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Author(s): Lawrence E. Guillo

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Pandemonium in the Plaza: The First Los Angeles Riot, July 22, 1856

by Lawrence E. Guillow

AFTER THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION of California in 1846, the Hispanic population lost both political and social influence. Soon outnumbered by Anglo-Americans, they slowly adapted to changes in government and culture brought by the invaders. The economic boom and inflation from the gold rush softened the social upheaval of the early 1850s but, as the economy slowed and unsuccessful miners flooded into Los Angeles, tensions increased. Disenchanted Anglo-American miners venturing into the town brought renewed support to existing anti-Hispanic prejudices, while recent immigrants from Mexico, already the object of discrimination in the gold fields, sought equality in the largely Hispanic town. Glaring injustices and obvious signs of inequality kindled resentment within many in the Hispanic community. By 1856, one incident ignited a volatile population, resulting in the first race riot in Los Angeles. Culminating in a race war or substantial rebellion, the threat subsided only after prominent *Californios* intervened and committed themselves to maintaining the American legal system.¹

Beginning with the American conquest of Los Angeles in 1847, Anglo-Americans slowly gained political and social control of the city. The Hispanic population found itself in the same position as Native Americans, a conquered people. Unlike the Spanish invaders of California, the Americans did not begin a process of forced assimilation. They did not remove most traces of Spanish culture and law, subverting the authority of local leaders. Instead, after an initial mistake by Captain Archibald Gillespie's administration during the Mexican War which led to a violent revolt, military discipline was relaxed in the Mexican capital of Los Angeles and some of the

town's customary practices were allowed. The military authorities even promised democratic elections for local officials and a quick return to civil government, as long as it did not interfere with wartime needs.

The transition from military rule to civil administration was not always smooth. While California remained a territory, civil authorities and military administrators often disagreed on their proper roles and jurisdictions in civil matters. In August of 1847, the second *alcalde*, Enrique Avila, resigned his post over a disagreement with the military commander, Colonel Jonathan Stevenson.² Alcalde Avila arrested the revolutionary Serbulo Varela on an unspecified charge. Since only a few citizens could bear arms under military law, the *alcaldes* relied on the military to act as a police force and secure dangerous criminals. Wishing to remove himself from civic responsibilities, Colonel Stevenson claimed the prisoner posed no threat to public safety and released Varela. Upon his release, Varela confronted Avila and verbally abused him. Avila, insulted by both Stevenson's decision and Varela's tongue lashing, resigned his post. The high office of *alcalde* had little meaning for Avila if a common criminal could treat him without respect and the military commander could question his every decision.³

The *ayuntamiento* (city council) tried to reconcile the two officials and continued to operate in Avila's absence until December, when Angelenos held new elections.⁴ After the election, Colonel Stevenson wrote to Governor Richard Mason, claiming the new *alcaldes*, Ignacio Palomares and José Sepúlveda, intolerable. Stevenson believed the Hispanic population elected these men for their known animosity towards the Americans. Mason, aware of the small military presence in Los Angeles and fearing a second revolt, revoked the right of elections and appointed an American, Stephen C. Foster, *alcalde*. At first the citizens of Los Angeles protested the appointments by refusing to serve regular guard duty, but after continual fines they gradually yielded.⁵

Anglo-Americans continued to fear and misunderstand the Hispanic population even after California entered the Union. Without a strong military presence in the south, they constantly worried that the Hispanic population would rebel and attempt to reunite with Mexico. The Hispanic community did little to alleviate these fears.

At times drunken young Hispanic men galloped through the streets late at night proclaiming exclamations of adolescent rebellion. Older Hispanic gentlemen often times recounted their adventures in ousting unpopular governors, leading Anglo-Americans to wonder about their own position.

