Chapter 1

Devil's Destiny

> Father Narciso was accused of baptizing Indians by force. When punished they protested, "Father, it hurts!"
>
> "Of course," agreed the missionary, "but the pains of hell hurt worse."
>
> —Mrs. Fremont Older, *California Missions and Their Romances*

In the early spring of 1786, three native residents of Mission Santa Clara issued a startling accusation: the mission's Father Tomás de la Peña had murdered four local Indians two years before. The testimonies of Plácido Ortiz, Anecelto Valdez, and the local headman Antonio about the priest's activities soon prompted extensive investigations by Spanish colonial officials. As those efforts developed, another native resident of the area reported that he had seen the friar give "many blows with the iron of a hoe to someone who was watering the crops." The priest for his part claimed that he had only been teaching that man how to use the hoe properly, and that the deceased had died instead from "a serious epidemic illness," an all too common problem in the late-eighteenth-century Santa Clara Valley. In defending himself, Peña argued that local Spanish soldiers and not Catholic priests were the violent actors often guilty of punishing native people too severely. He wrote that "On occasion soldiers have used their weapons against the pagans without having encountered resistance. At times the pagans have been left abused by the cruel punishment of being hung from a tree by one foot, by scarifying their buttocks with swords. The same soldiers hang them and then beat them with staves, each one taking his turn." Despite Peña's emphatic pleas, Alta California's Governor Pedro Fages initially decided that the friar had been too severe in his treatment of local natives, and that several had likely died as a result of the cleric's practice of corporal punishment. But

Fages then abruptly changed his mind; he "concluded that the three main accusers among the Indians had manufactured the whole thing" and sent the native perjurers to be incarcerated at the Monterey Presidio for ten years. In the following months, several witnesses in the case admitted that they had lied to investigators about the Franciscan's activities, pressured to do so by Plácido and Antonio.

The actions and reactions of priest, perjurers, and governor illustrate the messy set of social relations that had developed in the Santa Clara Valley since the arrival of the Spanish in the previous decade. Peña had founded the mission only a few years before, and he defended himself by attacking the colonial soldiers there to support the Catholic settlement. Government officials at times worried about Franciscan behavior, and Indians reacted in a variety of ways to the Spanish presence. Both friars and military officials increasingly believed that many Indians acted from untrustworthy motives: Plácido, the leader of the three accusers, seems to have been driven by anger about his declining political authority in the region. One of several natives of Baja California drawn to the area to work at the local mission, Plácido had managed the friars' storehouse, distributing food to local residents with the help of Anecleto and Antonio, until Father Peña removed him from that prestigious position because of apparent graft. The three accusers apparently hoped that their verbal assault on Peña would lead to the priest's removal and would help them regain their lost authority at the mission.

The lines of continuity running between Peña's valley and the more modern Silicon Valley are few and hard to trace. Like later elites, Spanish colonists manipulated work and opportunity to shore up their political control. While colonial social categories that differentiated Europeans from Indians were not hard and fast during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they appeared more and more determining as the decades passed. As these categories became more rigid, they did so along racial lines; in short, the Devil began making trouble by the late eighteenth century. Even by 1786, residents of northern Alta California had begun to identify themselves in ethno-racial terms as either indigenous, mixed-race, or European. Such racial thinking prompted Peña and other colonial authorities to define their own more European and "civilized" practices in opposition to Alta California's heathen Indians, even as native people with diverse cultural traditions and linguistic backgrounds came together in struggles against the Spaniards. These developments had parallels in many places where European colonists controlled new territories, but they remain largely forgotten in Northern California.

Expressing new ideas about race, residents such as Antonio and Father Peña watched changing cultural practices reshape the Valley and give birth to new social conflicts during the 1780s. Among other things, colonial policies in Alta California shaped the project of Spanish settlement, created new

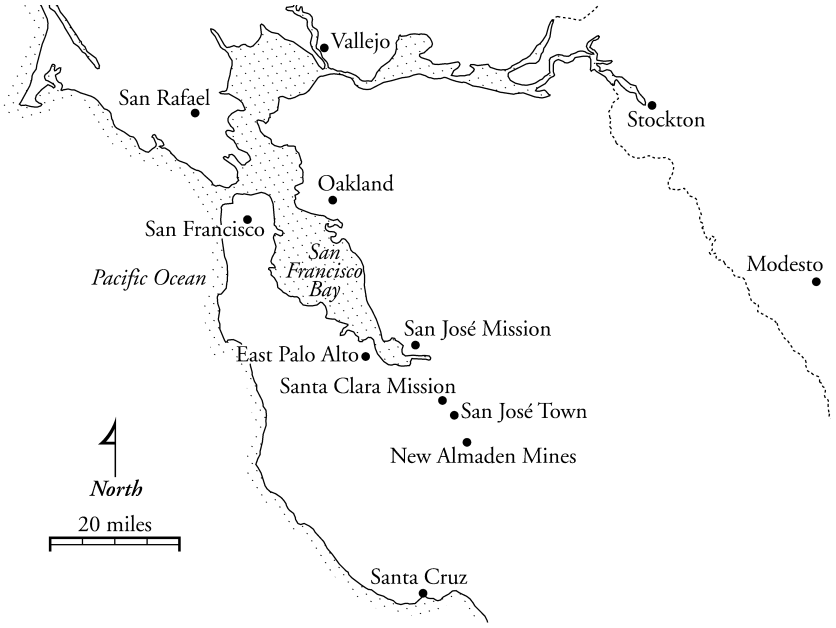
divisions among native inhabitants, reframed political aspirations, and helped define concepts such as "freedom." Natives like Plácido were clearly interested in the contents of the mission's storehouses and valued access to them. For their part, Franciscans emphasized that those repositories would help to acculturate the region's natives to Catholic and European practices. Soldiers and settlers, on the other hand, viewed commodities with a different eye, and they frequently valued Indian men as workers and Indian women as wives or sexual conquests. In partial response, native residents such as Plácido, Anecelto, and Antonio developed fresh tactics of political resistance and accommodation.

The determining force of race and the rapid pace of native acculturation could already be seen in Peña's encounter with Antonio and the other accusers, which, in turn, revealed two other changes that would reshape Valley society over the next sixty years. First, as Peña's own testimony about monitoring the "proper" use of a hoe made clear, the Spaniards introduced new ways of understanding and controlling productive work in the Valley. Prior to the arrival of these Europeans, as we shall see, no Valley resident regulated the labor of another in this way, and conflicts and debates about work persisted through the early 1840s and beyond. Second, new migrations began to restructure Valley society. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw the influx of people, goods, and ideas into the region as Alta California was increasingly linked to Europe, central Mexico, and eventually the eastern United States. By contrast, many native residents increasingly chose to leave the region for other parts of the province.

