

The Missing Link: Our Mexican California Past, 1821-1848

By

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Thesis

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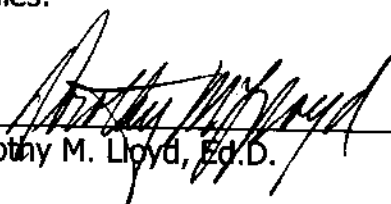
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A Thesis

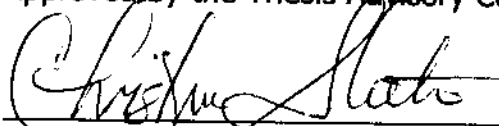
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*M. G. Macias*

## Abstract

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This action thesis consisted of the development of a curriculum rubric that could be used to evaluate and select socially conscious and culturally responsible curriculum in the area of Mexican California (1821-1848) history. Instructors were surveyed, in the form of a questionnaire, for their knowledge on this historical period. Existing textbooks were evaluated for their omission or inclusion of pertinent and relevant factors during this period of time within Mexican California (1821-1848) history lessons. To evaluate the textbooks, a curriculum rubric was developed to closely assess the inclusion of relevant factors of study topics, such as Native Americans, women, government, and California leaders in the years between 1821 through 1848. The results of the project indicated that while textbooks are improving, many continue to provide inaccurate or incomplete information, especially as it relates to the contributions of Mexicans. Since California student demographics have been changing, particularly with Chicano student populations on the rise, the curriculum materials, now more than ever, need to reflect accurate information in order to portray the role and significance of our past Mexican contributions in the development of California. Student academic success correlates highly with the relevance and meaningfulness of subject matter (Hollins, 1996, p. 90). The

accurate inclusion of the role Mexico and Mexicans have played in California could be empowering for all students, but specifically empowering for the student population in California.

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Chapter I

"When students learn about their heritage and contributions to society, they participate in a process of self-discovery and increasing social consciousness. This results in the realization that, contrary to the myth of their inferiority, their actions can be a transforming process in the United States and in the world. In other words, as they learn about their group, they grow in pride and knowledge about themselves..." (Sleeter and Grant, 1988, p. 115).

Introduction

California has a rich historical background steeped in traditions and cultural implications. In examining classroom textbooks used in schools for social study units on California, a person can be deceived on the historical chain of events (Richards, 1950). Textbooks have been written about the life of the Native Americans and the Spaniards; however, many textbooks omit certain information and sometimes disregard a chunk of history, jumping from the time of the Spaniards (1769-1821) to the United States occupation of California (1846). There is a period of California history (1821-1848) that many authors have failed to discuss and that is the importance of a people who governed California for 27 years. Those people who governed California (1821-1848) were the Mexicans, known in California as Californios. Mexico governed California from 1821 to 1848; however, Mexicans resided in California many years prior to



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this period and yet this is seldom mentioned in history textbooks. Mexican Californians were an active people that have greatly influenced today's California. Gonzales (2000) observes this specific time of history referring to the foundation established by the early Californios, " ... the magnitude of the early economic trade carried out between California and New England was to lay foundation for its later incorporation into the United States..." (p. 64) thereby playing an important part in California history. In 1846, one of California's political leaders General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo stated, "Look not, therefore, with jealousy upon the hardy pioneers who scale our mountains and cultivate our unoccupied plains; but rather welcome them as brothers, who come to share with us a common destiny" (Paulsen, 1948). The remnants of these pioneers' existence left an imprint on California's past, present, and future, that has previously been less prominent and sometimes even non-existent in history books, specifically school textbooks designed to teach California history to children. Both examples demonstrate Mexican influence and outlook on California's historical events. California underwent an important reconstruction period in the years 1821-1848. Many consequential episodes took place, some with positive outcomes others with negative implications. Certain contributions from historical figures such as Figueroa, Vallejo, Pico, and Carrillo, shaped California's state policies (Bean & Rawls, 1988, p. 48). Unfortunately, many elementary school children have little

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knowledge of true historical facts and have not been educated about these aforementioned occurrences or contributions from these historical figures.

This author decided to research this area of historical significance because there was no mention of Mexico or Mexican's role in this time period of history during this author's elementary school experience. The textbooks the author was assigned to read omitted important and inclusive historical information. While the textbook included typical European American lessons on important historical people, for example George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, lessons on important Chicano figures, for example Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and Joaquin Murieta, were not presented in the curriculum (Richards, 1950). According to Hollins (1996), "In the United States this means that most public schools continue to present a curriculum that serves the purpose of maintaining and perpetuating Euro-American culture. At this point, you recognize that such a curriculum is inherently more meaningful to Euro-American students than to those who identify themselves with other ethnic and cultural groups" (p. 12). As an adult, this author decided to put forth an effort to enhance and bring to the forefront, the importance of children learning about early California's (1821-1848) inhabitants. As noted by Hollins (1996), "The curriculum should help youngsters maintain a sense of identity and personal worth and a feeling of connectedness like themselves...Youngsters should find a positive representation of their cultural heritage within the curriculum" (p. 155).

