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Excavating Mexican American Voices in California History: The California Testimonials

Michelle E. Morton

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Excavating Mexican American Voices in California History: The California Testimonials

by

Michelle E. Morton
Bachelor of Arts, Latin American Studies,
University of New Mexico, 1993

THESIS
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Spanish

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico
December, 1996
Acknowledgments

I would not have been able to complete this thesis without the support of a number of people in both my academic and personal communities. I received a Research, Projects and Travel grant from the Office of Graduate Studies and a Travel grant from the Graduate Student Association of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. This financial support enabled me to work in the Bancroft Collection at U.C. Berkeley and obtain copies of the California testimonials. I also want to acknowledge the staff at the Bancroft Library for their patience and helpful advice.

I want to thank my father, Dave Morton, for teaching me how to work hard, think for myself and treat people with cariño and respect. I wish to express my gratitude to my best friend of thirteen years, Shehanna Stevenson, who has been there for me every step of the way and never let me lose perspective or settle for the easy answer; and to my partner in every way, Brij Lunine, who has read every word of this thesis at least ten times. Your insight and encouragement always improves the quality of my work.

Mil gracias a Tey Diana Rebolledo, for introducing me to the Californio testimonials and chairing my committee. I am grateful to Erlinda Gonzales-Berry, for always challenging me and for encouraging me when I really wondered if I belonged in graduate school; and Enrique Lamadrid, who has been
incredibly supportive throughout my studies and given me encouragement when I most needed it. I also want to acknowledge the support of Gabriel Meléndez, who has always been available to give me advice and direction, and Cynthia Orozco, for taking the time to give advice to an unknown graduate student. I would also like to recognize Rosario Johnson, la mera mera del departamento de español y portugués, for her patient assistance and attention to detail in the more technical aspects of getting a thesis approved.

Rosita Piñedo, mi mentora y querida amiga, without your example and encouragement I don't think I would have begun this thesis. Gabriela Díaz, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your confidence in me as well as your honesty. I am very grateful, Suzy Nayduch, for your patience and support these last two years. I would not have made it to graduate school without the loving support and confidence of my family and friends in California; thank you for inspiring me, always encouraging me and putting up with many late night phone calls.
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In the 1870s, a series of interviews were taken of Hispanic native Californians, or Californios as they call themselves, by the assistants of Anglo American historian Hubert Howe Bancroft. Many of these interviews, or testimonials as they are commonly referred to, have never been published in their entirety and have received little scholarly attention. This thesis focuses on Hispanic women in particular, the Californias, and the insight they provide into the day to day life of early Spanish, Mexican and American California.

After the Mexican-American War of 1846 many Californio families lost their properties to American settlers. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century they
became increasingly marginalized economically, socially and politically. Many historical documents narrating the history of these native Californians—including letters, interviews, diaries and newspapers—have remained unpublished in personal and special collections. The Californios interviewed by Bancroft's assistants narrate their experiences in California under Spanish, Mexican and American rule. These interviews voice the perspectives of a cultural and ethnic group whose experiences have largely been left out of our historical texts. The personal and communal histories narrated by the Californios fill a large gap in American history. The perspective the Californias provide as women is particularly interesting because they discuss not only well-known historical events and figures of their era, but also the details of their daily lives. They provide an abundance of information about the practices of everyday life—enabling us to reconstruct a cultural history of early California—as well as inserting themselves and other women as active agents in the social and political landscape. In this thesis I examine the interviews as historical texts and contextualize their production in order to analyze how this process can inform our understanding of race, class and gender relations in nineteenth century California.
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Preface

This thesis deals with the recovery of Mexican American voices in California history. My aim in analyzing the California testimonials is to move towards a more accurate representation of California history by recovering the voices of a community that has been "disappeared" by dominant historiographies. As a white woman, I am an outsider to the community I study, but my position as a descendant of nineteenth century American immigrants to California leads me to explore that history of contact and conflict with both a personal and an academic investment. As early American immigrants, my family belonged to the cast of historical characters who actively displaced Californio families in the region.

My mother's family came to California in the late nineteenth century and my father's arrived in the early twentieth century. Both were of vaguely defined, European, Catholic origins. Specifics of my ethnic origins were never emphasized in my family but I grew up knowing I was white, American, and more importantly, Californian. I believe the political, economic and social displacement of the Californio community in the nineteenth century has lead to an obscuring of historical reality in California. Places and names have been disassociated from their origins and Mexicans and
Chicanos have been re-cast as late-comers, unwelcome guests in a California settled by "pioneering European Americans."

It is difficult to begin to deal with issues of inequality and institutionalized racism with deep roots in the Southwest when our historical diversity as a community is not recognized. I believe the first step towards being able to conceptualize California as an ethnically diverse community is a recognition and recuperation of ethnic histories in California. In order to be able to "imagine" ourselves as an multi-ethnic community we need to begin to take into account how the positions of our ancestors have influenced our present situation and how our current positions will influence our future. This thesis is my contribution to the task of recovering Chicano history in California and re-imagining the California community within a more inclusive, historically solid framework.
Introduction

Excavating Mexican American Voices in California History:

The California Testimonials

In the 1870s, Enrique Cerruti and Thomas Savage, two field assistants of the American historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, collected a number of interviews with Californios, Spanish and Mexican Californians. The Californios interviewed by Cerruti and Savage narrate their experiences under Spanish, Mexican, and American rule. Bancroft used the Californios narratives and personal papers in his histories of California, but the interviews themselves were never published and remain in the Bancroft Collection at the University of California at Berkeley. In these interviews, or testimonials, the Californios narrate events to which they were observers and protagonists, they testify to the presence of a group whose experiences have been largely left out of our historical texts. After the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), the notion of the Southwest as a homeland for Mexicans and their Mexican American descendents quickly began to fade from our national memory. Materials documenting the historical presence of Hispanos in the Southwest challenge the accepted image of U.S. expansion into the sparsely populated "virgin lands" of the West. The personal and communal histories presented by the Californios fill a large gap in American history.
Among the numerous\(^1\) personal narratives taken by Cerruti and Savage are twelve interviews with Californian women, eleven *Californias* and one Native Californian. The perspective these women provide is unique from that of their male counterparts because of both what they choose to talk about and how they choose to talk about it. The *Californias* discuss not only well-known historical events and figures of their era, but also details of their own day to day lives. They provide a wealth of information about the practices of everyday life—family structure, religious and educational institutions, customs and traditions—which enable us to reconstruct a cultural history of early California. They represent themselves as well as women in general as active agents in both private and public spheres. And finally, the *Californias'* visions of the past and their representations of heroism have a decidedly different slant than those of their countrymen.

In this thesis I hope to contribute to the recovery of voices which have been long buried and forgotten. There has been a movement among Chicano academics in recent years to go beyond recognizing Chicanos' long history in the Southwest to begin to recover Hispanic voices from before the 1960s. This movement has been formally organized under the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project at the University of

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\(^1\) About sixty-two, according to Rosaura Sánchez, *Telling Identities*, 1995: ix.
Houston, a program which coordinates and facilitates the location, identification, and publication of literary contributions of U.S. Hispanics from the colonial period to the 1960s.

The Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project has a very wide scope in terms of both materials and its conceptualization of the purpose of the project. Their publications include works spanning from the sixteenth to the twentieth century and authors not only from Mexico and what is today the American Southwest but also from Puerto Rico and Cuba. The project seeks to recognize an ethnically and socially diverse Hispanic community in what is now the United States whose presence dates back to 1513, well before the arrival of Pilgrims at Plymouth (Gutiérrez and Padilla, 18). It seeks to recognize a heritage that forms a central part of American history but which up to now has been largely ignored. This exclusion has fragmented our historical consciousness as a nation and made Latinos living in the United States, in the words of Californios Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and Pablo de la Guerra, "foreigners" in their own land (Vallejo, 5:74; de la Guerra, cited in Padilla, 1993: 15). Recovery work invalidates the notion of Hispanic presence and literary production in the United States as a recent phenomenon. In their introduction to Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage (1993) editors Ramón
Gutiérrez and Genaro Padilla provide the following description of the aims of the Recovery project:

Our mission and goal is nothing less than to recover the Hispanic literary heritage of the United States, to document its regional and national diversity, to view from various perspectives and angles the matrix of power in which it was created, and to celebrate its hybridity, its intertextuality and its polyvocality. (21)

Although many nineteenth century texts recovered by scholars working with the Recovery project are being discovered for the first time, others are well known historical documents whose presence has been ignored by those who saw them as devoid of resistance. A vast majority of the nineteenth century Mexican and Mexican American texts were authored by dispossessed elites whose accommodating and aristocratic articulations of self made them rather unappealing candidates to Chicano scholars struggling to recover the voices of their ancestors. Scholars such as Genaro Padilla and Rosaura Sánchez however have argued for a re-reading of these texts that recognizes the circumstances under which they were produced. In order to read a century of Hispanic voices "de una manera digna de ellos" (Padilla, 34) it is essential to situate these voices within their historical context. Padilla and Sánchez suggest that we return to texts previously dismissed for their nostalgic vision of the past or accommodating tone and try to envision their production against the threat of erasure in an
environment of intense fear. Once contextualized, one finds within many of these texts encoded but very strident contestations to political discourses which justified Anglo American dominance and threatened to wipe out Hispano presence in the Southwest.

The Recovery project brings together scholars and texts in such a way that forces us to reconsider traditional modes of conceptualizing the Hispanic literary past. As Padilla and Gutiérrez explain, Latino scholars discussion of these recovered texts:

[C]hallenges us to critically examine anew issues of nomenclature, periodization, genres, the politics of textual production and reproduction, the primacy of written over oral forms of literature and, most importantly, the silence and resistance of female and subaltern voices. (25)

It is precisely those "female and subaltern voices" that I would like to engage in this thesis. Basing myself in the work of the Recovery project, and particularly the work of Genaro Padilla and Rosaura Sánchez, I look closely at some of the Californias' life narratives, paying special attention to the politics of textual production and self-representation.

Although many Chicano and Chicana scholars such as Antonia Casteñeda, Tey Diana Rebolledo and Vicki Ruiz have produced critical work on nineteenth century Mexican American narrative in general and the Californio testimonials in
particular, Genaro Padilla and Rosaura Sánchez have probably worked most closely with the Californio narratives in the Bancroft collection. Padilla's book *My History, Not Yours* (1993) treats what he sees as personal and communal autobiographical representations in the letters, memoirs, testimonials and literature of Mexican Americans in the Southwest prior to the 1960s. As I mentioned earlier, Padilla calls for a re-reading of early Chicano narrative, arguing for "... thick socio-historicized readings..." (xi) that enable us to better understand the position of Mexican Americans writing during this period. In his close socio-historicized readings of the Californio testimonials Padilla problematizes traditional interpretations of these narratives. He sees the Californio narratives as a response to the threat of cultural extermination, as a battleground for narrative authority and rights to representation:

Fear of being systematically erased by an ethnocentric society generated an autobiographical impulse in post-1848 Mexican American society through which people seized the opportunity to textually mark their individual names as well as their culture upon American history. (27)

Padilla discusses the importance of recovering Mexican American autobiography and developing a reading method that acknowledges the socio-historic circumstances that produce ideologically contradictory narratives (xi). He focuses on ideological ambivalence and contradictory messages he sees
within the testimonials, looking at some of the circumstances that produced this schizoid identity in post-war California and listening closely to the different messages--addressed to Californios, Mexicans, and Anglo Americans--encoded within the narratives. Padilla goes on to discuss the production of the testimonials and analyze the testimonials of Californios Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, one of the most prominent and powerful men in California history; Angustias de la Guerra, an upper-class California from a very prominent and politically active family; and Eulalia Pérez and Apolinaria Lorenzana, two working-class Californias who were employed in the missions. His readings of the women's testimonials note that Californias challenged not only Anglo hegemony but also patriarchal hegemony in their personal narratives.

Rosaura Sánchez's book, *Telling Identities* (1995), focuses exclusively on the Californio testimonials. Sánchez's work entails a detailed and highly theoretical analysis of some of the dominant discourses and institutions in California history. In particular, she explores how nationalist and ethnic discourses informed an emerging protonationalist identity in Alta California. She also discusses images of women in California history and the political and economic discourses underlying those images. Unlike Padilla, she defines the Californio narratives as testimonials rather than autobiographies and uses the contemporary Latin American testimonial to contextualize the
production of the testimonials. She emphasizes that the testimonials were produced in a dependent mode which has very different implications than the traditionally self-generated autobiography.

Both Padilla and Sánchez see the contradictions and ideological ambivalence of the Californio narratives as a result of the context of displacement, dispossession, and disempowerment in which they were produced. Sánchez's book attempts to examine and "disarticulate" contradictory and interconnected discourses embedded in the Californio testimonials, and in particular, to reveal ideological discourses that continue to determine the lives of Latinos living in California today.

This thesis is an attempt to produce a close, highly contextualized reading of the California testimonials. In the first chapter, I provide a brief overview of California history. This chapter is meant to familiarize the reader with the colonization and subsequent economic and political development of California; to give him or her a basic backdrop against which to read these life narratives. The second chapter deals with the Californio narratives as both testimonials and autobiographies. Padilla has approached the narratives as a form of autobiography, while Sánchez prefers to treat them as testimonials similar in many ways to the contemporary Latin American testimonial. I believe criticism
surrounding both genres can be constructively applied to the Californio narratives, particularly if one uses the critical frame of the testimonial to discuss issues of production and an expanded definition of the autobiography to discuss strategies of self-representation.

Chapter three deals with Bancroft's History Company and the procurement of the Californio narratives. Bancroft wrote a number of memoirs and social histories explaining and justifying his methods of production. Fortunately he also requested that Enrique Cerruti and Thomas Savage keep detailed notes on their work in the field. These notes enable us to further contextualize the actual production of the testimonials and look closely at the interaction between, on one level Bancroft and the Californio community, and on another the actual interviewers (Cerruti and Savage) and their subjects.

Chapter four deals with the testimonials themselves, analyzing six of the twelve dictations taken from women. These six women--five Californias and one Native Californian--represent a fairly diverse cross-section of socio-economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds in nineteenth century California society. In analyzing the California testimonials, I look at both the form and the content of these texts. Provided with a rare opportunity to narrate their lives, what do these women choose to discuss? How do they identify themselves and their community and what
strategies do they use to convey this identification? My intention is to examine the interviews as historical and cultural texts, contextualizing their production as much as possible, so that their voices can inform our understanding of California history.
Chapter I
A Brief History of California

This chapter provides an overview of California history to help situate the California testimonials within their historical context. It is not a comprehensive history but rather a brief sketch intended to give a sense of the social space in which these women's lives were lived and their testimonials produced. In particular I want to discuss the colonization of California and the emergence of an elite landowning class. The colonization of California was directed by the Spanish Crown but the colonizers themselves generally came from the lowest socio-economic class of colonial society (Castañeda, 1993a: 81). Some of these early settlers, identifying themselves as Californios, would emerge during the Mexican period (1821-1848) as an elite land-owning class. I will also look at the Mexican American War and its aftermath, focusing on the use of racialized political discourses by the United States to justify the war and consequences of these discourses for Californios and their descendents.

In their introduction to Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Ramón Gutiérrez and Genaro Padilla point out that by the early 1800s the communities of Mexico's Northern frontier had already developed distinct regional identities. As the last American region to be occupied by
the Spanish Empire California experienced a unique history of colonization that would manifest itself in its economic development under the Spanish Crown (1769-1821) and the emergence of the elite ranchero class during the Mexican period.

Although Spanish explorers first arrived in Baja California in 1533, efforts to settle Alta California did not begin in earnest until the later half of the eighteenth century. Concern about pirate activity and possible encroachment by Russian, English, and Dutch explorers and traders motivated the Crown to push for settlement of California through the mission-presidio-pueblo model\(^2\) with religious and military leaders staking-out the first settlements (Campa, 83). The San Diego de Alcalá Mission was founded by Father Junípero Serra in 1769 and from there Spanish explorers moved up the coast founding missions and presidios as far north as Sonoma. A total of twenty-one missions were founded in Alta California by 1826.