This was imperial Alta California, an area and an epoch shaped by political conflicts, labor struggles, rapid cultural change, and new migrations. Together these developments laid a foundation upon which white Americans would establish themselves by the 1840s. Valley communities developed more fiercely racialized allegiances after the United States claimed the territory in 1848, but the origins of such thinking lay in this earlier era. While often celebrated as an arcadia, the San José area witnessed new struggles for political power by the early nineteenth century that would persist for over a century. Some Indians planned militant revolts, while others joined mission society or worked for European colonists. In this "contested Eden," diverse communities continued to compete against a backdrop of mythmaking about the Valley's peace and prosperity.[1]

RACE IN THE VALLEY

Long before Plácido, Anacelto, and Antonio ever met Father Peña, their forebears had established extensive village settlements, trade networks, and social organizations based on gathering acorns, fennel, and other plants through-



San José and Northern California. Map by Scott Flodin.

out the region. The Ohlone had inhabited the area for at least six thousand years prior to Spanish explorations, existing amidst an atmosphere of political rivalries and occasional violence, and patterns of their social organization remained intact well into the nineteenth century. Like many native residents elsewhere in northern Alta California, Valley inhabitants continued to hunt tule elk, antelope, deer, and other animals, to harvest clams, to fish in local streams, and to burn grasslands in order to encourage the annual growth of herbs, grasses, and other plants.[2]

As the Peña episode makes clear, social relations in Alta California became more complex and marked by often bloody conflicts after the arrival of the Spanish. The settlers who entered the Valley in the late eighteenth century did not find a "virgin land" devoid of human settlement, of course, but Spanish commander Pedro Fages's first visit to the region in 1770 did set the stage for subsequent colonial projects to "civilize" local "savages." Race functioned as a governing principle of political identity, used to determine the distribution of land, labor, and other resources, but racial categories were less hard and fixed than they would later become. Religiosity proved a more determining force, at least in the early years of Spanish control. The Santa Clara Valley encountered Europe in the Age of Enlightenment, and Fages and his compatriots spoke openly about the heathens residing in the region. In

the aftermath of heated sixteenth- and seventeenth-century debates about human rationality, universalism, and political equality, Europeans struggled to understand local natives and assert their own power in the region.

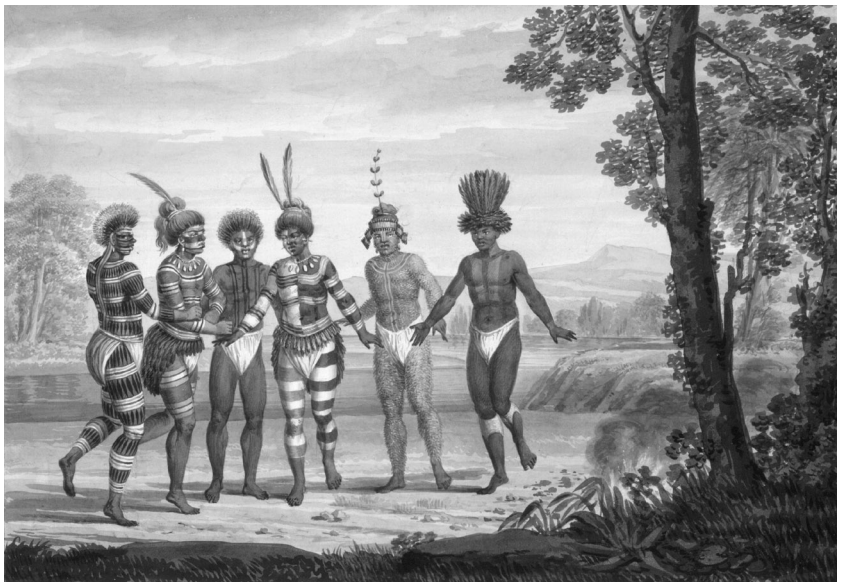
To emphasize that their arrival in northern Alta California heralded a new social order, José Joaquín Moraga and other representatives of the Spanish crown, most from the Mexican regions of Sonora and Sinaloa, constructed a new colonial settlement in 1777 on the ruins of an abandoned native village, naming it San José de Guadalupe after Moraga's patron saint.[3] In building this first *pueblo* (Spanish civilian town) in Alta California, the Spanish government hoped that colonial settlers from Europe and central New Spain (Mexico) would grow enough wheat to support the *presidios* (garrisons or fortresses) at nearby San Francisco and Monterey. They also intended to extend "the Catholic Religion to the numerous Gentiles who live in these lands." The pueblo and the two missions assured Spanish dominance by 1780, making the Valley a hub of colonial society in northern Alta California, one integrally dependent on both indigenous residents of the region and ongoing ties to other parts of New Spain.[4]

Challenging the economic and cultural practices of the region's native demographic majority, the pueblo of San José grew at a rapid rate in the early nineteenth century, doubling in size every twenty-five years (see table 1). But in this remote region surrounded by thousands of native Californians, colonists reckoned repeatedly with indigenous peoples and the very meaning of "Spanishness." At times *pobladores* (settlers) argued for militant vigilance and affirmed stark contrasts between themselves and California Indians. Responding in 1782 to Indian raids on Mission Santa Clara livestock, Lieutenant José Joaquín Moraga declared that "we should consider them

TABLE 1
Estimated Population of San José Pueblo, 1790–1848

Year	*Estimated Population*
1790	80
1800	165
1810	125
1820	240
1828	415
1846	700

Source: Daniel Garr, "A Frontier Agrarian Settlement: San José de Guadelupe [*sic*], 1777–1850," *San José Studies* 2:3 (November 1976), 98; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1888), 2:133, 377; Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1888), 6:4.



