

The Names of Land Grants in Provincial California

J. N. BOWMAN

IN 1769 SPAIN BEGAN ITS LAST EXPASION in the western hemisphere in the area north of Mexico and west of the Mississippi. Along both sides of the Amazon and north of the Florida territory west to the Father of Waters there remained only a series of boundary disputes, but on the Pacific coast north of Mexico she still had some freedom of movement. After 1763 the rumors of the southern expansion of Russia from Alaska were disturbing and this joined with the long recognized need of coastal ports for serving the Philippine galleons sailing east with the north trade winds resulted in the decision to establish ports at San Diego and Monterey and cooperate in the colonization and mission activity of the Franciscan fathers.

Six years later another factor, long in use in Mexico, was introduced — the granting of lands to retired or invalided soldiers and others, a movement extending from 1775 to 1846. In these 72 years land grants were made along the coast from San Diego to Ukiah, in the San Joaquin Valley, and in the Sacramento Valley as far north as Redding. During this period 717 pieces of land had been granted in addition to the usufruct rights of land for the 21 missions which were not grants; and of these 717 pieces 570, or 79%, were ranchos (a California league was 4438.68 acres); the rest were "lands," garden lots, house lots, timber cutting rights, and a few of unknown acreage. For additional identification as to location of the land solicited and in accordance with the land surveying methods of those days, these lands were given names in the same manner as names were given to pueblos, presidios, and posts. Most of the names were carried by the ranchos and a few by the "lands," house and garden lots; the others were designated only as lots, "lands," an area of so many varas or leagues, or for the purpose for which the grant was to be used, or an augmentation. About one third of

the land grants had alternate or secondary names and many of the 103 duplicate granted areas also had names. This makes a total of 875 names some of which were used for different pieces of land.

The simple and copulate names were such as Acalanes, San Antonio, Arroyo del Rodeo, Calera y las Positas, Valle de San Jose y Agua Caliente, Yerba Buena ó Socayre, and Cañada de Guadalupe, Visitacion y Rodeo Viejo. Some names were designations only such as Five leagues, One thousand varas, Cañada, Cienega, Parage, and these descriptions were accepted by the Americans as proper names. Auxiliary names were such as Habra or Cañada de Habra, conejo or Nuestra Señora de Altagracia, carne humana or Hailic noma or Caligolman or Calojomanoc.

As to the linguistic origin of the names the greater part of them were Spanish as would be expected — 658; while the Indians provided 173; the Americans (Johnson), Germans (Breisgau), and Irish (Macnamara) provided 9; and the Spanish combined with the American (Rio de los Americanos), Russian (Rio Ojatska), and Latin (Nueva Helvetia) provided 6; 9 were of unknown origin; and 156 places had no names.

The secondary or substitute names were constructed in a similar manner.

The 21 missions, as mentioned before, were not land grants but on their founding they received specific names; 12 were named after male saints, four after female saints (Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Ines, and Solodad), three were named after angels (San Gabriel, San Miguel, and San Rafael), and two received names of religious import (Santa Cruz and Purisima concepcion). Three of these mission names in time were superseded by other names: San Carlos became Carmel, San Francisco became Dolores, and San Francisco Solano changed to Sonoma.

The grantees followed the example of the missions but were much freer in their selection of names but those of a religious nature dominated, either named after saints or after places of their nativity which bore these names; 69 saints names were used 200 times and 48 names were of a religious nature and were used more than this number of times. San Gabriel was the most favored (18 times), San Jose with 16, Santa Clara with 14, San Luis Obispo with 11, Santa Rosa and San Juan Capistrano with seven each, San Pedro and San Jusn Bautista with six each, San Vicente, Santa Barbara

and San Francisquito with five each. Grants with the names of religious import were such as ascuncion, purisima, refugio, merced, providencia, virgines, cabeza de Santa Rosa.

Geographic features were the next most popular source of names, used 218 times. Some were purely descriptive such as Cañada del rincon en el rio San Lorenzo de Santa Cruz; cañada was used 47 times alone or in connection with other names, arroyo 12 times in a similar manner, rio 16, potrero 13, rincon 20, bolsa 10, punta 8, salinas, llano and its derivatives, and paso 4 times each, isla was used 15, water in some form 43, laguna 14, cienega and agua caliente 5 times each.

Names of trees, flowers and plants were used 48 times alone or in combination with other names, such as aliso, alimos, cipres, encino, laurel, nogales, robles, pinos, camote, flores, and others.

