and Indians to one dominated by White Americans in the immediate aftermath of the Gold Rush. As documented in chapter one, the change occurred quite suddenly, particularly so in the north. Tens of the thousands of settlers invaded the San Francisco area. The repercussions were that *Californios* were rapidly outnumbered by White Americans. Southern California followed a slightly different trajectory from their neighbors to the north in the San Francisco Bay Area. Namely, the demographic shifts occurred later:

In southern California, which had substantial Mexican settlements, Mexicans remained the majority until the 1870s, when the construction of railroads and land speculation drew thousands of settlers from the East and Midwest. Between 1860 and 1880 Los Angeles went from being 58 percent Mexican to 19 percent, Santa Barbara from 66 percent to 16 percent, and San Diego from 28 percent to 9 percent.³⁶⁶

³⁶³ Jesús María Estudillo, “Diary,” 1864.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*, 60.

³⁶⁶ Glenn, *Unequal Freedom*, 145.

Compounding the demographic shift in southern California were the results of litigation with squatters—remnants of the California Land Law. In Santa Ana and San Juan Capistrano, for instance, the United States government did not issue the first patent until 1866. The last occurred in 1883. As a result, “legal expenses, falling prices for cattle after 1857, and severe floods and drought between 1861 and 1864 caused the swift sale and subdivision” of many of the ranchos.³⁶⁷ In 1860, Californios owned 62 percent of the land in Santa Ana and San Juan. By 1870, the holdings of Californios dwindled to 11 percent. In contrast, European and Whites property almost tripled, from thirty one percent to eight seven percent by 1870.³⁶⁸

In Jackson Graves’ autobiography, *My Seventy Years in California*, the author’s biases are disclosed as he reflects on the plight of the *Californios*:

The native Californians [*Californios*] simply could not make headway against or in competition with American progress. One by one they faded away. Many of them died in poverty. Their children became day-laborers. Occasionally one of the younger generation received an education and assumed a position of importance and respectability in the community, but the majority of them did not. It is the sad story of the downfall of a happy, peaceful people, passing off the earth in less than two generations.³⁶⁹

However, Graves makes a number of salient points. Numerous historians share Graves’ belief that most *Californios* lost nearly everything—including their property and their social standing.³⁷⁰ But other historians, such as William Deverell, also emphasize that a handful of *Californios* maintained their social prestige, and in some cases, enough money

³⁶⁷ Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*, 67.

³⁶⁸ Federal Manuscript Censuses, 1860 and 1870, Santa Ana and San Juan Capistrano.

³⁶⁹ Jackson Graves, *My Seventy Years in California: 1857-1927* (Chicago: Times-Mirror Press, 1929), 159.

³⁷⁰ Besides Leonard Pitt’s groundbreaking monograph, *The Decline of the Californios*, other examples of this strand of literature include Pitti’s *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 32-50; and Acuña’s *Occupied America*, 141-155.

to live comfortably well into twentieth century Los Angeles and California.³⁷¹ More interesting, Graves acknowledged in his memoir what many scholars and researchers do not: that some *Californios* earned a college education well after statehood and the establishment of the White majority in the state. Still, the confluence of several events detailed earlier in this chapter, including the demographic shifts following the Gold Rush and statehood, drought, and economic downturns, effectively ended the ability of most *Californios* to send their children to college. Thus, it is not all together surprising that Spanish surnames largely disappeared from the student ledgers of Santa Clara College and the University of California in the 1870s.

One *Californio* family, the Watson/Domínguez clan of Los Angeles, flourished as California transitioned from a land dominated by the *Californios* to a state governed and controlled by White Americans.³⁷² The subsequent union of the James Alexander Watson and *Californiana* María Dolores Domínguez was a prime example of the intermarriage between White men and *Californio* women; commonplace in California both before and after statehood.³⁷³ Their fate trumped that of the Estudillos, as their holdings were so vast that they did not jettison portions of their land unless in their best interest to do so. To the contrary, the Watson and Domínguez family began to build an empire. Consequently, the higher education aspirations of *Californios* like the Watson-Domínguez boys were very much alive. Beginning in 1880, James Alexander Watson and María Dolores Domínguez sent their sons James, Robert, and Patrick to Santa Clara

³⁷¹ William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 31.

³⁷² A complete history of the family is chronicled in Judson, A. Grenier, *California Legacy: The James Alexander Watson-María Dolores Domínguez de Watson Family, 1820-1980* (Los Angeles: Watson Land Company, 1987).

³⁷³ A more detailed examination of intermarriage between Whites and *Californios*, including those that occurred within the Estudillo family, are highlighted later in this chapter.

in order to prepare for careers in business. The boys may have very well been the last *Californios* to attend the Jesuit College. Once completed with their studies at Santa Clara, the Watson brothers joined their father and managed the family holdings. James Watson, the eldest of the three boys to attend the College, became a successful businessman, and oversaw the family's numerous business ventures. The Watson-Domínguez family later transformed their California holdings into a series of large corporations that controlled factories, oil wells, and shopping malls.³⁷⁴

* * *

Ultimately, the Estudillo family also weathered the storm (not without some difficulty) following the Gold Rush and statehood—transitioning from Mexican to White American rule. They did so with considerably less aplomb than the Watson/Dominguez clan. Rather than giving away their fortune like the Guillermo Castro, and without resorting to panic when the purse strings tightened, the Estudillo family remained calm under the steady leadership of family matriarch Juana Estudillo. As noted in chapter one, the Doña took a very active roll in managing Rancho San Leandro after her husband died. When the State of California formed Alameda County in the early 1850s, home to San Leandro, Juana Estudillo initially disregarded the news. However, Doña Estudillo assertively acted once word reached her that a village neighboring San Leandro would hold the county seat, believing a town near San Leandro would decrease the value of her and her children's properties. She sent two of her son-in-laws, John Ward and William Heath Davis, to persuade local officials to consider San Leandro as the county seat instead. To sweeten the proposal, the Estudillos donated a tract of land on the rancho for

³⁷⁴ Grenier, *California Legacy*, 246, 265-66; McKevitt, "Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education," 323.

a proposed courthouse. With that, the town of San Leandro was born. By 1856, San Leandro served as the Alameda County Seat.³⁷⁵ Selling parcels of land to the residents of the town of San Leandro served as a means for the Estudillo family to weather the change from Mexican to American California. At times, however, this was a painful yet necessary practice, particularly for the still young and emotional Jesús María Estudillo. In July of 1864, he sadly wrote in his diary:

I heard from Mr. Ward that he had sold a part of my spot of land, a hundred acres, I believe for twelve thousand dollars. I am sorry that this particular spot should have been sold. I believe this to be the finest piece on the Rancho, below the town and all along the creek.³⁷⁶

In contrast to some *Californio* families, the Estudillos, led by matriarch Juana, remained steady throughout the land disputes with squatters. In the meantime, Doña Estudillo still exacted her family's influence on the communities of the East Bay.

Another instance of the Estudillo's power surrounded the founding of the first Catholic Church in San Leandro. Jesús María Estudillo attended the last mass conducted by the Reverend Father Callen in a hall of San Leandro's Beatty Hotel on July 29, 1864. A little more than a week later, on the morning of August 7, he picked some flowers from his mother's garden to adorn the altar of the new Catholic Church in San Leandro.³⁷⁷ Archbishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany, the "angel of order" who orchestrated the founding of Santa Clara College by the Jesuits, presided over Saint Leander's first mass—giving

³⁷⁵ The town of San Leandro remained the seat of Alameda County until the damaging earthquake of 1868. Thereafter, the State Legislature designated Oakland as the County Seat of Alameda County. After the County Seat moved to Oakland, the land occupied by the former courthouse reverted back to the Estudillo family—who later donated it to the Catholic Church. For more details, see Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 25-27.

³⁷⁶ Estudillo, "Diary," July 6, 1864.

³⁷⁷ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 33.

one sermon in English and the other in Spanish.³⁷⁸ Later that evening, Juana Estudillo hosted a lavish dinner at the mansion in honor of Archbishop Alemany. Most of the Estudillo family, including Jesús María, attended the special event.

The disparate episodes signify the power still wielded by Juana Estudillo and her family—literally facilitating the transfer of the county seat to San Leandro, the town’s founding and development, and the dedication of Saint Leander Church. While other *Californio* families already had lost their land, their wealth, and stature by the mid 1860s, the Estudillo family largely maintained their station.

Still, Jesús María Estudillo remained very worried about this family’s debts. In the following somber journal entry, Jesús María laments the amount of his family owed to a San Francisco bank:

The family owes now, one hundred and seven thousand dollars at interest. The greatest sum is due the Hibernia [Savings and Loan] Society (of San Francisco). Of San Leandro, there are at present unsold, two thousand, four hundred acres now selling for one hundred dollars per acre. The two ranchos below of forty thousand acres will no doubt be sold at a loss of ten to fifteen thousand dollars. San Leandro is all to be sold. Mr. Ward takes upon himself the whole of the family debt, giving my mother eighty thousand dollars, twenty-five thousand to each of the younger children, that Magdalena and myself. Lola’s property will be separated very soon. If the value of the property increases, as I have good reason to think, Mr. Ward will come out the winner; but it appears to me that he takes upon himself too much responsibility. He has to pay my mother interest on this eighty thousand dollars.³⁷⁹

Yet while the family did owe money, the family maintained the majority of the land in San Leandro through the 1860s. Compared to many *Californios*, the Estudillo family still kept a relatively comfortable lifestyle.

³⁷⁸ Michael Accolti to William S. Murphy, 8 November 1852, Archives of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus, the Pius XII Memorial Library, St. Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri.

³⁷⁹ Estudillo, “Diary,” August 16, 1864.

After leaving Santa Clara College, Jesús María's brother-in-law, John Ward, put the young man in charge of records pertaining to sales, rentals, leases, and various other business transactions. Jesús María studied bookkeeping in college and the job suited his meticulous and methodical nature. By working for Ward, John Nugent thought Jesús María could transition to another mercantile field.³⁸⁰ The duties assigned to Jesús María by his mother and Ward left the young man little time leisure. The youngest member of the Estudillo clan maintained the family's "milk ranch," located not far south of San Leandro Creek. Jesús María also rounded up cattle, sold small plots of land, and ran errands on his mother's behalf (including serving as his mother's companion on trips to the Martínez family's El Rancho Pinole). Jesús María frequently accompanied his elder sisters on shopping visits to San Francisco, dutifully carrying packages.³⁸¹ He was the consummate little brother. In whatever free time Jesús María possessed, he read avidly, particularly the classics.

Juana Estudillo was still a landholder of California well into the 1870s—a fact recognized in the *Sacramento Daily Union*.³⁸² She continued to manage her family's holdings, including the Estudillo House, until her death on November 9, 1879.³⁸³ The hotel stood on the southwest corner of the present day Davis Street and Alvarado Street. The property was very popular. Well into the 1880s, 500 or more guests enjoyed the large parlors, garden, recreation area, and the grape arbor with regularity. In this period, the Estudillo House comprised twenty two rooms, a dining room, a lounge, a billiard room, and several small card rooms. Among its distinguished guests were dignitaries

³⁸⁰ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 32.

³⁸¹ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 35.

³⁸² *Sacramento Daily Union*, February 8, 1873

³⁸³ *Daily Alta California*, November 11, 1879

from in around the Bay Area, including the Ghiradellis and former Governor James Budd.³⁸⁴ The hotel buttressed the Estudillo family's income until they sold the property.

* * *

The fate of *Californio* Santa Clara College students likely reflected the challenges the young men faced after leaving the institution. The accomplishments of Jesús María Estudillo were relatively modest in comparison to the Watson-Domínguez boys, but were possibly more indicative of the lives *Californios* who attended Santa Clara enjoyed. Jesús María became neither spectacularly wealthy, nor destitute. After working on his family's behalf for John Ward, Jesús María managed the Spanish correspondence of a local hardware firm. For the last twenty-five years of his life, Estudillo used his analytic nature to serve as bookkeeper for the Southern Pacific Railroad. But his lifestyle still afforded the time for leisure—he both owned horses and fished recreationally.³⁸⁵ And as the reader shall see later in the chapter, Jesús María Estudillo's fortunes remained steady as he aligned himself with another well-to-family from the San Francisco Bay Area.

The number of *Californio* Santa Clara College students and graduates who found some sort of a career as a politician is striking.³⁸⁶ As historian Leonard Pitt attests in *The Decline of the Californios*, “A prestigious Spanish surname (especially when combined with a Caucasian face) remained a good entrée into public office.”³⁸⁷ José de Guadalupe Estudillo, the diarist's cousin, served as state treasurer of California from 1875 to 1880. After leaving Santa Clara in 1873, Reginaldo del Valle passed the bar, and the citizens of

³⁸⁴ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 28.

³⁸⁵ “Man's Best Friend: The Gathering of the Horses—Further Review of Fine Stock in and About Agricultural Park,” *San Francisco Call*, August 31, 1878, 5; “Trout Rise to the Fly on the Truckee,” *San Francisco Call*, July 16, 1898, 9.

³⁸⁶ McKeivitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 330.

³⁸⁷ Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, 269.

