

Rivera y Moncada, Explorer and Military Commander of Both Californias, in the Light of His Diary and Other Contemporary Documents

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AT ARIZPE, capital of Sonora, on December 24, 1779, Fernando de Rivera handed to the eminent Franciscan historian, Agustín Morfi, his diary for the period May 25, 1774-January 16, 1777.¹ It was a personal record of decisive years in the history of Upper California, for on the earlier date Rivera y Moncada had become military commander and virtual governor of the territory, and during the period which it covered San Francisco was founded. Rivera's action saved the diary for posterity; less than nineteen months later, on July 18, 1781, he was slain by Indians at La Concepción, near present-day Yuma, as he led another contingent of settlers to Los Angeles.²

Hitherto, Rivera y Moncada has been best known and condemned for his attempts to delay the founding of San Francisco, a rather inglorious title to fame. Unfortunately for him, later generations have forgotten his many other services to his country in governing the Californias.³ Also they have lacked the man's own version of the

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¹For the complete diary of Rivera y Moncada see Ernest J. Burrus, S.J. (ed.), *Diario del capitán comandante Fernando de Rivera y Moncada, con un apéndice documental* (2 vols., Madrid, 1967). Several fragments (copies of some parts of the journal sent to the viceroys in Mexico City) were known before the discovery of the complete diary.

²A portion of the diary was in the form of rough draft, not yet copied into the volume. Cf. Fray Juan Agustín de Morfi, *Diario y derrotero (1777-1781)* (Monterrey, México, 1967), 251 (entry for November 15, 1779). On p. 417, n. 708 the editors wrongly identify Rivera as "Don Joaquín de Rivera, alcalde mayor de la provincia de Sonora (1777)."

³Consult Herbert E. Bolton, *Anza's California Expeditions* (5 vols., New York, 1966), I, 434, n. 1. Bolton, who did not have Rivera's journal and, therefore, could not know his side of the various disagreements, justly observed, after stating the versions of Anza and Font against Rivera in regard to the founding

events and ignored the well-nigh incredible conditions compelling him to make his unpopular decisions.

The prime purpose of this study is to set forth Rivera's merits. Few men in Spanish colonial history devoted more years to serving their country than Don Fernando. In 1742, at the age of seventeen, he began a military career at Loreto, Lower California, a career which was to last thirty-nine years.⁴ His sense of duty, diligence, endurance, and exceptional ability are attested to by numerous rugged frontiersmen who were not easily satisfied, among them Consag, Barco, Linck, and Ceballos.⁵

Ten years of dedicated service in this northwestern outpost of Spanish America, far from his native city of Compostela, Mexico, brought to the young officer the highest military appointment in Lower California. On September 11, 1752, the Spanish King sent a decree to the Mexican viceroy, Conde de Revillagigedo, naming Rivera captain of the Loreto presidio, succeeding Bernardo Rodríguez Lorenzo. He was only twenty-seven years old at the time of the appointment.⁶

The young officer, who had accompanied Ferdinand Consag on his epoch-making expeditions, now put his experience and ability at the disposal of Wenceslaus Linck, the last great Jesuit explorer of the peninsula. Rivera also helped to establish the last three and northernmost mission centers: Santa Gertrudis in 1752, San Borja in 1762, and Santa María in 1767.

On November 30, 1767, Gaspar de Portolá arrived in San José del Cabo, at the tip of Southern California, with instructions for the expulsion of the Jesuits from the peninsula. Rivera was then in the nearby mission of Santiago⁷ and soon learned of the order. Realizing what false notions Portolá had formed about the peninsula, Rivera knew that he had two formidable tasks to execute—first, to disillusion Portolá about the fabulous wealth credited to Lower California, and secondly to effect the expulsion of the missionaries without stirring up the natives to rebellion.

How successfully Rivera carried out the first task is evident from

of San Francisco: "It is unfair to judge Rivera by this episode alone. He had a long and useful career on Spain's frontiers."

⁴ See Rivera, *Diario*, I, 219-220, II, 428.

⁵ Cf. Rivera, *Diario*, I, xxi-xxii (Spanish), xli (English).

⁶ The decree was published in Rivera, *Diario*, II, 355; compare I, 265.

⁷ The details are given in Ernest J. Burrus, S.J. (ed.), *Ducrue's Account of the Expulsion of the Jesuits from Lower California, 1767-1769: An Annotated English Translation of Benno Ducrue's Relatio Expulsionis* (Rome-St. Louis, 1967), 42-45.