Aware of this anxiety, friends of the first mayor of Los Angeles, Alpheus P. Hodges, decided to play a prank. They told Mayor Hodges that the Hispanic population was in a state of rebellion. Convinced a race war waged just outside his office, the mayor called upon all the Americans to arm themselves. He ordered scouts to report on the enemy's position and prepared for a bloody assault. After several hours almost every Anglo-American in town took part in the joke. They maintained the charade until the following morning when some of the mayor's men informed him of the hoax. There were no injuries nor loss of life during the antics but the incident demonstrated how much Anglo-Americans mistrusted and suspected their Hispanic neighbors.⁶

The Hispanic population of Los Angeles had little reason to rebel in the early 1850s. As a direct result of the gold rush of 1849, the economy of southern California flourished. Argonauts flooded Los Angeles passing through to the gold fields of the north. The agrarian economy in southern California had a new market for their products, especially livestock, and the increased demand from the bursting population led to exorbitant prices. Almost everyone in Los Angeles prospered as inflation multiplied the value of California livestock.⁷

Over the next few years racial tensions increased. Disappointed miners flocked back into southern California looking for new economic opportunities. Anglo-American miners, unfamiliar with a larger Hispanic population, came to Los Angeles in greater numbers, settling close together in the western half of the city. Many of these men were gamblers and outlaws, having little respect for human life. They brandished guns at the least offense and posed a risk to public safety. The situation alarmed local residents so much that in March 1850 Stephen Foster petitioned the military to help control the Anglo-American immigrants. By 1854 more Anglo-American immigrants merely increased the problem as one of the town's papers called for a larger police force to control the rowdy crowd.⁸

Many of the Anglo-American immigrants built upon their anti-Hispanic prejudice after they arrived in southern California. They had very little opportunity to associate with the more respectable Californio population. Occupied with ranching, Californios ventured into town less often, while unsuccessful Hispanic miners, primarily from the state of Sonora, settled in the northern part of town. A number of race conscious Anglo-American immigrants to Los Angeles failed to notice any division within the Hispanic community and stereotyped all Hispanics together. Both the Californios and the Anglo-Americans noted the partiality of the Sonorans to drinking and gambling. Yet the Anglo-Americans freely associated the Californios with the racially similar Sonorans.⁹

By 1850 the northern section of Los Angeles gained the name Sonora Town for all the new immigrants from Sonora, Mexico. Kicked out of the gold fields or unfairly oppressed by the foreign miners tax, many of these immigrants hoped to start life again in the predominantly Hispanic town of Los Angeles. Most of the Sonorans had few skills and worked as laborers. Paid only half the amount of skilled Anglo-American craftsmen, many resorted to gambling and drinking to escape the oppressive conditions in California. Others resorted to banditry, stealing from successful miners or merchants. In 1853 the Los Angeles papers noted the rising number of crimes centering around El Calle de los Negros in the heart of Sonora Town. A number of outlaws from both the northern gold fields and Mexico congregated in this section of the city. Filled with saloons and brothels, this street catered to the less reputable members of all races. Alarmed at the rising number of murders and rumors of Mexican bandits, most Anglo-Americans viewed the whole Hispanic population with suspicion.¹⁰

By the summer of 1856, race relations deteriorated, resulting in the city's first race riot. On Saturday morning, July 19, 1856, Justice Alex Gibson issued a writ of execution on the personal property of a Californio, Antonio Ruiz, for lack of payment. The deputy marshal, William Jenkins, tried to execute the writ and confiscate a large Spanish guitar, but encountered resistance. Ruiz had placed a letter belonging to Señora María Candelaria Polloreña within the guitar and wished to retrieve it before the deputy confiscated a instrument. Señora Polloreña and Ruiz both pleaded with the deputy but he

refused. Finally, Ruiz grabbed the guitar. Jenkins rashly pulled his pistol, pointing it at Señora Polloreña. Alarmed at the gesture, Ruiz clutched the deputy's arm. Jenkins pulled free, aimed the gun back at Ruiz and fired. The bullet struck Ruiz in the chest, causing his death later that night.

Jenkins had no reason for drawing his weapon. Neither Ruiz nor Señora Polloreña were armed or presented any threat to the deputy. They did not even resist the impounding of the guitar but simply wished to retrieve a letter placed within the instrument. Jenkins, like many Anglo-Americans at the time, had little understanding of non-whites and feared those he did not know. This fear caused him to overreact leading to disastrous consequences.

