

Handbook of North American Indians

WILLIAM C. STURTEVANT
General Editor

VOLUME 8

California

ROBERT F. HEIZER
Volume Editor



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Introduction

ROBERT F. HEIZER

The aim of this volume is to provide a summary of what is presently known of the aboriginal culture forms and practices of about 60 California tribes. The background for these syntheses is provided in the form of a series of articles that describe the environment, prehistoric archeology, historical archeology, language classification, culture, population numbers since the time of European discovery, and the history of exploration and settlement by Whites. Certain topics of general interest, about which only brief mention is made in the ethnological summaries, have been treated separately at the end.

This volume provides an account of the aboriginal culture of each tribe and a sketch of its history from the time each came under the domination of Whites, whether this was in the 1770s in one of the Franciscan missions along the coast or as late as 1849 or 1850 in the far northern and Sierra Nevada regions. Entire tribal populations were drawn into the 21 missions extending from San Diego in the south to Sonoma in the north, and their native ways of life were changed to one imposed on them by the missionaries (Cook 1943). In 1834, some dozen years after Mexico had secured her independence from Spain and gained control of Alta California, the missions were secularized, and the resident populations numbering about 15,000 persons were released from their physical and religious bondage. The American seizure of California occurred in 1846 as an event early in the Mexican War. Despite the wealth of documentary records collected at the various missions between 1769 and 1834, and an even greater amount of information existing in newspapers and personal records from the American period beginning in 1846, there is not available a single history of a tribe. A beginning at the collection of references to significant record material has been made by Wuertele (1975), Heizer, Nissen, and Castillo (1975), and Beroza (1974). Some small groups in remote areas were so hard hit in the early gold rush period that they disappeared with scarcely a word said about them, but for others a great deal would be known if the information were only searched out and written as ethnohistorical narrative. Now that the aboriginal cultures are gone, the opportunity exists for more research on tribal histories that lead up to the present day. The massive immigration of Native Americans from other states into California beginning in World War II has been little studied (Heizer, Nissen, and Castillo 1975:48-56), and before the

trail becomes too cold, it and its effects should be followed.

Although California Indian cultures were treated on a tribal basis by Alfred L. Kroeber (1925) in his monumental *Handbook of the Indians of California*, much has been learned in the ensuing half-century, and this knowledge has been consulted and referred to for this volume. Each author has attempted to utilize and cite all the important sources available in order that the volume may be thoroughly up to date.

By the California culture area we do not mean an area congruent with the geographical borders of the present state. The state boundaries were established in 1850 when California was admitted to the Union, and the area then selected was a portion of the territory ceded to the United States following the Mexican War of 1846-1848. With reference to Native American populations and the occurrence of types of aboriginal culture, the California culture area is somewhat more restricted. If anthropologists in the past (for example, Powers 1877 and Kroeber 1925) treated the native cultures of the political state, that was because they were only trying to provide information on the people and cultures that had existed within the state boundaries (fig. 1). Any anthropologist employed by the state of California in the university might have been criticized if some taxpayer at Cedarville, Truckee, Needles, or Lone Pine had bought a book on the Indians of California and found that the native peoples in the area where he was living were ignored as being outside the California culture area as anthropologists envisaged this. Perhaps for this reason it became customary to write about the Indians of California in terms of the political state. Even though Holmes (1919:114-117, fig. 41) set aside a California "culture characterization" area and correctly saw that northwestern California had cultural ties with the Northwest Coast area and that southern California was culturally linked with the Southwest (which he called the Arid area), he mapped the California area as comprising the entire state with a southeastern salient running across the Colorado River to include a portion of western Arizona. Wissler (1938:fig. 58) is not very specific in either mapping or defining the California culture area, but he does point to Central California tribes as the most "typical" and recognizes that in the north, east, and southeast influences from other culture