Santa Barbara elected the *Californio* as an assemblyman and then state senator from the region.³⁸⁸

Even the Estudillo brothers actively participated in public life. Jesús María's elder brother, José Antonio, served as one of five municipal board members of the town of San Leandro from 1875 to 1877. In 1873, the people of the town of San Leandro nominated Jesús María Estudillo as the first county clerk of Alameda County. He later served as a member of the municipal board of his native San Leandro (1889, 1890, and in 1892). A staunch Democrat, Jesús María served as a delegate to the state convention.³⁸⁹ The Estudillo family, their riches gone and much of their land sold to the residents and town of San Leandro, still possessed some measure of respect in order for José Antonio and Jesús María to get elected and reelected on five occasions over fifteen years.

* * *

Throughout this time period *Californios* welcomed White outsiders into their families, and intermarriages between them and Whites were quite common (particularly before statehood)—as was the case with the Estudillo family. *Californios* expected White men to court their daughters, very much in the “Spanish” tradition. *Californio* patriarchs, such as José Joaquin Estudillo, expected these attitudes and a measure of respect. While some were unwilling to comply, most did.³⁹⁰ For instance, during the two years William Heath Davis courted Jesús María Estudillo's elder sister, María de Jesús, he did not remember “having spoken a hundred words to the young lady when [we] were

³⁸⁸ McKevitt, “Hispanic Californians and Catholic Higher Education,” 330.

³⁸⁹ “Pioneer of San Leandro Buried,” *The San Francisco Call*, August, 18, 1910, 11. “Alameda County Politics: Delegates to the Republican and Democratic State Conventions,” *Daily Alta California*, April 25, 1880, 1.

³⁹⁰ Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 105.

alone.” He recalled, “but I was permitted to converse with her in the presence of her parents, especially her mother” Juana.³⁹¹ Davis, and the majority of American suitors, strictly adhered to the courting decorum favored by the *Californios*.³⁹²

There were four such marriages in the Estudillo family alone—each of Jesús María Estudillo’s elder sisters married White men.³⁹³ Some Chicano scholars criticize *Californianas* such as the Estudillo daughters, as well their fathers, for permitting the marriages to take place. Chicano scholar Rodolfo Acuña refers to these marriages as “bleaching out.”³⁹⁴ Other historians, such as Lisabeth Haas, provide a more measured characterization of intermarriages, stating the unions “brought their husbands into this close world of family and fictive kin.”³⁹⁵ This occurred in the Estudillo family, as John Ward, William Heath Davis, and John Nugent each helped their mother-in-law Juana Estudillo to manage Rancho San Leandro.

But according to Chicano scholars such as Rodolfo Acuña, “the Californianas’ ethnic identity was subsumed within their husbands’ national identity,” making the women “the first Californios to purposely accept assimilation and accommodation into the dominant Euro-American culture and nationalism.”³⁹⁶ But this was not necessarily the case. María Raquel Casas concluded her study of intermarriages between *Californianas* and White men in the following persuasive passage:

³⁹¹ William Heath Davis, Jr., *Seventy-five Years in California: Recollections and Remarks By One Who Visited These Shores in 1831 and Again in 1833, and Except When Absent on Business Was a Resident from 1838 until the End of a Long Life in 1909* (San Francisco: John Howell Books, 1967), 55. (1929)

³⁹² Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 105.

³⁹³ María de la Concepción married Irishman John B. Ward, María de Jesús married early Californian settler William Heath Davis, María Dolores (Lola) married Charles H. Cushing, and Magdalena married John B. Nugent.

³⁹⁴ Acuña, *Occupied American*, 143.

³⁹⁵ Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*, 73.

³⁹⁶ Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 173.

The previous decades had fostered a sense of self within elite Californianas, based on their gender and class affiliation, that was not easily erased by the U.S. invasion or by their willingness to align themselves through marriage with the conquerors. The bicultural households they established proved that their version of California's future was one in which their past identities were being refashioned and transformed but never totally erased.³⁹⁷

In addition, Acuña's characterization of intermarriage between the *Californianas* and White men precludes the possibility that joining *Californio* families affected the husband.

Another union between a *Californiana* and a White settler took place between Ysidora Bandini, Jesús María Estudillo's first cousin, and Cave J. Coutts. Their marriage, like that of James Alexander Watson and María Dolores Domínguez, produced a number of children. Their story supports the claim made above by María Raquel Casas that *Californianas* did not abandon their roots, but passed them on to their children. Ysidora Bandini and her husband sent two of their sons, Cave Jr. and William Bandini Coutts, to Clarksville, Tennessee in fall of 1871 to attend Stewart College.³⁹⁸ Cave Jr. (his family affectionately nicknamed him *Cuevas* or *Cuevitas*, meaning "caves" or "little caves" in Spanish) and William's father, Cave Sr., grew up in Tennessee. As a result, the boys knew family in the area.³⁹⁹ The relatives of the boys often invited the brothers to family functions and weddings. The ability of the boys to speak Spanish was a source of pride, not derision. Cave Jr. proudly told his father, "No one else knows how to speak Spanish except us..."⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ Stewart College changed its name and location over the course of the last century. The institution is now known as Rhodes College, situated in Memphis, Tennessee.

³⁹⁹ Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 168.

⁴⁰⁰ Cave Johnson Coutts, Jr. to Isidora Bandini Coutts, February 28, 1872, Coutts Collection, Item 328, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

Both Cave Jr. and William each experienced episodes of homesickness while away for college. Longing to hear news from California, William asked his father to send him the *Weekly Union* and *Examiner* newspapers, “for that will be the only way we have to hear the California news.”⁴⁰¹ Like Jesús María Estudillo at Santa Clara, neither young man wrote of discrimination based on their bi-ethnic background. However, each wrote of fraternizing with young ladies. Cave Jr. shared his second-cousin Jesús María’s critical nature of the opposite sex, “the girls are very ugly her and there is only one pretty one in all of Clarksville and she is old and very short but is still very pretty.”⁴⁰² In a somewhat strange episode, a young lady converted to Catholicism in hopes marrying Billy Coutts, as told by his brother Cave Jr., “A Protestant girl is going to become a Catholic in four or five days...I am going to be the godfather of the lovely young girl who for the last four months has been, or was a great friend of your son Billy, who is the cause for the said young girl to find her fortune or misery.”⁴⁰³

While away at college, each of the young men strove to maintain their fluency in Spanish, their mother’s native language. While they addressed their father in English, the boys wrote their mother Ysidora in Spanish. After a year away from home, Billy wrote to his father, “I greatly fear that I might forget it [Spanish]; because every time I speak Spanish some English gets mixed in.”⁴⁰⁴ His anxiety demonstrates his concern for losing his mother’s language. Not long before he died, Cave Coutts admonished his sons for not

⁴⁰¹ William Bandini Coutts to Cave Johnson Coutts, December 5, 1871, Coutts Collection, Item 328, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁴⁰² Cave Johnson Coutts, Jr. to Isidora Bandini Coutts, February 28, 1872, Coutts Collection, Item 328, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁴⁰³ Quoted in Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 169. Eventually, William Bandini Coats married his first cousin, María Christina Estudillo (both were second-cousins to the diarist Jesús María Estudillo).

⁴⁰⁴ William Bandini Coutts to Cave Johnson Coutts, January 20, 1872, Coutts Collection, Item 472 (1-3), Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

excelling in school and paying too much attention on social activities. He wrote that little boys can “run to their mamas for a little Chichi, but young men of your age, talking about Sweethearts, should study as much during vacation as any other time—particularly reading.”⁴⁰⁵ Most interestingly, during their time away at college, the Coutts brothers steadfastly maintained their allegiance to their bi-cultural background.

In contrast to his cousin Ysidora Bandini and his sisters, Jesús María Estudillo married comparatively late in life, at the age of thirty-seven. Interestingly, he took a White bride—a practice not done nearly as often as marriages between *Californianas* and White men. His bride was Mary Eckfeldt Tillinghast, whom he wed on March 13, 1882. She was beautiful and but twenty three years old, the daughter of a respected White San Francisco area family. The couple met while Eckfeldt Tillinghast boarded for the night at the Estudillo Hotel.⁴⁰⁶ Marriages between Whites and *Californios* occurred with a fair amount of regularity. As noted in the introduction, María Raquel Casas devotes an entire monograph to the topic of intermarriages that took place between *Californianas* and White men. But the fact that Estudillo, a *Californio* man, took a White woman as his bride, deserves further discussion. These unions were far more uncommon.⁴⁰⁷

The marriage shocked Jesús María’s friends, but most especially his family. Mary Eckfeldt Tillinghast was not only a divorcee (with a little daughter, named Ynez), but also a Methodist. The marriage astounded his sisters, including Dolores, who remembered how her baby brother strongly disapproved of her marriage to Charles

⁴⁰⁵ *Chichi* is a Spanish slang reference for breast-feeding. Cave Johnson Coutts to William Bandini Coutts and Cave Johnson Coutts, Jr., January 16, 1874, Coutts Collection, Item 302 (1-7), Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁴⁰⁶ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 35-36.

⁴⁰⁷ Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities*, 73.

Cushing (a Protestant) years earlier. Jesús María's eldest sister, Magdalena Nugent, was purportedly more shocked, as she was the most devout Catholic in the family.⁴⁰⁸ There was a profound irony in Jesús María's decision to wed Mary Eckfeldt Tillinghast. Juana Estudillo baptized and raised Jesús María as a Catholic, and later sent her youngest child to Santa Clara to earn an education. And as a young man, Estudillo vehemently ridiculed Protestants (and Methodists in particular), as noted in several journal entries. On occasion, he would not approach a young woman he knew to be a Methodist.⁴⁰⁹ Jesús María's feelings on the subject changed as he reached adulthood, apparently no longer intolerant of non-Catholic faiths. Estudillo's union with Mary Eckfeldt Tillinghast proved to be quite a successful match. The twenty-eight year marriage lasted until Jesús María's passing in 1910; Estudillo's death taking place just as the first wave of Mexican immigrants settled in large numbers in California.

Jesús María's step-daughter, Ynez Estudillo, who he adored and regarded as his own, grew up to be one of the leading debutantes of her day. *The San Francisco Call* frequently featured Ynez in the society pages of the newspaper, and recounted the debut of Ynez Estudillo in the following piece:

Miss Ynez Estudillo...is one of the prettiest and most attractive debutantes of the winter. She came out informally at a very delightful tea early last month, given by her cousin, Mrs. Jabish Clement, at the latter's home in Oakland, and later made her more formal bow to society at Mrs. [Ynez] "Shorb" White's Friday cotillion at the Palace Hotel, where she was one of the belles of the evening.

"Shorb" White, the respected organizer of the cotillion, interestingly, descended from a *Californio* family. The article proceeded to describe Ynez's roots, including that of her adopted family, the Estudillos:

⁴⁰⁸ Schlichtmann, *Sketches of California*, 36.

⁴⁰⁹ Estudillo, "Diary," May 1, 1862.

She is a daughter of J. M. Estudillo, a member of one of the oldest Spanish families of California, and is the granddaughter of J. J. Eckfeldt, who was prominently identified with the San Francisco Mint in early days. On the side of her grandmother, who was a Miss Thurston of Louisville, Ky., a famous beauty and belle, she is related to many of the prominent families of Kentucky and Virginia. Miss Estudillo, who is spending the winter with Mrs. Clement, was greatly admired at the tea given by Mrs. Eleanor Martin...⁴¹⁰

Notably, the paper described the Estudillos as one of the “oldest Spanish families of California,” not as Mexican or *Californio*. Regardless, and perhaps equally telling, San Franciscans still held the Estudillo name in high esteem. Ynez attended several of Mrs. White’s functions; her photos prominently displayed on the pages of *The San Francisco Call*.⁴¹¹ Another article in *The San Francisco Call* described Ynez as “one of the prettiest girls present in a simply but exquisitely made gown of white chiffon satin with sleeves and bertha of lace.”⁴¹² Based on the experiences of Jesús María’s step-daughter, the legacy of the Estudillo family remained very much in tact through the beginning of the twentieth century.

* * *

After graduating from Stewart College in 1874, Cave Coutts, Jr. worked as an engineer, employed by various firms throughout South America. Coutts managed to support himself and his family through a variety of ventures, but he never became wealthy—much to his chagrin. As an adult, his interest in his childhood home Rancho Guajome, in northern San Diego County, never wavered. Cave Jr. bought out the interests of sibling and family members as they relocated after marriage. As the sole owner, Coutts attempted to make the rancho profitable through a number of development

⁴¹⁰ “Society by the Outsider,” *The San Francisco Call*, December 2, 1906, 22.

⁴¹¹ “Punctual Maids Enjoy Cotillion,” *The San Francisco Call*, January 18, 1908, 14.

⁴¹² “Gay Hours Are Spent at Mrs. White’s Cotillion,” *The San Francisco Call*, December 15, 1906, 5.

schemes, but each more or less failed. After the death of his aunt Arcadia Bandini Stearns de Baker, the elder sister of Ysidora Bandini Coats and first-cousin of Jesús María Estudillo, Cave Jr. inherited enough money to refurbish Rancho Guajome. But despite his efforts to transform his childhood home into a tourist site, the venture did not become a financial success.⁴¹³

Cave J. Coats was hardly the only upholder of the nineteenth century *Californio* past. Carmen and Francisca Dibblee of Santa Barbara, the granddaughters of Andrés de la Guerra, maintained their *Californio* household into the twentieth century.⁴¹⁴ Descendants of other *Californio* families mined their personal histories in an attempt to maintain a place in California society. But romantic images of the past replaced the historical realities expounded upon in earlier in this study. In actuality, the *Californios'* hold on political power in southern California had ended. After maintaining a strong influence until at least 1880, the influence of *Californios* waned considerably in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century—the result of the numerical strength of White American settlers.⁴¹⁵ And as noted earlier in the chapter, *Californios* and their Mexican brethren were not only wildly outnumbered by the 1870s, but they combined to possess relatively little land in comparison to immediately after statehood.

