

Peraltas and Native Americans, 1822–1834



"View near Monterey"
Richard Beechey, 1826–27

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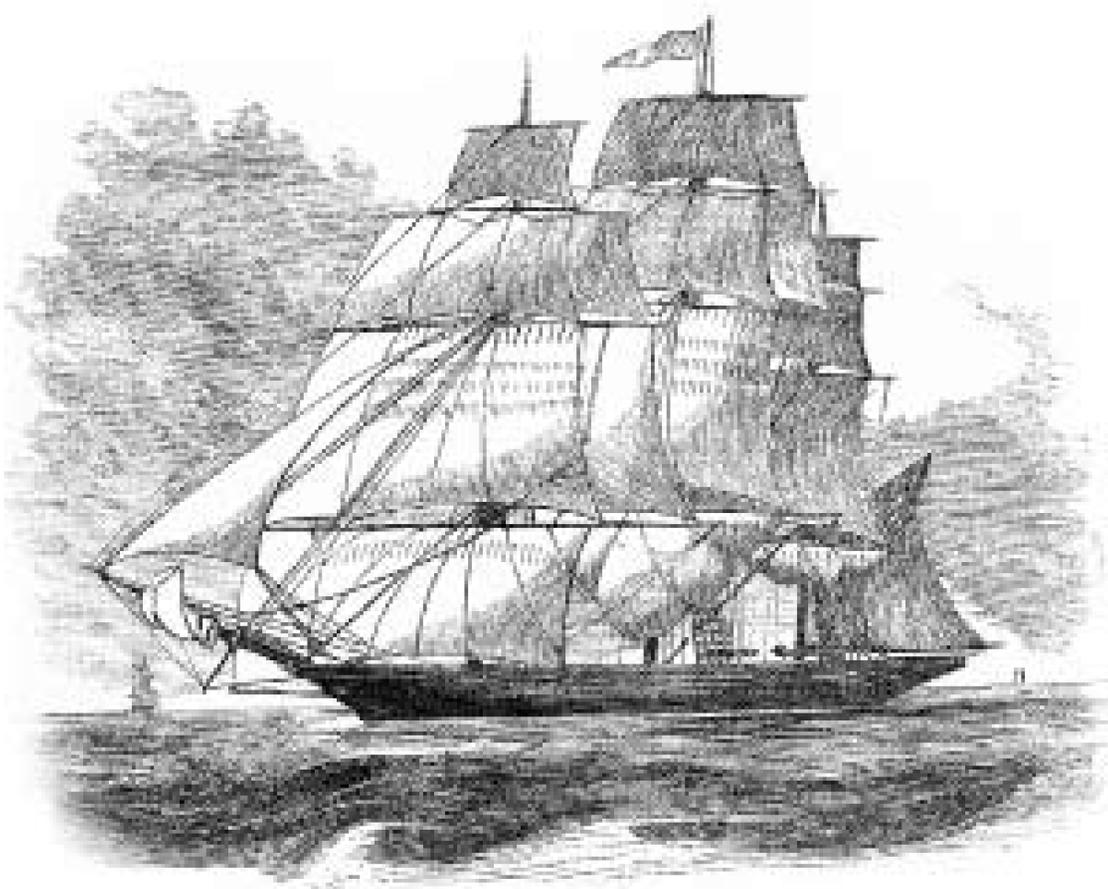
Mexico in 1822

After ten years of struggle, New Spain gained its independence from Spain in 1822 and became Mexico.

The new nation was in political chaos. The government couldn't send supply ships to its distant territory of Alta California any more, or patrol its coast.

The Californios, although they were now Mexican citizens, had to fend for themselves, and the coast was left open to foreign ships.

What happened to the Californios after independence from Spain?



CLIPPER SHIP

These speedy sailing vessels took the hide and tallow from the *ranchos* to markets throughout the world, and brought news and manufactured goods to California.