Portolá's letter to Viceroy Croix a few days later: "In my ten days' march from Mission Santiago to La Pasi6n (Dolores), I did not find a single shelter except in the mining camp of Ocio . . . and from there on, neither ranch, nor house, nor even the least shelter along the road. . . . For want of water pasture lands are lacking. The greater part of the country is a sandy waste sown with thorns and thistles."⁸ Yet when Portolá wrote this letter, he had seen only the best part of the peninsula. What would he have written had he seen the more arid and barren northeastern regions where Linck was working and exploring at that very moment? Rivera had succeeded in acquitting himself of his first task—the disillusionment of Portolá—merely by insisting that the man see a part of Lower California for himself.

To accomplish the second task—preventing a general revolt by the natives—Rivera quickly and prudently deployed the soldiers under his command. More important, the missionaries of the eighteen centers with their dependent stations came to his assistance by preaching and insisting on unquestioned obedience to the King's orders.⁹

After these successes, both Portolá and Gálvez had high praise for the military commander of Lower California; and when the settlement of Upper California was decided upon, Rivera was chosen to lead the first overland party. Everyone knows what disasters befell the sea expeditions, but, as Bolton observed:¹⁰

The land expeditions were much more fortunate, though the way was difficult and long. Provisions for the journey, horses, mules, and cattle were assembled at Velicatá, a post eighteen leagues beyond Santa María, the northernmost of the old missions.

The first of the overland parties set out from Velicatá on March 24, 1769. It was led by Captain Rivera, commander of the company of Loreto. He had twenty-five leather jacket soldiers, three muleteers, and some forty Indians from the old missions, equipped with pick, shovel, ax, and crowbar, to open the roads through the mountains and across gullies. Along went Father Juan Crespi [sic], principal historian of the expedition. Rivera's men were declared to be 'the best horsemen in the world, and among those soldiers who best earn their bread from the august monarch whom they serve.' . . . For the first eight days the trail was that followed by the Jesuit Father Linck, three years before.¹¹ Thereafter, a distance of three hundred

⁸ Cited from Peter M. Dunne, S.J., *Black Robes in Lower California* (Berkeley, 1952), 419.

⁹ Consult *Ducrué's Account*, 42-71.

¹⁰ The quotation which follows is from Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven, 1921), 260-262.

¹¹ Bolton is referring to Linck's 1766 attempt to reach the mouth of the

miles, the route was now explored by white men for the first time. . . . On the 15th of May [1769], the day after Rivera and Crespi reached San Diego, Portolá and Serra set out from Velicatá.

Rivera did not remain long in San Diego. Still to be founded and defended was Monterey, considered at the time the best port site of Upper California, where it was thought that enemy invaders would most likely try to land. Ahead rode Portolá, Fages, Costansó, the friars, six Catalán volunteers, and some of the Indians. In the rear came Rivera, the rest of the soldiers, and the mission Indians driving the herd of spare mules and horses.¹² Portolá and his party rode right by Monterey without recognizing in it Vizcaíno's fine harbor. They continued northward, and only in the vicinity of San Francisco did they realize their mistake. They explored San Francisco Bay and retraced their steps southward to reach San Diego on January 24, 1770.¹³

In San Diego there was rejoicing for the safe return of the exploring party but also consternation at having to share the almost nonexistent foodsupply with the newcomers. On February 12, 1770, Rivera was sent with forty men to Lower California so that he could obtain supplies from the missions there.¹⁴ During his absence the *San Antonio* put into port; San Diego was saved; and some of the pioneers proceeded northward to found Monterey.

It took Rivera several months to gather and bring the needed supplies, cattle, and soldiers for the Upper California enterprise.¹⁵ After this, he made at least one more such expedition from Lower California to the "new establishments," for "on July 18, 1771, five days after Fages landed at San Diego from Monterey, sixty mules, twenty soldiers, and five cowboys arrived there, brought up from Lower California by Captain Rivera on Fages' orders."¹⁶ This was at least the third such expedition made by Rivera in behalf of Upper California.

Shortly afterwards Rivera returned to the mainland and bought a small farm near Guadalajara, where he intended to spend the rest

Colorado River. The complete journal of his efforts was published in Ernest J. Burrus, S.J. (ed.), *Wenceslaus Linck's Diary of his 1766 Expedition to Northern Baja California* (Los Angeles, 1966).