However, that reality did not stop cities throughout California, particularly those in the southern end of the state, from reconstructing, recreating, and resurrecting both its Mexican and “Spanish” past.⁴¹⁶ For instance, White Los Angelenos distorted the history of the region by fostering the erroneous idea that “nineteenth-century Mexican/Spanish

⁴¹³ Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 170-171.

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁴¹⁵ Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio*, 158-159.

⁴¹⁶ Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 171.

Los Angeles was a lost civilization.” Promoters of the city of Los Angeles fostered the image of southern California as a “simple, pastoral society.”⁴¹⁷ Charles Fletcher Lummis, the city’s chief publicist, colorfully stated that “the Missions are, next to our climate and its consequences, the best capital Southern California has.”⁴¹⁸ Today, historians describe Lummis’s creation as the “mission myth,” an effort designed to attract settlers and tourists to Los Angeles.⁴¹⁹ This romanticized version of the past was best symbolized by the mission myth and Helen Hunt Jackson’s *Ramona*—originally published in 1886.⁴²⁰ This reinterpretation of history distorted the highly stratified Spanish/Mexican reign of California (highlighted in chapter one). Furthermore, the mythologized view of early California glossed over the cultural clashes between Mexicans and Whites.⁴²¹

Historian Leonard Pitt described the entire episode in the following manner: “The “Spanish” cult was thus comprised of one part aestheticism, one part history, and one part ballyhoo.”⁴²² William Deverell denotes the entire second chapter of *Whitewashed Adobe* to the history of the parade and La Fiesta de Los Angeles, echoing the sentiment of George J. Sánchez and others.⁴²³ Through architecture and fiestas/parties/festivals, cities and communities literally reconstructed the past—“prettifying” the legend of conquest

⁴¹⁷ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 70-71. See also Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, 286-290; Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 75-89; Carey McWilliams, *Southern California: An Island on the Land* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), 64-67; Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers*, 258-271.

⁴¹⁸ Charles Fletcher Lummis, quoted in Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 71.

⁴¹⁹ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 70-71.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.*

⁴²² Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, 290.

⁴²³ Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, 49-90.

and settlement. Scholars such as Carey McWilliams (and others such as Acuña) assail the “Spanish heritage fantasy.”⁴²⁴

According to María Raquel Casas, however, “one person’s fantasy was another person’s historical heritage.”⁴²⁵ Delfina and Herminia de la Guerra, the daughters of Andrés de la Guerra (along with their nieces Carmen and Francisca), actively participated in—“indeed gave authenticity to”—the Santa Barbara Spanish Festival.⁴²⁶ Herminia organized both the dancers and the parade for the pageant, while her sister Delfina chaired the pageant committee until at least 1919. More importantly, the de la Guerra household remained the epicenter of *Californio* life largely as a result of the efforts of the de la Guerra women. These women, as heirs to an “illustrious past,” became valued civic volunteers to both the immigrant and native population of the Santa Barbara area.⁴²⁷ Still, the age of the *Californios* was long since gone. While a few lived throughout the growth of a burgeoning metropolis like Los Angeles, their numbers were so small they ceased to profoundly affect California society. Instead, a new segment of the Mexican community would change California forever.

* * *

Even as the remnants of *Californio* way of life disappeared in early twentieth century southern California, demographic changes continued to transform the state. Hundreds of the thousands of Mexican immigrants settled in southern California in the first quarter of the twentieth century, fleeing Mexico after the Revolution of 1910; lured

⁴²⁴ Carey McWilliams, *North from Mexico: The Spanish Speaking People of the United States* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1949), 37; Acuña, *Occupied America*, 81.

⁴²⁵ Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, 171.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 171-172.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 172.

to the United States by the promise of a plentiful number of jobs and a better life for their families.⁴²⁸ Los Angeles and its environs offered a nice climate and a large and growing Mexican community, and made sense as an attractive destination for the immigrants. There were numerous jobs available, particularly in agriculture.⁴²⁹ Mexican immigrants quickly overwhelmed the number of *Californios* (who at their peak numbered but a few thousand).⁴³⁰ And those *Californios* that remained in the Los Angeles area often lived apart from the scores of recent Mexican immigrants.⁴³¹

In his study on the nineteenth century origins of the Los Angeles barrio, Richard Griswold del Castillo found that migration was the “main source of population change” among the ethnic Mexican community. Griswold del Castillo estimated that nearly 90 percent of the Mexican population in Los Angeles in 1880 migrated to the city after statehood.⁴³² The pattern continued into the twentieth century. Pedro G. Castillo and Ricardo Romo cited the statistically low persistence rate of the Mexican population in Los Angeles throughout the first third of the century. In essence, the low persistence rate suggests that successive waves of new immigrants dominated the Mexican community.⁴³³ Mexican-born residents outnumbered American-born citizens of Mexican descent in Los Angeles as early as 1910. By 1920, the ratio of foreign-born immigrants to native-born

⁴²⁸ Approximately 678,000 Mexicans legally immigrated into the United States—many of them to the state of California. The census data is drawn from Rogelio Saenz, *Latinos and the Changing Face of America: The American People Census 2000* (New York and Washington: Russell Sage Foundation and Population Reference Bureau, 2004), 2.

⁴²⁹ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 67-70

⁴³⁰ Pitti, *The Devil in Silicon Valley*, 32.

⁴³¹ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 70.

⁴³² Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio*, 36-39.

⁴³³ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 70.

immigrants reached two to one. Ten years later, on the eve of the founding of the college student-led Mexican American Movement, the ratio grew to five to one.⁴³⁴

Mexicans traditionally lived near the Plaza of *La Reyna de Los Angeles*, before the swelling population (augmented by the thousands of recent immigrants) crossed the Los Angeles River and expanded into East Los Angeles. Historians characterized the “barrioization” of the Mexican people as a negative phenomenon. But as Ricardo Romo attested, “the majority of Mexican immigrants, for reasons of language, kinship, and folk customs, chose to live together in barrios,” such as the one in Los Angeles.⁴³⁵ George J. Sánchez added, “A strong sense of family...enabled Mexican immigrants to survive in a hostile American environment, and contributed to a strengthening” of the blossoming Mexican community inside the barrio, a phenomenon comparable to the experiences of other immigrant groups in the United States.⁴³⁶

Most germane to this study, the majority of Mexican children faced a number of obstacles completing primary and secondary school—a byproduct of the socioeconomic disparities between Mexicans in the barrio and Californians elsewhere. Still, Mexican parents sent their children to segregated public schools in and around Los Angeles—they viewed the learning opportunities better in California than in Mexico.⁴³⁷ By 1930, around 55,000 Mexican students enrolled in the Los Angeles public schools,

⁴³⁴ Pedro G. Castillo, “The Making of a Mexican Barrio: Los Angeles, 1890-1920” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1979), 116-119; Romo, *East Los Angeles*, 124-128. For estimates of the entire Mexican population in Los Angeles, see Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 200.

⁴³⁵ Romo, *East Los Angeles*, 9-10.

⁴³⁶ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 149. For an introduction to the discussion of how immigrant groups constructively coped with their move to the United States, see John Bodnar’s *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

⁴³⁷ Romo, *East Los Angeles*, 138.

approximately fourteen percent of the total population.⁴³⁸ Ideally, Mexican parents hoped their children could become proficient in English and become truly bilingual—much the same way *Californios* sent their boys to Santa Clara College to perfect their English a half-century earlier. If the children of Mexican immigrants could accomplish this challenging feat, parents reasoned, their children might be in position to appreciate both American and Mexican culture.⁴³⁹

* * *

By the turn of the century, the age of *Californios* attending college had long come and gone. That turn of events reflected the *Californio* population further assimilating into both the White and Mexican community of California. On occasion, a *Californio* such as Leo Carrillo enrolled in college. The future vaudeville stage and television actor attended Loyola University (predecessor of Loyola Marymount University), where he earned a degree in engineering. Born Leopoldo Antonio Carrillo, he belonged to one of the more prominent early *Californio* families. His great-grandfather, Carlos Antonio Carrillo, served as governor of Alta California from 1837 to 1838, while his father, Juan José Carrillo, worked as both the police chief and mayor of Santa Monica.⁴⁴⁰ Based on Leo Carrillo's experience, perhaps a few of the most privileged *Californio* families continued to send their children to college after the turn of the century. But that never came close to duplicating events of the mid-nineteenth century: when *Californios* sent hundreds of their sons and daughters to schools such as Santa Clara and the College of Notre Dame.

⁴³⁸ Quoted in Gilbert González, "The System of Public Education and its Function within the Chicano Community, 1920-1930" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1974), 134.

⁴³⁹ Romo, *East Los Angeles*, 138.

⁴⁴⁰ Leo Carrillo, *The California I Love* (Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1961); Dale Ballou May, "The Adobe Is My Birthstone: Leo Carrillo's Rancho de las Quiotes," *The Journal of San Diego History* 35, no. 4 (1989).

Paradoxically, while both the greater Mexican population in California and the University of California steadily grew in the first quarter of the twentieth century, the participation of Mexicans in California higher education remained quite low—almost non-existent. As noted above, the main cause of few Mexican and Mexican American participating in higher education in early twentieth century California was the limited (K-12) educational opportunities for Mexican children. As the readers shall see, a couple Mexican Americans did enroll at the University of California by the 1920s. But by in large, few Mexican Americans successfully navigated the challenges of attending predominantly under-funded segregated schools. Mexican American young people graduated high school in low numbers--one study found that approximately fifty four percent of Mexican girls and forty four percent of Mexican boys dropped out of high school between the age of fourteen and sixteen—let alone attend college.⁴⁴¹ This phenomenon did not represent that large of a departure from the overall state of higher education in the United States in the first quarter of the twentieth century—for anyone, regardless of their background. Overall, limited access to college still characterized American higher education. Less than five percent of Americans between the age of eighteen and twenty two enrolled in college.⁴⁴²

The University of California flourished in the new century—the institution far larger than the young University that offered the Fifth Class preparatory department a half-century earlier.⁴⁴³ The University of California became a charter member of the

⁴⁴¹ Herman Buckner, “A Study of Pupil Elimination and Failure among Mexicans” (Master’s thesis, University of Southern California, 1935), 37-38.

⁴⁴² Ibid, 169.

⁴⁴³ By 1920, the campuses the constituted the University of California enrolled around 14,000 students. See Douglass, *The California Idea and American Higher Education*, 130-131.

prestigious Association of American Universities in 1900. And ten years later Edwin Slosson, editor of *The Independent*, recognized the flagship California state institution as one of the “great American universities.”⁴⁴⁴ A handful of Latin American students formed at least three fraternal student organizations at the flagship state institution the 1920s. A few students founded the Latino fraternity Phi Lambda Alpha on November 26, 1920; while a few more created another student group named El Circulo Hispano America.⁴⁴⁵ However, nearly all the students who founded the two organizations were from abroad—mainly from Latin America. For instance, Phi Lambda Alpha member and El Club Hispano America President Jesús de la Garza originally came from Mexico City.⁴⁴⁶ Another El Club Hispano America member, and a likely friend of de la Garza, Eduardo de Antequera Romecin, grew up in La Paz, Mexico.⁴⁴⁷ Bartolo Guzman, of Pasadena, California, was the only Mexican American among the leadership of the student organization.⁴⁴⁸ Similarly, a number of female students and faculty founded Casa Hispana. But that group grew out of students interested in Spanish culture and the language (their membership were largely White or from abroad).⁴⁴⁹

The experiences of Mexican Americans in California contrasted to that of Mexican American students in the neighboring state of Arizona in this time period. At least 150 Mexican American or Spanish-surnamed students attended Tempe Normal School (which later became Arizona State University) between 1896 and 1936.⁴⁵⁰ The majority of the students were women—attending college to earning a teaching degree.

⁴⁴⁴ Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 110-111.

⁴⁴⁵ University of California *Blue and Gold*, 1922, 600.

⁴⁴⁶ University of California *Blue and Gold*, 1928, 78.

⁴⁴⁷ University of California *Blue and Gold*, 1928, 111.

⁴⁴⁸ University of California *Blue and Gold*, 1929, 83.

⁴⁴⁹ University of California *Blue and Gold*, 1929, 446.

⁴⁵⁰ Muñoz, “Desert Dreams,” 188-189.

According to Laura K. Muñoz, Mexican Arizonans “actively cultivated an educational agenda tied to an historical legacy of educational attainment among the “Spanish American” elite and connected to U.S. middle class aspirations.”⁴⁵¹ Whatever their rationales for attending college, Mexican Americans in Arizona participated in higher education while in California, most did not. The distinctive Mexican American experiences in higher education in various states throughout the West and southwest certainly warrants further study.

