THE JOURNAL OF

SAN DIEGO HISTORY

A Publication of the San Diego History Center

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Front Cover: Nathan Harrison sits on his patio in this circa 1913-17 Edward H. Davis photograph, which features the local legend with his skillet, coffee pot, and other cooking materials. SDHC Photo Collection. Colorized by Lia Dearborn.

Back Cover: *Stella di Genova,* circa 1946. The tuna and sardine industries were important to the San Diego community, including the Miramontes family whose descendants grew up in the interwar heyday of Little Italy and worked on the *Stella*. SDHC #UT 8241-1461.

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CONTENTS

VOLUME 66 SUMMER 2020 NUMBER 1

ARTICLES

Editors' Introduction

Last summer, our editors' introduction explained to readers why we devoted an issue of the *Journal* to the 250th anniversary of the founding of the mission and presidio of San Diego. In light of the developments of the past twelve months, last summer may seem a lifetime ago. Yet as we offer this note of introduction, it seems appropriate to recognize both the dramatic disruptions and the continuities our community has witnessed as we return to the task of considering what our collective past has to tell us about our present and future.

First, the disruptions: the COVID-19 pandemic has created a public health emergency as well as economic strain that will likely be with us for some time to come. Apart from the human tragedy of the disease, the pandemic is forcing businesses, including the San Diego History Center, to reexamine every aspect of their operations. As a result, *The Journal of San Diego History* will be moving from three issues per year to two. Yet our commitment to interpreting and disseminating the diverse stories of our past remains unchanged. After the current issue, we plan to release in the winter an issue devoted to disease and public health in San Diego history.

The content of the current issue connects in direct ways to the other contemporary development that future historians will likely see as a defining moment of 2020. The protests in the aftermath of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery have brought to the forefront of the nation's consciousness not only issues of policing and race, but broader concerns revolving around systemic racism, identity, and historical memory. While the content of this issue of the Journal was in preparation well before these recent developments, the events of the past months have added a measure of urgency and relevance to the scholarship we present here. The articles written by Seth Mallios and his team at San Diego State University have much to say not only about the experiences of San Diego African American pioneer Nathan Harrison, but also about the delicate performative acts Harrison undertook to negotiate an environment that could prove deadly to Black people, and indeed, to people of color generally. Shayna Muckerheide's contribution to this issue is an account of the history of two Mexican American families in Little Italy in the first decades of the twentieth century. It too connects with issues of identity and belonging in a region stratified along lines of race and ethnicity. Finally, editor David Miller's historiographic essay considers the paucity of scholarship on San Diego's African American community in the pages of *The Journal of San Diego History,* thereby highlighting the need for critical inquiries into this topic. We hope the articles in this issue mark a beginning to this corrective process.

Nathan Harrison's story is significant in what it tells us about myth, legend, and public memory. In short, what we remember (and choose not to remember) about Harrison sheds light on our collective understanding of who we are and who we wish to be. Given recent re-examinations of public monuments such as statues of

Confederate leaders or Junípero Serra, we are reminded of the contested ground of public memory. And here is the continuity: in our editors' introduction a year ago, we asked whether a careful consideration of the history of Spanish colonization could help us confront present-day issues of dispossession and marginalization. The current historical moment suggests that the larger task of reckoning with our past is of vital importance.

Why Nathan Harrison Was and Is Important

Seth Mallios

"Who cares?" is an impolite question, but one every author seemingly faces. Over the years, I have found that it is best to offer an explanation of significance at the outset of every article before any kind of "so what" inquiry can be uttered. Fortunately, for the Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project, this question of historical importance is easy to answer. In fact, it was the key factor nearly twenty years ago in our decision to search for Harrison's historic home in the first place.

In my mind, there are at least three fundamental reasons that Nathan Harrison's life was significant and remains important. First, his story brims with themes of prevailing against staggering hardships, forging something from nothing, and demonstrating unwavering perseverance. As such, Harrison's life was intriguing, insightful, and inspirational. The story of his life is clearly worth being told. Second, the ways his biography has been transformed into local legend offers great insights into how and why myths are made. It is an intriguing process still in play today. A century before social media, Harrison was using images and words to shape public opinion, and once he died, others similarly manipulated his likeness and biography. It is fascinating to examine why a particular story gets told and retold, even when—or especially when—it is untrue. Third, recently uncovered archaeological evidence from Palomar Mountain's Nathan Harrison site reveals previously unknown nuances of his secret double life. Harrison successfully cloaked part of his contemporary identity, but—thankfully for us—seemed unconcerned that future archaeologists might investigate his garbage. Our archaeological discoveries have exposed hidden elements to the Nathan Harrison story never before considered.

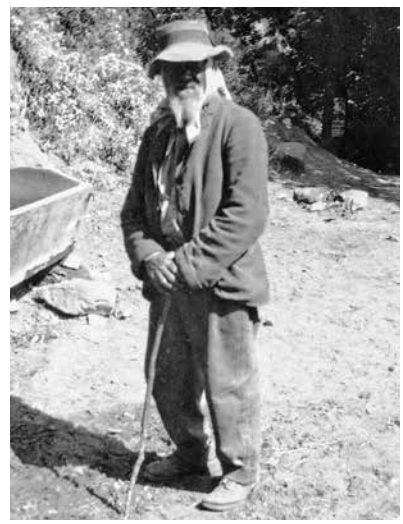
Dr. Seth Mallios is Professor of Anthropology, University History Curator, and Director of the South Coastal Information Center at San Diego State University. He is the author of ten books, including *Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer: Nathan Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend* (2020).

This introduction and the articles that follow offer different yet intersecting explanations of why Nathan Harrison is of great consequence to San Diego, California, and American histories. They serve as companions to the project's recently published book, *Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer: Nathan "Nate" Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend*, and the 2021 San Diego History Center exhibition, *Nathan Harrison: Born Enslaved, Died a San Diego Legend*.[1] Although research on the project continues and the annual archaeological dig will occur again this summer (2020), the book, exhibition, and this volume serve to commemorate Nathan Harrison on the centennial of his 1920 passing.

Inspirational Perseverance in the Face of Hardship

Nathan Harrison's life story can be defined by how he overcame nearly insurmountable obstacles. Born in Kentucky sometime around 1833, he endured slavery, a cross-country trek in servitude, the Gold Rush, and the Wild West. Harrison did more than just survive; he prospered, gained widespread acceptance, and became a pillar of the community. Most impressively, Harrison achieved this acclaim in regions where whites were openly hostile and sometimes violent towards people of color. Despite the fact the he had little in common with his neighbors, Harrison was hailed by his contemporaries as a San Diego County pioneer and, to this day, remains a local legend. In evaluating people of the past on the basis of what was done and what was overcome, I believe that Nathan Harrison was a truly remarkable historical figure.

In fact, I can think of no San Diegan who embodied the American Dream more than Nathan Harrison. During his lifetime, he achieved some of the nation's most formative self-proclaimed and time-honored ideals. Whether it be John Locke's influential reference to "life, liberty, and property" or Thomas Jefferson's later declaration of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," Harrison's biography echoed these empowering concepts of democracy.



Nathan Harrison at the natural spring and trough on his homestead at Palomar Mountain, nd (SDHC #84_15163).

Life. Harrison had an undeniably long life; he lived well into his 80s, nearly triple the average for formerly enslaved people. One account even insisted he made it to his 107th birthday!

Liberty. Harrison attained freedom and

strategically ensured this liberty by settling on the highest mountain in the region. It was almost impossible to sneak up on him at his home, as Harrison could see visitors venturing up Palomar Mountain for hours in advance of their arrival. Its remote location and defensible high ground exudes independence.

Property. Harrison had extensive land holdings. In fact, he acquired 112 acres at the base of Palomar Mountain years before homesteading the forty-five-acre hillside tract where we currently excavate. The initial property acquisition at Rincon made him the first African American homesteader and landowner in the region.

Pursuit of happiness. While there are many debates as to what Jefferson meant by this phrase, it is well documented that Nathan Harrison forged strong relationships with his neighbors and became a beloved member of the community.[2] Perhaps I am overthinking the matter (it happens all too often); Susan B. Anthony very succinctly stated in a speech delivered in Chicago, Illinois on March 14, 1875, that, "Independence is happiness."

People are Born, but Myths are Made

Just as fascinating as Harrison's actual life story is what has happened to his biography since his passing. Following Harrison's death, written accounts of his life and times appeared frequently. Though short on historical facts, these tales alleged striking claims. In the century after his passing, a surge of biographical narratives placed Harrison at a wide array of important events in the region's history, from fighting with Captain John C. Frémont in the Bear Flag Revolt in 1846, marching with the Mormon Battalion in 1847, encountering notorious gold-country bandit Joaquin Murrieta in 1853, to opening Tejon Pass in 1854. None of these stories is likely true, but in the process of this rampant myth-making, Nathan Harrison became a most ubiquitous figure in San Diego history. He was allegedly present at nearly every significant event in the history of Southern California in the years following the American conquest.

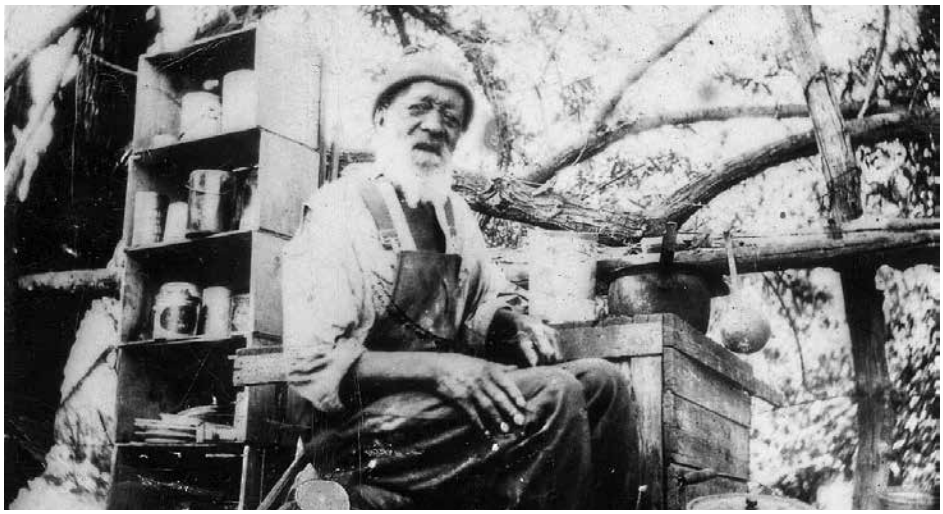
There were many truths in these fictitious stories—not in the details of the accounts but in the agendas of those who wrote them. Those of us working on this project have pinpointed how and why these narratives evolved over time. Some of the changes were gradual and reflected a burgeoning romance of the past. For example, in the decades following his death, Harrison was described as smarter and smarter, his home was lauded as nicer and nicer, and tales regarding the legality of his emancipation grew more and more celebrated.[3] The changes were not subtle. Over time, Harrison went from being called "uneducated" to "cultivated" to "intelligent." His house went from being deemed a "shack" to a "hut" to a "crude cabin" to a "cabin." Furthermore, early stories of his path to freedom alleged he was a runaway slave, mid-century accounts insisted his owner

manumitted Harrison, and later narratives proclaimed that Harrison purchased his own freedom. These biographical changes were striking for three important reasons: first, they happened well after Harrison died; second, the evolution was almost perfectly linear; and third, they were untrue. Regardless, these were the stories that grew in popularity and continue to be told to this day.

In addition to the gradual evolution of stories regarding Harrison, there were some striking moments of unexpected invention. The decade of the 1950s, in particular, was a time when certain individuals attempted to capitalize on Harrison's local fame by manipulating the past.[4] For example, one aspiring politician and his allies in the media created a completely fabricated story, alleging that Harrison was originally brought to Southern California by the politician's grandfather. The account, which teemed with clear historical inaccuracies, first appeared alongside a campaign advertisement for the very same candidate. It was successful on two grounds. First, the unscrupulous team succeeded in getting their politician elected to Congress. Second, this account rewrote the history of Harrison's migration to the West. In fact, it was the accepted narrative—even on the San Diego Historical Society webpage—until our project started in the early 2000s.[5]

Jaime Lennox and I have studied myth-making in depth, especially in terms of Nathan Harrison's biography.[6] We have examined how and why certain tales of Harrison were told, embellished, and re-told. Interestingly, Harrison himself set the tone for many of these tall tales and exaggerations, as his storytelling abilities were a source of great excitement and gratification for his frequent audiences. In our article of this volume, Jaime and I present new material on how the Old West was a prime source for a burgeoning American mythology. We then ground this legendary "Wild West" backdrop with actual details of two notorious murders with a direct tie to Nathan Harrison. We compare sensationalized notions of the Old West with the seemingly regular killings and vigilantism in Harrison's daily life and examine how Southern California justice changed over time.

Harrison's legendary past resulted from a complex mix of internal and external factors. He was a local icon and a celebrated raconteur who played an active and deliberate role in the making of his own myth. The fact that Harrison's home was a prominent tourism destination for San Diegans during the late 1800s and early 1900s added to the far-fetched fabrications. Visitors participated in an exotic and almost otherworldly experience as they rode up the precipitous mountain road and were regaled by this anachronistic former slave who seemed to be a remnant of the antebellum South. As Ryan Anderson and I discuss in the third article this tourism contributed to Harrison being perhaps the most photographed nineteenth century San Diegan. These images are a material legacy of the unforgettable trip to his cabin. We note intricacies in the photographic process, especially in terms



Nathan Harrison on his patio outside of his Palomar Mountain cabin, nd. Photo courtesy Kirby Collection, Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

of how it gave visitors an image they wanted and expected yet also provided affirmation of Harrison's right to live on the mountain.

New Archaeological Evidence for an Old Story

Spectacular recent archaeological discoveries at the Harrison site add an additional layer of importance and intrigue to his story. With the existing historical evidence so full of contradiction, exaggeration, and manipulation, there were many times when our trowels seemed to bring us far closer to the actual life and times of Nathan Harrison than any written account, government ledger, or old photograph. Occupying the same space as the individual who first homesteaded the property and uncovering over 50,000 fragmented items from his daily life methodically revealed past activities and behaviors of Harrison that were far different from the often-told myths and legends.[7] The arduous and meticulous excavation of artifacts seemed to make time slow down and muted the desire for quick interpretations and hasty conclusions about the past. It allowed us time for deeper analysis and reflection. The artifacts found at the Harrison site were consistent, cohesive, and told a clear story of pioneer life on Palomar Mountain. As the article in this volume by James Turner, Shannon Farnsworth, Jamie Bastide, and me details, the material assemblage unearthed at the site pinpoints Harrison's occupation at the cabin, identifies his primary activities, and even showcases certain priorities and strategies.

Archaeology is a massive puzzle. To complicate matters further, there is no picture on the metaphorical box, and many pieces are missing. Nevertheless, the patterns formed by tens of thousands of artifacts are not blurred by revisionist

Participants in the 2005 archaeological field school successfully exposed the hidden remains of the Harrison cabin. Photo courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

histories. Though there can be great debate as to the accuracy of various archaeological interpretations, there is no questioning what was found and where it was found. The work presented here by Turner et al. examines the entire assemblage and is careful to appreciate broad patterns created by past activities. It is easy to fall into a trap of celebrating isolated finds and ignoring the bigger picture. This archaeological variant of missing the forest for the trees reminds us to look beyond amazing individual items and to consider collectively all we have found. It also encourages us to see artifacts in relative and comparative terms within the context of each of the materials found at the site.[8]

Assessing Archaeological Significance

Archaeological projects often seem significant after the work has been done. The artifacts have a way of bringing the past back to life in an astonishing fashion that can make the ends justify the means. However, it would be inaccurate for me to suggest that the importance of this project was obvious or embraced by all at the outset. There were two factors that seemed to undermine this work even before it started: 1) the site was not especially early, and 2) the person inhabiting the site, Nathan Harrison, was well documented in the written records. Simply put, many people wondered why in the world I would spend my time working on a project that was so late and already extensively historically documented.

In fact, when I interviewed for my current archaeology position at San Diego State University nearly two decades ago, members of the department widely assumed that I intended to excavate at either the Presidio or one of the Spanish missions. They linked my previous position as Site Supervisor at the 1607 James Fort site in Virginia with an automatic desire to research the earliest historical sites

in San Diego. It is worth emphasizing that even though I dug at Jamestown—the first permanent English settlement in the Americas—I do not believe that the older a site is, the more important it is. As I see it, there is a fundamental flaw in equating a site's significance with its antiquity.[9] This logic would replace the primary goal of archaeology—the quality of insight into the past—with a standard that favors the earliest site, no matter how trivial the insight gained. This collector's mindset fails to acknowledge the importance of the sophistication of knowledge learned from the site and only prizes it for its absolute age.

In addition to Nathan Harrison's relatively recent occupation at Palomar Mountain, there are over 100 historical accounts of his life. This information, although well dispersed and often hidden in archives across the state, was available before we first put a trowel in the ground at Palomar Mountain. Since there was a deluge of associated historical records, what more could be learned through excavation?

I see the role of archaeology differently. In my mind, any model that reduces documentation to a single variable, one of quantity—from none to ample—is inherently flawed. It only analyzes written sources as a simple additive to a singular composite historical narrative. Privileging excavation at sites with less documentation as better or more significant than those with more sets up a scale in which all written records purportedly offer the same amount and kind of insight. It is as if all documentation is merely being tallied to contribute to one story. On the contrary, written records vary greatly as do the insights they provide for the subjects, sites, and events being studied. Archaeology's unique ability to contradict contemporary historical accounts emphasizes that all past documentation is

In 2017 field school students uncovered extensive historical debris in the midden just west of the Harrison cabin and patio. Photo courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

similar in neither accuracy nor importance. In fact, one of the most startling qualities of archaeological research on documented sites is how unearthed artifacts can expose such a wide variety of historical biases, perspectives, and revisionist dogma. Thus, I believe that assessing significance on the basis of quantifying such erratic historical components is warped.

The primary issue here is not whether the excavated artifacts confirm or contradict the existing written records; both points of view are limited in scope in that they insist on a singular narrative for the site. Complex individuals, complex events, and complex times—all part of the incredibly complex performance that is the human experience—warrant complex narratives that must take into account multiple and highly nuanced perspectives. Ample documentation should not be equated with lesser significance for the archaeological deposits. In fact, the myth-making in the written records associated with Nathan Harrison makes the excavations of his cabin site even more important in making sense of the convoluted and highly distorted narratives.[10] The nature of the Harrison-related historical records underscores my objection to the traditional model—the belief that more documentation somehow diminishes the ability of artifacts to be as insightful. It can be just the opposite, as excavated material often allows historical archaeologists to view skewed written accounts in a broader—and as I like to say, a more "orthogonal"—mindset.[11] Orthogonality involves opening one's mind to the deluge of different historical narratives and perspectives. It is this immersion that allows for us to embrace the complexity of the past. Rather than view the relationship between documentation and artifacts as additive (corroborative) or subtractive (corrective), I encourage historical archaeologists to move away from singular—and thus, definitive—narratives of the past peoples that inhabited the sites they dig. In my mind, a site's significance is directly tied to the different kinds of insights it can provide and the depth of those new ideas.

Upending Traditional Old West Narratives

Nowhere was this archaeological ability to offer a completely different historical interpretation more evident than in how our work revealed a deep split in Nathan Harrison's persona. None of the historical accounts referred to Harrison having dual identities. In this case, the archaeology did not settle a debate between conflicting narratives. It provided a completely distinct interpretation, one that Harrison himself deliberately disguised and did his best to keep out of any account. Harrison's life, as revealed in the historical documents and archeological records, illustrates these correctives to common misunderstandings about California history, whether it be the state's dedication and implementation of "Free State" ideals, California's allegiance to the Union during the Civil War, or its commitment to racial equality

following the Emancipation Proclamation. Misrepresentations such as these merit additional explanation here at the outset of the work presented.

Myth #1: California was a free state.

Nathan Harrison was brought by his owner to California as a an enslaved person during the early years of the Gold Rush. Although California was technically admitted to the Union as a "free state" in 1850, the Golden State was no land of equality for African Americans. There were many discriminatory legal loopholes. For example, California explicitly denied the freedom claims of enslaved African Americans if they were brought into California by gold-seeking whites. Since Nathan Harrison came as an enslaved person to California during the pre-Emancipation Gold Rush, this meant that he was not free. To make matters worse, some California slave owners—even if they did not come west for the Gold Rush—simply refused to liberate their slaves. It is worth noting that a majority of the 2,200 Blacks in California in 1852—when Harrison appeared on a census living in Northern California—were still enslaved.[12]

Myth #2: California was entirely pro-Union during the Civil War.

Have you ever wondered why there are many memorials to Southern rebels in Southern California? The region was a hotbed of secessionist activity during the Civil War (1861-65). Former slaveholders and their sympathizers held most of Southern California's elected offices, actively defied policies of the Lincoln administration, and even marched in support of the Confederacy. In fact, Judson Ames, editor of San Diego's local newspaper, *The Herald*, explicitly lobbied for California to be split into two during the 1860s, with the North being free and the South being a slave state. This bigoted legacy continued for decades as California refused to ratify the 14th and 15th Amendments to the US Constitution (citizenship and voting rights for African Americans) until 1959 and 1962, over ninety years after they were ratified nationally.

Myth #3: The late nineteenth century was a time of racial equality for California.

It is also worth noting that the last few decades of the nineteenth century—the famed Gilded Age—were a time of inequality and divisiveness in the United States. The American economy grew at its fastest rate ever, but with this hyper-focus on wealth building came rampant exploitation, highly unethical business practices, and an all-time low in post-Civil War race relations. Non-white groups faced frequent and widespread antagonism. For example, African Americans lost many rights, lived in fear as lynchings surged, and witnessed an unabashed rise in white supremacy. Nathan Harrison had to be constantly on guard; his world

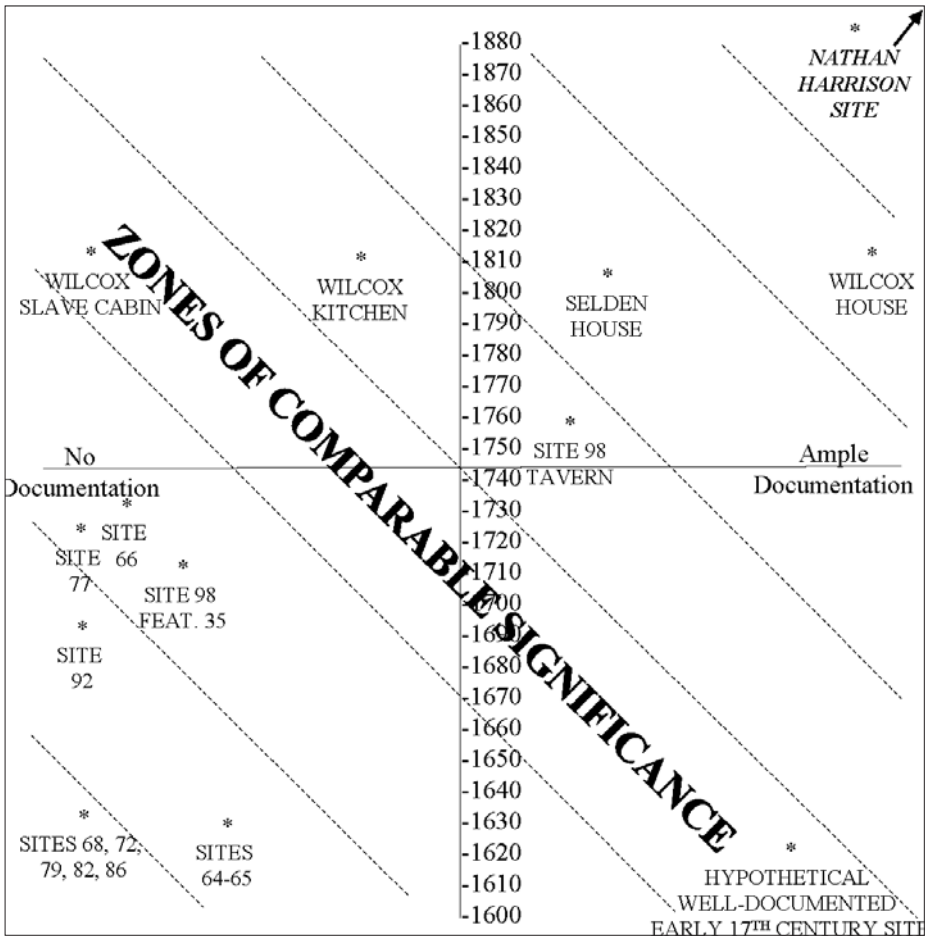


Figure 1. This figure is derived from James Deetz's 1993 "Site Significance Chart," which graded site significance at Virginia's Flowerdew Hundred on time and amount of relevant documentation; it would have placed the Nathan Harrison site in a significance zone that was so late and amply documented as to be comparable to no others. Do not let the placement at the top of the graph fool you; the implication is that the Harrison site would have been rated as of the most minimal significance possible. Figure courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

was full of scams, scoundrels, and sundown towns, which were municipalities that used intimidation and violence to forbid non-whites from being in the city limits after dark. Escondido, just 30 miles from his Palomar Mountain homestead, was one such sundown town.

These deeper appreciations of the volatility of nineteenth-century US history, which for us grew with our archaeological findings at the Harrison site, make it clear that this project is not about just one person. It is far broader than only Nathan Harrison's story. This work intersects with prominent issues of agency, identity, and community in the Old West and survival strategies employed to

navigate treacherous environs across the world and throughout time. It touches important and almost universal questions regarding struggles for human equality, examining past strategies for overcoming discrimination and concurrent risks for disempowered peoples seeking change.

I hope this volume and its companion monograph and exhibition offer great insight into local history and archaeology, but I also would like them to inspire self-reflection. Nathan Harrison's story has great potential to teach about past and present issues regarding identity, power, and permanence. Harrison was no Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and our work is not a celebration of one such person's extraordinary vision of change. Presenting Harrison's story is tricky and complex, especially at the centennial of his passing when we are to consider the past 100 years of race relations in San Diego and across the nation. Harrison was a survivor, a pioneer, and a self-effacing local celebrity. He carefully crafted different identities for the many communities he engaged. Throughout his life but particularly during his time in Southern California, Harrison was highly successful in making people—especially white people—feel comfortable, winning them over, and gaining their trust. He had to be; his life depended on it.

NOTES

1. Seth Mallios, *Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer:* Nathan "*Nate" Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020).

2. I acknowledge that it is difficult to assess Nathan Harrison's pursuit or attainment of happiness through any historical, archaeological, or anthropological lens. Furthermore, earlier versions of Thomas Jefferson's seminal declaration for the United States insisted on "life, liberty, and the pursuit of *public* happiness" (italics added). See Merrill D. Peterson, "Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue," *The Wilson Quarterly* (Autumn 1976): 108-125; Jon Meacham, *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power* (New York: Random House, 2012). Jefferson was not alluding to personal or private contentment. Drawing on the Aristotelian idea of *eudaimonia*, he pointed to happiness as mental pleasure through moral living within society. See Allen Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence: Origins, Philosophy, and Theology* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 136. As Gary Wills wrote in his 1978 book, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*, "When Jefferson spoke of pursuing happiness, he had nothing vague or private in mind. He meant a public happiness which is measurable; which is, indeed, the test and justification of any government." Gary Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978), 164. Fellow nation founder and active editor Benjamin Franklin responded to Jefferson's preliminary draft with the observation that it was implicit and common knowledge of the time that public happiness—i.e., virtuousness, generosity, and empathy toward fellow Americans—was happiness. Thus, Franklin convinced Jefferson that including the word "public" was redundant and cut it from The Declaration of Independence.

3. Mallios, *Born a Slave*; Seth Mallios and Jaime Lennox, "Nate Harrison as Person, Myth, and Legend: Archaeological History and the Apotheosis of a Nineteenth-Century African-American in San Diego County," *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage*, 3 no. 1 (2014): 51-80; Jaime Lennox, "Archaeological History: Seriation of Nate Harrison Narratives" (Master's thesis, San Diego State University, 2008).

4. Mallios, *Born a Slave*.
5. The San Diego Historical Society was the former name of the San Diego History Center.
6. Mallios and Lennox, "Nate Harrison as Person, Myth, and Legend."
7. Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nate Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2017 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2017); Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nate Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: Final Report for the 2004-13 Field Seas*ons (Decade I) (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2017); Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nathan Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2018 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2018); Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nathan Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2019 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2019).
8. Seth Mallios, "Scientific Excavations at Palomar Mountain's Nate Harrison Site: The Historical Archaeology of a Legendary African-American Pioneer" *The Journal of San Diego History* 55, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 141-60.
9. Gail Madyun and Larry Malone, "Black Pioneers in San Diego: 1880-1920," *The Journal of San Diego History* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1981): 91-114; Robert Lloyd Carlton, "Blacks in San Diego County, 1850-1900" (Master's thesis, San Diego State University, 1977), 50; William E. Smythe, *History of San Diego: 1542-1908* (San Diego: The History Company, 1908), 92. I am the first to admit that the depth and breadth of history can be overwhelming. It is difficult to sift through all that has happened before us and determine what should be remembered, discussed, and celebrated, even if it is just for a specific region like San Diego County. Even though I argue against an "earliest is best" mindset for historical archaeology, famous firsts are commonly used as anchors in time, and Harrison's story has many to offer. He was the region's first African American homesteader (1879). Furthermore, toward the end of his life he was widely hailed as San Diego's first permanent African American on the basis of his acceptance by the larger community. Nonetheless, it is important to note that Nathan Harrison was not the first Black person in the region. The list is long of Africans and African Americans that pre-dated Harrison in San Diego. It includes the descendants of enslaved Black people under Spanish conquistador Hernando Cortés who intermarried and assimilated into Mexican-Era California, sailor John Brown who deserted the *O'Cain* in 1804, and San Diego's unofficial postmaster Richard Freeman during the 1840s.
10. *Mallios, Born a Slave;* Mallios and Lennox, "Nate Harrison as Person, Myth, and Legend"; Lennox "Archaeological History: Seriation of Nate Harrison Narratives," 2008.
11. *Mallios, Born a Slave:* 18-21.
12. Mallios, *Born a Slave;* Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nathan Harrison Site 2018*. The October 14, 1852 California census for Santa Clara County, which stretched from the coast into motherlode country, included an entry for both Nathan Harrison and his enslaver, B. O. Harrison.