Both Arthur Campa (1979) and David J. Weber (1973) note that the settlement of California differed from that of other Northwestern provinces in that it was first and foremost a clerical project (Campa, 82; Weber, 15). The first expeditions were made up of missionaries and military escorts which founded both presidios and missions and claimed

\(^2\) Religious and Military leaders explored the new territory and established missions and presidios. They were soon followed by settlers who established pueblos in the same area.
ownership of the land in the name of the Spanish Crown. Land was allotted to settlers for cultivation and the raising of live-stock but the titles remained the property of the Crown. Despite promises of land, livestock, seed, rations, and even wages at times, the Crown had a difficult time finding willing settlers for California pueblos and oftentimes recruited or forcibly sent colonists from the lowest and most disenfranchised classes in Spanish colonial society (Castañeda, 1983: 81; Pitt, 6; Sánchez, 1995: 56-57; Weber, 17, 33). As Apolinaria Lorenzana describes in her personal narrative, she and numerous other orphans were sent by the colonial government to the frontier to be parceled out to families "como perritos" ("Memorias" 1). The Spanish government had even resorted to sending convicts as colonists (Weber, 15). As Rosaura Sánchez explains, up until the 1820s Alta California was often treated by the colonial government as a sort of a penal colony (1995: 50).

In her research on women in early California history, Castañeda documents that the majority of early colonists were poor Mestizos. While the religious and military leaders may have been Spaniards, the foot soldiers and poor settlers in Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Monterey, and San Francisco were largely Mestizos, Blacks, and Indians. The first census of Los Angeles, taken in 1781, records only two residents claiming to be Spanish. The rest were identified as Indian,
Mestizo, Mulatto, Black, Coyote\(^3\) and Chino\(^4\) (Weber, 33). This racially and culturally heterogeneous group settled and colonized California. Castañeda also notes that this group would go on to form the elite Californio families of the Mexican period (1993b: 269). Many elite Californios, however, would take great pains to separate themselves from the vast majority of Mestizo Mexicans and from their own Mestizo roots, identifying themselves as blue-blooded Spaniards (Castañeda, 1990b: 9).

The missionaries' rights to the land they settled and cultivated was, according to the Crown, by way of their converts who were the official owners of the land. Missionaries brought Native Californians to live in the missions where they were taught Spanish, the fundamentals of Christianity and skills to make them useful to the Spaniards living in missions, presidios and pueblos. As Lisbeth Hass explains in *Conquests and Historical Identities in California* (1995), the Law of the Indies which governed activities in the American colonies deemed that "... the mission held the territory of the converts in trust, to be returned to them once they had adopted Spanish social, cultural, linguistic, and economic behaviors" (14). In twenty-five to thirty years the missions were to be secularized and their lands converted into pueblos of Native Californians (Campa, 82). Although

\(^3\)The child of Indian and Mestizo parentage.

\(^4\)The child of Indian and African parentage.
Native Californians did not organize defensive campaigns on the same scale as other tribes in the Southwest their uprisings and raids continued throughout the mission period and well into Mexican and American rule. Their resistance is well documented in both their own accounts and the accounts of early settlers (Castillo, 1989a & 1989b; "Memorias," 1878; "Los tiempos pasados de la Alta California," 1878; "Recuerdos," 1878; "Ocurrencias en California," 1878).

While in theory mission life prepared Native Californians to be productive members of Spanish society, in practice it was also very profitable for the missionaries to have extensive land-holdings and a massive labor force at their disposal. By the end of the Spanish period (1769-1821) the most productive lands and largest herds of cattle in the new territory belonged to the missions. Manufacturing of nearly all items sold at the presidios, pueblos and ranches was done within the missions by Native California labor. We find extensive documentation of commercial activity within the mission system in the testimonials of Eulalia Pérez and Apolinaria Lorenzana, two women who worked as llaveras, head housekeepers, of large Southern California missions.

As the missions' production power and wealth grew, many missionaries became more interested in the services their converts provided than preparing them to integrate into Spanish society as good Christians. The emphasis moved from religious to vocational training and Native Californians were
forced to work long hours on the mission lands as well as being contracted out to work on ranches. As Campa explains, when it came time to secularize the missions "...[t]he economic benefits of their large Indian labor force and monopoly of manufactured products were a potent argument in favor of keeping the missions under their control" (89).

After Mexican independence in 1822 the newly formed government began to initiate a number of anti-clerical reforms throughout Mexico, including the forced secularization of California missions. The secularization of the missions began in 1826 and lasted approximately ten years. The missions themselves were to covert into parish churches and the former mission lands were to revert back to the control of Native Californians. However most of the mission lands passed into the hands of Californios and in particular to cattle ranchers. This sudden availability of huge amounts of rich lands helped to strengthen the emerging elite ranchero class in California, represented by families such as the Vallejos, the de la Guerras, and the Picos (Almaguer, 30). Many Native Californians became laborers on the lands they were to have inherited or returned to live in the secularized missions.

As mission and rancho production grew, so did the demand for foreign trade. Spain had strictly forbidden international commerce and allowed only minimal trade amongst its provinces. Nevertheless extensive clandestine trading
took place during the Spanish period and some of the first Anglo Americans to settle in California made their contact with Californio families through illegal trade. After Mexican independence these restrictions were lifted and Californios were free to trade on the international market. The acquisition of missions lands, unlimited manpower provided by Native Californians, and the sudden boom in international trade combined to create an extremely wealthy class of Californio ranchers. As a Mexican territory, the population of California was made up mainly of 1) the newly emergent elite ranchero class; 2) middle and lower class pueblo and presidio residents; 3) missionaries and their converts; and 4) an increasingly large number of Americans.

During the Mexican period, California and other Northern territories felt restricted by the Mexican government's centrist policies and resented the lack of local autonomy. Most Californios were not directly involved in the wars of independence and tended to identify more closely with their regional business and political ties. Other factors, such as the practice of sending convicts to the region, may have caused Californios to attempt to differentiate themselves from recently arrived Mexicanos, and particularly poor Mestizos, Indians, and blacks. Californio federalists felt that the far-off Mexican government was out of touch with their needs and standing in the way of their political and economic prosperity.
The Mexican wars of independence initially had little effect on its northernmost territories but after 1822 the Mexican government begin to pass new land laws and institute reforms that would have far reaching implications for the economic and political development of the region (Castañeda, 1993b: 269). Although the secularization of the missions (1826-36) and the lifting of international trade restrictions pleased the Californios, internal divisions began to develop within the region that would lead to years of sectionalism and political turbulence between the norteños in Northern California and the sureños in Southern California. As Dorotea Valdez explains in her testimonial:

To make a long story short I will conclude by saying that if the Americans had not taken the country in 1846, in 1847 every native California[n] would have been killed in civil war; the feeling of hate was very bitter. Good men preached in vain for nobody was willing to listen to the voice of reason. ("Reminiscences," 13)

Before the Mexican-American war the Californio elite fought bitterly amongst themselves and with the Mexican government for control of the region. Although it is clear from their testimonials that Californios felt strong national ties to Mexico and particularly to California, many writers have pointed out that there were great differences in the everyday lives of the wealthy class (mainly ranchers, merchants and government officials), Spanish and criollo missionaries, and the Mestizo and Native Californian laboring
class. During and after the war many prominent Californios put class ties before their somewhat ambiguous and complex national identity and hoped their upper-class status and ties with early American settlers would ensure them a place in California under U. S. rule.

In assessing the role of the Californio elite in the loss of California, Chicano historian Rodolfo Acuña concludes that as a group prominent Californio families were unable to offer leadership to the masses because they insisted on class differences and allied themselves with the Anglo American elite until they were forced to realize they would never be allowed to integrate (1981: 13). As Rosaura Sánchez explains in her work on the Californio testimonials:

Forged in a race- and caste-based society, the Californios unfortunately fell back on these operative categories, incapable of constructing an interethnic identity and alliance on the basis of class and ethnic oppression, and "imagined interethnic community" still in the making and necessary today. (1995: 302)

American and English sailors and traders had been arriving, settling and marrying into Californio families since the early 1800s (Castañeda, 1990a: 215). The majority of these early traders converted to Catholicism and became Mexican citizens. They supplied the newly emerged elite with many goods, particularly luxury items, previously unavailable on the frontier (Pitt, 12). The liberalization of trade by the Mexican government opened California to eager
entrepreneurs from all sides. International trade increased and American trappers, gold miners and land-seekers begin to arrive overland and by sea. However, Americans arriving after 1840 were less interested in becoming Mexican citizens and assimilating into Mexican culture (Pitt, 19). This contact signaled the end of the semi-feudal ranchero economy and initiated the integration of California into the United States capitalist economy as well as the United States interest in obtaining the fertile and strategic territory.

The United States had made efforts to acquire the territory as early as 1835 (Acuña, 109). Americans had been exploring, trading, and settling in California since the early 1800s and beginning in the 1840s John C. Fremont made various "peaceful" but heavily armed mapping expeditions into the region. Although there had been prior incidents, such as the raising of the American flag in Monterey in 1842, the Mexican American War was officially initiated in California with the 1846 Bear Flag Revolt in Sonoma. The Bear Flag Revolt has been portrayed in California history as "the Alamo" of California, the initiation of California independence from tyranny by the Anglo American "freedom fighters." However, as with the Alamo, this myth has been questioned and largely debunked by historians and, specifically, by voices such as that of Rosalía Vallejo de Leese, a California who witnessed the revolt first hand. According to Vallejo de Leese, the bear flaggers were made up
of an unorganized and unkempt group of thugs commanded by John Fremont who terrorized Sonoma and jailed some of its most respected citizens. Genaro Padilla describes the bear flaggers as "... a species of nineteenth century Hell's Angels..." (55), without any well-formed political goals aside from relieving Californios and Native Californians of their goods and properties.

The irony of the targeted prisoners of the bear flaggers has been pointed out by many authors (Acuña, 1988; Campa, 1979; Padilla, 1994). General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, an ardent supporter of U.S. annexation of California known as "the Americano's best friend" (Pitt, 27), was captured and jailed for over two months. During the revolt the bear flaggers looted and destroyed homes, crops, and cattle and terrorized the citizens of Sonoma. They were, by their own accounts, drunk and confused as to the mission of their revolt before the end of the first day. Rosalía Vallejo de Leese characterizes the group as "... a band of ungrateful horse thieves, trappers and run away sailors..." ("History of the Bear Party," 6). Her sister in-law, Benicia Vallejo, held a similarly negative view of the bear flaggers and, according to Enrique Cerruti, "... whenever a favorable opportunity presented itself would fire a full broad-side to the bear flag crowd" ("Ramblings in California," 58).

Similar incidents occurred throughout California as Americans living in the territory declared their own bands of
loosely formed battalions and, in many cases, used the declaration of war as an excuse to raid Californios' and Native Californian's lands. Commodore John Drake Sloat arrived by sea and took possession of Monterey while Stephen W. Kearny marched into California from New Mexico. Californio forces rallied to beat Kearny's army at the battle of San Pascual under Governor Pío Pico, but that would be their only victory.

Dissatisfaction with the centrist policies of the Mexican government along with the intense power-struggle that had been underway between the Californios themselves left them in a very weak position to defend their territory from the American invaders. Many Americans who joined the invading army had settled in California under Mexican rule and had even married California women and formed ties with their communities. Class interests had been forged between the Californio elite and Anglo American traders and merchants and many Californios such as Mariano Vallejo saw annexation as the ideal solution for California. However, soon after the war it became apparent to even the most enthusiastic supporter of annexation that there would be no positions for Californios within the new regime. Although the American government had promised to protect the rights of all residents of California in the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, among American citizens support for the war had been largely fueled by the philosophy of Manifest Destiny, a political
philosophy based on a belief in the racial superiority of the Anglo Saxon people.

As Michael Omi and Howard Winant describe in their text *Racial Formation in the United States* (1986), race has been central to social organization in the United States:

... even a cursory glance at American history reveals that far from being color-blind, the United States has been an extremely "color-conscious" society. From the very inception of the Republic to the present moment, race has been a profound determinant of one's political rights, one's location in the labor market, and indeed one's sense of "identity." The hallmark of this history has been *racism*, not the abstract ethos of equality... (1)

Racial classification has been and is used as an form of social control in both the United States and Latin America. From their arrival at Plymouth to their extension to California, Americans have used theories of racial superiority to justify their territorial expansion. The ideological arm of the Mexican American war was the concept of Manifest Destiny. As Antonia Castañeda explains:

... pejorative, racist stereotypes of Mexicanos... were an integral part of an ideology that helped to justify the Mexican-American War as well as subsequent repression in the conquered territory. (1990a: 213)

A number of elements combined to re-enforce this political ideology: a belief in the racial superiority of Anglo Saxons and the inherent superiority of their political and economic institutions, an emphasis on individual achievement, and the
belief that it was the will of God that the Anglo American people govern North America, from sea to shining sea.

In Latin America there developed an elaborate caste system that attempted to define and classify all possible racial combinations in order to determine their social position and their level of official participation within colonial society. The caste system reflected a desire to classify and control mestizaje in the New World. This imposition of racial hierarchies was at the same time particularly rigid and fluid on the frontier, the periphery of "social control." For example, while there was a great deal of emphasis on racial classification there was also a certain amount of flexibility which enabled people to purchase their way into lighter, more socially equitable racial categories. During the nineteenth century, both Mexico and the United States defined mestizaje as transgression of social norms and the Mestizo subject as a social problem.

As a category of social organization in both Latin American and the United States, political definitions and social manipulations of race have varied greatly throughout our history. Although race has to do with biology, biology is not the fundamental aspect that defines race. What is race? Is it in the blood? Skin color? Geographic origins? Is it possible to be of only one race? Race is, more than anything, a socio-political construction. As Omi and Winant
show, racial classification can affect your work, where you live, your legal rights, your social, economic and political position, and much more. It often determines how we are identified by the society in which we live as well as how we identify ourselves. As Omi and Winant explain:

Our theory of racial formation emphasizes the social nature of race, the absence of any essential racial characteristics, the historical flexibility of racial meanings and categories, the conflictual character of race at both the "micro--" and "macro-social" levels, and the irreducible political aspect of racial dynamics. (4)

As a fundamental mechanism of social control, in times of political conflict there is a lot of emphasis on race while, at the same time, there is a destabilization of the limits of its categories and definitions.

In his book Racial Fault Lines (1994) Tomás Almaguer proposes that the conquest of Mexico's Northern territories by the United States created a pattern of racialized relationships between the conquered and the conquerors which has persisted in California:

For various sectors of the European-American population, located at different levels within the emergent class structure, racializing discourses and practices served as mechanisms to create, extend, or preserve their social position in the period during which white supremacy was being systematically institutionalized. (3)
Almaguer emphasizes that the "racial formation" of California is an ideological process that has been naturalized and de-historicized. White supremacy became the "master narrative" (7) that defined European Americans as the norm against the differences of the diverse indigenous and immigrant population of California which included Native Californians, Mexicans, Spaniards, Blacks and Chinese among others. Ethnic groups in California were defined by European Americans on a negative continuum in which "savage" and "uncivilized" native peoples were seen as most "foreign" and least desirable while Mexican "half-breeds" were seen as culturally closer to the European Americans and worthy of at least partial integration into American society (4).

However, Almaguer points out that "[b]ecause race is fundamentally a socially conferred status whose anthropological and biological underpinnings are dubious at best, how and where the racial lines are drawn is an open question..." (9). Many prominent Californios for example identified themselves as white and took pains to distinguish themselves from the Mexican "cholo," a term that has both racial and class connotations. The Dictionary of Latin American Racial and Ethnic Terminology (1989) defines a "cholo" as a person who is dark-skinned, Mestizo, or poor; while "blanca" or "gente de razón" refers to a non-Indian, a Catholic, or a wealthy or social prominent individual. Regarding the term "blanca" the dictionary explicitly states
that being "blanca" does not have to do with skin color so much as social and economic position. As Omi and Winant suggest, racial classifications have more to do with social organization than any inherent, stable biological quality.

Chicano historian Mario Barrera describes Manifest Destiny as the belief that "... Anglo-Americans were possessed of a vision of history in which they were divinely chosen to populate the North American continent and to bring the blessings of democracy and progress to this area" (12). Anglo American contact with Mexicans and indigenous peoples of the Southwest has been defined by this philosophy of racial superiority. The belief in the Manifest Destiny of the Anglo Saxon race and the inherent inferiority dark-skinned people re-defined and re-enforced a system of racial classification already in place in California and set a tone of racial violence which would intensify during the Gold Rush era (1848-1866).