¹² See Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands*, 263.

¹³ Cf. Maynard J. Geiger, O.F.M., *The Life and Times of Fray Junipero Serra, O.F.M., or the Man Who Never Turned Back* (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1959), I, 239.

¹⁴ Data from Geiger, *Serra*, I, 240, 243.

¹⁵ Consult *ibid.*, 264, 338.

¹⁶ Quoted from *ibid.*, 340.

of his life with his devoted family.¹² But this bright dream was not to find realization, for the hardy frontiersman, already thirty years in his country's service, was destined to continue for nine more years.

The Rivera y Moncada family remained together until the latter part of 1773, when Don Fernando was appointed military governor of Upper California. Father Junípero Serra, president of the missions in Upper California, had become dissatisfied with Pedro Fages as the military governor, finding in him an obstacle to the progress of the missions and to the moral conduct of the soldiers.¹⁸ When Serra pressed Viceroy Bucareli to replace Fages with Sergeant José Francisco Ortega, the viceroy agreed to remove Fages, but objected to Ortega because of his low rank and named Rivera y Moncada to that position instead.¹⁹

Summoned to Mexico City, Don Fernando discussed problems with the viceroy and other officials. Towards the close of 1773 he left for his new post in Monterey, traveling via Guadalajara, where he bade his family farewell, and Sinaloa, where he recruited fifty-one settlers for Upper California. He sailed from the mouth of the Río Yaqui to Loreto, capital of both Californias, arriving in March 1774. Then began the difficult overland journey to Monterey, via the old Jesuit missions of Lower California, and Velicatá—the first California mission founded by Serra—on to San Diego and along the rest of the route which Rivera knew so well from previous expeditions. Finally, on May 23, 1774, he reached the presidio of Monterey and replaced Pedro Fages as military governor.²⁰ Most of the persons recruited by Rivera had been left en route to follow at a slower pace.

Early in Rivera's governorship appeared a controversy which persisted throughout his term of office. It concerned the establishment of

¹⁷ In 1750, shortly before his appointment as captain of the Loreto presidio, Rivera had married Doña María Teresa Dávalos y Patrón. Their marriage was blessed with one daughter, Isabel, and three sons, Juan Bautista, José Nicolás María, and Luis Gonzaga Francisco Javier María. Isabel died very young, in the Colegio de San Diego in the city of Guadalajara, just after the father left the mainland to take command of Upper California. Juan Bautista, the oldest boy, became parish priest of the church in the town of La Magdalena, near Guadalajara. I obtained this information about Don Fernando's family from AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 197; it can be found briefly summarized in Rivera, *Diario*, I, xxii-xxiii (Spanish), xlii-xliii (English).

¹⁸ Numerous complaints against Fages are specified by Mariano Carrillo in his *Informe*, written from Monterey, California, December 21, 1772, and reproduced in Rivera, *Diario*, II, 356-374; cf. Geiger, *Serra*, I, 379.

¹⁹ A detailed account is given by Geiger, *Serra*, I, 383.

²⁰ See Rivera, *Diario*, I, 3-4.

additional missions in Upper California. The president of the missions, Junípero Serra, enterprising, optimistic about human nature, and confident of divine bounty, wanted to establish as many missions as his Franciscans could man. He filled most of his letters with his plans. But Rivera, always cautious and distrustful of the Indians, considered it highly imprudent to spread too thinly the meager military forces under his orders. The vast difference in character and attitude produced unbridgeable misunderstandings between the two leaders.²¹

In reality, neither Serra nor Rivera was to blame for the tragedies which befell California during the latter's governorship; instead these were the work of higher officials, beginning with the king of Spain and the viceroy in Mexico, who sent insufficient military protection and financial assistance. To guard a vast region, Rivera had fewer than sixty soldiers, poorly armed and provisioned and often unpaid. Could anyone seriously expect him to face hostile natives, ward off attacks from outside enemy forces, and at the same time reduce his undermanned garrisons to found and protect new missions?²²

As if these circumstances were not enough to demoralize Rivera, he was deprived of his salary during the last seven years of his life.²³ When he set out for Monterey in 1773, his brother Ambrosio generously shouldered the maintenance of the entire family, sending Isabel to the Colegio de San Diego in Guadalajara, and the oldest boy, Juan Bautista, to the diocesan seminary in the same city, and probably educating the other two boys also, at least privately. Don

²¹ Consult the correspondence of Serra and Rivera published in *Diario*, I and II, especially II, 482-491.