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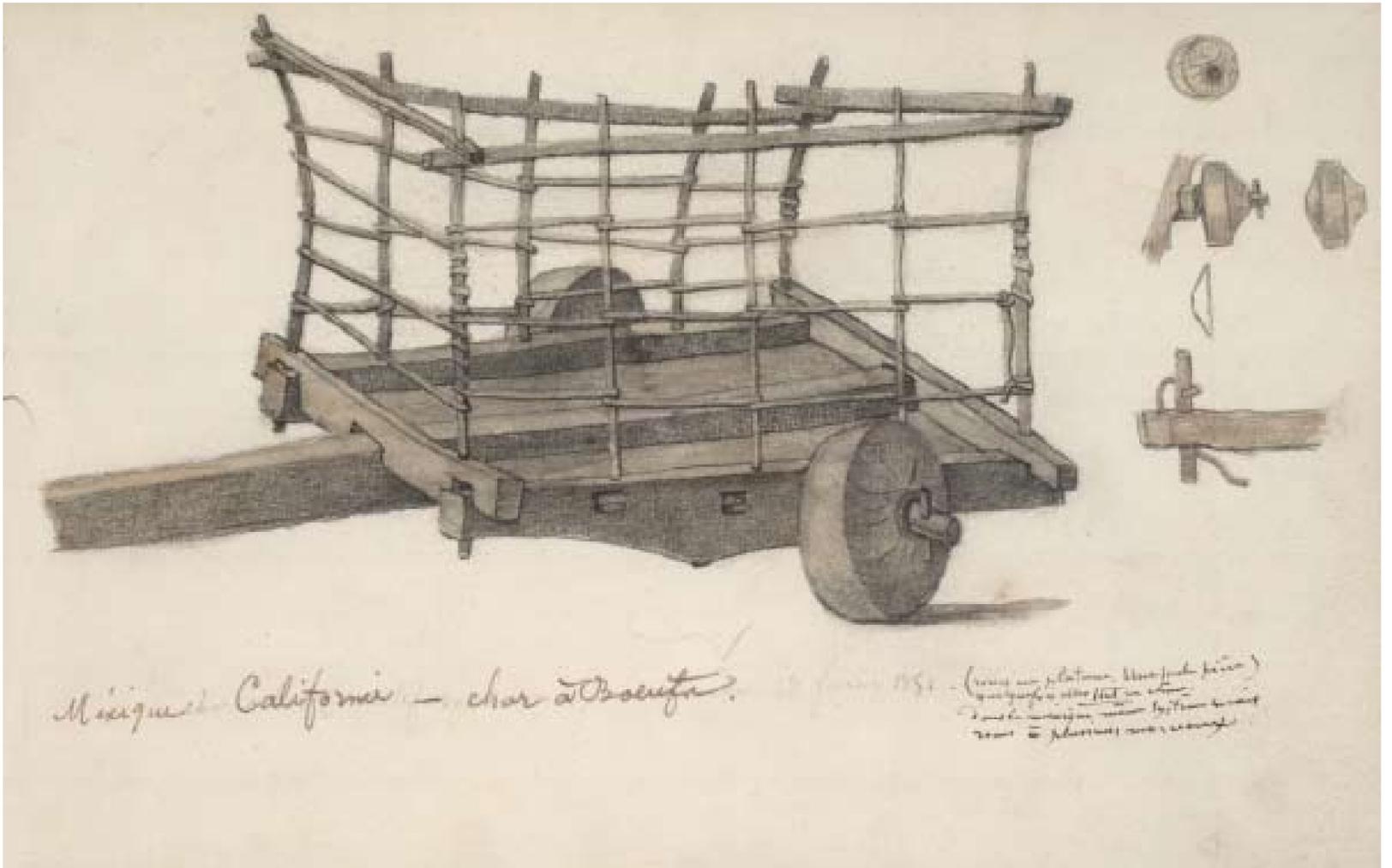
Leather and Lard

The Peraltas begin to sell cow skin and cow fat—hide and tallow—to the ships from England and the U.S. that now sailed up and down the California coast. Rancho San Antonio was one of the few private *ranchos* that Spain had granted before Mexican independence.

The missions, with their huge landholdings, sold most of the hide and tallow throughout the 1820s. Soon, the Mexican government was pressured to grant more land to individuals, to meet the demand.

Fifty to one hundred candles could be made from the tallow, or fat, of each cow. The hide, or leather, was used to make shoes, pouches and many other items.

How did the Peraltas survive and prosper?