With the discovery of gold in 1848 came thousands of European American settlers. By 1850 European Americans outnumbered Mexicans in California nearly ten to one (Acuña, 111). Californio ranchers saw their vast territories carved up by squatters and found little help in the American judicial system. Despite promises by the American government to honor Spanish and Mexican land grants, in 1851 the burden of proof was placed upon the landholder to verify their title within the U.S. court system by the Federal Land Act. Even
if their title was upheld by the courts many Californios lost their lands to lawyers and court fees. In his book *The Lost Land* (1984) John Chávez describes this process of deterritorization:

Since the boundaries of the original grants were often loosely drawn, the Californios were soon caught in what seemed endless difficulties: an unfamiliar judicial system conducted in English, unscrupulous lawyers who demanded exorbitant fees often payable only in land, squatters who refused to pay rent until grants were validated, ... The Land Law of 1851 together with the Californios' unfamiliarity with the competitive Anglo economic system eventually led to the loss of their property. (49)

Without land and political representation Californios quickly began to lose their remaining economic leverage. Land loss and heavy draughts followed by floods ruined cattle ranchers. The Californios left on their feet after the war lacked the capital, the experience, and the access to compete within the international marketplace. Chávez uses the idea of a lost homeland in his work to discuss the dispossession of Chicanos in the Southwest. Chávez says that this loss of land has created for Chicanos a sense of dislocation not only from their homeland but also from their history. Almost overnight conquered Mexicans across the Southwest became, in the words of Juan Seguín, Mariano Vallejo, and Pablo de la Guerra among others, foreigners in their native land.

Racist rhetoric that had justified the United States' war of aggression against Mexico carried over into the
American period with a vengeance. The gold rush created an atmosphere of tension and frustration as some got rich quick and others lost everything. As the competition stiffened Californios, Latin Americans and other ethnic minorities in California found that their every interaction with European Americans was laced with racial tension and, more often than not, violence. Lynchings and vigilante violence, almost always marked by racial divisions, rose dramatically during this period. Nearly every "popular tribunal" of the period involved a Spanish speaking Californian. As Leonard Pitt describes in *The Decline of the Californios* (1971):

...[vigilantes] thus inclined toward quick and final punishments such as whipping, branding, ear cropping, banishment, and hanging. Many of the regular courts demonstrated a form of justice comparably rugged to that of the lynch courts. (70)

Racism and xenophobia were justified by the "moral authority" of the Anglo Saxon race and what was seen as the essential perversity and barbarism of the Mexican. In one of the most infamous cases of the period a pregnant Mexican woman, Juanita, was lynched, according to one bystander, by "... the hungriest, craziest, wildest mob... that I ever saw anywhere" (cited in Pitt, 74) for having killed an Anglo. The lynching of Juanita was justified in part by the claim that she was a prostitute and was "corrupting" innocent men. However Acuña has disputed these claims and suggested that
the Anglo had threatened Juanita and she had killed him in
self-defense (118-19). As Pitt describes, the lynching of
Juanita "...inaugurated a five-year era in which he [the
Anglo American] either committed crimes or meted out
punishment with particular fury and sadism" (74). Both Acuña
and Tomás Almaguer emphasize that this racialized violence
during the gold rush "... established a pattern of North
American-Mexican relations" (Acuña, 112).

This "linchocracy" was legitimized within legislative
system by laws such as the Foreign Miners Tax of 1850 which
levied a tax on all "foreigners" in California and defined
evety non-Anglo Californian as "foreign." In the eyes of the
American government and many of its citizens, every Mexican
became a potential criminal. With no legal recourse within
the system many Californios began to function outside the
law. Many Mexicans and Latin Americans living in California,
including sons of elite Californio families, turned to social
banditry. These "social bandits" such as Joaquín Murrieta
and Tiburcio Vásquez terrorized Anglo communities (and other
ethnic groups according to Chávez) and became heroes among
poor Mexicans.

As with most histories, the history of the American
Southwest has been written from the vantage point of the
conqueror. In California the image of the Southwest as a
Mexican homeland has been so violently displaced that the
conqueror has been able to wipe all but the most distant traces of color from the face of California history. Chávez suggests that the collective memory of the Mexican community in the Southwest began to be affected by emerging Anglo American representations of California history:

The common Mexican began to forget his history, to forget that he was indigenous to the Southwest as well as Mexico. For a time during the twentieth century, the loss of historical memory would obscure the Chicano's image of the Southwest as lost, and of himself as dispossessed. (62)

Without political representation in the United States, many Mexicans looked to Mexico for advocacy and cultural reinforcement. Mexico began to be seen as homeland even for natives of the Southwest. The Californio testimonials resuscitate the memory of the Southwest as a homeland to Chicanos. They testify not only to the lengthy historical presence of Chicanos in the Southwest, but also to active resistance and a will to survive after the American takeover. Their voices restore an important chapter in Mexican, American, and Chicano history.
Chapter II

Testimony and Autobiography:
Self Representation Through Dependent Production

The interviews conducted by Enrique Cerruti and Thomas Savage have been studied both as testimonials and as autobiographies. Bancroft himself referred to the narratives as "biographical sketches," while Cerruti and Savage refer to them as biographical sketches, dictations and personal narratives. In his work Genaro Padilla has defined the Californio narratives as autobiographies while Rosaura Sánchez believes they are better defined as testimonials. In this chapter I would like to discuss both genres, looking specifically at the narratives as testimonials in terms of production and as autobiographies in terms of representation.

A testimonial is a first person narrative describing events in which the narrator was a protagonist or a witness. These events can be the narrator's life or a particular event. The testimonial has been called by John Beverly "... a literature of personal witness and involvement..." (1992: 94). Although the testimonial is often considered a new genre, it in fact has many historical predecessors, such as the crónicas, memoirs, and ethnographic life histories collected in Latin America during the colonial period. In his work on the genre John Beverly argues that testimonials generally occupy the margins of literature and
historiography, and particularly those testimonials whose subjects have traditionally been excluded from authorized self-representation (93).

Testimonials are usually seen as resistance literature, counter-perspectives of the marginalized that challenge dominant historiographies. There is often a tone of urgency in the text, the desire to inscribe a subaltern perspective and argue one's cause. Testimonials differ, according to Rosaura Sánchez and others, from autobiography in that they are primarily concerned with a collective social situation rather than with a particular person. The narrator of the testimonial is representative of his or her community rather than exceptional. As Beverly explains:

Testimonio represents an affirmation of the individual subject, even of individual growth and transformation, but in connection with a group or class situation marked by marginalization, oppression, and struggle. If it loses this connection, it ceases to be testimonio and becomes autobiography... (103)

Unlike the traditionally defined autobiography, the testimonial does not have as its primary focus the achievements of one individual. However if we reconsider our definition of autobiography, as I will discuss later, this fundamental distinction becomes problematic.

Margaret Randell, an American author who has put together numerous collections of testimonials of Nicaraguan and Cuban women, discusses the definition and the production
of a testimonial in her article "¿Qué es, y cómo se hace un testimonio?" (1992). Her basic definition of a testimonial involves direct-participant account and a "testimonialist," or collector, who seeks out the witness, records his or her account, edits and compiles the text. A quality testimonial according to Randall, must also meet a number of additional requirements. In addition to writing and organizing skills, the "testimonialist" must possess: 1) knowledge of the theme being treated and familiarity with the life of the subject; 2) respect for the informant and his or her life experiences; 3) a profound understanding of the ideology of the proletariat; and, 4) "human sensibility" (26).

Bancroft employed both writers and amateur historians who were trained in the collecting, compiling, and editing methods that Bancroft used in his production of historical texts. Most likely the majority of the Bancroft project field workers had a fairly limited sense of California history and in particular the Californios' situation. However Cerruti and Savage seem to have tried to familiarize themselves with their potential subjects in order to convince them to dictate their life narratives. Familiarity with the subjects and the social positions they occupied varied. Some narrators, particularly the men, were sought out because of their prominent position in California history. Others were stumbled onto at random or recommended by other Californios. The latter was the case with most of the Californias
interviewed. In terms of the respect Bancroft and his field workers held for their "informants," it is clear from their own commentary and field notes that, while they sympathized with many of the Californios, ultimately they had little respect for their life experiences and viewed their narratives as sentimental, bitter, and generally suspect. Neither the collector nor the narrators can realistically be said to have a profound familiarity with the "ideology of the proletariat," though many of the Californias base their authority on their life of hard work. Whether or not the Californios can be said to identify with the working-class position they occupied at the time of the interviews is a problematic question which I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter. In any case, while Bancroft actively pursued the Californios version of early California history his sympathy for their current position was limited. As for the final qualification, Randall provides no definition of "human sensibility" and seems to assume a universal, ahistorical acceptance of the term. I am sure Bancroft and his field agents believed themselves to possess a great deal of human sensibility but the Californios may have had a very different opinion on the matter.

Randall also suggests any sort of identification (gender, class, ethnic, national, religious...) between the testimonialist and the testifier can only help the final product. According to Cerruti's field notes ("Ramblings in
California"), Mariano Vallejo chides Cerruti for rushing him through his life history and expecting him "...to write history on horseback" (35) and tells him "..., you are more yankee than italian" (35). This seems to indicate that as an Italian Catholic Cerruti was seen as closer in terms of cultural identification and values to the Californios than perhaps Bancroft would have been. Rosaura Sánchez also notes in Telling Identities that without the work of Cerruti "...it is unlikely that Vallejo and others would ever have consented to dictate their recollections and testimonials" (19). For reasons unknown--perhaps owing to a combination of his cultural background, his experience in Latin America and his unique personality--Cerruti was able to procure materials that had eluded the Bancroft Project for years. I will discuss Cerruti's collection methods in more detail in chapter three.

The position of the Californios was distinct from that of the contemporary testimonial subject as defined by Randall. Although they occupied a subaltern position at the time of the interviews, many of them once formed part of the dominant culture. They are not "organic intellectuals" narrating the history of the proletariat. Class, and in some sense, ethnic identification has been forced upon them by the reality of their positions in post-Mexican California; they

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5 A term developed by Antonio Gramsci to describe an intellectual leader who comes out of a subaltern background and uses his or her abilities and experiences to theorize about and seek agency for subaltern groups.
have been "... marginalized, proletarianized, and pauperized,..." (Sánchez, 1995, 2). Although they no longer had access to the means of production, they were not always "outsiders"; many were highly literate and politically savvy.

In *Telling Identities* Rosaura Sánchez discusses at length the production of the testimonials and the dynamics and contradictions that form what she calls the "politics of identity construction" (x). She sees the Californio narratives as testimonials rather than autobiographies, and uses the work of critics such as John Beverly and Gayatri Spivak to look at the production of these mediated narratives. Sánchez claims that although the testimonials contain autobiographical elements within them they cannot be considered autobiographies because they are dependent--as opposed to self-generated--texts. As Sánchez explains, collaborative efforts which are initiated and sponsored by a member of the dominant culture cannot be considered autobiographies because "... their production is mediated and filtered through a second, more powerful agency, that of the interviewer/editor" (8). The subaltern are allowed to speak, but their voices are filtered through a representative of the dominant culture and are only given public distribution once they are sanctioned by institutional authorities (i.e. a publisher).

Autobiography is the main critical lens through which Padilla examines the Californio narratives in his text, *My
History, Not Yours. However Padilla's interpretation of "autobiography" re-works and expands the traditional definition of the genre to fit less individually oriented personal narratives. Rosaura Sánchez argues against defining the testimonials as autobiographies in part because "... testimonials interpolate not an individual subjectivity but a collective identity, a 'We' engaged in political struggle within a diversity of social spaces" (8). However, Padilla and many other Chicano critics have pointed out that Chicano autobiography is "... a genre in which individual experience and collective historical identity are inextricably bound" (6). Padilla re-defines autobiography as we known it, claiming that autobiographical consciousness is marked by both individual and collective experience. Rather than the feats and accomplishments of "great men," in Padilla's autobiographies we hear life narratives which define the self within specific socio-historic contexts, thereby struggling to represent not only an individual's but an entire community's experiences.

In this expansion of the traditional definition of the autobiography the self-portrait is of an individual who, rather than "transcending" his or her environment, is defined by it. The focus is on subjects that are exemplary of their communities rather than exceptional or extraordinary. The acts that the Californias consider heroic and choose to
narrate in their testimonials are carried out on a much more mundane level than their male counterparts, they are the women who not only survived under extreme duress but bore children, raised families and ran households. The narrator not only speaks to her own personal experiences but also evokes other voices in her community that are absent in dominant historiography.

However this affirmation of the collective is voiced by an authoritative speaking subject in the California testimonials. Nearly every narrative begins with "Yo, (full name)" with the majority of the women using their maiden name to identify themselves. The first paragraph of the testimonial of Dorotea Valdez, dictated to Enrique Cerruti, is exemplary of this strong "I":

I have witnessed every event which have transpired since that time [1793], but being a woman was denied the privilege of mixing in politics or business, my education has been very limited, yet my memory is good, and being aware of the fact that you are the emissary of a learned man, bent on a noble object, namely writing a reliable history of this country, I will with great pleasure give you the benefit of my recollections, you can at leisure proceed to ask me questions6 ("Reminiscences," 1.)

In one short paragraph Valdez seizes narrative authority despite her social position as a woman with little education and places herself in firm control of the interview. In the testimonial, this speaking subject is contextualized. The

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6 I present the narratives as they appear in the Bancroft collection, without correcting any grammatical or typographical errors.
self, according to Beverly, is affirmed within a collective mode (97).

In his article "La historia y la voz del otro" (1992) Hugo Achugar suggests that another quality that may separate the autobiography from the testimonial is the autobiography's focus on the private realm. Sánchez believes that the Californio life narratives focus mainly on the public realm to the almost total exclusion of intimate and personal sites (1995: 9). This may be true of the men's narratives, but I believe the women's narratives move freely between the private and public realm. As Padilla points out, the Californias refused to stay, as women, within the private, domestic realm. They narrate their lives and actions within both the private and the public sphere, and easily move in and out of these two spaces. Their representations of self cannot be separated from their actions and interactions within their communities; the boundary between public and private is transgressed.

Padilla suggests that the Californios seize the narrative space offered to them by the Bancroft project and use it to create their own personal and collective autobiographies. They make the testimonials into their autobiographies: "... it is the ever present 'I' within that transforms them from oral history into the genre of life writing we call autobiography" (27). Achugar also suggests
that the testimonial may in fact be the autobiography of the subaltern:

Aunque la autobiografía y el testimonio presentan algunas diferencias, podría aventurarse la hipótesis de que el testimonio es, en una de sus formas, la autobiografía del iletrado o de aquel que no controla los espacios de la historiografía y de la comunicación. (56)

Padilla places diaries, letters and cooking instructions alongside testimonials, viewing the entire record of personal experience as the collective autobiography of a people documenting their way of life under the threat of erasure.

In his work on autobiography James Olney also clearly sees autobiographical texts for their representative value not only to individuals but also to communities:

... autobiography--the story of a distinctive culture written in individual characters and from within--offers a privileged access to an experience... that no other variety of writing can offer. (13)

If we utilize the expanded definition of the autobiography suggested by critics such as Padilla, Achugar and Olney, many of the differences we use to distinguish between testimonial and autobiography disappear. The autobiographical voice in this case speaks in a strong "I" but defines itself by social interactions within a collective. The subject seeks to represent not only itself but its community (other women, other Californios, other working women, etc.). And finally
the subject inscribes these representations with a sense of urgency, under the threat of physical and textual erasure.

In her analysis of ethnic working-class women's autobiography, *Take my Word* (1996), Anne Goldman warns against what she sees as an uncritical acceptance of the "collective voice" by critics of ethnic autobiography. She suggests if we do not recognize the specific and particular representations of self, as well as communal and cultural representations, we run the risk of generalizing and essentializing individual experience. As Goldman explains:

>[P]eople of color make their opportunities where they find them, and for women of color, especially, such openings have often taken shape in an ethnographic publishing context that ignores the specificities of individual voices in order to draw general, and abstract, claims about the way "culture" operates. (xx)

In other words, one factor of the subject's identity is deemed central, and the subject her- or himself is defined as "representative" of their group by the ethnographer at the expense of their particular experience. The subject becomes, in Goldman's words, "...more a cultural sign than a autobiographical presence" (xxi). Goldman emphasizes that her intent is not to reinstate the notion of an "I" that develops in isolation but to find a balance. This balance would recognizes multiple positionings rather than forcing the subject to choose between being representative of, and
defined by, one aspect of their identity or ignoring the social affiliations of their personal development altogether.

As Achugar points out, once the testimony is given, authorization of that testimony can only come from the editor in the form of publication. In the case of the Californio testimonials that authorization never came. Their personal, familial and communal histories never reached the public. Not only were their voices not authorized, but they were judged and ridiculed by Bancroft in his "official" histories of California. In both his histories of California and Literary Industries (1890b) Bancroft calls into question the reliability of the Californios' narratives and makes fun of his informants. The paradox of the testimonial is, as Achugar reminds us, that in most cases it can only be made public by a member of the dominant culture:

Es en ese sentido que decimos que el testimonio o testimonio final no llega a circular si no ha sido previamente autorizado. Es decir, llega a circular y a ser aceptado como legítimo sólo y cuando pre-existe la autorización legitimadora. (64)

John Beverly suggests that rather than seeing figures such as Rigoberta Menchú as "the voice of the subaltern" they might be more accurately described as organic intellectuals in the Gramscian sense: activists and intellectuals from a

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7 For examples see History of California v. 5, 62; Literary Industries, 420; California Pastoral, 260, 263, and 278-79.
subaltern background who attempt to voice to and seek agency for their communities (110).