²² The figure sixty means sixty able-bodied soldiers. On paper, each of the five missions had six soldiers; the San Diego presidio had as high as twenty-six, and that of Monterey was supposed to have even more, although the highest number ever recorded by Rivera was twenty-four (*Diario*, I, 110). Furthermore, because of the considerable distance between the two presidios and the five missions, it would have taken much time to bring to bear on a hostile force more than a score of soldiers; witness the case of San Diego: the attack took place on November 5, 1775; Rivera learned about it on the night of December 13th, and he did not reach San Diego until January 11, 1776, more than two months after the attack. More research must be undertaken to clarify Upper California's unfavorable economic situation. At the expulsion of the Jesuits the Pious Fund was favored to add up to 504,633.01 pesos; cf. Fr. Zephyrin Englehardt, O.F.M., *The Missions and Missionaries of California* (Santa Barbara, 1929), I, 498. The Gálvez Papers in the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, contain several documents referring to José de Gálvez' drawing on the Pious Fund for his military campaign in Sonora; the visitador attempted to justify his action by contending that the wars were for the security of the California missions.

²³ That is, over three as governor (his pay was to begin on January 1, 1774) and four in recruiting and accompanying settlers to Upper California.

Ambrosio was never repaid, for neither Don Fernando nor any of his relatives received any part of his salary, which on paper amounted to 3,000 pesos a year. Doña Teresa, the governor's widow, could not even collect a single peso of the insurance (Montepío) theoretically received by the survivors of deceased soldiers in the Spanish dominions. She and three of her children, Isabel, José Nicolás, and Luis Gonzaga, all died paupers, dependent on the charity of Fernando's brother, Ambrosio.

From 1774, one year after his appointment as governor, until his death in 1781, Don Fernando made repeated efforts to collect the salary due him. For more than fifteen years thereafter his relatives tried in vain to obtain at least some part of his salary, though officials in Mexico City admitted that 11,877 pesos, 7 reales, and $5\frac{7}{8}$ granos were due to Don Fernando at his death.²⁴

But let us return to Rivera's years as military commander. On November 23, 1774, six months after reaching Upper California, Rivera set out from Monterey with Father Francisco Palou and a group of soldiers to explore the area and select the appropriate sites for presidio, town, and two missions. They returned to Monterey on December 13, 1774.²⁵ Although their expedition was successful, nearly two years elapsed before either the presidio or the mission of San Francisco could be established.²⁶

Rivera was convinced that he could not spare enough soldiers for founding and holding the new post. The same was true of San Buenaventura to be established near the Santa Barbara Channel. With some difficulty Serra and Rivera compromised by founding San Juan Capistrano, between San Diego to the south and San Gabriel to the north.²⁷ But even this incipient effort was cut short on November 5, 1775, by the tragic destruction of the San Diego mission. One of its missionaries, Father Luis Jaime, and two of its workers were killed, while Lieutenant Ortega and a group of soldiers of the nearby presidio of San Diego were away, helping to found the mission of San Juan Capistrano.²⁸

When news of this disaster reached Rivera, he had just written

²⁴ Consult the sources indicated *supra*, note 17, and Rivera, *Diario*, II, 512-528.

²⁵ The details are given in Rivera, *Diario*, I, 69-84.

²⁶ The exact dates are given *infra*, note 33.

²⁷ See Geiger, *Serra*, II, 41.

²⁸ The most complete account of the San Diego attack is that by the lieutenant of San Diego, José Francisco Ortega, and countersigned by Rivera; the original document is preserved in the Doheny Memorial Library, St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California, and is reproduced in full with commentary in *Diario*, II, 429-481.

to viceroy Bucareli, telling him that all was peaceful in Upper California.²⁹ He hastened to inform Serra in nearby Carmel, and three days later, on December 16, he set out from Monterey for San Diego. En route he met Anza, who was bringing settlers for San Francisco, but who now returned with Rivera to San Diego, arriving on Thursday, January 11, 1776.³⁰ Serra did not come to San Diego for another six months,³¹ but even before his arrival the opposite views of the two leaders became manifest. Rivera insisted on punishing with exemplary severity the Indians who had attacked the mission, but Serra favored pardon and mercy, citing the policy and experience of the San Sabá tragedy in Texas.