Statement of the Problem

The curriculum of elementary schools has not adequately informed students on the significance of Mexico's part in California's (1821-1848) history. A traditional elementary textbook (Richards, 1950) included information on the indigenous period (pre 1769), the Spanish period (1769-1821), and briefly discussed the Californio Ranchos. The traditional textbook and class lecture then shifted from the Spanish (1769-1821) period to the events leading up to the United States' occupation of California (1846) and the 1849 Gold Rush. The problem with this curriculum content is that little emphasis had been placed on the significance of Mexico and its citizens during a very important historical time from 1821 through 1848. Hollins' (1996) opinion on this approach to teaching is, "This creates dissonance in school learning for some groups of students. Some students will be able to tolerate this dissonance and do well; others will fail" (p. 12). Omission of important historical factors has been and will continue to have implications on education with such relevant topics as:

- Cultural perspectives
- Racial oppression
- English only versus bilingual education
- Annual increase in migratory Mexicans
- Mexicans becoming a strong constituency in California once again

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to explore available information on this time period in social studies textbooks. Also, its purpose was to identify if there was a need for a more accurate portrayal of California history, and then to develop a more comprehensive and inclusive social studies unit for the historical time period of 1821-1848, thus revealing the importance of Mexico's role in California's history. School-age children, especially Chicano children in California, should have the opportunity to learn about this aspect of their cultural roots in school curriculum. California has been and has continued to be shaped with Mexico's influence and yet this is not always portrayed accurately in textbooks.

This project attempted to show how the curriculum does not meet the needs to educate students on the notable Mexican past in California. Thus, young Chicanos/as lose their opportunity to be empowered with this information. This empowerment could take place by focusing on Mexican cultural roots, which extend beyond the migration to California during the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Mexican people have made incredible contributions and have left a legacy for future generations to build on. By developing a more realistic and truthful picture of this historical period (1821-1848) in California history, this author's purpose was to provide relevant and accurate material that could be used in social studies curriculum, thereby reinforcing the role and significance Mexicans played in California history.

Background

This author has been involved as a volunteer docent during the past five years, 1995-2000, with California State Historic Parks in Monterey, California. The focus of concentration has been sharing information with the public on the Californio period, which dated from 1821 to 1848.

Access to the state park's historical programs enabled a closer look at the lack of information available in this research area that was evident upon the author's attempt to find accurate literature of this historical period. Most of the state park's resources on Mexico were often inaccurate or completely without truth. The available information seemed to have been derived from biased sources. One example is the narrative in the living history program at Petaluma, California. Jane Beckman inaccurately stated, "One of the popular misconceptions is to refer to Californians as Mexicans, which is erroneous. Their bloodlines were closer heavily traced with Scottish and German bloodlines" (Petaluma Living History Orientation, 1996). Her statement is not only misleading but culturally inaccurate and biased.

As part of the Monterey State Historic Parks & Recreation programs, school groups were offered the opportunity to take a field trip to the adobe dwellings, which were built within the Monterey city limits, and have a personal guided tour. There were 18 adobe dwellings built during the Mexican period (1821-1848) and were built by Mexican citizens with the exception of one adobe

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dwelling that was built by Thomas Larkin, who was a businessman and United States Consul to Mexican California in the years between 1832-1846. Most of the adobes have remained on the exact lot where they were originally erected. Over the years, the descendants of the original owners deeded or sold the properties to the state park or the city of Monterey for use as museums or historic sites. The tours allow students to learn about the people and their culture who were California's 1821-1848 residents.

Working with the state parks, most of the volunteer work involved time spent on living history reenactments that were performed in and around the adobes where school groups would visit. Reenactments comprised of dressing in period clothing and researching a particular historical person or event, with the expectation of providing facts to the park's visitors. The reenactment provided the opportunity to interact with the public, especially with schools and school children and this is when the author became acutely aware of the lack of knowledge, not only from the public, but also from teachers and school children.

Interacting heavily with the state park's events, a few bias incidents were experienced from audience members and some derived from fellow docents at the state park, which showed a total lack of understanding of actual historical facts or events. When reenacting a scene from a meeting held in 1846 Monterey by the Mexican Assembly, one participant and a fellow docent made remarks referring to California being in the hand of greasers who were lazy and incapable

of administering justice. On another occasion, this author's spouse heard audience members claiming the historical reenactment was a fabrication on the imperialistic approach taken by the United States during the 1840's. One audience member was overheard to actually say to his own son these were false reenactments intended to deceive "real" Americans.

Besides interacting with students during their school field trips to the adobe dwellings in Monterey, the author had opportunities to visit schools and students as part of the Outreach Program. The Outreach Program implemented by the state park system offered docents the chance to visit elementary schools, bringing the historic park into the classroom. One need for the outreach program was to bring the program to schools since some schools simply could not afford a field trip for the students to visit the historic adobes in Monterey. This gave the author a chance to interact more closely with schools and teachers.

In 1998 and in 1999, while visiting schools in Salinas, this author sat in on fourth grade class lectures and observed that a minimal amount of information was provided to students regarding the Mexican period (1821-1848). Based on this observation, the author started an exploratory research with the goal of assessing teachers of their knowledge and the availability of accurate materials for the teaching of this time period. The author designed and conducted a

survey of fourth grade elementary school teachers to gather and assess information on the accurate knowledge of teachers.

Through the survey, an effort was made to research what was being taught in the classroom for the history of California, what teaching materials were available on this topic, and the inclusiveness of accurate information on the historical period of 1821-1848. The research showed the lack of information and materials made available to teachers and reinforced to the author, the need to improve and provide accurate information relating to Mexican California (1821-1848) history that should be included in social studies textbooks.