Sánchez points out that the same battle that is waged for representation in California history takes place at the micro level within the testimonials themselves for control of the narrative space:

[T]here is a consciousness of the constructedness of history and a keen desire to struggle through narration, to deploy their own reconstruction of history and identity as weapons to be wielded in the contest. (1995: 27)

Achugar also describes the discursive space of the testimonial as an ideological and rhetorical battleground:

Es un espacio discursivo donde se representa la lucha por el poder de aquellos sujetos sociales que cuestionan la hegemonía discursiva no de los letrados en sí, sino de los sectores sociales e ideológicas dominantes y detentadores del poder económico, político, cultural y social que han controlado históricamente la ciudad letrada. (57)

The production of a narrative cannot and should not be neatly separated from its content. Considering the power dynamics that are usually in place during the production of a testimonial—with the collector generally being a member of the dominant culture and the testifier a member of a marginalized culture—it only makes sense that differences of race, class and gender and abuses of power that define the context in which the collaboration takes place might be reproduced on the level of the testimonial text itself. In
the worst of cases, the dialectic of the colonizer/colonized can be reproduced in a situation where the collector manipulates the material the informant provides as raw materials to his or her own end (Beverly, 99). Even in the best of cases, as Spivak, Audre Lorde, and many other theorists have insisted, it is difficult to escape the contradiction of dismantling the master's house with his own tools.

However, this does not necessarily lead us to the conclusion that we should dismiss these sort of dependently produced narratives outright. Rather, it is essential that instead of minimizing the role of the collector we recognize inequities of power in the production process. Goldman argues that "... editorial agenda can mask but not obliterate the imperatives of the speakers" (68). Padilla, Sánchez, and Goldman insist that in the process of narrating the testimonial and appropriating the narrative space the subaltern collaborator does recover some degree of agency (Sánchez, 14). As Goldman notes, "Recognizing power differences is not the same as either wishing them away or apologizing for them, but instead means outlining what is sometimes made to appear invisible" (69). This "outlining" not only helps us begin to recognize the realities of dependent production but also enables us to listen more closely to the speaker and can enrich our understanding of the narrative.
History, as I suggested in chapter one, is almost always written by the dominant class and is usually shaped and molded in such a way as to justify its actions and uphold its interests. Randall suggests that the use of oral histories along with traditional historical methods such as research in archives, libraries, newspapers, etc. can be combined to give us a more inclusive and complete vision of historical events. This vision includes, in particular for Randall, the perspectives of the proletariat, as well as other marginalized groups. For Olney autobiography can also serve this purpose by rendering "... in a peculiarly direct and faithful way the experience and the vision of a people..." (13). Randall suggests that we have the opportunity and the responsibility to write what she refers to as "...una verdadera historia" (37) of our times. This new history would collect "... en la voz viva del pueblo la dimensión humana de hechos, lugares, hazañas" (37).

But what of the past? Is it possible to recover these buried perspectives in the documents collected at the hands of the dominant culture? Bancroft's use of oral histories and solicitation of subaltern perspectives was highly innovative and even progressive for his times. However, the lack of respect Bancroft, as a collector, held for his subjects and the way in which he utilized these histories was very much in line with the dominant historiographies of his era. He exploited the "raw materials" of the testimonials
to create his own vision of California history, giving little credit or direct voice to the Californios' life narratives. His methods of collection and his use of the materials were much like the methods of ruthless lawyers and businessmen who preyed on marginalized Californios during the second half of the nineteenth century.

The Californio narratives were collected under false pretenses. Throughout Cerruti's account of his own field work he describes how Californios only agreed to provide their dictations after he assured them:

[T]hat Mr Bancroft was bent upon giving to the world a true history of California, on doing justice to everyone who had played a prominent part in the conquest, and civilization of the country, that he had not a single sparkle of animosity against the natives [the Californios] who would receive their just due at his hands--. ("Ramblings in California," 114)

I believe, as I will discuss in chapter three, Cerruti said this both sincerely (in his own way) and out of a willingness to say and do just about anything to convince the Californios to contribute to the Bancroft project. As Sánchez points out, Bancroft was a "capitalist cultural entrepreneur" (33) who appropriated and commodified the life narratives of the Californios for his own "literary industries" (1890b). The Californios conceded to this appropriation in exchange for historical representation. They saw their presence being rapidly erased from California history and, encouraged by
Bancroft, believed that this was their opportunity to inscribe their version of events on dominant historiography. Nevertheless Rosaura Sánchez also points out that we should recognize that the manipulation was mutual. As she explains:

The narrators can attempt to manipulate the discourses by assuming a dual tactic of concession to and questioning of the social order and its dominant discourses and by appropriating, in the act of narrating, this representational terrain for themselves as a historically positioned collectivity. (12)

The Californios, many well aware of Bancroft's true intentions, employed strategies and rhetorical maneuvers to wrest control of the narrative from the interviewer and insert encoded messages that expressed opinions they did not have the luxury of stating openly.

By choosing to give Bancroft their testimonials, Californios were attempting to contest hegemonic representation and record their counter-history through collaboration with a historian from the dominant culture whose business was precisely hegemonic ideological production. It is because of this complex dynamic of manipulation and antagonism that both Padilla and Sánchez insist that we read these narratives closely, carefully, between and beyond the lines, in order to capture possible meanings behind their enigmatic, vacillating, and often contradictory statements. As Sánchez points out, marginal
discourses are always contradictory (4); for, as Tey Diana Rebolledo notes in her work on early texts by Nuevo Mexicanas, "It is a wonder they wrote at all" (1990, 99).

The recovery of historical documents voicing perspectives of subaltern groups enables us to work towards creating a more multidimensional, complex, representative vision of the past as well as the future. Documents such as testimonials, autobiographies, and oral histories give us the rare opportunity to hear lively and dynamic—though often mediated—descriptions of Mexican and Mexican American history from the protagonists themselves. As Beverly explains:

What is important about testimonio is that it produces if not the real then certainly a sensation of experiencing the real that has determinate effects on the reader that are different from those produced by even the most realist or "documentary fiction." (102)

In the final two chapters I will discuss what field notes we have from Cerruti, Savage and Bancroft and the testimonials themselves. My intention is to keep in mind the politics and inherent problems of dependent representation while at the same time recognizing the Californias' abilities to negotiate and maneuver within that confined narrative space. It is my hope that an analysis of both the general and the specific aspects of these women's lives as well as the circumstances of textual production will enable us to
wade through the ideological filters and listen more closely to these women's life narratives.
Chapter III

Notes from Behind the Scenes and on the Front Lines

Hubert Howe Bancroft (1832-1918) was an Anglo American publisher and historian. He moved to San Francisco in 1856 where he made his fortune as a bookseller. In the 1860s he became interested in Western history and began collecting books, pamphlets, manuscripts, personal papers and oral dictations on what he termed the Pacific States (Central American to Alaska). Over a sixteen year period Bancroft published thirty-nine volumes of historical and social studies of the West. In the process of producing his seven volume history of California his assistants collected letters, dictations, mission and pueblo archives, as well as numerous other personal and official documents from early American "pioneers," Californios, and Native Californians. In addition to field workers Bancroft also employed a number of readers, copiers, catalogers, compilers, and writers. Bancroft himself estimates the total number of people working in his San Francisco office to be up to fifty on any given day (Clark, 14).

Bancroft's official method of historical production was to amass as much information as possible and then have his copiers and compilers organize and edit this information. Theoretically he was responsible for drafting the final product, but in reality many of Bancroft's best writers ended
up writing huge sections, even volumes, of his histories while he gave them a superficial review and published them under his name. In his study of Bancroft's work, *A Venture in History* (1973), Harry Clark suggests that as many as 29 of the 39 volumes Bancroft published under his own name may have been written by his "literary assistants" (19). Bancroft's methods of "collective authorship" were eventually exposed by some of his more prolific writers and much of his work has been ridiculed and dismissed by historians. However as Clark notes Bancroft's *Works* are still seen as an invaluable reference tool (ix).

Bancroft's autobiography, *Literary Industries* (1890b), is largely a reaction to his critics and a justification of his methods of collective authorship. He gives a detailed description of his methodologies and claims that financial aspects of his business often interfered with his writing (Clark, 20). A business man turned historian for commercial ends, it seems that Bancroft was mainly responsible for the business end of production. Clark suggests that it appears from the historian's own descriptions and the exposés and private letters of his assistants that Bancroft was "... clearly the editor and publisher, and only incidentally the author" (22) of his histories of the West.

Bancroft termed the life narratives that he solicited from various "old time" Californians "biographical sketches" ("Documentos para la historia de California," b, 129).
Bancroft's publishing house, the History Company, provided field workers with "Suggestions for Biographical Sketches" ("Documentos," b, 129) which gave a detailed step by step description of how to complete a thorough biographical sketch. The form listed a number of possible topics and the selection of these topics was left to the discretion of the transcriber. Bancroft's motto was "leave no important fact unstated" (129 1/2). He encouraged the transcriber to record the informant's answers faithfully and frankly and leave it to the editors back in San Francisco to make the dictation readable and "literary" (129 1/2). Bancroft said the goal of the sketch was "To do full justice to the career and character of each, and at the same time not to wound the self-respect of any" (129 1/2). Bancroft also claimed that all sources would be kept confidential, which they clearly were not. The layout of a biographical sketch was as follows:

1. Full name.

2. Date of Birth (including specific site, town, state, nation, time, etc.)

3. Full names of both parents, important life events, how they might have influenced the subjects.

4. The ancestry of the subject, any ancestors of civil, military or ecclesiastical position, their deeds, how they arrived in California and their genealogy.

5. Character and extent of Education, well known teachers, preferences for or aversion to a particular line of study, connection to early and later life experiences
6. Active life: when they left school and why, their trade or occupation, the physical state of the subject at the time of the interview.

7. Manhoods career: "... more full details of changes, removals, experiences, enterprises, successes, failures, disappointments, achievements, and all important incidents in the life of the individual" (136).

8. Date of marriage, maiden name of wife and any information of interest about her family (ancestry, important events in her life).

9. Religious affiliation; social, occupational, financial, and educational ties due to this affiliation; any change in religious views.

10. [Page missing].

11. [Page missing].

12. Political parties subject belonged to, any party changes, political influence.

13. [Page missing].

14. Social offices--benevolent, patriotic, or industrial--occupied by the individual: "Such facts help to individualize the character and break the monotony of the narrative" (141).

15. Military record, where records are kept, dates, promotions, battles, division, commander, etc. ("Documentos," b, 129-42)

Again, the scope is extremely broad but the focus is up to the discretion of the interviewer. Bancroft also says the informant may fill out the forms himself (the subject is assumed to be male), making the sketch autobiographical, but it would later be re-written in the third person. This does not appear to have been a very common practice. Only a few
informants were even allowed to review and edit their own dictations.

Because most of the editing and re-writing process took place during the final production of Bancroft's works, the original dictation of the informant is preserved more than it might have been in other oral histories of the period. The dictations were essentially used as raw materials and were never published themselves. So although Bancroft mines, twists, and turns the Californios words in his own works the testimonials themselves, after he framed the terms of their collection, were essentially untouched by Bancroft. Their voices are filtered through the transcriber at the time of the interview and again during the editing process. As Sánchez points out one begins to notice a style that runs throughout the women's narratives and after a few readings it becomes clear whether the narrative has been transcribed by Cerruti or Savage (1993, 286). An exploration into the methodology of the Bancroft publishing house as well as a close look at the men who collected the California narratives should give us some insight into the collection process and the interaction between these two field workers and their subjects.

Bancroft frequently criticizes early Anglo American historical writings as biased and claims his "... purpose is to write a complete, accurate, and impartial history of California" (1890b, 443). As an Anglo American historian,
Bancroft exercises a certain degree of power in the business of what Foucault calls knowledge production (Foucault, 1980). Through him speak the discourses of race and nation of his time. His racialized interpretations of Californios, Native Californians, Mexicans, Chinese, and other groups express a belief in the inherent superiority of Europeans, and particularly, the Anglo Saxon race.

Although Bancroft does sympathize with the original and early inhabitants of the Southwest, their disappearance is, in his eyes, inevitable. While ostensibly criticizing the United States government's policy of exterminating Native Americans, Bancroft explains:

Perhaps it is better so. If with our Indians we could kill off our Africans, and Asiatics, and low Europeans, we might in due time breed a race of Gods. (Retrospective, 69)

While Bancroft recognizes the plight of the conquered in the newly acquired American Southwest, ultimately he endorses a genocide he considers divine providence. There are numerous passages in Bancroft's works that illustrate his belief in a "natural" racial hierarchy in which difference from Anglos is equated with inferiority. In California Pastoral (1888), Bancroft's interpretive social history of California, Bancroft refers to Mexicans and Californios as "mongrels" deriving from a "turgid racial stream" (76-79) and concludes that they exist "halfway between savagery and civilization"
This obsession with racial purity and distaste for mestizaje demonstrates Bancroft's subscription to the basic tenets of Manifest Destiny.

In *Literary Industries* Bancroft acknowledges some of the contributions of his many "literary assistants," among them Thomas Savage and Enrique Cerruti. Bancroft employs his favorite method of documentation, the biographical sketch, to describe his literary assistants. Bancroft tells us that Thomas Savage's parents moved from Boston to Cuba where he was raised. Savage studied law briefly and worked for twenty-one years at the United States consulate in Cuba. He was fluent in English, Spanish, French, and Latin and is described as an excellent transcriber and translator. Savage was employed as Bancroft's Spanish American affairs expert and Spanish scholar. He was also responsible for directing various group trips to Southern California where he and his assistants collected, copied and abstracted numerous mission, civil, military, and personal collections. For example, he headed a crew which copied, abstracted and catalogued all the mission archives in California. During these trips Savage attempted to get the narratives and personal papers of prominent or long-time citizens of the communities he visited. He used letters of introduction from prestigious and well respected *Californios* such as Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo to win the trust of these potential narrators.
Savage's various "Documentos para la historia de California" and his "Report on Labors in the Archives" are mainly collections of original official documents, dictations, letters and personal papers he gathered while traveling through California for Bancroft. His descriptions are very concise and taxonomical. His record of his activities lists what he was able to encounter with concise commentary on the usefulness of particular documents or the willingness of priests, officials, or Californios to hand over their documents and dictations. Savage usually provides a brief estimate of the intelligence of the narrator and the reliability of the dictation, such as "quite intelligent" ("Labors," 43); as well as the usefulness and accuracy of documents, such as "very valuable data" ("Labors," 56). He judges a number of male and female narrators suspicious and unreliable, saying their testimony contradicts the version of "the best authorities" (73). He describes María Inocenta Pico de Avila's dictation and contribution of documents to be very useful and Apolinaria Lorenzana's dictation as having "some good matter" (56) on the history of San Diego and the Mission, while he judges José de Jesus Pico's "a very meager contribution" (60). Savage also had various assistants, mainly Californios and Mexicans, traveling with him and at times it seems that they may be recording his actions. His activities are often referred to in the third person ("Mr. Savage..." 55).
Vicente P. Gómez, a Mexican, traveled extensively with Thomas Savage throughout Southern and Central California. Gómez had come to California as a child but returned to Mexico to receive an education. He later came back to California with General Micheltorena in 1842. According to Bancroft, Gómez was a good writer and conversationalist with an excellent memory (1890b, 274). Gómez dictated his own reminiscences for the project which Bancroft described as very useful (274) and while traveling with Savage was often sent to look for Californios and solicit their "narrative recollections" (523). It seems that a number of the Savage interviews were actually conducted by Gómez or other native Spanish Speakers while Savage supervised their work (Sánchez, 1993: 284). The dictation of Catarina Avila de Ríos, for example, was recorded by Gómez and later transcribed by Savage.

Savage worked mainly in Southern California where he visited missions and ranches of well known families and asked to copy or take with him any historical documents they possessed. Many of the California dictations were only taken because Savage had nothing better to do for the day. In other words, many of these women were not sought out by Savage but rather were stumbled upon and interviewed by default. For example, while in San Diego Savage had intended to look at some mission documents but was unable to see the mission books until the priest returned from a trip. Having
nothing else to do while waiting, another priest introduced Savage to Juana Machado de Ridington and Felipa Osuna de Marrón and he took their dictations ("Report," 45).