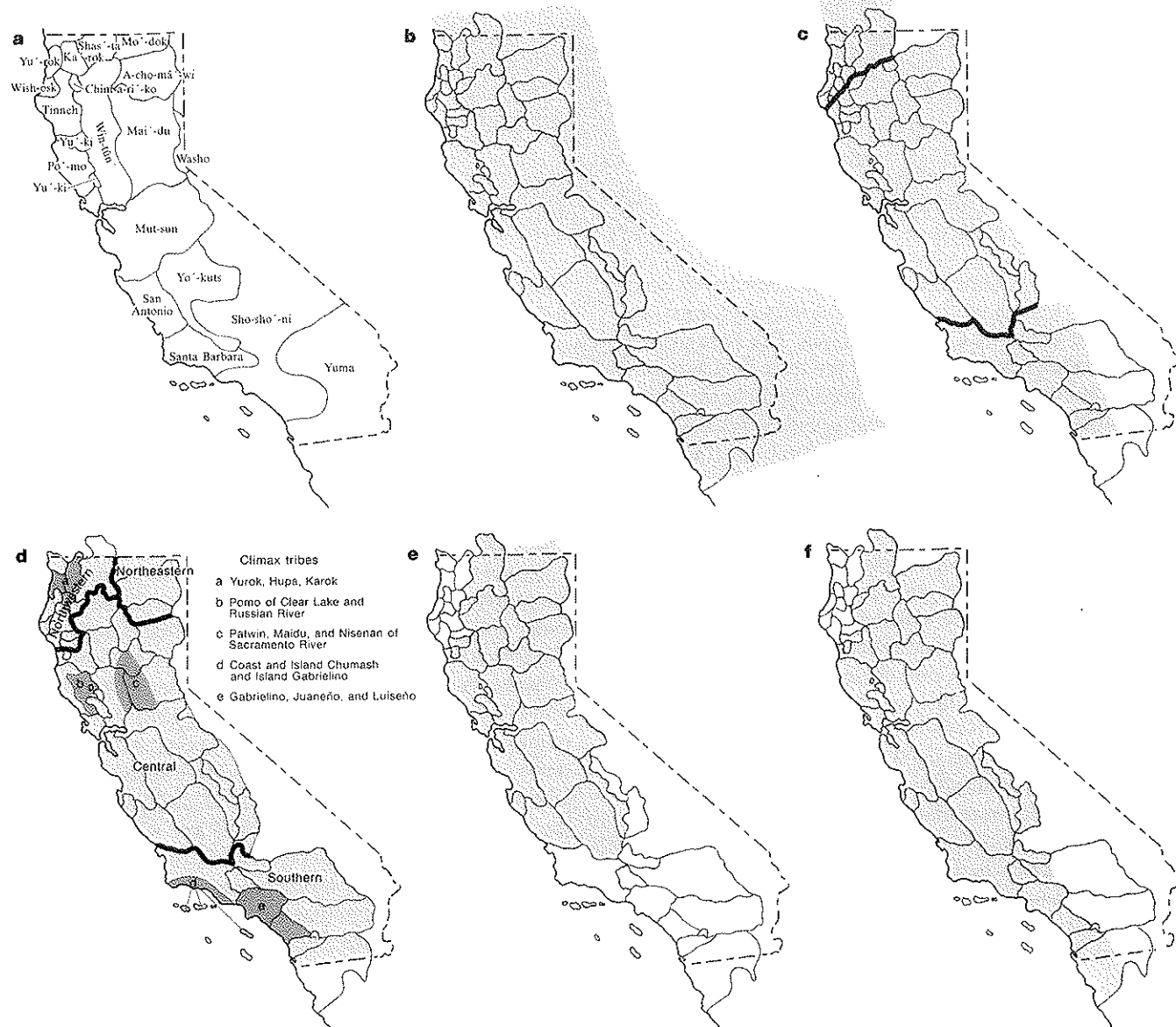


Fig. 1. Anthropologists' interpretations of the California culture area. a, linguistic stocks according to Powers 1877, culture areas according to Holmes 1919; b, Holmes 1919; c, Kroeber 1925; d, Kroeber 1936; e, Murdock 1960; f, Driver 1961.

areas are apparent. Driver (1961:map 2) outlines the California culture area much as we do in this volume.