Despite the numerous challenges facing young Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, southern California, and elsewhere throughout the state, a few exceptional individuals such as Ernesto Galarza did complete high school and go to college—the so called “scholarship boys.” Ernesto Galarza and his mother fled Mexico during the revolution when he was just eight years old. He grew up California’s Sacramento Valley, where he worked in the fields along with his family. But Ernesto succeeded in earning an education where others in his community were unable to do so. Along the way, he received the assistance of teachers and a school principal, a local union leader and the YMCA. Each introduced the young man to a world outside of the fields and the barrio.⁴⁵²

Galarza attended Occidental College in Los Angeles, beginning his studies in 1923. Looking back at his experience in college, he remembered only knowing around five Mexican or Mexican Americans attending college in California at the same time.⁴⁵³ Galarza made a concerted effort to remain attached to the community that bore and nurtured him—working during school and returning to the Sacramento Valley during

⁴⁵¹ Ibid, 190.

⁴⁵² Ernesto Galarza, *Barrio Boy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971, reprinted 2005).

⁴⁵³ Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power*, 34.

summers. Carlos Muñoz, Jr. characterizes Galarza's experience in higher education as a graduate student at Stanford University as the beginning of the student youth activism.⁴⁵⁴ Galarza was one of the first Mexican Americans to attend and graduate from Stanford—few if any other Mexican Americans joined him on campus while he attended at the institution. Galarza believed students and professors thought of him as a “novelty” and a “curiosity,” since few actually consorted with Mexicans or Mexican Americans prior to college.⁴⁵⁵ Galarza did not join any Mexican American student organizations while at Stanford, since none akin to the Mexican American Movement existed at the time on campus. While in school, he repeatedly spoke out against the treatment of immigrant Mexican workers. Galarza continued his active involvement in the struggle for Mexican rights all the way until his death in 1984.

The Mexican American Movement, examined in depth in the following chapter, featured the story of Dr. A. A. Sandoval—a graduate of San Mateo Junior College and the University of Southern California. Sandoval became an optometrist after working to pay his way through school—a success story cited by MAM members.⁴⁵⁶ Galarza and Sandoval represented the handful of working class second generation students who were among the very first Mexican Americans to attend college in California. Their stories were truly exceptional. The vast majority of the Mexican American population was ill equipped to even complete high school, let alone attend college. Many left school early to join their parents in working to support their families. But by the early 1930s this phenomenon was about to change, yet again: a number of Mexican American students

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, 33.

⁴⁵⁵ Ernesto Galarza quoted in *Youth, Identity, Power*, 34.

⁴⁵⁶ “Dr. A.A. Sandoval—A Portrait,” *The Mexican Voice* (Sept. 1938), 8-9.

were prepared to force open the iron gates of California colleges and universities, and earn an education.

* * *

Massive changes occurred in California society from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century: the state completed its journey as a region dominated by *Californios* to one dominated by a large White majority. Jesús María Estudillo and his family's history reflected the changes that occurred. Their story was a distinctly *Californio* experience: they managed their holdings, intermarried, and they parceled out pieces of their property to build a town. As chronicled in the chapter, the Estudillo family remained relevant long after many *Californio* families in the north lost much of their lands and prestige.

While *Californios* ultimately lost nearly all of their land and much of their power in southern California in the latter half of the nineteenth century, a number of families (such as the Coutts/Bandini and Watson/Domínguez clans) flourished and maintained their status—even able to send their children to college (into the 1880s). However, *Californios* no longer participated in higher education in appreciable numbers. The completion of railroads linked Los Angeles and its environs with the rest of America, leading to tens of thousands of settlers moving to the area. The percentage of *Californios* as a part of the overall Mexican American population only continued to shrink through the end of the nineteenth century—especially so once the first wave of Mexican immigrants moved to California in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

Mexican immigrants established themselves throughout California, and in particular, the greater Los Angeles area. They succeeded in the sense that their children did have the opportunity to earn an education, albeit an unequal one predominantly in

underserved segregated schools. The *Californios*, assimilated into both the White and Mexican American community, were no more. The transformation of California society fundamentally altered who among the Mexican community attended college. By the 1920s, Ernesto Galarza and the so called barrio boys became the very first members of the “second generation” to go to college. Within a decade, they would be joined by hundreds of other motivated young Mexican American men and women. Their story is featured in the final chapter of this study of the Mexican American experience in California higher education.

Chapter Five: “Education Is Our Only Weapon!:)” The Mexican

American Movement and California Higher Education, 1934-1945

Experience reveals that Equality, like its companion, Freedom, exists in four modes—
the Equality which God gives,
the Equality which the State gives,
the Equality which a man wins for himself,
the Equality which one bestows on another.⁴⁵⁷

Long after Jesús María Estudillo attended Santa Clara College and Manuel M. Corella the University of California, a new generation of Mexican American students enrolled in California colleges and universities. The sons and daughters of the first wave of Mexican immigrants, these young men and women participated in higher education in numbers large enough to form their own college student organizations. One group, the Mexican American Movement, functioned in one capacity or another for approximately fifteen years—until 1950. My analysis of this dynamic college student-led organization forms the foundation of this chapter on the Mexican American experience in California higher education.

The establishment of an organization made up of Mexican American college students signified a fundamental departure from even ten years earlier—when “Latino” fraternities existed and very few Mexican students enrolled in California colleges and universities. The experiences of MAM members represent the beginning of more active participation in California higher education among the youth of the Mexican American community—a generation before Mexican American professors, students, and activists

⁴⁵⁷ “Memo No. I, undated, Papers of the Supreme Council of the Mexican American Movement, Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge.

pushed for and established the first Department of Chicano Studies at California State University at Los Angeles in 1968.

MAM, both a Mexican *and* American college student organization, reflected the complexity of Mexican American identity during the immediate prewar period. MAM emerged from the YMCA sponsored Mexican Youth Conference in southern California in the early to mid 1930s. Led by proactive and ambitious second generation Mexican Americans, these students not only attended college, but also formed the organization to lend support to one another in order to earn a college degree. One member of the MAM leadership, Felix Gutiérrez, served as the editor of the group's newspaper, *The Mexican Voice*. In the newsletter (disseminated quarterly) MAM leadership attempted to instill the value of earning an education in the other young people of the Mexican American community by publicizing achievements of MAM members.⁴⁵⁸

Members of MAM predominantly attended higher education institutions in and around the greater Los Angeles area—from local junior colleges to the most prestigious universities in the state. Students affiliated with MAM attended UCLA, University of Southern California, University of California, Santa Barbara State College, Redlands University, Compton Junior College, and Los Angeles City College—among several others. Some of MAM's more prominent leaders, other than Felix Gutiérrez, included Paul Coronel, Manuel Ceja, and Bert Corona. Members were most often the sons and daughters of working-class Mexicans who immigrated to the United States in the first

⁴⁵⁸ The student organization did not formally incorporate itself as the Mexican American Movement (MAM) until 1942. Until then, it was known as the Mexican Youth Conference. For the sake of continuity, I predominantly use the term “MAM” to describe the students of the Mexican Youth Conference in relation to their production of *The Mexican Voice*.

third of the twentieth century. MAM participants followed in the footsteps of Ernesto Galarza, excelling in the classroom and often working their way through school.

* * *

Both Catholic and Protestant Church organizations attempted to make inroads into the immigrant Mexican community during the 1920s. As Ricardo Romo attests, Catholic and Protestant denominational religious organizations “took an active role in attempting to Americanize the Mexican immigrants.”⁴⁵⁹ Catholic leaders attempted outreach to those within the East Los Angeles barrio, but Mexicans who lived there viewed the Church with skepticism—harboring anticlerical sentiments from experiences during and after the Mexican Revolution. Interestingly, the Catholic Church seemed reluctant to use funds for building new parishes for the immigrants. As a result, some Protestant organizations capitalized off the weak bonds between the Catholic Church and the Mexican American community, forging relationships with some of the young people in and around city of Angels.⁴⁶⁰

The YMCA was one of a handful of Protestant-affiliated organizations that became involved with aiding immigrants’ acclimatization to life in America, including outreach to the Mexican community in Los Angeles proper. The Mexican Youth Conference, the forerunner of the Mexican American Movement, grew out of that tradition. Meeting annually beginning in 1934, the YMCA attempted to facilitate leadership among the young men of Mexican descent by having the high school aged

⁴⁵⁹ Romo, *East Los Angeles*, 146.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 142-148.

boys fraternize with one another outside of the barrio. The participants in the Conference took part in organized peer activities and athletics in an effort to build character.⁴⁶¹

Beyond the sports, recreation, and socializing at the annual event, the young men took advantage of the opportunity to discuss the issues pertaining to the greater Mexican community. Realizing meeting one time a year was inadequate, the most ambitious of the conference participants decided to hold their own informal discussions. In 1938, a handful of the young men started a student newspaper, *The Mexican Voice*, in order to reach a greater audience for their ideas. The Mexican youth who published *The Voice* described the paper in the following manner:

The MEXICAN VOICE stands for encouragement, inspiration, and upliftment of our people. It tries to live up to this by giving news of outstanding Mexican youth, his achievements, his thoughts, his ideals, and his aspirations. The VOICE in the future will give you educational articles that pertain to our people.⁴⁶²

An “inspirational/educational youth magazine,” *The Mexican Voice* became the public mouthpiece of what would become the Mexican American Movement.⁴⁶³

The first young editor of *The Mexican Voice*, Felix Gutiérrez, employed his skills as a part-time journalist for the *Pasadena Chronicle* in order to put together the paper. The organization’s most active members, including Paul Coronel, Bert Corona, and Manuel Ceja, contributed to the newspaper on a regular basis. The young men produced *The Mexican Voice* with the express purpose to establish year-round communication among the Mexican Youth Conference participants.

⁴⁶¹ Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 255-256; Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power*, 43-44.

⁴⁶² “What’s The Voice All About?” *The Mexican Voice* (March 1940), 14.

⁴⁶³ “Leaders Meet at Pomona “Y,” *The Mexican Voice* (July 1938), 5; *The Mexican Voice* (Winter 1941), front cover.

The newsletter served as a forum for the student's ideas and opinions about the issues the Mexican youth and the larger Mexican American community faced in Los Angeles and southern California. The newspaper recorded the accomplishments and successes of young Mexicans—both in the classroom and in athletics. They did so with the notion that publishing such stories would inspire the young Mexican Americans in the barrio to take school seriously and to motivate students to stay out of trouble. Eventually, *The Voice* evolved into a polished publication.

Publishing *The Mexican Voice* served as only the first step in the organization's attempt to broaden the group's work and mission. The students who created *The Voice* organized leadership institutes and regional conferences in order to supplement the annual Mexican Youth Conference.⁴⁶⁴ Within two years of the newspaper's initial publication, in 1940, MAM leaders sponsored a youth conference for young women in San Pedro, with the intent of promoting female participation.⁴⁶⁵ A year after the women's conference, the student group's leadership divorced itself from the YMCA, officially creating the Mexican American Movement.⁴⁶⁶ MAM transformed into a full-fledged advocacy organization committed to working with the Mexican American youth. As MAM members grew into young adults, they supported one another in their endeavors to make a difference in the community as teachers, counselors, and social workers. In addition, MAM initiated contact with other college students outside California, most especially in neighboring Arizona.⁴⁶⁷ Members of MAM summarily dismissed the idea

⁴⁶⁴ "Leaders Meet at Glendale," *The Mexican Voice* (Jan.-Feb. 1939), 6-10.

⁴⁶⁵ "Did You Know," *Mexican Voice* (Nov.-Dec. 1939), 8.

⁴⁶⁶ "M.A.M. Completes Year," *Mexican Voice* (1943), 4.

⁴⁶⁷ Rebecca Muñoz, "Horizons," *The Mexican American Voice* (August 1939), 1-3.

that “MEXICANS CAN’T ORGANIZE.”⁴⁶⁸ Quite the contrary, MAM leaders actively attempted to bring the young people of the Mexican American together for the common goal of promoting the value of an education.

* * *

Most importantly, throughout the duration of *The Mexican Voice*, the publishers and contributors of the newsletter emphasized the importance of a college education. In its inaugural issue, José Rodríguez wrote:

“Education is the only tool which will raise our influence, command the respect of the rich class, and enable us to mingle in their social, political and religious life.... today a college education is absolutely necessary for us to succeed in the professional world...If our opinion is to be had, respected, our income raised, happiness increased, we must compete! EDUCATION is our only weapon!”⁴⁶⁹

José Rodríguez was nineteen when he penned his first article on the value of education in *The Mexican Voice*. The newspaper often included a profile of the Mexican American young men and women who contributed to *The Voice*. For instance, José Rodríguez graduated from San Bernardino Junior College with a degree in accounting, “with an eye towards the University of California at Berkeley.” Rodríguez originally grew up in Texas; born to parents from Mexico. Editor Felix Gutiérrez described José as a “steady, conscientious fellow, fond of hard work; who is not doubtful of his success because he is dark skinned.” According to Gutiérrez, Rodríguez’s reported philosophy was that there was “always room at the top.”⁴⁷⁰ Rodríguez also made the case that education can occur outside of the classroom—outside the college campus. In the same article as above, he wrote:

⁴⁶⁸ Felix Gutiérrez, *The Mexican Voice* (August 1938), 5.

⁴⁶⁹ José Rodríguez, “The Value of Education,” *The Mexican Voice* (July 1938), 8.