Carreta by Fritz Wickersheim

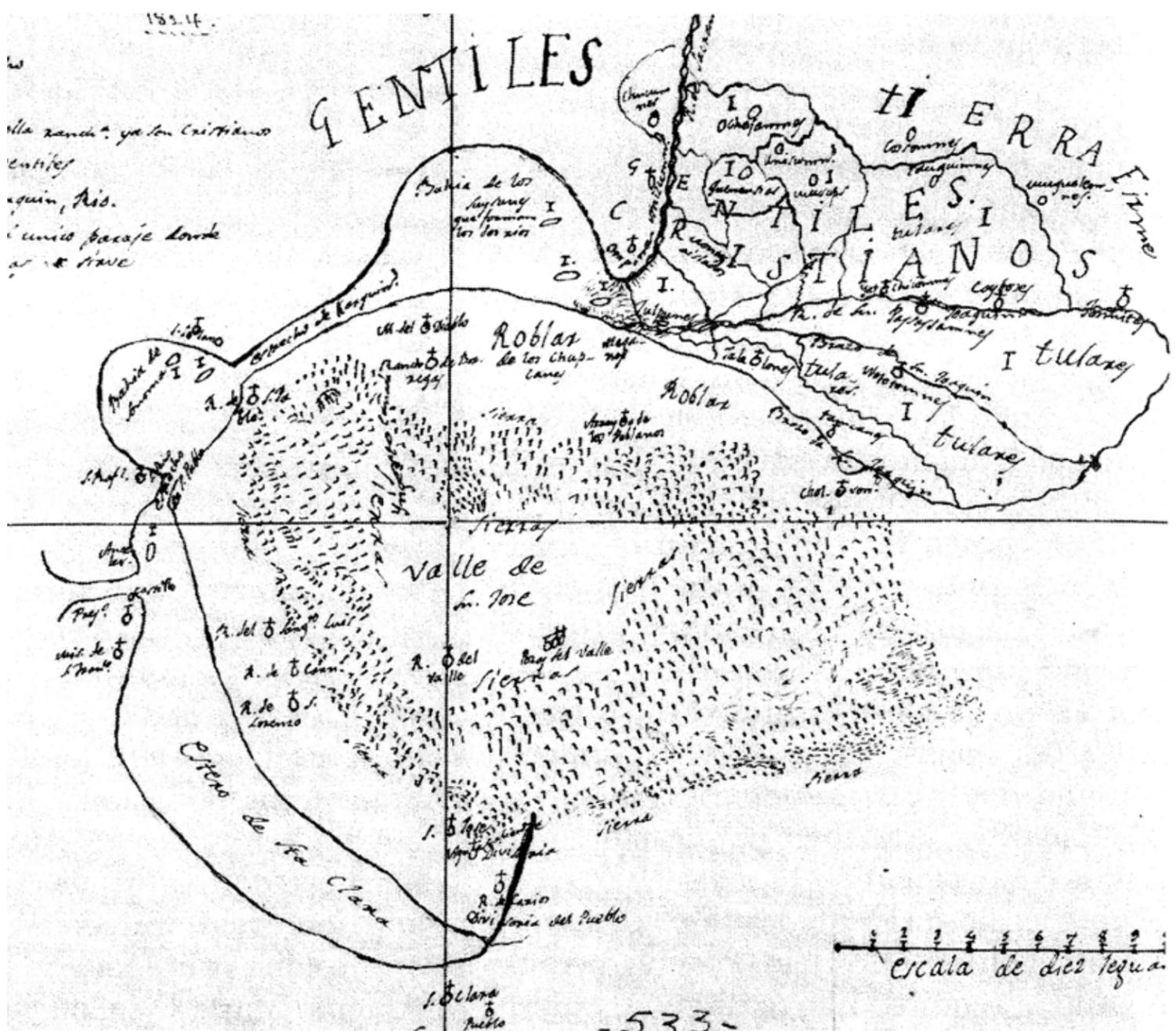
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Native Americans killed and skinned the longhorn cows, and hauled the skins and bags of lard to the waiting ships on *carretas*, or carts, like the one pictured here.

They also did most of the herding, branding and round-ups.

Many Native Americans in the missions became expert horsemen, with skill equal to that of the Californios, who themselves were famous for their horsemanship.

What kind of work did the Native Americans do?



Father Narciso Durán's map of the lands of Mission San José in 1824, showing the rivers in the San Joaquin Valley in the upper right, where the mission went to get more workers.

