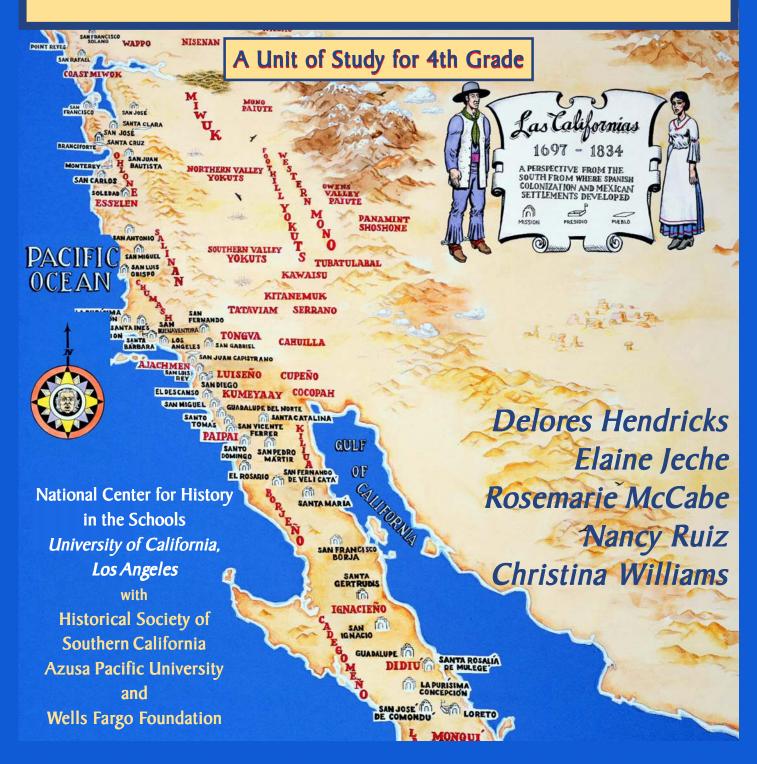
New Perspectives on The California Missions



NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS University of California, Los Angeles



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Introduction

New Perspectives on The California Missions

I. Approach and Rationale: "Why Another Missions Unit?"

Tew Perspectives on The California Missions is one of over seventy teaching units published by the National Center for History for the Schools that are the fruits of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers.

As we approached this historical era, we wanted to put together a study unit for teachers that is both practical and meaningful. What happens all too often in the classroom is that our students create a beautiful product—such as a report on a mission, a replica of a mission, or a poster about a mission—but they can rarely tell us much about how the California missions changed California's future and how they affected the lives of the Native American people.

This teaching unit is based on primary sources taken from letters and diary entries and includes photographs taken by third and fourth grade teachers while on a 2005 field trip through the state of California, sponsored by a Teaching American History grant with the Los Angeles County Office of Education. Using these lesson plans, you can present to students a more in-depth view of this historical period based on both Spanish and California native perspectives. What we hope you achieve by using primary source documents in these lessons is to have your students connect more intimately with the past. In this way, students get more of a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were part of the events.

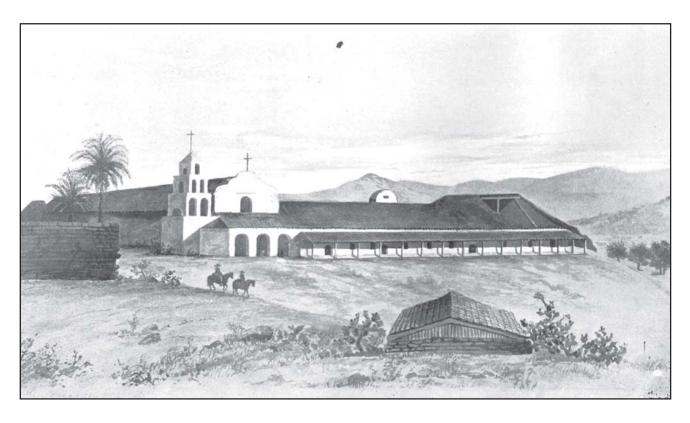
II. Content and Organization: "How to Teach this Unit"

Tithin this unit, you will find: 1) California State Standards Addressed; 2) Unit Context; 3) Historical Background; 4) Lesson Plans, with Objectives and Handouts; 6) Resource CD; and 7) Bibliography.