Of the California narratives, Savage took the dictations of Apolinaria Lorenzana, Juana Machado de Ridington, Felipa Osuna de Marrón, Angustias de la Guerra de Ord, María Inocente Pico de Avila and Eulalia Pérez. He refers to nearly all the women he comes in contact with by their husbands' names, although they themselves generally identify themselves by their maiden names. Angustias de la Guerra, for example, identifies herself as "Yo, María de las Angustias de la Guerra," ("Ocurrencias," 1) but she is referred to as Mrs. Ord; Juana Machado identifies herself as "Yo, Juana de Dios Machado" ("Los tiempos," 1) but is nevertheless referred to as Mrs. Ridington by Savage. Many women are not even named but simply referred to as "the wife of so-and-so" or "the widow of so-and-so."

Savage's notes and descriptions are generally short and to the point, particularly when compared with those of Enrique Cerruti. His notes describe how he obtained the documents he collected and his daily routine. Unlike Cerruti he does not get into descriptions of social interactions and lengthy character portrayals but sticks strictly to business pertaining to the retrieval of documents. The narrator of "Report on Labors in the Archives" (recorded under Savage's name) gives the following description of Savage's activities:
During his travels Mr. Savage made every possible effort to procure the needed material. He applied to all persons, reasonably accessible and supposed to be able to furnish it. (73)

Bancroft also held a very high opinion of Savage and recognized his contribution to the histories of California in Literary Industries (1890b). Bancroft praises Savage for his Spanish, his writing, and his "methodical habits" (259). Aside from some brief mentions of family, Bancroft refrains from much commentary on Savage's personal life or habits. Bancroft's description of Savage is a conscious contrast to Cerruti's apparent flamboyance: "Though less ostentatious than some, his abilities were not surpassed by any" (529).

Historian Harry Clark, along with Padilla and Sánchez, believes that without the efforts of Enrique Cerruti, Bancroft most likely would not have been able to obtain the dictations of Mariano Vallejo and many of his friends as well as his extensive collection of historical documents. Clark suggests that Bancroft "... lacked the qualities of gentility to recommend him to the Mexican-Californians, but Enrique Cerruti, an Italian soldier of fortune, had them in abundance" (17). Cerruti's flamboyant style and dogged persistence won over Vallejo who not only gave him a five volume dictation and his personal collection of historical
documents but wrote him letters and even accompanied him to solicit dictations from other Californio families.

Although Cerruti was sympathetic to the Californio experience of appropriation and betrayal, he was still willing to do anything to get materials for Bancroft. In "Ramblings in California" (1874) Cerruti narrates his untiring pursuit of historical materials and his ability to enlist support for the Bancroft project. Although Bancroft makes fun of his exaggerated personality and his grandiose writing style, he acknowledges his hard work and his amazing ability to generate support for the project. Bancroft notes that Cerruti "... did what no one else connected with the work could do, what but for him would never have been done" (1890b, 373).

Cerruti took Bancroft's instructions to take notes on his adventures in Sonoma very much to heart and provided detailed, elaborate descriptions of his "Ramblings in California." He begins with a brief description of his origins in Italy, his political adventures in South America and how he came to work for Bancroft. Cerruti, fluent in English, French, Italian and Spanish, worked as a translator, transcriber and copier as well as being one of Bancroft's Spanish American experts.

Bancroft was impressed by Cerruti's ability to acquire materials and sent him to Sonoma in March of 1874 to acquire "... by purchase or any other manner..." ("Ramblings," 13) as
many original documents on early California history as possible. He was also instructed to take dictations from as many early settlers and Californios (whom Bancroft refers to as Native Californians) as possible. In particular Bancroft was after the recollections and historical documents of Vallejo, a figure he considered central to California history.

Once in Sonoma, Cerruti installed himself in a local hotel and immediately began the task of ingratiating himself to the Vallejo family. Although Cerruti did not initially tell Vallejo that he was an employee of Bancroft, Vallejo was well aware of his purpose and told Cerruti that he no longer had any historical documents. However Cerruti was insistent and continued to visit Vallejo as a friend, bringing up the subject of California history whenever the opportunity presented itself. He played upon Vallejo's pride as a prominent Californio and reminded him that without his input the Californios would, once again, be represented by an outsider. Cerruti clearly uses this argument to try to convince Salvador Vallejo, Mariano Vallejo's brother, to narrate his recollections: "Nothing daunted [at his refusal] I continued arguing with him, told him how his enemies had dictated histories in which his great services to the land of his birth had been overlooked,..." (122). Throughout "Ramblings" Cerruti's language betrays his manipulative intentions when he describes Mariano Vallejo as "... the
personage that I had been sent to captivate" (19) and the various "tricks" (153) he employs to get what he is after.

While attempting to win-over Vallejo Cerruti spent his spare time acquainting himself with other residents of Sonoma and soliciting their dictations. His approach to research was to befriend and regale with compliments every person he came in contact with and try to establish himself in the community, while seeking out potential informants on early California. His field notes are a collection of lavish descriptions of activities, personal observations about the people he met, and dictations from various Sonomans. Through them we get a sense of the town and hear various aspects of its history through the memories of its residents. The dictations in Cerruti's "Ramblings" include numerous early European American settlers, Mexicans, Californios, and Native Californians.

Cerruti was instructed to "note down" (212) every word said by his informants and, by way of a disclaimer, he says in "Ramblings" that he "... reported in their own words, conversations held with ignorant persons dwelling in different parts of the state" (212). Cerruti incorporates the shorter dictations into his narrative, weaving in and out of personal observation and dictations. Cerruti also claims that he has followed Bancroft's request to "... keep aloof from prejudice, and note down only facts and personal observations" (1). We know from his descriptions and
Bancroft's **Literary Industries** that Cerruti would either make an appointment to take a subject's dictation or simply recorded notes on earlier conversations to the best of his ability when he returned to his room (or his "office" as he called it). Often times these notes were recorded or arranged several days later. Both direct dictations and his notes on earlier conversations are presented in quotes.

According to Cerruti's descriptions of himself, he was a man obsessed with obtaining historical documents. Every minute of the day--en route to Sonoma, in his hotel, while eating dinner--he was on the lookout for possible informants. When he was not plotting how to "capture" potential informants he was busy copying documents in his "office." His descriptions are interesting because they detail the nature of his interactions with his informants and reveal his methods. Cerruti's notes reveal much more informal, intimate interactions than Savage's. What stands out in "Ramblings in California" more than anything is the constant consumption of alcohol. Cerruti's basic approach was to invite potential informants to a drink. Nearly every interview is accompanied by a few drinks and cigars, regardless of the time of day, and the more reluctant the potential informant, the more alcohol involved in the interview process.
After spending some time at "Lachryma Montis," the Vallejo residence, the general begins to agree to "... the propriety of dictating something having reference to the early days of California" (56) every once in a while, but his full attention is not devoted to Cerruti and he is often distracted by visitors or family affairs. Vallejo also begins to let Cerruti take small bundles of historical documents to copy in his hotel room. In every case regarding the Californios, be it documents or dictations, Cerruti had to insist and badger. But, fortunately for Bancroft, insisting was what Cerruti did best, and in the process, he did everything he could to gain the trust and friendship of the potential informant.

It should also be kept in mind that Cerruti was keeping these notes for his employer, and that descriptions of his lavish praises for Bancroft (to the Californios) and his constant focus on his mission in Sonoma may have been embellished in order to better his own position. He gives the impression that his work never left his mind for a second, and that he was constantly scheming how to acquire materials. When his new friend, Salvador Vallejo, tried to convince Cerruti to pass the day with him, Cerruti replied:

... I assured him that my time by right belonged to H. H. Bancroft and I could not appropriate one whole day to my friends, no matter how much I preferred their company, but after reflecting a moment I added, I will spend the whole day in your company providing you will allow me to send to San Francisco to be copied the
documents which your brother the general has given me...  
("Ramblings," 63)

In this manner Cerruti is able to send the documents to Bancroft with the blessings of a member of the Vallejo family, without having to deal with Mariano Vallejo himself. Cerruti explains his own twisted logic later in "Ramblings":

I regretted very much to be compelled to trouble the Major [Salvador Vallejo], but as General Vallejo had strictly forbidden me to allow his papers to leave his hands, I had no resource left except intriguing through his brother, who being much beloved by the general could do as he pleased with anything belonging to the family. (109)

When Vallejo finally does agree to Cerruti's requests, it is in Cerruti that he places his trust and responsibility for the documents: "... I will place implicit confidence in you, you shall be given the privilege of opening the trunk [of documents]" ("Ramblings," 72). Vallejo agrees to give his dictation and loan his collection to Bancroft, but he wants to have a say in the use of these materials. As Genaro Padilla discusses at length in My History, Not Yours, the title of which is a direct quote from the Vallejo dictation, Vallejo insists on maintaining control of his narrative, and reminds Cerruti of this the day they begin his dictation:

I am willing and ready to dictate everything I can remember, but I wish it clearly understood, that I must be allowed my own way, I will not be pushed, if those terms suit you I am ready to commence. ("Ramblings," 75)
It is clear that Vallejo and Cerruti became friends during his stay in Sonoma, and, I believe, Cerruti attempted to portray Vallejo in a positive light to Bancroft and look out for Vallejo's interests. In *Literary Industries* Bancroft complains that Cerruti kept bothering him to thank Vallejo and keep him posted on the progress of his work. Bancroft dismisses Cerruti's courtesies as excessive and no longer necessary after he had obtained the Vallejo dictation and collection (398). He complains that he had to waste a lot of time dealing with offended "Hispano-Californians" he believed he had never offended (398). Bancroft considered the Californios great complainers and refers to them as "ancient children" (398). He also took great pains to emphasize that he never promised to publish their dictations and that he had no obligation to tell their version of events.

In many of the dictations that appear in "Ramblings" Cerruti describes how he flattered and pretended to agree with just about anything his informants said in order to obtain their dictations. After Juan Antonio Sánchez, a Mexican living in Sonoma, describes how he has resigned himself to the fate of his hard life because it is the will of God, Cerruti comments:

Though I profess doctrines opposed to those of my friend Sánchez, I pretended to coincide with his views; said unto him a few words of encouragement, took another drink and ... [gave] him my word to send him a copy of his history as soon as the printer should have it ready... (52)
Two cases in particular serve to illustrate Cerruti's principal methods of collection: alcohol and flattery. The first is the dictation of the widow of Solano, Indian Princess Isidora Filomena, in Sonoma; and the second is Cerruti's encounter with Californio Francisco Peralta in San José.

Princess Isidora Filomena was a Chiuructus Indian who lived on the land of Mariano Vallejo, a friend and associate of her deceased husband. She was about ninety years old and lived with her son, Bill. Filomena was at first very shy and suspicious of Cerruti but after Vallejo assured her that he was "... an innate enemy of the Bostons (princess Solano calls Bostons the natives of North America\(^8\))..." (111) she agrees to answer a few of his questions. At the beginning of the interview Princess Filomena shows Cerruti her wedding dress, a dress made from beads, bones and shells. Cerruti immediately offers to buy her wedding dress, a "sacred relict of days gone by" (113), but Filomena laughs at his offer and is obviously offended. To this reaction Cerruti replies "... nothing daunted I offered her another drink, begged of her to introduce me to her son..." (111). Cerruti then begins to ply Filomena with alcohol and inquire about her son, with whom he also talks briefly. After her son leaves, Cerruti again brings up the subject of Filomena's wedding dress, and

\(^8\)Cerruti is referring to citizens of the United States.
in the end "I offered her twenty four dollars and the rest of the brandy contained in the bottle, [and] she accepted my offer" (114).

In both his encounter with Filomena and an interview with another Native Californian, José María Flores, Cerruti obviously takes advantage of their alcoholism to get what he wants out of them. He criticizes Filomena's "drunken habits" (113-14) and makes fun of Flores' "incoherent" (164) sentences and "nonsensical" (164) conversation in his notes after both had consumed bottles of alcohol he himself brought to the interview. Reading Cerruti's blatant manipulation of Filomena's alcoholism is particularly painful after one has read her dictation, which I will discuss in chapter four, in which she laments the disintegration of her culture and the effects of alcohol, introduced by the Spaniards, on both her personal life and her people.

Although there is a clear difference in Cerruti's interactions with Native Californians and Californios, he has no reservations about deceiving either in order to acquire materials for Bancroft's "noble" project. While in San José he attempts to obtain some documents from Californio Francisco Peralta. Peralta is initially suspicious of Cerruti and only agrees to show him his manuscripts because of an introduction letter from Mariano Vallejo. When Cerruti attempts to leave with the manuscript Peralta angrily asks him what he thinks he is doing (145). Seeing that Peralta is
not willing to part with the document, even on loan, Cerruti says:

... as I had brought along with me a bottle of the best brandy I called for a cork-screw and a couple of glasses and having lighted a segar I presented my companion with a real habana, having accepted it we were soon engaged in conversation... (145)

After finishing the bottle Cerruti leaves with the manuscript, but as Cerruti himself notes Peralta later accuses him of having stolen his manuscript in a letter to Vallejo. The manuscript is eventually returned by Bancroft, but it is clear that Cerruti believes he was justified in his actions. Subjects such as Peralta who present problems in handing over documents or dictations are slandered by Cerruti and often times by Bancroft himself in his works. Of Peralta's accusation Cerruti comments:

... he wrote a falsehood well knowing it to be such at the time he wrote; to speak plainly I will observe that the person who like Mr. Peralta goes under an assumed name is not much to be trusted--his secret is however is known to General Vallejo and should I be allowed to live long enough I will surely discover it because I have a peculiar way of acquiring knowledge of things and persons, things which I ought to know--and surely no person will gainsay my right to know everything that is to be known about the social position of my defamer--. (153)

This thinly veiled threat reveals another practice of Bancroft and his assistants of publicly defaming in their work any person who refused to participate in the project or challenged Bancroft's views or methodology.
Finally it should be noted that Cerruti did not live long enough to discover all the secrets of his perceived enemies. He committed suicide in Sonoma on October 10, 1876, at the age of forty. He had apparently lost very heavily in stocks and was deeply in debt. It is unknown why he returned to Sonoma to die but Benicia Vallejo attempted to revive him and was at his side when he died.

Both Savage and Cerruti chastise the Californios for carelessly destroying historical documents or expressing ambivalence or apathy towards Bancroft's historiographic project. Savage laments that "Many useful public documents have been smoked up in the form of cigarettes, and others wantonly destroyed, or allowed to decay" ("Report," 57). In regards to many Californios enthusiasm for the project Savage gives the following opinion:

... [Savage] regrets to say that he found quite a number [of Californios] who were totally indifferent to the country's history being written or left unwritten, and who couldn't be induced to devote any time to the subject. ("Report," 73)

While Savage doesn't seem to be able to distinguish between apathy and alienation, Cerruti recognizes Californio's suspicion and tries to ease it.

María Amparo Ruiz de Burton was one California who took a great interest in the Bancroft project. She helped Bancroft in the acquisition of historical documents and biographical sketches from her own family and other
Californios of San Diego. However she also sympathized with the reticence of several Californios towards helping the Anglo American historian. She describes the conflicting feelings of many Californios in a letter to Bancroft: "No one seems to care about historic good name, and yet they are very sensitive on the subject," ("Documentos," b, 122). Ruiz de Burton's letter expresses a clear desire to explain the resentment and suspicion of the Californios to Bancroft and impress upon him the difficulty of their situation:

The part of it is (and a very serious fact which you as a conscientious historian must not omit) that "the natives" with the loss of all their property and their prestige, they have also lost all ambition. (122)

Ruiz de Burton goes on to say that the Californios' bitter experiences have led them to give up their struggle against "oblivion" (123) and give in to the flood of "pitiless Anglo-Americans" (123). Nevertheless she reminds Bancroft that she, among other Californios, has not given up the fight and fully expects Bancroft to represent her people's historical experience with compassion and historical "objectivity":

So, we must not blame the disheartened Californians if they do not rise to the importance of appreciating your work, and you, without resentment for their unambitious indifference, which is the result of their misfortune, must speak kindly of them. You can afford it. And being an American you can say many things that the American people would perhaps not accept from a foreigner. ("Documentos," 123)
While Ruiz de Burton in a sense accommodates Anglo American views of Californios by saying they have "languidly surrender[ed]" and calling herself "a foreigner", at the same time the letter carries some very pointed advice for Bancroft. Aside from playing on Bancroft's sympathies and his pride in the "objectivity" and veracity of his work, Ruiz de Burton demands that he treat the situation of the Californios with compassion in his histories and that he not abuse his position of privilege. It is also clear from Bancroft's own words that he was aware of the source of the Californios' bitter and suspicious state:

The Hispano-Californians particularly, many of them had been so abused, so swindled, so robbed by their pretended friends, by unprincipled Yankee lawyers and scheming adventurers, that they did not know whom to trust and were suspicious of everybody. (1890b, 375)

Ruiz de Burton also sheds some light on why she and other Californios were so eager to help the Bancroft project. Both Ruiz de Burton and Mariano Vallejo saw Bancroft as their last hope for avoiding historical erasure. Ruiz de Burton and Vallejo both spent a lot of time and money trying themselves to counter Anglo American images of California in print. Ruiz de Burton published The Squatter and the Don in 1884, a historical romance which described the deterritorialization and the pauperization of an elite San Diego Californio family. In her novel Ruiz de Burton attempts to resolve conflicts between Anglos and Californios
through the allegorical romance of Mercedes Alamar and Clarence Darrell, a California and an Anglo American. Ruiz de Burton attempts to appeal to the Anglo American upper class by emphasizing their similarities and flattening out their differences. Lower class and dark-skinned Californios and Mexicans are almost entirely absent from her work.