Kroeber (1925:fig. 73) divided the state into subculture areas—Northwestern, Lutuami, Central, Southern, and Great Basin. He examined in some detail the relations of the Northwestern subculture area with the North Pacific Coast culture centering in British Columbia. The Lutuami subculture area comprised the territory of the Modoc, whose affiliations lay mainly to the north with the people of Klamath Lake. The Great Basin, constituting the eastern border of the state beyond the Sierra Nevadas, included the larger portion of the desert area of the southern part of the state. This area is, of course, the western fringe of the larger Great Basin area of interior drainage covering most of Utah and Nevada. Southern

California was seen as having received strong cultural influences from the Southwest proper lying east of the Colorado River. Kroeber (1936:map 1) returned to this culture classification problem and suggested modifications of his earlier scheme. The Lutuami area was slightly expanded to include the territory of the Pit River tribes (Achumawi and Atsugewi) and renamed Northeastern. The narrow zone of the western border of the Colorado River was separated from the former Southern California area and named Colorado River culture area. In addition to his final estimation of culture areas lying within the present boundaries of California, Kroeber (1936) gave his judgment as to which tribe or tribes represented the climax development of the particular subset of the whole—that is, "hearth tribes" of the subculture areas to

the extent that there are distinctive developments enabling the ethnographer to identify them (see fig. 1).

The coverage in this volume includes the Northwestern, Central, and Southern culture areas in their entirety. The Great Basin tribes of modern California are reported in volume 11 of this series, and the Colorado River culture area in California is treated as a part of the Southwest in volume 9. Only a portion of the Northeastern culture area in California is incorporated here, the southern half occupied by the Achumawi and Atsugewi. The northern half, held by the Modoc, is considered as part of the Plateau in volume 12.

Because the Northwestern California and Southern California subareas are seen as adumbrations of the larger Northwest Coast and Southwestern culture areas, the Central subculture stands as the most distinctively Californian. Kroeber (1936:105) characterizes this region as follows:

The Central Californian area . . . leans to no serious degree on anything. To the west was an unnavigated ocean, to the east the Great Basin with scattered tribes eking out a bare subsistence. To the north and south lay the two contrasting areas [Northwestern, Southern], from which some cultural material was no doubt derived, but in so trickling and perhaps so ancient a stream, that, simply patterned as the Central culture was, it was able to mould this material over into its own patterns as fast as it came in. This is shown by the fact that the Northwestern and Southern elements in the Central area are, after all, few in comparison with those specific to it: 14 and 21, respectively, as against 160. The Central culture thus is definitely not a mere transition or blend between those of the Northwest and the South. It is a culture of lower potency, of less rich characterization, and, hand in hand with this, of less sharply definable climax. But in another sense, it is more independent than its Californian neighbors which, after all, are essentially local workings-over of distant greater culture impulses.

In the larger perspective, therefore, Northwestern California—with its industrial emphasis on woodworking, twined basketry, stone-handled adz, rod armor, elkhorn wedge, bell-shaped stone maul; salmon fishing with nets, weirs, traps, and harpoons; dentalium currency; dugout canoes; plank houses with double-pitch roof; sea mammal hunting with heavy harpoons with attached retrieving lines; and emphasis on wealth as a means of acquiring power and status—is seen as a kind of pale reflection of the more brilliant Northwest Coast culture development of the British Columbia shore. In a descriptive sense the culture of the California Yurok, Tolowa, and Wiyot represent what Kroeber suggested as formative Northwest Coast culture that was "originally a river or river-mouth culture, later a beach culture, and only finally and in part a seagoing one." He viewed Northwest Coast culture, of which Northwestern California is a part, as "least affected by influences from Middle (Nuclear)

America" and having been "reached to an unusual degree by influences from Asia" (Kroeber 1939a:28).