#### Overview and Scope of the Study

Through observations, this author researched and discovered the need for the development of more accurate curriculum for the fourth grade social studies classes relative to the Mexican California 1821-1848 period. The following steps were taken in planning and completing the study and the development of a project:

- A preliminary research of textbooks, resources, and materials was undertaken to assess a need for accurate historical information on the time period of 1821-1848.



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- A questionnaire was developed for twenty fourth grade social studies teachers to identify areas of weakness in knowledge of Mexican California (1821-1848) history and the availability of material on Mexican California in textbooks. Assessed knowledge of material and available textbooks through the survey results.
- A curriculum rubric was developed, which could be used for the assessment of the accuracy of an inclusive social studies program for this time period.
- The curriculum rubric was used through a designed matrix to review four social studies textbooks used in California schools for fourth grade history classes.

### Definition of Terms/Glossary

Californio:	A citizen of California under the Mexican regime. Usually reserved for Spanish speaking citizens, either born in or living in California for some time.
California	
Land Grant:	Deeds given to citizens in California first by the Spanish government and later by the Mexican government. The term "Spanish land grant" has been a misnomer as most land grants were distributed under the Mexican government.

- Chicano:** Mexican American; form of "mexicano" truncated by dropping the first syllable and pronouncing the X as in Nahuatl used since the turn of the century and popularized by the movement in the 1960s (Meier & Ribera, 1997, p. 280.). A Mexican-American with a non-Anglo image of himself (Gonzales, 2000, p. 191).
- Hispanic:** Term used (especially by government and other agencies) to include all persons of Spanish cultural background; used also by nuevomexicanos (inhabitant of the New Mexico area) since the early 1900s to assert Spanish descent in order to distance themselves from poor immigrant Mexicans with limited formal education (Meier & Ribera, 1997, p. 281).
- Mexican/Mexicano:** Usually a person from Mexico; also a person of Mexican descent in the U.S. Southwest; even today, when Spanish is the language spoken, mexicano is widely used, and the distinction between Mexican American and Mexican national may rely on the terms *mexicano de este lado* and *mexicano del otro lado* (Meier & Ribera, 1997, p. 282).
- Mexican-American:** Repetitive term used to define a person twice, since Mexico lies on the American continent.
- Mexican California:** Period of time when California was a province and later department under the government of Mexico (1821-1848).
- Mission:** Property owned by the Catholic Church in California. The property was used for the support of the government.
- Rancho:** Rural property, usually one on which cattle are raised (Meier & Ribera, 1997. P. 284).
- Secularization:** A law enforced from 1834-1846, which mandated church mission lands to be divided and given to the citizens of Mexican California.

Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this project is that not all fourth grade social studies textbooks were evaluated. Even though the textbooks evaluated in this study either contained inaccurate information or blatantly omitted important historical events or people, it should be noted, there may be textbooks currently being used in other parts of the nation that are indeed more socially responsive and culturally inclusive. Other textbooks may be in the process of being published that were not evaluated in this study.

A second limitation exists with the observation of the selected teachers and perhaps in the limited number of observations. There may be teachers who instruct students using information and lesson plans that are more inclusive of the Mexican California (1821-1848) history than what was observed.

As has been previously discussed, the purpose of this study was to establish the need to develop a more accurate and inclusive program, which would enhance the elementary school curriculum on Mexican California's history focusing on the years 1821 through 1848. The second chapter will include supporting literature that reflects the need and implication of a culturally responsive curriculum, as well as contribute to the foundation of literature that provided the content for the developing of a curriculum matrix. The methods and procedures of this study and the methodology for the development of a curriculum matrix and referred to as the project are presented in Chapter Three.

An analysis of the study and the presentation of the project are submitted in Chapter Four. The final chapter of this study/project is concerned with the discussion, recommendations (suggestions for further implementation of this curriculum project into schools), and the conclusion.

## Chapter II

## Literature of Review

As this project was in its fetal stages, this author pondered on which approach to use in designing a project that would enable Chicano youths to be empowered by the truthful knowledge of their rich heritage in the history of California. Historically, the fourth grade California social studies curriculum either skipped or portrayed a small, although negative, discussion on the Mexican period (1821-1848). Acuna (1972) notes, "History can either oppress or liberate a people. Generalizations and stereotypes about the Mexican have been circulated in the United States for over 124 years...Incomplete or biased analyses by historians have perpetrated factual errors and created myths" (p. 1). Information relayed to young students was portrayed in a racist, anti-Mexican discourse for many years. This type of information can be damaging to students eager to learn about their past. Acuna (1972) further states, "The tragedy is that the myths have degraded the Mexican people—not only in the eyes of those who feel superior, but also in their own eyes" (p. 1). One author, Richards (1950) addressed the Mexican people as "The Spanish Californians" (p. 177) in an attempt to describe the inhabitants of California during the Mexican period (1821-1848). This type of description disregards the Mexicans who lived in California (1821-1848) and who heavily participated in political and social activities.

There is a need to establish and provide more culturally responsive curriculum in schools. Examination of the educational teaching materials such as the social studies textbooks used in elementary schools resulted in little reference on California history discussing the period when the main inhabitants were Mexican citizens. This kind of omission of accurate historical facts could create dissonance among students of Mexican heritage. Hollins (1996) presents a strong argument for reframing the curriculum and states, "Among the purposes served by the school curriculum are the transmission of culturally valued knowledge and the perpetuation of cultural values and practices" (p. 12). All students, but especially Chicano students need to know that their heritage and contributions are valued and valid.