A depiction of the Ohlone Indians who lived around Mission San José. BancPic 1963:001:1023:FR, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

enemies, all the more because we are surrounded by a great number of pagans. At any hour they could turn ugly, come to realize what they could do as a united group, and direct their will against our work." Franciscan friars at Mission San José asserted in 1813 that the area's native people had little in common with enlightened Europeans, observing that these native residents were "the poorest, most backward, and most stupid of the peoples of America." Other chroniclers reported that the Ohlone were somehow less than human, as when the artist Louis Choris suggested in 1816 that "I have never seen one laugh. I have never seen one look one in the face."[5]

But impressions of the region's "uncivilized" Indians remained complicated by local religious, political, and demographic factors. Like their counterparts in many other Spanish frontier settlements, Santa Clara Valley colonists often did make room for the Ohlone and other indigenous groups on their social ladder, and unlike most English colonists elsewhere in North America, Alta Californians witnessed significant intermarriage between Europeans and local Indians. The children of *pobladores* and native residents often became full members of colonial society and enjoyed significant social status. Geographic isolation from other parts of the Spanish empire demanded such openness. The region's distance from the rest of Mexico led few recognizably "Spanish" colonists to arrive in the Valley prior to the 1830s, and it was natural increase rather than immigration that accounted for most

of the pueblo's demographic growth throughout the early nineteenth century. The ethnic diversity of the small settler population also complicated local social divisions, and in strict blood quantum terms, most were in fact *castas*, mixed-blooded *mestizos* and *mulatos* who shared a Spanish, Indian, and African heritage. Pueblo San José residents were many-hued, and only one of seventy-one adult males living in the pueblo between 1786 and 1799 had been born in Spain and could accurately claim *pureza de sangre* (pure Spanish blood).[6]

This phenotypical and cultural diversity complicated the ways *pobladores* thought about native people. Catholic proselytizing offered Indian equality under God, muted some overt conflicts between the settler and indigenous populations, and created new opportunities for many Ohlone. Catholic friars in the Santa Clara Valley and other parts of Alta California struggled to change the religious practices and world-view of the recently converted Indians in their charge by promising salvation in Heaven and material benefits on Earth. Like other missionaries throughout Latin America, they established catechism classes to teach Catholic doctrine in both Spanish and native languages, attempted to eradicate "heathen" customs and traditions, and stressed the importance of sexual abstinence before marriage. In the early nineteenth century, the Franciscans also attempted to put an end to native abortion practices, which had continued at Mission Santa Clara. As agents of cultural change, colonial religious authorities over the next twenty years extended their spiritual influence over many local Indians. Priests such as Fray Magín Catalá, who arrived at Santa Clara in 1794, conducted exorcisms to remove the evil he believed haunted neophyte communities, speaking directly to natives' longstanding spiritual concerns about evil spirits. As Catalá cultivated his prestige as one especially knowledgable about Catholic teaching and the worship of Christ, rumors abounded that the padre had foretold numerous deaths among the local neophytes, even sowing hardship among his enemies.[7]

From the time of Mission Santa Clara's establishment in 1777 and Mission San José's founding in 1797, the two local missions lured numerous native residents into the Valley's colonial settlements by offering food, spiritual rewards, and prestige. Boasting the largest group of neophytes in northern Alta California, Mission San José soon grew larger than the nearby pueblo. Friars became involved in local power struggles within and between *rancherías*, and they did their best to play politics to their own advantage. In the early years of Mission Santa Clara's existence, the Franciscans had baptized four children of the prominent local Ohlone headman Aqui to connect themselves to the Valley's indigenous power structure. These spiritual conquests reaffirmed the leadership of the local headman, and signs of Franciscan success quickly became clear.[8] In baptizing thousands more, the friars assured converts that they might one day become self-supporting, contributing members of Spanish society.[9]

While social divisions remained, belying that promise, the local missions and the pueblo of San José did eventually provide some real opportunities to Alta California natives, and other *indios* also held positions of prestige in colonial society. Most notably, a farm worker and native of Chihuahua named Manuel González became *alcalde* (mayor) of San José pueblo in the 1780s. The possibility that indios might advance undoubtedly reinforced the colonial system, but the friars also resorted to more brutal tactics to entice non-Christians to join the mission communities. Colonial violence determined the ways in which California natives responded to the rapid changes underway during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, prompted new patterns of migration throughout Alta California, and shaped the stories Indians would subsequently tell about the Spanish colonists. Both Indians and soldiers in the area later remembered, for instance, that Mission Santa Clara's Father Manuel Fernández had once traveled to nearby rancherías and "severely threatened the Indians who refused to become Christians, and with some he even went beyond threats to actual punishment." The priest purportedly horsewhipped an Indian slow to respond to his call, and some native people in the Santa Clara Valley, affirming that friars were often agents of violence, spread the news that Franciscans purposefully burnt the rancherías of non-Christians.[10]

In part because of Franciscan strong-arm tactics, many native people living in Valley missions defiantly retained their existing cultural and political practices well into the nineteenth century.[11] Even at the missions, many parents gave their newborn children clandestine Ohlone names such as Kaknu, and Christian Indians performed the dances that had been their "main form of communal religious expression" prior to their settlement at the missions.[12] The Ohlone's indigenous trade network also remained in operation, local tribelets in the Bay Area continued to speak "dialects of five mutually unintelligible languages," and each village still represented "an independent, landholding religious congregation" that retold its own myths and practiced its own ceremonies. Interrancheria ties depended on a longstanding system of shell money that enabled residents to trade with one another, though conflicts over commerce as well as territorial boundaries erupted among them both before and after the arrival of Spanish colonists. Indigenous headmen in Valley towns continued to resolve conflicts within their own settlements, and established modes of political resolution—particularly commerce and intermarriage—still provided ways to mediate intervillage conflict. The colonial intrusion did change affiliations among native people, however, and local residents of Valley missions forged new relations with ranchería residents with whom they often had only limited prior contact. As they congregated in the area surrounding San José pueblo, former residents of distant villages now married and formed political ties, and a new lingua franca apparently emerged, "an amalgamation" of the dialects spoken by the diverse neophyte population.[13]

In the mission context, new social lines marked insiders from outsiders, the lowly from the more powerful. Acts of violence against "barbaric" Indians in the area soon became a critical way to define those categories. And while always unsteady and qualified by religious promises of inclusion, race clearly drew fateful and clear distinctions. Most obviously, newcomers to California imported microbes to the area that attacked natives regardless of cultural or ideological orientation. Lacking natural immunities to smallpox and other threats, many who flocked to Valley missions seeking "baptism and other rituals that might protect them from disease" found that the poor sanitation, close living quarters, and stressful conditions of the missions "increased morbidity and mortality" significantly during the early 1800s. In response, ranchería and mission inhabitants called upon their own shamans to cleanse them of these new diseases, and their ties to home communities only led to greater devastation when returning Christians unwittingly spread microbes further into the interior of California. Between 1802 and 1833 at least 6,565 Indians died at Mission Santa Clara from measles, smallpox, and other diseases, and the four northern Alta California missions would bury some 10,812 inhabitants by 1840.[14]

