



The History of Alta California: A Memoir of Mexican California

Antonio Maria Osio

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Antonio María Osio's *La Historia de Alta California* was the first written history of upper California during the era of Mexican rule, and this is its first complete English translation. A Mexican-Californian, government official, and the landowner of Angel Island and Point Reyes, Osio writes colorfully of life in old Monterey, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, and gives a first-hand account of the political intrigues of the 1830s that led to the appointment of Juan Bautista Alvarado as governor.

Osio wrote his *History* in 1851, conveying with immediacy and detail the years of the U.S.-Mexican War of 1846–1848 and the social upheaval that followed. As he witnesses California's territorial transition from Mexico to the United States, he recalls with pride the achievements of Mexican California in earlier decades and writes critically of the onset of U.S. influence and imperialism. Unable to endure life as foreigners in their home of twenty-seven years, Osio and his family left Alta California for Mexico in 1852.

Osio's account predates by a quarter century the better-known reminiscences of Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and Juan Bautista Alvarado and the memoirs of Californios dictated to Hubert Howe Bancroft's staff in the 1870s. Editors Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz have provided an accurate, complete translation of Osio's original manuscript, and their helpful introduction and notes offer further details of Osio's life and of society in Alta California.

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