Mariano Vallejo wrote his own history of California "...at the urgent request of many Californians who desired to see the deeds of their ancestors correctly transmitted to posterity" (Literary Industries, 439). This original history was destroyed in a fire in his Sonoma home. Although he was at first wary of the Bancroft historiographic project, the persistence of Enrique Cerruti and assurances by Bancroft that he would provide a just and balanced view of California history convinced Vallejo to contribute his dictation and personal papers to Bancroft. Once won over Vallejo became an active advocate for Bancroft's history and traveled with Cerruti for over two and a half years helping him procure dictations and documents from Northern California families.

Both these well respected Californios campaigned heavily for Bancroft among their own communities because they believed that through him their voice would reach a public they had no access to. In both her letter to Bancroft and her use of the ethnically and sexually ambiguous pseudonym "C. Loyal" to publish The Squatter and the Don, Ruiz de Burton makes it clear that she believes the only way to reach
a wider audience is through a (male) member of the dominant culture. Although many Californios encouraged him to publish his own history of California, according to Enrique Cerruti Vallejo believed the history of the Californios had a better chance of making an impact and reaching future generations through the Bancroft project:

When general Vallejo was in the city, some Californians approached him, and tried to convince him that he had better give his manuscript to some publisher who would agree to print the work, immediately; furthermore they said that it would better to have his history come out as a whole and not in driblets as quotation. The general, who has a good share of common sense, told those persons he would be highly pleased to be quoted in your great work, as your history would be in future ages the great authority on Californian matters, while a history written by him would not carry an equal weight of conviction. (Literary Industries, 421)

Vallejo and his paisanos disagree on the difficult issue of representation. If one has limited access to the means of knowledge production as a racially, economically and, in the case of Ruiz de Burton, a sexually marginalized individual, is it better to allow oneself to be represented to the public by the dominant culture or to represent oneself with the knowledge that this representation will most likely reach a very limited, if any, public?

Many Californios were not in agreement with Vallejo's and Ruiz Burton's views of the Bancroft project. Although he eventually did concede to give his dictation, Juan Bautista
Alvarado was very critical not only of Bancroft but also of Vallejo's support of Bancroft:

It seems you insist that Mr. Bancroft is to be our messiah, who will stop the mouth of babblers that insult us. I am of the contrary opinion in regard to this and I will tell you why: I do not believe that any American, a well educated literary man, will contradict what the ignorant populace say of the Californians, from the fact that the cholada gringa, or Yankee scum, are very numerous, and take advantage of it to insult us, as they are many against few. This is a peculiarity of the American people. (Literary Industries, 408-09)

Bancroft's encounters with Alvarado were very contentious and much less smooth than his relationship with Vallejo. Bancroft dismissed Alvarado's problems with his project, complaining that "... Alvarado had acted like a demented old woman" (1890b, 420), and he contributed any reluctance to participate in the project to a lack of patriotism and love of the truth (1890b, 374).

It is clear that Ruiz de Burton and Vallejo felt such a deep sense of marginalization and alienation that they had no faith in any but the dominant cultures means of knowledge production and dissemination. Although Alvarado ultimately consented to Bancrofts requests, he openly questioned the validity of any representations of Californios by the Bancroft company. Because of the mediated, at times diluted nature of many of the Californio voices we do have access to, it is essential that we pay close attention to the power relations behind knowledge production and acknowledge the
dissention of Californios such as Alvarado as well as the silences of the many Californios who refused to take part in the project altogether.

Rosaura Sánchez suggests that "In a war of position... one does not turn over one's weapons to the enemy for safekeeping, unless, perhaps, it is the only way of ensuring their storage for survival" (1995: 28). Cerruti, Savage and Bancroft's notes reveal that there was substantial contention and struggle involved in the production of these testimonials. Although it is clear from their own descriptions that they engaged in a great deal of deception and manipulation to obtain these personal narratives, it is at the same time owing to them that we have access to the dictations from the Californios themselves (Sánchez, 1993, 280). It is against this dynamic of antagonism and mutual manipulation that the Californio narratives should be read.

I believe the original dictations, taken together as a macro-text, do provide, as Rosaura Sánchez suggests, "... a collective reconstruction of a crucial period in Chicano history" (1995: 290). Moreover the dynamics of their production also reveal a great deal about relations between the dominant culture and subaltern groups in California as well as divergent views within these subaltern groups on how to achieve self-representation. Sánchez points out that the Californio narratives have been "Mined like a rich vein by numerous historians" (1993: 279) but have never been
published and have rarely been given the opportunity to speak for themselves. In the final chapter I hope to analyze the California narratives on their own terms, paying close attention to what they choose to talk about while at the same time keeping in mind that they did not have the luxury of being "straightforward" and that the interview was framed by the questions and interests of Cerruti or Savage.
Chapter IV
California All the Way Back:
A Gendered Perspective

In this final chapter I utilize my earlier discussions of California history, testimonial production and autobiographical representation to contextualize and analyze the California narratives. Chapter three gives us an idea of the circumstances under which these narratives were produced, in this chapter I will look at specific texts and try to fill-in how each one was produced and what part the Californias played in their production. What did they choose to talk about? Were they able to exercise any control in the interview? What strategies did they use to represent themselves?

I consider these questions by closely reading the dictations of six women: Rosalía Vallejo de Leese, an upper-class California; Dorotea Valdez, a working-class California; Isidora Filomena de Solano, a Native Californian; María Angustias de la Guerra de Ord, the daughter of a very wealthy and prominent California family; and, Eulalia Pérez and Apolinaria Lorenzana, two working women from what Rosaura Sánchez calls California's "managerial class" (1995, 73). I have chosen these women because they represent diverse socio-economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds and also because their dictations are interesting in both their content and
their form. Keeping in mind that Cerruti and Savage are soliciting the interviews and framing the terms of the discourse, I want to look at how the Californias contribute to the production of their personal narratives.

Although the interviewers were seeking specific information from the women they interviewed, I think much can be learned from the way in which these women presented this information and re-directed the focus of some of the questions towards issues they wanted to discuss. I believe they took this narrative opportunity and, as Padilla suggests, made it their own (1993: 117). They responded to Cerruti's and Savage's questions in such a way as to insert their own versions of events and assert their own competence as narrators. The Californias utilized certain strategies to present themselves as authorities in these texts. Eulalia Pérez, for example, claims authority through her work. Angustias de la Guerra de Ord claims authority as a reliable witness through her knowledge of California politics and her incredibly precise and exact memory.

The dictations of Dorotea Valdez and Rosalía Vallejo de Leese, unlike the other women's dictations, include Cerruti's questions. These women fall into the category of subjects whom Cerruti happened to stumble across in his travels and whose dictations were solicited because of their status as "old time Californians." Cerruti seeks their version of specific events they witnessed rather than information about
their lives as individuals. Rosalía Vallejo de Leese, the sister of famous Californio Don Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, was interviewed because she witnessed the bear flag revolt. She offers some interesting opinions of the conduct of California's "freedom fighters" and Anglo Americans in general. Dorotea Valdez, a worker in the household of a presidio officer according to Castañeda (1993, 85) and a long time resident of Monterey, was asked to comment on specific figures and events in the history of that town. Although her narrative contains little personal information it is interesting because she offers strong opinions on a number of subjects and employs metaphors and criticisms that appear in a number of California narratives. The language of both Valdez and Vallejo de Leese is very ornate--with phrases such as "upon hearing this alarming piece of intelligence," (Vallejo de Leese, 1)--however since both were also translated into English by Cerruti their style may be a reflection of his own flamboyant writing.

The dictation of Rosalía Vallejo de Leese was taken by Enrique Cerruti when he was in Monterey collecting materials with her brother. At the house of Vallejo de Leese a group of Californios gathered to meet General Vallejo and welcome him to Monterey. Cerruti describes Vallejo de Leese and her daughters as friendly and hospitable, though he laments her strong dislike for Americans ("Ramblings," 180-81). However he adds that Vallejo de Leese has good reason to complain,
saying "... she has suffered too long and too deeply to forget or forgive her wrongs" (181). In addition to being mistreated by the bear flaggers and losing her property to squatters, Vallejo de Leese was married to an American who "... squandered her dowry and then had deserted her leaving to her charge four young daughters and two sons" (181). As Vallejo de Leese herself describes in her dictation, her experiences left her with such a distaste for Americans that she has since avoided contact with them and refused to learn English. Though her daughters spoke English fluently according to Cerruti, Vallejo de Leese insisted that they "... converse in the Spanish language when in her presence, the very sound of the English language causes her to shudder-" (181). As many scholars have noted (Padilla, 1993; Sánchez, 1995), it is a bitter irony that the Vallejo de Leese narrative was translated into English and is only available in a language she herself refused to speak.

It seems that Vallejo de Leese offers her opinion of the American people in response to a question Cerruti asked of just about every Californio he met in Monterey: how did they feel about the changes in California since the arrival of the Americans, and did they hurt or benefit Californios (180-181)? While Cerruti claimed that he tried to sway Vallejo de Leese's negative view of all Americans, at the same time he recognized that she had been wronged by the American people and pointed out that both she and Benecia Vallejo's version
of the bear flag revolt were supported by numerous observers and military correspondences.

Vallejo de Leese's relatively short dictation narrates her version of the 1846 bear flag revolt. The six-page dictation answers the following question posed by Cerruti:

Please madam Leese tell me what you know with reference to the hoisting of the Bear Flag in Sonoma. ("History of the Bear Party," 1)

Vallejo de Leese describes the events of that morning offering vivid portrayals of the bear flaggers. Her descriptions are very detailed and exact, providing precise times and dates for all events. In the course of her narrative Vallejo de Leese dismantles the mythology surrounding the bear flag revolt by portraying the group as an unorganized, incompetent group of thugs. She provides detailed descriptions of the bear flaggers' physical appearance:

... a large group of rough looking men, some wearing on their heads caps made with the skins of coyotes or wolfs, some wearing slouched hats full of holes, some wearing straw hats as black as charcoal. The majority of this marauding band wore buck-skin pants, some blue pants that reached only to the knee, several had no shirts, shoes were only to be seen on the feet of fifteen or twenty of the whole lot [about seventy]. (2)

This description of a rough shod and tattered group inverts the civilized/savage dichotomy that had been used to justify the American invasion of California, initiated with the bear
flag revolt. Vallejo de Leese utilizes these descriptions of socially and morally questionable conduct to contest dominant historiographers who painted the bear flaggers as lovers of freedom and democracy. This sort of detailed and precise description is characteristic of all the California narratives and I believe represents an intention to gain authority by presenting themselves as reliable witnesses.

"History of the Bear Party" is a righteously angry narrative that backs up every one of it's charges against the bear flaggers with facts, figures, and analysis. When describing the bear flaggers as "a god forsaken crowd" (2) and their leaders as cold blooded murderers (1), stalwart bullies (1) and arch fiend[s] (2), Vallejo de Leese carefully reinforces her terminology with descriptions of character and behavior. One strategy she uses that appears in many California narratives is judging a man's character by his treatment of his wife and family. After calling Sutter "the arch fiend" (2), Vallejo de Leese explains:

... [he is a man] who though married in Europe where he had left a wife and several children was living in open concubinage with two black women whom he had brought in his vessel from the Sandwich island. (2-3)

Vallejo de Leese criticizes both the private and the public conduct of the bear flaggers. She demonstrates her clear grasp of California politics when she attacks Fremont and suggests that he choose to hoist the "bear flag" rather
than the American flag over Sonoma so as not to associate his
country with the "ill looking desperadoes" (3) under his
command:

John C. Fremont, the man who had planned the wholesale
robbery of California, though an officer of the United
States army, was afraid to compromise the honor of his
government if his party pursued their thieving
operations under the flag, that lovers of liberty
throughout the word hold dear, hence his reason for
resorting to the adoption of a flag unknown to civilized
nations. (3)

Vallejo de Leese is clearly trying to contest the
official histories of California with her descriptions of the
territory's supposed heroes. She insists that Fremont is a
"great coward" (4) despite the many "paid writers" (4) who
have praised him and she demands that we heed her judgment:
"I say so with good reason--hear me--" (4). Vallejo de Leese
goes on to describe her personal encounter with Fremont, in
which he forced her to write a letter to the Mexican army en
route to liberate Sonoma telling them to return to San José.
Vallejo de Leese obviously regrets this act but quotes
Fremont as saying "mandaré quemar las casas con ustedes
adentro si Padilla [the Captain of the Mexican Army] se
acerca a Sonoma9" (4). Vallejo de Leese explains that the
wild behavior of Fremont and his troops as well as a desire
to protect her unborn child and her country women prompted
her to consent to Fremont's demands.

9The Fremont quote appears, in parenthesis, in Spanish. It is the only
section of the narrative that appears in Spanish.
Vallejo de Leese describes how the Sonomans were mistreated by the immigrants they had welcomed to their town. Again she deconstructs the myths surrounding the bear flaggers by focusing on their moral conduct, describing how robberies became very common and women no longer dared go out unescorted (5). In particular she tells Cerruti about an incident with a Native Californian which clearly calls into question the conduct of Fremont and his officers:

Among my maid servants I had a young Indian girl about seventeen years of age; and I assure you that many a time John C. Fremont sent me orders to deliver her to the officers of the barracks, but by resorting to artifices I managed to save the unhappy girl from the fate decreed to her by the lawless band who had imprisoned my husband. (5)

Vallejo de Leese’s portrayal of Fremont as encouraging the rape of Native Californians and the breaking up of families aims a serious blow at dominant representations of the bear flaggers as racially pure freedom fighters.

Rosalía Vallejo de Leese concludes her narrative with a strong condemnation of the bear flag crowd on a very personal note. This formerly wealthy California, sister of a supporter of American annexation and wife of an American who would go on to join the invading troops, gives the following opinion of the American people:

I could relate many a misdeed of the bear flag crowd, but not wishing to detain you any longer I will close with the remark that those hated men inspired me with such a large dose of hate against their race, that
though twenty eight years have elapsed since that time, I have not yet forgotten the insults they heaped upon me, and not being desirous of coming in contact with them I have abstained from learning their language. (6)

Vallejo de Leese's narrative openly expresses the anger felt by many Californios towards the Americans. Bancroft would describe her narrative, a rich description of the initiation of California "independence," as one of "the least-useful of my collection" (cited in Padilla, 148). This dismissal of the Vallejo de Leese narrative demonstrates how Bancroft edited-out perspectives he found distasteful or challenging to his own version of events.

Dorotea Valdez is asked by Cerruti about a number of events and figures in the history of Monterey. Cerruti inquires about Californio and Mexican politicians, some prominent Americans in Monterey, and a few historical events such as the raising of the American flag in Monterey by Commander Sloat, the visit of the Sonoma Indians to Monterey, and various visitors and pirates who passed through the port. Dorotea begins her dictation with the quote I cited in chapter two (p. 40-41), presenting herself an authority despite her lack of education and low socio-economic status. Valdez takes pride in her memory and throughout the narrative calls attention to her reliability as a witness. After giving a detailed description of Governor Arillaga's funeral, Valdez states:
the mission of Soledad is now in ruins, only a part of the church exists, yet I can point out the place where Arrillaga was buried for I have often prayed in front of his tomb. (2)

When recounting events and figures in Monterey history, along with her descriptions Valdez provides her own opinions of the conduct and character of the people she describes. As Padilla notes, "... women have much to say about their own work and those political events from which they were officially banned" (117). While describing how Governor Argüello sent all the old men, women and children of Monterey into the hills when a foreign ship arrived in the harbor Valdez praises his actions and explains that, in her opinion, the citizens of Monterey had no hope of resisting the rebel ship. She backs up this judgment with an inventory of the soldiers and arms aboard the vessel as well as the number and condition of soldiers and arms at the fort in Monterey. Of General Micheltorena she says "I consider him a very much abused man," (11-12) who came to this country at the request of Californio politicians but was not supported by them when he arrived. She criticizes General Vallejo for sending for General Micheltorena from Mexico and then abandoning him, describing Micheltorena as a champion of the poor and "the most popular man of the two" (11).