The "Historical Background" section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the activities to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient reading/listening level.

The lesson plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. Any lesson in this unit can be further developed with other resources or simplified as needed. Each lesson also includes several suggestions for accompanying activities which meet various California English Language Arts Standards.

For ease of use, the reproducible handouts (including worksheets and primary sources) are gathered at the back of the unit. Key vocabulary in student handouts is provided in the margins. The appendix also includes a comprehensive glossary.



Mission San Diego

From a painting at St. Joseph's Rectory, San Diego In Zaphyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, vol. II, Upper California (Mission Santa Barbara: 1930), 86.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

California Missions

I. California State Standards Addressed in this Unit

History-Social Science Content Standards

- **4.2** Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.
 - (3) Describe the Spanish exploration and colonization of California, including the relationships among soldiers, missionaries, and Indians (e.g., Juan Crespi, Junipero Serra, Gaspar de Portola).
 - (4) Describe the mapping of, geographic basis of, and economic factors in the placement and function of the Spanish missions; and understand how the mission system expanded the influence of Spain and Catholicism throughout New Spain and Latin America.
 - (5) Describe the daily lives of the people, native and nonnative, who occupied the presidios, missions, ranchos, and pueblos.
 - (6) Discuss the role of the Franciscans in changing the economy of California from a hunter-gatherer economy to an agricultural economy.
 - (8) Discuss the period of Mexican rule in California and its attributes, including . . . secularization of the missions. . . .

History-Social Science Analysis Skill Standards

Research, Evidence, and Point-of-View

- (1) Students differentiate between primary and secondary sources.
- (2) Students pose relevant questions about events they encounter in historical documents, eyewitness accounts, oral histories, letters, diaries, artifacts, photographs, maps, artworks, and architecture.
- (3) Students distinguish fact from fiction by comparing documentary sources on historical figures and events with fictionalized characters and events.

Historical Interpretation

- (1) Students summarize the key events of the era they are studying and explain the historical contexts of those events.
- (3) Students identify and interpret the multiple causes and effects of historical events.

English-Language Arts Content Standards

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Word Recognition

1.1 Read narrative and expository text aloud with grade-appropriate fluency and accuracy and with appropriate pacing, intonation, and expression.

2.0 Reading Comprehension

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Identify structural patterns found in informational text (e.g., compare and contrast, cause and effect, sequential or chronological order, proposition and support) to strengthen comprehension.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

- 2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).
- 2.3 Make and confirm predictions about text by using prior knowledge and ideas presented in the text itself, including illustrations, titles, topic sentences, important words, and foreshadowing clues.
- 2.4 Evaluate new information and hypotheses by testing them against known information and ideas.
- 2.5 Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.
- 2.6 Distinguish between cause and effect and between fact and opinion in expository text.

<u>Writing</u>

1.0 Writing Strategies

Organization and Focus

- 1.1 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements.
- 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph compositions:
 - a. Provide an introductory paragraph.
 - b. Establish and support a central idea with a topic sentence at or near the beginning of the first paragraph.
 - c. Include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations.
 - d. Conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the points.
 - e. Use correct indention.
- 1.3 Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, posing and answering a question).

Research and Technology

1.6 Locate information in reference texts by using organizational features (e.g., prefaces, appendixes).

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

- 2.1 Write narratives:
 - a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience.
 - b. Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.
 - c. Use concrete sensory details.
 - d. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.
- 2.4 Write summaries that contain the main ideas of the reading selection and the most significant details.

English-Language Development Standards

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Listening and Speaking

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies

Comprehension

- 1.1 Ask thoughtful questions and respond to relevant questions with appropriate elaboration in oral settings.
- 1.2 Summarize major ideas and supporting evidence presented in spoken messages and formal presentations.

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

- 2.1 Make narrative presentations:
 - a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections about an event or experience.
 - b. Provide a context that enables the listener to imagine the circumstances of the event or experience.
 - c. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.

II. Unit Context

essons in this unit should be taught after studying the social organization, economic activities, legends, and beliefs of the diverse native population of California. Before introducing a study of the mission era, students should be aware of the physical geography of the regions of California and how Native peoples adapted to the natural environment. This unit focuses on the mission era and is not intended to explore the secularization of the missions or the establishment of rancherías.