Hitherto Rivera had always tried to study only one problem at a time and at great leisure. In the present circumstances he was faced with complex tasks too great to cope with: to find the culprits of the San Diego attack, to pacify the natives of the area, and to effect the establishment of the presidio and missions of San Francisco. By his conduct he alienated Juan Bautista de Anza, the one man who could have helped him in all three tasks. Both military leaders wrote numerous reports to the viceroy, each blaming the other; and both received severe rebukes for delaying the founding of San Francisco. To understand Rivera's strange treatment of Anza, it must be remembered that Don Fernando was physically ill at the time, angry and deeply offended because Anza had belittled his merits. Above all Rivera was much disturbed because Father Vincent Fuster had declared him excommunicated on the ground that he had violated ecclesiastical asylum by removing the chief culprit of the San Diego disaster, Carlos, from the mission warehouse serving temporarily as a church.³²

San Francisco was finally founded in the fall of 1776—the presidio on September 17 and the mission on October 9.³³ Ironically all three great protagonists—Serra, Rivera, and Anza—were absent from the inauguration, and a relatively minor actor in the drama, José Joaquín Moraga, was the actual founder.

On November 20, 1776, Rivera set out from Monterey for his third and last expedition to San Francisco, arriving on the 26th. He approved the sites chosen for the presidio and mission; and then,

²⁹ Rivera's account is given in *Diario*, I, 219-220.

³⁰ Data from *ibid.*, 226.

³¹ On July 11, 1776; cf. *ibid.*, 279.

³² For a general account see Geiger, *Serra*, II, 88-98; Rivera's own defense is given in *Diario*, II, 421-426.

³³ The dates are those given and discussed by Geiger, *Serra*, II, 141.

with Moraga, he explored the entire area around San Francisco, choosing the site for the second mission.³⁴ He directed the founding of Santa Clara on January 12, 1777.³⁵ (San Juan Capistrano had been re-established on November 1, 1776.)³⁶

Don Fernando carried on his exploration in the San Francisco Bay Area until December 13, 1776. No doubt he would have remained even longer if messengers had not arrived to inform him that hostile Indians had attacked the mission of San Luis Obispo. Fearful of another San Diego tragedy, he hastened to San Luis. There he found that the Indians had burned the mission church, the missionaries' residence, a new house still under construction, and two other buildings, just as Antonio Cota, the corporal of San Luis, had reported.³⁷ Meanwhile Moraga had reported to Rivera at great length on the presidio and mission of San Francisco,³⁸ which had also suffered Indian attacks. In the light of these events, is it any wonder that Rivera should have felt his policy of prudent expansion justified?

On February 3, 1777, Rivera was relieved of his command, being replaced by Felipe de Neve, who had been governor of Lower California with residence in Loreto.³⁹ Monterey was now made the capital of both Californias. At the same time, Rivera was again named military commander of Loreto, where he had spent so many happy years (1742-1768). He felt that he was an old man and longed to return to his family in Guadalajara. But when the viceroy insisted that he lead additional settlers to Upper California, for San Gabriel and Los Angeles, he obeyed loyally. His obedience was all the more remarkable in that he had not received one cent of pay as military governor of Upper California.

On July 18, 1781, a group of hostile Yumas overwhelmed and killed him on the banks of the Colorado. He had just sent ahead a contingent of settlers for San Gabriel, who got through safely to their destination, and was then on his way with a second group for Los Angeles.⁴⁰ By a strange turn of fortune, it was Pedro Fages, his immediate predecessor at Monterey, who discovered his remains and

³⁴ These facts are recorded in *Diario*, I, 315-332.

³⁵ See Geiger, *Serra*, II, 142.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ The burning of the San Luis mission is given in detail in Rivera, *Diario*, I, 328-329, n. 14, 336, 339, 341, 347-348.

³⁸ Moraga's letter to Rivera and the latter's reply are given in *ibid.*, 332-337; the account of the Indian attacks on San Francisco is found on pp. 332-334.

³⁹ Consult Geiger, *Serra*, II, 143-144.