⁴⁷⁰ Felix Gutiérrez, “Editor’s Note,” *The Mexican Voice* (July 1938), 7.

College doors are not the only gate to education. [Abraham] Lincoln did not attend schools, but was educated. Education begins at home, education means a complete knowledge of yourself, a good knowledge of your fellowmen and a thorough knowledge of the world in which you live...We gain the equal of a college education by earnest, sincere, patient and persevering application in reading and studying at home.⁴⁷¹

Manuel Ceja, a political science major and star athlete at Compton Junior College, echoed Jose Rodriguez's point of view on the importance earning a college education in the second issue of *The Mexican Voice*:

But what can one individual do about this situation? He can uplift the Mexican name by constant work – hard work with others who have the same high ideals and aims. By securing education, not just high school but a college one.⁴⁷²

Ceja frequently contributed to *The Voice*.⁴⁷³ Manuel Ceja was born Los Angeles, the son of immigrants. He attended Compton Junior College after graduating from the Spanish American Institute—a Los Angeles magnet school. In high school he lettered in football, basketball, and track. Ceja was also a member of the Watts “Y” Phalanx Fraternity, a student organization composed of Mexican American high school and college students, as well as recent college graduates.⁴⁷⁴

The belief that earning an education could alleviate the problems the Mexican people faced in the United States was a core tenant of MAM's philosophy. But the experiences of MAM members (their very achievements in earning an education) colored their point of view. Nearly every participant in the Mexican Youth Conference was a diligent and successful student, who saw their opportunities expand as they completed high school and attended college. The notion that only lacking an education kept

⁴⁷¹ José Rodriguez, “The Value of Education,” *The Mexican Voice* (July 1938), 8.

⁴⁷² Manuel Ceja, “Are We Proud of Being Mexicans?” *The Mexican Voice* (August 1938), 9.

⁴⁷³ “What’s The Voice All About?” *The Mexican Voice* (March 1940), 14.

⁴⁷⁴ “Manuel Ceja,” *The Mexican Voice* (August 1938), 8.

Mexican Americans from advancing their position in the United State was idealistic. In that sense, students in MAM oversimplified the complex problems the Mexican people faced in California and elsewhere. Still, the young Mexican Americans' unwavering conviction in education set them apart from their peers, and made their accomplishments in higher education not one bit less noteworthy or significant.

* * *

MAM members did not withhold their thoughts on other young people in the Mexican American community who they viewed as not even attempting to try to have a better life for themselves and their family. Manuel de la Raza (Felix Gutiérrez) chastised those Mexican American young men in the following passage of *The Mexican Voice*:

Don't heed the fellows loafing at street corners, wasting their time. They'll tell you an education is worthless. Don't believe them. They don't want you to progress. They are greedy and jealous, because you have a better chance. They want you to be like them – easy-going, time-wasting Mexicans fellows who drag down our name.⁴⁷⁵

Gutiérrez repeatedly referred to those who did not try to earn an education as “easygoing loafers.”⁴⁷⁶ Similarly, Paul Coronel admonished Mexican American young men who did not make an effort, “It's really sad to see so many young lazy fellows hanging around the corners, pool halls, gambling joints, and everywhere doing ABSOLUTELY NOTHING for themselves.”⁴⁷⁷ More often than not, however, the Mexican Americans students that published *The Voice* encouraged young men in their community who did not see hope in passages like the following:

But good or bad neighborhood, anyone with “guts” courage, determination, can arise, become educated and command respect. All you've got to do is “give

⁴⁷⁵ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (July 1938), 4-5

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Paul Coronel, “Give Yourself a Chance,” *The Mexican Voice*, (July 1939), 6.

yourself a chance.” You’re “double-crossing” yourself if you let opportunity pass. Take it or make it!⁴⁷⁸

Coronel made a passionate plea to his fellow Mexican young men in the barrio in an article appropriately titled “Give Yourself a Chance:”

“AMBITION is that strong mover that stands between desire and success...Talent and capacity are not lacking in us. What is lacking is GUTS, AMITION, FAITH, ANIMATION, and greatest of all A DESIRE TO ELEVATE OUR MEXICAN RACE!”⁴⁷⁹

Overall, MAM leadership was overwhelmingly positive and encouraging—attempting to instill confidence in those young men in the barrio that may not have had hope in their future.

In this vein, Mexican Youth Conference and MAM leaders printed dozens of success stories of Mexican American young men and women in *The Mexican Voice*—with the expressed intent of inspiring their brethren. For example, in the September 1938 edition of *The Mexican Voice*, contributors to the newsletters conducted a profile on Stephen Reyes, the President of the 1937 San Pedro Conference. According to the article, Reyes picked oranges during the summers throughout high school to pay for college. He commuted seven miles to junior college, where he received a degree in Associate of Arts in Letters and Science. After junior college, Reyes received student loans and worked part-time to help pay for college at UCLA. Upon graduation in 1938, he taught night school classes at a junior college and directed a local playground. Reyes hoped to return to UCLA for a master’s degree.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (Oct.-Nov. 1938), 15.

⁴⁷⁹ Paul Coronel, “Give Yourself a Chance,” *The Mexican Voice*, (July 1939), 5-6.

⁴⁸⁰ “Stephen Reyes Answers a Question,” *The Mexican Voice* (Sept. 1938), 10-11.

MAM members hoped to fashion themselves into leaders of their people, as they viewed themselves as role models for their community. In the words of Felix Gutiérrez:

Our job is uplifting our people, ejecting confidence into their veins, bolstering their depleted prides. And how can we do this? By becoming teachers, social workers, writers, lawyers, doctors, business men, trained workers, and working in every way possible for their benefit and betterment. Remember, we understand them because we are one of them and only we are can bring out the best in them! We are they; they are us!⁴⁸¹

MAM not only encouraged progress through education, but also advocated for self-help through alternative means. In this regard, the leadership of the organization recognized that for many in the Mexican American community, earning a college degree was nearly impossible. MAM advocated for self-improvement—whatever that may be. That included learning a trade. MAM published a story in *The Mexican Voice* about Johnny Gutiérrez, the cousin of Felix Gutiérrez—who earned a living with a trade in order to support his family.⁴⁸²

* * *

The Mexican Voice fostered discussion beyond promoting the value of education, and contributors to the newspaper expounded on any number of topics important to the Mexican American community—including the more taboo topic of Mexican American identity. Felix Gutiérrez penned his editorials in *The Mexican Voice* under the telling pseudonym, “Manuel De La Raza,” which literally translates into the name, Manuel “Race.” Manuel De La Raza created the section of the newsletter called “Nosotros” (meaning “we” or “us”), to demonstrate his commitment and that of the Mexican Youth Conference/MAM to a cohesive Mexican identity.

⁴⁸¹ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (Nov.-Dec. 1939), 18-19.

⁴⁸² “Johnny Gutiérrez,” *The Mexican Voice* (Oct.-Nov. 1938), 5-7.

In one of his last contributions to *The Mexican Voice* as Manuel De La Raza, Felix Gutiérrez asked those in his community to be proud of their vibrant heritage. He also criticized the more affluent Mexican Americans who tried to portray themselves as “Spanish” in the following powerful passage of the paper:

Rather discouraging has been a trend we have noticed among both our Americans of Mexican descent and others not of our national descent...The trend is towards calling any accomplished Mexican-American “Spanish,” or anyone well-to-do, above average...“Spanish-American”...The whole inference...is...**THAT NOTHING GOOD COMES FROM THE MEXICAN GROUP**...that only the talented, the law-abiding, the part Mexican, the fair complexioned, the professionals and the tradesman are “Spanish.” The drunkards, the delinquents, the very dark, the manual laborers, the pachucos, the criminals and those in the lower-socio economic scale are the Mexicans.

Gutiérrez’s commentary of those both in and outside the Mexican community saying the most successful Mexican or Mexican Americans were “Spanish” recalls the “Spanish heritage fantasy” referenced in the preceding chapter. As noted earlier, *Californios* emphasized their Spanish heritage well into the early twentieth century, while White Californians extolled the virtues of old California while simultaneously restricting the rights of most Mexicans in the state. In the same article cited above, Gutiérrez added:

If you don’t consider this an insult, then you don’t have any pride in your background! Newspapers carry this trend, prominent politicians...[and] Anglo Americans in general are guilty of this, but worst of all, our own Mexican-Americans are making this distinction! Let’s have more pride in our own group. We are all the same, whether we have been here ten generations or one. We have common goals, we have community problems...Let us be proud of our heritage.⁴⁸³

As exemplified in the preceding excerpts from *The Voice*, Gutiérrez and MAM members avidly promoted pride in their Mexican American background. In *The Mexican Voice*, the student organization emphasized the commonalities among the increasingly diverse

⁴⁸³ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (1943), 8.

Mexican community in the United States, as opposed to the differences among their people.

Despite MAM's apparent commitment to the Mexican American community, Chicano scholars today often question the mission of the organization. For instance, David G. Gutiérrez characterizes MAM as being an organization that "adhered to a stridently assimilationist political philosophy."⁴⁸⁴ Carlos Muñoz, Jr. argues that members of MAM urged Mexican Americans to "identify as Americans first and as Mexicans second."⁴⁸⁵ One excerpt from *The Mexican Voice* in particular has drawn a great deal of attention from Chicano scholars, a passage that historians employ to prove the American assimilationist rhetoric of the organization. In a column of "Nosotros," Felix Gutiérrez disagreed with a Mexican consul's notion that "A Mexican will always be a Mexican" in the United States. He wrote in part:

But after the second or third generation that's hard to believe; especially here in our country. Go to Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pasadena, Santa Barbara, and see the young students success, interested in American activities, playing American games, speaking and using American terms, having the same ideas and ideals, using American sportsmanship, enjoying American customs, loving American food. No, that statement was wrong! We wish our Consul could visit our modern "Mejicano," see him or her go around with American friends, taken for one, treated as one and feeling as one.⁴⁸⁶

Muñoz notes that in the same editorial, Felix Gutiérrez wrote that "*The Mexican Voice* sticks for Americanism." According to Muñoz, Jr., then, MAM believed "the future of his young generation was in the United States and not in Mexico," what amounted to a rejection of Mexican identity.⁴⁸⁷ That was not the case. MAM members embraced their

⁴⁸⁴ Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 1995, 136.

⁴⁸⁵ Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power*, 46.

⁴⁸⁶ Gutiérrez, "Nosotros," *The Mexican Voice* (Oct.-Nov. 1938), 16-17.

⁴⁸⁷ Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power*, 46.

future in the United States and encouraged the readers of *The Mexican Voice* to take full advantage of what America offered—all the while still honoring their Mexican roots.

In the same article of “Nosotros” noted above, Gutiérrez made the case that Mexican Americans should not have to change in order to become American, stating that “Italian-American and German-American organizations” often formed. “They don’t deny their national descent. Why can’t we do the same?”⁴⁸⁸ Gutiérrez urged Mexicans to “become a citizen, an American; you can’t be a “man without a country.” He continued, but “Be proud of your background” as a Mexican.⁴⁸⁹ MAM’s views on citizenship exemplified pragmatism: Mexican Americans were American citizens. They should enjoy all the privileges contained thereof. In the initial issue of *The Mexican Voice*, Gutiérrez stated, “Remember whenever, if ever, there is a war, your being of Mexican descent won’t stop you from being an American soldier. This is your country, your flag. Prepare yourself for the better positions you deserve as American citizens.”⁴⁹⁰

Chicano historian Francisco Arturo Rosales goes even further than Muñoz, Jr., claiming, “While they extolled the virtues of *Mexicanidad*, when confronted with a situation where they had to choose between Mexicaness and being American, they chose the latter. MAM ideology equated white with Americanism.”⁴⁹¹ Chicano historians like Rosales present a false dichotomy—that the young people of Mexican descent in California were either Mexican *or* American. Consequently, Muñoz, Jr., Rosales, and other Chicano scholars often conflate the notion of citizenship—as if it were impossible

⁴⁸⁸ Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (Oct.-Nov. 1938), 17.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹⁰ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (July 1938), 4-5.

⁴⁹¹ Rosales, *Chicano!: The History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1996), 101.

for MAM members to promote their American citizenship *and* their honor their Mexican heritage. I believe MAM did *both*.

In fall of 1938 Felix Gutiérrez published a very interesting anecdote regarding a Mexican American young man and self-identification. When applying for a social security card, Gutiérrez wrote that the young man filled out “White,” to the chagrin of his “paisanos.” His friends laughed at the boy for his mistake—his “color” should have been “Mexican”—so they thought.⁴⁹² Gutiérrez wrote of the young man offering the following laudable response:

It asks for your color. Well I’m of Mexican descent, an American citizen. I was born here. It doesn’t ask for your national descent, it asks for your color. Mexican is no color, nor race! Mexican is a nationality. Racially what difference is there between us South and Central Americans? Very little, if any. I have white blood in my veins as well as red. I couldn’t sign this card as Indian because I’m not. The only alternative is to sign it white.⁴⁹³

The older young men were shocked at his deliberate response. According to Gutiérrez, the boy’s friends “gathered the impression he had denied being of Mexican descent.”⁴⁹⁴ Significantly, Gutiérrez wrote that MAM and their leadership agreed with the young man, believing, “This young fellow spoke the truth.” The editor of *The Voice* elaborated further, “Saying we are Americans doesn’t mean we are not of Mexican descent: Even Americans of other descents know this. So the next time anyone asks you what you are, you say, “I’m an American.” If he questions further, say, “I’m an American of Mexican descent.”⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹² Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (Sept. 1938), 14.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (Sept. 1938), 15.