How Wild Was Nathan Harrison's Old West?: Murders and Mayhem in Late Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth- Century San Diego

Jaime Lennox and Seth Mallios

During the middle nineteenth century and into the early twentieth, exaggerated and romanticized tales abounded of the Old West and the apparent wildness of frontier life. These notions of the "Wild West" captured the collective imagination and, for many, popularly defined what it meant to be American. Indeed, the West came to symbolize something fundamental about the United States: the struggle between wilderness and civilization. Popular accounts of this struggle typically emphasized adaptation rather than Old World cultural inheritance as the defining element of the frontier experience.[1] With this sentiment as backdrop, it is not surprising that a sensationalized view of those associated with the American West grew over time. Celebrated images of gunslingers, bandits, lawlessness, and frontier justice persist to this day, and as such, cement the places and individuals of the Old West into a mythological realm of recollection.

This process of mythologizing the Old West played out in fascinating ways in the case of legendary African American pioneer Nathan Harrison and his Palomar Mountain home. During his time on and around Palomar Mountain, Harrison proved to be a fundamental figure in the community and eventually, a larger-than-life character in the recollections of the many visitors to his mountain property. For example, a wide variety of fantastical stories exaggerated his ubiquity at major regional events; he was seemingly and impossibly everywhere

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in Southern California history.[2] Despite the far-fetched nature of many of the accounts, Harrison's long life and extensive communal connections across the region resulted in him legitimately being a direct and indirect participant at certain historic events, effectively adding to his already legendary status. Two of these signature events were murders committed against prominent Palomar Mountain residents and the subsequent pursuits of justice.

Harrison's time in Southern California (circa 1865-1920) was bookended by these two crimes. In 1868, San Diego County pioneer and former sea captain Joseph Smith was killed at his Palomar Mountain home. In 1907, English storekeeper and skilled ethnographer Philip Sparkman was murdered at his store at the base of the mountain. Both men were killed under mysterious circumstances, and much debate ensued regarding the identity and motive of each of their assailants. Smith and Sparkman were friends and neighbors of Harrison. Furthermore, Harrison was a member of the vigilante posse that avenged Smith's death, and Sparkman's store was on land once homesteaded by Harrison.[3] This article examines these violent crimes and others in the contemporary region. It places them in the context of the laws of the time, general practices in law enforcement in rural California in the nineteenth century, and the public's overall fascination with stories of murder in the West, all of which further mythologize Harrison and Palomar Mountain as part of the imagined and romanticized "Wild West."

Frontier Justice and Vigilantism

While frontier settlements of the nineteenth century tended to have more raw violence than those of the earlier colonial period, the American West was not without law and order.[4] Since population increases were regularly coupled with the development of social institutions, such as schools and churches, there were often concurrent needs and demands for law enforcement.[5] In California, statehood in 1850 led to the emergence of official United States channels of law, law enforcement, and subsequent punishment. Simultaneously, the California Gold Rush brought a massive influx of settlers to mining camps, which were notorious for high crime rates. As such, there was also a need for a fast, community-based form of law enforcement, which ultimately took shape in vigilantism. Both of these systems of formal and informal justice tended to have similar outcomes in cases of murder: capital punishment.

In the United States, capital punishment has almost always been exercised at the state level.[6] According to sociologist David Garland, "The use and character of capital punishment are—and have always been—shaped by the structure of state institutions and the decisions of state officials acting in accordance with their perception of strategic governmental interests."[7] Since the death penalty verdict

has always been an exercise of state power, it can be seen as a radically local version of democracy.[8] The first session of the California legislature formally defined the crime of murder with the passage of the Criminal Practices Act of 1851, which also authorized legal executions. In the 1850s, the state ostensibly banned public executions, with protocol dictating that local sheriffs were to carry out executions discreetly, behind prison or jail walls. By 1891, California passed a statute requiring that future executions must take place at one of the two state prisons, either San Quentin or Folsom.[9] This practice of unobtrusive executions was not observed throughout California, especially in rural areas where a sheriff—not to mention a jail—was often not readily available. In scenarios such as these, whereby the community demanded immediate action (and punishment) for a capital crime, out-in-the-open vigilantism was regularly the solution.

From the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries, the United States had an estimated 300-500 vigilante groups, most of which lasted less than a year.[10] A vigilante was an individual who implemented personal justice in the absence of legal authority.[11] Vigilantism occurred when members undertook extralegal actions to "take the law into their own hands."[12] It invoked three components: 1) popular sovereignty, 2) the right of revolution, and 3) the law of self-preservation.[13] Even though vigilantism was a violation of the formal legal code, vigilantes did not think of themselves as defying the law but as fulfilling it.[14]

Vigilante groups were typically comprised of individuals from a given community who worked cohesively and ultimately dispensed justice as they saw fit. Sometimes they had trials, heard witnesses, and reached verdicts, but it is worth noting that there were remarkably few acquittals.[15] During the Gold Rush, vigilantism had effectively replaced institutionalized justice through swift decision-making and immediate executions outside the purview of organized law.[16] An overall trend in the history of criminal justice in the United States during this time was the shift from private to public, and from lay to professional.[17] In California this private, lay phase of criminal justice took the form of vigilantism. It was present before statehood and pre-dated more public and professional forms of justice that became the norm in the twentieth century. Nonetheless, vigilantism in California continued well into the late nineteenth century.

According to historical records, vigilantism began in California during the Mexican period in Los Angeles in 1836.[18] However, the most famous cases of vigilantism came decades later from San Francisco's "vigilance committees" of the 1850s, which helped to popularize the term "vigilante." For example, the 1851 vigilance committee enacted a local brand of justice when the general public believed that official channels had failed them. Likewise, the 1856 vigilance committee was a massive, 6,000 person-strong group that sought not only to put

a stop to frontier lawlessness but also to attack rampant political corruption.[19] Both committees garnered widespread media coverage though they were relatively short lived, each lasting approximately one month.[20]

During the mid-nineteenth century, public fascination with capital punishment cases in the Old West grew. With recently honed skills from covering the Civil War, media correspondents were eager to oblige the public's new and constant demand for stories from the frontier.[21] As historian Susan Sanchez-Barnett noted:

> …the notoriety of capital punishment cases fascinated the public, with increasing newspaper coverage of murders and subsequent trials. The public were active observers of the final verdict and sometimes the executions…[W]ith some infamous personalities emblazoned in the press, the public became overly active in the process.[22]

Ironically, just as public fascination with violence in the Old West surged, there was an overall downward trend in homicide rates in California from the 1850s through the 1900s. San Diego, in particular, reached its low for homicide rates: eighteen per 100,000 by the 1890s.[23]

Vigilante movements in California during the Gold Rush and beyond fit neatly into an already romanticized image of the Old West. This fabricated notion of local pioneers taming the landscape played directly into the collective imagination of a lawless "Wild West." Sensational media coverage of crimes and localized justice via vigilantism combined with the public's interest created an environment ripe for myth-making, a trend that continues to this day. In the nineteenth century, it was with books and newspapers; a century later, it was television and movies. Popular American mythology is full of Dodge Cities, Wyatt Earps, and Billy the Kids, all contributing to the portrayal of a raw and lawless "Wild West" frontier.[24]

Despite dropping murder rates in the region, Nathan Harrison came in direct contact with high-profile killings and vigilante justice in the late nineteenth century. In fact, northern San Diego County's Palomar Mountain has a colorful folklore that fits seamlessly into the "Wild West" paradigm. For example, local Abel Davis described the area in the mid-1800s as "a refuge for outlaws."[25] Palomar Mountain was (and still is) a rural community. In the nineteenth century, the combination of a sudden influx of a transient, ethnically diverse, and mostly single male population and limited formalized law enforcement likely contributed to crime.[26]

The Murder of Joseph Smith

Beloved Palomar Mountain resident Joseph Smith was murdered in 1868.[27] A well-known local pioneer, Smith oversaw roads traveled by the Butterfield Stagecoach Line, thus helping open Palomar Mountain to settlers from the United States.[28] Smith was a successful businessman with a spacious adobe house that was a common site for lavish parties. He picked up a drifter on the road to Temecula in 1860, was enthralled with the young man's backstory as a deserter from a British ship in San Diego harbor, and hired him as a ranch foreman. Soon after, the man killed Smith. Many motives have been suggested, including a fight over Smith's indigenous wife, a desire to steal Smith's purported hidden stash of gold, or simply a drunken argument. However, none was corroborated by anyone close to the scene of the crime. In 1932, Palomar local Edward H. Davis, who would have been six years old at the time of the murder, gave the most detailed account of the nefarious 1868 incident:

> During the war (civil) deserters began to come into the Mts. And one came from Arizona and went to Palomar and lived with [Joseph] Smith for a while…This deserter got Smith's gun and shot him at a work bench in back of his house. The man thought [Smith] had money hidden away and searched but did not find any. He then went to La Joya and told the Ind. Woman [Smith's wife]. Smith was dead and

Joseph Smith's Palomar Mountain home, the location of his murder, nd. Photo courtesy Escondido History Center.

Warner Ranch store, where Smith's murderer was tried by jury and subsequently was hanged nearby, April 1911 (SDHC #5965).

> returned with her to the Smith house. The day Smith was killed[,] Bill Place came to Smith's and found his body shot[,] and when his murderer came back they arrested him and took him down to the Warner ranch store and called a jury together for trial. On this jury were the Helms, Andrew Linton, Bill Place, Old Nate [Harrison] and other old timers. He was found guilty and sentenced. That night he was chained to the wheel of a big freight wagon with an iron ring locked about his neck. The next morning he was hanged to the tree on hill back of the old Wilson house in Warner Ranch.[29]

In this particular case, Harrison's participation in vigilante justice was partially the result of "relational distance" whereby the degree to which people engage in one another's lives was measured by variables such as the number of ties between two people, the duration of contact, or the age and nature of their relationship.[30] With vigilantism, the closer the relational distance to the victim, the greater the likelihood of action taken and the severity of the punishment. Harrison's friendship with Smith and status as a fellow Palomar Mountain resident enabled him to be part of this case of localized and popular justice. The saga of Smith's murder contained key components of what was reported, celebrated, and mythologized about the Wild West, including a brutal crime by a treacherous outlaw and equally fierce and immediate vigilante justice by a heroic community. Although relatively few sources exist, the local recollections of Smith's murder alone served as a powerful tool in the myth-making of Harrison as part of Palomar Mountain's Wild West.

The Murder of Philip Sparkman

On the contrary, the 1907 murder of Philip Sparkman—nearly four decades later—exemplified how far San Diego County had come in terms of public and professional justice. Though including some of the same people and occurring within a few miles of each other, these two murders and their perpetrators were handled far differently. Whereas the killing of Joseph Smith is a story that is central, even to this day, to San Diego's Wild West mythology and present in every Palomar Mountain history, the saga of Sparkman's demise disappeared quickly from public consciousness and is rarely evoked.

Philip Stedman Sparkman, c. 1885 (SDHC # 91_18597).

Philip Sparkman was a well-known storekeeper, ethnographer, and highly regarded member of nearby white and Indian communities. He often engaged with the indigenous population and had homesteaded land on the edge of the Rincon Reservation once belonging to Harrison. In fact, for an extended period, Sparkman fronted money to pay Harrison's property taxes.[31] Sparkman was found dead with two gunshot wounds and his throat slashed. Blood was found both inside his store and outside where his body lay, suggesting a prolonged and violent struggle. There was debate as to the identity of the assailant. On the one hand, stories immediately began to circulate that Sparkman had been killed by "a drunken Indian" who was part of Sparkman's local community.[32] This conclusion was undermined by the findings of the coroner's jury, which ultimately concluded Sparkman had died from wounds "inflicted by parties unknown."[33]

News of Sparkman's murder spread quickly throughout the region. Almost immediately after Sparkman's body was found, San Diego County Sheriff Fred Jennings identified Rincon Reservation resident Francisco Calac as the lone suspect. Local Louis Salmons recollected:

> Fred Jennings was sheriff, and he was standing around with his hands in his vest, smoking a cigar you know, and bigger than anything. There was something happened that he thought he'd

Sparkman's store, nd. SDHC Photograph Collection.

> get a lot of notoriety out of it. Frank Jennings, his brother was a fine man. I know them both. Well, Fred was standing there, so we were talking, and he had an Indian there that had worked for me. I'd known him. He lived there on Rincon. He's worked for me there often. His name was (Francisco) Calac. Fred Jennings said he had him, and take him down for killing Sparkman. "Why?" I said, "Calac didn't kill Sparkman, Fred."[34]

What led Jennings to the conclusion Calac was responsible for Sparkman's murder? Perhaps Salmons's assertion that Jennings wanted to make a name for himself was correct. According to the Sheriff's Museum in Old Town San Diego, Fred Jennings was the eighteenth sheriff of San Diego County; his brother Frank preceded Fred as the sixteenth sheriff of the county, serving from 1895 to 1902.[35] Fred took over as sheriff in 1907 and served until 1914.[36] Arguably, a high profile case such as Sparkman's murder would have certainly aided Fred Jennings in making a prominent name for himself if, during his first year as sheriff, he was able to solve the crime and catch the murderer.

Sheriff Fred Jennings was unfazed by Salmons's unwavering declaration regarding Calac's innocence. He curtly responded, "I've got enough evidence on Calac there to hang him," and proceeded to arrest Calac and bring him to San Diego shortly after Sparkman's body was found in May of 1907.[37] Calac spent approximately two weeks in jail before his first court appearance took place on June 8, 1907; it resulted in the scheduling of his preliminary hearing.[38] Shortly before this hearing, however, a first examination of Calac's mental stability took

place on June 18, as his sanity had come into question while he awaited trial.[39] *The San Diego Union* went so far as to deem Calac a "raving maniac."[40]

At the preliminary hearing on June 19, 1907, the charge of murder was sustained against Calac due exclusively to circumstantial evidence. Sheriff Jennings was the prosecution's star witness. He provided shoes allegedly worn by Calac during the murder and shells from Calac's shotgun, which purportedly matched those found at the crime scene. Furthermore, he related first-hand knowledge that Calac, known as "the poorest Indian in the whole reservation," purchased meat from a local butcher and asked to change a ten-dollar bill after the killing occurred.[41] After the murder charge was upheld at the preliminary hearing, Calac pled not guilty during arraignment on July 23.[42]

Calac next appeared in court on August 8, 1907. The judge had ruled that given the question of Calac's mental stability, a trial by jury was necessary in order to determine whether he was fit to stand trial for the murder.[43] By the time of this court appearance, the case had amassed widespread news coverage, with media outlets as far away as Oregon covering the trial. The focus of the case was not on whether Calac had murdered Sparkman but exclusively on his sanity. On August 12, the jury found Calac to be insane and ordered him institutionalized until deemed sane enough to be tried for Sparkman's murder.[44]

The court ordered Calac to be committed to the Highland Insane Asylum (renamed Patton State Hospital in the 1920s) located in San Bernardino, California. Calac remained in the institution from 1907 to the mid-1920s. The 1910 and 1920

Sparkman's home, nd. In various accounts, locals surmised Sparkman was in his home, directly behind his store and was summoned by the murderer to the store where the initial attack appeared to have taken place. SDHC Photograph Collection.

Highland Insane Asylum (later Patton State Hospital), c. 1900. Photo courtesy University of Southern California Libraries and California Historical Society.

United States censuses reported Calac as "patient" and "inmate" respectively at the hospital. The Indian Census Rolls—kept specifically for reservations from 1885 to 1940 to record by jurisdiction rather than by who was physically present on the reservation—supplemented recordings of Calac's whereabouts, reporting him as in the institution from 1907 to the 1920s.[45] For Calac, this meant he was listed alongside the rest of his family still living in the Rincon Reservation though he was not physically living within the family household; instead, a note was placed next to his name. Through 1922, the rolls simply noted Calac as "in asylum." Beyond 1922, however, the notes changed. The 1923 roll noted Calac as "said to be in asylum" and the 1925-1927 rolls questioned, "in insane asylum?" By 1928, no further notes were placed next to Calac's name, suggesting he was no longer housed within the hospital. This was corroborated by the 1930 federal census, which listed Calac as living in Rincon with his family as the head of the household.

The exact date and nature of Calac's release are not known. While it was widely reported upon Calac's sentencing in 1907 that he would stand trial for Sparkman's murder upon regaining his sanity, there are no records of a subsequent trial to determine Calac's guilt or innocence. With regard to Calac's time at the Highland Insane Asylum/Patton State Hospital, Louis Salmons recalled that Calac "used to run off, and come home. They'd come down and get him two or three times, think they got tired of that, and said, 'Let him alone.'"[46] Whether this informal policy ultimately ensured Calac's permanent release remains in question.

Other factors of Calac's release could relate to the fact that an earthquake

in July of 1923 damaged buildings at the hospital severely enough to force the relocation of a number of patients.[47] Additionally, Patton State Hospital reported a drastic decrease in the number of patients it housed during the late 1920s. Perhaps Calac's departure, sanctioned or not, was part of this larger trend.[48] Although it is not known if Calac was among the groups of patients relating to these events, the timing aligns with the change in Calac's recordings in the Indian Census Rolls during the mid-1920s. Salmons estimated that Calac was institutionalized until approximately 1925.[49] Regardless of exactly when and how he left Patton State Hospital, Francisco Calac lived at Rincon until his death in 1944 without further incident. Though the court in August 1907 ordered Calac to stand trial once mentally capable, he never did. Since no other suspects were arrested, this case technically remains unresolved.

At face value, the Sparkman case clearly did not resemble typical frontier justice and vigilantism. Rather than a quick local trial with a hasty and brutal sentence, the litigation rambled for months, the consequences involved different jurisdictions, and a sentence was never delivered. Whereas lay people controlled the consequences of the Smith murder and swiftly avenged his death, professional lawyers, judges, juries, and even medical specialists weighed in on the Sparkman case, prolonging judgment for decades without resolution.[50] Despite these more formalized legal factors, this case still seemed to have some lingering characteristics from the Old West, especially in the way Calac ultimately evaded execution in the safety of his community. If, as Salmons had insisted, the original murder charge was clearly unfounded, then perhaps the surrounding community did indeed employ a nuanced type of frontier justice by ignoring the verdict and refusing to carry out the sentence.

Nathan Harrison's time in Southern California was bounded by these two cases, which emphasized pronounced differences in Old West justice between the middle of the nineteenth century and the turn of the twentieth. The murder of Joseph Smith became inseparable from local lore. Its themes of frontier justice and vigilantism fulfilled popular expectations and enthralled audiences.[51] All the hallmarks of vigilantism were met with the capture, trial, and punishment of Smith's murderer, with the distinction that an African American community member participated in an exercise typically involving only white participants. Conversely, the saga of Francisco Calac did not fit into this genre and was never included in popular narratives of San Diego County's Wild West. The initial formalized pursuit of justice in Calac's case may have resulted from San Diego County's mid-nineteenth-century history of relatively common interracial violence between white males and Indian males, though the ultimate "justice" potentially came from a community-based understanding of the crime and the accused.[52]

Our research on the Nathan Harrison Historical Archaeology Project has emphasized that the Harrison biography was and is a complex and continually changing construction. The narratives of Harrison over the past century are telling in terms of both their contents and their omissions: what was remembered is as important as what was forgotten. This phenomenon transcended Harrison and was at play in regional history as well. It is remarkable that collective nostalgia in the celebration of how Joseph Smith's death was avenged occurred at precisely the same time that a social amnesia swept the local community with regard to Francisco Calac's apparent murder of Philip Sparkman.

NOTES

1. William H. Katerberg, "A Northern Vision: Frontiers and the West in the Canadian and American Imagination," *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 33, no. 4: 545-48.
2. Seth Mallios, *Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer: Nathan "Nate" Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020); Seth Mallios and Jaime Lennox, "Nate Harrison as Person, Myth, and Legend: Archaeological History and the Apotheosis of a Nineteenth-Century African American in San Diego County," *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 3, no. 1: 51-80.
3. Mallios, *Born a Slave*.
4. Lawrence M. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment in American History* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
5. Steven Lubet, "Law and Popular Culture: Slap Leather! Legal Culture, Wild Bill Hickok, and the Gunslinger Myth," *UCLA Law Review* 48 (2001): 1548.
6. Paul Marcus, "Capital Punishment in the United States and Beyond." *Melbourne University Law Review* 31 (2007): 838.
7. David Garland, *Peculiar Institution: America's Death Penalty in an Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 128.
8. Ibid., 127, 309.
9. Susan Sanchez-Barnett, "The Death Penalty in California 1857-1970," in *Invitation to an Execution: A History of the Death Penalty in the United States*, ed. Gordon Morris Bakken (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010) 413-416.
10. Roberta Senchal de la Roche, "Collective Violence as Social Control," *Sociological Forum* 11, no. 1 (1996), 118.
11. Mary Marki and Christopher Clayton Smith, "Vigilantism during the Gold Rush," in *Invitation to an Execution*, 403.
12. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment*, 179.
13. Burrows, *Vigilante!* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 17.
14. Ibid., 7; Friedman, *Crime and Punishment,* 182.
15. Friedman , *Crime and Punishment,* 182.
16. Sanchez-Barnett, "Death Penalty," 413.
17. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment*, 174.

18. Marki and Smith, "Vigilantism," 403.
19. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment,* 180-82.
20. Ibid.
21. Lubet, "Law and Popular Culture," 1547.
22. Sanchez-Barnett, "Death Penalty," 416.
23. Clare V. McKanna, "Enclaves of Violence in Nineteenth-Century California," *Pacific Historical Review* 73, no. 4 (2004), 399.
24. Friedman, *Crime and Punishment,* 176.
25. Abel Davis, *The Memoirs of Abel M. Davis* (self-published, c. 1955), 63.
26. McKanna, "Enclaves," 394.
27. Mallios, *Born a Slave*. While it might seem hyperbolic to refer to Smith as "beloved," residents re-named Palomar Mountain as "Smith Mountain" after his passing. This moniker lasted for over three decades before reverting to "Palomar Mountain" in 1901.
28. Ibid.
29. Edward H. Davis, "32-B Nate Harrison, Joshua Smith, Bill Nelson/Image Ceremony at Palm Springs/Personalities/Palomar 1932." Edward H. Davis Collection, MS 75, San Diego History Center Document Collection, San Diego, CA, Notebook 32B.
30. Senchal de la Roche, "Collective Violence," 107.
31. Mallios, *Born a Slave*.
32. Richard W. Crawford, *Stranger Than Fiction: Vignettes of San Diego History* (San Diego: San Diego Historical Society, 1995), 50; Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide,* 1846-1873 (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2012); McKanna, "Enclaves." The racist phrase "drunken Indian" was often employed to further white genocidal agendas in the Old West. If one can get past the offensiveness of this term, it is worth noting important contextual information. San Diego County differed from the rest of California due to its relatively high number of Indian lands. By the late nineteenth century, decades of land disputes and abuses by white settlers created an atmosphere of tension in the region. Homicide data from the late 1800s suggest that interracial homicides in rural San Diego committed between Indian males and white males were relatively common, and alcohol was typically a factor. This may be the reason why the idea that a "drunken Indian" committed the murder persisted, though Sparkman was known to be friendly and often engaged with the local indigenous groups.
33. Crawford, *Stranger Than Fiction,* 50; Mallios, *Born a Slave*.
34. Gordon Johnson, "The Death of Philip Sparkman," The *Californian*, September 29, 1991.
35. "The Museum," Sheriff's Museum Old Town San Diego, accessed December 13, 2019, http://sheriffsmuseum.org/sheriffsmuseum-san-diego/.
36. Ibid.
37. "Cruel Villain Killed Friend of Indians," *Escondido Times-Advocate,* April 13, 1969.
38. "Calac will have Hearing on June 19," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, June 8, 1907.
39. "Man Accused of Murder is Raving Maniac," *The San Diego Union*, June 18, 1907.
40. Ibid.
41. Murder Charge is Sustained against Indian," *The San Diego Union*, June 20, 1907.
42. "Alleged Slayer Says Not Guilty," *The San Diego Union,* July 24, 1907.
43. "Jury Will Try Calac's Sanity," *The San Diego Union*, August 10, 1907.

44. "Jury Says Calac Shows Insanity," *The San Diego Union,* August 13, 1907.
45. "Indian Census Rolls, 1885 1940." US National Archives and Records Administration, accessed December 16, 2019, https://www.archives.gov/research/census/native-americans/1885-1940.html.
46. "Cruel Villain Killed Friend of Indians," *Escondido Times-Advocate*, April 13, 1969.
47. "Insane Patients Removed," *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1923.
48. "State's Wards Show Increase," *Los Angeles Times*, April 27, 1927. While the number of patients was increasing significantly at mental institutions across the state, Patton was one of the few that saw declining enrollments.
49. Johnson, "Death of Sparkman."
50. Crawford, Stranger, 52-53. There were other Southern California murder cases in the late nineteenth century that involved trials and acquittals, but these were typified by wealthy white settlers taking advantage of legal loopholes. For example, the Couts family, one ofthe richest groups in the region, managed to get away with murder—twice. The Couts andAlvarado families had a memorable showdown in 1863. When a smallpox epidemic ravaged Rancho Monserate, the deaths included the owner of the rancho, Ysidro Alvarado, his wife, and nearly two dozen of its laborers. Cave Couts owned the grounds of Mission San Luis Rey at the time and prohibited any new burials because of the threat of spreading the disease. However, Ysidro's dying wish was to be interred in the mission graveyard. Tomas, Ysidro's son and the heir to the eastern third of Rancho Monserate, attempted to honor his father's final request, but just as the burial party lowered Ysidro's casket in the ground at Mission San Luis Rey, William Blount Couts, Cave's brother, interrupted the funeral with the shout, "Como diputado del Sherif del condado, no es permitido que este Señor se entierra aqui" ("As deputy of the sheriff of the county, I declare that it is not permitted to bury this man here"). Couts, backed by two of his men, aimed a shotgun at the Alvarados and their fellow mourners. One of the people in this group, Leon Vasquez, picked up a shovel and charged at Couts, who immediately shot him in the face. Vasquez died from the shotgun wounds. William Blount Couts was charged with murder, but ultimately the charges were dropped because of "paperwork technicalities." Cave Couts was unapologetic for his brother's actions, stating, "In avoiding the loathsome disease now infesting our community, we have had to resort to arms, resulting in the killing of one man [Vasquez, who was…] not worth noticing […because of his] bad character." Cave Couts himself would get away with murdering Juan Mendoza two years later in 1865. The circumstances again involved a Couts using a shotgun to kill an unarmed Mexican man.
51. At the same time in the early 1900s that Harrison entertained hundreds of visitors traveling up Palomar Mountain with stories of the Old West, the rustic backdrop caught the eye of Hollywood's elite moviemakers as well. In 1914, legendary film director Cecil B. DeMille decided to shoot part of his silent movie, *The Virginian*, atop Palomar Mountain. Based on the bestselling 1902 Western novel by Owen Wister and an equally successful follow-up play, DeMille's *Virginian* was a critically acclaimed blockbuster hit. Various scenes from the movie used the Bailey Resort at the top of Palomar Mountain, and especially the iconic hand-hewn Bailey Barn, as part of the backdrop. Clearly, even as the region was no longer the Old West in the 1910s, it was still being used as a vehicle to perpetuate the public's romance with the American frontier.
52. McKanna, "Enclaves," 412-418. California Indians significantly outnumbered whites in San Diego County during the mid-1800s. During this time, violence committed against white males by American Indian males was common, especially in well-documented cases in the 1870s. However, the trend in homicides shifted with changes in the population. By the 1880s, various factors dramatically altered the region's demography. With a surge in white immigrants and formal indigenous relocation through the reservation system, whites quickly outnumbered California Indians in the county. While violence committed against whites by American Indians rapidly diminished, violence committed against Indians by whites persisted.

Historical Photography and its Impacts on the Life and Legends of Nathan Harrison

Ryan Anderson and Seth Mallios

Introduction: Free Man on the Mountain

Look closely. It's a photograph of an African American man, taken around 1910, in San Diego County, California (photo next page). He is facing the camera directly. The man squints as the shutter snaps, his hands folded over one another atop a long walking stick. The image was taken with a view camera on a tripod, which means this moment was not spontaneous. Such images take time. The man certainly had to wait while the photographer—in this case an individual named Robert H. Asher—set up the camera, focused, closed the shutter, inserted the film holder, pulled the dark slide…and finally fired the shutter to expose the film. There is an element of time in this image that goes beyond the fraction of a second that the aperture opened to allow light to hit the film. Such details are telling.

The man is standing in the mottled shade of a tree, located near a natural spring at his homestead on Palomar Mountain. He is wearing a wide-brimmed hat, a striped long-sleeved shirt, long pants with holes at the knees, and boots. He has a long, white beard. The look on his face is confident, comfortable, and perhaps contemplative. He does not appear coerced or hurried. These details are suggestive of the relationship he may have had with the person behind the camera. The man in this photograph was a formerly enslaved person who came out west with his owner, attained freedom, and lived out the remainder of his life in a one-room cabin he built on the western face of this mountain.[1] His name was Nathan Harrison.