The Southern California culture area, heavily influenced by the Southwest, can trace many of its constituent elements to an origin among the Pueblos or the ancestors or cultural kinsmen of the Pueblos. However, the province is not a mere extension of the Southwest, for it has generated indigenous focuses (Kroeber 1925:913). But, since the Southwest or Pueblo area has clearly been partly shaped in its development from influences radiating north from the Mesoamerican heartland, so also does Southern California share, even though one more step removed, in having been stimulated from the civilizational hearth of Nuclear America.

Thus, Central California, into which diffused some traits from Northwestern California and some also from Southern California, at the same time was so distant from the main diffusion centers of British Columbia and the Southwest that these impulses could be absorbed and reworked into the Central California pattern, which presumably retained the basic features of the undifferentiated American Indian culture. Central California, in this sense, can be seen as representing a buffer zone lying between the dynamic Asiatic-stimulated Northwest Coast culture and the equally dynamic, though different, Mesoamerican-stimulated Southwest. Although anthropologists no longer discuss culture areas much, and may even tend to think of this concept as outmoded, regional types of native culture surely did exist, and this understanding of the placement of the California area is important.

The archeological record of man in the California area has become reasonably well known for the period of about the last 4,000 years. Beyond that in time the record is much less full and is therefore difficult to piece together to gain a coherent picture of what areas were occupied and the nature of the environmental adjustment. There are clear hints of the presence of Paleo-Indian hunters who were making Clovis-type weapon tips, but thus far no occupation site producing evidence of how these people lived has come to light. Humans were surely present in California by 10,000 or 11,000 years ago, but how much earlier than that is obscured by a surprisingly large number of unsupported claims that propose that stone tools or human bones ranging in age from 26,000 to 48,000 years have been found (Bada, Schroeder, and Carter 1974). While such proposals are made by competent laboratory scientists and cannot be ignored, most archeologists prefer to take the "wait and see" attitude until such time as the dating methods and their results are proved beyond all doubt to be accurate. Reserving acceptance of such datings is encouraged by a regrettable history of claims of extreme age for man in California made earlier at such "sites" as the Death Valley terraces, Texas Street roadcut near San Diego, Santa Rosa Island fossil elephant localities, and Calico Hills gravel fan.

None of these has in the end proved to be acceptable to archeologists as an archeological site; hence, archeologists are reluctant to give approval to more recent claims for the oldest direct dates yet secured for man in the New World. California has been the scene of a considerable number of such propositions. At the same time there are no final and absolute answers, and we may expect the claim and counter-claim game to continue. For a wider perspective than afforded in this volume of Paleo-Indian cultural materials and the earliest skeletal remains from North America, consult volume 3 of this series.

Some effort, but not nearly so much as would be desired, has been made in attempting to trace back the ethnographic cultures into the prehistoric period. The "direct historical approach" in archeology has not been much employed in California as a means of tracing back into prehistoric times the identifiable historic cultures, though some initial efforts have been made in this direction in Central California (Heizer 1941b) and Northwestern California (Elsasser and Heizer 1966:1-6). Efforts to chronologize the history of the Achumawi and Atsugewi (Baumhoff and Olmsted 1963, 1964) by comparing glottochronological and archeological time-depths were reasonably successful, but thus far no similar studies have been attempted. Kroeber (1909a:4) pointed out the interesting fact that "even the geographical limits of subordinate types of culture, and the distribution of specialized forms of implements, coincide almost absolutely so far as archaeology and ethnology have been able to determine." It does seem to be true that regional culture specializations in California have deep localized roots in the past, but where Kroeber could find no clear evidence of culture succession in the archeological data available at the time he wrote, we now know that there has occurred a succession of cultures, and presumably populations, in nearly all areas of the state. Where these have not come to light the reason is more likely to be that they have not yet been uncovered rather than that they are lacking.