For those who survived, culture and religion went far in distinguishing social position. The Valley's distance from central Mexico led many local mestizos and settled indios to affirm more vehemently by the early nineteenth century that they were culturally "Spanish." Reinforcing their distance from the *indios bárbaros* ("barbarous Indians") in the area, pueblo denizens called themselves *vecinos*, or residents, of Valley settlements. Both before and after Mexico's independence from Spain in 1821, local natives who did not settle at the missions, become Christians, speak Spanish, and adopt other Spanish-Mexican cultural practices remained defined as threatening outsiders, *bárbaros* in the eyes of these "people of reason" (*gente de razón*), acculturated persons of African, Indian, and Spanish descent. A traveler in the Valley during the 1820s noted that these inhabitants "style themselves *Gente de Razón* to distinguish themselves from the Indians," and that they berated the "heathens" whose "intellectual qualities are frequent subjects of animadversion amongst these enlightened communities." Neophytes and their children could become people of reason and advance in the colonial context. As in other parts of New Spain, residency in the missions or pueblo at times allowed some Indians to "declare themselves *mestizos*." To add to the fluidity of social categories, by the 1820s and 1830s, the Santa Clara Valley and other parts of Alta California would witness the emergence of a "Californio" identity based on an affirmation of the region's Castillian heritage.[15]

As *gente de razón* defined their own privileges and the boundaries between civilized and uncivilized communities, and as Franciscan missionaries encouraged native acculturation and settlement, many Indian peoples launched a defiant opposition to the colonial order. Neophytes fleeing Valley

missions to return to their rancherías began by the early nineteenth century to plot collaborative raids on those Spanish settlements, plans that no doubt helped to shape a new sense of pan-Indian affiliation. Their overt and at times violent efforts to resist Spain's colonial presence further contributed to a belief among *gente de razón* that true barbarians lived just beyond the reach of the Spanish colonists. Franciscan friars at Mission San José literally mapped these fears onto the local landscape in 1824 when they drew a picture that marked surrounding regions as the home of *indios bárbaros*. Colonists argued for stricter controls over fugitive neophytes and concerns about depredations led friars and soldiers to band together by the early nineteenth century to subdue those Indian communities once again. *Gente de razón* from the missions and the pueblo often worked together to defend their settlements against Indian raids, and in typical fashion Sergeant Luis Peralta led a retaliatory expedition in 1805 against a ranchería that had attacked two Valley colonists. His party killed ten and sent twenty-nine others to live at Mission San José.[16]

Brutal as this was, violence did not only break out between Spaniards and Indians. In fact, neophytes often engaged Alta California's so-called *bárbaros* during the early nineteenth century in violent military conflicts. Those confrontations often reflected older political tensions between rancherías, longstanding regional dynamics that the Franciscans manipulated to their own advantage. In one such case in 1823, Father Pedro José Altamira of Mission San Francisco Solano accused Father Narciso Durán of Mission San José of ordering Indians under his direction to attack, kill, and capture native rebels from surrounding communities. Again in 1831, when a Mission Santa Clara neophyte named Yóscolo rebelled against the Franciscans and raided their supplies, other neophytes were sent to capture him. Successful in their venture, they helped to nail Yóscolo's "head . . . to a post near the church door as an object lesson." The messy politics of imperial Alta California became most clear in such moments when colonial politics pitted Indian against Indian.[17]

LABOR TROUBLES

Neophytes who took up arms helped to maintain the power and strength of Spanish settlements, and colonists developed a new labor system in the Valley to harness the work of these Indians and others. Believing that native Californians had gathered acorns and done little else prior to the Europeans' arrival, officials enforced new approaches to labor and offered new rewards to encourage agricultural production. Most Spanish policymakers had assumed since the 1760s that native Californians would labor in Franciscan missions, and the ecological disruptions wrought by the arrival of European

cattle and agricultural practices pushed many native residents to do so. An interest in trade goods prompted others to seek out the friars, and many young Ohlone flocked to the missions in quest of material items never before seen in California. As Father Francisco Palóu explained it, Franciscans were well aware that local residents could "be conquered first only by their interest in being fed and clothed, and afterwards they gradually acquire knowledge of what is spiritually good and evil. If the missionaries had nothing to give them, they could not be won over." To acquire these riches, however, California natives had to submit to the Franciscans' labor requirements, and the missions began to instruct Indians to work in a European fashion. One historian has suggested that some 60 to 70 percent of the male population at the missions worked under the friars' immediate direction, while roughly 30 percent labored in agriculture, and the remaining 10 percent tended the Franciscans' large herds of cattle. *Mayordomos*, drawn from the military, supervised neophyte farm workers and *vaqueros* (cowhands). Only male neophytes worked in these sorts of tasks, and the friars reproduced the division of work familiar in Europe by directing native women to "engage in tasks fitted to their sex."[18]

As in other parts of Alta California, bells rang throughout the day to mark the rhythms of daily life at Santa Clara and San José missions and to remind residents of the developing economic system. They announced the beginning of work shifts, the end of mealtimes, and the singing of vespers, and Indians lived with an ear to those chimes. From the vantage point of the friars, there was much work to be done in this newly settled Valley. Mission bells reinforced their authority and helped guide regional developments. In 1799, for instance, Santa Clara's Fray Magin Catalá directed those in his charge to build a road connecting his mission to the San José pueblo. The Alameda, as it became known, would serve as the major thoroughfare in the area throughout the course of the nineteenth century. (The road survives and remains an important landmark today.) Gangs of Indian workers also performed other chores. The resident Nasario Galindo recalled that Mission San José neophytes processed grain and carried fifty-pound loads of wheat collected from local fields during the Mexican period. Other converts helped transport local products to market, and when hides could not be moved by cart from the Santa Clara Mission to the docks nine miles away because of winter rains one year, "about a thousand Indians were loaded each with a hide, and carried them to the embarcadero."[19]

To guide these projects, soldiers and colonists managed and controlled, surveyed and tutored native laborers. Craftsmen from Mexico arrived to teach neophytes skills useful to the mission economy. Franciscans appointed trusted natives to monitor their fellow neophytes, yet another example of the intra-ethnic divisions developing in the Valley, and these powerful Indian go-betweens often enforced Franciscan authority. Under the direction of those

local overseers, neophytes labored not for wages but rather under a system of Franciscan paternalism that rewarded these so-called children with food and clothing. The missions were a collective enterprise, and native workers sustained the community, but converts felt a damaging toll on their bodies when Franciscans, *alcaldes*, and *mayordomos* made use of corporal punishments to control their labor. Economic changes shaped both individual aspirations and new social conflicts. Clearly, those like Antonio, who charged Father Peña with murder in 1786, saw work for the friars as a means to increase their own power and prestige in the mission system. For their part, Peña and other friars viewed the work of Indians as their "way to salvation, and if it could be directed towards increasing the wealth of the mission and acquiring religious articles for the church, then so much the better."[20]