III. Historical Background

Diego to San Francisco) history give a prominent place to the Spanish creation of a mission system in the second half of the eighteenth century. Spain had approached "civilizing" its territories in New Mexico and Baja California using three institutions: the mission, presidio [fort], and pueblo [town]. Spanish explorers had explored the west coast of North America in the 1540s, but they planted no settlements. Their efforts at establishing a permanent presence in Alta California began with sending Franciscan missionaries, who prided themselves on converting, at least in part, native people to Christian rituals and doctrine. In 1769 Father Junípero Serra, formerly a university professor in Spain, began to establish missions, most on or near the Pacific Ocean and connected by various public roads, or camino reales. From San Diego, where the first was built, the missions stretched north of San Francisco, where the last was built in present-day Sonoma in 1823. Nearly all of the mission-building was based on California native labor.

As historian Steven Hackel has said, "Alta California was . . . a colony of a colony, . . . overseen by men who knew much about what they wanted to do but little about those whom they sought to dominate." Conversion of the California natives to the Catholic faith was foremost in their minds, and that conversion was also the handmaiden of establishing Spanish control of the vast California lands. What happened in this encounter between Spaniards and Native Americans was one of thousands of encounters between Europeans and Native Americans that occurred in the Americas, but it was unique in many ways. Looking back, it is remarkable that such a vast territory fell under the sway of the mission system in a period of just a half century and that only 127 Franciscan missionaries operated the mission system between 1769 and 1833 (about half of the missionaries died while serving in the colony, only two of those at the hands of the native people). It is also remarkable how quickly the mission system collapsed, lasting only two generations after Father Serra's death in 1784.

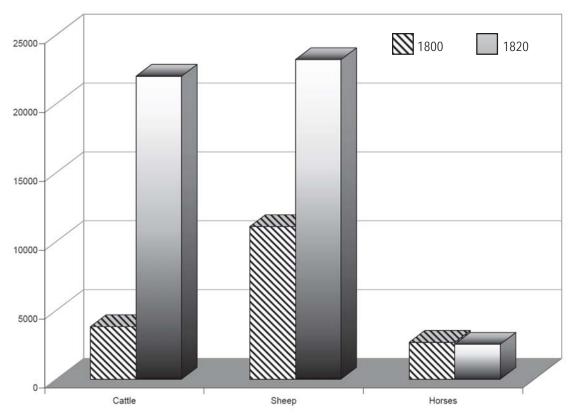
At the time Spanish missionaries reached Alta California, just before the American Revolution, native people lived in groups or "tribelets" much smaller than on other parts of the continent. Skillful at adapting to their generally mild environment, they were hunters, fishers, and gatherers, rather than maize farmers, as was true of many natives in other parts of the Americas. They were also traders, exchanging goods and food surpluses from village to village.

¹[The idea of one] "'El Camino Real' [is] . . . the myth of [mission] boosters from the turn of the 20th century. 'Camino Real' means literally 'King's Highway,' but in local usage it meant pubic road. There were dozens of "caminos reales" throughout the coastal and inland zone of Spanish settlement, but no single road ever connected them; no single route could overcome the environmentally diverse places the missions were located." —Prof. James Sandos, private communication (February 24, 2006).

² Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California*, 1769–1850 (University of North Carolnia Press, 2005), 6.

The Spanish came with Franciscan priests, soldiers, and settlers. But they were not numerous. Only about one thousand settlers and soldiers came during the Spanish period, which meant that California remained overwhelmingly native throughout the life of the mission system. At the time of the first census of 1790 in Alta California, only about 240 people were classified as Spanish—and most of them were mestizos, mixed-race people.

For many years historical accounts of the mission period have romanticized the missionization process. "The padres," historian John Tate Lanning claimed, "brought comfort and the most softening influence" to the "miserable life" of the "American aborigine." In such Eurocentric accounts, those California natives who failed to understand the benefits of a civilizing force among them were pictured as treacherous and unredeemable savages. It was within such a literature of noble Spanish attempts to civilize an uncivil people that the myth of the missions grew in the late nineteenth century and through the first half of the twentieth century.