Places, villages or towns were used 91 times as names (San Jose, rancheria), and the names of the grantees as designations of their lands were used 38 times (Solis, Fernandez, Feliz, Blucher). Work places as names 18, were such as pescadero, embarcadero, carbonera, cazadero. Animals provided names 17 times such as puerca, conejo, liebre, coyote, gatos, tejon. Names of peoples, alone or in conjunction with other names, were used 15 times, such as Franceses, and names of Indian tribes or people. Names of cultivated or agricultural areas were used seven times — milpitas, huerta, viña. Birds and fowels gave six names — pajaro, gavilan, alcatraz, gallinos. Items of construction, used 16 times, were such as puente, goleta, bodega, molino, corral. Parts of or pertaining to the human body were used four times — calaveras, cabeza, cojo. Insects became names for lands five times — pulgas, piojo, mariposa, not to mention. escorpion. Fruits gave names three times such as uvas, camulos, cuca (probably). Apparently an Indian name for fish was used once — sespe. Color became parts of names six times — verde, colorado, prieto, tuluca. Food also provided names on three occasions — pinole, and canejo. In 50 instances words with a miscellaneous meaning were used such as sur, buena vista, pala, escarpines, temescal, salsipuedes, hambre, panoche, carna humana, otay. Twentyseven names used some 70 times are of unknown meaning. These names total 690.

The auxiliary names for these grants were quite similar to the above. Saints names were used 85 times, words with a religious

import gave 16 names, and geography gave 118 names, 24 bore the names of the individual grantees, 22 referred to rivers, waters or springs, 21 referred to trees, plants of flowers, 15 indicated animals or birds, 17 were the names of peoples, 18 bore the names of towns, missions and other places, 9 indicated work places, 39 of miscellaneous meaning, and 32 are of unknown meaning. There were 430 of such names.

There were 103 duplicate grants, i.e. regrants or recognition of new grantees for lands already granted; they had 57 Spanish names and seven were of Indian origin, and 39 were without names. A total of 64 names.

These 875 individual names (total less duplicated names) used singly or in combination with other names were used over 1000 times for the different pieces of land; the frequency of use of the names of the missions is due to the adjacent pieces of land taking the name of the nearby mission.

As to the survival of these names to the present, the missions, intact or restored, all have retained their original or popular names. The land grants, however, have all except 21 been divided and subdivided and so have lost their corporate names, and excepting these 21 mentioned the original names are now only of historical or traditional interest.

During the Spanish period up to 1810, 17 land grants were made but in the naming of the lands the expected influence of the mission naming was absent; four were without names, two had saints names (San Rafael, and Los Angeles pueblo), one was probably named after a person, pueblo San Jose probably was named after a place and Villa de Branciforte was named after a Spanish official, three of these names were duplicated, and four grants had no names.

During the Revolutionary period, 1811 to April 1822, six grants were made with half of them duplicates. Only one received a saints name taken from a hill which bore the name of El Cerrito de San Antonio.

During the Transition period from April, 1822, to the introduction of the land law of 1824 early in 1833, there were 18 grants four of which were duplicates. Again the religious influence in the selection of names is absent. Only one received a saints name (San Pedro).

During the land-granting period (1833 to 1846) the definite trend was from the religious names to non-religious and "no names" was well marked at the rate of $3\frac{1}{2}$ to one.

Such was the use of names in provincial California in the naming of the pieces of lands granted; names to designate the presidios, missions, and pueblos, and to designate the location of the granted lands; they were dominantly of Spanish origin followed closely by the Indians. In the early days names of a religious origin dominated but in time names of individuals or an absence of names took the lead. With the breaking up of the ranhos into subdivisions the rancho names disappeared except in a historical and traditional sense.

The above is concerned only with the land grant names and so does not include the place names of streams, valleys, hills, mountains and other geographic features.

Note

These names were found in the land grant papers in the National Archives, in the transcripts in the State Archives in Sacramento, and in the private land grant cases in the Clerk's office of the U.S. District Court in San Francisco; a few were also found in the Bancroft abstracts of the Spanish Archives now in the Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California

★ ★ ★

ADDENDA TO "NOTES ON HUMBOLDT COUNTY CALIFORNIA, PLACE NAMES OF INDIAN ORIGIN"

1. *Town of Loleta*. In my article of the above title, which appeared in this journal Volume VI, pp. 55—56, I failed to specify adequately the transition from the Wiyot model /wiwítak/ to the current name. The simplest explanation for the change from w- to l-sounds is no doubt the well-known supposition among non-Indian Americans that Indian languages are simply forms of glorified baby talk. Such an attitude was nearly universal in the last century. Since w is a standard substitute among English-speaking children for either l or r of the adult language, Mrs. Herrick might have chosen either of these in her form, but evidently preferred the former, thus arriving, with the dropping of -k and vowel changes dealt with in the article, at the Spanish-sounding *Loleta*. The fact that the second vowel sound is spelled with e and not i, incidentally, is another external piece of evidence that the town name is not derived from the Spanish name.

3. *Weott*. The permanent population of the town by this name has greatly declined since flood damages of the past few years, and is currently about 150, rather than 350 as given in the original article.

University of California, Berkeley

Karl V. Teeter