Colonial society also offered Indian laborers work opportunities outside the mission boundaries. Pueblo residents coveted Indian laborers for themselves, and the town's colonial elite eventually defined its own economic and social privileges in relation to the tasks performed for them by local Indians. Native Californians who lived in pueblo San José escaped Franciscan supervision and often could more easily preserve their religion and independence. Many who did so became vaqueros and took quickly to horse culture, becoming extraordinarily adept at breaking and riding the wild mares and stallions that congregated near the San José pueblo. By the 1830s they worked for local elites who depended on these skills and others acquired in and around the missions. One Valley resident recalled how "many [neophyte] shepherds" counted Mission Santa Clara's sheep in their native language ("1-Imefen; 2-Uchigin; 3-Capagan," etc.) by marking a stick "as to account for the flock." Native Californians took domestic jobs, as well, and because local pueblo families desired household servants, approximately 150 native servants, most of them women, made up one-sixth of San José's population by the 1820s. Indian residents clearly dominated these and other lower rungs of Valley society.[21]

Colonial San José and its adjacent missions had done much to create new economic and cultural practices, but emerging labor systems also resulted from ongoing dynamics among Indians of different rancherías. Native peoples remained agents of their own history. Colonists took advantage of interrancheria disputes to purchase captives when warfare between kin groups erupted in the San Joaquín Valley. Similarly, indigenous inhabitants at times helped Santa Clara Valley colonists secure workers by acquiring other Indians for the missions and pueblo. In the 1840s, for example, Máximo, a headman of a Miwok ranchería who had become a military captain in John A. Sutter's Sacramento Valley settlement of New Helvetia, sent captured Miwok laborers to the secularized Mission San José. Another ex-neophyte from Mission Santa Clara who had rebelled in the 1830s also trafficked in Indian workers by 1848. Eager to make peace with the San José pueblo from

which he had stolen many horses, and ready to become a labor contractor in the new period of American rule, he offered the local alcalde gifts of captured native people, promising they "would be useful workers."[22]

With Indian labor assured, friars and pueblo residents in the Santa Clara Valley participated in new patterns of trade during the early nineteenth century, linking the San José area to more distant economies as capitalism developed worldwide. While Valley residents did not witness the "market revolution" experienced by contemporary New Englanders, their orientation toward outside commerce impressed newcomers. When in 1806 Count Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov and his entourage from Sitka purchased food in the area, for example, a member of the Russian expedition noted that Father Uria of the San José Mission already knew how to obtain "business advantages" in the negotiations. The Russian observed that "it was by no means the first time" that Padre Pedro de la Cueva "had engaged in trade." Most importantly, a vital commerce soon developed in Alta California that sent local cow hides and tallow to New England in exchange for manufactured goods. The market economies of missions San José and Santa Clara developed rapidly as a result of these activities, with the latter raising approximately 18,000 head of cattle, 1,500 sheep, and 1,100 horses during the 1820s alone. Rather than backwater traditionalists—as Franciscan missionaries would later be portrayed by Americans arriving in California—foreign traders saw the priests at missions San José and Santa Clara as "first-class merchants" and "shrewd partners" in business, and more than one historian has since contended that these clerical entrepreneurs became more interested in these economic activities than in the spiritual conversion of their Indian wards.[23] The business acumen of local missionaries in fact foreshadowed that of later settlers in the Valley.

The hide and tallow trade also accelerated the development of a mestizo bourgeoisie in the Valley. By 1819 there were forty-five rancheros living in the pueblo of San José, and an American observer noted soon thereafter that residents "who had any wealth, had it in cattle, at their ranches in the vicinity." The hide and tallow agent Faxon Dean Atherton expressed his certainty in 1836 that it was "their chief pride . . . to see who can cheat a foreigner the most." To capitalize on these emerging trade networks linking California to world markets, the Valley's newly established Mexican elite—residents such as Antonio Pico, Selvis Pacheco, Dolores Pacheco, Jose Noriega, and Antonio Suñol—took full advantage of Indian workers. Since 1769 California Indians had provided the sweat and muscle that developed Valley commerce, but during the 1820s friars began to worry about their dwindling influence with native residents. From the early years of the Spanish occupation of the Valley, the friars had struggled to keep local Indians away from the corrupting influence of San José pueblo where settlers offered neophytes valued trade goods in exchange for their work. Stymied by the difficulties of controlling native labor in the Valley, Fray Narciso Durán, the longtime Mis-

sion San José priest, would complain in 1845 that "the Indians, in my opinion, do not deserve to be directed by a missionary. A slavedriver is what they ought to have."[24]

Broader political changes frustrated Durán and other clerics. As Valley residents became tied to distant markets, Alta California lost its colonial ties to Spain and became "Mexican" national territory for the first time in 1821. Mexican independence accelerated other economic transformations already underway and threatened Franciscan authority. A new national framework began to play an important role in governing local intergroup relations, and discussions of republican citizenship would shape Valley politics for decades. Most importantly, Mexico's governing authorities emphasized that Indians would be truly equal citizens of the new nation, included to a degree unknown in the colonial period. Officials sought to do away with the corporate property holdings of the Church, now at odds with the ideals of secular nationalism and a society of yeomen farmers. Under the rule of Mexican President Valentín Gómez Farias, the national government in 1833 announced that the missions would be "secularized"—that is, converted into parishes—and that Franciscan lands would be broken into thirty-three-acre parcels that individual neophytes might own. Many in California and central Mexico supported this attack on Church power as a way both to teach Indians the value of private property and to limit the influence of missionaries, still loyal to their *patria* (motherland) of Spain. But because natives were deemed unfit for the privileges of landowning, nascent elites in places like the Santa Clara Valley acquired mission properties and established methods of debt peonage to retain control over legions of Indian workers.[25]

Enterprising mestizo sons of presidio soldiers acquired enormous tracts of land in the Santa Clara Valley during the 1830s, and critics charged that those inhabitants supported mission secularization as a poorly veiled property grab. Liberal rhetoric about neophytes' common Mexican citizenship also conveniently justified the exploitation of Indians no longer "productively" attached to the missions and ensured enormous profits in an expanded hide and tallow trade. Mission San José's Fray Narciso Durán contended in 1831 that local *gente de razón* adamantly believed that when it came to difficult work,

> The INDIAN must do it. Does the wheat need to be cut? Bring in the INDIAN. You need to . . . build a house, make a coral, carry firewood [or] water for the kitchen, etc? Let the INDIAN do it. . . . They rely upon the INDIAN as if the INDIAN alone were the son of Adam and everyone else didn't have arms. . . . In this way it actually seems as if nature had destined the Indian to be the slave of the *gente de razón.*

As elite rancheros replaced the padres as the region's new labor brokers, most neophytes remained propertyless and could take little solace in the once powerful paternalism of the Franciscans. Few gained ownership of Alta

California's redistributed mission lands, and only seven of the more than one thousand former inhabitants of Santa Clara Mission received such property.[26] The liberal rhetoric of Mexican independence in the end meant few material gains for native residents of northern Alta California.