Gutiérrez's article is fascinating for a two main reasons and deserves further discussion. First, this episode again documents how MAM members viewed themselves: they were each an "American of Mexican descent." In other words, they were Mexican American. This rebuts the notion that some Chicano historians place on MAM—that members of the student organization identified as White/American first and Mexican second. Were they not both? Furthermore, the young man featured in the article is quite prescient. Even today, Mexican is not a race. If one looks at the recently distributed 2010 U.S. Census questionnaire, Hispanic/Latino is not a race—the terms represent an ethnicity. Mexican Americans today, interestingly, can both be "White" and "Hispanic." This speaks to the complexity of the issue racial/ethnic identity formation then, as it does even today. As this instance illustrates, the college students who composed MAM were on the vanguard of thought on Mexican American identity.

Even still, Carlos Muñoz, Jr. claims MAM agreed with the idea of the "Mexican Problem," and that the "roots of the problems facing Mexicans in American society was a backward Mexican culture."⁴⁹⁶ Similarly, Francisco Arturo Rosales states, "Moreover, MAM organizers accepted a prevalent notion that Mexicans in the U.S. inherited traits that were shaped by Mexican history and were incompatible with modern society."⁴⁹⁷ Rosales cited Paul Coronel's "An Analysis of Our People" to inform his analysis. The Chicano historian argues that Coronel refereed to Mexico's poverty and weak and corrupt political leadership and created a "deficient culture." Rosales's use of words such as "inherited traits" and "deficient" almost suggests that MAM believed Mexicans were inherently inferior.

⁴⁹⁶ Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power*, 47.

⁴⁹⁷ Rosales, *Chicano!*, 101.

In fact, the opposite was true. Coronel believed it was “heartbreaking to see our youth fling away their beautiful gifts of music, literature, art and numerous other talents that have been in the Mexican blood for centuries.” When the Mexican youth does not fulfill their potential, he said, “We do not really appreciate our incomparable mixture of Spanish and Aztec blood.”⁴⁹⁸ Manuel Ceja, another of MAM’s college student leaders, passionately stated:

Why are we so afraid to tell people that we are Mexicans? Are we ashamed of the color of our skin, the shape and build of our bodies, or the background from which we have descended? The Mexican Youth in the United States is, indeed, a very fortunate person. Why? Where else in one county do you have two cultures and civilizations of the highest type that have been developed come together to form into one? The Mexican Youth come from a background of the highest type of Aztec and Spanish cultures, and now is living in a country whose standard of life is one of the highest and where there are the best opportunities for success. Take the best of our background, and the best of the present one we are now living under, and we shall have something that cannot be equaled culturally...A Mexican must be a Mexican. His heritage of rich Aztec and Spanish blood has provided him with characteristics born of a high cultural civilization. When this rich background has been tempered with the fires of the Anglo-Saxon understanding and enlightenment, you will have something which will be the envy of all.⁴⁹⁹

Stressing the talents of the Mexican American population was one of the core tenants of the student organization. MAM repeated, in nearly every issue of *The Mexican Voice* that the strong and vibrant Spanish and Aztec blood ran through their veins. MAM often cited their heritage. A generation later, the leaders of the Chicano movement did much the same.

In the same article that Manuel Ceja extolled the virtues of his Mexican heritage, the young college student added his thoughts on another subject related to the advantages

⁴⁹⁸ Paul Coronel, “An Analysis of Our People,” *The Mexican Voice* (Sept.1938), 1.

⁴⁹⁹ Manuel Ceja, “Are We Proud of Being Mexicans?” *The Mexican Voice* (August 1938), 9.

Mexican Americans possessed, an issue pertinent to those in the Latino community even today. He foreshadowed:

The Mexican Youth in the United States has one more advantage—that of two languages. Now that the United States has become Latin-America conscious, we cannot miss the glorious opportunity of our bilingual ability of speaking and writing. With the ability to use the Spanish and English languages one has innumerable doors opened for him to succeed. What more can we want and hope for?⁵⁰⁰

In this spirit, a MAM member again reinforced the belief that being Mexican American offered tangible benefits and qualities few other peoples possessed. This central theme reoccurred throughout the duration of *The Mexican Voice*.

* * *

MAM's pride in their Mexican background manifested itself in other significant ways as well. Felix Gutiérrez and the MAM leadership thought building pride amongst the Mexican American community was one of the chief goals of *The Mexican Voice*, so the newspaper often publicized the athletic accomplishments of the Mexican youth in greater Los Angeles as well. Achievement in college sports was held in particularly high regard by the MAM leadership. Excelling in athletics signified two accomplishments—athletic prowess and academic achievement (being a successful student *and* an athlete). The newspaper included sports sections on football and track in the newspaper, named “Sporting Around” and “On Your Marks!” respectively.⁵⁰¹ Each year the contributors to *The Voice* named all-star teams in the most popular sports.

For instance, Felix Gutiérrez composed a section the March 1940 edition of *The Mexican Voice* entitled, “Foul Shots,” documenting the accomplishments of Mexican

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Felix Gutiérrez, “Sporting Around,” *The Mexican Voice* (Nov.-Dec. 1939), 15-16; Felix Gutiérrez, “On Your Marks!” *The Mexican Voice* (1940), 8-9.

American athletes on the hardwood. Gutiérrez boasts of the difficulty in choosing high school and college all star teams:

“As rare as a basketball team without a paisano,” may some day be a favorite expression; after what happened this past season. A year that saw almost every team with at least some Spanish name in its roster, from waterboy to coach. With a continued increase in the participation in sports our “All-Mexican Teams” are becoming harder and harder to pick.⁵⁰²

The Voice’s “Los Angeles City All-Mexican Basketball Team” featured athletes from Garfield, Verdugo Hills, Jordan, Fremont, and Dorsey High School; while the “County High School All-Mexican Basketball Team” (including the Catholic league) included young men from Cathedral, Chino, Puente, Loyola, and Redlands High School. Students from Santa Barbara State, Whittier College, Chapman College, and Arizona University were members of the “All-Mexican College Team.”⁵⁰³ The inclusion of scholastic and intercollegiate athletics in *The Mexican Voice* demonstrates the multiple ways the young Mexican American leaders hoped to inspire those in their community—the achievements of the scholar athletes “proof” that that the Mexican American people were as strong as any other in the state of California and the United States.

* * *

Some of the most dynamic leadership within MAM came from female students. They advocated improvement through education, but also for women within the Mexican American community. Dora Ibáñez, born in Mexico, attended public schools in Texas before taking college courses in Iowa, Arizona, and California. She earned her teaching credentials and a B.A. from Redlands University. She worked her way through school, and earned a scholarship for voice and singing. Ibáñez had the opportunity to attend

⁵⁰² “Foul Shots,” *The Mexican Voice* (March 1940), 10.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

Columbia for grad school, but did not due to health concerns. She ended up becoming a teacher.⁵⁰⁴ Ibáñez wrote the essay, “A Challenge to the American Girl of Mexican Parentage,” in the December 1938 issue of *The Mexican Voice*.⁵⁰⁵ In the article, she applauded the efforts of MAM to champion education. But Ibáñez also expressed her concern that the leadership of the organization reached out to a primarily male audience. She suggested women should be apart of this movement too. Overall, her message to Mexican American women mimicked that espoused by the predominantly male MAM leadership. Ibáñez wrote:

Do you realize that you are in a country where educational opportunities for both sexes are equal? Where you too can on ahead side by side with the boys, acquiring an education which will open up for you new horizons, a new world with a beautiful outlook, where education is gratuitous, yours only for the taking?⁵⁰⁶

Dora encouraged Mexican American women to pursue a college education in spite of whatever obstacles there may be. In her opinion, the challenges Mexican women faced in California were not insurmountable:

If you are a girl with aspirations for a college education, and your meager financial circumstances discourage you, don't let this bother you. If you have the mentality and ability to study for the profession or career on which you have set your mind, if you have enough determination, will power and spunk to meet all obstacles, you will succeed in attaining your desires.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁴ “Miss Dora Ibáñez,” *The Mexican Voice* (Dec. 1938), 2.

⁵⁰⁵ Dora Ibáñez, “A Challenge to the American Girl of Mexican Parentage,” *The Mexican Voice* (Dec. 1938), 3-5.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 3.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 4.

Once successful, Ibáñez believed a Mexican American woman would be respected, “Her success is an immediate result of the blend of her rich Aztec culture and the best that this country has given her.”⁵⁰⁸

* * *

As of the 1941-1942 school year, MAM proudly recorded that “there are more students of Mexican descent now attending the University of California at Los Angeles than ever before.” According to the organization, approximately thirty students enrolled in classes. MAM acknowledged that the number represented a modest accomplishment in comparison to the percentage of Mexican American students matriculating at Arizona State, but an improvement none-the-less.⁵⁰⁹ Throughout its duration, MAM kept abreast of students who enrolled at colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area. As noted above, they often published the accomplishments of individual students. In *The Mexican Voice*, MAM leaders also heavily publicized the events and meetings of other Mexican American student organizations—both on and off campus of local colleges. For example, MAM designed the last edition of the 1940 *Mexican Voice* as the “Club Issue” to feature local student groups.⁵¹⁰ A number of the student organizations featured in *The Voice* were affiliated with the Mexican Youth Conference and later MAM, while others were not.

For example, the “Club Issue” of *The Voice* prominently featured a piece on the female Mexican American student group at Pasadena Junior College—El Círculo de Oro

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁹ According to publishers of the newspaper, 42 of the 1500 students at “Little Tempe State Teacher’s College in Arizona” were “paisano” students—a much larger percentage than at UCLA. See “UCLA Paisanos,” *The Mexican Voice* (Winter 1941), 4.

⁵¹⁰ “Club Issue,” *The Mexican Voice* (Winter 1940).

(The Golden Circle). According to the newspaper, the Mexican American young ladies that organized the student group formed El Círculo de Oro in order to “foster social consciousness among Mexican junior college girls and to help them develop qualities for leadership among their own people.”⁵¹¹ Similarly, the editors of *The Mexican Voice* did a write-up of the regional Mexican American fraternity Phi Sigma Upsilon. According to the article, it was the “first chapter of the Phalanx Fraternity to be composed wholly of young men of Mexican descent in unique honor of the Phi Sigma Upsilon Fraternity”—located in southeast Los Angeles. The Mexican American fraternity chose “SERVICE” as their motto.⁵¹²

The “Club Issue” of *The Mexican Voice* not only provides a vivid example of the community outreach MAM took upon itself, but also provides evidence of the numerous other Mexican American student organizations throughout southern California—many of whom were connected to or located at local colleges and universities. This represented a fundamentally different phenomenon from even a decade earlier; when only a handful of student groups existed (fraternities) due to so few Mexican American students enrolled in California colleges. The widespread establishment of Mexican American college student organizations also stood in marked contrast to the mid-nineteenth century, when students such as Jesús María Estudillo and Manuel M. Corella joined college drill companies and a number of literary societies alongside their White peers.

* * *

The Mexican Youth Conference/MAM also influenced college students beyond the borders of the state of California. Rebecca Muñoz, a student at what is now Arizona

⁵¹¹ “El Círculo de Oro,” *The Mexican Voice* (Winter 1940), 3.

⁵¹² “Phi Sigma Upsilon,” *The Mexican Voice* (Winter 1940), 10.

State University, noted that the Mexican youth taking part in MAM were going through an “intellectual awakening.”⁵¹³ Rebecca and her siblings Rosalio, Lucinda, and Josephine founded Los Conquistadores (the conquerors), or “*Los Conquis*” in 1937. They were the children of Methodists missionaries, and graduated from Phoenix Union High School. Los Conquis, like MAM, was as an “incipient” civil rights student organization, based in Tempe at Arizona State.⁵¹⁴ They founded Los Conquis after attending a MAM conference in Los Angeles. The organization mimicked MAM—holding annual conferences that drew Mexican American youth from across the state to discuss issues pertinent to the Mexican American community.⁵¹⁵ In her first literary contribution to *The Voice*, Rebecca Muñoz wrote:

So we find at this time a great movement taking place among those of us who have been able to take the opportunities of education and see the immense possibilities of improvement for our people as a whole, aiming to waken our people, especially our youth to take these opportunities and thus enable themselves to become better and more productive citizens of this country.⁵¹⁶

As noted above Los Conquistadores goals of self-improvement were nearly identical to MAM. Like the leaders of MAM, Muñoz also chided the preceding generation for their loyalty to Mexico:

I have always thought that beauty of this great democracy lies in the freedom of thought and expression which grants these people the privilege of thinking as they wish, but oftentimes we see these people working a great harm for themselves by passing up great opportunities for their self-betterment because of a mistaken sense of loyalty to their cultural background.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Rebecca Muñoz, “Horizons,” *The Mexican American Voice* (August 1939), 1-3.

⁵¹⁴ Muñoz, “Desert Dreams”, 194-195.

⁵¹⁵ “Youth Conferences: Arizona,” *The Mexican American Voice* (Winter 1941), 6.