The first systematic ethnographic work in California was done in 1871 and 1872 by Stephen Powers, who in 1875 was appointed to collect objects of Indian manufacture for display in the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. Powers (1877) collected and printed his ethnographic observations under the title *Tribes of California*. Before Powers there are only incidental records that might be generally characterized as ethnohistorical data. About 1900 under Kroeber's guidance the systematic recording of detailed tribal ethnographies was begun; it was essentially completed 40 years later. In the first decades of the twentieth century California's White population was not very large, and native Californians survived in some numbers in out-of-the-way places. Many of these people who served as informants for ethnologists had been born before the gold rush (cf. Heizer and Nissen 1973) and were able to provide, from

actually remembered experience, accounts of what native life was like before the Whites appeared. But not all ethnographic informants were persons who were alive in or before 1850, and as ethnologists continued to record data for tribal ethnographies not only did it become more and more difficult to find informants, but also most of these were determined as having been born in the 1860s, 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s. Therefore, the supposed record of precontact, aboriginal culture was increasingly being supplied by individuals born in California under the United States flag among more and more acculturated native groups. How much culture change occurred among the survivors of the native Californians after 1850 is not known because this problem has never been examined. We can suppose, however, that a considerable amount of change did occur and that to some degree the accounts of aboriginal cultures presented in ethnographies published after 1900 are, in fact, a record of changed and acculturated societies. These societies may have been rather different in detail in the early sixteenth century before the European discovery of California or before the catastrophic effect of the gold rush. This situation was specifically noted by Powers in 1872, but its consideration does not enter into the reports of ethnographers such as Kroeber, Barrett, Dixon, and other students of California Indian culture who published their monographs in the University of California scientific series (cf. Heizer 1975). Voegelin's (1956:4) recommendation that ethnographers admit "the fact that North American Indian ethnographies be taken as relating in general to a period coincident with the early years of the informants who supplied the data upon which such ethnographies are based" seems a sound one, but it has thus far not led to any major reassessment of the California ethnographic record through ethnohistorical data. However, this examination and reevaluation of the assumed aboriginal ethnographic cultures will almost inevitably come, if for no other reason than that it offers such rich results. This promise will make such inquiries attractive to students of Native American cultures that no longer exist even in the memories of living people. Not only social and cultural anthropologists will turn to this subject, I predict, but so also will archeologists who depend so heavily upon the ethnographic accounts for hints and leads in their effort to interpret the facts of prehistory. The "new anthropology" in California is likely to have a strong ethnohistorical orientation rather than remain concerned with the systems approach or "processual" interpretation, which in the mid-1970s seems to have caught the interest of some students. Much of this last-mentioned work seems to be unduly hypothetical and to extrapolate from solid data into quite unproved, and perhaps unprovable, projections. But the course of any science, both social and natural, is continually examining such innovations, and in the end they are accepted if sound and rejected if they are untenable.