People of color are becoming more prevalent throughout the United States. According to Hollins (1996), "Eighty percent of the 14 million immigrants arriving in this country during the 1980s were from Asia and South America...there is a declining birthrate among Euro-Americans" (p. 30). This reality must be acknowledged in presenting culturally responsive curriculum across the nation.

In California, there have been recent reports of Mexicans becoming the largest ethnic minority group in the state. According to the Chicano Latinos Affairs Council, by the year 2025, Hispanics' population in California will increase

to 21,232,000 (see Appendix C). In Salinas, California, the school population consists of 60% Latino (California Department of Education, 2000). These numbers in all likelihood will continue to increase because Mexican immigrants will continue emigrating to California and children will continue to be born to Chicano/as already residing in California.

In the 1998 California elections, Cruz Bustamante was elected Lieutenant Governor of the state of California. He is the second highest government official in California and is of Mexican heritage. Perhaps in the future, a person of Mexican heritage will be elected governor of California, as there once was. There is nothing new about the aforementioned population and elected Mexican official information. Until 1849, Mexicans outnumbered other people in California with a ratio of seven to one. Also, every governor from 1821 through 1846 was a Mexican (Bean & Rawls, 1988, p. 52), so history may actually repeat itself.

Demanding a restructure of the curriculum should be designated as one of the highest priorities in California. Mexican-American youth are placed at a disadvantage and are put in danger of losing their historical and cultural roots. Without this knowledge, the youth cannot understand their past or themselves. Grosser (1970) points out, "it is through demands [to be made of the public schools] and implementations that the Mexican American may change his position in society or change society itself" (p. 43). With the denial of many

students of color's heritage, no wonder so many students are labeled "at-risk" in our schools.

Reinforcing that education is important, the enhancement of the educational curriculum is vital to the future of the Mexican American youth. According to Grosser, "education is the most important area of action for the Mexican American" (p. 43).

There have been various strategies developed on how to incorporate and deliver subject matter specifically for the Mexican American student. Some Mexican American students need bilingual programs, others do not, but all students need culturally responsive curriculum. Cortes (1974) has developed six options to help the culturally diverse instructor teach in a non-traditional manner. The following concepts are the alternate ideas presented by Cortes:

1. A recognition of the influences on the development of the "Greater America" of the American cultures that existed prior to the arrival of the Europeans;
2. The comparative analysis of ethnic experiences;
3. The diversity among Chicanos;
4. The view of society as a problem for Chicanos, rather than Chicanos as a problem for society;
5. An awareness of the history of Mexican-Americans;
6. A recognition of the Chicano people as a whole, not through isolated individual success stories, (p. 19).



Teaching, using Cortes' framework, can have a significant impact on the ethnic minority student. In due course, this method of teaching can only have positive results. Certainly these six options should be further explored and eventually implemented into schools where there are students of color.

Students can only benefit from a curriculum that meets their cultural needs. Escamilla (1992) states, "teaching Mexican-American history and culture is a means of improving educational attainment among Mexican-Americans, of developing 'ethnic literacy' among all students, and helping them understand their uniqueness while improving their self-esteem" (p. 3). This statement speaks to the empowerment of all students when addressing the need for ethnic literacy. However, another facet exists when one considers that minority students and Anglo students are not equitably educated, that a definite gap exists in the context of schools. Slavin (1997) comments on the issue of inequality, "The only way to decrease the equity gap in academic performance is to greatly increase the achievement and school success of disadvantaged and minority students. If we could place a high floor under the achievement of all children, regardless of social background, we would substantially reduce inequalities" (p. 8).

Mexican California (1821-1848) history needs to be a part of every students learning. Not only in content, but also in the fashion that Chicanos can take ownership of accurate historical information. According to Luciano Cedillo

Alvarez, Museum Director – Mexico’s Museum of National History, “Mexicans often consider their history a living part of the present, rather than as a blur or a school memory as Americans do. It’s a fundamental difference between Mexico and the United States, one that affects how Mexicans see themselves, their place in the world and their relations with the United States” (Thompson, 2000, p. 1AA). Perhaps, it is due to feelings like those expressed by Cedillo Alvarez that Americans and Mexicans do not view racial and historical issues similarly. Considering that the United States took control of California from Mexico and Mexicans cannot separate themselves from their history, it is most important California’s Mexican history be infused into the social studies curriculum.

To effectively challenge traditional and exclusive education, a student must be empowered as to his/her existence and worthiness. As Cummins (1989) states, “Unless we ourselves are empowered, we cannot be involved with any other processes of empowerment. To be voiceless is to be powerless. If we view ourselves as helpless, we are” (p. 95). The power element exists in the decisions of what and how truths are known and taught in our schools.

Teaching and learning in children’s native language has often been an effective method to gain and retain knowledge. In states such as California and Texas, bilingual education has been a controversial issue for people since the nineteenth century (Daniels, 1976, p. 99). In the nineteenth century, the local government in Texas petitioned the federal government for access to bilingual

education. The emissary sent a petition, which was not granted and the law of the country was upheld to continue education in Spanish. The immigrant parents in Texas were outraged their children could not be educated in English, their "home" language (Daniels, 1976, p. 99).