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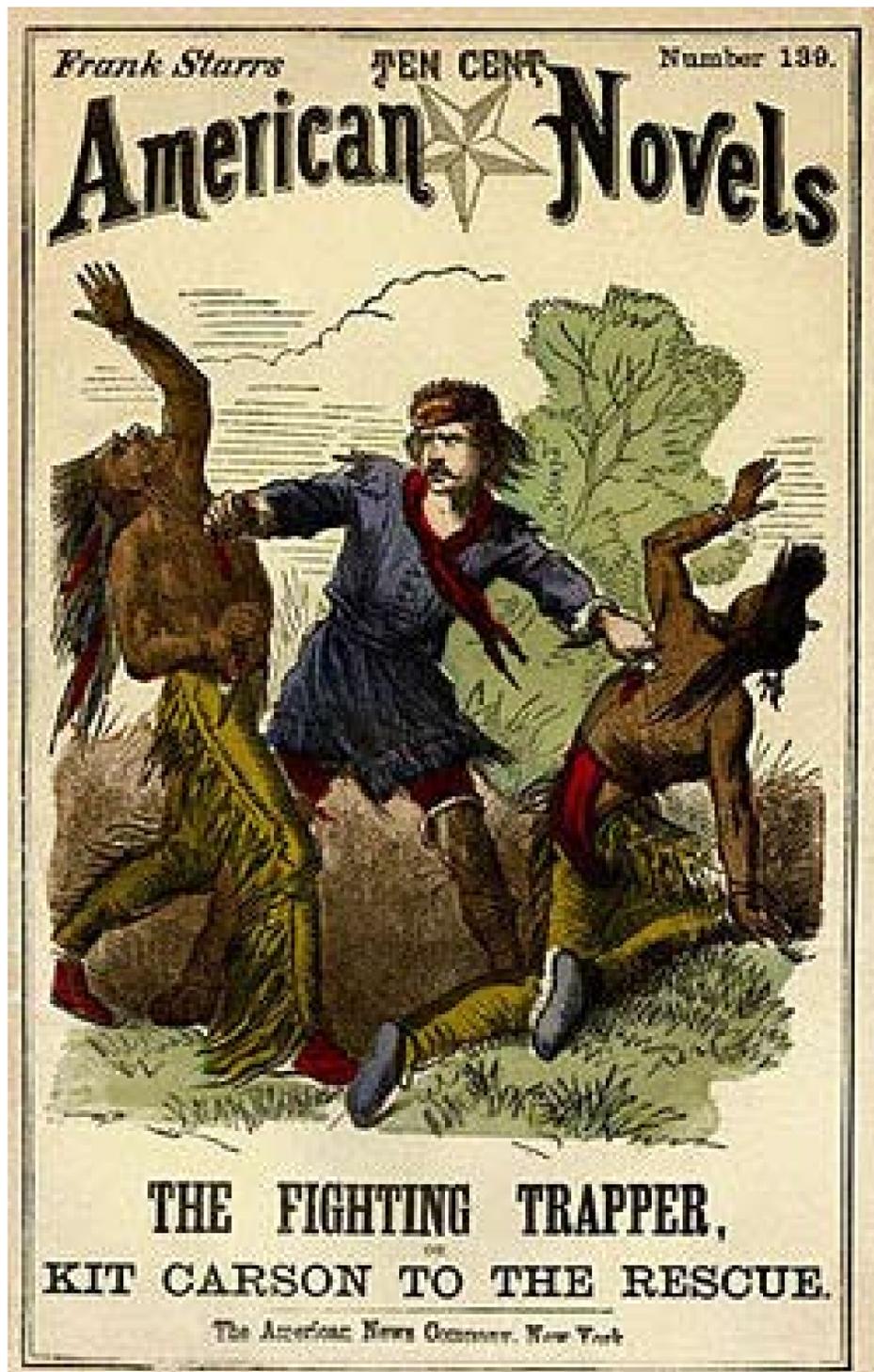
Narciso Durán with Native American child.

EUGENE DUFLLOT DE MOFRAS, 1844, COURTESY OF THE HUNTINGTON LIBRARY

The inland Native peoples now working in the missions began to die off as they came into contact with diseases carried by the colonizers—just as the Ohlone had in the previous generations.

Mexican soldiers went further inland in ever-widening circles in search of more laborers, into the Central Valley, home to the Yokuts people.

Why did the missions and ranchos need more workers?



Two famous mountain men came through Mission San José, just an hour's ride from the Peralta *rancho*, Kit Carson and Jedediah Smith. Kit Carson went after runaways and burned a Miwok village to the ground in retaliation for horse theft. Jedediah Smith, on the other hand, was held by Father Durán on suspicion of causing discontent with the mission system among Native Americans there.

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The hide and tallow trade brought many more foreigners to California than before, mostly by sea. English-speaking mountain men—trappers and traders—began to arrive overland from the east as early as the late 1820s. They blazed trails and led pioneers from the United States into California (which was part of Mexico).

Native Americans traded horses, including some stolen from the Peralta rancho, with the mountain men.

Who were the “mountain men” who came through Mission San José?