But while assumptions about Indian inferiority survived in San José pueblo, national debates about mission secularization exposed some of the contradictions in contemporary liberal thinking about political rights. *Gente de razón* promised Indian neophytes new freedoms but insisted that they were not yet ready for full equality with landed mestizos, and these pronouncements prompted many native peoples to redefine their interests. Indians influenced by liberal notions of social equality declared their own sense of purpose in Alta California. On a practical side, some engaged in military resistance or stole settlers' livestock. A handful filed formal petitions with the new government to request freedom from Franciscan control, and others fled the missions to return to ancestral rancherías. Four hundred neophytes at Mission San José did so in May 1827, and the population of Mission Santa Clara would soon decline from 1,125 converts in 1832 to just 291 in 1839. By 1842 the number of mission residents in Alta California had likely declined to a third of what it had been in 1834. Government official Antonio María Osio recognized that these revolts and movements developed in part from liberal efforts to "inst[ill] republican ideals in the Indians' minds." While Osio believed that native residents "did not understand" the complex political questions of the day, he acknowledged that former neophytes now "deemed themselves important persons and took to calling each other 'sovereign,' since they wanted to give themselves the full treatment to which citizens were entitled." Responding to Indian depredations, he and others lamented that the Franciscans could no longer "supervise the Indians' conduct and punish them appropriately when they deserved it."[27]

Other political conflicts also became critical to Valley residents after 1821, and some of these developments anticipated future Valley struggles over national identity. Many Mexican citizens in Alta California expressed growing resentment about their own lack of participation in local and national decision making. Their strong sense of regional identity, nurtured by Alta California's long isolation from Mexico City, now came into conflict with the emergent nationalism articulated in central Mexico. Local attachments developed among Alta California's *gente de razón*, and many San Joséans during the 1820s and 1830s increasingly thought of themselves as "Californios" rather than "Mexicans," thereby trumpeting their distinctiveness. Residents emphasized "a sense of reciprocity and obligation, at least with respect to other *gente de razón*," and their growing interest in blood purity shaped an insistence that, unlike Mexicans to the south, Californios had remained racially pure in far northern New Spain, "descendents of pure Spaniards."[28]

Arguments that the region remained more Spanish than mestizo, more

Californio than Mexican, also gave rise to new calls for Alta California's political separation from Mexico City. Californios launched a number of failed revolts against the central government during the 1830s and 1840s. Not surprisingly, Mexican government officials expressed concern about such dissent within their new nation and feared that Russia, but especially the United States, might take control of Alta California. To deter foreign threats, Mexican officials therefore passed a Colonization Act in 1824 to populate the nation's far northern provinces with new citizens. While Alta California remained an isolated outpost in the eyes of most Mexican officials over the next two decades, this new policy encouraged a gradual influx of American and European immigrants into the Santa Clara Valley, foreigners who could naturalize as Mexicanos if they embraced Catholicism. Empowered to grant property, the governors of Alta California made forty-one land grants in the Santa Clara County area after 1821, including several to immigrant Europeans and Anglo-Americans. This right to own land and establish a settled community would prove critical to the Valley's subsequent history, as residency eventually led white settlers to claim the Valley for themselves in the name of their own racial supremacy.[29]

But in the short term, relations between the region's small number of incoming American settlers and its already-established Mexican citizens remained mostly harmonious. As late as 1845 only about 150 Americans resided in the pueblo, compared with 750 Mexicans, and a U.S. takeover of Mexico still seemed anything but inevitable. Few American settlers showed disdain for Mexican culture prior to 1845, and many instead entered Alta California society, learned the Spanish language, accepted Mexican citizenship, and sometimes even took Spanish surnames.[30] A few served in the *diputación*, or territorial legislature. Roughly two-thirds of the Anglo male population in San José married Mexican women between 1821 and 1846, and many American settlers also joined Californios in their grievances against the Mexican government.[31] Common economic interests also united Mexicans and white Americans. Joining propertied Alta Californians, men such as Robert Livermore and Henry Bee, like many Mexican rancheros, used California Indians as laborers, relying on former neophytes to work the Valley soil. Together, Americans and Mexicans sold produce and cattle to hide and tallow traders visiting San Francisco Bay, to Russian soldiers who lived at Fort Ross, and to residents of the Hawaiian Islands.[32]

But race relations began to change during the 1830s, and the Devil infiltrated the Valley in new ways. White Americans brought with them the disdain for Indian "savages" central to American racial thought during this period, and these incoming settlers shared with local Californios a common desire to subdue the "barbarous Indians" nearby. Settlers like William Heath Davis approved the "good discipline" that Catholic priests continued to demand of the few converted neophytes still living at the nearby missions, for

instance. After the German immigrant Charles Weber arrived in the area in 1843, he negotiated a pact with the native leader José Jesús, a former Mission Santa Clara neophyte and now chief of the Siakumne (Yokuts), "to ensure the security of [his] rancho" from native attacks. When Locolumne Indians did raid Valley ranchos four years later, José Jesús provided Weber "most of the two hundred men who formed the expedition" that set out to fight the invaders from the San Joaquín Valley. Anglo-native sexual relations at times turned into violent conquests.[33] On other occasions, Indian men facilitated the sexual adventures of white Americans. The young entrepreneur Faxon Dean Atherton, later considered one of California's finest residents, described in 1836 how he had spent the night at Mission San José, writing in his journal that "All the young girls of the Mision [*sic*] are kept locked up nights by themselves, to keep them from mischievous pranks. They are under the charge of a man who is called an Alcalde, but I found that he knew the value of a 4 real piece, and understood what he received it for. There are some pretty fair girls amongst them, and what is more, devilish neat and clean."[34] The chilling cooperation between Atherton and the Indian alcalde showed the growing vulnerability of Indian women in this era.