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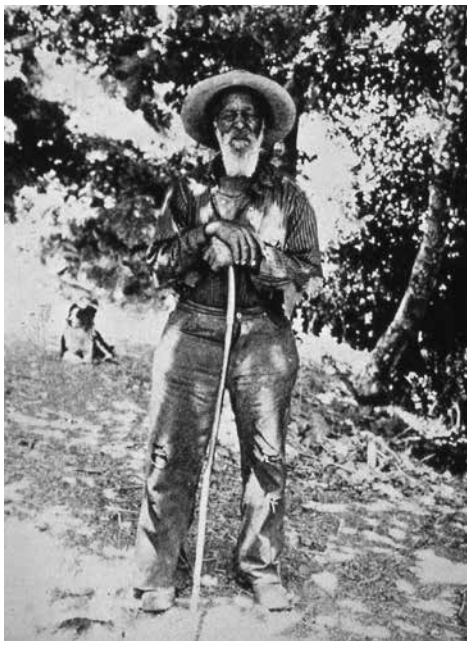
In many senses, at that moment in United States history, Harrison should not have been there. At least, many around the country would not have wanted or accepted him there—not as a free, landowning, formerly enslaved man. This was the nadir of the Jim Crow era of the American South, which pushed many African American migrants—or perhaps more accurately, refugees—out west to places like California. The Golden State, however, was no idyllic respite from violence fueled by bigotry and racism. And yet, there was Nathan Harrison, living as a free man in the southwest corner of the state. How did this happen? And what does it mean to see these images of a free Black man, homesteading in the early twentieth-century California wilderness?



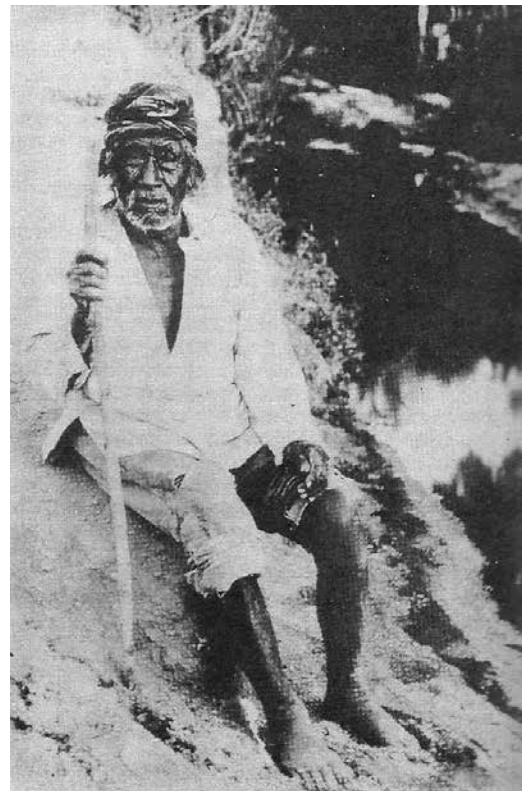
Nathan Harrison, photographed by Robert H. Asher, c. 1910. Photo courtesy Kirby Collection, Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

The fact that Harrison chose to live alone on a forested mountainside is particularly noteworthy, especially considering that for many formerly enslaved people, American wildlands were anything but places of refuge, respite, and peace.[2] As lynching photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remind us, forests and rural areas were often places of terror and fear. Despite this, Harrison persisted on his mountain homestead for decades. His presence, perhaps ironically, attracted numerous visitors, predominantly white, who ventured to his mountain home. And when they came, many took photographs, leaving a unique, complicated record behind. This article examines the story of Nathan Harrison through a discussion of how these photographs fit within a broader context of racialized and racist imagery of African Americans that pervaded American life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We argue for a new interpretation of Harrison's life and legacy through a reconsideration of the subtle, yet disarmingly powerful, photographic record of his home life on a California mountain.

Photographing Nathan Harrison

An undeniable part of Harrison's legacy stems from the numerous photographs taken of him by visitors to his Palomar property. We have compiled thirty-one

images, almost all shot at different times, but even more may exist. The photographs we examine for this article have appeared in other project publications.[3] Harrison might have been the most photographed San Diegan of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[4] This is remarkable, especially considering the political and racial context of the time and the fact that he lived so far away from the urban center of San Diego. Harrison was photographed far more than any other local legends that lived in San Diego, including famed Kansas lawman Wyatt Earp who arrived in booming San Diego in the 1880s, celebrated American booster Alonzo Horton who laid claim to the title of Father of the City of San Diego, and many others. Somehow, this non-wealthy, non-white, non-San Diegan became a regional photographic and touristic obsession.



Unidentified man, likely Yellow Sky, incorrectly identified as Nathan Harrison, nd. Despite the confident attribution by Abel Davis regarding the identity of the man in this photograph, featured in The Memoirs of Abel M. Davis, *it is not Nathan Harrison. Courtesy Abel Davis.*

So celebrated were the images of Harrison that they seemed to take on a life of their own. For example, when Palomar Mountain residents were raising money to build a memorial in Harrison's honor following his 1920 passing, they offered copies of photographs of Harrison as gratitude for donations. In addition, when inventorying and studying the many images of Harrison, we encountered one image published as Palomar's Nathan Harrison that was, in fact, someone else. Abel Davis's circa 1955 memoirs contained an image attributed as Nathan Harrison that was most likely the indigenous Kumeyaay sage and healer Wa Amaay Kwakas, known widely as "Yellow Sky."[5] Clearly, the Harrison photograph collection continued to remain in circulation well after his death and included, at times, images that were not even him.

Harrison's popularity coincided with the rise of the camera as a more widely available and increasingly powerful medium of communication and

documentation. Most professional photographers at the turn of the century were using view cameras, although smaller and more portable cameras such as the Graflex SLR (first produced in the late 1890s) allowed for more flexibility. During the early decades of the twentieth century, photography began a slow transformation from an endeavor of a select few to a tool of the masses. Harrison's later years on the mountain were concurrent with the transition from bulky, fragile, and inflexible equipment to smaller, more portable cameras—including mail-in point-and-shoot cameras.

Most of the images of Nathan Harrison were made by either Edward H. Davis or Robert Asher. Both used view cameras for their work and were celebrated naturalists and ethnographic photographers, but Davis, in particular, has been roundly criticized for stereotyping and manipulating his photographic subjects to "tantalize and titillate white audiences."[6] Overall, the photographs themselves are remarkably consistent. They depict an aged Harrison, standing at his mountain property, clad in multiple layers of well-worn clothing, accompanied by one or more of his favorite objects: his wide-brimmed hat, pipe, watch, walking stick, or dog. In most of the photographs, he is looking directly at the camera with neither smile nor frown. In each case, Harrison is undeniably a focal point of the image. Some focus only on him, while others also highlight his living spaces or other people posing with him.

These photographs offer us numerous opportunities for insight, as there were multiple material one-to-one correspondences between items in the historical images—the cabin itself, smoking pipes, watch fob, boots, etc.—and the features and excavated artifacts. We even found a lens from one of the original Brownie cameras at the site. Yet beyond this sort of materialist corroboration of existence, what do these images tell us?

Historical photographs have long been a cornerstone of substantiating existence and constructing knowledge about the past. In their most basic form, photographs freeze a moment in time. As the French philosopher and literary critic Roland Barthes once wrote, "Every photograph is a certificate of presence."[7] Such images verify that what the photographer saw within the frame existed, and that the subjects and imagery captured by film were indeed real. As building blocks of the actual past, these images often facilitate the narrative process. Acclaimed visual artist Susan Sontag asserted that, "Photography is an instrument for knowing things."[8]

Historical archaeologists traditionally treated paintings and photographs as literal clues for researching the past. Ivor Noël Hume, for example, employed seventeenth-century Dutch genre paintings to capture everyday artifact parallels with material finds from the seventeenth-century Chesapeake.[9] Likewise, James Deetz used an old photograph to compare archaeological landscapes at Flowerdew

Hundred in Virginia. Drawing on ideas developed by his friend and colleague Gene Prince, Deetz lined up a nineteenth-century photograph of Grant's Crossing, a Civil War pontoon bridge across the James River, with a modern image of the current landscape.[10] This technique employed a literal one-to-one correspondence between the past and the present. However, Deetz made no mention of the agenda or intent of the photographer, awareness of an audience, or the subtleties of framing, lens selection, film choice and processing. What was missing, then, was a discussion of the contingencies of the photographic process, and how such contingencies can complicate the historical meaning of photographs. The singularity and stasis of this kind of methodology folded easily into mono-perspective, truth-based interpretations of the past.

The images of Nathan Harrison do indeed confirm aspects of his life, but there is more to see and think about here. These photographs were produced within a wider context of socio-political relationships and processes of representation in which African Americans were often depicted in extremely negative and discriminatory terms. The media landscape of that time was flooded with racist, derogatory, and dehumanizing imagery.[11] In light of this, these images of Nathan Harrison stand out rather starkly. While there were efforts to challenge representations of African Americans at the turn of the twentieth century (the photographic exhibitions of W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, for example), images of free Black landowners such as Harrison were rare.[12]

Photographs, Representation, and African Americans

Nathan Harrison lived in Southern California in the years following the Civil War, during Reconstruction, through the backlash of the "Redemption" and the beginning of the Jim Crow South. During this time, hopes for African American political and social empowerment, which flourished very briefly just after Emancipation, were stridently attacked and undermined by widespread political, legal, and social forces.[13] Images played an important role in this process of disenfranchisement and disempowerment. In fact, there was a deluge of racist imagery that stereotyped and demeaned African Americans, with the peak years of this phenomenon reached between 1880 and 1920.[14] Many of these images were in the form of popular postcards.[15] These pictures ranged from racist, derogatory depictions of African Americans to brutal images of lynchings. One infamous postcard from 1908, which depicted five African American lynching victims alongside the white supremacist poem "The Dogwood Tree," demonstrates the violence, terror, and racism of this imagery.[16]

Author and activist bell hooks reminds us that the entire process of representation is an ongoing struggle. She explains that, "The history of black

liberation movements in the United States could be characterized as a struggle over images as much as it has been a struggle for rights, for equal access." [17] Ubiquitous racist imagery from the late 1800s through the middle 1900s helped to undermine African Americans' position within American society by justifying and normalizing Black inequality. "Before racial integration," hooks explained, "there was a constant struggle on the part of black folks to create a counter-hegemonic world of images that would stand as visual resistance, challenging racist images."[18] As mentioned previously, the photographic projects of W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, who both used photography to combat racist depictions of African Americans, were part of this struggle.[19]

Where can we place Nathan Harrison within this all of this? Unlike W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, Harrison had obviously not embarked on a formal and explicit crusade to counter the stream of racist imagery that was rampant in the United States. But perhaps he was engaged in his own form of resistance, in his own way, through daily interactions with visitors and neighbors on that California mountaintop. Harrison was clearly aware of, and affected by, the larger racial climate of the United States. The discrimination, violence, and racism of American life was not limited to the Jim Crow South—it also engulfed the American West, including Southern California. One of Harrison's neighbors, Louis Salmons, for example, affirmed that Harrison told him that he never slept overnight in Los Angeles because "they was killing people every night" out of racial animosity.[20]

By the 1870s, when Harrison was well-established on Palomar Mountain, there were approximately seventeen African Americans in San Diego County.[21] Harrison, like many other African Americans in the county, chose to live far away from urban areas.[22] This may have been part of a deliberate strategy to both build a new life and avoid racism, discrimination, and violence. What he participated in—or permitted—was the documentation of his everyday life. His was a quotidian project, born of everyday decisions, negotiations, and relationships. We see where he lived, what he did, and who he was through these fragmented images. But we also see hints of his relationships with the people who came to see him.

Relationships, Representations, and Performances

Both W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington—along with others—realized the potential for the camera to become, as bell hooks put it, a "central instrument by which Black could disprove representations of us created by white folks."[23] The production of racist imagery was dominated by larger white society—whether through popular, commercial, or academic discourses. The images of Harrison were largely produced by white friends, such as Asher and Davis, acquaintances,

or other visitors to his property. Harrison was not directly in control of the photographic process. This brings up questions about the relationship between Harrison and these photographers, particularly about who had the power to control the process of image production. Was Harrison merely a subject waiting to be documented, defined, and categorized?

Here Harrison's relationship with Davis and Asher bears some comparison with the case of Ishi and the American anthropologist Alfred L. Kroeber. Kroeber, a student of Franz Boas, was a central figure in American anthropology during the early- to mid-twentieth century. In 1914, Kroeber traveled with Ishi, the last known indigenous Yahi, to his homeland in northern California to document his people's vanished customs.[24] Kroeber made about 150 5" x 7" negatives on this trip.[25] While Kroeber normally did not stage his subjects in aboriginal attire, in this case he did. Throughout this series, Ishi appears dressed in a way that he likely never did. What is difficult to know is to what extent Ishi was able to direct this process in which he came to represent visually a "lost way of life" through photographic images. Arguably, Robert Asher and Edward Davis's relationship with Nathan Harrison had similar complications and power dynamics. Like Kroeber, they participated in the documentation of a unique individual with an unquestionably ambiguous social status in twentieth-century America. The photographs of Harrison—and Ishi—can be understood within the wider, socially-fraught moment of that time, in which photography played a key role in shaping and disseminating ideas and beliefs about human difference, rights, and belonging.[26]

Interpretations, Narratives, and Images

One interpretation of the images of Harrison is that they were staged to depict a charming old African American man performing a kind of unthreatening minstrelsy.[27] Harrison likely chose this path rather than allowing friends and outsiders to see him as an angry, armed former slave atop an easily defensible high ground. As an independent and successful land owner, he may have also presented an *economic* threat to local whites, which is yet another factor he may have actively tried to downplay. In this scenario, Harrison probably saw subservience as the best strategic avenue. Such a choice would suggest that the relationships he had with the people who photographed him were uneven, or at least heavily constrained. This interpretive scenario is supported by historical narrative accounts, some of which mention the photographic process itself.[28]

In fact, there is evidence that Harrison played a key role in the production of these photographs.[29] Consider that Harrison could have easily avoided every camera on the mountain. The particular spot of his cabin and the path that every traveler had to take to visit his homestead ensured that Harrison had hours to decide whether

Nathan Harrison, photographed by Robert Asher, likely early 1900s. This is the only photograph of Harrison with his rifle, which rests to his right atop the platform for his spring. Photo courtesy Barbara Anne Waite.

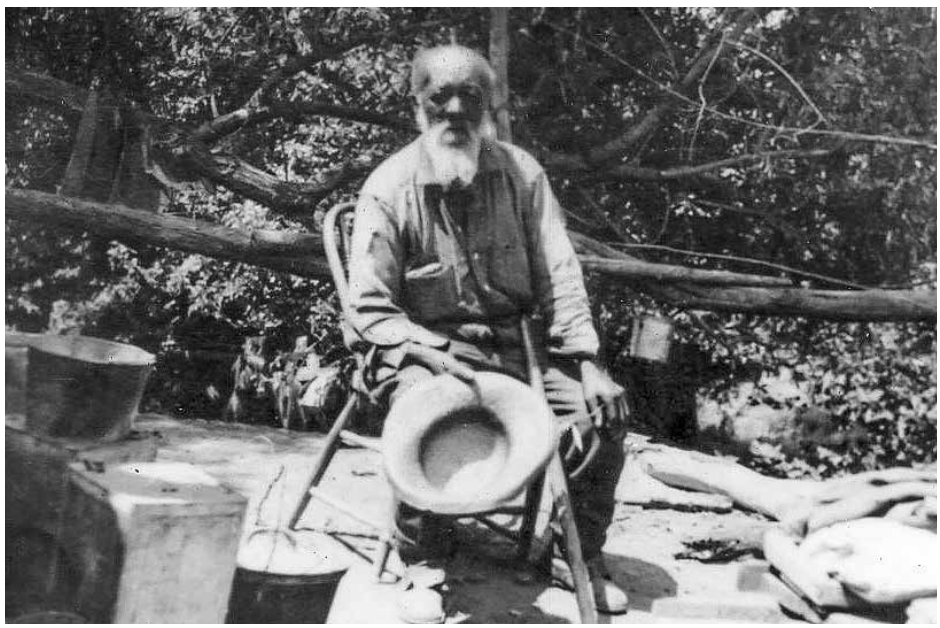
to engage with visitors, what to wear for the encounter, what objects to bring along as accessories, and how to present himself during the meeting. It is important to note here that these visitors were mostly white, and they came up to the mountain from the city. It is likely that Nathan Harrison strategically participated in these encounters in part because he recognized how the photographs would help solidify his claim—legal and social—on the mountain.

It seems clear that Harrison deliberately created a particular mood for his mountain visitors. By many accounts, he was an engaging, affable, and memorable individual who charmed the many guests that trekked up Palomar.[30] He disarmed outsiders with humor, welcoming them to his spring with a gift of liquid refreshment, good cheer, and an entertaining tale. Part of his charm was grounded in his non-threatening behavior. Harrison was a small man and regularly emphasized his subservient qualities. Visitors often quoted his self-deprecating and overly acquiescent speech. Historical accounts from close friend Robert Asher revealed that Harrison's "performances" included his deliberately putting on his oldest and shabbiest clothing when visitors were approaching.[31] Whereas many people might put on their finest garb to welcome honored guests, Harrison put on his worst; both acts involve dressing up—but in his case, it was dressing down—and playing a part. Harrison's role involved donning tattered clothes, speaking in a fractured lingo, and acting the role of a deferential formerly

enslaved person. This caricature contributed to his local reputation and fame.

He may indeed have been purposefully performing a kind of strategic, disarming minstrelsy that other African Americans, such as Hattie McDaniel, also navigated.[32] McDaniel, an American actress, was a key figure in the depiction of the subservient—and controversial—mammy image in American film and media. The mammy image was a racial caricature of African American women that served to reinforce the dominant interests of white America.[33] However, Carolyn Finney argues that while McDaniel was often criticized for taking such roles, "she used the opportunities to express her disdain for her white masters while being anything but submissive."[34] Beyond mere subservience, Finney tells us, we should see resistance in McDaniel's actions. Was Harrison engaged in his own form of subtle, subversive resistance through his participation in the photographic and representational process?

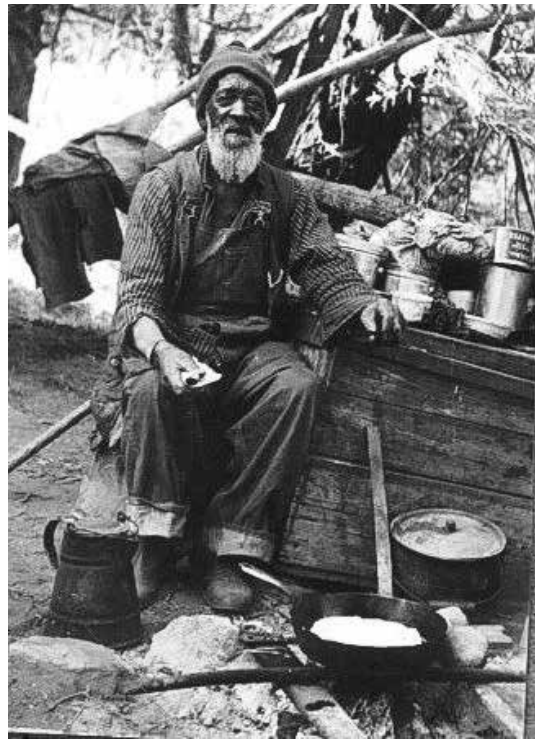
Here we need to consider not only at what was depicted in these photographs, but also what was left out. Only one of the thirty-one historical photos showed Harrison with his rifle, and it was off to the side and not a central point of the image. Harrison owned at least one firearm—the historical accounts and archaeological evidence make it overwhelmingly clear—but almost never posed with the rifle for a photograph. This may have been a clever refusal that was part of a crafted identity for outsiders, central to which was Harrison's non-threatening character.



Nathan Harrison sits on his Palomar Mountain patio, nd. Photo courtesy Kirby Collection, Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

In a time of severely strained race relations across the United States, Harrison may have seen this "performance" as one viable option for self-preservation.[35]

These interpretations are based largely upon the historical records and archaeological artifacts. They provide insight into the encounters between Harrison and his visitors and how he may have participated in the representational process. But another look at this collection of photographs, specifically, opens additional interpretive possibilities. The photographs and the historical narratives may give us a more subtle, complex view of Harrison and his historical legacy when we look at the unique aspects of each.



This prominent photograph of Harrison cooking at his homestead has conflicting dates at the various archives across San Diego County. Edward H. Davis might have taken this image in 1913, 1916, or 1917 (SDHC #82_13432).

Looking through the entirety of the collection, it seems clear that Harrison is not wearing his best clothing and may have been dressing down for these visits. But in some images, it appears he may simply be wearing the everyday work clothes that come with life on a mountain homestead. One theme that seems to run through many of the photographs is a kind of quotidian domesticity (photos above and opposite). These images may give us small insights into the daily life of this individual, whether through views of his house, kitchen, subsistence production, or simply how he greeted and interacted with visitors. This is a departure from how Harrison is portrayed in the historical narratives discussed above. Instead of that self-deprecating minstrelsy, we see a confident, free man living his daily life. Such representations of domesticity may seem insignificant, but they can be seen as a powerful, if subtle, subversion of the dominant racist imagery of the time.

There is power in such everyday depictions. In an essay about Black representation and photography, bell hooks writes about the social and political meaning of everyday snapshots. She describes the camera as a tool that offers

disempowered African Americans a path to empowerment through direct participation in the process of image production. Photography gives African Americans the power to document, share, and pass around history, offering "a way to contain memories, to overcome loss, and to keep history."[36] Hooks sees the camera as a political instrument that gives African Americans the ability to counter misrepresentations and produce new images of themselves and their futures. Whereas Washington and Du Bois focused on more formal photographic projects, hooks sees both power and inspiration in the daily documentations of everyday snapshot photography. She describes the walls in Southern African American homes as "sites of resistance" that challenge segregation and dehumanization on an everyday basis precisely because they are *seen*.[37]

These images of Harrison can be seen in a similarly empowering light. This might have been his own quiet resistance. Certainly, Harrison was not the one behind the camera, and did not have full control of the representational process. But he did participate in and shape that process, and his relationship with the photographers might have been a key element. In Robert Asher's accounts, for example, it sounds like there was a genuine relationship between the two. Asher's narratives about Harrison do not carry the same derogatory tone that characterize many other historical accounts. Asher and Harrison appear to have been friends. This may have been the case with other visitors who came to his property and photographed him—at least to varying degrees. This could explain, at least in part, the relaxed, confident, everyday feeling of many of the photographs.

Several images of Harrison have a quality of intimacy to them. Despite the fact that many of the images were likely taken with large format equipment, they convey a comfortable, informal view into his daily life. These images, with their intimacy and empathetic character, speak against some of the more derogatory accounts of Harrison which sometimes portrayed him as lazy or ignorant.[38] Here the power of photography allows us to see some of the stories, legends, and partial truths about Harrison in a new light.

Conclusion

There is an important parallel between Harrison and the most photographed American of the nineteenth century, Black or white: Frederick Douglass. An African American and former slave, Douglass posed for 160 separate photographs. Douglass's staggering number of portraits was intentional; he strove to create a new image for emancipated African Americans, one that projected, embodied, and radiated pride, strength, dignity, and determination. This is similar to the photographic projects of W.E.B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington, whose exhibits of African Americans provided an alternate view of people who were

often represented as subordinate, diminutive, and inferior.[39] Nathan Harrison might have participated in a parallel battle but in his own quiet, subtle, and often self-effacing style. He used photography to craft images of himself—some anachronistic, others powerfully mundane—that likely facilitated his very survival and livelihood. Harrison's struggle was not a broader political movement; it was a day-to-day battle for survival and, ultimately, acceptance within the highly racialized and racist American West. As such, he would not pose with his rifle, his nicest clothing, or a defiant stare, but he did manage to co-produce a multitude of images that cemented his role as rural Southern California pioneer at the turn of the nineteenth century and catalyzed his status as local legend by the end of the twentieth century.

NOTES

1. Seth Mallios, *Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer: Nathan "Nate" Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020); Seth Mallios and Jaime Lennox, "Nate Harrison as Person, Myth, and Legend: Archaeological History and the Apotheosis of a Nineteenth-Century African American in San Diego County," *Journal of African Diaspora Archaeology and Heritage* 3, no. 1 (2014), 51-80; Seth Mallios, "Scientific Excavations at Palomar Mountain's Nate Harrison Site: The Historical Archaeology of a Legendary African-American Pioneer," *The Journal of San Diego History* 55, no. 3 (Summer 2009): 141-160.
2. Carolyn Finney, *Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).
3. Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nate Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2017 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2017); Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nate Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: Final Report for the 2004-13 Field Seasons (Decade I)* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2017); Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nathan Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2018 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2018); Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nathan Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2019 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2019).
4. Through extensive archival searching across the region, we have been unable to find any contemporary San Diegan depicted in as many different photographs as Nathan Harrison.
5. Abel Davis, *The Memoirs of Abel M. Davis* (self-published, c. 1955), 62; Ethan L. Banegas, "The Socioeconomic Impact of Indian Gaming on Kumeyaay Nations: A Case Study of Barona, Viejas, and Sycuan, 1982-2016" (Master's thesis, University of San Diego, 2017); "Yellow Sky," Kumeyaay.com, accessed January 22, 2020, https://www.kumeyaay.com/yellow-sky.html; "Wa Amaay Kwakas," Kwaaymii Cultural Center, accessed January 22, 2020, http://www.americanindiansource.com/khistories/histories.html; Richard L. Carrico, "A Brief Glimpse of

the Kumeyaay Past: An Interview with Tom Lucas, Kwaaymii of Laguna Ranch," *The Journal of San Diego History* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1983), 121. Anthropologists perceived Yellow Sky as the "Ishi of the South" in that he was the last recorded Kumeyaay person to live in a manner that seemed closest to pre-contact lifeways. Yellow Sky, whose father was Kwaaymil (Kumeyaay) and mother was Quechan (Yuma), was photographed on multiple occasions by Edward H. Davis. Davis also took many images of Harrison. This might have led to the confusion in the Abel Davis text, although it is worth emphasizing that Harrison was relatively short—listed as 5' 3" on his 1894 voter registration form—and Yellow Sky, also known fittingly as "Zeus," was well over six feet tall. According to Jon Mesa Cuero, "This man [Yellow Sky] was so tall he could have painted the sky. This is why he was called *'pinta el cielo amarillo'* in Tipai, *Mai Ta Quas,* Paints the Sky Yellow." Richard L. Carrico, "A Brief Glimpse of the Kumeyaay Past: An Interview with Tom Lucas, Kwaaymii of Laguna Ranch," *The Journal of San Diego History* 29, no. 2 (Spring 1983), 121.

6. Mallios, *Born a Slave*, 165; Christian Gonzales, "'Their Souls Are Equally Precious': Edward Henry Davis, Benevolence, Racial Logic, and the Colonization of Indigeneity," *The Journal of San Diego History* 60, no. 3 (Summer 2014), 181-206.
7. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 87.
8. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 92.
9. Ivor Noël Hume, *Martin's Hundred* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 92-93.
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11. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black," *Representations* 24 (1988): 129-55; Finney, *Black Faces*; Amy Louise Wood, "Lynching Photography and the Visual Reproduction of White Supremacy," *American Nineteenth Century History* 6, no. 3 (2005): 373-99; Jessy J. Ohl and Jennifer E. Potter, "United We Lynch: Post-Racism and the (Re)Membering of Racial Violence in *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*," *Southern Communication Journal* 78, no. 3 (2013): 185-201; The Jim Crow Museum of Racist Memorabilia, accessed March 15, 2020, https://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow.
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An Archaeology of Space and Everyday Life at Palomar Mountain's Nathan Harrison Site

James Turner, Shannon Farnsworth, Jamie Bastide, and Seth Mallios

Introduction

The Nathan Harrison site, located at 3,650 feet above sea level on the west side of Palomar Mountain, is rife with features and artifacts that reflect numerous human decisions and behaviors of the past. Spatial studies of the site have yielded important insights into the daily life of Nathan "Nate" Harrison, the first African American to own land in San Diego County. Over the past fifteen years, student excavators have uncovered over 50,000 artifacts, the identity and distribution of which enabled us to learn how Harrison used distinct areas of the site. This article details how fluctuating artifact densities can identify distinct activity areas. These are important because they tell us the activities that Harrison was likely to have carried out. Accordingly, we identified three different areas on Harrison's land that correspond with these activities: three at the main cabin site and a potential *arrastra*, or ore-grinding station, hundreds of feet down the hill from Harrison's primary residence.

Human activity is not random. As such, the material results of human activity culminate in unique artifact patterns that can be analyzed to gain understandings

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of the past. This spatial signature varies greatly in scope and can include the remains of large structures, fractured debris from intensive tasks, and even nearly invisible chemical residue in the earth itself. Archaeologists carefully identify, record, and analyze spatial patterns created by past peoples. We use this data to build interpretations regarding nonrandom, and often rather quirky, human activities.

One of the few universals in archaeology is that objects are never evenly distributed in space across a site.[1] Even at the most uniform sites, there are inevitably groups of artifacts that are clustered and reflective of specific activities. We pay close attention to the nature of these clusters, especially in terms of space, time, and form. Before larger questions of "how" and "why" can be addressed, spatial, temporal, and formal dimensions must be answered. Space refers to where the items are found, time ties to when the goods were used, and form refers to what they were. Each of these dimensions is not as simple as it seems. Space can be broadened to include where items were made, used, and deposited. Time can also be expanded, tying to the entire production and use range of the goods, not just the particular episode at a given site. Form is trickiest of all in that people can use the same object in any number of ways.

Spatial artifact studies are further complicated by the fact that archaeological sites are rarely static. The idea that archaeological deposits are permanently fixed in time is known as the "Pompeii Premise," so named for the ancient city of Pompeii, which was buried in ash at a single moment by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. With the exception of such rare and uniquely cataclysmic sites, archaeologists are far more accustomed to witnessing past movements of goods at their excavations. Artifacts routinely go through several processes, such as use, reuse, disposal, scavenging, and re-disposal.