⁵¹⁶ Rebecca Muñoz, “Horizons,” *The Mexican American Voice* (August 1939), 1.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

The interaction among the Mexican American youth in California and Arizona resulted in the formation of significant relationships between the leaders of the Mexican American Movement and Los Conquistadores—including the marriage of *The Mexican Voice* founder Felix Gutiérrez and Rebecca Muñoz. Many alumni of Los Conquis also pursued similar vocational goals as their compatriots in MAM—leading to careers in education and advocacy (for the Mexican American communities). Rosalio Muñoz’s son, Rosalio, Jr., became a leader in the Chicano movement of the 1960s, much like MAM’s own Bert Corona did.⁵¹⁸ In effect, two generations of Mexican American activism were linked, as El Movimiento built off of the groundwork laid by student-led organizations such as Los Conquis and MAM.

* * *

In the February 1940 edition of *The Mexican Voice*, Mexican Youth Conference President Paul Coronel reflected back on the seven-year old organization (that was about to formally become the Mexican American Movement):

It may now be said that our Mexican Youth Conference is approaching the realization of its aims and profound desires...From the very beginning most of us were conscious of an ardent feeling that did exist which showed concerned sentiment and attention in our speeches and discussion groups. Our intense interest for our Mexican youth became more vigorous and expressive year after year until we arrived to the culmination of our highest desires.⁵¹⁹

With regional conferences in both California and Arizona, as well as the Mexican Girl’s Conference, the organization reached its maturity. Coronel described the growing youth movement in the following manner:

⁵¹⁸ Muñoz, “Desert Dreams”, 194-195.

⁵¹⁹ Paul Coronel, “Where Is the Mexican Youth Conference Aiming?” *The Mexican Voice* (February 1940), 1.

Our youth movement is fundamentally non-sectarian and non-political. We are not interested in interfacing with any religious beliefs or political theories which characterize radical youth movements in our present day of political and economic struggle. Though we are extremely interested in the progress of our Mexican youth, we are not using measures which are offensive and radical. Our battle is inspirational and not material. We are using calm, determination, sincerity, and strong sense of responsibility to achieve our ends.⁵²⁰

In effect, the student-led group attempted to avoid association with the old Left, in an age of hyper-nationalism. Despite MAM espousing the contrary, the movement can now still be characterized as progressive and activist. Their general point of view, economic and social progress through education, was and is a transformative message.

As Coronel and his fellow Mexican Youth Conference participants matured along with the MAM organization, they more and more appreciated the challenges their peers in the Mexican American community faced. The President of the Mexican Youth Conference reflected upon this growing realization in a passage from the same column as above:

Many youth would like to go to school but the family conditions do not permit many of them to do so. The average earnings of these families are astonishingly insufficient. Another situation is the class conflict in the communities and even in the schools. Many of our youth have lost much hope because they feel that there are no more opportunities available for them as Mexicans when they observe the great numbers of people unemployed in spite of their good training. Great numbers of Mexican children are segregated in our schools thus demoralizing many of them...Another vital problem and the most serious of all is the lack of inspiration and encouragement in our and homes and in the communities.⁵²¹

MAM pushed forward with their message, and moved to organize the youth group in a way to address the concerns raised above by the MAM leadership.

The following year, in 1941, Gualberto Valadez, Paul Coronel's successor as President of MAM, codified the goals of the student organization and laid the foundation

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Ibid, 2.

for formally establishing MAM, Inc. in a ten-point platform published in *The Mexican Voice* in 1941. The principles laid out by Valadez stressed themes underscored over the years at the Mexican Youth Conferences as well as in *The Mexican Voice*: “to better conditions among our Mexican race living in the United States,” to be “proud to be of Mexican descent,” to encourage the Mexican youth “to take greater interest in and better advantage of...educational institutions,” and to promote “mutual understanding” between the Mexican American community and other racial groups.⁵²²

By 1941, many of the original participants of the Mexican Youth Conferences (the forerunner of MAM) had graduated college. Several of them were now teachers, social workers, and community organizers. A number of the former college students, those who had stayed in touch and had worked closely with one another publishing *The Mexican Voice*, formally incorporated MAM as a non-profit in an effort to expand the student movement. Paul Coronel and Felix Gutiérrez, among others, were instrumental in the transition. Of note, the leadership of MAM chose the term ‘Mexican American’ in the name of their organization—a final confirmation of their evolving identity. Two years earlier, Felix Gutiérrez wrote of the group’s commitment to being fundamentally Mexican American in orientation:

There is feeling about, to change the name to “Mexican-American Youth Club.” We think this has a basis of support. Isn’t it better under this name, to show pride in our descent? Isn’t it better to raise this name by associating it with us? We think so. The name “Latin-American” applied in our case, reminds us of softened statements, honeyed words. It’s like hiding behind a false front. The name “Mexican-American” is coming forth with pride, honesty, and it paints a true picture of us.⁵²³

⁵²² Gualberto Valadez, “Principles of Mexican Youth Conference,” *The Mexican Voice* (Winter 1941), 1.

⁵²³ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros,” *The Mexican Voice* (March 1940), 16.

Among MAM's advisory board were progressive activist Ernesto Galarza and one member of the conservative Daughters of the American Revolution, as they all worked with one another in pursuit of the common cause of the improvement of the Mexican American people.⁵²⁴

* * *

The arrival of World War II brought opportunity and challenges for MAM, and served as vehicle for its membership to reexamine the issues related to the Mexican American youth. Images of Mexican American volunteers and a Mexican American soldier graced the cover of *The Mexican Voice*, rather than face of a student or a young couple.⁵²⁵ Members of the MAM leadership, such as Manuel Ceja, enlisted and served in the armed forces overseas.⁵²⁶ Newspaper columns featured titles such as "Our Heroes" and "Our Soldiers."⁵²⁷ Similarly, the Zoot Suit Riots between *pachucos* and White servicemen and sailors forced MAM to acknowledge the prejudices of the dominant White community. MAM's first president, Paul Coronel, attempted to make sense of the cause of the riots in the following sobering judgment published in *The Mexican Voice*:

Much has been written on the "Pachuco" problem. Delinquency and crime waves have always victimized racial groups but it seems minority groups are always the hardest hit. The youth riots have arisen from our Mexican-American communities and now the young Mexican-Americans are faced with second generation adjustments...⁵²⁸

In the point of view Coronel and MAM, the Pachucos exhibited "antagonism and hatred towards the very society which bred them." Coronel criticized White Americans, who

⁵²⁴ Muñoz, Jr., *Youth, Identity, Power*, 50.

⁵²⁵ *The Mexican Voice* (1943), front cover; *The Mexican Voice* (Summer 1944), front cover.

⁵²⁶ "Dedicated to," *The Mexican Voice* (1943), 2.

⁵²⁷ "Our Heroes," *The Mexican Voice* (1943), 2; "Our Soldiers," *The Mexican Voice* (1943), 5.

⁵²⁸ Paul Coronel, "The Pachuco Problem," *The Mexican Voice* (1943), 3.

did not regard the Mexican Americans “as an equal, racially or economically,” as well as “American institutions” such as schools and churches, who “regarded the Mexican as a problem and not as an asset to our American society,” and the policy of segregation. At the same time, Coronel suggested that the Mexican American community shared some of the responsibility for contributing to the conditions that created the conflict: he scolded the parents of Pachucos for not encouraging the education of their children.⁵²⁹ Coronel’s weighty assessment of the riots represented the complexity of MAM itself, critiquing both the Mexican American community as well as the dominant White hierarchy.

A year later in 1944, under less contentious circumstances, Paul Coronel again took inventory of the maturation of the Mexican American Movement:

We began as a conference, we went into a general movement and now we are in the process of organization. The hinge upon which our work moves is the very responsible local council...No longer will we rely entirely on Regional Conferences for the work in the various areas. The local councils are made up of Mexican-Americans and Non-Mexican-Americans who are interested in the problems of the Mexican people residing in this country...As more local councils are organized it is planned to organize state organizations of the M.A.M. wherever there is a large proportion of Mexican-Americans.⁵³⁰

In the same year MAM held its first convention in Los Angeles, where the association clarified the goals of the entity as a social services organization. Education remained the cornerstone of MAM:

[W]e are perfectly good examples of people who are in schools, in colleges, in universities, in the professions, who have gained their place because they have earned it. We can’t gain our place by simply hollering at the weaknesses or talking about the discrimination against us...[W]e accept the shortcomings that we have and we work from scratch up.⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Paul Coronel, “As We Move,” *The Mexican Voice*, (Summer 1944), 2.

⁵³¹ Quoted in Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power*, 53, from Proceedings (unpublished), First Annual Convention, Mexican-American Movement, 8 October 1944, 63.

The Mexican American college-aged students effectively distanced themselves from YMCA in order to reach out to the Catholic Mexican American community. Officially, MAM was politically non-partisan and non-sectarian, and continued to foster an abiding commitment to the solution of problems through education (and in particular college), citing themselves as examples of Mexican Americans who were in schools, colleges, universities, and in the professions.

But despite the reorganization of MAM, the group did not reach the zenith its leadership anticipated. World War II served as a disruptive event, not an opportunity to expand, and membership subsequently declined. Paul Coronel confessed:

I am beginning to feel we cannot depend on the old blood in our movement. The only thing that will awaken the movement and the people in it to the responsibility we owe our people is new blood. It is wonderful to speak to people and tell them we're trying to do and feel the enthusiasm those people radiate. We have lost so much of that feeling.⁵³²

MAM attempted to create a Youth Council, named the Supreme Council of the Mexican American Movement, which the organization had hoped would carry on the same spirit exemplified by the previous incarnation of the YMCA Mexican Youth Conference. By then, however, MAM had lost its momentum. In 1950 MAM ceased to exist.

* * *

The history of MAM definitively documents Mexican American participation in California higher education prior to World War II and the implementation of the G.I. Bill, long after *Californios* attended Santa Clara College and took part in the Fifth Class at the University of California following statehood. Founded by and created for Mexican American students, members of MAM portrayed education as an instrument for uplift,

⁵³² Paul Coronel to Angel Cano, letter, 10 August 1949, Papers of the Supreme Council of the Mexican American Movement, Urban Archives Center, California State University, Northridge.

both personally, and for the larger Mexican American community. Moreover, this study of MAM sheds light on how the complexities of race, ethnicity, class, and citizenship impacted how young Mexican Americans viewed higher education, and larger American society in general.

MAM was both a Mexican *and* an American student-led organization. The group personified the fundamental shift from the first generation of Mexican immigrants that came to California between 1900 and 1930. Dora Ibáñez authored one of the first articles in *The Mexican Voice* composed entirely in Spanish, “Diferencia en la Esfera de Acción de los Padres y sus Hijos en este País.” The article is an interesting piece of literature in that the Ibáñez highlighted the differences between the author and MAM members and that of their parent’s generation. She repeated the questions the first generation of Mexican immigrants asked their children:

What is happening with our children? Why do they reject our behavior? Why don’t they respond harmoniously with our way of thinking? Don’t they feel the warmth of our traditions and customs like we do?

Ibáñez answered as a voice of her generation:

Many of you don’t get answers to these questions and see that your son or daughter doesn’t find satisfaction in themselves, nor in the home, nor in the community nor in their own people in general.⁵³³

Ibáñez and her fellow MAM members believed their parent’s generation need not be afraid of their children’s different point of views. The parents themselves brought this about—by immigrating to the United States and California. MAM and its members

⁵³³ Dora Ibáñez, “Diferencia en la Esfera de Acción de los Padres y sus Hijos en este País,” *The Mexican Voice* (Aug. 1939), 4-5.

simply fulfilled their promise by earning a part of the American dream. MAM members believed they transformed into “New Modern Mexicans.”⁵³⁴

Ultimately, MAM endeavored to instill a sense of confidence in members of the Mexican American community to actively pursue an education, a nuanced philosophy that had not likely been put forth before by Mexican Americans in California. There was a certain sense of naiveté to the thought that hard work, determination, and effort could lead to a young man or woman getting an education and having a better life. But in other ways, idea of self-help through education was a transformational message that had never been espoused in the Mexican American community. The founders of MAM emphasized the progress of Mexican American people through education, and used *The Mexican Voice* to impress upon others in the Mexican American community to take schooling seriously. The inherent challenges facing Mexican Americans (low socioeconomic status, the language barrier, a history of oppression and discrimination) were matched against the hope and perseverance of student youth organizations such as the Mexican Youth Conference and the Mexican American Movement. MAM, in some ways, had a profound impact on the Mexican American community that resonates to this day. They instilled the idea of the importance of earning an education—even if at the time, it only reached a small segment of the population.

I fervently believe that the college students who participated in the Mexican Youth Conference and founded MAM laid the roots of El Movimiento of the 1960s. MAM not only groomed influential Chicano activists like Bert Corona, but the incipient civil rights student group provided a blueprint for the next generation of Mexican

⁵³⁴ Felix Gutiérrez, “Nosotros” *The Mexican Voice* (August 1938), 10.

Americans to advocate for more opportunities in California higher education. Less than two decades after MAM disbanded, Mexican American students pushed for the formation of Chicano Studies programs and created student organizations such as the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán-- M.E.Ch.A. And thus, a new generation of the Mexican American Movement was born.