Conceivably, this is a good example which demonstrated the barriers dealt with in the contemporary era such as Proposition 227 (the UNZ initiative). There is a difference however in using the example of Texas; in the nineteenth century, the parents were predominantly immigrants from the United States. Anglo Americans petitioned the Mexican government to allow their children to be educated in English, since the United States children were not fluent in the country's native Spanish tongue (Donovan, 1976, p. 99). Eventually the language barrier was overcome because of the change of governing powers, thus leading to an increase of success within the population of Anglo immigrants. Example, such as the ones presented can be found in the history of the Southwestern United States, where empowerment and assimilation was made easily into Chicano society.

Having reviewed the literature for the need for culturally responsive curriculum, this author researched in depth the details for accurate information for the period of 1821-1848. The resources researched for the development of the curriculum rubric included *The Decline of the Californios* (Pitt, 1971), which furnished information on Mexican governors such as Figueroa, Alvarado, and

other important political leaders like General Vallejo. A vital resource was found in *The Spanish West* (Daniels, 1976) because it included information on the indigenous people of Mexico and California. Another book referenced was *Mexicanos* (Gonzales, 2000), which was a very useful reference because the historical information provided was accurate in discussing Chicana women roles in 1821-1848 Mexican California and political and business agendas with the United States government.

Chapter III

Methodology

Type of Research Design

The research method used for this thesis was exploratory research and the development of a project was through a historical study. The project was designed by reviewing the social studies framework for K-12, examining different types of curriculum rubrics used in schools for content areas, observing fourth grade classrooms, and developing a questionnaire that guided the direction of the project. Most of the resources for the development of the project were derived from historical records, which focused on the time period between the years of 1821 through 1848. The research was conducted in the following libraries:

- Bancroft at Stanford University – Berkeley, California
- Clark Library at San Jose State University – San Jose, California
- Steinbeck Library – Salinas, California
- California State University, Monterey Bay Library – Seaside, California

Setting

The preliminary study for the development of this project took place in Salinas, California at local school districts. Salinas is a community in Monterey County, in the central coastal region of the state. The major industry consists of

agriculture. Based on statistics conducted in 1997 by the city of Salinas, the population was 123,300, with Latino residents comprising 51%. The city of Salinas projected the population to increase to 138,271 by the year 2000 (City of Salinas, 2000).

### Preliminary Interviews

The author visited three schools in Monterey County as part of the Monterey State Parks outreach program. Informal interviews were conducted with four classroom teachers on the content area of Mexican California (1821-1848) curriculum. The purpose of these interviews was to gather insight on teachers knowledge in Mexican California (1821-1848) history. When asked, the teachers discussed their knowledge of Mexican California (1821-1848) subjects such as the people of Mexican California, California laws in the first half of the nineteenth century, and the role of women in Mexican California. Also discussed were resources and textbooks used for Mexican California (1821-1848) curriculum. Other areas such as the student population and the students' knowledge of Mexican California (1821-1848) were also discussed.

### Research Participants

Besides gathering historical information, reviewing historical documents, and synthesizing the information into a curriculum rubric for the design of the project, an assessment questionnaire was developed and distributed to twenty

elementary school teachers, and the author observed classes at three local schools. The questionnaire was developed as a need assessment to inquire about the social studies in fourth grade curriculum at individual schools.

The participants of the questionnaire consisted of twenty fourth grade teachers, selected from Monterey and Santa Cruz County elementary school teachers attending a historical program hosted by Monterey State Historic Parks on April 4-5, 2000, in Monterey, California. A random group of fourth grade teachers, in attendance during those two days, were asked to voluntarily complete the questionnaire.

#### Teacher Questionnaire

Primarily, data was gathered through researching existing social studies classroom materials, abstracts, historical documents, and California history books in an effort to design the project. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to fourth grade elementary school teachers, which enabled the author to collect data regarding the social studies curriculum for the history time period 1821-1848. There were twenty questionnaires distributed to teachers in attendance during the state park's program on April 4-5, 2000. Of the twenty questionnaires handed out to the teachers, seventeen questionnaires were returned. Ten were returned on that day, while seven were faxed to the author. The questionnaire

(see Appendix A) was designed with eleven open-ended questions relating to Mexican California (1821-1848) history. The questionnaire asked the teacher not to write in the space provided if s/he did not know the answer.

The data was analyzed through reading the responses. Specializing in this area of research, this author was able to determine the teacher's knowledge or lack of for teaching Mexican California (1821-1848) history. Gathering this information provides a better understanding of the need to incorporate a more culturally responsive curriculum, especially when the teacher has little knowledge of Mexican California (1821-1848) historical events.

#### Description of the Curriculum Rubric

The next step involved the content areas deemed important to be in fourth grade Mexican California (1821-1848) curriculum. Based on historical research, the author included the following eight content areas:

- Mexican Period
- Mission Lands
- Government
- Social Life
- Women
- Commerce in California



- Native Americans
- California leaders

Each content area included examples of events or names of historical figures, which provided the criteria to evaluate the textbooks selected.

Points were assigned in the curriculum rubric (refer to figure 4.2), which was developed as a scale to evaluate the selected textbooks using criteria as noted above. The points were categorized from one to four beginning with mostly inaccurate/omitted (rating of 1), somewhat accurate (rating of 2), mostly accurate (rating of 3), or extremely accurate (rating of 4). To further clarify the rating, a lower score indicated the textbook did not contain accurate Mexican California (1821-1848) historical information.