One of the most telling examples of this type of re-use was seen at the Harrison site in two large iron artifacts found during our recent excavations. Although uncovered in separate units, these pieces joined together and were originally a singular wagon sand board plate; they formed the three-and-a-half-foot flat metal cross bar that supported a nineteenth-century wagon's axle and fifth wheel.[2] One of the large fragments was found amidst extensive historical debris in the patio area, just west of the cabin. The other was over twenty feet away, driven deep and vertically into undisturbed sterile subsoil, acting as an anchor for a

The two pieces of the sand board plate; the 2019 find is on the left and the 2006 find is on the right. Photo courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

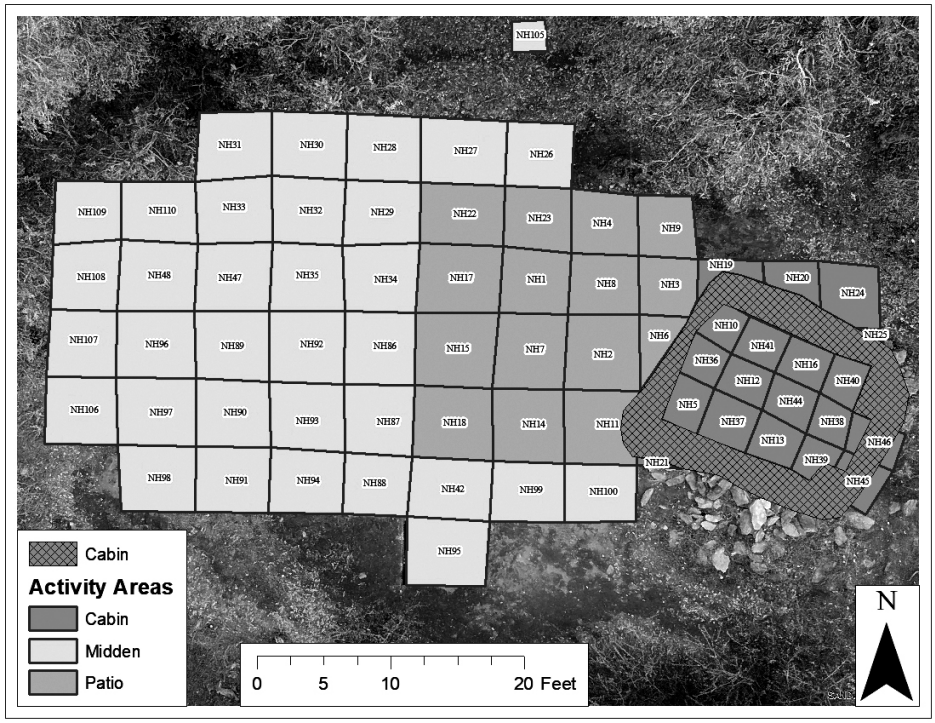

Figure 1. Map of the main Harrison site projected onto an aerial photograph of the excavation area with the three hypothesized activity areas; the spatial analyses presented here narrowed both the patio and midden boundaries. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

long-since vanished fence or rope line that ran off the northwest edge of the cabin. Simply put, one item, after its initial use, became two; and they ended up being refashioned and deposited in entirely different manners. This example demonstrates both the creative re-use of certain items and the importance of spatial context for determining how an artifact was used.

Spatial studies of the Harrison site required four complimentary kinds of archaeological work. The first involved excavation of the site, a feat that took close to two decades and involved more than 100 students. The second consisted of cleaning, labeling, and cataloging the entire artifact assemblage. The third entailed mapping the excavation area using a digital total station. A total station is a piece of equipment that uses optical sensors to lock onto a glass prism and measure the distance between the station and the prism's location to record a data point.[3] Once this was completed, the data were imported into a mapping program called ArcGIS, which georeferenced them in order to create a digital map of the site.[4] The individual five-foot by five-foot units and the cabin were then drawn in dot-to-dot fashion to finish the completed site base map. This map served as a

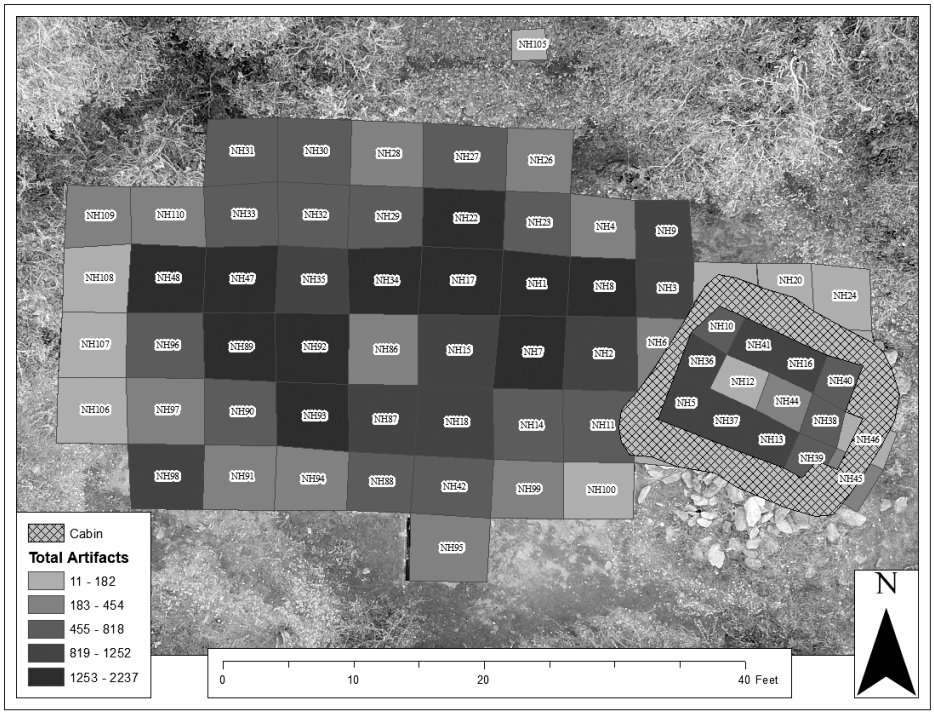

Figure 2. Heat map of the total artifact assemblage; the darker red the unit, the more artifacts that were recovered from it. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

basis for a variety of other maps that show artifact densities, hot and cold spots, and other groupings (see Figure 1, previous page). It was these later maps that fueled the identification of several activity areas across the site.

Heat maps show artifact densities, often depicting raw quantities of things (see Figure 2, above). These maps show tinted shapes that use a range of shades, with one end of the range representing low quantity, the other showing high quantity, and gradations denoting the quantities in between. For the heat maps of the Harrison site, the darker the unit square, the higher the artifact quantity. The ArcGIS Grouping Analysis tool was used to create a second map (Figure 3) that displayed color-coded groupings of units with low artifact quantities (Group 1), moderate artifact quantities (Group 2), and high artifact quantities (Group 3). This tool works by performing a classification procedure where natural data clusters are found. Given a set number of groupings, this tool identifies a solution where all the components within each group are as similar as possible, while ensuring that the overall groups are as different as possible.

The grouping analysis had striking results for the Harrison site. It was able to identify distinct patio and midden areas of the site as intense activity loci, while also including the doorway of the cabin in the same high-artifact grouping

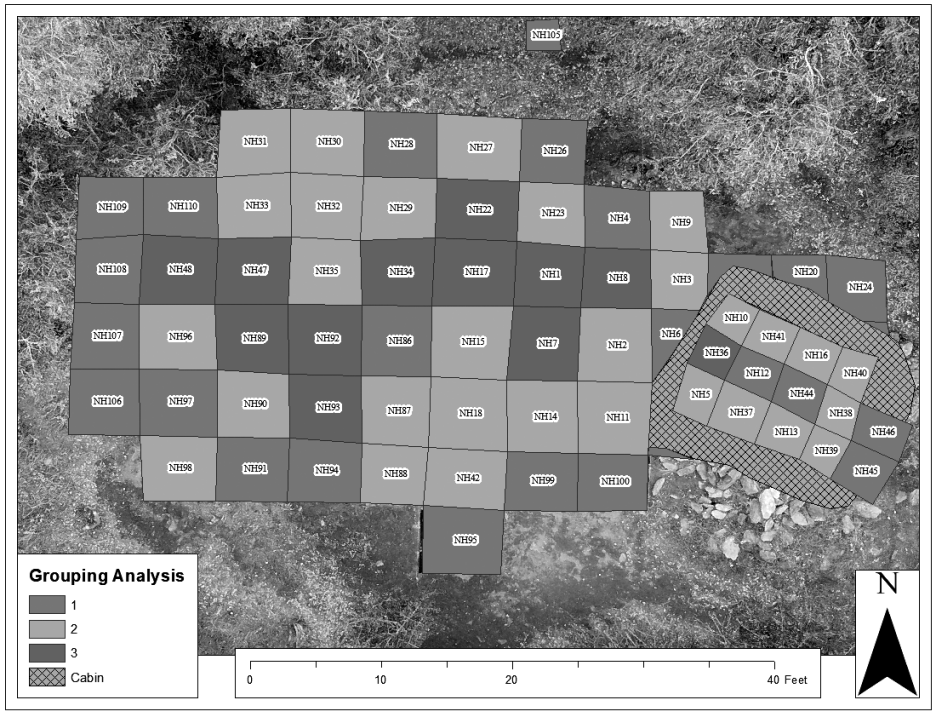

Figure 3. Grouping analysis of the main site; units were categorized into Group 1 (low artifact quantity), Group 2 (moderate artifact quantity), or Group 3 (high artifact quantity). Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

(Figure 3). Intense activity, deposition, and traffic each resulted in a similar high artifact signature. It is worth noting that many of the units along the western edge of the site (NH106-109) were categorized into Group 1, but this low artifact density likely reflected the fact that they have yet to be completely excavated. There are likely many more artifacts hidden in their depths, which is strikingly different from the five units along the north edge of the site (NH26-28, 30-31), which have been fully dug and have low to moderate artifact quantities.

Soil Chemistry

Chemical analysis of archaeological soils is a valuable tool that can provide additional insights into past activities and ways of life.[5] Elevated levels of specific elements can pinpoint occupation areas, disposal practices, and specific behaviors.[6] When the units at the Harrison site were excavated, student archaeologists simultaneously collected soil for chemical study. Offsite control units were also dug and sampled. Then, all the soil samples were chemically tested for baseline levels of many different elements, including phosphorous (P), calcium (Ca), strontium (Sr), lead (Pb), and iron (Fe) (Figure 4).

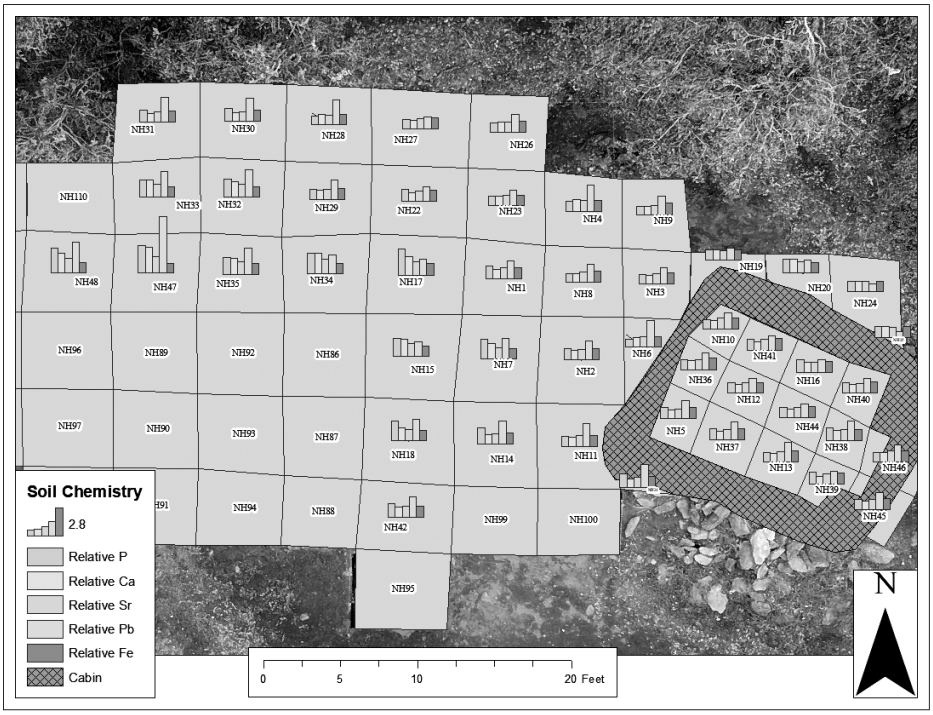

Figure 4. Soil chemistry results from the main cabin site. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element in animal tissues and feces and is a strong indicator of site areas that are repeatedly used. It is one of the best soil chemical measures of past human or animal activities, often pinpointing areas used for food or animal processing, biological waste disposal, and animal upkeep.[7] Calcium is a major component of shell, bone, and hard tissues in animals. Like phosphorus, high calcium levels reflect areas of animal processing and food preparation, as well as trash pits and middens.[8] Strontium occurs naturally with calcium in the bones of herbivores and is also traditionally associated with food preparation and animal processing.[9] Lead is rarely used in soil chemistry analyses, though its presence can identify and isolate various craft activities, such as painting, glazing, and projectile making; it is also a byproduct of certain mining activities.[10] Since iron is a key element in hemoglobin, the molecule in blood cells, it is often found in high concentrations in areas used for animal slaughtering and butchering.[11]

Activity Area #1: The Cabin

Once fully excavated, the cabin was a most obvious bounded activity area in that our archaeological team exposed a buried stone foundation that was

entirely enclosed. It was originally a single-room structure, whose interior was an eleven-foot by eleven-foot square with a single western doorway opposite a built-in chimney.[12] The cabin's stone foundation included a doorsill in the form of a large threshold stone that clearly marked the location of the doorway. The cabin contained few artifacts, and most of them were clustered near the doorway. At other historical sites with long-since vanished impermanent earthfast architecture, it is precisely this cluster of artifacts that archaeologists often use to identify the specific position of the doorway.[13]

Historical accounts suggested that the cabin was cramped, with a bed, a small table, and a cooking space.[14] It was tempting to conclude that Harrison would have used the interior for little else besides sleeping and protection from the weather. The artifacts found within the cabin, however, hinted at something else. The southwestern corner of the structure contained a large amount of buttons, most of a large ceramic pitcher, a skeleton key, a silver quarter-dollar, several sherds of picture-frame glass, a sharpened pencil lead, and multiple fired rifle cartridges. These items each seemed to hold additional value in comparison to artifacts found in other areas of the site. Some were utilitarian (buttons, pitcher, key), some economic (coin), some sentimental (picture), and some were likely part of a concealed identity (pencil and cartridges) that included items and skills (literacy and self-armament) regularly forbidden to African Americans and the indigenous population during the nineteenth century.[15]

The large ironstone pitcher being uncovered in the southwest corner unit of the cabin in 2004 likely had a direct tie to Harrison's active role in delivering water from the natural spring on his homestead. Photo courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

This 1926 photograph of the Harrison cabin from the southeast clearly shows that the southern edge of the patio that extended to the west was bounded by a wooden fence (SDHC #80_8949).

Activity Area #2: The Patio

The patio to the immediate northwest of the Harrison cabin evolved during his time on the mountain. Some of the historical photographs indicated that it was entirely open; others provided evidence that it was enclosed by a wooden fence on the north and south side. Regardless of the fluctuating presence of this wooden barrier, the artifact maps clearly delineate the boundary of the patio. The area in bright red in the center of Figures 3 and 4 reveals that the patio was remarkably similar to the cabin itself, oriented along the same axis and approximately the same size (twelve to fifteen feet square).

Excavated units in the patio area of the site contained extensive glass and ceramics and a moderate amount of faunal remains. It is worth noting that over the course of excavation at the Harrison site, student archaeologists found few ceramics, amassing pieces from only fourteen different vessels. The counts were especially minimal in comparison to the site's ample glass and can assemblage. Unlike other artifact categories, however, the majority of the pottery sherds were recovered in the patio. These five units just west of the cabin (NH1, 7, 8, 17, and 22)

evinced an especially high number of artifacts relative to the surrounding units and suggested that the patio area was used for multiple intensive activities, especially cooking and eating.

The faunal remains found in the patio area consisted mostly of sheep and cow bones, with occasional pig specimens as well. These remains were clustered in the western area of the patio and seemed to spill over into the adjacent midden (Figure 5). During our analysis, the faunal remains were subdivided by class, including long bones (humerus, radius, etc.), skulls, mandibles, vertebrae, and pelvises. The distribution of identifiable bone classes suggested that there was no meaningful spatial pattern at this sub-level of analysis. Furthermore, relatively few butchered remains (bones with visible cut, chop, or saw marks) were recovered in this area. As is detailed below, these two factors—the lack of bone element subdivision and butcher marks—suggested that the patio and midden were used differently, and that the patio was *not* an activity area for processing meat.

Patio-area units contained high levels of phosphorus, calcium, and strontium, elements that often reflect food preparation activities.[16] In addition, people of the past who practiced broadcast refuse, or the wide scattering of waste and trash outside their residence, often inadvertently created a ring of phosphorus- and calcium-rich soil around their dwellings.[17] Lower levels of iron were found in the patio units compared to the surrounding area, though these levels were slightly higher than those of the control units. This could be due to some activity or event that caused leaching, or removal, of the iron in this area. Iron leaching typically results from the oversaturation of water in the soil; an event like a large rainstorm could have caused this oversaturation, and thus resulted in lowered iron levels.

Activity Area #3: The Midden

The extended midden area to the west of the cabin teemed with faunal material, meat cans, nails, and other artifacts, suggesting it was a primary locus for refuse deposition. This was likely not a trash pit as there was no evidence of digging a specific hole for garbage. It was probably a midden from the broadcast disposal of household items such as cans, bottles, and bones. By throwing these used material goods in a wide arc across the rear area of the patio, Harrison was more than likely leaving food scraps out to offer supplemental food for his canine companions and ovine livestock. Five units in this area (NH47, 48, 89, 92, and 93) were located in the heart of the midden. Based on the heat maps and grouping analysis (Figures 2 and 3), it is clear that this was the main disposal area.[18]

In addition, the core meat processing area was most likely located somewhere in the northwest section of this midden area. Two units, NH34 and NH47, contained the highest number of animal bones at the site, while six surrounding units (NH17,

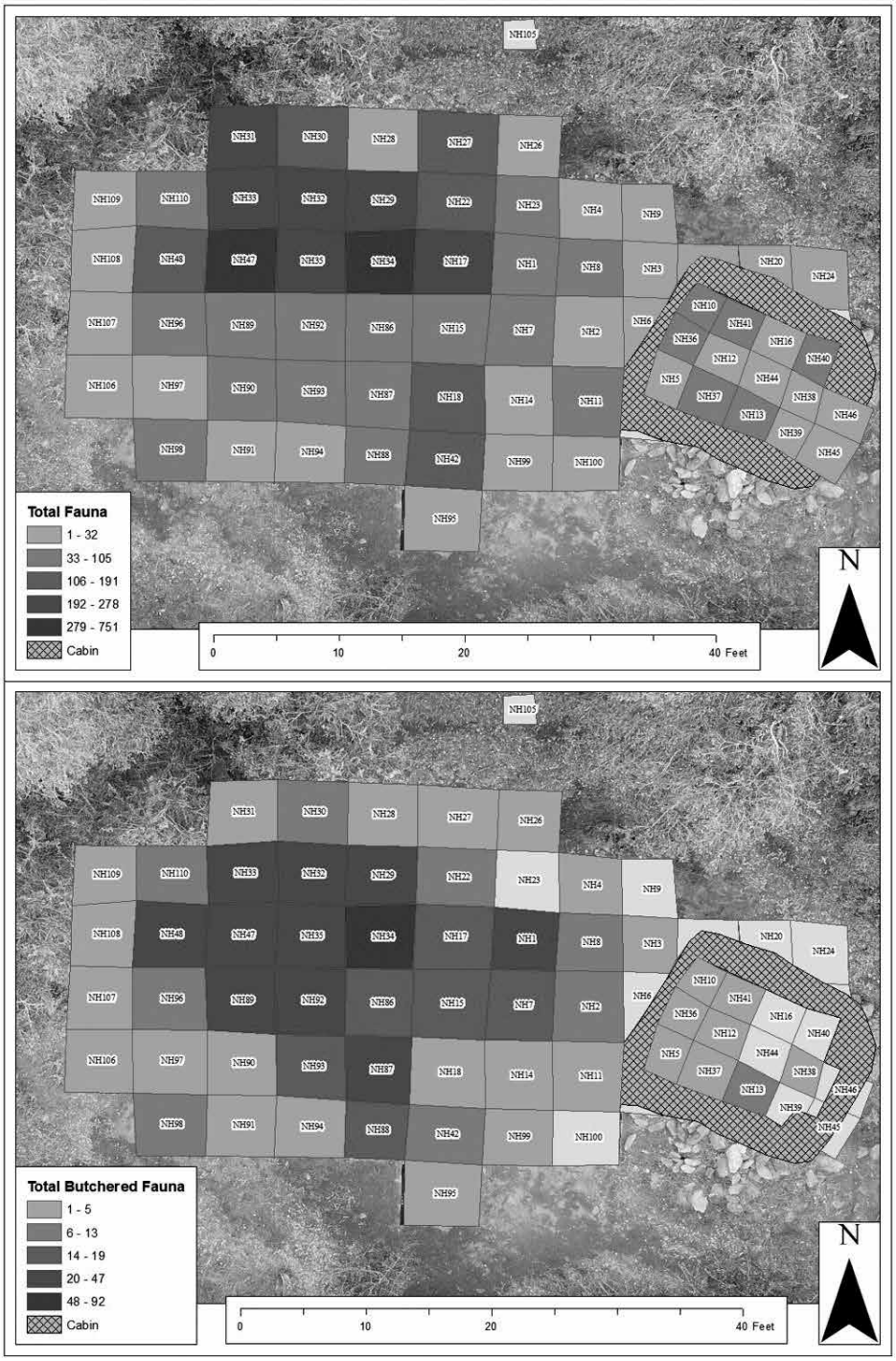

Figure 5. Heat maps of the total faunal assemblage (top) and the butchered faunal assemblage (bottom). Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

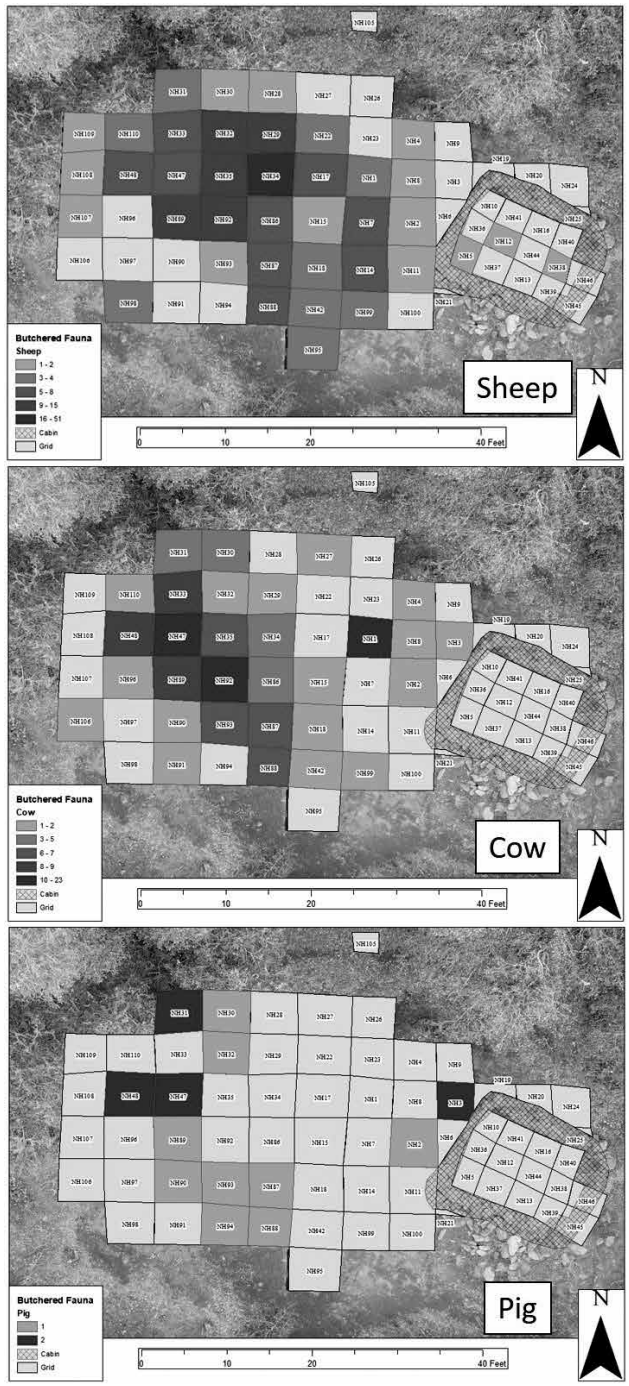

Figure 6. Heat maps of the butchered sheep (top), cow (middle), and pig (bottom) assemblage. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

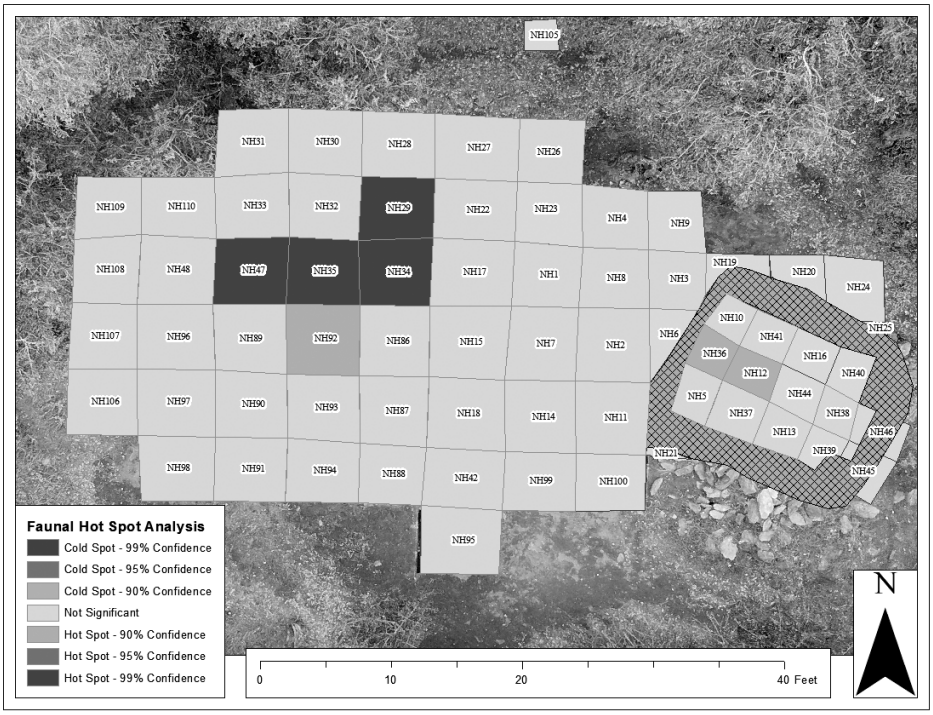

Figure 7. Hot spot analysis map of the total faunal assemblage. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

29, 31, 32, 33, and 35) each contained a relatively high number of faunal remains. In addition, the soil chemistry of the units in this area, discussed in more detail below, contained high levels of strontium, phosphorus, and calcium, which also supports the idea that this area was a processing center for the herbivorous faunal remains.

Carnivores often scavenge discarded animal bones, in the process leaving telltale marks on bone. Scavengers in the area, such as coyotes or bobcats, can not only modify or damage discarded remains but can also move the remains away from the primary area of discard.[19] Long bones are the favorite of scavengers, as these bones are filled with a delectable marrow. Carnivores crack long bones into shaft fragments and end fragments; the shaft fragments tend to stay in the same place, while the end fragments are moved to other areas of the site or off the site entirely.[20] The long bones at the Harrison site did not display this pattern of secondary scavenging; they clustered together around NH34 in the western midden. In fact, the majority of all bone classes clustered at this same spot, which appeared to be the bone use and deposition epicenter of the site.

Another modification that can occur on the faunal assemblage is butchery. There was ample evidence that Harrison was both butchering his own livestock and purchasing already butchered meat cuts. The small number of cow remains was

likely a result of meat purchased by, or given to, Harrison for consumption, and the scant pig remains also indicated these remnants resulted from purchase, trade, or gifting. Sheep, on the other hand, dominated the faunal assemblage. The presence of bones that were usually not sold at butcher shops, like sheep feet and vertebrae, indicate that Harrison butchered and used the entire animal. Equal representation of wholesale (available at butcher shop) versus non-wholesale (traditionally non-usable) cuts of meat suggested that all parts of the sheep were being processed or used at the site. Harrison likely kept sheep both for meat and wool production.[21]

Distinct patterns emerged when each species was mapped individually in the midden area (Figure 6). The butchered remains of cattle were scattered evenly throughout the site's exterior areas, especially in the patio and the midden. Butchered pig remains, however, appeared almost exclusively in the western portion of the site. According to the spatial evidence, none of these species seemed to be used in any specialized manner other than consumption and disposal. The site's butchered sheep evinced a different spatial pattern. Sheep bones were found in large numbers throughout the site, even inside of the cabin. While unit NH34 in the far-western midden area contained over 300 butchered sheep remains, several units inside the cabin—e.g., NH5, 12, and 32—had dozens as well. Clearly, sheep were far more important to Harrison's daily life than cattle and pigs.

