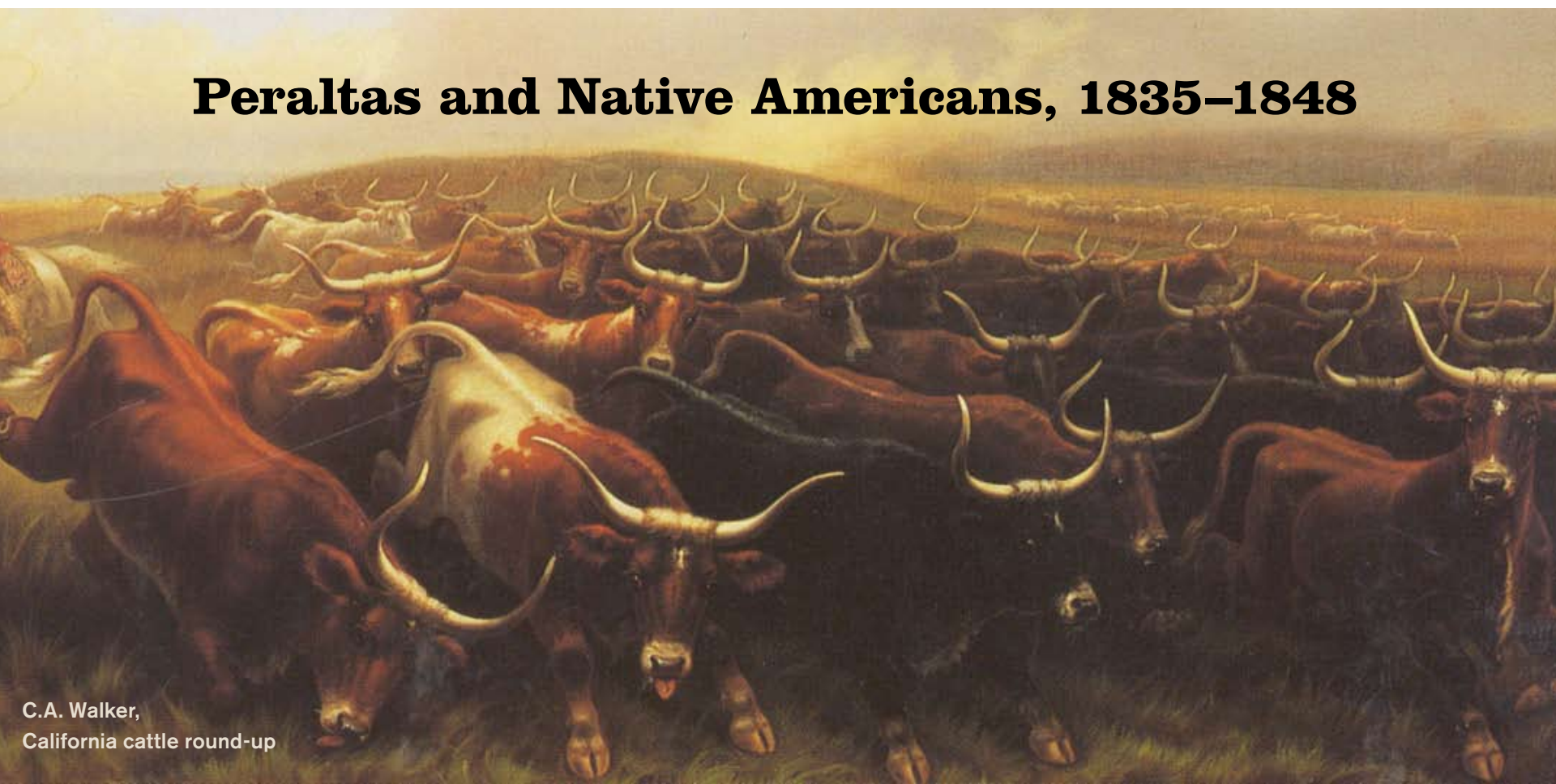


Peraltas and Native Americans, 1835–1848



C.A. Walker,
California cattle round-up



Elegant image of landowners with foreman, by Carl Nebel, 1836.
No images survive of the Peraltas during the *rancho* era.