The dictations of Valdez, Vallejo de Leese, de la Guerra de Ord and numerous other Californias offer opinions and
analysis regarding military, political, and economic history in California which demonstrate not only their familiarity with these subjects but their understanding of the nuances and complexities of behind-the-scenes maneuvering. In particular Valdez and other Californias are critical of the divisions fueled by personal ambitions among both Southern and Northern Californios and their inability to protect the country from the Americans.

Valdez's opinions of the men she describes are based on their conduct within her community. She says of the rebel ship that had sent most of Monterey's population into the hills that although it was filled with gachupines "... they behaved very well," (4) always paying their bills and generously giving away sacks of sugar in a time of great scarcity in Monterey. Valdez is much less impressed with the conduct of the Americans in her community. Like the writing of the majority of her country-women, Valdez's descriptions of men she considers dishonorable often include commentary on their treatment of their families. Valdez, describing a "miserable cual ninguno" wealthy American, says that "... he even denies his own wife and children the comforts of life" (9).

When comparing life in Monterey before and after the arrival of the Americans, Valdez uses a metaphor that appears in many of the California narratives: she describes life
before the arrival of the Americans as fertile and abundant
and life after as sterile and barren:

... in fact until the arrival of the americans our
population increased very rapidly, it was not an unusual
thing to see a mother leading to church twenty four
children all begotten by the same husband. (5)

Valdez is perhaps the most explicit of the Californias in her
descriptions of the American people as sterile, and she
interprets this sterility in part as a consequence of the use
of contraceptives and abortion:

... since the americans have taken possession of this
country, sterility has become very common, because
American women are too fond of visiting doctors and
swallowing medicines--este es un delito que Dios no
perdona. (5)

There are four instances in the Valdez dictation where
Cerruti leaves the dictation in the original Spanish. It is
not clear why he chose to do so, being a competent if
creative translator, but in three of the cases Valdez is
criticizing the moral conduct of an American or the American
people as a whole and the fourth is a proverb, "hicieron
buena cara a un mal que ya no tenía remedio," that appears in
quotation marks (6). It may be that as an Italian Catholic
Cerruti felt that Spanish lent more force the Valdez's moral
condemnation.

In 1874, almost thirty years after the American
invasion, Valdez expresses a clear identification with the
Californian "nation" when she refers to other Californios as countrymen, Californios, or el pueblo. Valdez accuses an American she refers to as "el dueño del pueblo" (9), Mr. Jacks, of stealing land from the people of Monterey. When criticizing Mr. Jacks, she contrasts his conduct with this regional, collective indentification:

... all we want is a smart lawyer, to take away from him the land of the pueblo, lands which no person had the right to give away, because said lands did not belong to the americans... but were the property of every man, woman and child born in our town. (10)

Valdez doesn't limit her critique to Jacks himself. The particular instance of Jacks and the pueblo of Monterey is contextualized within the history of the conquest of California by the Americans: "Mr. Jacks is an innate enemy of everything having relation to our ancient history" (10). Valdez goes on to describe the historical and religious significance of the land, having crops "planted near the bridge in 1770 by father Junípero" (10), linking loss of land to loss of history.

The Indian chief Solano, the husband of Isidora Filomena de Solano from whom we'll hear later, came to Monterey with Salvador Vallejo. Valdez's descriptions of Solano reveal a lot about Californio--Native Californian relations:

I really believed them to be devils let loose from hell--not every one of the indians had a dark colour like Solano, some had white skins, but the majority looked very red in the face. (7)
It seems that Californios distinguished between what they called neophytes (pacified, enslaved Native Californians that supported the Californios; mission Indians) and hostile Indians. Relations between Californios and Native Californians varied from tribe to tribe and pueblo to pueblo. The following dictation given by Isidora Filomena de Solano describes life in her community in Sonoma where the Native Californians seem to have maintained if not friendly at least working relations with the Californios.

Cerruti introduces Isidora Filomena de Solano as an Indian Princess, the widow of the feared chief Solano. Solano was the leader of various tribes in Northern California—including the Suyounes, the Topaytos, the Yoloitos, the Chuructas and the Topiatas among others—and a man who, according to Filomena de Solano, "... en su vida hizo temblar a todo el mundo blanco y indios, con especie de su amigo el General Guadalupe Vallejo" ("Isidora, widow of California Indian Chief, Solano," 1). Cerruti's treatment of both Filomena de Solano and her narrative is clearly distinct from that of the Californias. Cerruti's physical representation of Filomena de Solano portrays her as a specimen, describing her height, feet size, teeth, nose, etc.

10The Isidora Filomena de Solano dictation has been copied and typed and appears without any accents. The original document may have included appropriate accents but only the typed copy is available at this point.
He gives a taxonomy of her physical appearance, presenting her as an object of study. In his afterward Cerruti explains that he wanted to let Filomena de Solano speak in "sus mismas palabras" so he did not edit her dictation in his normal fashion. This produces quite a different effect than the ornate style he uses to transcribe the Vallejo de Leese and Valdez narratives.

Cerruti describes Filomena de Solano as a picturesque but tragic figure, saying that if it wasn't for her drunken state she would be considered a woman "digna de aprecio" (5). Cerruti, in any case, clearly doesn't hold Filomena de Solano in high esteem and takes advantage of her addiction to alcohol to swindle her out of her wedding dress; a dress of shells and bone that, in Cerruti's own words, Filomena de Solano "... se había propuesto hacerse enterrar con esos adornos que ella en mucho estima pues le fueron regalados por Solano" (6).

Filomena de Solano has, like many Native Californians, assimilated to a certain degree to Hispano culture. She converted to Catholicism and was baptized and given a Spanish name. In her old age she lives on the lands of Mariano Vallejo and depends on him and her son to survive. Cerruti explains to us that Filomena de Solano lives in "terenos pertenecientes al Señor General Vallejo que recompensa de los servicios de Solano cuida de la viuda de su esposo" (5). Filomena de Solano portrays Californio--Native Californian
relations in a relatively positive light in her narrative but at the same time she may not have been in a position to express herself freely on the matter.

Similar to the California narratives, Filomena de Solano's account gives detailed descriptions of her community's way of life. She describes the clothing they wore, the use of medicinal herbs, how they fished, traditional dances and celebrations, battle rites against other Native Californians and Europeans, and much more. She, again similar to the Californias, pays a great deal of attention to physical description and particularly to skin color:

A mi tierra toda mi raza tenia cutis como yo, es decir muy colorado, todas las mujeres eran muy altas, yo era quizas una de las mas chiquitas; muchos de nosotros viven hasta mucho mas cien anos, pero el pelo el mujer no pone blanco... (3)

Filomena de Solano identifies the Californios as "blancos" and the Anglo Americans as "blancos," "rubios," or Bostons. She laments the disintegration of her culture and way of life since the arrival of the Spanish, and particularly since the arrival of the Americans. She focuses on consequences of the introduction of alcohol to California on both a personal level and in terms of the Native California community at large. Cerruti tells us that Filomena de Solano "... ha no ser que desgraciadamente se deja dominar por el vicio de la borachera podria ser considerada como mujer digna de aprecio"
Cerruti is very critical of Filomena de Solano's addiction to alcohol but, at the same time, wastes no time taking advantage of it. Filomena de Solano explains that liquor was not widely consumed among her tribe until General Sutter begin to use it for trade. She says that she has lost a lot of her memory since she begin to drink after having lost all of her "... caballería llena de vacas que el rubio todo robo; nada dejo para pobre Isidora" (2). She expresses a clear resentment towards "los blancos" (in this case referring to Americans):

--no quiero mucho el blanco porque muy embusteroy ladron, mi compadre Peralta y amigo Bernales tenia mucha vaca el sutter engano todo toma nada paga. (4)

Filomena de Solano, like Rosalía Vallejo de Leese, points out that Sutter took an Indian concubine, and she emphasizes that the woman was India rather than California. She herself married an American after the death of Solano, a man named Bill who she describes as ".. hombre mucho chiquito de corazón" (2). In her descriptions of Bill, Filomena de Solano, similar to Valdez and other Californías, hints at his sterility and impotency as a strategy of criticizing his character: "... [married to Bill] ya no pari mas, con Solano pari ocho chiquitos..." (2). Throughout the California narratives we see the importance of fertility and childbirth on the frontier as the women describe themselves as almost constantly pregnant and express pride in their large
families. In Filomena de Solano's narrative fertility also appears as an important theme, but for her the abundant past lies not in the Mexican or the Spanish period but before the arrival of any European in California. She recalls a time when "...nosotros teníamos mucha comida y muy buena sin mucho trabajo" (3) before the arrival of the blancos who, in this case, refer to both Americans and Californios.

Angustias de la Guerra de Ord's narrative is the most similar in style and content to the Californio men's narratives. She gives Savage a detailed, eye-witness account of Santa Barbara's political history. It is an insider's perspective of California politics and de la Guerra doesn't hesitate to provide her own analysis and opinions.

Angustias de la Guerra de Ord was born in Alta California in 1815 to a prestigious and politically active family. Her father was a Spaniard who had come to New Spain at the age of nine and her mother was from a prominent Californio family. She was married to a Mexican, Manuel Jimeno Casarín, for twenty years and had eleven children by him, only three of which survived. In 1853 Angustias and her husband separated, and he returned to Mexico (Sánchez, et. al, 1994). Although de la Guerra later married an American, Dr. James L. Ord, she expresses clear opposition to the American occupation in her narrative.
Angustias de la Guerra de Ord's dictation is the longest of the Californias at one-hundred-fifty-six pages and was considered the most useful by Bancroft. In Savage's own words Angustias was interviewed because her connections and position enabled her "... to inform herself upon Government affairs" ("Ocurrencias," 1). Savage sought information about the various prominent and politically active men she had ties to, and de la Guerra talks about these men at length. However she also inserts strong criticisms of the conduct of the Californio men--particularly in regard to the defense of California--and represents her country-women as strong, resourceful and independent. She and other upper-class Californias such as María Inocenta Pico de Avila describe women's resistance to American occupation. At the time of the interview de la Guerra had been, according to Savage, in a very distressed state because her brother was dying. However her desire to "contribute her share towards the success of Mr. Bancroft's labor" (1) and a particularly strong letter of recommendation brought by Savage from her sister Teresa de la Guerra de Hartnell induced her to take the time to dictate some pages to Savage.

I believe that de la Guerra positions herself as an authority through her insider's knowledge of California politics and her precise memory. She gives Bancroft the information she knows he is after with startling exactitude and is more successful than the other women at gaining his
respect. Her accounts of events include: a chronology, the main players (including herself), and her own analysis and opinions. Her memory of the exact times, days and dates of events is particularly impressive. When describing a revolt by mission Indians in 1824 she not only provides the date but recalls that "Esto fue en sábado como entre 12 y 2 p.m." (7).

De la Guerra provides an abundance of information on California politics during the Spanish, Mexican and American period but what distinguishes her from her male counterparts is her criticism of Californio men (as a whole) and her representations of actively involved California women. She describes General José Castro, for example, as a coward who "no era nada aficionado a exponer su interesante persona a las balas" (139) and tells how he criticized the Californias when they were suspicious of American activity in Monterey, accusing all women of thinking badly of others, especially men, to which de la Guerra replied "--a lo que contestamos que casi siempre acertábamos más" (141).

In her narrative de la Guerra records women's opinions of the American invasion, telling Savage "La toma del país no nos gustó nada a los californios, y mucho menos a las mujeres" (143). This quote, ironically, has been used to argue that California women, many of whom were married to Englishmen and Americans, were not bothered by the American occupation. As Padilla explains de la Guerra was mistranslated by Francis Price and William Ellison: "... de
la Guerra is made to say "the conquest of California did not bother the Californians, least of all the women" (149). As de la Guerra herself points out, marriage to an American did not necessarily signify support of the occupation. She describes husbands and wives divided by the war: "Esta era patriota, y su marido muy enemigo de los californios" (147). She also tells us of an old Mexican soldier who hid a Californio soldier from the American troops but warned him that "... hasta sus propios hijos divulgarían que estaba allí" (148). Both Angustias de la Guerra and Rosalía Vallejo de Leese who were visibly bothered by the American occupation were married to Americans.

Although de la Guerra was opposed to the American occupation, her representations of California history before their arrival are not shrouded in the same cloud of nostalgia as the men's narratives:

Pero debo confesar que California estaba en el camino de la más completa ruina. Por un lado los indios estaban desbordados, cometiendo robos, y crímenes en los ranchos, y poco o nada se hacía para contener las depredaciones. Por otro lado, estaban las desavenencias entre la gente del Norte y la del Sur, y ambas contra los mexicanos de la otra banda. Pero el peor cáncer de todo era la rapiña que se había hecho general. (143)

The Californias' memories of the past are much more critical than those of their country-men. This is not to say that they didn't feel any nostalgia for the past, but rather that
they also recalled the corruption, the civil strife, and the constant struggle for survival.

Towards the end of her narrative de la Guerra describes how she hid a wounded soldier, José Antonio Chávez, from the American troops. De la Guerra's descriptions of her own resourcefulness and heroism are indicative of her representations of women throughout her narrative. She describes how while she recovered from the birth of her most recent child, Chávez begged her "por amor de Dios" (149) to hide him from the Americans. De la Guerra tells us that aside from the force of the words "por amor de Dios" she agreed to help Chávez because:

Yo estaba muy enojada contra los americanos porque trataban mal a mis hermanos teniéndolos presos sin motivo ni razón, y con enojo le dije que si él creía que los Yankees pudieran hallar una persona a quien yo escondiera. (149-50)

De la Guerra snuck Chávez out of a soldiers' house and past the American troops on the shoulders of another small man. Together the two appeared to be one tall man and managed to get past the Americans. Chávez would eventually escape Monterey dressed as a woman, another idea of de la Guerra's.

As de la Guerra goes on to describe the frantic hiding of Chávez and searching of her house by American troops we see that her ability to remain calm and think quickly under pressure rivals any military strategist. She first explains, as had Rosalía de Leese and other Californias, that the
American troops were greatly feared because their commanders didn't seem to be able to control them and oftentimes confrontations led to mob lynchings and vigilante violence. As de la Guerra tells it the American occupying forces were made up of "... casi todos aventureros sin disciplina ni responsabilidad" (154). When the troops arrived at the de la Guerra household and began to search the grounds, de la Guerra put Chávez in a narrow space between the bed and the wall and then she, her newly born baby, and another California got into the bed on top of him. When the lieutenant arrived to search her room he approached her bed and, with his pistol and a candle next to her face, told her that he was looking for a man who was said to be hidden in her house. The rest of the story I will leave in de la Guerra's own words:

Le pregunté si lo había encontrado, y me contestó que no y le dije que me alegraba mucho—porque yo nunca pensé dícerles una mentira. Entonces me dijo que él estaba algo cansado y que sentía mucho haberme venido a molestar, pues suponía que estaría yo algo asustada, y quiso tomar una silla para sentarse—le contesté que yo no me asustaba por nada, y que él podía irse a descansar a su casa porque en mi cuarto no descansaban nadie que no fuera de mi familia o amistad. (155)

Californias may not have been in the midst of battle but that doesn't mean that they didn't experience the terror and violence of the war. Their experiences took place within their own communities and homes; their heroism is expressed not only in the courageous acts of resistance of women such
as de la Guerra but also on a more mundane level as they struggled to survive and keep their families together under very adverse circumstances.