Race and labor, ideologies of difference and economic change, all continued to transform the Valley in dramatic ways after 1821. The Indian revolt led by Estanislao provides another case in point. A product of the Franciscan mission system, this former vaquero and alcalde, who had directed native workers at Mission San José, returned to his ranchería in 1828 and began to lead raids against the area's Mexican settlements. The revolt reflected new political ideologies current in Mexico as well as new patterns of violence evident throughout Alta California. The rebels sought to achieve the political equality promised them under national independence. After skillfully ambushing a Mexican militia unit, Estanislao and his group celebrated with a festival at which "the bodies of the soldiers were put on display so that the neighboring tribes, who were invited to the festivities, would admire the natives' great valor and prowess." But just as interranchería conflicts shaped Estanislao's show of strength, they also led to the rebel's eventual defeat. After the militia's first failed venture against him, another armed contingent left San Francisco and Mission San José that included both "inhabitants of the pueblo of San José and some allied Indians who were longstanding enemies of Estanislao's ranchería." Only too "anxious to avenge long-standing grievances . . . they had been awaiting the right moment to attack Estanislao and his people," and they now killed most of the rebel band. The former neophyte soon gave himself up, unable to survive the web of enemies conspiring against him.[35]

While making clear the conflicts between Mexican citizens and Indians during the 1820s, Estanislao's revolt and surrender illustrated again that political struggles were not simply defined as Californios versus Indians in the

Mexican period. These episodes also displayed the near impossibility of armed military resistance by the Valley's native populations, even by 1828. Racial inequalities soon became more entrenched. The Santa Clara Valley witnessed the ongoing political development of the Mexican nation, conflicts between rancherías, the depredations of California natives targeting local ranchos, the resulting punitive expeditions by both *gente de razón* and mission neophytes, the consuming political conflicts among local Californios over the fate of the province, and the arrival in California of new American and European immigrants.[36]

MANIFEST DESTINY

It was that last process that would transform Alta California in most dramatic fashion. Although many of San José's Americans and Europeans seem to have welcomed assimilation into the Valley's Mexican society in the 1830s, new political pressures soon changed the delicate balance between white Americans and Mexicans. By 1845 several different national governments had announced their designs on the region, and Mexico was but one of these countries. Alta Californians had long complained that federal policymakers paid them little attention. Officials in Mexico City now increasingly proclaimed their fears about their future claim to California, and prominent writers such as Tadeo Ortiz de Ayala reminded his readers that Russians lived just seventy-eight miles north of San Francisco Bay. National leaders also expressed suspicions that Americans had established their own colony north of San Francisco, while others noted greater concerns about apparent British designs on the territory. In 1835, in fact, the first English-language book written exclusively about California, the Scottish merchant Alexander Forbes's *California: A History of Upper and Lower California*, professed the hope that Mexico would resolve its foreign debts to the English by giving up California. Noting "how little progress [Alta California's] population has made in this country," Forbes argued on racial grounds that "It is obvious that it is from the free white and creole races and from the introduction of fresh colonists, the future population of California must proceed; for the enslaved Indians are already on the decline, and, on the dissolution of the missionary system, they will dwindle away and soon become almost extinguished."[37] Calls in Central Mexico to improve communication networks and military routes between northern Alta California and the new nation's interior regions soon followed, and Mexicans renewed demands that Russia withdraw from California entirely.[38]

Russia did so in 1841, but American citizens arriving in northern Mexico began by the mid-1840s to express their own distinct hope that Mexico would then follow suit and also retreat from the region. Many held racist

perceptions of California's native and Mexican populations shaped by a long history of anti-Hispanic sentiment and by recent English-language writers such as Thomas Jefferson Farnham and Alfred Robinson, whose published accounts reinforced notions of white racial superiority and the providential westward march of the United States. Farnham asserted that the Californios were "in every way a poor apology of European extraction," and he denounced their slothful approach to work in Alta California:

> Destitute of industry themselves, they compel the poor Indian to labor for them, affording him a bare savage existence for his toil, upon their plantations and the fields of the Missions. In a word, the Californians are an imbecile, pusillanimous, race of men, and unfit to control the destinies of that beautiful country.
>
> No one acquainted with the indolent, mixed race of California, will ever believe that they will populate, much less, for any length of time, govern the country. . . . They must fade away.[39]

Among American immigrants, notions of Manifest Destiny became increasingly influential by the early 1840s, a worldview stressing that settlers would help bring about "the domination of civilization over nature, Christianity over heathenism, progress over backwardness, and, most importantly, of white Americans over the Mexican and Indian populations that stood in their path." This, at long last, was the Devil's language. Mexican government officials had hoped that these settlers would become loyal subjects of Mexico, but the bellicose attitudes of the migrants led policymakers in Mexico City to attempt new measures that might bring the country's northern provinces under greater central control. In response, Americans began to call for the military takeover of the Mexican north, an imperial spirit that became an animating cause of the Mexican War, which broke out in 1846.[40]

Astute Mexican observers had long worried about Americans' declarations of their national and racial superiority, and such political tensions had been evident even before Estanislao's rebellion when Jedidiah Smith passed through the area in 1826. A trapper seeking lucrative beaver pelts, Smith and his followers became the first Americans to enter California by land from the east; embodying the period's American nationalism, then approaching high tide, Smith openly praised "that restless enterprise that . . . is now leading our countrymen to all parts of the world" and proudly announced that "it can now be said there is not a breeze of heaven but spreads an American flag." Considered a threat by government officials, Smith's presence provoked new fears in and around San José. Military authorities suspected that the trappers were U.S. spies, and American activities certainly encouraged that conclusion. A short time earlier, the group had arrived unannounced and without Mexico's permission. When Governor José María Echeandía de-

tained the trappers at Mission San Gabriel and ordered them to leave the province, the group instead headed north through the Central Valley and camped on the Stanislaus River. Soon thereafter, San Joaquín Valley natives, including neophytes who had lived in Santa Clara Valley missions, visited the San José area and informed local friars about the Americans' encampment. Native stories that the trappers were "making a map" of the area further confirmed Mexican officials' fears that the Americans had imperial ambitions.[41]