An additional ArcGIS Hot Spot Analysis tool was used on the total faunal assemblage (Figure 7). It calculated what is known as the Getis-Ord Gi* statistic for each feature in the dataset. This statistical equation returns a z-score, which is a standard deviation or how far away from the average a given value is. The resultant z-score indicates where features with either high or low values are clustered spatially. To be a statistically significant hot spot, a feature would have a high value and be surrounded by other features with lower values. Simply put, hot spot analyses use statistics to define areas of high quantity versus areas of low quantity. Using this tool, two pieces of information were uncovered. First, the center of the midden—units NH 35, 47, and 92—were found to be clustered areas of high faunal quantities. Second, units in the cabin were designated as cold spots; that is, these units were statistically significant in how they maintained a lower quantity of faunal material than other surrounding units at the site. This pattern was especially pronounced when one considers how few artifact types were found in the cabin.

Cans for meat and fish were one of the most common artifacts at the Harrison site. Over 160 distinct food-related cans and tins were recovered during excavation. Like other artifacts, this can assemblage was based spatially in the far-western midden area. Both the heat map and the hot spot analysis confirmed this (Figure 8). Fish-related containers, such as tuna or sardine cans, were found scattered

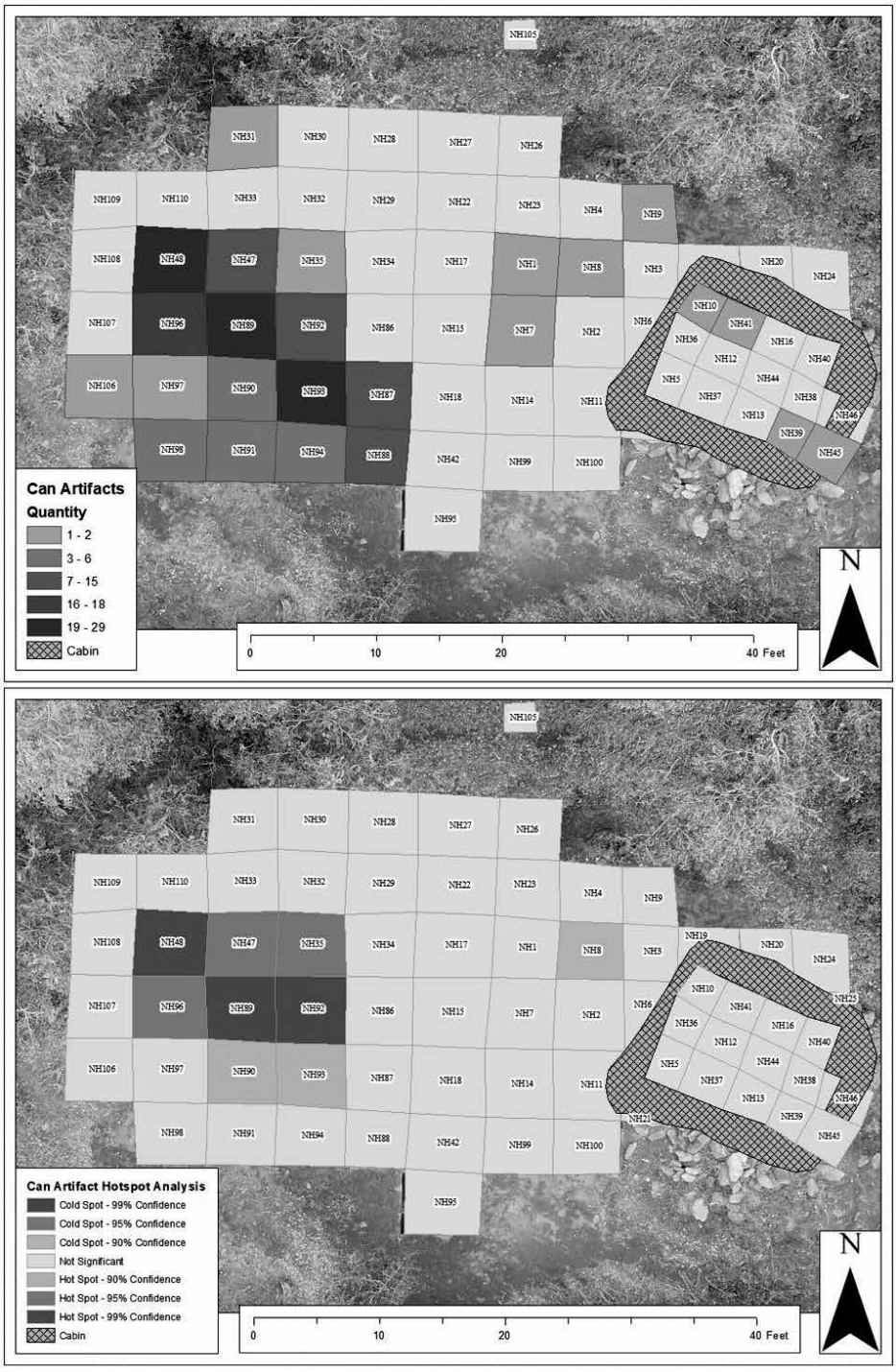

Figure 8. Heat map and hot spot analysis maps for the can artifacts. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

exclusively in the midden. Likewise, all but one of the meat cans were found in the heart of the midden.[22]

The soil chemistry from units in the midden area produced results similar to those in the cabin area (see Figure 4). Like the cabin and patio, the midden area had spikes in phosphorus, calcium, strontium, and lead levels. The analyzed units from the midden area could have fallen within the fringes of Harrison's broadcast refuse, and thus, resulted in elevated levels. Iron levels were also rather low, but again these levels were higher than the control. As discussed earlier, this was likely due to some event that caused the iron to be leached out of the soil.

Activity Area #4: The Arrastra

Over 300 feet south of the Harrison cabin, student archaeologists uncovered remains of a curvilinear stone structure. Certain historical narratives hinted that this was a second dwelling, while others intimated that this might have been a storage facility for Harrison's legendary hidden gold.[23] It is likely, however, that this structure served as an *arrastra* (Figure 9). An arrastra was a mill designed to grind ore in the search for precious metals. It was traditionally powered by a person riding or leading a horse or other stock animal in a circle. A large stone was tethered to the animal, which crushed ore with each pass.[24]

The possible arrastra was identified by an eight-foot semi-circular stone wall running in the north-south direction that bordered a flat area to the west. Excavation at the eleven-unit arrastra site produced nearly 700 artifacts (Figure 10). There was also a small oval-shaped discoloration in the center of the semi-circular arc of rocks that contained a posthole and postmold. Postholes are the filled holes dug to place a post, while postmolds are remnants of the post originally placed in the posthole.[25]

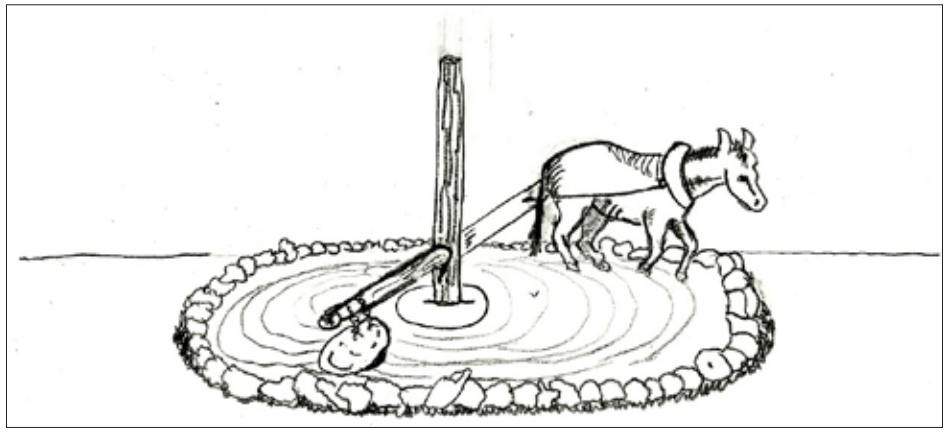

Figure 9. An artistic depiction of an arrastra. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

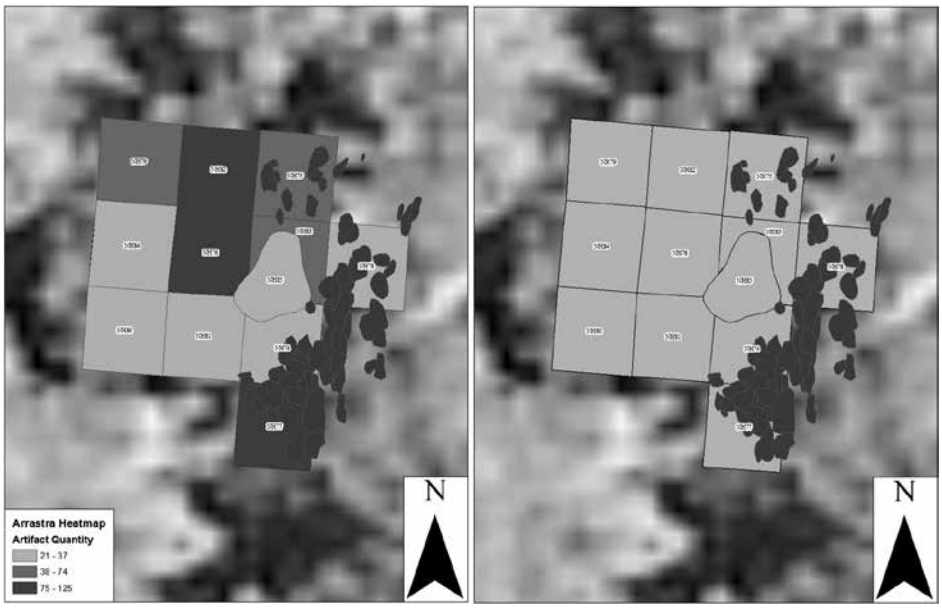

Figure 10. General map and heat map of the arrastra site. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

The vast majority of artifacts found in the assumed arrastra area consisted of nails and metal fragments, though there were a few can, faunal, and button artifacts found among the units. There were no ceramic sherds or ammunition casings recovered in this area. Furthermore, of the forty-two nails, only eight were of the earlier machine-cut variety (c. 1810-1910). The rest of the nails recovered from this area were wire-cut and dated to after the 1890s.[26] The soil chemistry of the arrastra units also was different from the main cabin, patio, and midden areas (Figure 11). While the calcium, strontium, and iron levels were close to those of the off-site control units, the phosphorus and lead levels in units near the stones spiked far higher than the control samples. At historical sites, these kinds of phosphorus readings typically indicate human or animal activity. Excess phosphorus commonly enters the soil though animal tissues and feces, reflecting repeatedly used areas such as privies, animal pens, and animal processing areas. The elevated lead levels were intriguing, possibly reflecting mining activities.

Overall, the few artifacts, especially in terms of butchery, and the distinctive chemical signature supported the notion that this area was an arrastra. Additionally, a contemporary account from Palomar neighbor Robert Asher suggested Harrison used that particular spot for mining purposes. Asher stated:

> I have seen the old arrastra on the flat south of Nate's cabin. An arrastra is an animal-motivated contrivance for reducing mineral

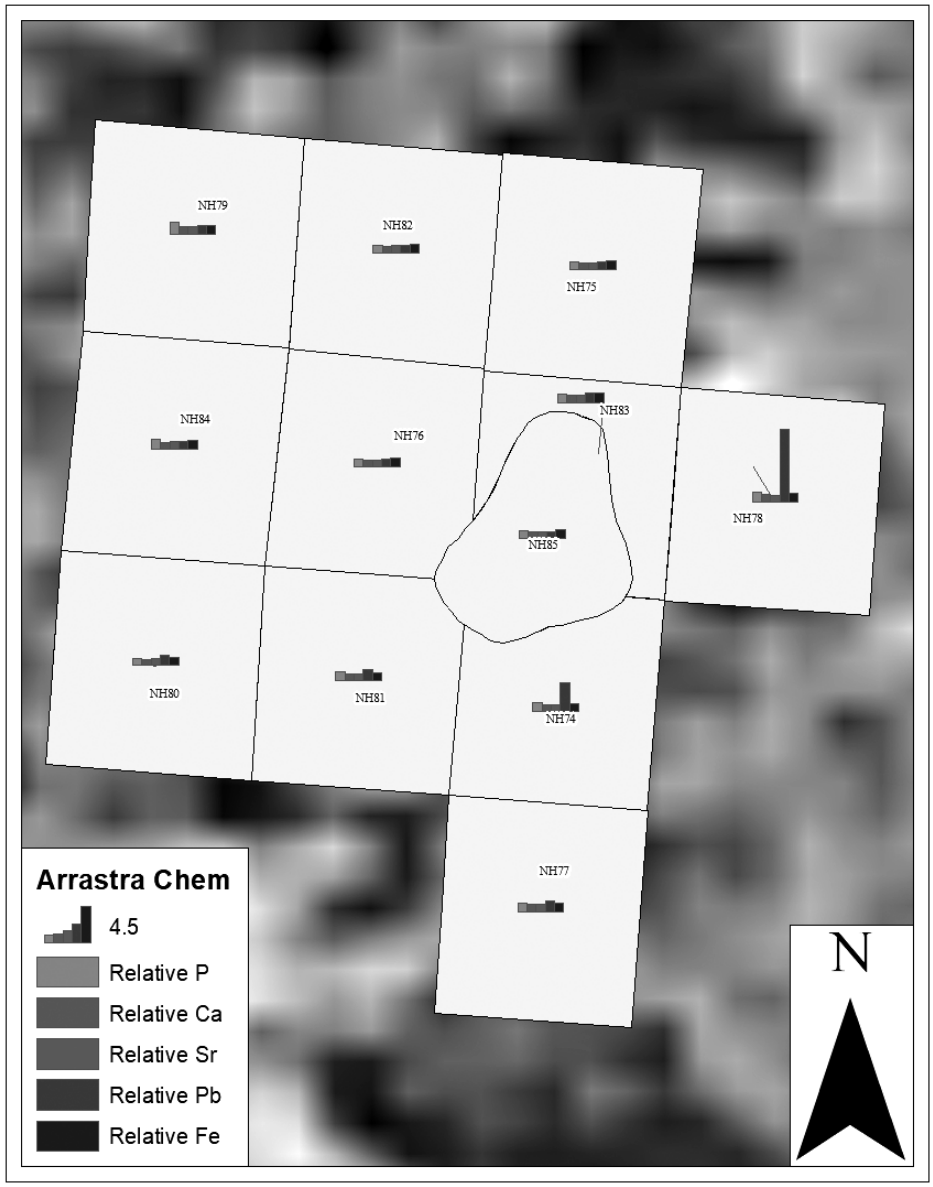

Figure 11. Soil chemistry map of the arrastra site. Courtesy Nathan "Nate" Harrison Historical Archaeology Project.

ores to powder. It is the supposition that the mill was erected to treat gold ores presumably found in the vicinity, but the hillside canyons around Nate's cabin have been thoroughly prospected and the mystery still remains unsolved.[27]

Conclusion

Distinctive spatial patterns of archaeological structures, artifacts, and chemical readings allowed us to decipher how Nathan Harrison used different areas of his Palomar Mountain homestead. Since sites almost always include only partial remains, these different types of independent archaeological evidence are essential in piecing together viable interpretations of past activities and behavior. Though individual fragments of the past are often blurred by both the chaos of everyday life over a century ago and a wealth of factors that impacted the site after Harrison's passing, multiple lines of evidence studied rigorously along dimensions of space, time, and form allow us to see through this historical haze. What remains are distinctly non-random patterns, patterns that reflect ideas, decisions, and behavior of the past. The artifacts found at Harrison's homestead are a direct result of these behaviors and decisions, but that is only part of the complex narrative. The other articles in this volume broaden our understanding of Harrison's life and times, demonstrating that archaeology is a multilayered discipline. It relies not only on excavated artifacts but also on the contextualized interpretations and conclusions gleaned from a variety of associated historical materials.

NOTES

1. Karl Butzer, "Context in Archaeology: An Alternative Perspective," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 7, no. 4 (1980): 417-422.
2. Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nate Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2019 Field Season* (San Diego, California: San Diego State University Department of Anthropology: 2019).
3. More than 100 of these survey points were obtained, including the datum, which is a point with known geographic coordinates.
4. Although the 100+ survey points that were mapped using the total station contained no geographic information, however, we did have spatial data for one point—the datum—and this is what we used to place the points in the correct area using the ArcGIS program.
5. Kristen Tennesen, "Survival, Subsistence, and Industry at the Nate Harrison Historical Archaeology Site," (Master's thesis, San Diego State University, 2010).
6. Joseph Lambert, *Traces of the Past: Unraveling the Secrets of Archaeology through Chemistry* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997); Seth Mallios, *At the Edge of the Precipice: Frontier Ventures, Jamestown's Hinterland, and the Archaeology of 44JC802,* (Richmond, VA: Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, 1999).
7. Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nate Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2008 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2009), 102.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., 103.
11. Connie Hsia, "Respiratory Function of Hemoglobin," *Mechanisms of Disease*, 338 (1998): 239–47.
12. Seth Mallios, *Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer: Nathan "Nate" Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2020), 199.
13. Mallios, *At the Edge of the Precipice*. "Earthfast" is defined as a building that is built into the ground. In archaeological discussions, it often refers to wooden post-in-ground structures that have long since vanished and left only faint soil stains in the ground of the original post (post mold) and hole that was dug to place it (post hole).
14. Robert H. Asher, "Manuscripts of Robert Asher," Unpublished manuscripts, 1938, California State Parks Collection.
15. Mallios, *Born a Slave*.
16. Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations 2008*, 102-107.
17. Mallios, *Born a Slave*, 213-16.
18. John Rick "Downslope Movement and Archaeological Intrasite Spatial Analysis" *American Antiquity* 41 no. 2 (1976): 133–44. The western edge of the midden area sits approximately 10 feet lower than the cabin's doorstep. Perhaps the units at this lower elevation had larger quantities of artifacts due to the process of erosion. Archaeologist John Rick discussed erosion as the most common post-depositional change in an archaeological assemblage. Erosion is the downward movement of cultural material that is usually caused by gravity, precipitation, wind, plants, or animals. Erosion caused by gravity is known as downslope erosion; gravity may move an object at the moment of deposition, or it may require a further stimulus to start the artifact's motion. In the context of the Harrison site, the units at the lower end of this slope, specifically units NH91, 97, and 98, should theoretically then contain higher quantities of artifacts when compared to those units at higher elevations. This was found to be an incorrect assumption;

in fact, some units in the patio and northern area of the midden contained more than three to four times as many artifacts as these units.

19. Curtis Marean and Leanne Bertino, "Intrasite Spatial Analysis of Bone: Subtracting the Effect of Secondary Carnivore Consumers," *American Antiquity* 59, no. 4 (1994): 748–68.

20. Ibid.

21. Archaeologists have found multiple sheep shears at the site. Furthermore, multiple historical records stated that Nathan Harrison was a longtime shepherd in the region.

22. Seth Mallios et al., *Archaeological Excavations at the Nate Harrison Site in San Diego County, California: An Interim Technical Report for the 2017 Field Season* (San Diego, CA: Montezuma Publishing, 2017), 100; Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Kitchen History* (New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2004); Norman Jarvis, "Curing and Canning of Fishery Products: A History," *Marine Fisheries Review* 50, no. 4 (1988): 180-85. The meat cans found at the Harrison site were the hole-in-cap variety, with crimped walls and a scored strip below the lid that would be rolled away with a metal key for simplified opening. Due to the key-wind strip and the hole-in-cap lid, these cans date between 1895 and 1911. The fish-related cans date from 1875 through the end of Harrison's 1919 occupation. Can keys, the key-like metal tools used to open meat and fish cans by either unrolling the lid itself, or by unrolling a metal strip that sealed the lid to the container, followed a similar pattern to the cans, though with one minor exception: the keys were clustered around units NH89 and 93, and a few were also found within the cabin, bordering its northern wall.

23. Mallios, *Born a Slave,* 210.

24. Ibid.

25. Mallios, *Born a Slave,* 211.

26. Katy Meyers Emery, "Welcome to the Jungle... of Nails" (2017) https://campusarch.msu.edu/?tag=nails, accessed August 7, 2019.

27. Robert H. Asher, "Manuscripts of Robert Asher," Unpublished manuscripts, 1938, California State Parks Collection.

A Mexican Family in San Diego's Little Italy: Mixed Ethnic Spaces in the Interwar Years

Shayna Muckerheide

Before San Diego's Little Italy became the chic locale that it is today, it was a quaint enclave supported by fishing and full of close-knit families and friends. The preponderance of Italian Americans—mostly Genovesi, Marchigiani, and Siciliani—who lived and worked on San Diego's waterfront earned it this namesake. However, there were also Portuguese, Japanese, Jewish, Filipino, and Mexican immigrants who helped to settle this area. The Miramontes and Romeros were among the first Mexican families to put down roots in early American-era San Diego, with their descendants growing up in the interwar heyday of Little Italy.

"During the Depression, we were all going through hard and rough circumstances. Everyone was poor, but everyone was so kind and good to each other. We all loved each other; there was no bickering, no racism," Judith Miramontes remembers. "It was difficult living in those times, but there are beautiful stories. We all loved living there."[1]

As of today, her recollections are among the few from that era recorded by a Mexican family

Louis Miramontes, nd. Private collection.

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in Little Italy and San Diego at large. Her childhood delights and hardships during the area's prime years shaped her into the proud, spirited, and strong nonagenarian that she is today. Moreover, Judith Miramontes's story sheds light on the larger history of interethnic relationships in a growing city. While much historical scholarship on American urban areas notes how immigrants and their descendants rallied around institutions based in particular ethnic cultures, the story of Judith Miramontes and her family reminds us that the boundaries between ethnic groups was permeable. In San Diego's Little Italy, schools, churches, and the waterfront drew together working-class families from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

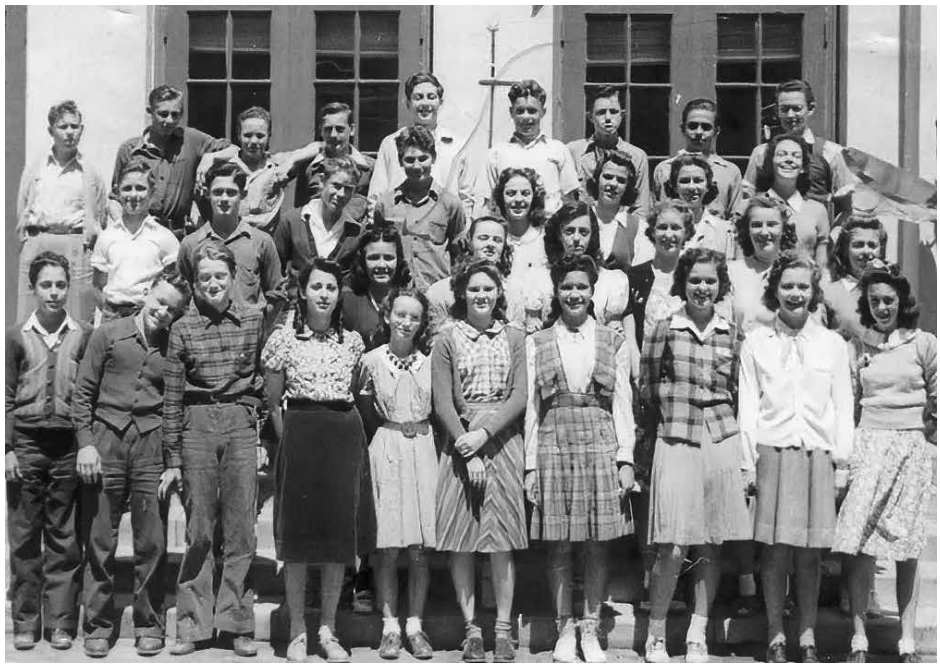
Louis and Armando Miramontes, c. 1926. Private collection.

From Mexico to "Italy"

San Diego grew rapidly during the economic boom of the 1880s, when the California Southern Railroad finally connected the town to eastern cities in November 1885, ushering in a real estate and building frenzy.[2] Much of the town's white population settled in what is today downtown San Diego. In the early 1900s, Italian immigrants began arriving in larger groups, supporting themselves along the waterfront through commercial fishing with boats and nets.[3] This fishing industry (tuna, sardines, halibut, and others) spawned fish markets and canneries and eventually contributed to the emergence of cargo shipping and naval activities in San Diego.

At the same time, turmoil during the Mexican Revolution increased the fluidity of the border between California and Mexico. Ships brought fishermen up and down the California coast and tourists back and forth between the two countries for shopping and sightseeing.[4] Trains and feet carried fleeing refugees north for safety, and military adventurers and American tourists south for action and revelry. Similarly, Judith's maternal Romero and paternal Miramontes families straddled the two nations. Eventually, most of both families became allegiant to the United States as official citizens and spread their roots in California. They settled with other immigrants and fishermen in what would become Little Italy.

Judith's mother, Francesca "Frances" Romero, was born in 1899 in San Diego to Spanish-speaking Jose Jesus Romero, a fisherman, and Ramona Bareño, a former teacher.[5] She had two older and two younger brothers and was the oldest of four surviving girls. Like all the Romero girls, Frances was beautiful, and she



Roosevelt Junior High School class picture, 1941. Judy Miramontes is the 6th girl from the right in the second row from the bottom. Private collection.

was renowned for her light complexion, light brown hair, and hazel-green eyes. Even while attending Franklin School as a young teen, Frances appears to have been a sort of debutante, making it to the "Society" page of *The San Diego Union* for joining a girls' club and attending a "jolly" birthday celebration at the home of one of her school friends, "a charming little hostess."[6]

Meanwhile, Judith's father Pedro Miramontes, Jr. was born in 1890 in Ensenada to the infamous, loyal Mexican patriot and Chief of the Rural Guard, Pedro Miramontes Sr., and Maria de Jesus Varela.[7] When Pedro Jr. was just five years old, his father died, prompting his mother and six older sisters to spoil the youngest and fatherless boy.[8] His first exposure to Alta California was likely while accompanying his mother and sisters on shopping trips as a youngster, crossing the border on steamships that stopped in Ensenada, Tijuana, San Diego, and Los Angeles.[9]

Pedro attended school until seventh grade and grew up to be very smart and clever but also lazy, mischievous, and carefree. He was a handsome boy with dark hair and eyes, light skin, and a broad smile, who became known for his classy style and petty crimes. By 1909, he was living with his mother and sisters at 537 Ninth Street in San Diego.[10] On his way to sporadic work as an auto mechanic, Pedro apprenticed with F. B. Naylor, a man who would become a large distributor of automobiles and colleague of the prominent Ed Fletcher.

Judith (far left) and high school friends in early 1940s. Private collection.

Pedro and Frances probably met while living and socializing in the same neighborhood along San Diego's coastline, their good looks likely kindling their mutual attraction. In November 1917, just weeks after Frances's eighteenth birthday, the young couple married at Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in San Diego.[11] Also known as La Purísima Mission, it was founded that same year to serve many of the Mexican families escaping from the Mexican Revolution.[12] The small chapel on the northeast corner of Kearney Avenue at 19th Street was staffed by two nearby parish priests.[13]

In 1918, the young couple rented a home at 1619 J Street, with Pedro's older sister Jessie and sometimes their mother, Maria Jesus, as tenants.[14] Pedro was working alternately at the St. Clair Ford Agency as an auto mechanic or as a machinist at C. S. Hardy. Although Mexico declared itself neutral in World War I, Pedro, a Mexican citizen, registered for the draft in the United States but was never sent to fight. Meanwhile, the family expanded when Frances gave birth to Raul "Roy" Miramontes in fall 1918.[15]

Over the following decade, the family grew while coping with instability. Pedro's spoiled youth led him to become a self-centered, egotistical man who enjoyed fast driving and deceptive schemes.[16] Embarrassed but publicly supportive, Frances attended hearings at the San Diego courthouse during Pedro's many appearances. As the 1920s progressed, Pedro and Frances gave birth to five more children, a

new baby arriving every two years: Siria "Pina," Armando "Pat" (people said he walked like a little duck or *papito*), Louis "Wedo" (*guerro* for his light complexion), Judith, and finally Minerva "Minnie" in 1928. A book-lover, Pedro chose to name his children after noteworthy characters in famous stories and myths. The family's growing instability was evident in their frequent moves, as they resided in several San Diego homes and spent a short period living in Los Angeles.[17] Pedro's frequent absences (due to incarceration and border crossings) and unstable income forced Frances to work intermittently as a clerk at Davidson's Department Store.

1929: Fateful Year

Pedro's minor run-ins with law enforcement continued, and since he had never liked the United States but rather was a proud Mexican citizen, he was glad when he was eventually deported to Mexico in 1929.[18] Frances remained in San Diego, left alone to raise and provide for six children aged eleven years and younger, with only her widowed mother close enough to assist. She began working in a cannery to support her children. Being a single, working mother with so many children would have been a struggle and was a role that she considered beneath someone of her respectable Mexican American status.

Our Lady of the Rosary Church in Little Italy, San Diego, 2011. Private collection.

Girls in kindergarten class, c. 1930. Judith is wearing a lighter plaid dress, standing just slightly behind the third and fourth girls from left in the front row. Private collection.

One of Judith's earliest memories—a frightening incident that would change the course of her life—occurred in August that year. Her mother and siblings were renting a cottage at 1729 Atlantic Street, behind the home of their landlords, baker Joseph Tonini and his Mexican American wife, Victoria.[19] One evening after work, Frances reportedly found her family's furniture and personal belongings removed from their house.[20] Frances and young Judith made their way to the large, green Tonini house. Judith remembers that Frances knocked on the back door to discuss their rent payment, which was behind by several months. Victoria was in the kitchen and called through the screen door, "Just a moment." Suddenly, Victoria charged through the door, wielding a butcher knife and stabbing Frances on the cheek. Even as Frances turned away and she and Judith began screaming and crying, Victoria plunged the knife all the way through Frances's left arm.[21]

Longshoreman Diego Torres, walking by on his way home from the waterfront, rushed to tackle Victoria and wrestle the knife out of her hand. Passersby and neighbors who heard the commotion called the police. Frances was rushed to the hospital, and Victoria was arrested the following day, August 23, 1929, with bail set at $1,000.[22] Frances was originally treated at the county hospital, but when she noticed her swollen left arm turning black and blue, she notified Joseph Tonini. Mercy Hospital doctors suspected an infection had set in and thought they might have to cut off her arm. Instead, they operated on and saved her arm, with Joseph paying the bill.