COURTESY OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

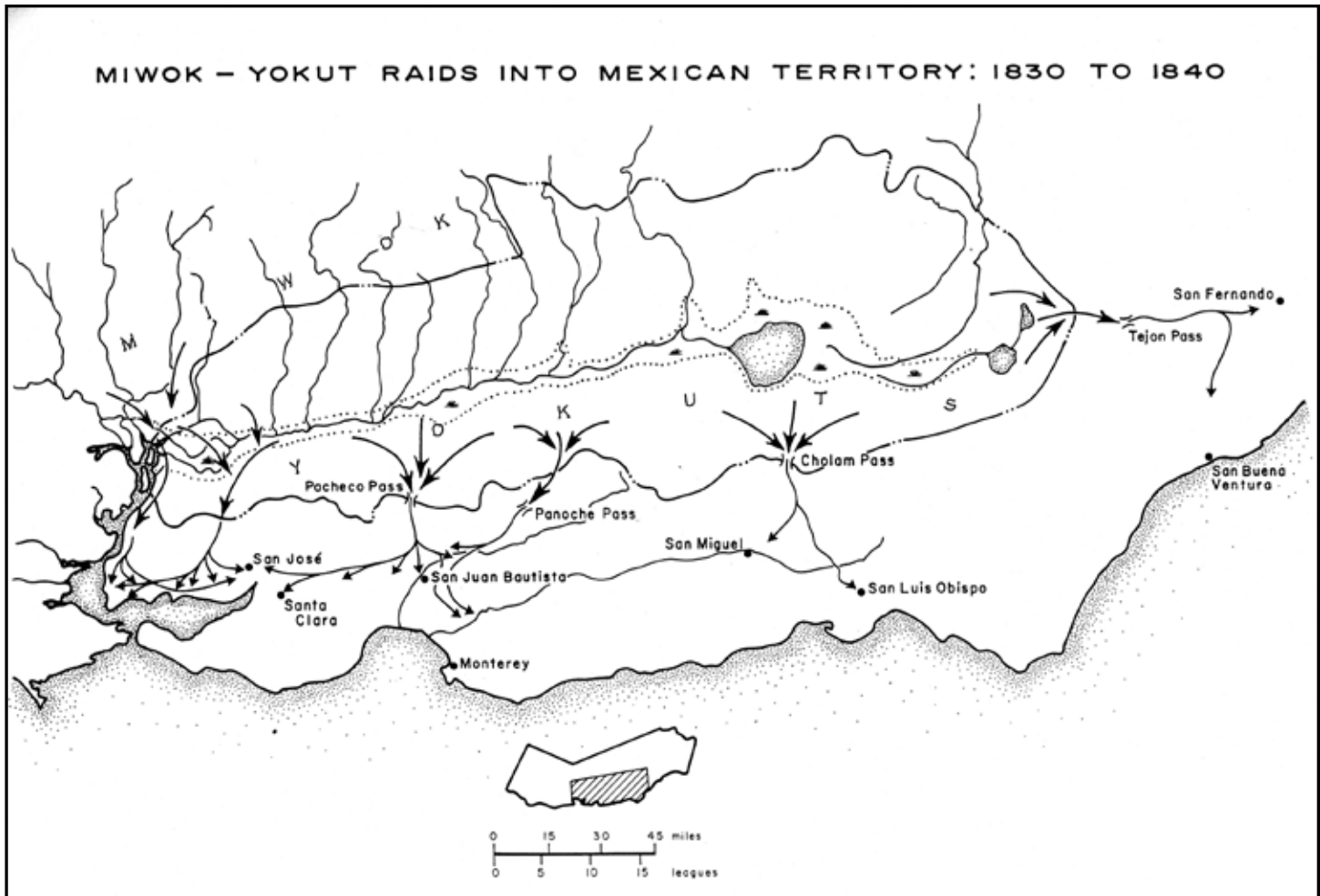
The Mexican government ended its support of the mission system in 1834.

The Decree of Secularization stated that the mission lands, along with the herds, were to be given back to the Native Americans. Many ex-mission workers would have been eager to own mission land, while some wanted to get as far away from the missions as possible.

As it turned out, a bare handful of land grants went to Native Americans. Instead, almost all the mission land went to Californios: Over 800 Mexican land grants were made after 1834 to soldiers or ex-soldiers.

The Peralta land grant had been granted fifteen years earlier, one of the mere 23 land grants made during the whole Spanish era.

Who got the land when the mission system ended?



Miwok-Yokut raids into Mexican territory 1830-1840

... the 14th of August, the Indians had run off more than 100 animals from the Peraltas and the Mission of San José. . . .

IGNACIO MARTINEZ, 1837



Some of the ex-mission workers stayed near the missions or towns, hoping for work. Many went to work on the private ranchos. Some formed independent mounted bands in the Central or San Joaquin Valleys, and swooped down on horseback to take horses from ranchos and missions on the edge of settlement.

Portrait of California Native, 1839,
Charles Christian Nahl

COURTESY OF THE BANCROFT LIBRARY

What did the Native Americans do when the missions closed?



Antonio María Peralta held rodeos on the east side of Peralta Creek with a race course and informal bull ring—probably a corral with pens for bulls and bears.

(TO COME FROM LISA (SHE HAS BOOK).