In an unlikely coincidence, four hundred neophytes then left Mission San José for the San Joaquín Valley in May, no doubt prompted to do so by liberal rhetoric about freedom, but government representatives feared that Smith had recruited the Indians to make war against the Mexicans. The often-harsh inequalities of local missions could not explain their exodus, according to Alta California's former governor Luis Antonio Arguello, it was instead the trappers' efforts "to win the goodwill of these natives" that threatened to corrupt Indians "well satisfied with the law that incorporates them into the Mexican nation." The threat of an Indian-American alliance worried Mexican authorities. Arrested and incarcerated at Mission San José for two months, Smith continued to insist that he was only an eager trapper. When released and given specific instructions about how to travel east to the United States, he and his fellow travelers defied the Mexican government's marching orders and followed their own route out of California, but not before writing the United States Minister in Mexico City to complain "as an American citizen" that "Spanish [*sic*] impositions" had left him "intirely [*sic*] destitute of money."[42]

Smith's arrival and imprisonment made clear that new national competitions for control of California were clearly changing the area by 1830. Despite Smith's claim to the contrary, former governor Arguello believed for certain that the trapper was no American innocent. While likely not a spy of the United States, Smith and his compatriots assumed Mexico's national inferiority and expressed their own hopes that the American flag would one day fly over San José. Just as Smith mapped the province's rivers and other resources, many Americans and Europeans arriving subsequently found in the territory other impressive "natural advantages" that would yield profitable returns when a progressive nation seized control of the region. This was the essence of Manifest Destiny. Lamenting that so many Mexican mestizos had already settled in San José and other parts of the province, a Frenchman noted in the late 1820s that while San Joséans "own[ed] herds and harvest[ed] grain . . . the natural laziness of these creoles, and other things . . . have arrested the development of, and brought decay to, this establishment." Among the American visitors who followed Jedidiah Smith, advocates of a U.S. takeover became all the more excited in 1845 when Andrés Castillero, a Mexican army officer sent to counter U.S. influence among residents of

California, spread news about a rich quicksilver discovery a few miles south of San José. American government officials quickly took interest. Thomas Larkin, the U.S. consul at Monterey, immediately informed Senator Thomas Hart Benton and Secretary of State James Buchanan of this development, and John C. Frémont, an officer in the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, subsequently offered to purchase the mineral rights to the Santa Clara Valley from the Mexican government.[43]

More concerned about developing the region's agriculture, many American settlers who arrived in the 1840s expressed shock at the rancheros' "baronial estates" and apparent dependency on the pueblo's communal lands. Affirmations of white American supremacy drew strength from an aversion to the economy established by mission and pueblo residents. Those from the United States expressed certainty that Californio decisions to allow their livestock to wander together on unfenced territory betrayed a disinterest in private property, and many dreamed about what a more "civilized" American society might create in the Santa Clara Valley. In effect sticking a new top rung on a preexisting social ladder, Americans like Josiah Belden compared the "rude state" of local Mexican society with what American settlers might one day build in the region. In suggesting that Indians and Mexicans had produced little during the years they controlled the Valley, these newcomers began to call for replacing Mexican indolence with Anglo American "industry," the peonage established at Valley missions with "free white labor," and "superstitious" Catholicism with rational Protestantism.[44]

New ethnic conflicts took center stage by the mid-1840s that reflected these devilish American attitudes towards race and labor. While earlier groups of American settlers had attempted to adapt to local Mexican society, freshly arrived immigrants took a more confrontational stance toward the region's inhabitants, taking their cues from Texans who had wrested control of that northern Mexican state by asserting their own cultural distinctiveness as white Americans. Contending that California Mexicans, including those around San José, were equally unworthy of holding political power, American travelers and settlers suggested that, as Catholics, Mexicans were incapable of democratic governance and unable to recognize the value of hard work. Descriptions of nonwhites unfit to govern themselves or prosper in the capitalist market were twin hallmarks of republican ideology in the United States of the 1830s and 1840s, and as westward migrants found their way to the Santa Clara Valley, some dismissed Californio "religious ceremonies [as] very grotesque and amusing." Migrants scrambled to join other Protestants in creating new churches intended to make clear their differences from Mexican residents, and one resident recalled that "The people that came there in '47 organized a body of Christians and had regular service every Sabbath. . . . Some of us were Cumberland Presbyterians, some Methodists[,] some Baptists, and we had a Methodist preacher at first."[45]

After 1841 American immigrants increasingly dispossessed San José Californios of their property, killed their cattle for food, and stole their horses running loose on the pueblo's communal lands. Incoming settlers acted in the name of acquiring private property to establish a more familiar community of independent white farmers. Mexicans in the Valley reacted to these attacks with great anger. Longtime resident Secundino Robles attributed Californio participation in the War of 1846 to this "scandalous stealing of property," and Charles White, the first American alcalde of San José, blamed "runaway sailors [and] volunteers from the [U.S.] army" for the violence and criminal plunderings in the area. To further complicate the situation, native raiders—prompted to steal Californio horses by white trappers who had arrived in the state—also increased their attacks on Valley ranchos during the mid-1840s. Ethnic Mexicans now felt threatened by both Indians and white settlers, and new rounds of violence soon altered the lives of local Californios forever.[46]

Alta Californians learned that the United States and Mexico were at war in July 1846, but by that time white settlers, the so-called Bear-Flaggers, under the command of U.S. Army officer John C. Frémont had already declared the region independent from Mexico. Fighting raged between Californios and U.S. forces in Southern California, and while many San Joseans remained unsure about whether to fight on behalf of Mexico, white Americans almost unanimously rallied behind their country's providential mission to expand west to the Pacific Coast. Their sense of national and racial affiliation proved a powerful force. In January 1847 Californios agreed to lay down their arms in return for a guarantee that they would enjoy the rights of U.S. citizens. War sealed the political fate of San José and all California residents, and the conflict's conclusion in 1848 led Mexico to cede half of its territory to the United States, including the coveted settlements of the San Francisco Bay Area.[47]

Longtime Mexican residents could only speculate about their futures under U.S. rule. As they soon discovered, American settlers would revolutionize patterns of residency and attendant meanings of race, ultimately creating such a violent society in the San José region that the very existence of conquered Californios and Indians would be threatened. In the short sixty years since Plácido, Anecelto, and Antonio had accused Father Tomás de la Peña of murder, colonial settlements and work regimes in this Northern California valley had become firmly established, local missionaries and *pobladores* had made violence a constant threat, and dissidents like Yóscolo had suffered death at the hands of Spaniards and converted neophytes. With the coming of American rule in 1848, discerning Californios and Indians must have seen the shadow of the devil standing behind their new white neighbors.