Minerva Miramontes, nd. Private collection.

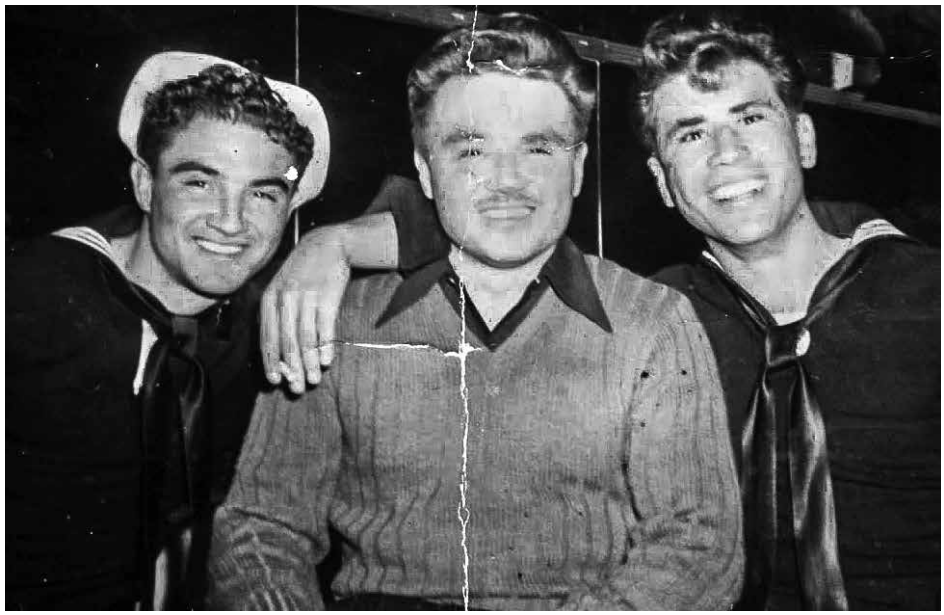
The criminal trial began a few weeks later, when Victoria was charged with assault with a deadly weapon with the intent to commit murder.[23] Judge Lloyd Griffin presided over the September trial; Frances and Diego, along with two police officers, were subpoenaed. On September 23, twelve jurors (none with Latino names) deliberated for eight hours, finding Victoria guilty of the lesser charge of assault with a deadly weapon. "It is quite fortunate that the wounds inflicted did not cause the death of the complaining witness, but as both the complaining witness and the defendant are Mexicans or of foreign extraction, sometimes this course of conduct is not considered as serious as with others," Judge Griffin wrote in his statement.[24] Victoria, aged twenty-nine years, arrived at San Quentin Prison on September 28, 1929 for a maximum ten-year prison sentence.[25]

One month later—October 29—the Stock Market crashed, plunging the country into the Great Depression and creating an even more dire situation for the struggling Miramontes family.

Changes at Home

In 1930, Frances was listed as the head of her household at the same address on Atlantic Street, continuing to support her children by working as a packer at a fish cannery.[26] Victoria's assault resulted in a four-inch long scar across Frances's cheek, scars on her left arm, and Judith's lifelong aversion to knives. But the incident also proved fortuitous for the victim and her savior. Frances and Diego soon developed a relationship; she found a man to support her large family, and he found female affection, entry to a class more elevated than his own, and a household to rule over. In January 1931, the couple welcomed the birth of their first child together. Frances Miramontes was still officially listed as head of household, a cannery worker, and living at 840 W. Cedar Street during the next few years.[27] Diego was living just a few doors down at 825

Minerva Miramontes, nd. Private collection.



Armando and Louis Miramontes beside Vince Adamo, likely early 1940s. Private collection.

W. Cedar. At some point, Diego probably moved into the home, and Frances quit working to begin raising her next set of six children. His work as a longshoreman became the family's sole financial support, a source of power that he used to make home life difficult for the growing Miramontes children. In 1934, Frances filed for divorce from Pedro Miramontes.[28]

Victoria Tonini, now referred to as "La Loca" by the neighborhood, was paroled in July 1931.[29] Probably due to her declining health, she was discharged in April 1933 to her relatives so she could pass away at home. Judith remembers that one of Victoria's legs was rotting badly (probably due to cancer); it was always wrapped in bandages that smelled horrible. Victoria had mellowed and become kinder, giving Judith a nickel or dime to go to the stores for her.

Fishing

Even though their fisherman grandfather Jose Romero had died the year of Roy's birth, the maritime industries still played a major role in the Romeros' and Miramontes's lives, with most of the men becoming fishermen or longshoremen. Judith's older brothers went fishing on the dock when they were young. Roy and Pat taught themselves to become excellent swimmers, but Wedo never learned to swim well. Pat became so good at swimming that everyone thought he should be in the Olympics. He was courageous enough to climb onto the mast of the *Star of India*, anchored at the Embarcadero, and dive into the water below.[30] Unfortunately,

Judith's mother would not permit her daughters to swim, so Judith never learned even though she grew up less than half a mile from the ocean.

When her brothers grew older, they went out on the big ships, such as *Conte Bianco* and *Stella di Genova*, to fish for tuna and sardines. These were owned by commercial fishing companies, which had the necessary money for oil or gas fuel. All of the families fished, because it was good money, but this meant the men would be gone for months at a time. Women often worked in the canneries (like Frances and Judith's friend Antoinette Balistrieri, who always returned from work stinking like fish) to earn money for their families and helped the men with their nets.

Roy Miramontes playing guitar. Private collection.

Upon the fishermen's return, the block along the train tracks and California Street, between Date and Cedar, became the net preparation area. Huge fishing nets from the boats were boiled in water in twelve-foot wide, circular tanks to wash out the salt so they would not break as easily. Wedo, being nosy, once fell into one of the huge tanks and was badly scalded in the hot water; blisters developed on his skin, but everyone was grateful that he had survived. Afterward, the fishermen kept the lids on the tanks so others would not get burned. After boiling, the wet nets were spread out to dry. The women would sit on the ground mending the torn nets, and passersby would take photos of them or paint them working.

Little Italy

Like many who grew up in San Diego's Little Italy, Judith has fond memories. She entertained her grandchildren with stories about growing up there and the area's ties to famous Americans. At the nearby airfield, Charles Lindbergh's famous *Spirit of St. Louis* plane was designed and built in the 1920s. The neighborhood residents watched as workers built the Civic Center (now the County Administration building) on Atlantic Street (now Pacific Highway). President Franklin Roosevelt came to dedicate the building when it was completed in 1938, and Judith remembers him touching her hand as he drove by.[31] She thought he

Cathedral Girls High School graduates, 1944. Judith is towards the center, with full bloom showing. Can you find Gloria Walton, mother of the famous Bill Walton? Private collection.

was so handsome, and at that time, nobody knew that he was unable to walk. "He loved San Diego and would use any excuse to go visit," she recalls.

Beyond these recollections of noteworthy events in San Diego's interwar history, Judith's memories paint a picture of the diversity of Little Italy and the struggles of people trying to get by during a time of economic difficulty. Judith's school years were spent in a neighborhood that bore many of the hallmarks of a working-class ethnic enclave, but her friends and acquaintances—and the churches, shops, and gathering places that defined the area's culture—reflect a heterogeneity somewhat obscured by the name "Little Italy."

San Diego's first synagogue, Temple Beth Israel, was located on First between Beech and Cedar before being moved to Old Town San Diego. Constructed in 1887, it is the second oldest synagogue structure still in existence in the American West.[32] Judith's friend Joe Schloss went there for services, but he used Italian dialect like the Italian American kids he grew up with.

The commercial district lay mostly along India Street. There were several stores to purchase food, and Judith especially liked Napolitano's, where Filippi's Restaurant is now located. Owned by Neapolitan Giglio Mattera, it was a small

shop that sold dried meats, cheese, vegetables, bread, pasta, hard candies, and ice cream, some of it homemade.[33] Other food stores were Catanias and Bernadinis, as well as butcher Johnny Zuanich, where customers could purchase flank fat for a few cents to fry for beans, meats, or vegetables. De Falco, a pricier grocery store, came later. Tony Adamo's barbershop was also located on India Street, and his brother had a shoe repair shop across the street where everybody went to gossip. Adults and old men—many of whom could not speak English—played bocce in the empty lots beside the shops, "but the young guys would not be caught dead playing with them," Judith recalls.

Judith's graduation photo, 1944. Private collection.

Bay City Drug Store on India Street was a popular hangout for teenagers, even though it always smelled clean and medicinal. Kids could purchase a soda fountain drink and enjoy it on a swivel chair. All the "cool" kids hung out there, with the boys eyeing the girls who stopped in. The theater next door became popular when it showed *Ecstasy*, the much talked-about film that everyone wanted to see because of Hedy Lamarr's nude scene. The theater closed soon after opening, though. Closer to school was Heller's Groceries, mostly a bakery. The Jewish owner sold day-old pastries, candy, bread, and cheese. Across the street, at the corner of Date and State, was another shop that kids frequented to buy candy, sodas, and malts.

Globe A1 Flour Mills, located on the corner of California Street along the train tracks and Beech Street, sold bags of flour for less money than the grocery store. Once the flour was used, mothers would turn the bags into underwear for their children. Judith remembers seeing Globe A1 Flour printed on girls' bloomers when they flipped on the monkey bars at school; the trademark would eventually disappear after several washings.

Lew Allen's Junk Yard was along California on the next block, Cedar; he would give children a penny or two for junk or scrap metal that they sold to him, even though he knew much of it came from his own junk yard.[34] Fishermen often purchased used items or leftover materials from him for their boats.

Home & Health

By 1936, Diego and Frances had moved the family to 1636 California Street.[35] This new house had three bedrooms, a kitchen, and sitting area atop wooden

Louis (second from left) and Armando (first on right) Miramontes during "Blow Out" party in December 1946. Private collection.

floors. The kitchen contained a large, black, wood-burning stove about six feet wide and four feet high, with four burners, an oven, and a flat space for browning tortillas. This served for cooking and warming the house, fueled by newspapers and wood found by the children or sometimes purchased by parents and chopped by the older boys. There were beds and cribs everywhere, with the girls sleeping in one room, the boys in another, and Frances and Diego in the master bedroom with a crib. The house contained a single bathroom, but it was rarely available because everyone wanted to use it. Brother Pat spent forever in the bathroom, as he was very focused on his looks. Eventually Judith's brothers set up a shower stall outside, where they could wear their bathing suits and wash outdoors.

Frances continued to give birth about once every two years. Most families in the area had a minimum of six children, but it was unusual to have a dozen, so many residents pitied the Miramontes children for being fatherless and having to share with so many siblings during such poor times for everyone.

Judith knew when her mother was going into labor each time, because they would begin boiling water and gathering towels and old newspapers. Apart from visits to attend to very sick children, these were the only occasions when the doctor came to the house. If anyone had measles, mumps, or whooping cough, the family would have to put up a quarantine sign on their front doors, which was very embarrassing for the household. When Roy was a baby, he contracted measles. Judith herself was a skinny and sickly child, always getting injured or having

colds or a cough and being sent to the hospital. When Judith was very sick once and admitted to the county hospital, her mother and siblings came to visit, and during one of her moments of rest, she remembers hearing her brothers and sisters (tired of her incessant coughing) ask their mother, "Is she going to die this time?"

The Torres home became quite noisy with so many people in it. Children awoke to babies crying and a loud racket each day, got themselves a cereal breakfast, fought to use the bathroom or washed themselves in the bedroom with a pan of water, and headed off to school on foot. Judith remembers coming home one day and finding her dolls, metal dish set, and toys—gifted from her Miramontes aunts and neatly hidden in a corner of the girls' bedroom closet—scattered all over the floor. She became angry at her mother for allowing her younger half-sister Thelma to get into and make a mess of her toys.

Given the economic strain of the Depression, everyone in the neighborhood was struggling. People walked everywhere; few owned or needed cars. Once or twice a month, the government would send out a truck and worker to distribute food and clothing at the corner of Kettner and Grape Streets.[36] A government official would supervise to ensure that no person or family was taking more than they were allotted based on household size. Eggs, powdered milk, butter, bread, some vegetables, and the same outfits (flowered dresses for girls, dark green corduroy jackets for all, and navy blue pants for boys) were available. If they were savvy sewers, females would customize the stock clothes so theirs did not match everyone else's. Thin Judith often shared her sister's clothes.

Kindergarten boys at Washington School, likely early 1930s. Private collection.

Globe A1 Flour Mill, March 1936 (SDHC #2041-3).

Most people ate a lot of lima or pinto beans and potatoes, inexpensive and filling foods. Judith remembers also eating a lot of fish, so much so that she is disgusted and refuses to eat it even today. Lunches were eaten at home or packed for school. Frances was a good cook, making delicious tortillas. With so many children and little money, though, she often made big pots of soup or beans for dinner, saving her enchilada and turkey baking for Christmas and Easter with the help of Pina and sometimes Judith.

Work & Play

Oldest Miramontes child Roy was always "away at college," Frances said, when in reality, he was in and out of detention and correctional facilities. So as the eldest daughter, Pina took on a lot of the responsibility in caring for her younger siblings. The majority of children had chores to do and little jobs to help earn money. They often washed and dried dirty clothes and dishes, swept porches, and collected wood (in exchange for candy or cookies from their Grandma Ramona) and scrap metal. To clean their clothes, Judith's family first used a washbasin and board, and later a washing machine. The clothes were hung outside to dry, and then a family member would bring them in and spread them on the table to sort them. When Frances once asked Wedo to bring in the dry clothes or chop some

wood, he responded, "Why can't Phonie do it?" while baby Alfonso sat nearby in a highchair! Boys like Pat and Wedo sold weekly *Liberty* magazines door to door and on corners, going all the way to Mission Hills and downtown San Diego. They would bring the money they had collected to the distributor and receive a dime in payment. Frances, Grandma Ramona, and neighbors would pay Judith five cents to run errands, so she would borrow a wagon, take their shopping lists, visit the stores, and deliver the groceries. As she grew older, Judith also worked as a "mother's helper" for neighbors; they would pay her twenty-five cents per hour to care for their children, and she would give twenty cents of it to her mother to help with household expenses.

Pat and Wedo enjoyed hanging out at Bay City Drug Store. George Ashook, one of six brothers in a Syrian family, and some of the Corona brothers were friends of Wedo and Pat too.[37] In 1936, 13-year-olds George and Pat, along with another teen, "had a large quantity of cigarets [sic] and tobacco with them, which they admitted taking from [a] Fifth Ave. store."[38] They were arrested and placed in a detention home, but that was the end of Pat's run-ins with police. Later, Wedo and his friend Vince Adamo (son of the shoe repair shop owner) went downtown to dance frequently, and the adults worried about the boys being near Broadway Street, which was known for lots of drinking and smoking.

Black Pullman trains and colored freight cars always whizzed by on the Santa Fe railway (with the closest stops in Oceanside and the Mexican border), so the neighborhood thought nothing of the constant rumble and train whistles. Engineers would sound the whistle at the children as they went by, and everyone had to learn to live with trains stopped on the track. One child was killed after trying to cross the tracks to beat the train. Even though all the adults told them not to, the kids would wiggle underneath rather than go around stationary train cars. They also turned the stopped freight cars into playgrounds, hopping on, playing and building campfires, and finding foods and candies stashed by train workers or hoboes.

To escape the commotion of the Torres household, the remaining Miramontes children spent as little time as possible at home. By age fifteen, Pina had married Ernest Cuadras, an educated Mexican boy who would often come by the house to pick her up, hiding his missing fingers in his pockets to avoid teasing by the kids. Judith often stayed with her Grandma Ramona or hid below her family's porch, where she could lay on the dirt and quietly read whatever she could get her hands on from the school library.

Parents usually wanted kids out of the house and off the porches when playing, so they often roamed the neighborhood. During their free time, they built fires and cooked potatoes. The neighborhood children would play kick the can,

Pedro Miramontes Jr., stands between two other men, likely in 1930s Mexico. Private collection.

king of the mountain, and hide and seek. Boys went to the vacant lots on Atlantic Street and used cardboard segments to make a hideout under a cherry tree. Judith often played there too with her Portuguese friends Madeline and Margaret Gomes, who lived at the end of the block.

Special Events & Trips

Even though the 1930s were a hard period for people nationwide, there were still opportunities for diversions and entertainment. Once or twice a year, the circus would roll into town on the trains. San Diegans would crowd around the tracks to get a closer look at the performers waving through the windows. Tents full of animals, performers, and equipment would camp out on the flat area between Atlantic Street and the coastline. Grandma Ramona loved the circus, so she would often treat her grandchildren. Judith remembers watching the singers, dancers, and gun fights during the big shows and savoring the popcorn, peanuts, and Cracker Jack. The images most memorable to her were the oddities: a woman with one arm, a man with funny-looking feet, and the famous Schlitzie, billed as an "ugly woman." Actually, Schlitzie was a four-foot-tall man with microcephaly and the mental capacity of a toddler.[39]

During the summers, Judith and her siblings often visited their father Pedro and stayed with his sisters in their Tijuana properties. Pedro had settled into one of the little houses, living a relaxed lifestyle full of bullfighting, horse racing, and gambling at Agua Caliente using money given to him by his sisters.

One of Judith's earliest memories of her father was of him setting her on a horse at Agua Caliente, it rearing up or jumping, and her flying through the air and landing on the ground. She thought she was dead, and everyone was angry at Pedro for being so careless with his young daughter. Another time, when she was about eight years old, she was visiting him and he asked her to iron his shirt for him. She was shocked at his laziness, replying, "No, I don't know how to iron!" On another occasion, young Minnie went missing from the Tijuana house, and everyone began frantically searching for her. Several hours later, a young couple approached the house, with five-year-old Minnie happily licking an ice cream

Siria and Roy Miramontes, nd. Private collection.

cone, oblivious to her family's worry. She had wandered off on her own in search of the city park but then became lost. The couple had seen her crying, bought her an ice cream, and escorted her home.

Pedro's sister Guadalupe "Lupe" had epilepsy at a time when there was no treatment. Regardless, she married a Mexican officer, Michael Castro, and gave birth to two handsome boys. By the 1930s, she was a widow whose children were grown, so her sisters took turns caring for her in their homes. She would go days without a seizure, but her condition was worsening. Once, her younger sister Jessie had to leave the house to run some errands, so she asked young Judith and Judith's rich Fernandez girlfriends to watch over Lupe while she was gone. Lupe did end up convulsing, scaring the young girls so much with her ugly expression that they ran out of the house, leaving Lupe writhing on the floor. When Jessie returned home, she discovered Lupe listless, which she knew meant that she had had a seizure. Jessie was furious that the girls had left Lupe alone in that condition.

Judith's Haven

Judith's favorite place to be was her Grandma Ramona's house at 1625 or 1635 Atlantic Street (now Pacific Highway), where she felt safe, well-loved, and cared for. [40] Of all Ramona's grandchildren, Judith had the closest connection with Ramona, more like a warm mother-daughter relationship. Ramona felt pride in her Mexican heritage and knew how to raise children properly, without yelling. Although she understood English, she always spoke in Spanish, teaching Judith to speak it fluently.

Ramona had a large Victorian-style house with beautiful gardens in front and an old carriage house in the backyard. The front area was filled with trees, flowers, and a brick pathway—Judith remembers passersby gawking at the house and stopping to

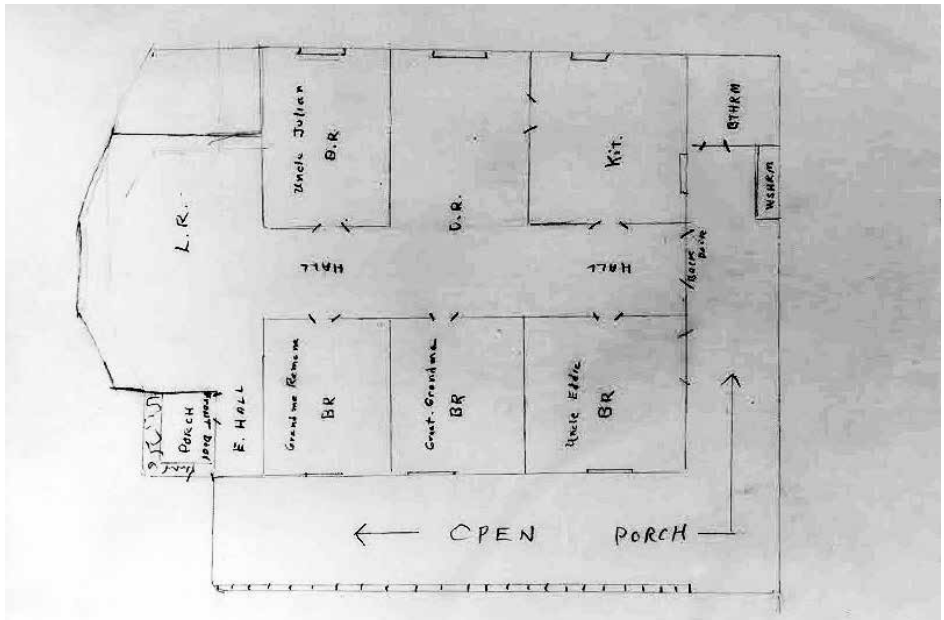
Pedro Miramontes Jr. holding toddler Roy, c. 1920. Private collection.

take photographs of the colorful flowers and complimenting how well Ramona maintained it. The house had four bedrooms, a living room with huge picture window and full of antique oak furniture, a kitchen, and an indoor bathroom with toilet and shower room toward the back. The kitchen had a big wood stove for cooking and to keep warm, and the family would go outside for coolness, sleeping on the wraparound porches in the summer. Ramona used one bedroom, her grown sons Julian and Eddie used two others, and her own mother, Pilar Vargas, used the fourth one. The old carriage house had been turned into a garage, although nobody owned a car.

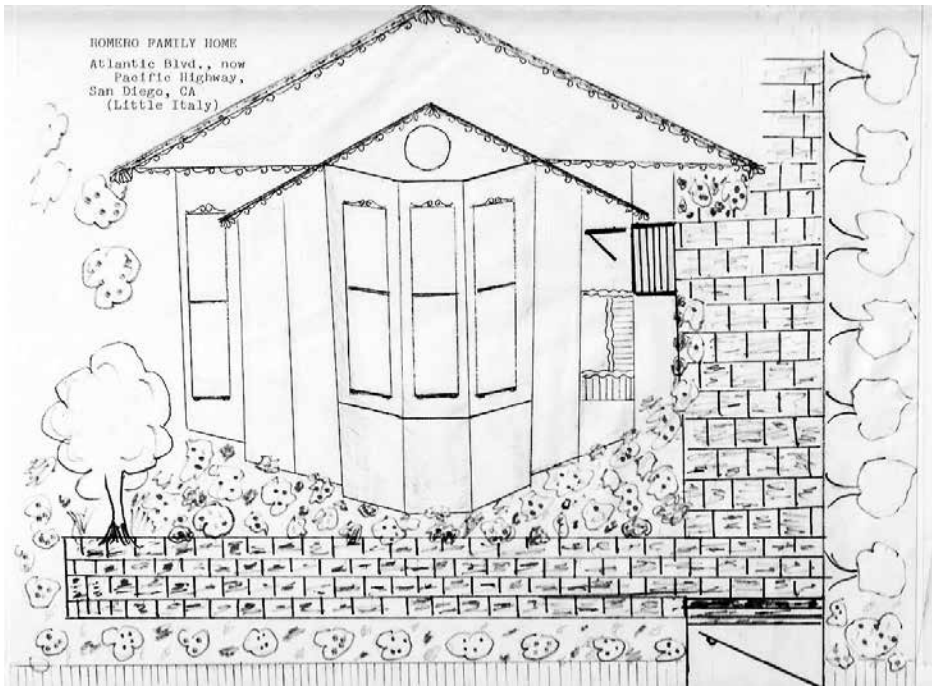
Siria Miramontes, likely in 1940s. Private collection.

At one point, Grandma Ramona and Uncle Julian told Judith at the last minute that they were going to move to Anaheim. Judith packed all her belongings and marched over to their house to join them. When they told her she could not come with them, she sat on their stoop, crying and watching as her Uncle Harry drove them away in his moving truck. After a few months, they returned to the same house, saying they did not like Anaheim!

Judith spent much of her free time at Ramona's house, sleeping, eating



Floorplan of Grandma Ramona Romero's home on Atlantic, drawn by Judith. Private collection.

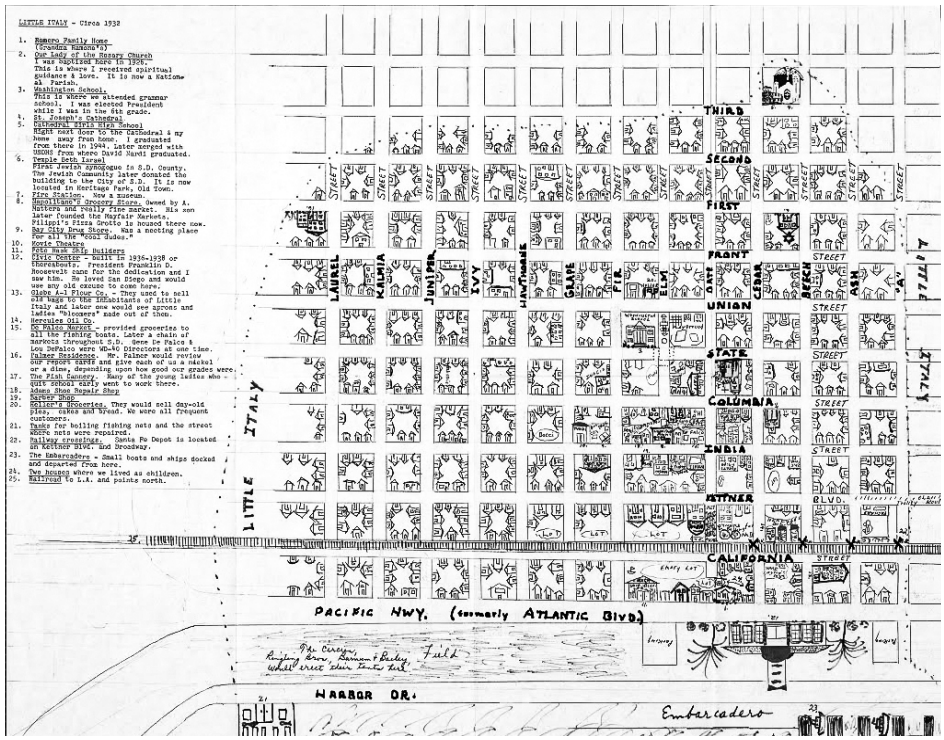


Front of Grandma Ramona Romero's home on Atlantic, drawn by Judith. Private collection.

breakfast and dinner, doing homework, and playing outside afterward. Her grandma was always urging Judith to play with children her own age, but Judith soaked up the warmth, safety, and love of this household. Ramona used a foot-pedal Singer sewing machine at the end of her hall and made thick flour tortillas that Judith loved. Uncle Julian was a kind, quiet man, who carried a lot of mental and physical pain from his experiences during the First World War. He limped and battled post-traumatic stress disorder before it was a recognized condition, but he at least received disability from the military and continued working as a fisherman for the remainder of his life.

Other Sanctuaries: School & Church

Another of Judith's sanctuaries was Washington Elementary School nestled in Little Italy. All the teachers were kind and cared for the children, whom they knew were growing up during impoverished times. The principal and teachers made sure that nurses came to the school to vaccinate the students. When they made house calls to speak to parents, they were puzzled when instructed to take an empty jar with them. The parents would speak with the teachers and send them along home with a jar full of homemade wine. Prohibition lasted from 1920 to 1933, but that did not stop anyone from making their own wine, including Judith's



Little Italy, San Diego map, c. 1932, drawn by Judith. Private collection.

Grandma Ramona and Uncle Julian.[41] Principal Peter Snyder was especially kind to the students, inviting a dozen or so to his family's Mission Valley house, where they were fed and able to ride horses.

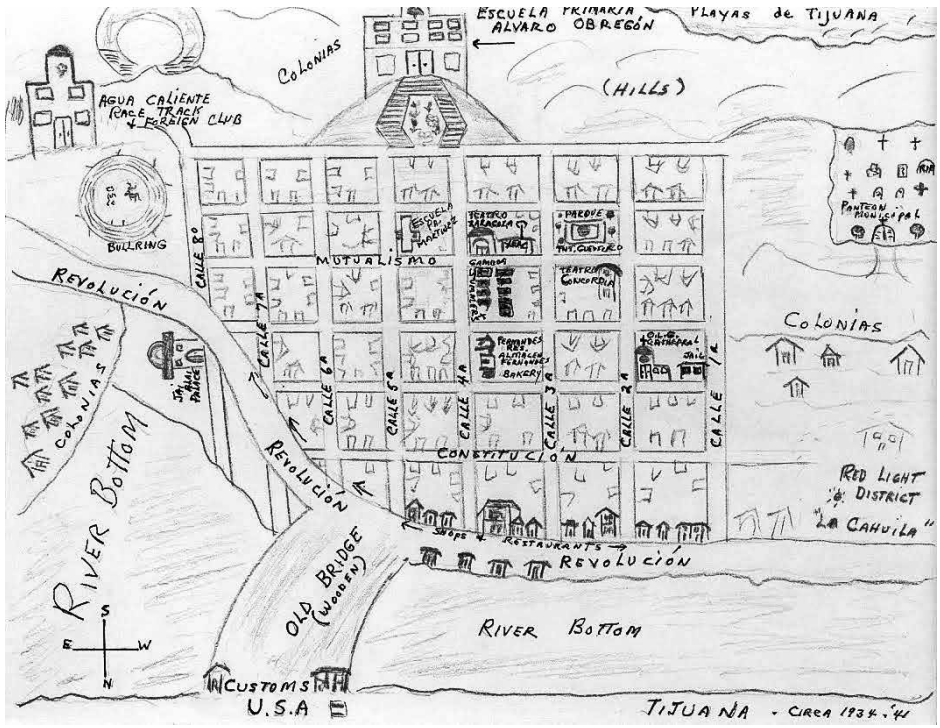
Teachers and librarians especially favored studious Judith, because they knew she tried her best in school, because they felt sorry for her poverty, or both. Mrs. Alice C. Walters was the fifth-grade teacher, and after arranging a doctor's checkup, she invited Judith to her Idyllwild house over the summer to play with her kids. Mrs. Lena Krause taught science and liked the boys better than the girls, but she asked Judith to run errands for her and then brought her candy. The school librarians let Judith stay longer than other students to peruse the books and made recommendations to her. Her closest school friends were Marie Tarantino, Antoinette Balistrieri, Tiadora Inacio, and Jack Zolezzi; she and Antoinette were the smartest in their class and trusted by their teachers.