Upon fatally wounding Ruiz, Jenkins immediately returned to town and surrendered himself. At first the Justice of the Peace released Jenkins on his own recognizance. Later, upon the death of Ruiz, District Judge Benjamin Hayes decided Jenkins should remain in jail and issued a warrant committing Jenkins to the custody of Under Sheriff Charles E. Hale. Convinced Jenkins acted in the performance of his duty, Hale saw no reason to confine him and allowed Jenkins to leave. Later, however, Jenkins was jailed again in response to public outcry. The Hispanic population, outraged that a murderer should be permitted to walk the streets, started gathering together to discuss a means of action. They spread news of the murder but, out of respect for Ruiz's widow, waited until after the funeral to discuss matters further.

With people from all over the county attending, the funeral was one of the largest ever held in Los Angeles. After the family had interred the body, mourners gathered near the grave site to discuss a plan of action. Complaints about unfair treatment, discrimination, and arbitrary arrests were voiced throughout the meeting. Soon grief turned to anger as a number of men proposed vigilante justice.¹¹

Few people in California had confidence in the American legal system. Beginning well before the notorious San Francisco vigilance committees, Angelenos had already developed a twenty-year tradition of vigilante justice, in some cases almost gaining official sanction. By the mid-1850s law enforcement ran into difficulties enforcing the peace. Los Angeles newspapers reported personal assaults almost every day. As the population grew, violence in the

city increased to such an extent that the local Presbyterian minister considered Los Angeles hopeless and left town. In 1854 Mayor Stephen C. Foster dispersed a mob by saying that the accused, Dave Brown, would either be convicted and hung legally or he would resign and direct the lynching himself. After the court ordered a stay of execution, he fulfilled his promise.¹²

Despite the prevalence of vigilante action, not everyone at the cemetery considered it the best alternative. Many of the wealthier Californios believed the rules of law should apply, since they feared mob action from the poorer recent immigrants from Mexico. After a lengthy discussion assessing the impact of lynching a public official, cooler heads prevailed. The crowd appointed six men to serve the dual role of assisting the officers in protecting the jail and representing the Hispanic community, insuring the law would be impartially administered.

News that Judge Hayes ordered Jenkins confined to the city jail that evening probably helped dispel some of the complaints about American justice. However, a few of the more violent members of the meeting refused to subsist and continued their attempts to create a disturbance. Fernando Carieiga, a Frenchman, rode into town violently denouncing the Americans and supporting Mexico. Possibly attempting another revolution, he tried to garner support against the American authorities and gathered a number of followers.¹³

Alarmed at the events in the cemetery, the town's Anglo-American population started arming and gathering to defend the jail. Rumors circulated throughout the town claiming the Mexicans were preparing to kill every American. The six-man committee from the graveyard tried to reassure their fellow citizens that the rumors were unfounded. Still, most of the crowd remained unconvinced and continued their watch of the jail all night without incident.¹⁴

Tuesday morning while Jenkins appeared before Judge Hayes to defend himself on the charge of murder, many of the poorer Mexicans in town met in secret to discuss action against Jenkins and his American defenders. Carieiga and his men warned their friends in the town of a plan to raid the jail that evening. All seemed quiet but news spread of the impending attack. Many Americans believed the Mexicans intended to assault and rob the town. By evening a large body of citizens assembled to help the sheriff defend the jail.¹⁵

At four o'clock a Californio, hearing of the impending attack, warned his friend, Judge William G. Dryden, to take his horse, leave town and hide on a distant rancho. This man told Dryden the attackers planned to kill all the Americans but made no mention of the jail. For several nights the judge had heard people riding at night in the streets singing refrains about war and crying "Vengeance" and "Down with the Americans." Dryden needed no further warning. He quickly called upon Justice Hayes, thinking the Jenkins trial might be at the heart of the matter. Together the two justices visited the city jail. They listened to the committee representing the people from the graveyard and dispelled the fears of the crowd surrounding the jail.¹⁶

Judge Dryden discussed his warning with Sheriff David W. Alexander. Dryden told the sheriff the Hispanic community was upset over the death of Ruiz and wanted justice. He warned the sheriff of an impending attack on the jail and of the mob's intentions to execute Jenkins. Sheriff Alexander promptly took control and ordered increased security for the jail. He asked a number of prominent Californios to approach the hills surrounding Los Angeles and disperse the crowds gathering there. The sheriff was well aware of the hostility among the Hispanic residents of Los Angeles and feared for any American venturing into the hills that night. Aware of the racial tension, he directed the Anglo-American city marshal, and his deputy, William Peterson, to remain in the city and patrol the streets for any signs of disturbance.¹⁷