By the time ethnographers began to systematically record the names and territories of individual tribes, a procedure instituted by Powers in the 1870s, a certain amount of territorial readjustment, through expansion or retraction of tribal lands engendered by severe population diminishment among some groups, may have occurred. And, despite the relative plethora of tribes in California, by the time the ethnographers got around to asking survivors of decimated groups the names of all their neighbors, it is perfectly possible that some small independent tribes had become extinct some generations earlier and that even the memory of their existence had been lost. Kroeber (1925:610) discusses the supposed tribe named the Giamina, who may have spoken a Uto-Aztecan language and who were neighbors of the Bankalachi and Palewyami; nothing is known of them, not even the proof that they actually existed. Equally mysterious are the Watiru and Kammatwa, two groups that spoke both Karok and Shasta, and whose identity as either Shasta or Karok has never been satisfactorily established (Heizer and Hester 1970b:134). What has been accepted as firmly established as regards speech affiliation or territorial holdings of some groups is still being modified. Examples are the Saclan, who were doubtfully classed as Costanoan by Kroeber but who prove on the basis of Arroyo de la Cuesta's (1821) word list to be Miwok, and the Alliklik, who were recently identified as at least in part a Chumashan- rather than a Uto-Aztecan-speaking tribe. The long-accepted view that the Marin Peninsula was occupied by Coast Miwok is now questioned on the basis of a dozen and a half words, recorded in 1775 from villagers living on the shore of San Francisco Bay near Angel Island, that prove to be Costanoan. Coast Miwok informants in the early 1900s affirmed their ownership of this territory and supported that allegation by naming village spots and features of the terrain. Perhaps what happened was the early removal of the Costanoans living north of the Golden Gate to the mission in San Francisco and the occupation of their abandoned territory by the Coast Miwok whose lands lay just to the north. By the time ethnographers recorded ethnogeographic details for the Marin Peninsula area, the Costanoans were all gone and the Coast Miwok had forgotten in the course of the preceding century that their occupation was recent, a result of events that came about through missionization. One wonders how many such territorial readjustments may have occurred of which there is no hint in the documentary record. There will no doubt be other such corrections as scholars continue to sift the recorded information.

Kroeber's (1925) monumental work is a most authoritative treatment of California Indians in one volume, although it is obviously "dated" since it reflects only what

was known when it went to press in 1923. This volume covers fewer tribes and a smaller area than Kroeber's, and the two differ in approach and aim. By first defining regional patterns of various aspects of native culture, Kroeber did not need to repeat them for every tribal group. The saving in space thus allowed him, when writing about the tribes of northwestern or central or southern California, to expand on some particular tribal development without undue sacrifice of general coverage. The core of this volume, on the other hand, is 44 chapters by 33 authors, each being a self-contained synthesis of the culture of a tribe or group of closely related tribes that can be considered as a unit. While there is some unavoidable duplication of information between this volume and Kroeber's, at the same time the two volumes can be taken as complementing each other. Most students who have access to both volumes, and to whom library resources are available, should have little difficulty in becoming informed about or guided to the great bulk of information available on particular tribes or topics.

This volume employs, in a few instances, language classifications and tribal names that differ from those used by Kroeber. Shoshonean has disappeared as a distinct subgroup of Uto-Aztecan; Konkow is now the accepted designation for the Northwestern Maidu; Ipai has come into vogue as the name for the Northern Diegueño and Tipai for the Southern Diegueño and Kamia. Less abrupt in being more easily identified is the current usage of Cahto for the people reported in the earlier literature under the name Kato.

One matter concerning social and political organization of California Indians should be mentioned here in order to make clear what is meant by the word *tribelet*. The word was coined by Kroeber to indicate the basic, autonomous, self-governing, and independent sociopolitical group found all over the state. The term *village community* has also been used in the same sense. The *tribelet* consisted of the aggregation of people living in two or more (often up to a dozen) separate villages, acknowledging the leadership of a chief who usually resided in the largest and most important of the several settlements. The data on number and nature of the *tribelet*s of some larger tribes (that is, linguistic units) is known with fair completeness. The Pomo, for example, were divided into 34 *tribelet*s living on 3,370 square miles of land and numbering altogether about 8,000 persons (Stewart 1943). The Achumawi were divided into 11 *tribelet*s and their total numbers are calculated at 3,000 persons, their territory comprising about 6,000 square miles of plateau land (Kniffen 1928). Kroeber (1962) discusses the nature of California *tribelet*s in detail and summarizes much of what is recorded about them.

History of Research

ROBERT F. HEIZER

A complete and detailed history of anthropological research in California would take the form of a narrative that identified each investigator, specified the native group or topic he was concerned with, analyzed his theoretical biases, method of approach and results achieved, and included a complete documentary bibliography to all published and unpublished records. A large volume would be required to encompass all this.