The ratings below reflect the elements ascribed to each category:

- A score of 1 indicated the textbook's Mexican California (1821-1848) information was mostly inaccurate. The textbook fabricated or omitted information.
- A score of 2 indicated the textbook's Mexican California (1821-1848) information was somewhat accurate. The textbook illustrated useful information when applied properly and systematically.
- A score of 3 indicated the textbook Mexican California (1821-1848) information was mostly accurate. The textbook depicted events and people more precisely.

- A score of 4 indicated the textbook Mexican California (1821-1848) information was extremely accurate. The textbook established ethnic backgrounds, cultural values, and the historical significance of Mexican Californios.

As previously noted, the curriculum rubric contained examples of important historical events and names to be used as indicators for each topic and for each score (1-4) to help instructors and administrators determine if critical Mexican California (1821-1848) information was present in a textbook. In addition, the curriculum rubric was designed as a sample rating system, whereby, the curriculum rubric could be updated or expanded by adding other content areas.

#### Description of the Matrix

A matrix (refer to figure 4.3) was designed for use in evaluating textbooks. The matrix, used in conjunction with the curriculum rubric, was designed as a tool to determine whether a textbook contained accurate and culturally responsive information. The author selected four textbooks, three were recently published textbooks and being currently used in schools and the remaining textbook was a traditional textbook published in 1950.

The following fourth grade social studies books were selected for the testing of the curriculum rubric:

- California: Adventures in Time and Place – McGraw Hill School Division (1999)

- Oh, California – Houghton Mifflin Company (1991)
- California – Harcourt Brace Company (2000)
- Early California – California State Department of Education (1950)

Description of the Project – Rubric for the California Mexican (1821-1848) History

In order to develop the project, information crucial for accurately recording facts and events during the history time period between 1821-1848 was researched and then a curriculum rubric (Figure 4.2) was designed. Background historical information was organized to preface the rubric in order to provide pertinent information associated with the historical time period of 1821-1848.

In Chapter Four, the results of the questionnaire will be discussed, the actual product exhibited, and the results of the product with four selected textbooks will be shared.

## Chapter IV

### Results

Since this thesis focused on the production of a product (the curriculum rubric), the author will report the results of the questionnaire, which guided in the development of the product, and then report the results of the matrix designed to analyze the textbooks.

#### Questionnaire Results

Out of twenty questionnaires distributed to fourth grade elementary teachers, seventeen questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire consisted of eleven open-ended questions and teachers were instructed to leave the question blank if they did not know the answer. Six of the eleven questions were left blank or partially answered in all seventeen returned questionnaires. Since some of the questions were blank or partially answered, it appeared the survey participants were limited in their knowledge of Mexican California (1821-1848) history. Below are some answers, which were provided by the participants:

Question #1 (refer to Appendix A) when asked about the inclusion of Mexican California (1821-1848) history in their curriculum, only a few teachers gave the proceeding partial answers:

- "The Spanish period leads us through the Mexican period to annexation."

- "Some time is given to the period between the missions and the gold rush."
- "The Mexican period is covered to discuss the missions and the land."
- "Ranchos in old California are discussed during the section of Mexican California."

In Question #7 (refer to Appendix A), which was phrased as, what other languages have you used in your teaching experience? Only one teacher completed this question stating that she could speak, read, and write in Spanish fluently, the other 16 respondents either answered only English or left the question blank.

The question which would solicit specific information for the depth of understanding the participants on Mexican California (1821-1848) period was Question #10 (refer to Appendix A). This question asked, in your opinion, name some of the most important events that transpired during the Mexican California period? List one Mexican California historical figure you focus on in your unit of study and tell why he/she was selected. Only two of the 17 teachers completed this question. Their remarks were:

- "The missions were closed down to give the property to the citizens."
- "Spanish grants were given to worthy citizens. Father Serra was a figure of historical significance."

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Based on the questionnaire feedback, teachers seemed to have very limited knowledge of Mexican California (1821-1848) history. This analysis was attributed to six questions being left entirely blank, while seven gave partial or limited responses, they did not answer with any specificity. In addition, teachers indicated they were unaware of the additional existing textbooks for use in their Mexican California (1821-1848) curriculum.

All seventeen of the teachers reported using the Houghton Mifflin Social Studies for their California history classes.

Matrix Results

Figure 4.1 (below) shows the results of the four textbooks examined, using the curriculum rubric and the matrix developed for this thesis. The total score was arrived at by adding the sum of scores and then dividing by eight (the number of content areas).

Textbook ▸ Content Area ▼	<b>Oh, California</b>	<b>California: Adventures...</b>	<b>California</b>	<b>Early California</b>
Mexican Period	4	4	4	1
Mission Lands	4	3	4	1
Government	2	4	3	1
Social Life	2	2	2	1
Women	2	4	3	1
Commerce	3	4	3	1
Native Americans	2	4	3	1
California Leaders	1	4	3	1
<b>Total Score:</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>1.0</b>

Figure 4.1

In Figure 4.3, the matrix will display scores and explain the results.