Losing the advantage of surprise, Carieiga and his forces gathered supplies and arms. The Frenchman and a few of his men called upon the local Catholic priest. Claiming they wished to form a guard before the door of the church to protect it, a few of the men distracted the priest. With the priest engaged in conversation, the others ransacked the house, stealing a dozen weapons including one small brass cannon. Gathering behind a small hill, the mob resolved to take action.¹⁸

Under the sheriff's orders, a number of upstanding Californios approached the mob trying to avert bloodshed. Each appeal to reason was rejected by another emotional rendition and call for vengeance. Although unable to sway the rioters, these representatives brought back more information about the mob. They con-

firmed suspicions that the Frenchman, Carieiga, led the majority of rioters, but they also noticed the size and emotional composition of the mob. Two men also claimed a mysterious Afro-American who spoke excellent Spanish commanded a number of rioters. Although witnesses could accurately describe this man, and few Afro-Americans inhabited Los Angeles during this period, no one could identify him.¹⁹

One of the ambassadors for peace, Pedro Romo, made three separate attempts to disperse the crowd, each time bringing another prominent Californio with him in his appeal. Well known among the Hispanic community, he appealed to a number of rioters by name. One rioter claimed the mob forced him to join, threatening both him and his family. Others ignored Romo's appeal, but some realized the folly of their actions and returned home.

Romo might have met with success if he had had more time. When he first approached the mob there were approximately three hundred people calling for vigilante justice. By the time of his last appeal there were only one hundred people left. However, just before midnight, in the middle of his last appeal guns blazed. Someone in the mob cried, "Viva Mexico." Another responded, "Let's go, now is the time."²⁰

In the town below, Marshal William C. Getman and Deputy Peterson patrolled the city streets looking for signs of the disturbance. As they neared the plaza, Getman saw a large mob and admonished Peterson to return to the jail. Peterson proceeded back towards the jail and encountered a small party of six men on foot, sent to reinforce the marshals. Peterson told the party they were outnumbered and ill-equipped to handle the mob of two- to three-hundred men gathered just a short distance away. He ordered them to return to the jail.

As the foot party retreated, Peterson and Getman waited and tried to gather more information. Suddenly one of the rioters spotted the two marshals and cried "Vamanos." Five or six shots flew past the marshals as they retreated from the mob and the plaza. Heroically, Getman ordered Peterson to ride in front, while he covered their retreat.

Unexpectedly, ten to fifteen men appeared from behind the

church, separating the two officers and cutting off the marshals' retreat. Getman yelled out the password, "Quien vive?" Hearing the proper response of "Carajo" coming from the opposite direction, he knew these men were not the foot patrol but part of the mob. Getman's horse broke into a gallop, screaming past the small party of rioters. Anxious from the previous gunfire, the party shot at Getman. He returned fire with his shotgun. The others returned twelve to fifteen more shots, one of them hitting Getman just above the right temple and knocking him from his horse. Several shots struck Getman's horse, killing the animal. After taking immediate shelter behind the dead animal, Getman gathered himself and ran down the street to his waiting deputy. Peterson, hearing the gunshots and witnessing Getman's fall, yelled at some Anglo-Americans in the nearby Montgomery Saloon for assistance. Seeing Peterson and a few Anglo-Americans proceeding from the saloon, the rioters dispersed. With the help of some friends, Peterson assisted the severely wounded marshal and awaited reinforcements.²¹

Upon hearing the shots, the jail guard removed the prisoner and marched to the aid of Marshal Getman. By the time they arrived the mob had already dispersed. Loyal citizens patrolled the city but could find no trace of the rioters. Afraid of more violence, some of the citizens decided to appeal to the nearby township of El Monte for assistance. By ten o'clock Wednesday morning thirty-six men arrived to help defend the town. Families, worried the rioters might seek revenge on individuals in the country, moved from the surrounding ranches into the city for protection.