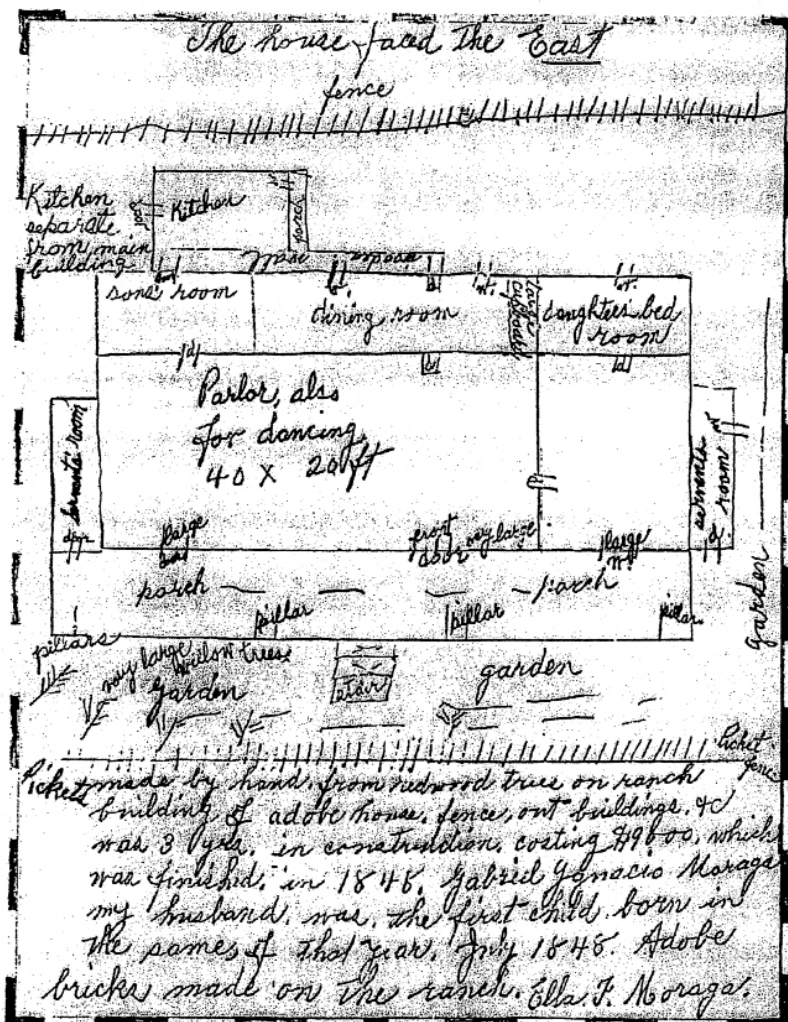
At the height of the rancho's prosperity, the four Peralta brothers owned 8,000 longhorn cattle and 2,000 horses.

The *Californios* displayed legendary skill at horsemanship.

Nothing but a tornado or a far-striking thunderbolt can overtake the Californian on horseback.

WALTER COLTON, YANKEE MAYOR OF MONTEREY

How big were the Peraltas' herds?



We don't know what the Peraltas' new adobe was like inside. This floor plan shows the Moraga adobe, which might have been similar. Rooms for Native American servants are on either side of the parlor.

ELLA OLIVE BROWN, COURTESY AIMEE ARRIGONI

Native Americans probably built the new adobe at the site in 1840; they made most of the adobe bricks—literally millions—throughout California in the Spanish and Mexican eras. You can see the outline of this house outside, near the smaller 1821 adobe.

Antonio Peralta also had a massive adobe wall built to enclose the settlement, like a typical hacienda in Mexico.

Q: How many bricks were in the houses and wall?
A: Approximately 10,000 bricks, hand-made, each 11 in. x 22 in. x 5 in.



Who built Antonio Peralta's 1840 adobe house?



Fandango

HARPER'S MONTHLY, JUNE 1863

Dancing was a passion with the Californians. It affected all, from infancy to old age; grandmothers and grandchildren were seen dancing together. . . . If a few people got together at any hour of the day, the first thought was to send for a violin and a guitar.

HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT

Although the Californios were known for their outstanding dancing, no Peralta diaries or letters survive that recount their individual feelings about dancing or other daily activities.

We do know that Antonio Peralta hosted frequent *fandangos* at this site for Californios from all over the East Bay.

Did the Peraltas like to dance?



Antonio's brothers, Vicente, Ignacio and Domingo, lived with Antonio intermittently at the site where the park is today, then gradually married and spread out over the East Bay, building their own adobe houses and raising cattle.

Domingo and his wife Eduviges moved to what is now Berkeley, Vicente and his wife Encarnación to what is now the Temescal District in North Oakland, and Ignacio and his wife Rafaela, to San Leandro. This all happened while the East Bay was still part of Mexico.

By 1840 over 40% of Alta California's land grants were held by non-citizens, mostly traders from the U.S.

Luis Peralta might have suspected that the U.S. government would soon pose a threat to Mexican territory and wanted to make sure his sons legally owned their land. In 1842, he formally gave his sons the four sections of the rancho they had been living on for many years.

Why did Luis Peralta finally deed the rancho to his sons?