1821-1848 ~ Mexican History Curriculum Rubric

	1 Mostly Inaccurate/Omitted	2 Somewhat Accurate	3 Mostly Accurate	4 Extremely Accurate
<b>Mexican Period</b>	*Lacks definition of land grants and ranchos *Lacks information on people ethnicities	*Discusses land grants *Discusses Spanish vs. Mexican Californios	*Clearly states land grants Spanish vs. Mexican *Defines Mexican Empire vs. Republic	*Gives examples of Mexican land grants *Describes Mexican Californios outlook
<b>Mission Lands</b>	*Romanticizes role of the mission *Discusses Native American experience as pastoral	*Mission as a spiritual refuse *Positive lifestyle change	*The role of the mission *Life in the mission from a Native American perspective	*Discusses mission roles in decline of Native Americans quality of life *Discusses Native Am. loss of rightful ownership of land
<b>Government</b>	*Defines government *Lacks governor information	*Some information on Monterey as capitol *Generally discusses governors	*Monterey as capitol *The role of governor *Mentions specific governors *Gives examples of laws	*Clearly defines Mexican laws *Names Mexican governors
<b>Social Life</b>	*Romanticizes life in California *Lacks real social problems	*Describes social activity of elite Californios	*Describes social life of all Californios	*Clearly shows difference of quality of social life landowners and the landless people
<b>Women</b>	*Describes women as docile and voiceless *Omits information on women's central role in society and family life	*Provides some information women roles in California	*Clearly gives names of women in leading California families	*Provides information on women roles through out California and in relation with other people
<b>Commerce in California</b>	*Lacks information on types of business *Shows only Americans as successful business merchansts	*Discusses role of Mexican Californios as cattle ranchers, and farmers	*Describes trade with other countries and Mexico's policy on exports and imports	*Gives examples of Mexican Californios business owners *Demonstrates partnerships with Americans
<b>Native Americans</b>	*Romanticizes life in the mission for Native Americans	*Shows church role in subjugating the Native American people *Describes cultural loss due to church/gov't	*Clearly defines church/ gov't as reason for decline of Native American people	*Shows examples of the Native American attempt to resist subjugation and loss of culture
<b>California Leaders</b>	*Describes leaders as "Spanish" & not Mexican *Lacks information on leaders	*Gives examples of leaders such as Vallejo, Pico, Carrillo as the only elite families	*Describes leaders as Mexican Californios *Shows attitude of leaders toward U.S. and other countries	*Clearly states life of a Californio leader and their experiences within the Mexican period

Figure 4.2



**Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix**

(for textbook analysis using the curriculum rubric)

<b>Textbook Evaluated</b>	<b>Mostly Inaccurate</b>	<b>Somewhat Accurate</b>	<b>Mostly Accurate</b>	<b>Extremely Accurate</b>
California: Adventures in time and place				<b>3.6</b>
Social Studies			<b>3.1</b>	
Oh, California		<b>2.5</b>		
Early California	<b>1.0</b>			

**Figure 4.3**

**Matrix Results**

Based on the evaluation of the four social studies textbooks discussed in Chapter Three, the following are the results:

\*Early California: rated with a score 1.0 on the Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix. This book lacked definitions of terms, such as ranchos and land grants. The book also romanticized the roles of the mission and of the people.

\*Oh, California: rated with a score of 2.5 on the Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix. This book described social activities of the elite Californios and provided some information on women roles in California. It also showed how the church subjugated the Native American people and the difference between Spanish versus Mexican Californios.

\*California: rated with a score of 3.1 on the Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix. This book clearly stated Spanish land grants versus Mexican land grants. Discussed the life in the missions from a Native American perspective.

\*California: Adventures in Time and Place rated with a score 3.6 on the Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix. This book provided examples of Mexican governors, Mexican business owners and demonstrated partnerships with Americans. It clearly demonstrated the life of the Californio leader and his/her experiences within the Mexican period.

## Chapter V

### Discussion, Recommendations, & Conclusion

#### Discussion

This author embarked on this project, which resulted in the development of a curriculum rubric of the historical period of 1821-1848 in California. A matrix was used to evaluate four California history textbooks used to teach fourth grade students in California.

This author was motivated to complete this project for a few reasons. First, as a Chicano student, this author felt deprived and disenfranchised by the educational system, which historically has denied Chicano/a students their positive ancestral and cultural contributions. Chicano/a students have historically been taught with a European ethnocentric approach. Mexican California (1821-1848) history has been reserved for either Spanish or other European extraction people. This author's passion for history would not be forgiving had this project not been pursued.

Second, California's demographic student population has been changing and with this change comes the need for a different teaching approach. Chicano students are growing in number and their academic needs should include an accurate and concise education in Mexican California history. The frustration of having been denied cultural and significant historical information as stated previously, and the seemingly changing landscape of the political scene, require

this author to address the limitations of existing Mexican California (1821-1848) history in the fourth grade setting and call upon a change to happen in presenting culturally responsive curriculum to students in the context of schooling.

Having administered a questionnaire to teachers, visiting classrooms and observed social studies and the history of California being taught, the need for providing accurate and relevant information for the historical time period of 1821-1848 was most evident.

It is significant that materials and resources accurately portray the truth in history and that the Euro-American slant on curriculum be realized as a façade. Thus, this author has made an attempt to bring forth the truth in the development of a product, which can be used for more accurately presenting the facts.