Wednesday morning Judge Myron Norton and other frightened citizens circulated a hand bill printed in Spanish and English calling for a public meeting. The people attending the meeting claimed they were securing the peace and defending property, a job the police were obviously unable to perform after the riot Tuesday night. They selected a committee of twenty members, several of them prominent Californios, to draw up a resolution which they unanimously adopted. The resolution resembled any other vigilante charter of the time. They called themselves the City Guard and formed a committee to investigate suspicious persons. The Guard acted as a private police force at the discretion of the committee.

Besides the City Guard, other groups of citizens banded togeth-

er calling themselves the Rangers and the Citizen's Company. Until the perceived threat passed, twenty men willing to enroll as police served each night at the Masonic Lodge for nightly duty. Just after sunset on Wednesday evening two unknown Mexicans fired on one of these groups then sped off out of town.²²

By Thursday the only trace of a race riot were the bands of armed citizens patrolling the county. Anglo-American fears of an unbridled race riot subsided as an increasing number of Californios took action against the rioters. Never really interested in rioting, prominent Californios joined with the Anglo-Americans to reestablish the rule of law. Other Californios followed the lead of men like Andrés Pico, Tomás Sánchez, Antonio F. Coronel, Juan Padilla and Louis Sansevaine, leaving only a small proportion of Californios to join with the recent immigrants from Mexico in overt rebellion.

When Don Andrés Pico gathered twenty other Californios to scour the countryside in search of the riotous men, he convinced any remaining rioters to abandon their cause. Through their connections in the Hispanic community, Pico learned the location of the Frenchman, Fernando Carieiga. Abandoned by his followers and struggling to flee the area, Pico easily captured the leader of the riot and return him to Los Angeles. With most of the Californios supporting a return to law and order, and one of the riots' ringleaders under arrest, the town's Anglo-American population felt greatly relieved.²³

Only one further incident marred the restoration of peace. On July 30 a party of Mexicans fired upon a party of Anglo-Americans patrolling the area around Mission San Gabriel. No one was injured, but the Anglo-Americans pursued the Mexicans, only to lose their trail a few minutes into the chase. By August 1 the Rangers saw no need of continuing their vigilance and disbanded. However, the City Guard, convinced the town was still unsafe, formed a permanent organization and elected Judge Norton as their captain.²⁴

Afraid any further delay would only incite more violence and possible vigilante action, Judge Hayes requested a speedy trial for Deputy Jenkins. Indicted on August 9 and arraigned on August 11, the Jenkins' trial began on August 14, just twenty-six days after the shooting of Ruiz. Although Anglo-Americans still comprised a minority of the town's population, all twelve jurors were Anglo-

American.²⁵ The only witnesses for the prosecution were Californios. The defense so maligned the credibility of the state's chief witness, María Candelaria Pollorena, that none of the jury members believed her. The all-white jury could not believe the deputy acted outside the proper role of his duty. After only fifteen minutes of deliberation, the jury acquitted the defendant, and the judge discharged him.²⁶

The acquittal did not go unnoticed by the Hispanic population, but few wanted a return to the riotous conditions of a few weeks before. On August 31 two Spanish-speaking citizens of Los Angeles, Don Pedro Avila, a Californio, and Diego Nieto, a Mexican, engaged in a dispute which resulted in bloodshed. Under Sheriff W. H. Peterson tried to arrest Nieto but his friends surrounded him and resisted. Marshal Getman approached the group with his gun drawn, and the men backed down. Peterson and Getman arrested Nieto over a caution that his countrymen were determined to kill the local law enforcement officers. The next evening while the officers patrolled the city streets, two people attempted to assassinate officers Myers, Getman and Peterson. None of the officers sustained any injury and no further attempts, associated with the Jenkins-Ruiz incident, occurred.²⁷

The riot demonstrated the racial mistrust and inadequate justice system of the early American period in California history. Despite prompt police action and the attempts of local authorities to execute justice, Anglo-Americans played only a minor role in settling the riot. Although the Anglo-Americans exerted political control, they maintained order at the discretion of the large Hispanic population.

The Hispanic community had legitimate grievances against the Anglo-Americans, yet only a small proportion wanted to upset the political system and take matters into their own hands. The opposition of prominent Hispanic civic leaders and a divided Hispanic community contributed greatly to the dissolution of the riot. Once men like Pico, Romo and Coronel showed their commitment to support the American legal system, most Californios reevaluated the merits of mob action.