A considerably more modest summary is attempted here to introduce the reader to the events in the main course of the accumulation of knowledge on the archeology, ethnography, folklore, and linguistics of the Indians of California. No attempt is made to mention the names or cite the published reports of all the persons who have worked in the field of California anthropology. Those persons listed are mentioned mainly because they did particular pieces of research that at the time were important.

The history of California ethnography strictly speaking is part of the documentary record of exploration and settlement by Euro-Americans ("The Impact of Euro-American Exploration and Settlement," this vol.; Heizer, Nissen, and Castillo 1975). California was first seen by Europeans just 50 years after the discovery of America by the Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo expedition of 1542-1543 (Wagner 1928; Kroeber 1925:552-556; Heizer 1972a). The garbled copy of the original log of the Cabrillo expedition contains the first description and place-names of California Indians—mainly the Chumash. The people seen along the southern California coast and at Monterey were friendly, but they had no gold or silver to encourage conquest or colonization, and, because until about 1700 the Pacific Ocean was exclusively a Spanish sea, little was done in the way of further exploration. The second recorded California visit of Europeans was by the Francis Drake expedition in 1579. A valuable description of the Indians visited with—identifiable as the Coast Miwok ("Coast Miwok," fig. 2, this vol.)—together with a few words and phrases has survived (Heizer 1974a). By the late 1700s other European nations were becoming active in the Pacific and the Spanish Crown realized that their claim to all the lands north of Mexico must be affirmed by the act of settlement. As a result, the Franciscan Order was granted the privilege of establishing missions in Alta California. The Jesuit Order, which had missionized Baja California, was expelled in 1767. The first Franciscan

mission of Alta California was established in 1769 at San Diego, and in all some 21 missions were founded between 1769 and 1823 along the coastal zone (the "Mission Strip") as far north as Sonoma.

The Franciscan missionaries were not concerned with recording the "heathenish customs" of their "gentile" (that is, unbaptized) wards, whom they generally classed as ignorant and stupid savages. The few exceptions to the rule that priests wrote nothing about the Indians under their direction includes the attempt by Fr. Geronimo Boscana to describe the religion of the Juaneño in a work titled "Chinigchinich" written between 1814 and 1825 (see Reichlen and Reichlen 1971; Kroeber 1959:282-293). There were some important linguistic recordings by Fr. Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta in the early nineteenth century, some of which are published (Arroyo de la Cuesta 1861, 1862; J.A. Mason 1916); the copies of the replies from 18 missions to the official questionnaire sent in 1812 by the Spanish government (Heizer 1975a); Bonaventure Sitjar's (1861) vocabulary recorded at San Antonio Mission; and an account of life in Mission San Luis Rey written by a neophyte, Pablo Tac (1930, 1952) about 1834. Because there is so little fact recorded during the Spanish-Mexican period (1542-1846) on Native Californians in either their "wild" or "domesticated" (missionized) situations, the journals of Spanish, French, German, Russian, and English voyagers who visited the California coast to reprovision their vessels are ethnohistorically important (Weber 1968). There are also observations by pre-Mexican-War-period visitors or settlers such as Alfred Robinson, J.J. Warner, J.A. Sutter, J.C. Frémont, Z. Leonard, G. Yount, and G. Nidever. The ethnological gleanings from these sources are usually slim and often in error; nevertheless, when taken as a total body they are important because they are all that is available for the period. A survey of these sources has been written by Barbara Beroza (1974).

The year 1850 marks entry into the Union by California, and one by-product of the activities of the flood of humanity that came to California in search of gold was the publication in newspapers and journals of some descriptive accounts of the cultural practices of those native peoples the Argonauts encountered who had survived missionization (for example, Gibbs 1853, 1973; Meyer 1855; von Loeffelholz 1893), peonage under the Mexicans from 1821 to 1846, and the side-effects of