All the students loved showing their grades to Mr. Parmelee, a wealthy man who lived in a nice home at 202 W. Ivy Street.[42] He gave the children dimes for good report cards—a significant reward for a child in those days. The kids did not know it at the time, but they were recipients of the goodwill of Edmund Parmelee, a prominent San Diego newspaperman.[43]

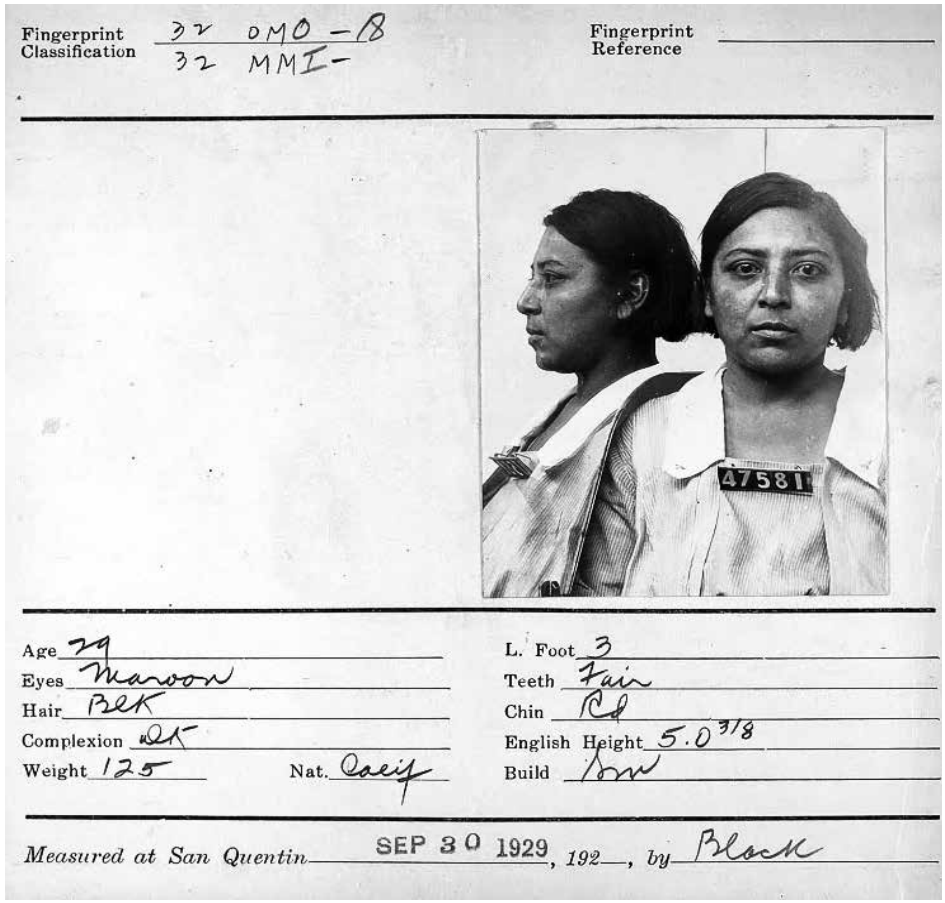
Several Miramontes children became involved in school activities. In 1929, young Pat played a "flower" in the "Living Flower Garden" play at school, a persona that was at odds with his later boxing career.[44] Judith was part of the Glee Club that sang carols in the Yule Christmas program in 1937. That same school year, sixth grade, Judith was elected school president and was excited to organize school assemblies. Judith graduated from Washington School in June 1938.

Most neighborhood children went on to attend Roosevelt Junior High School, near Balboa Park, for seventh through ninth grades. Around this time, both Judith and Minnie attended the Frances De Pauw Industrial School for Spanish Girls, a Protestant boarding school in Los Angeles, for about one year. They were separated by age for instruction, and each girl had her own bed. Neither girl liked it, so they returned to San Diego, but lived itinerantly thereafter, moving from one family's house to another.

Unfortunately, many students did not have the opportunity to continue school past ninth grade; boys would be sent off to fish, girls to get married or to work in the canneries to help support their families. Judith and Minnie were lucky to continue attending school. Judith walked to and from junior high and then to San Diego High School for tenth grade, a distance of about three miles. When she



Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico map c. 1934-41, drawn by Judith. Private collection.



Victoria Tonini San Quentin Prison ID Card. Courtesy Records of the California Department of Corrections, San Quentin State Prison, California State Archives.

had money, she would take the bus from the State Street station, then transfer to a streetcar at the Plaza. Vito Sardo, a younger neighborhood friend, remembered seeing Judith on these bus and streetcar rides. "We did not talk too much but I remember that you were extraordinarily beautiful and that you favored your brother Pat in looks (in a feminine way of course)," he later wrote to her.[45]

Our Lady of the Rosary Church served as another safe haven for Judith, where she would attend mass with Grandma Ramona or sneak away from home for quiet solitude and prayer. Dedicated in 1925 under the leadership of Father Rabagiati to serve the growing Italian Catholic population in San Diego, the church still exists today at the corner of Date and State Streets.[46] The parish buildings were generously financed by the Italian fisherman families, and most of the Miramontes children were baptized there. When Fr. Rabagiati retired and returned to Italy in 1935, Father Pilolla replaced him. Judith remembers Fr. Pilolla as being a very

holy man who gave half of his salary to poor people in the neighborhood. The Parish Hall was dedicated in 1939.[47]

The Catholic Church was an important source of community in Little Italy, especially in its ability to draw together the Mexican and Italian immigrant populations. Judith remained steadfast in her Catholic allegiance, refusing to attend services at the Protestant church in a house on the corner of Columbia and Ash as expected by stepfather Diego, who liked to exert his control over the Miramontes children. Judith believes he felt guilty for his mistreatment of them and never would have wanted to confess in a Catholic church. Judith enjoyed watching the many Italian processions—women and girls carrying beautiful flowers as they celebrated Madonna del Lume or the beginning of another fishing season. Judith's devotion to the Catholic Church continued into her teenage years, when she worked odd jobs (including at the U.S. Grant Hotel malt shop) as a teen to pay her own tuition for two years at Cathedral Girls High School. These were probably the happiest years of her life.

By this point, the United States was embroiled in the Second World War. All three Miramontes brothers served in the military. Pat operated navy landing craft in the Pacific Theater, earning the Victory Medal. Wedo served in the air force in the Europe-Africa-Middle East campaign (including the Normandy invasion and Battle of the Bulge), earning a Silver Star and another medal with four bronze service stars. Roy enlisted in 1945 and was trained as a paratrooper.[48] Pina and Minnie had started their own families, and Judith later married an Italian American, Louis Nardi, a handsome boy who joined the navy to get away from Connecticut and who came to adore San Diego.

End of an Era

New international conservation and trade laws, employment restrictions placed on Italian aliens, and the confiscation of boats by the navy during World War II dampened San Diego's fishing industry.[49] After the war, the Japanese were able to fish in Mexican and California waters, causing the area to become overfished. Furthermore, fish could be imported more cheaply in the postwar years. Many residents of Little Italy wrote to the US government to complain, but they were unsuccessful. These developments destroyed the fishing industry, but San Diego became a powerhouse for shipping and the navy. While Little Italy as Judith and her siblings knew it faded away, it continued to exert a powerful influence on those who grew up there. Many of the grown neighborhood kids attended the annual "Blow Out" parties at the U.S. Grant Hotel to rekindle Little Italy friendships.[50]

Despite their tough family life, the Miramontes siblings developed into

Washington Elementary School, nd. Private collection.

attractive and talented young women and men. Along with his intelligence, Roy was very musical, learning to sing and play the piano, guitar, and banjo. Pina played the piano by ear and excelled at cooking. Pat's athleticism was well known in Little Italy. Along with his swimming feats, he began boxing as a teen and excelled in every weight class. "Pat was well known for his swift hands and hard counter punching capability, along with a great left hook," according to his children.[51] Additionally, Pat could paint beautifully, imitating oil paintings from the masters, and perfected the harmonica, with which he serenaded his future wife, Lorraine. Wedo played guitar but adored the saxophone, as both he and Judith loved jazz music. Wedo wrote very touching poetry and later attempted to write a book about his experiences during World War II. Minnie was known for being beautiful, both inside and out. She would turn the heads of everyone who walked by her, and often they would turn to give her a second look, their jaws falling agape in awe. She was sweet and sensitive, clung to Judith as her nearest companion, and sang beautifully too. Judith sewed and embroidered; she also developed her intellectual abilities through voracious reading and her prolonged attendance in school. Judith Nardi was proud to be elected as an officer at WD-40 when the company went public in 1973 and worked for years under Cy Irving and later, John Barry.

All the Miramontes siblings married and had children and grandchildren. Even though all moved out of Little Italy (as did most of the original families), the Miramontes brothers returned to work along the coast as fishermen and

longshoremen. Miramontes descendants are now scattered across San Diego, northern California, Arizona, New Mexico, and northeast Ohio. While Little Italy's present-day promoters celebrate the area's Italian roots, the Miramontes family story is an important reminder of the neighborhood's diverse and dynamic past.

Siria Miramontes, nd. Private collection.

NOTES

1. Much of the narrative of the Miramontes and Romero families is derived from multiple conversations between the author and her grandmother, Judith Miramontes.
2. Douglas L. Lowell, "The California Southern Railroad and the Growth of San Diego," *The Journal of San Diego History* 31, no. 4 (Fall 1985), https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1985/october/railroad-8/.
3. William C. Richardson, "Fisherman of San Diego," *The Journal of San Diego History* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1981), https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1981/october/fishermen/.
4. This is evident from numerous border crossing cards, ship manifests, and *San Diego Union* newspaper articles for Romero and Miramontes family members.
5. US Census Bureau, "1900 Census, Population Schedule 1," San Diego City, ward 5, supervisor's district 6, enumeration district 195, sheet 1, Ancestry.com.
6. "Young Hostess Celebrates Birthday," *The San Diego Union*, June 5, 1912, Newspapers.com; "Organize Girls Club in School," *The San Diego Union*, June 22, 1913, Newspapers.com.
7. Purísimo Corazón de María, "Bautismos," Baja California and Baja California Sur, Catholic Church Records, 1750-1983, Ensenada, 1890, p. 24, no. 29, FamilySearch.org.
8. Pablo L. Martínez, *Guía Familiar de Baja California 1700-1900* (La Paz, Baja California, Mexico: Instituto Sudcaliforniano de Cultura, 2011), 893.
9. Some of their arrivals were announced in California newspapers, border crossing permits, and ship manifests beginning from 1895 through the 1930s.
10. San Diego City and County Directories (San Diego: San Diego Directory Co., 1909), 361.
11. "Marriage Licenses," San Diego Directory, San Diego City Directory 1930, Nov 24, 1917, http://www.newspapers.com; "Complaint," *Frances R. Miramontes v. Pedro V. Miramontes*, Superior Court of California, County of San Diego (1934).
12. "Our History: Nuestra Historia," Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, accessed February 16, 2020, https://olgsd.org/22.
13. Alberto López Pulido, "Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: The Mexican Catholic Experience in San Diego," *The Journal of San Diego History* 37, no. 4 (Fall 1991), https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1991/october/catholic/.
14. San Diego City and County Directories (San Diego: San Diego Directory Co., 1918), 636; US Selective Service System, "Registration Card," San Diego Local Board No. 2 (1918), Ancestry.com.
15. US Census Bureau, "1920 Census-Population," San Diego City, ward precinct 102, supervisor's district 9, enumeration district 336, sheet 7A, Ancestry.com.
16. There are many references to his petty crimes in *The San Diego Union* newspaper, San Diego Court case documentation, and California Youth Authority Inmate Records.
17. See San Diego City Directories throughout the 1920s; California Board of Health, "Certificate of Birth," Louis Miramontes, California State Archives, FamilySearch.org; Whittier State School, "Probation Officer's Report, Raul Miramontes," Inmate History Register 1928 in Youth Authority Inmate Records, California State Archives.
18. Several *San Diego Union* newspaper articles describe Pedro's legal troubles; *Miramontes v. Miramontes*.
19. San Diego City and County Directories (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1930), 508.
20. "Judge's Statement," *The People of the State of California v. Victoria Tonini*, Superior Court of California, County of San Diego (1929).

21. "Judge's Statement," *People of California v. Tonini*. Victoria claimed in the ensuing trial that Frances entered the house without knocking and that during an argument that ensued Frances motioned in a threatening manner with a "bundle" she held in her hand. Thus, Victoria claimed the knife attack was an act of self-defense. "Warrant of Arrest," The People of the State of California vs. Victoria Tonini.
22. "Warrant of Arrest," *People of California v. Tonini*.
23. "Criminal Complaint," *People of California v. Tonini*.
24. "Judge's Statement," *People of California v. Tonini*.
25. California Department of Corrections, "San Quentin State Prison Inmate Identification Photograph Cards/Inmate 46141-47680," in San Quentin State Prison Records, 1850–1950, ID #R135, California State Archives, Ancestry.com.
26. US Census Bureau, "1930 Census-Population Schedule," San Diego City, supervisor's district 21, enumeration district 37-148, sheet 2B, Ancestry.com.; San Diego City and County Directory (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1930), 508.
27. San Diego City and County Directories (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1930-1933).
28. *Miramontes v. Miramontes*.
29. California Department of Corrections, "San Quentin Mug Book 62413-71409, Photos 1926-1956," in San Quentin State Prison Records, 1850–1950, California State Archives.
30. Peter Corona, *Little Italy: The Way It Was* (Bloomington, IN: Trafford Publishing, 2010), 35, 67, 86.
31. Corona, *Little Italy*, 58.
32. Henry Schwartz, "Temple Beth Israel," *The Journal of San Diego History* 27, no. 4 (Fall 1981), https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1981/october/temple/.
33. San Diego City and County Directory (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1932), 405.
34. Ibid., 100.
35. "Three Boys Held in Store Thefts," *The San Diego Union*, March 20, 1936, Newspapers.com; San Diego City and County Directory (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1939), 564.
36. Judith is unsure what specific government agency was responsible for these relief deliveries. Traditionally, care of the poor in California was a task delegated to counties, but municipal and state agencies, as well as private charities, dispensed aid as well. After the creation of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration during the New Deal, federal funds were diverted to the states, which in turn distributed money to county agencies.
37. Corona, *Little Italy*, 67.
38. "Three Boys Held in Store Thefts."
39. John Woolf, *The Wonders: The Extraordinary Performers Who Transformed the Victorian Age* (New York: Pegasus Books, Ltd., 2019), 301-302. Due to his incontinence, he wore diapers and dresses for easier care. He spent 30 years performing in American sideshows and the cult classic film Freaks in 1932, spent some time in a mental institution, and then returned to sideshows and circuses until his death in 1971.
40. "Mother Spared When Son Goes to Jail," *The San Diego Union*, March 21, 1925, Newspapers.com.
41. San Diego City and County Directory (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1933), 495; San Diego San Diego City and County Directory (San Diego: Frye & Smith, 1939), 476; US Census Bureau, "1930 Census-Population Schedule," San Diego City, supervisor's district 21, enumeration district 37-140, sheet 4B, Ancestry.com. The street number and name changed during these years, but this author believes the house was the same"Mother Spared When Son Goes to Jail," *The San Diego Union*, March 21, 1925, Newspapers.com.

42. US Census Bureau, "1930 Census-Population Schedule," San Diego City, supervisor's district 21, enumeration district 37-140, sheet 6B, Ancestry.com.

43. William Ellsworth Smythe, "Part 5: The Last Two Decades, Chapter 3: Later Journalism & Literature," in *History of San Diego: 1542-1908* (San Diego: The History Company, 1908), https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/books/smythe/part5-3/; "Edmund Fairfield Parmelee," Find a Grave, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/116795758/edmund-fairfield-parmelee. Born in Michigan the year the Civil War began, he began working in the San Diego newspaper industry in 1888. Married and father to three children, Parmelee was considered the "dean of the newspaper corps" for the longest continuous service to San Diego newspapers. In 1930, he was a wealthy and aging advertising executive for *The San Diego Union*. His children were grown and moved out, but he was still head of the household with his wife, sister-in-law, and a live-in maid. He passed away in 1937 and was interred in the Cypress View Mausoleum.

44. "'Flowers' in School Play Here," *The San Diego Union*, May 27, 1929, Newspapers.com; "Tableaux to Aid School Singers in Yule Program," *The San Diego Union*, December 12, 1937, Newspapers.com; "Washington Pupils to Graduate Today," The San Diego Union, June 9, 1938, Newspapers.com.

45. Sardo, letter to Miramontes, September 16, 2015, private collection. See also Vito M. Sardo, *Little Italy: The Sicilians* (San Diego: Allegra, 2015).

46. "The First Ninety-Three Years–A Brief History," Our Lady of the Rosary Church, accessed February 16, 2020, http://www.olrsd.org/History-of-OLR.

47. "The First Ninety-Three Years." See also, "1939 Parish Hall Program," Italian Community Archives of San Diego, https://italianarchives.smugmug.com/Our-Lady-of-the-Rosary-Parish/Programs-and-Documents/1939-Parish-Hall-Program/.

48. Roy was dishonorably discharged about a year later after 428 days lost, under Articles of War, section 107.

49. Richardson, "Fisherman of San Diego.

50. Corona, *Little Italy*, 190-91.

51. "Pat Miramontes," Obituaries, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, October 14, 2012, https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/obituaries.

Historiographic Review: "San Diego History and Black (In)visibility"

David Miller

Editors' Note

We are excited to present here the second installment of what we hope will be a regular feature. For each issue we will invite a scholar to revisit past content from the Journal *and to assess it from the perspective of recent developments in the relevant historiography. Our desire is to familiarize readers with some of the ways historians are reinterpreting the past and to remind us that history is a living discipline.*

On Thanksgiving Day 1924, Black entrepreneur and community leader George Ramsey opened the Douglas Hotel on the corner of Market and Second Streets. For thirty years, his hotel (co-managed with his wife Mabel Rowe) served San Diego's Black community with rooms, a nightclub, grill, cleaners, and clothing store because White-owned stores downtown would not. Theirs was an institution of Black economic independence, culture, and kinship. In 1985 redevelopers tore it down in favor of a mixed-use residential and commercial building, and today only a sidewalk plaque marks the spot where the hotel once stood. The story of the Douglas Hotel illustrates the active, often vibrant, historical presence of the Black community in San Diego and how its members demonstrated incredible resolve in the face of White supremacy and segregation. To come to terms with histories like that of the Douglas Hotel is to come to terms with the best and the worst of San Diego. The Douglas Hotel is also a metaphor for the ways Black

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history has become nearly invisible to the public and, for most of the past sixty-five years, to readers of this journal.

The Journal of San Diego History has a blind spot. Our research shows that since the Journal's founding in 1955, excluding this issue, only twelve articles specifically devoted to a topic involving the Black community have appeared.[1] If we expand the definition slightly to include articles with a peripheral discussion of Black history, the number increases slightly but is less than twenty. Between 1955 and 1972, one article about African Americans in San Diego appeared in print (1958). The same is true from 1976 to 2007, with the lone article appearing in 1981. The remaining ten appeared between 1973 and 1975 and since 2008. So while Black history is San Diego history, the scholarship in this journal has not always reflected that fact.

San Diego's Black history follows many of the trajectories of the broader development of both the city and the United States. The first settlers of African descent arrived with the Spanish expedition of 1769, which included Afro-Caribbean soldiers and sailors. Exact demographic counts of early Black San Diego are hard to determine as Spanish and Mexican records often lumped peoples of African descent into a "mixed" category. For example, the Black population was included in the 1790 presidio census which showed forty-five of the ninety adults as "mixed blood." Similarly, during the Mexican Era, the multi-ethnic landscape of San Diego Pueblo included many with mixed African heritage. With the United States conquest, Americans of African descent began arriving in California, including Allen Light and Richard Freeman in San Diego, the latter of whom settled in 1847 and served as postmaster until 1850.

The American period produced what might properly be considered a Black community. Post-Civil War migration brought some Black residents who preferred the relative isolation of Julian and Palomar. Indeed it was African American Fred Coleman who discovered gold and triggered Julian's gold rush in 1870, while Albert and Margaret Robinson opened a bakery and eventually built the Hotel Robinson in 1897. Others, arriving as tradesmen and laborers, lived interspersed with the houses and businesses of Horton's New Town addition, primarily between Ash and Market and Eighth and State. The Great Migration, the massive movement of Black peoples out of the South, touched San Diego. The Black population was growing dramatically, brought to San Diego by the prospect of railroad jobs and opportunity during the world wars. From just under 1,000 residents in 1920, the city's Black population reached 2,723 in 1930 and about 3,700 by 1940. In response, by the 1920s White property owners and real estate agents had employed restrictive covenants, property deeds stipulating that an owner would not sell to non-Whites, which shifted the Black community from the center of Downtown to the southeast. There the Black community looked

inward, building churches, businesses, and mutual aid societies, including the San Diego Race Relations Society in 1924 and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925. And it is in this context that Ramsey built the Hotel Douglas to serve Black people who passed through the mostly segregated downtown area.

The *Journal*'s scholarship on Black San Diego mirrors many of the developments within the historical profession since 1955. In some ways, it is not surprising that there is only one article in the 1950s as historians, mostly White, were simply not concerned with what they often considered unimportant or inaccessible Black histories. The January 1958 article "Palomar's Friendly Hermit" by Laura James offers a brief sketch of Nathan Harrison's mysterious life, without investigating the complexities of the man behind the myth.[2] Then the social and cultural shifts coinciding with the Civil Rights Movements called into question such scant and dismissive Black histories as James's. The New Social historians, a group of academic historians primarily focused on the lived experience, re-centered United States history, as White scholars—and for the first time large numbers of non-white scholars for whom civil rights laws had opened academia—took an interest in Black histories, embracing in particular the twin themes of presence and agency. These scholars looked at history from "the bottom up" and emphasized the long-neglected role of marginalized peoples in the historical process.

We see this reflected in a spike of scholarship in the *Journal* in the 1970s. Henry Schwartz was the first to seriously examine San Diego's anti-Black racism in his article, "The Mary Walker Incident."[3] Kenneth G. Goode took an interest in the contributions of Black settlers in the region in *California's Black Pioneers: A Brief Historical Survey* (1974). Lawrence B. de Graaf reviewed this first major history of Blacks in California for the Journal in 1975.[4] David J. Weber emulated Goode's model of presence and agency in "A Black American in Mexican San Diego." Weber explored the mystery of one of San Diego's earliest Black residents, Allen Light, through two documents Light seems to have hidden in the Machado adobe. Weber writes of Allen's prescient agency, "In hiding two of his personal papers in the Casa de Machado during his brief stay in San Diego, this black American has inadvertently told historians more than we would otherwise know about him. Unfortunately, more questions remain than the present state of research allows us to answer." Robert L. Carlton's "Blacks in San Diego County" and Gail Madyun and Larry Malone's "Black Pioneers in San Diego" furthered the placement of San Diego's Black residents into the historical record.[5]

A resurgence of scholarship following the silence of the 1980s and 1990s began after 2004 and can be attributed, at least in part, to a renewed interest in historical preservation as San Diego's historically Black communities became targets for redevelopment. A Centre City Development Corporation study in 2004 represented

a renewed interest in the importance of Black presence, visibility, contribution, and preservation. The study noted: "African-Americans in San Diego experienced and contributed to the growth of the city, and were at once part of and distinct from the histories familiar to us today."[6] Leland T. Saito's "African Americans and Historic Preservation in San Diego" compared the destruction of the Douglas Hotel in 1985 to the preservation of the Black-owned Clermont Hotel in 2005, determining it was the action of local Black activists who saved the Clermont. Saito concluded, "The reason why the one hotel was destroyed and the other saved, then, has nothing to do with a change at the top. Rather, the Clermont/Coast Hotel was saved because an African American grassroots movement forced the city to change."[7]

New *Journal* editors and History Center leadership facilitated the revival of interest in San Diego's Black history. The Summer 2011 issue featured three photo-essay retrospectives of Norman Baynard's work, including an essay by his son Arnold. Norman Baynard operated a commercial studio in Logan Heights from 1939 through the mid-1980s where he documented the social, political, and religious life of San Diego's African American community. His work, according to the former Director of the Photograph Collection, Christine Travers, "constitutes a unique record of San Diego's twentieth-century African American community."[8] Robert Fikes, Jr. authored two studies of Black professionals, "Remarkable Healers on the Pacific Coast" and "Pioneers, Warriors, Advocates," reminding readers not only of an educated, professional, middle-class Black presence, but of their efforts to create civil rights organizations such as a chapter of the NAACP in 1917.[9] Seth Mallios and Breanna Campbell continued tracing the narrative of civil rights in San Diego with "On the Cusp of an American Civil Rights Revolution: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Visit and Address to San Diego in 1965," while Charla Wilson explored Black community agency with her "Why The Y?"[10]

Then there's Nathan Harrison, the man this issue of the Journal revisits in light of Seth Mallios' years of archeological work. Laura James (in the 1958 article noted above) was the first to write about Harrison for this journal. Ronald Florence's 1998 "Palomar, After 50 Years" discusses the history of the observatory built on Palomar Mountain and mentions Nathan Harrison in a footnote, in part to explain why, according to Florence, the trail that ascended the west shoulder of the mountain was "called the 'N----r Grade' by locals..."

> The road was officially named after Nathan Harrison, a black man who called himself "the first white man on the mountain." Harrison had come to Palomar in 1848 as a slave, and worked at a mining claim in Rincon. No one knew how he survived year-round on the mountain. His only source of income was tips from travelers

> grateful for the buckets of water he brought for their struggling teams. "Uncle Nate" died in 1920, at the age of 101.

In 2009 Seth Mallios published some of his early work on Nathan Harrison[11] and in this issue we present what Mallios and his team have discovered not just about Harrison, but about how he navigated the complexities of race, White spaces, and racial inequality in San Diego. These three articles and their treatment of Harrison say a lot about the trajectory of how the *Journal* has (or has not) dealt with Black San Diegans. We have moved beyond treating Harrison as an oddity or a local legend worthy of only a footnote to a historical actor whose story has much to say about race, survival, and ultimately, our region.

Where do we go from here, both as scholars and as a community? The scholarship on Black history that has appeared in the *Journal* in the past decade and a half is to be celebrated, but it should be regarded as foundational rather than definitive. These articles have begun to correct the problem of Black invisibility in San Diego history, and they can inspire future inquiry. Indeed, there is a need to cultivate Black scholarship and the telling of San Diego's Black history not just in this journal, but throughout the social and cultural institutions of the region more broadly. As we move in this direction, we can contemplate the direction of future work by asking important questions: *In what ways has race as a social and historical construction of power, authority, privilege, and disadvantage operated in the San Diego region? In what ways are the systems of race intersectional with other identities and systems of power, especially class, gender, and sexuality? What are the continuing legacies and consequences of the history of race in San Diego today? In what ways does the history of race, and Black history in particular, celebrate Black people as well as affirm their presence, value, and dignity as part of the San Diego community?* As part of the work of recovering Black histories in San Diego, there is the opportunity for collaboration and action: the San Diego History Center acknowledges this gap in its own holdings and has taken steps recently to address it by inviting members of the Black community to donate their historical mementos to the collection.[12]

Ultimately the histories we tell reveal what we value as a community and shape the direction we are headed. Engaging in the history of Black San Diego is important because it gives us the tools to understand the formation and development of San Diego as it is, not as we may wish it to seem. This has the potential to make us more aware of the whole of our historical experience, more sensitive to many of the essential problems in the region's history, and more informed about the ways race, and in particular "Whiteness," affects our lives today. By studying the histories of Black San Diego, we can make the invisible visible, celebrate the accomplishments of Black history, and grapple with the injustices of the past.