The dictations of both Eulalia Pérez and Apolinaria Lorenzana are interesting because they provide an insider's view of life in the missions. They are also unique because both women lived fairly independent lives. Lorenzana spent much of her life working in missions and never married "a pesar de conocer los méritos de una institución tan santa" ("Memorias," 46) but was godmother to many children. Eulalia's first husband died leaving her to support six children so she found work and safe haven in the San Gabriel mission. Both women held hard-earned and respected positions within the mission system. They both directed large Native Californian labor forces, overseeing the vocational training and production of the "neophytes." As llaveras Lorenzana and Pérez were responsible for keeping the mission industry operating: running the production and trade of soaps, wines, chocolates, oils, leather goods, and the many other items that were made in the missions and sold in the pueblos and presidios. In addition the llavera was responsible for general housekeeping duties and supervising the work of the neophyte women which included "sewing, needlework, grinding corn, and all preparations for feeding and clothing the mission population" (Castañeda, 1993a, 86).
Both women went on to become landowners—Lorenzana at one time owned and operated three ranches—and both lost these lands after the American occupation. They played key roles in the administration of mission industries and their testimonials reveal a lot about the business side of the mission system from an insider’s perspective. As managers within the missions they identified with and accommodated mission interests. Though they describe how the neophytes were taken from their parents, locked into dormitories, forced to work within the mission economy, and punished for any slack in production, they never question this system, and it seems that although they lament the abuse the neophytes often suffered they see their enslavement as "natural." The California women are a product of their times, they express compassion for the neophytes but ultimately subscribe to the dominant view of "natural" racial hierarchies imposed by Spanish missionaries. Nevertheless, we know that these women lived much of their lives working with Native Californias, usually directing them, and as Sánchez suggests they had a range of different interactions with the local Indians (1994: 4). When Lorenzana talks about the many children she is godmother to (between one and two hundred) she tells us that they were "... tanto gente de razón como indios" (13).

Eulalia Pérez was interviewed by Thomas Savage and it appears that he choose to interview her because of 1) her knowledge of the mission systems and 2) as a novelty because
of her fame as the oldest living woman in California (it was said that Eulalia Pérez was between 104 and 139 years old at the time of the interview). Pérez was born in a presidio in Baja California and came to Alta California with her first husband at the age of fifteen. She was married two times and survived both husbands. Pérez passed the major part of her life in missions and presidios: she lived with her first husband, Miguel Antonio Guillén, in the presidio of San Diego. After his death she worked for thirteen or fourteen years as the llavera in the San Gabriel mission, the wealthiest mission in California according to Sánchez (1995: 75). She later remarried a Spaniard, Juan Mariné, at the urging of Father Sánchez of the San Gabriel mission and went to live with him in the San Diego presidio. She spent her final years on the Ranch of her daughter María del Rosario de White and her son-in-law Michael C. White.

The interview with Eulalia Pérez is interesting not only because of the information she provides about mission life but also because she is one of a handful of working-class women interviewed by the Bancroft project. It is obvious that Pérez takes pride in the work that she has done over her long life and throughout her narrative she stresses her competence through her detailed descriptions of her work. She also notes with pride the important role that she played within her community.
While living at the San Diego presidio with her first husband, Pérez worked as a midwife. Pérez established her position as an important and respected person within her community through her work as a midwife. She explains to Savage that she wanted to visit family in Los Angeles but her husband didn't want her to go and "... el Comandante del presidio tampoco me dejaba salir porque no había otra mujer que supiera partear" ("Una vieja y sus recuerdos," 1). When she talks about her work, she describes how aside from clamoring for her services the residents of the presidio also treated her like family and invited her into their houses as both a midwife and a friend:

En San Diego todos me manifestaban mucha estimación, y en las casas principales me trataban con mucho cariño. Aunque tenía yo mi propia casa, me hacían estarme casi todo el tiempo con esas familias, y hasta mantenían a mis hijos (2).

Pérez also inserts herself into the California political landscape in a very interesting way when she explains that she helped at the birth of Don Pío Pico, the last Mexican governor of California.

When her first husband died, Pérez was left with six children. As a single mother she went to the San Gabriel mission where she lived and worked for the priests. As Pérez tells Savage "Los padres querían hacerme bien porque estaba viuda y cargada de familia, buscaban modo de ocuparme sin dar que sentir a las otras señorases" (7). In this section Pérez
describes a cooking contest, in which Pérez and two other highly esteemed female cooks competed for the position of head cook. It is clear from her descriptions that Eulalia respected the two women and their work, not only for their cooking skills but also for their service to their communities as midwives, curanderas, and teachers.

During the contest each woman had one night to prepare a dinner for the priests and their guests. Pérez is the last cook and she prepares an assortment of delicious food: "... varias sopas, diversidad de rellenos, y cuanto más se me vino a la cabeza que yo sabía" (9). We see in her descriptions of this contest that Pérez has a clear understanding of the possibilities and limitations she has as a single mother in a semi-feudal patriarchal society: "Los padres quedaron muy contentos, y esto me valió para granjearme más estimación" (10). Pérez utilizes her competence as a cook to gain a position of authority and respect that was normally not accorded to working-class mestiza women in her society.

After the cooking contest Pérez provides an impressive list of chores and responsibilities she had as llavera. I will cite this list at length because I believe the avalanche of information she provides creates a very conscious effect on the reader:

Los deberes de la llavera eran varios. En primer lugar, repartía diariamente las raciones para la pozolera, para esto tenía que contar el número de monjas, de solteros, gañanes, vaqueros de silla y
vaqueros de en pelo--aparte de eso, había que darle cada día sus raciones a los casados. En una palabra ella corría con la repartición de raciones para la indíada, y para la cocina de los Padres. Tenía a su cargo la llave del almacén de ropa de donde se sacaban los géneros para vestidos de solteras, casadas y niños. Después también tenía que atender a cortar la ropa para los hombres.

Corría también con cortar y hacer ropa y demás cosas para los vaqueros desde la cabeza a los pies, esto es, para los vaqueros de silla, los de en pelo no recibían nada más que su cotón, frazada, y taparrabos, mientras que los de silla eran vestidos lo mismo que la gente de razón, esto es, se les daba camisa, chaleco, chaqueta, calzón, sombrero, bota, vaquera, y sus zapatos y espuelas, para el caballo su silla vaquera, freno, y reata--a cada vaquero se le daba además un pañuelo grande de seda o de algodón, y su buena banda de saya--saya burato, ó lo que hubiera en el almacén.

...

Tenía yo, además, que atender a la jabonería que era muy grande, a los lagares, a las moliendas de aceituna para hacer aceite, que yo misma lo trabajaba--Domingo Romero atendía bajo mi cuidado y responsabilidad a los cambios de licor.

Luis el jabonero tenía cuidado de la jabonería, pero yo lo dirigía todo. (10-12)

And the list of chores continues. Pérez almost buries Thomas Savage with the details of her work and emphasizes the authority she exercised over men. In terms of content this section of the narrative offers us a wealth of information about industry, race relations, treatment of Native Californians, and everyday life within the missions. In terms of presentation I believe that the list provided by Pérez and her insistence that she directed everything is a strategy she uses to re-enforce her authority and competence.
Apolinaria Lorenzana, a friend and colleague of Eulalia Pérez, spent her life as a single woman in Alta California also working in the missions as a llavera. De la Guerra recommended to Savage that he interview Lorenzana, "la beata," who was a loved and respected figure in Santa Barbara. In his introduction to Lorenzana's narrative, Savage says that having passed most of her life within the mission she knows little about politics. However it seems to me that Lorenzana provides extensive description and analysis of political figures, social positions, race relations, and much more. Though her narrative focuses on her daily life within the missions she makes constant references to what was going outside the missions and particularly when secularization, and later war, forced the mission population into mainstream society. At numerous points she comments directly on the American occupation saying "Yo estaba muy triste por la toma del país por los americanos" (19) and hoping that if she left San Diego the Americans would leave with her (20).

Lorenzana, as does Pérez, provides extensive information about the missions and the indigenous population in California. These women have, as single women surviving on their own, a somewhat fluid social position within Alta California society. Both Lorenzana and Pérez proudly describe their abilities and accomplishments as curanderas,
midwives, cooks, teachers, and llaveras. Lorenzana emphasizes her independence throughout her narrative, telling us at many points that "Yo sola aprendí" (5) and "Yo me mantenía con el trabajo de mis manos" (6). In Lorenzana's narrative I believe she emphasizes not only her work but also her service to her community and, in particular, to women and girls.

Lorenzana describes how she taught herself to read as a "mujercita" (4):

... yo sola aprendí a escribir valiéndome para ello de los libros que veía--mitaba las letras en cualquier papel que lograba conseguir--tales como cigarros vacías o cualquier papel blanco que hallaba tirado. Así logré aprender lo bastante para hacerme entender por escrito cuando necesitaba algo. (4-5)

Lorenzana tells Savage about a small school she directed where she taught various girls to "leer, rezar y coser" (5). She explains how between duties at the mission she taught both boys and girls to read, and that many parents sent their children to study with her. An orphan herself, sent to California by government officials and forced to work for wealthy Californio families, Lorenzana explains that she had under her care various girls that she taught to read, pray, and work and saw that they were married "a su debido tiempo" (45). As Lorenzana explains, "...yo - que no tenía hijas, tenía que cuidar las hijas de todas" (47).
Another notable aspect of Lorenzana's narrative is her inscription of women's names onto her history of California. Almost every time she mentions a man--official, politician, military man, etc.--she also mentions his family: his children, his wife, her family, etc. In this way Lorenzana re-directs Savage's questions towards the history she wishes to tell. She takes control of the interview and uses this narrative space to speak about what she considers important.

Together these California testimonials represent a collective portrayal of California history from a gendered perspective. Their descriptions of the past lack the uncritical nostalgia of those of their country-men. While they are critical of the American occupation and bemoan their loss of land and power, they do not present us with a utopic, pastoral vision of the past. They describe a life of hard work and survival. They are also very critical of their own exclusion from the political process by the Californio men and the inability of those same men to defend California from the Americans.

The Californias actively insert both themselves and other women into the historical landscape. They present a much more inclusive vision of the past, discussing not only "great men" and events but also matters of day to day survival within both public and private spaces. They insist on their own authority and reliability as narrators and
employ various strategies to seize control of the narrative and make it their own. Their voices are distinct and their beliefs and experiences highly divergent, but each of the narratives portrays Californias as heroes and activists within their communities and expresses a strong will to historical presence.
Conclusion

Traditionally, the history of the American Southwest has been portrayed as an Anglo American pilgrimage into a wild and virgin territory. According to the official histories of the West, pioneering European Americans carved out their lives on the edge of the frontier while the few Natives that populated the region were crushed under the weight of civilization and progress. These "official" histories legitimize Anglo American hegemony by "disappearing" Californios, Native Californians, and other non-European ethnic groups from California history and naturalizing Anglo American dominance. The Californio testimonials represent the possibility of recovering Chicano history in California. The Californios delineate a social and geographical topography that testifies to the continuous historical presence of Hispanos in California. Their personal narratives challenge official histories of the West by reinscribing ethnicity onto the American national imagination.

The Californios portray a landscape colonized and populated by a diversity of ethnic and cultural groups. Their descriptions of both the Latino community and a variety of other communities are important because they demonstrate California's long standing ethnic diversity. Their portrayals of inter-racial contact and conflict testify to a long history of both mestizaje and active resistance to Anglo
American hegemony among many sectors of California society. They describe a history of ethnic diversity and ethnic strife which has been muted.

As Tomás Almaguer suggests, racialized discourses used to justify territorial expansion and Anglo American dominance form the foundations of our social organization and define the parameters of how we interact with one another. These racialized discourses, developed during the nineteenth century, have very tangible consequences for minorities living in the American Southwest today. They inform political discourses which erase the presence of the Other in our national history and distort our historical consciousness as a nation. I believe the recovery of ethnic voices in American history can help to dispel misconceptions central to our national identity as well as enable us to confront exclusionary and xenophobic political discourses that continue to make Chicanos and Chicanas in the Southwest foreigners in their own land.

In examining the testimonials of these early Californians, it has become apparent to me that issues of institutionalized racism that Chicanos and other marginalized groups face today in California are strikingly similar to those faced by people of color in California in the mid-nineteenth century. I believe that though Californian Chicanos are aware of the long history of their community in the Southwest, oftentimes their connection to this past is
much less tangible than in states such as New Mexico or Texas. This may be in part because the sheer number of Anglos that came to California during the Gold Rush (1848-1866) was so vast the marginalization of the Californio community was more rapid and complete than in more isolated areas such as New Mexico.

As Almaguer suggests in *Racial Fault Lines*, the racial formation of California was an ideological process which has been naturalized and dehistoricized. Listening to the anger, frustration and resentment expressed by Californios in their testimonials helps to remind us of the people and communities that were destroyed by that process of marginalization and to unmask the ideological implications of the production of historical texts. Their contestations to "official" histories of California call into question the entire production of "official" histories. In *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), Linda Hutcheon notes that once we reject the idea of a unitary, evolutionary narrative of the past we can begin to listen to the histories of "... the losers as well as the winners,... of the unsung many as well as the much sung few,... of women as well as men" (67).

Rosaura Sánchez ends *Telling Identities* by emphasizing the role the past plays in determining the future. She maintains that ideological discourses forged in the nineteenth century California are still with us today and she
insists on the relevance of Californio testimonials to the lives of contemporary Chicanos:

By reactivating these Californio discourses, Chicanos are also no doubt similarly engaged in a process of reterritorialization of representational spaces and in setting down the terms of engagement for present and future political and ideological struggles. (304)

Unable to print and circulate their own histories and autobiographies among the California public, a small number of Californios, many of them former elites, agreed to narrate their reminiscences to the agents of Hubert Howe Bancroft in the hopes of achieving some degree of representation through his work. For the Californias, even such compromised and mediated forms of self-representation were very difficult to come by. Although the circumstances under which these testimonials were produced were clearly restrictive, I believe that ultimately the Californias did exercise a degree of control in their narratives and that through that control they were able to achieve some measure of self-representation for themselves and their communities.

Castañeda suggests that it is possible to recover women's voices in American history through careful discourse analysis (1993b: 267). Anne Goldman maintains that rather than wishing away or apologizing for power differences in the text we should outline and pay close critical attention to those differences (69). A critical look at inequities of power in the production of testimonials can enrich our
reading of these narratives and hopefully enable us to listen more closely to the voices of the women interviewed by the Bancroft project. Moreover, expanding our understanding of autobiography to include less traditional or individually-centered forms of representation enables us to listen to the personal narratives of subjects without access to the means of knowledge production.

The Californias' narratives describe California history from a "gendered perspective" that contests both Anglo and Californio patriarchal historiography. While most Californias were interviewed because of their association with "great men," regarding traditions and customs, or by default, Padilla notes that the Californias declined to focus their testimonials on these great men or to define themselves strictly within the domestic sphere. Rather, their testimonies break down the public/private dichotomy to describe themselves as active social agents in both spheres. Throughout the twelve narratives Cerruti and Savage collected, the women consistently shift the narrative away from the interviewer's questions towards their own accomplishments and experiences as women in Spanish and Mexican California. Eulalia Pérez and Apolinaria Lorenzana are consulted due to their association with the missions, but they very quickly shift the focus of the narrative from the mission system to their abilities and accomplishments as single, working women within that system. Angustias de la
Guerra is interviewed because of the active role the men in her family took in California politics, but she represents women alongside men as active agents in all of California's political struggles. Beyond that she often represents men as bumbling cowards and their wives and sisters as decisive and fearless.

The Californias expand and enrich our vision of the past in a number of ways. They insert Californios and women onto the landscape of California history as active agents in the development of that region. They move beyond traditional historiographic representations by giving us a view into homes, families, and day to day lives of nineteenth century Californians. As Antonia Castañeda has pointed out in her work, traditional histories that focus on government bodies and structures that expressly exclude women fail to examine:

... what women responded and reacted to as they lived the political events of their times, as they nursed the wounded and put food on the soldiers' tables, and as they farmed ranchos, supplied soldiers with horses, and slaughtered cows to feed them. (88-89)

The Californias give us a different view into history, describing the daily routine as well as the heroism and resistance of everyday people. They value the heroism of women who gave birth, raised families, and ran households through settlement, political upheaval, and war on the Spanish, Mexican, and American frontier. Their narratives break down both Anglo and patriarchal representations of
California history by documenting Californio resistance to Anglo American hegemony while at the same time expressing the hardships of everyday life as well as their anger and frustration with corruption and in-fighting among Californio politicians.

Finally, in terms of future research I would like to see the Californio testimonials move beyond academic discussions into the public realm. In particular, I believe it is imperative that a version of the Californio testimonials be published that is directed towards young people and could be incorporated into curriculum at the elementary and secondary school level. As Onley and Beverely point out, one of the virtues of the testimonial is that it provides a very engaging representation of history. Re-activation of the lively and accessible personal narratives of the Californias could help give young Chicanos and Chicanas a concrete sense of place in California history while at the same time moving towards giving the Californias a voice of their own by finally publishing their testimonials.
Works Consulted