### Recommendations

As this chapter allows for personal thoughts and suggestions, this author will take the opportunity to make recommendations on how the curriculum can be continually improved in the area of Mexican California (1821-1848) history.

The recommendations are as follows:

1. This author recommends the Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix/Rubric be used with the thought in mind that it was developed to assist in the implementation of more socially responsive materials for the classroom.
2. This author recommends instructors and administrators use the Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix/Rubric to evaluate and select resource materials, including textbooks. It can be part of a conference packet and distributed to persons authorized to purchase books for their district.
3. This author recommends that within the next three to five years an update be conducted to evaluate any new resources and textbooks available at that time. In doing so, the opportunity will present itself to see how much additional improvement has been made.

### Conclusion

As stated in Chapter Four, this author was disappointed to find few resources, which rated in the extremely accurate category for the inclusion of California Mexican history social studies curriculum in schools. However, the four textbooks evaluated, using the curriculum rubric designed by this author, provided hope that such resources are indeed becoming more socially conscious

of culturally correct information. The textbooks, by accurately presenting the role and contributions of Mexicans, permit Chicano students to learn more about their culture's positive influence in California's history.

This author feels that although the textbooks are being written in a more cultural and responsible manner, improvements need to continue and all schools need to look carefully at how curriculum is structured and presented to students.

To that end, this author attempted to assist in the empowerment of all students, particularly Chicano students, who may take pride in the fact their cultural group contributed and succeeded to make a positive historical impact on California.

APPENDIX A

## **Mexican California (1821-1848) History Questionnaire**

1. How many years have you taught California History? In Grades: \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you include Mexican California history? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If so, approximately how much class time is spent on Mexican California history
2. What experience if any do you have which attributes to your teaching of Mexican California history?
3. What is your opinion of the Houghton Mifflin Social Studies text?
4. Besides Houghton Mifflin Social Studies text, what other sources do you use in teaching Mexican California history?
5. Where do you acquire teaching materials specific to Mexican California history?
6. Have you taught in other countries? If so, where. Please discuss the history you taught in that country.
7. What other languages have you used in your teaching experience?
8. What is generally the prior knowledge of your students on Mexican California history prior to your study of Mexican California history?
9. Describe the student's overall response to Mexican California history.
10. In your opinion, name some of the most important events that transpired during the Mexican California period? List one Mexican California historical figure you focus on in your unit of study and tell why he/she was selected.
11. Have you taken the students to visit historical buildings/sites constructed during the Mexican California period? If so, where and what criteria was used in the selection of this site?

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO DOCENT: MAX G. MACIAS.**

**Thanks for coming!**

APPENDIX B

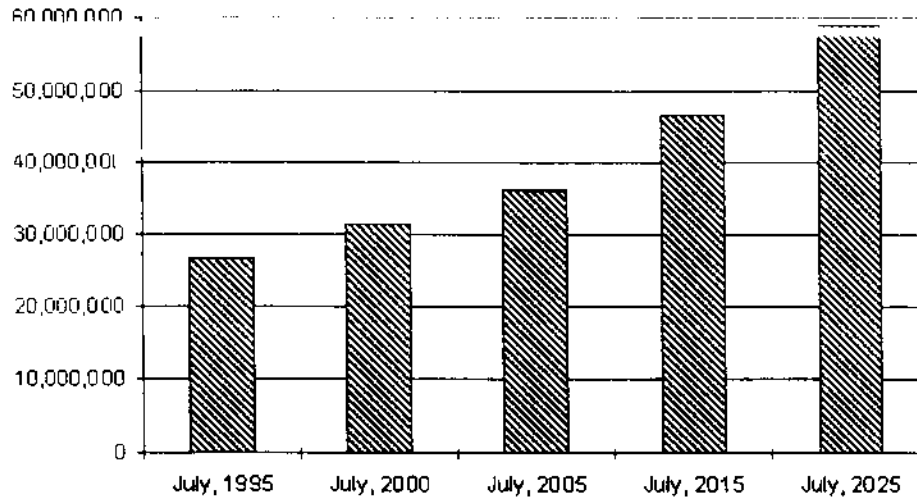


### Mexican California (1821-1848) Matrix

Textbook Evaluated	Mostly Inaccurate	Somewhat Accurate	Mostly Accurate	Extremely Accurate

APPENDIX C

# US HISPANIC POPULATION GROWTH PROJECTIONS (1995-2025)



State	July, 1995	July, 2000	July, 2005	July, 2015	July, 2025
California	9,206,000	10,647,000	12,268,000	16,411,000	21,232,000
Texas	5,173,000	5,875,000	6,624,000	8,294,000	10,230,000
New York	2,541,000	2,805,000	3,071,000	3,664,000	4,309,000
Florida	1,955,000	2,390,000	2,845,000	3,828,000	4,944,000
Illinois	1,090,000	1,267,000	1,450,000	1,840,000	2,275,000
New Jersey	896,000	1,044,000	1,196,000	1,513,000	1,861,000
Arizona	868,000	1,071,000	1,269,000	1,641,000	2,065,000
New Mexico	657,000	736,000	821,000	1,011,000	1,241,000
Colorado	507,000	594,000	682,000	859,000	1,067,000
Massachusetts	355,000	437,000	524,000	719,000	934,000
Washington	284,000	360,000	437,000	605,000	797,000
Pennsylvania	279,000	334,000	391,000	507,000	639,000

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