⁴⁰ Cf. Rivera, *Diario*, II, 507-509.

reported his killing to the viceroy.⁴¹ Among the 104 slain in the Yuma area were also the four Franciscans in charge of nearby missions: Francisco Garcés, Juan Antonio Barreneche, Juan Díaz, and José Matías Moreno.⁴² Survivors told how Rivera and his men had put up a fierce resistance to their last breath.⁴³

Rivera exhibited a number of merits in addition to those which have appeared in this account. His generosity to the underpaid soldiers finds few parallels in Spanish colonial history. In his diary we find long lists of loans ranging from 3 to 44 pesos each.⁴⁴ Most of them were never repaid, as the treasurer in Mexico City who studied the accounts recorded. This generosity becomes all the more remarkable when it is recalled that Rivera received no part of his stipulated salary and, therefore, had to make the loans out of the sums of money sent to him by his brother, Ambrosio.⁴⁵

Rivera showed the most scrupulous honesty in administering the presidio accounts. He was the only one of the pioneer governors of Upper California to handle all the mission mail free of charge. He insisted on regular attendance at religious services, exempting only the sentinel on actual duty.⁴⁶ He demanded a high moral standard in the behavior of the soldiers, never tiring in his insistence that they give the Indians the example of real Christian conduct, and severely punishing their transgressions against the accepted standards of morality.⁴⁷

Much has been made of his own failure to attend religious solemnities celebrated in Carmel. His diary reveals that during his first year in Monterey, he regularly attended Mass not only in the presidio chapel but also every solemn and Sunday Mass in the nearby mission church.⁴⁸ After requesting in vain a chaplain for the presidio of Monterey, he still attended Mass in the presidio chapel. But he refused to attend the celebrations at Carmel in protest at the failure to provide the garrison and the nearly Indian families with a

⁴¹ His report is given in *ibid.*, 510-511; cf. Ronald L. Ives, "Retracing the Route of the Fages Expedition," *Arizona and the West*, VIII (1966), 49-70, 157-170.

⁴² See e.g. Rivera, *Diario*, II, 511, 529-675 ("Sermón de Bringas").

⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, 509.

⁴⁴ For example in *ibid.*, I, 92-93.

⁴⁵ Data from AGN, Provincias Internas, vols. 197 and 199; pertinent documents are reproduced and discussed in Rivera, *Diario*, I, xxii-xxiii (Spanish), xlii-xliii (English), II, 512-528.

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*, I, 68: "Todos oigan misa en el día de fiesta, exceptuando el que se hallare de centinela."

⁴⁷ Consult e.g., *ibid.*, 57.

⁴⁸ See e.g., *ibid.*, 27, 31, 49, 62 etc.

chaplain—in his opinion a grave and unjustifiable dereliction of duty. He was convinced that the soldiers would attend to their religious duties more faithfully and profitably if they had their own chaplain, and that one could be easily supplied. Furthermore, the baptisms of Spaniards and Indians should, in his opinion, take place in the presidio chapel with its consecrated font, obviating the risk of a trip to Carmel some three miles away.⁴⁹

Canon lawyers today will endorse Rivera's action in removing the Indian culprit Carlos from the San Diego warehouse serving as a temporary chapel, and agree with the commander that he did not incur any ecclesiastical excommunication.⁵⁰

Rivera made every effort to improve the material conditions of the presidio, which did not even have a mason to construct needed buildings or to repair the old ones.⁵¹ He pleaded for more animals—more cows to furnish milk and meat, more horses and mules to haul supplies from the ships to the warehouse, to distribute them among the missions, and to patrol the vast territory.⁵² Food supplies frequently reached the vanishing point: very little was grown, and what arrived was often spoiled before being placed in the storeroom. Tragically or comically, the soldiers spent much of their time hunting for bears to replenish the meat supply or exchanging trinkets with the natives for fish, corn, or other foods. Don Fernando pleaded over and over again for medicines needed so desperately in the presidio and missions.⁵³ He has the distinction of making the first Upper California land grant.⁵⁴ He repeatedly tried to secure better weapons. He worked out a signal system so that he could distinguish Spanish ships from hostile intruders.

His diary gives us the names of countless pioneer Californians not recorded by Bancroft or any other historian or genealogist. Above all, this journal merits study for a more complete picture of pioneer years in California, a better understanding of key events at the time, and a more just image of a leading participant during nearly forty years of West Coast history.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, II, 405-406.

⁵⁰ Details in Geiger, *Serra*, II, 97; *Diario*, II, 421-426.

⁵¹ See *Diario*, I, 60, 129.

⁵² E.g., *ibid.*, 91.

⁵³ See, e.g., *ibid.*, 31-32, 64, 66, 161, 198, 203; cf. II, 433.

⁵⁴ Consult Geiger, *Serra*, II, 56-57, and Rivera, *Diario*, I, 217, n. 10.