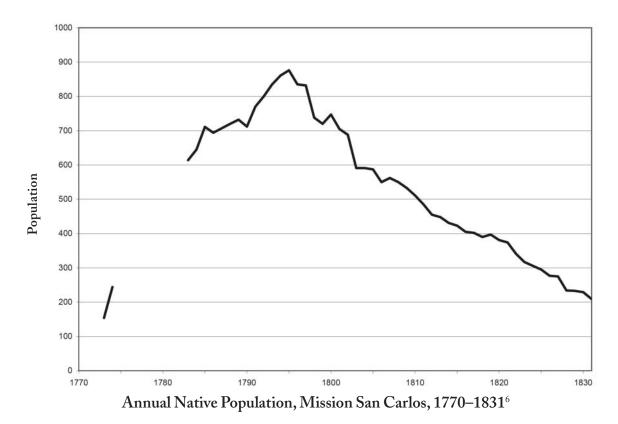


Total number of cattle, sheep, and horses in 1800 and 1820 at Missions Santa Cruz, San Carlos, Soledad, and San Juan Bautista. Orders went out in 1805 to slaughter horses, keeping their numbers down.⁴

³ David J. Weber, "Blood of Martyrs, Blood of Indians: Toward a More Balanced View of Spanish Missions in Seventeenth Century North America," in *Columbus, Confrontation, Christianity: The European-American Encounter Revisited*, ed. Timothy O'Keefe (Los Gatos, CA: Forbes Mills Press, 1994), 431.

⁴Information for chart from: Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 79. [Chart adapted by Marian Olivas.]

Although there were a few early pioneering historians of a more realistic treatment of Indians and the mission process, it was not until the 1960s that historians and anthropologists began to overturn the earlier interpretation of California's missions. Some of the new scholarship pictured the California natives as victims of Spanish cruelty and cultural oppression. But in recent decades, scholarship has ripened to see the encounter between the California natives and Spaniards through the eyes of both groups. Mature scholarship today understands, as one of its best historians has said, that the Franciscans "did not succeed unless Indians cooperated, and Indians cooperated only when they believed they had something to gain from the new religion and the material benefits that accompanied it, or too much to lose from resisting it."



One of the most important insights that has come through recent scholarship is the double blow that the Spanish arrival silently inflicted on native Californians. The first blow was disease—influenza, measles, and other water-borne afflictions. The second blow was the degradation of the environment through the introduction of Spanish flora and fauna: horses, pigs, cattle, and mules followed by European weeds and grasses. Outside the missions, Spanish livestock exhausted native grasses, soon to be replaced by

⁵ David J. Weber, The Spanish Frontier in North America (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 115.

⁶ The native population was recorded as 154 natives in 1773, peaked at 876 in 1795, and was down to 209 by 1833. Data for graph from Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 98–99, after graph on page 101. [Chart adapted by Marian Olivas.]

Old World grasses and by weeds that crossed the Atlantic. Gradually, indigenous food sources were supplanted, in some cases leading to a subsistence crisis for native people.

Though the padres were effective in drawing California natives to the missions, they were unable to arrest the grim reality that mission life sapped the native population. A very crude way of seeing this is to count California native births against their deaths in the missions. Both the low fertility rate and the high mortality rate pointed in the same direction—the collapse of the missionizing enterprise. At Mission San Carlos, for example, California natives continued to arrive from 1770 to the early 1800s; but the California native population could not reproduce itself and the mission population, after reaching a peak of nearly 900 converts, fell at a sickening pace. By 1810, the California natives at the mission were barely 500 and by 1830 less than half of that. During the entire history of the mission, more than a third of all babies born did not reach their first birthday and, of those who survived their first year, 43 percent did not reach their fifth birthday.⁷ As historian Steven Hackel has written, the California missions "offered the promise of individual and community salvation, but they destroyed nearly all those they intended to save."

IV. Teaching Note

he lessons in this unit refer to the native populations of California using the tribal name, if known, or the general term "California natives." In a number of primary sources, students will come across the use of other terms such as "Indian," "mission Indian," and "savage."

Before beginning the unit, explain to students that various terms have been used to refer to the native people of the Americas. When reading primary sources, note that explorers, soldiers, and missionaries from Spain were often demeaning when describing the native Californians. Discuss how prejudice can be reflected in the ways people describe other cultures.

⁷ Hackel, Children of Coyote, 106-7.

⁸ Ibid, 97.