Conclusion

Today tens of thousands of Mexican American students attend colleges and universities across the state of California—from Los Angeles Community College to dynamic universities such as UCLA and the University of California, and countless institutions in between. Hundreds of thousands more go to college and universities across the United States. Mexican American students have a long and proud history of enrolling in American colleges and universities, beginning in California, not long after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. As this study clearly shows, the Mexican American legacy in American higher education predates El Movimiento. A number of *Californios* were among the first to enroll at Santa Clara College—doing so until at least the mid 1870s. Not far away, *Californios* and Mexicans took part in the University of California’s Fifth Class preparatory program in the early 1870s. Several decades later, on the eve of World War II, Mexican Americans attended California colleges and universities in large enough numbers to establish student organizations such as MAM. For too long, historians of higher education ignored the story of Jesús María Estudillo, the Fifth Class and Manuel M. Corella, and MAM. Now that is no longer the case.

Events in Spanish and Mexican California prior to statehood laid the foundation for sons and daughters of wealthy landholders, *Californios*, to eventually go to school at Santa Clara College, the College of Notre Dame, and the University of California in the mid-nineteenth century. Specifically, the Spanish Crown colonized Alta California by establishing a series of Catholic missions and forts (known as presidios). The soldiers who protected the missions and California later became Dons when Mexico declared

independence from Spain. Once independent of Spain and far from the government in Mexico City, the former army officers began to refer to themselves as *Californios*, and claimed lineage directly to Spain. The *gente de razón* parceled out the former lands of the prosperous missions following secularization, creating magnificent homesteads called ranchos. Managing their ranchos allowed some *Californios* to become quite wealthy; riches that were drawn upon to finance their children's college education in the years and decades that followed. However, the era of the Dons was short in duration—less than two decades. Most important to this study, despite the changes that rapidly swept across California following the Mexican War, the Gold Rush and statehood, many *Californios* still possessed enough wealth to send their children to college.

A handful of schools, including Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame, were founded in the immediate aftermath of California statehood. The Catholic Church aggressively sought to educate the new state's citizens in the absence of a state university, including the aforementioned *Californios*. Among the *Californio* families who retained enough funds to finance a college education were the Estudillos who sent their youngest son, the diarist Jesús María Estudillo, to Santa Clara. Recognizing that statehood and the arrival of hundreds of thousands of White Americans fundamentally altered California, the Estudillos and other *gente de razón* looked to the fledgling colleges in the state to educate their children, providing them with the skills necessary to survive and flourish in a post-Mexican California society. For instance, Juana Estudillo sent Jesús María to college to perfect his use of the English language. Approximately 350 *Californios* and Mexican enrolled at Santa Clara between its founding in 1851 and 1876 alone. Estudillo, in his series of diaries, reflected on the challenges and enjoyment

derived from attending Santa Clara. His thoughts and concerns were often typical of students even today; attempting to excel in classes and to socialize with young women in off-campus visits. While at Santa Clara, Jesús María attended classes alongside and befriended both *Californios* and White young men. Based on Estudillo's observations while at Santa Clara, relations between *Californio* and White students were cordial, and little if any evidence suggests Jesús María's classmates mistreated or prejudiced the young man or any other *Californio*. More unique to *Californios* and Mexicans enrolled at the Jesuit college were Estudillo's desire to master English and concerns over legal troubles with squatters. Even while Jesús María excelled in his studies at Santa Clara, his mind often drifted to his family's ongoing legal battles with squatters on his family's Rancho San Leandro. Eventually, Estudillo left college before he earned his degree (much to the chagrin of his mother Juana), a common practice at the time. From his experiences, the reader can appreciate what it was like for Jesús María and his fellow *Californios* to be a student at Santa Clara College in mid-nineteenth century California.

When Jesús María Estudillo left Santa Clara in 1864, many more *Californios* continued to matriculate at the institution until at least the mid 1870s. Not far away, in Oakland (and later Berkeley), around two dozen other *Californios* and Mexicans entered the Fifth Class at the University of California, a preparatory division of the flagship institution. The Regents of the young University recognized that the institution struggled to enroll enough students: for few could afford the tuition, and even less could pass the strict entrance exams. As a result, the University of California sanctioned the Fifth Class preparatory department for both the 1870-1871 and 1871-1872 school years. The fledgling University attracted a clientele similar to its fellow institutions to the south,

Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame. Among those who enrolled in the Fifth Class were Mexicans and *Californios*, the sons and daughters of a few remaining *Californio* families. Similar to Santa Clara College and the College of Notre Dame, the forerunner of the Fifth Class (Oakland's University School) actively recruited *Californios* as prospective students. Early California colleges needed the patronage of wealthy *Californios*, while *Californios* needed the institutions to provide an education to their children. In effect, a symbiotic relationship formed that attempted to ensure the survival of both the *Californio* people and California higher education. However, the Fifth Class proved short in duration, lasting only two years. With enrollment up, the flagship state university no longer needed to keep its affiliation with a preparatory department. While a number of *Californios* and Mexicans took part in the Fifth Class, Manuel M. Corella became both the first Mexican to be an undergraduate student and lecturer at the University. Though he, like Jesús María Estudillo, left the institution before he earned his degree. Corella shared additional similarities with Estudillo. While on campus, he too joined student groups and organizations with White students. This provides another instance suggesting racial and ethnic tensions may have not taken place at Santa Clara and the University of California—since both Estudillo and Corella joined student organizations without incident. Quite the contrary, each were lauded by their peers, chosen as leaders of their respective drill outfits.

The abrupt disbandment of the Fifth Class and the departure of Manuel M. Corella marked the end of Mexican and *Californio* matriculation at the University of California—most likely until after the turn of the century. Around the same time, the enrollment of *Californios* at Santa Clara precipitously declined. The absence of the

names of *Californios* and Mexicans from student ledgers at colleges and universities across northern California (from the mid-1870s onward) can best be explained by the eroding fortunes of the *Californios* themselves. While the Estudillo family weathered the storms that followed statehood, most *Californios* were not as fortunate. Paying for protracted lawsuits, drought, and economic downturns adversely impacted *Californios*, and in turn, the people's abilities to send their children to college. While a few of the most well-off *Californios* (such as the Coutts-Bandini and the Watson-Domínguez families) maintained the ability to finance their children's college education, nearly everyone else in the *Californio* community did not. The Coutts and Watson brothers, all of whom attended college, were very much anomalies.

By the time of Jesús María Estudillo's death in 1910, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans poured across the border between Mexico and California, in search of jobs and educational opportunities for their children. This new generation of Mexican immigrants found support from one another within the barrios of California's major cities. While the inhabitants of barrios such as East Los Angeles were largely poor, the collective fate of the Mexican community rested on the opportunities their children received as a result of their parent's move to the United States. Though Mexican children often attended segregated and underfunded schools, a few became the first scholarship boys and girls in the 1920s and were some of the first Mexican Americans to attend college in the state of California in the twentieth century. Overall, however, earning an education of any kind—even a high school diploma—escaped nearly everyone in the barrio of East Los Angeles and elsewhere. Paradoxically, while higher education in California matured from the late-nineteenth to early twentieth century, and enrollment at the state's colleges

and universities grew larger than ever, extremely few Mexicans attended college during this time period.

However, by the early to mid 1930s, the tide shifted for Mexican Americans, and they began attending California colleges and universities. They did so in numbers large enough to form their own college student groups such as the Mexican American Movement—a phenomenon impossible to imagine only a decade before. Student organizations such as MAM simultaneously represented a clear departure from generations earlier, when young men like Jesús María Estudillo and Manuel M. Corella participated in drill units and literary societies along with their White peers. Rather, Mexican American college students established groups such as MAM for Mexican students, a precursor to M.E.Ch.A. Founded as an offshoot of the YMCA, MAM began as the Mexican Youth Conference, and lasted in one form or another from 1934 to 1950. Over the course of sixteen years the organization's members attended colleges and universities such as UCLA, the University of Southern California, Santa Barbara State College, and Compton Junior College.

Not long after forming, the group's most ambitious members created a newspaper named *The Mexican Voice*, a periodical the young Mexican Americans disseminated to the youth of the Mexican community in and around Los Angeles. MAM used *The Mexican Voice* as a platform to instill the value of earning an education. Again and again, the editors of the newsletter penned columns that urged their hermanos and hermanas from the barrio to view education as a means to better themselves, their family, and their community. The college students who created MAM exhibited a certain amount of naiveté in the belief that hard work, determination, and effort could lead to a

young Mexican man or woman getting an education and having a better life. Still, MAM's inherent optimism no less diminishes the significance of the student-led organization, as the theme of uplift through education represented a transformational message seldom seen in the Mexican community in California before MAM. Through their tireless efforts to promote the benefits of a college education before and during World War II, MAM laid the foundation for Mexican American students and professors to create departments of Chicano Studies and to form M.E.Ch.A. only one generation later.

As described above, different segments of the Mexican community attended California colleges and universities between 1848 and 1945; from Jesús María Estudillo and the sons and daughters of wealthy landholding *Californios* to MAM member Felix Gutiérrez and the sons and daughters of poor immigrants. While *Californios* enrolled in college in order to perfect/learn English in hopes of maintaining their status near the top of California society, MAM members and others like them later matriculated in colleges and universities across the state in an effort to earn their opportunity to have a better life. The role of higher education in the Mexican and Mexican American community indeed changed markedly from when Jesús María Estudillo first stepped foot on the campus of Santa Clara College and Mexican Youth Conference/MAM members first published *The Mexican Voice* eight-one years later.

Still, further study of the Mexican American experience in higher education in California, and elsewhere, is certainly warranted. For example, the story of Jesús María Estudillo and *Californios* at Santa Clara College and that of MAM complicate the notion of Mexican American identity. *Californios* themselves straddled the boundary between

Whiteness and Mexicaness by adopting the name *Californio* and harping on their Spanish roots. *Californios* joined their White peers in student groups at Santa Clara, and based on the experiences of Jesús María Estudillo, seemingly without being mistreated due to their background. White, Mexican, and *Californio*, a young man like Jesús María Estudillo defied easy categorization. Several decades later, nearly each contributor to *The Mexican Voice* overtly claimed their Mexican *and* American identity in articles published in the student newspaper. When Mexican Youth Conference participants formally decided to name their student group, they deliberately selected the Mexican American Movement. A more in-depth examination of Mexican American identity in the context of experiences in higher education of students would compliment the work done in this study.

Furthermore, lengthening the periodization of this study to 1960 and the outset of El Movimiento would incorporate the effect of World War II on Mexican Americans in higher education—including but not limited to the experiences of the Mexican GIs who enrolled in college not long after the end of their military service. Doing so would bridge the gap between the Mexican American college students who organized MAM and those who led El Movimiento just a generation later. What were the experiences of Mexican Americans in California colleges and universities in between these two transformative time periods? As a corollary, comparing the similarities and differences between MAM and the Chicano student movement in the 1960s would reveal the evolving nature of the Mexican American experience in higher education.

In addition, the work of historian Laura K. Muñoz on Mexicans in Arizona is a fine example of research that can and should be conducted on the Mexican American experience in higher education beyond California. Other states such as Colorado, New

Mexico, and Texas offer natural comparisons to California and Arizona, as all of the above states housed a very large Mexican population since each were incorporated into the Union. Each state offers a unique lens to view the Mexican American experience, as governments, institutions, and society developed disparately from one another—thereby impacting Mexican participation in higher education. For example, California is unique from the neighboring state of Arizona (and other states in the West and southwest) in that members of the Mexican community attended local colleges since the early 1850s, some four decades before Mexicans enrolled at the Tempe Normal School. Since Mexicans also migrated to other regions of the United States in the early to mid-twentieth century, researchers should explore whether the children from these ethnic enclaves attended college.

More broadly, Latino participation in the American higher education encompasses such a diverse group of people. Surely other Latinos, in addition to Mexicans, enrolled in colleges and universities across the United States throughout part of the periodization of this study. For example, the founding of la Universidad de Puerto Rico in 1903 is often overlooked even today, as is the enrollment of several hundred Puerto Rican students at mainland colleges and universities (ranging from Tuskegee to Cornell) in the first decade of the early twentieth century.⁵³⁵

Finally, I believe scholars can compare and contrast the participation of Latinas/os and Blacks in American higher education—noting the similarities and the differences between their experiences. For example, as this study proves, members of the Mexican community (*Californios*) attended colleges and universities alongside Whites in the state

⁵³⁵ Carlos Rodríguez-Fraticelli, *Education and Imperialism: The Puerto Rican Experience in Higher Education, 1898-1986* (New York: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Working Papers Series, 1986).

of California since 1851. While a handful of Black students enrolled in northern colleges and universities with Whites, Blacks in the South attended a segregated set of institutions, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs). An intriguing study would assess whether segregated HBCUs fostered greater access to higher education for Blacks in the South than Mexicans in the West and southwest.

Ultimately, the experiences of Jesús María Estudillo, Manuel M. Corella, the Fifth Class, and MAM are a meaningful addition to the still growing literature on the history of higher education. But still more can be done, as the history of Latinos, Asian Americans, and American Indians in American higher education is largely unwritten. This study represents not the end, but the beginning of my effort to contribute to this unique stand of scholarship—beyond the Black/White paradigm. Once unearthed, these stories will join the now documented history of the Mexican American experience in California higher education, before El Movimiento, before *we* were Chicanas/os.