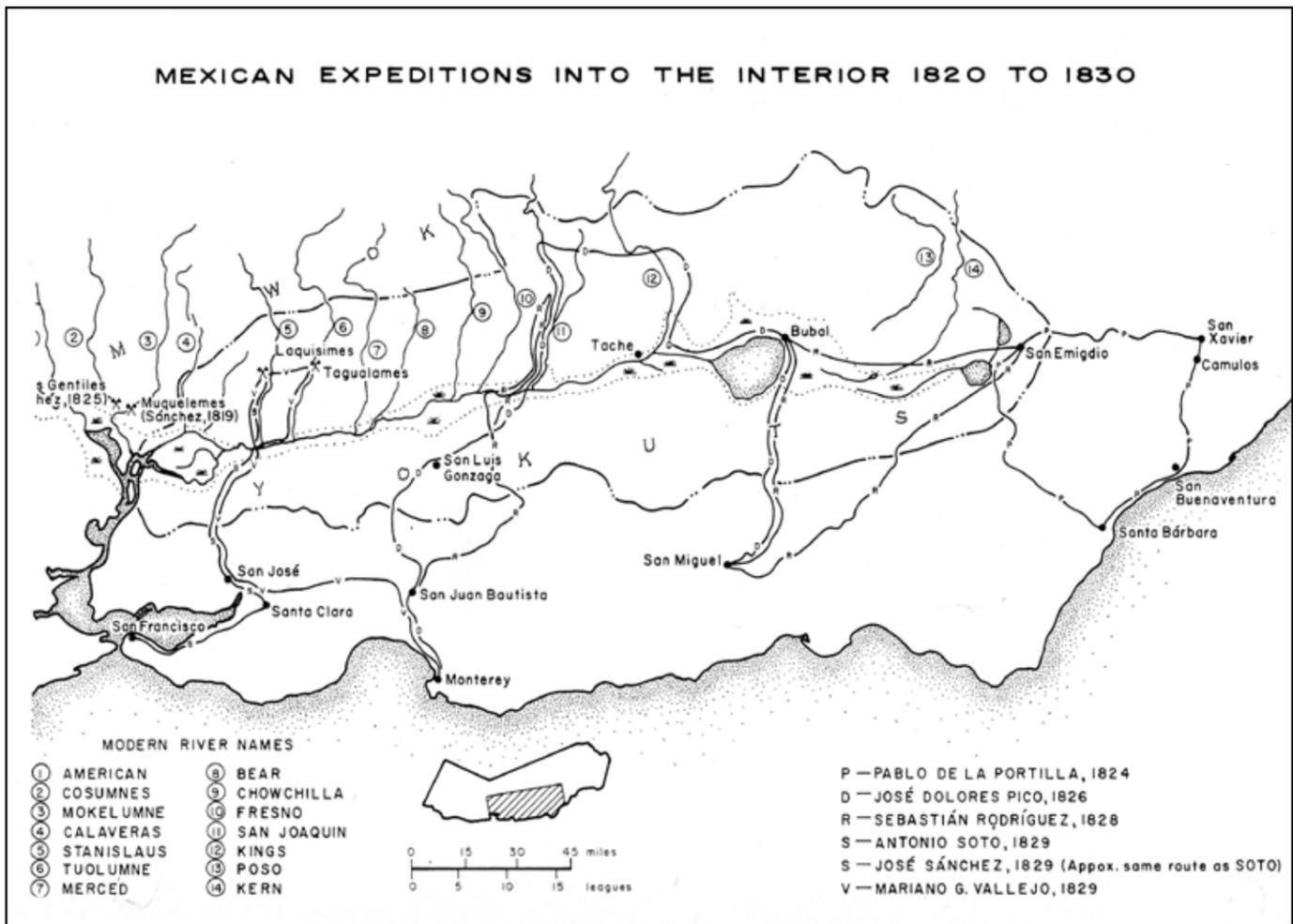
No image survives of Antonio's first wife, María Antonia Galindo. This portrait of a *californio* landowner's wife is taken from Carl Nebel's 1836 drawing, *Hacendero y Mayordomo* (Landowner and Foreman).

Antonio Peralta and María Antonia Galindo moved to the site where the park is today when they got married in 1828. They lived here for the rest of their lives.

After having 11 children—only two dying in childhood, rare for those times—María Antonia died in 1850.

Antonio later married María Dolores Archuleta. They had three more children before her death in 1868, just before the Peralta House was built. Two died in childhood.

Why did Antonio Peralta come to live here?



By the early 1830s, all tribal lands within 40 miles to the north of San Francisco Bay and 80 miles inland had been emptied of their original villages by disease and military action.

Spanish-speaking soldiers, now Mexican citizens, were still working for the missions, rounding up laborers, catching fugitives, and retaliating when laborers took horses or mules. This map shows the routes the soldiers followed, going inland in search of Native Americans.

By then, none of the Peraltas were in the military, but some took part in citizens' posses.

How much Native American land was lost by the 1830s?