NOTES

1. For perspective on this number, Black articles account for roughly 1.5% of the *Journal's* content. I calculate this number with a rough approximation of 65 years x 3.5 issues per year x 3.5 articles per issue equals about 800 articles. This number divided into 12 equals about 1.5%..
2. Laura M. James, "Palomar's Friendly Hermit," *The Journal of San Diego History* 4, no. 1 (January 1958).
3. Henry Schwartz, "The Mary Walker Incident: Black Prejudice in San Diego, 1866." *The Journal of San Diego History* 19, no. 2 (Spring 1973).
4. Lawrence B. de Graaf, review of *California's Black Pioneers: A Brief Historical Survey*, by Kenneth G. Goode, *The Journal of San Diego History* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1975).
5. David J. Weber, "A Black American in Mexican San Diego: Two Recently Recovered Documents," *The Journal of San Diego History* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1974); Elizabeth C. MacPhail, "When the Red Lights Went Out in San Diego: The Little Known Story of San Diego's 'Restricted District'," *The Journal of San Diego History* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1974). In the same issue as David J. Weber's "A Black American in Mexican San Diego," Elizabeth C. MacPhail discussed Black San Diego residents tangentially in her study of the Stingaree. She wrote, "Nevertheless, from then on, Bellon was accompanied everywhere by his two burly bodyguards, both highly respected police officers, and they became good friends. Townsend, a Negro, was one of San Diego's first black police officers." Robert L. Carlton, "Blacks in San Diego County: A Social Profile, 1850-1880," *The Journal of San Diego History* 21, no. 4 (Fall 1975); Gail Madyun and Larry Malone, "Black Pioneers in San Diego: 1880-1920," *The Journal of San Diego History* 27, no. 2 (Spring 1981). The Spring 1981 edition was the first to feature an image of Black residents on the cover.
6. Richard L. Carrico, Stacey Jordan, Jose Bodipo-Memba, and Stacie Wilson, "Centre City Development Corporation Downtown San Diego African-American Heritage Study," Mooney and Associates, 2004.
7. Leland T. Saito, "African Americans and Historic Preservation in San Diego: The Douglas and the Clermont/Coast Hotels," The Journal of San Diego History 54, no. 1 (Winter 2008).
8. Chris Travers, Arnold Baynard, and Nicholas Vega, "The Norman Baynard Photograph Collection: Three Perspectives," *The Journal of San Diego History* 57, no. 3 (Summer 2011).
9. Robert Fikes, Jr., "Remarkable Healers on the Pacific Coast: A History of San Diego's Black Medical Community," *The Journal of San Diego History* 57, no. 3 (Summer 2011); "Pioneers, Warriors, Advocates: San Diego's Black Legal Community, 1890-2013," *The Journal of San Diego History* 60, nos. 1&2 (Winter/Spring 2014). Fikes illustrates just how diverse and vibrant San Diego's Black civil rights community was, noting that "during his visits W.E.B. Du Bois was not only struck by the area's natural beauty, he also extolled the city's black [sic] leaders as 'pushing.'" Meanwhile a chapter of Marcus Garvey's opposition group, the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), opened in San Diego before Los Angeles.
10. Seth Mallios and Breanna Campbell, "On the Cusp of an American Civil Rights Revolution: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Visit and Address to San Diego in 1965," *The Journal of San Diego History* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2015); Charla Wilson, "Why The Y?: The Origin of San Diego YWCA's Clay Avenue Branch for African Americans," *The Journal of San Diego History* 62, nos. 3&4 (Summer/Fall 2016); Ronald Florence, "Palomar After 50 Years," *The Journal of San Diego History* 44, no. 4 (Fall 1998s).
11. Seth Mallios, "Scientific Excavations at Palomar Mountain's Nate Harrison Site: The Historical Archaeology of a Legendary African-American Pioneer," *The Journal of San Diego History* 55, no. 3 (Summer 2009).
12. To contribute an artifact to the San Diego History Center's Black History collection, see https://sandiegohistory.org/research/donate-an-artifact/ and to participate in the Share Your Story Program, see https://sandiegohistory.org/shareyourstory/.

BOOK REVIEWS

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo: A Voyage of Rediscovery. By Wendy Kramer. Edited and Illustrated by Kevin Sheehan. A special publication of *Mains'l Haul: A Journal of Pacific Maritime History* Vol. 55: 1-4 (Winter/Spring 2019). Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. 104 pages. $15.99 paper.

Reviewed by Iris Engstrand, Professor Emerita, Department of History, University of San Diego.

In lieu of the regular issue of *Mains'l Haul* comprising articles written by separate authors, in 2019, the San Diego Maritime Museum elected to publish an English translation of Dr. Wendy Kramer's book in Spanish titled *El Español que exploró California: Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo (c 1497-1543) De Palma del Río a Guatemala* (Córdoba, 2018). The new English edition is subtitled "A Voyage of Rediscovery" because the uncovering of primary documents sheds new light on Cabrillo's life. Not only does the book confirm his birthplace in Spain, it also accounts for his career as a landowner in Guatemala, provides new details about his family, and illuminates the circumstances of his death and burial during his voyage to the California coast in 1543. He was not a "*conquistador*," but rather an explorer looking for a shorter route to Asia by sailing northward along the little known coast of California, north of what is today's Cedros Island, reached by Francisco de Ulloa in 1539.

Getting history right is never easy. In the case of Spanish explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, his story has been controversial from the beginning of his arrival in the Americas around 1514, when he landed in Panama and then sailed to Cuba, joining Hernán Cortés and his troops. He later settled in Guatemala under Pedro Alvarado. Historian Dr. Harry Kelsey documented the story of Cabrillo's life in 1997 but, because of a lack of conclusive evidence at the time, could only speculate about the actual place of the explorer's birth. Along with several other writers, Kelsey rightly surmised that Cabrillo was indeed Spanish. Recently, Dr. Kramer, a historian from Toronto, Canada, working on sixteenth-century documents that are located in the Archives of the Indies in Seville, uncovered absolute proof of Cabrillo's birth in Palma del Rio, province of Córdoba, in the heart of Andalucía, Spain. Many of the sixteenth-century documents concerning his landholdings, business affairs, and family matters in Guatemala are included in the illustrations accompanying this work.

In later tellings of Cabrillo's life story, his identity became mistaken as Portuguese, thanks to a single seventeenth-century account and other

misrepresentations. First, Spanish chronicler Antonio de Herrera in 1615 recorded the Spaniard's title with a third surname as Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo Portuguese, without explanation or any documentation. Second, in the 1930s, a number of Portuguese residents of Point Loma carried forward the idea of his being Portuguese and enlisted the support of the government of Portugal to honor him with a statue. Third, National Park Service officials accepted plaques and a statue identifying him as the Portuguese navigator João Rodrigues Cabrilho without any proof or even a proper in-depth investigation.

This new work by Dr. Kramer is a must-have for members of the Maritime Museum as well as for supporters and visitors of the Cabrillo National Monument. It solves a mystery that the National Park Service has perpetuated by accepting incorrect plaques, a statue, and other misleading information. It is also important because of the recent building of a replica of Cabrillo's flagship *San Salvador*, which is on exhibit and available for tours and voyages at the San Diego Embarcadero. This issue of *Mains'l Haul* is available at the San Diego Maritime Museum.

Joaquín Velázquez de León: Royal Officer in Baja California Second Edition. By Iris Wilson Engstrand. La Paz, Baja California Sur: Editorial Museo Ruta de Plata, 2018. Illustrations, notes, and bibliography. 117 pp. $24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Roger Showley, *San Diego Union-Tribune* staff writer (retired).

First published in 1976, this updated account of Joaquín Velázquez de León covers the amateur scientist and Spanish official's voyage to Baja California from 1768 to 1770. This journey had worldwide repercussions: it marked the launching of Spanish colonization of Alta California, and its members observed the transit of Venus's shadow across the Sun. The first led to the founding of San Diego and the eventual annexation of California to the United States. The second was part of a worldwide scientific effort to measure the distance from the Earth to the Sun and pinpoint the longitude of various places on the planet.

Iris Engstrand, San Diego's most prolific historian, translated the correspondence of Velázquez and other officials to weave together eyewitness accounts of both efforts. This second edition includes new bibliographical entries and footnotes, as well as some additional text. As in the first edition, color illustrations of local Indians and their living conditions by one of the expedition's members, Alexander-Jean Noëlle, add a human touch.

Velázquez (1732-1786) was born in what is today Zucualpan, outside of Mexico

City, and studied law, mathematics, metallurgy, and natural sciences. In 1765 he became a professor of astronomy at the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico. It was that role that brought him to the attention of José de Gálvez, the visitor-general dispatched to New Spain by King Carlos III, also in 1765. Gálvez's portfolio included overseeing the finances, defenses, and expulsion of the Jesuits from New Spain, the exploration of Alta California, and arranging an international astronomical study of the transit of Venus from the southern tip of Baja California.

Velázquez accompanied Gálvez in 1768 to make final preparations for the land and sea expedition parties that met in San Diego on July 1, 1769. Franciscan friar Junípero Serra was in the land party and said mass at what is today Presidio Park in San Diego fifteen days later—an event that made July 16 the city's traditional "birthday."

Velázquez wrote two letters, probably to fellow scientists, with descriptions of Baja California, its resources, inhabitants, and economic potential. But it is his political observations that resonate today. Foreseeing what Spain could accomplish if it could preempt rival nations' ambitions, he wrote:

> If one brings together all this precious information, it could be ascertained what our losses have been, when other foreign nations might have come to take over this inheritance, as the Russians and English have repeatedly intended. Nevertheless, it appears that our great God wishes to liberate this fortress of America from the greed and activity of our enemies and open our eyes in order to close the door to those powerful enterprises, which would not be difficult (p. 17).

As for the transit of Venus, Velázquez welcomed a team of French and Spanish astronomers and assistants to set up their telescopes at a makeshift observatory in Santa Ana near San Jose del Cabo for this very rare event (no more than twice each century) on June 3, 1769. Theirs was one of seventy-seven stations involving 151 individuals around the world, from Tahiti to Philadelphia, northern Europe, and Russia. All aimed their telescopes at the Sun that day to measure the time it took for Venus's shadow to cross. The findings were crucial in ascertaining the size of the Sun and planets and their relative distance from each other.

On transit day, Velázquez reported, "The afternoon was so beautiful and serene that not even the smallest cloud appeared." As a result, he was able to observe the exit of Venus's transit on the right side of the Sun "with the same fortune as the first contacts" (p. 61). The team also monitored the lunar eclipse on June 18.

The postscript of this feat was not so triumphant. Typhoid and malaria struck down eleven of the expedition's seventeen members. "The groans of dying men,

the terror of those who were seized with the distemper and expected the common fate, all conspired to make the village of [San Jose] a scene of horror," wrote chief French astronomer, Jean-Baptiste Chappe d'Autoroche, who also succumbed on August 1 (p. 70).

Velazquez survived, returned to Mexico City, and took up other tasks, including plans to drain the lakes around the capital, topographical surveys, and writing a history of mining. He founded the Royal Tribunal of Mining and became its first director. The explorer died at age 53 in 1786, mourned by his contemporaries and memorialized by a portrait over the doorway to the School of Mines in Mexico City, his name in gold letters (p. 106).

The book's reissue coincided with the 250th anniversary of San Diego's founding and should appeal to history buffs as well as professionals. This story of settlement and inquiry reminds contemporary Californians that this was a lightly populated place (by today's standards), far from Europe's Enlightenment culture, and shielded—at least partially and for the time being—from the impact of Europe's diseases. It also speaks to the extraordinary dedication citizen scientists displayed as they recorded and analyzed natural phenomena.

Modern science relies on millions of dollars in capital investment and government grants as well as legions of researchers and assistants. But lone individuals still make a difference, no matter how big "Big Science" has become. Now, as then, exploration and discovery can also end in lives lost due to misfortune or miscalculation. The risks undertaken by Velázquez and his band of explorers were enormous, as were those by the astronauts who perished in the shuttle *Challenger*'s explosion in 1986. Heroes still need a large dose of bravery, no matter what century they live in.

Forging Communities in Colonial Alta California. Edited by Kathleen L. Hull and John G. Douglass. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2018. Illustrations and index. x + 292 pp. $60.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Kelly B. Silva, PhD, Writing Instructor, University of California, San Diego.

Forging Communities in Colonial Alta California, edited by Kathleen L. Hull and John G. Douglass, originated from a shared interest among the editors and seventeen archaeologists, anthropologists, and interdisciplinary scholars to study community formation during Alta California's colonial period. Between 1769 and

1846, Spanish, Russian, and then American colonists came to this region seeking social, economic, and religious opportunities. Their arrival altered the region's physical, social, and cultural landscapes, as they established colonial institutions and structures along the coastline. This process of imperial expansion significantly altered the lives of the region's Indigenous peoples. In addition to the demographic disaster following the influx of nonnative diseases, Native Californians witnessed the upending of their traditional lifeways and subsistence practices. As Native and non-Native peoples navigated this new terrain, they imagined, negotiated, maintained, and reaffirmed notions of community and belonging both within and outside of colonial spaces.

In the introduction, Hull and Douglass detail the theoretical frameworks and research methods that inform the case studies of this edited volume. As the authors make clear, communities are not natural. Instead, they "are brought into existence through the deliberate actions of autonomous individuals and materialized through agency and practice" (p. 3). In each of the book's nine case studies, the authors rely on archaeological and ethnohistorical methods to examine the social processes of community formation that took place amidst great change and uncertainty in a variety of settings, including Spanish missions, Native camps and villages, pueblos, and trading outposts. As the case studies reveal, these processes "were dynamic, overlapping, and perhaps above all else, conditional" within the changing contours of Alta California's colonial landscape (p. 21).

Forging Communities is organized into three parts, each examining how communities formed within "three relational realms" (p. 18). The case studies in part 1 examine how individuals developed, maintained, and reaffirmed notions of belonging and community around religious beliefs and practices. In chapter 1, Douglass, Hull, and Seetha N. Reddy explore community creation between colonists and Native Californians in the rural areas of the Los Angeles Basin, and the impact of these interactions on the maintenance and dissolution of Native villages and settlements. This chapter illuminates the limitations of binary distinctions between "Native" and "colonial" communities. The authors detail a variety of social interactions that took place between Native Californians and rancheros who labored together on rancho lands. In chapter 2, John Dietler, Heather Gibson, and Benjamin Vargas use archaeological data from Mission San Gabriel to reveal how Native people created and maintained communities, despite missionization, through the enactment of traditional mourning ceremonies. In chapter 3, Tsim D. Schneider examines how coastal Miwok people regrouped and purposefully forged new communal ties with other Indigenous groups in the hinterlands of the Marin peninsula following Spanish missionization. He highlights the "geographic and temporal flexibility of communities" as well

as the fruitful possibilities of moving beyond land-based histories to examine colonial encounters (p. 92).

The case studies in part 2 examine how communities formed around economic or political ties. In chapter 4, Julienne Bernard and David W. Robinson examine community formation in the San Joaquin Valley, an area of refuge for baptized Native Californians from coastal missions, who despite linguistic, cultural, and political differences, shared a "common desire to maintain (or regain) autonomy from colonialism" (p. 113). In chapter 5, John R. Johnson presents an ethnohistorical study of the Cuyama Chumash. Utilizing mission register records, he reveals the changes that occurred over time to community membership at six rancherías in the midst of Spanish recruitment for the missions and the outbreak of epidemic diseases. In chapter 6, Sarah Peelo, Lee M. Panich, Christina Spellman, John Ellisons, and Stella D'Oro examine the ways neophytes (baptized Native Californians) "maintained and reimagined connections to traditional communities" at Mission Santa Clara (p. 163). This included the maintenance of physical connections to ancestral homelands and the reproduction of traditional marriage practices within the mission setting.

Lastly, the case studies in part 3 examine how communities formed around quotidian practices in shared spaces. In chapter 7, Panich, Peelo, and Linda Hylkema examine the complex and dynamic processes of community formation at the Santa Clara neophyte ranchería. They present a nuanced interpretation of how Native peoples, "who lived, worked and interacted in distinctly *indigenous* spaces within the overarching colonial landscape," maintained ties to ancestral homelands and forged new ties based on daily, lived experiences within the mission setting (p. 208). In chapter 8, Kent G. Lightfoot examines community formation among residents in the colonial neighborhoods surrounding Fort Ross. Lightfoot argues that these "communities of perseverance" helped Native residents "cope with the daily struggles of colonial entanglements" and aided their survival across Spanish, Mexican, and Russian California (p. 217). In chapter 9, Glenn Farris reconstructs families in the ethnically diverse Pueblo of San Diego, "the first non-Indigenous 'urban' community in the southernmost part of Alta California" (p. 235), between 1821 and 1846. Through the use of material artifacts, he is able to incorporate figures typically excluded from historical scholarship, including Native servants, into this diverse, multicultural society and reveals the ways they interacted across Mexican and American households.

The volume ends with an epilogue by James R. Brooks, who has written extensively on New Mexico's colonial period. Brooks uses the case studies presented here as a "proximal mirror" to reflect upon New Mexico's colonial period, which began much earlier and lacks the rich, archival source base available

to scholars of Alta California. He highlights the fruitful possibilities of these methodological approaches to studying community formation in colonial contexts. He also echoes Douglass and Hull's argument in the introduction that this type of scholarship is needed to help us better understand contemporary issues facing Indigenous peoples of California today.

As a whole, this edited volume reveals the complexity of ways colonial institutions and practices disrupted the lives of Indigenous people. It reveals how they adapted to these changes by maintaining and reformulating notions of community in a variety of settings. The case studies highlight themes of adaptability, resilience, and continuity and together serve as a necessary corrective to the ways scholars typically research and write about Alta California's colonial period. As Lightfoot argues, scholars have too often focused on detailing the historical trauma Native inhabitants faced and endured during this period. "What has received far less attention," he correctly notes, "is how Native people persevered through these dark, dangerous years" (p. 214). As Lightfoot, Hull, Douglass and the other contributors to *Forging Communities in Colonial Alta California* reveal, Indigenous people adapted to these new environments, made new social connections, maintained older ties to their homelands, and, most importantly, survived. This well-researched and well-written volume will appeal to scholars, researchers, and general readers for years to come.

Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer: Nathan Harrison and the Historical Archaeology of Legend. By Seth Mallios. New York: Berghahn Books, 2020. Illustrations, notes, and index. xvi + 340 pp. $149.00 cloth. $24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Geoffrey West, PhD, Lecturer in the Humanities, San Diego State University and the University of California, San Diego.

The solitary miner working long-spent seams of gold and silver is a spent trope in the historical literature on the American West. For over a century, the dominant narratives privileged white men as not only representative of "the conquest of the West," as historian Patricia Limerick puts it, but the only story worth telling. Fortunately, the academic field of US history has moved away from that privileging. Oftentimes, local histories have lagged in this trend. Biographies and smaller-scale descriptive histories have often continued the practice of placing white men at the center of these works. Seth Mallios's *Born a Slave, Died a Pioneer* is by no means the first attempt to create a more balanced portrait of the nineteenth-

and early twentieth-century American West, specifically Southern California. What makes this book relatively innovative is his combination of seemingly disparate approaches to history—that of the archaeologist, the academic historian, and the local lay historian—and the creation of something fresh, if imperfect.

Mallios is a professor at San Diego State University and director of the university's South Coastal Information Center, a repository for archaeological records in San Diego and Imperial Counties. He draws on the data he collected managing the Nate Harrison Archaeology Project to craft a new narrative of the pioneer's life in *Born a Slave*. While Mallios presents Harrison as something of a legend, he is hardly known outside San Diego County. This is perhaps one of the book's few real flaws. While the lone miner is a ubiquitous "legend" across many California communities, Mallios misses an opportunity to place Harrison within the broader context of miners' stories. That oversight may be purposeful, given the book's biographical and local orientation. Isolating Harrison from similar narratives does, however, force the reader to consider only those events empirically represented in his life.

This empiricism is the real heart of the book. Mallios manages to distill years of archaeological research on Harrison into a dense but critical chapter, "Digging for Answers." For those interested in the field of historical archaeology, this section of the book should be required reading. Mallios carefully presents data point after data point and connects each back to "myths" and "legends" concerning Harrison. He creates a triangulated approach to verifying or disproving those stories via a technique he calls "orthogonal historical archaeology." This approach "allows individual audience members to witness alternative perspectives, appreciate broader issues of context, and identify which accounts resonate most personally with their own experiential truths" (p. 282). Mallios reveals the inherent problems in assuming a one-size-fits-all approach to historical truths.

For those interested in San Diego's local history, particularly the emergence of communities of color and connections with the American South and the Gold Rush era, *Born a Slave* deftly combines a multitude of often conflicting narratives into a coherent and cohesive whole. Mallios handles Harrison's story with a sensitivity that could only come with close and sustained contact with the long-dead miner's stories. Mallios dismisses nothing out of hand and instead considers the possibility of each seemingly contradictory narrative as offering a window into a more complete whole. The book's treatment of Harrison's exodus from Kentucky and migration to California is particularly indicative of the author's ability to balance multiple, often conflicting, narratives. The complex analysis of data and the ability to satisfactorily prove or disprove prior accounts of Harrison's journey to the Golden State show a profound attention to relationships between details

and narratives often lacking in local histories. Mallios's work is a reminder that academic disciplines thrive at the liminal spaces where they merge with other fields. Similarly, Harrison's story is a reminder that the story of California, itself a liminal space for much of its history, was always racially and geographically diverse.

Choosing to Care: A Century of Childcare and Social Reform in San Diego, 1850-1950. By Kyle E. Ciani. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2019. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. xxviii + 342 pp. $70.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Maria Carreras, PhD Candidate, University of California, San Diego.

In *Choosing to Care*, Kyle E. Ciani traces the development of childcare and social reform in San Diego over the span of a century (1850-1950). Weaving together a vast array of primary sources—records of reform associations, government reports, newspapers, and memoirs—she examines how parents, reformers, social workers, doctors, and educators connected over childcare concerns. Focusing especially on the city of San Diego, this welcome contribution to the growing historiography of childhood highlights the ways in which local methods of social reform overlapped with, built on, and contested those of the national agenda. Chronicling the origins and development of reform programs in this city, the book provides a valuable view of the broader, interrelated themes of urbanization, race, gender, and class.

The evolution of social reform followed the growing concerns and efforts of parents and guardians, benevolent reformers, and social workers who sought to address the tensions that existed within San Diego's social matrix. Reformers grew increasingly concerned with the well-being of children of Native American, Asian, Mexican, African American, and impoverished Anglo American families—those considered most in need of behavioral regulation.

Upper- and middle-class women played an important role in establishing reform programs. Institutions like the Children's Home and Day Nursery (CHDN), the Girls Rescue Home, and the Helping Hand Home transformed childcare into a public concern and allowed women to enter the public sphere. Female reformers demanded that leaders find solutions to two problems in particular: prostitution in the downtown area and single fathers raising children because mothers left their homes or died.

Professional actions against rising crime at the turn of the century were similar to those in larger cities. Beginning in the 1880s, professional reformers trained in medicine, early childhood education, and social work arrived in San Diego and provided solutions to the growing problem of juvenile delinquency. Ciani's detailed descriptions of this delinquent behavior, and of the ways reformers attempted to help troubled families, reflect the depths of her research and bring the story to life.

The popularity of settlement houses increased during the second decade of the twentieth century when the College Women's Club (CWC) opened the Neighborhood House. Mexican Americans and African Americans in particular benefitted from these services, receiving food, public baths, and pre- and postnatal education. The houses also served the growing number of refugee migrants of the Mexican Revolution, which fueled public concern with poverty and vagrancy.

National reform programs established during and after the Great Depression made a significant impact in San Diego. The Emergency Nursery Schools of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) offered workers daycare, using existing spaces and infrastructure to provide relief. The development of state and federal programs gave support for San Diego reformers to expand their local initiatives. Yet while federal programs allowed the city to open more childcare centers, they were unable to solve the problem of infant care amidst a rapidly growing population, especially during the 'blitz-boom' of the Second World War. The need for childcare increased after the Great Depression, but by 1945, reformers struggled to deliver relief, thus forcing families to make lifestyle changes.

Choosing to Care is an important addition to the historical literature on San Diego. Ciani reveals the complexities of providing childcare, and of social reform more broadly, during a period of rapid social transformations. In San Diego from 1850 to the end of World War II, these changes brought diverse people together over concern for the welfare of minors. Parents, reformers, social workers, doctors, and educators all agreed that children were the most vulnerable group in society. Students and scholars interested in the social history of this city, childhood, urbanization, migration, and public health will all find something of interest in this insightful monograph.

In Search of the Mexican Beverly Hills: Latino Suburbanization in Postwar Los Angeles. By Jerry González. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2017. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, and index. vii + 216 pp. $120.00 cloth. $30.95 paper.

Reviewed by Peter Chesney, PhD Candidate, University of California, Los Angeles.

In Search of the Mexican Beverly Hills is historian Jerry González's rebuttal to a still too-common assumption in the academic field of urban studies: that the history of American suburbanization is a story of top-down forces in government and the housing market endeavoring to keep the suburbs white. Important exceptions to this rule deserve scholarly attention. Thus, readers of this book will learn about a suburban anomaly, Pico Rivera, a community in Los Angeles County that gave middle- and working-class Latinx families access to life in single-family homes during the years between World War II and the 1970s.

González's conclusions build on the work of the "New Suburban Historians" such as Becky Nicolaides, Andrew Weise, and Wendy Cheng, who have shown that the working and middle classes, including marginalized communities of color, were active in the bottom-up making and remaking of suburbs. This process occurred in places marked as "Mexican" on LA's urban fringes, including González's hometown of Pico Rivera. Based on his personal experience, the author posits the theoretical framework of "Latino Suburbanization"—Mexican Americans in suburbs simultaneously becoming "stakeholders in the American Dream" while establishing "their own sense of the suburban ideal" (p. 6).

With this focus, González digs deeply into Pico Rivera's transition from rural area to postwar suburb. Yet in doing so, he loses an important subplot that encompasses the greater Southwestern region. Some of the book's strongest arguments highlight how closely this area's "suburban renewal" from agricultural working-class *colonias* into tracts of housing intended to be sold in capitalist real estate markets prefigured what community activists and sociologists now call gentrification. That said, as I read, I grew increasingly curious about the points of origin of these participants in Latino Suburbanization. After all, many people who moved into postwar suburbs came not from cities but instead from small towns in the countryside. González mostly ignores the broader transnational histories of the areas in the US-Mexican borderlands in which some Pico Rivera residents evidently lived before purchasing their homes.

The evidence that could have made this history a more ambitious study—potentially including such topics as migration, popular culture, and labor

organizing—was readily available. Searching the digitized archives of the *Los Angeles Times*, I easily found a 1974 posting announcing a social dance, "El Paso Reunion," at the United Auto Workers union hall in Pico Rivera. Privileging the politics of housing and elections, González risks erasing the many other aspects of everyday life that gave texture to Latino Suburbanization. Finally, the epilogue addresses Mexican American leisure activities, music at the El Monte stadium, and lowrider cruising on Whittier Boulevard, but readers will finish this book never knowing the city's sports arena has recently become the top venue for Mexican rodeo in the United States.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, this history tells us what González theorizes are the most significant matters for understanding suburbanization. Do identity, land, and government offer a sufficient basis for explaining how nonwhite suburbs emerged on LA County's periphery? Possibly. Perhaps González could have spared additional attention not only to the fact that suburban Latinx people commuted, but also to *where* they commuted. Recalling the book's title, I will conclude with a note that Mexican Americans have a long history of labor in the city of Beverly Hills. Maybe a better example of "the Mexican Beverly Hills," therefore, is Beverly Hills itself, where Mexican American workers built much of the housing, shaped much of the landscape, and performed much of the domestic work for the mostly white, affluent, and aging residents occupying that city to this day.

BOOK NOTES

Coastal Sage: Peter Douglas and the Fight to Save California's Shoreline. By Thomas J. Osborne. Oakland: University of California Press, 2018. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, and index. xx + 248 pp. $85.00 cloth. $34.95 paper. Thomas Osborne examines the three-decade fight of California Coastal Commission executive director Peter Douglas to prevent the privatization and overdevelopment of the state's shoreline. Douglas coauthored California's formative shore management and conservation laws that protect coastal habitats. With these accomplishments, he became a leading figure in the American environmental movement, influencing conservation and protection initiatives across the United States.

Crush: The Triumph of California Wine. By John Briscoe. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2018. Illustrations, appendix, notes, bibliography, and index. xviii + 368 pp. $34.95 cloth. In this thoroughly researched study, John Briscoe examines the 200-year evolution of California wine from its first vintage to its achievement of world-class status in recent decades. In many ways, the history of California winemaking is the history of the state itself. Briscoe brings that broader story to life through the prism of this prized craft.

First United Methodist Church of San Diego. By Krista Ames-Cook. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2018. Illustrations. 128 pp. $21.99 paper. San Diego's First United Methodist Church was established in 1869 in the downtown district. It relocated a number of times over the years, erecting some of the city's most attractive houses of worship. From 1907 to 1963, the congregation's home was a Gothic Revival-style sanctuary on C Street and Ninth Avenue designed by the noted Southern California architect Irving J. Gill. Since 1964, it has occupied a landmark Spanish contemporary-style building in Mission Valley. Using a rich collection of photographs, Krista Ames-Cook tells the history of this iconic San Diego church.

San Diego Murder & Mayhem. By Steve Willard. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2018. Illustrations, bibliography, and glossary. 144 pp. $29.99 cloth. $10.99 paper. Using case files from the San Diego Police Department, Steve Willard recounts some of the most captivating stories from the front lines of crimefighting in this city during the early twentieth century, an age of rapid urbanization and progressive reform. A San Diego police officer himself since 1985 and now the official historian of the San Diego Police Officers Association, Willard shows that detectives and patrolmen raided illegal vice establishments and pursued criminal fugitives across state boundaries and into Mexico.

Urethane Revolution: The Birth of Skate—San Diego, 1975. By John O'Malley. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2019. Illustrations and glossary. 192 pp. $34.99 cloth. $23.99 paper. In the mid-1970s, a number of developments on the Southern California coast coincided to revolutionize skating. Manufacturers and skateboarders adopted urethane wheels, achieving a grip far superior to that of the composite clay that had prevailed until this moment. Around the same time, a drought in the US Southwest uncovered reservoirs and drainage ditches, while a deep financial recession left houses vacant and their swimming pools empty, offering new skating surfaces. All of this set the stage for a skating revolution that unfolded between the Bahne/Cadillac contest at the Del Mar Fairgrounds in April 1975 and the ABC/Hang Ten World Championship at the Carlsbad Skatepark that September. John O'Malley of the original Encinitas Skunkworks crew had a front-row seat, and with this exciting story, he brings us along for a ride.

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