Unlike the Mexican revolt under the wartime Gillespie administration, most Californios had more to lose than gain. As a whole, Cal-

ifornios identified with their local community rather than the country of Mexico. Many felt betrayed by the Mexican government, who sold California to the Americans and failed to support their patriotic rebellion of 1847. Even after the war, they manifested little desire to return to Mexico. When the José Islas party entered Los Angeles looking for discontented Hispanics wishing to return to Mexico, very few Californians felt conditions intolerable enough to leave. California was their home, regardless of who controlled the political system.²⁸

Accepting the inevitability of American dominion, a few Californio leaders held important local political office. Some even managed election to the state legislature. In Los Angeles Californios represented a majority of the population and so comprised a large voting block. In 1856 Manuel Requena, Ygnacio del Valle, Agustin Olvera and Antonio F. Coronel all held important local political office. Even though the Anglo-Americans gradually pushed Hispanics out of government, Californio leaders maintained a strong voice in local politics and were unwilling to overturn the American political system following the lead of a few recent immigrants. Through family ties and friendships these men influenced much of the Hispanic community.²⁹

Besides political involvement, Californios comprised a vital proportion of Los Angeles society. Although effected by the depression of the late 1850s, many still owned sizable amounts of personal property. They could not gamble on an unruly mob respecting their property and businesses, nor on the American government respecting their property if they joined in a rebellion.

The rule of law benefited the Californios and, once assured that it was equitably administered, they lost any desire for revenge. When the Anglo-American jury acquitted Jenkins and he returned to his duties, the grand jury quashed the remaining indictments against Carieiga and the other suspected rioters. With the recovery of Marshal Getman, the courts dropped the charges of attempted murder and all the parties involved in the riot resumed their lives. Justice may not have triumphed in Los Angeles but equality ruled.³⁰

NOTES

¹Few historians have dealt with the first race riot in Los Angeles. For years the riot passed unnoticed as historians concentrated on the Chinese Massacre fifteen years later. The pre-eminent California historian, Hubert H. Bancroft gives the first description of the riot in his *Popular Tribunals* (2 vols., San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), 1:496-498. Without much analysis he dismisses it as the action of a few drunken Mexicans. Recently, Chicano historians have studied this event further and given the riot more significance placing it in terms of racial conflict. On the cutting edge of this movement, Leonard Pitt published the first concise account in his ground breaking history *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish Speaking Californians, 1846-1890* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 162-166. He describes the riot as an attempt by the Hispanic community to implement equal justice in Los Angeles. Richard Griswold del Castillo followed this study and insightfully used the riot to demonstrate the emergence of race consciousness among the Hispanic population in his *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 108-109. He credits class distinctions between the rich Californios and the poorer immigrants from Mexico with dissolving the volatile situation.

The riot highlights both racial tensions and class distinctions present within the small agricultural city and the failure of contemporary law enforcement to effectively control the expanding population. This article builds on previous scholarship and emphasizes the role of Californio civic leaders in directing the large Hispanic population through periods of perceived racial injustice. It is the first thorough examination of the riot, including a description of the racial discrimination and misunderstanding leading to a climate of distrust and reaction.

²A type of combined mayor and judge under the Spanish and Mexican systems of government.

³Los Angeles City Archives Ms. 4:497-505; United States Congress, House of Representatives, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., *California and New Mexico, Message from the President of the United States*, Doc. No. 17 (Washington, D. C., 1850), pp. 323-34, 349-350.

⁴A type of city council under the Spanish and Mexican types of government.

⁵Los Angeles City Archives Ms., 4:899; *California and New Mexico*, p. 443; Stephen C. Foster, "I Was Los Angeles' First American Alcalde," ed. by W.W. Robinson, *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, 31 (December 1949): 321; Few official records remain from the brief period Stephen Foster acted as alcalde. However, valuable information regarding the appointment of Foster may be found in the writings of Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California* (7 vols., San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1884-1890), 5:626-627. Bancroft had access to the Los Angeles City archives from this period, many of which are missing from the present collection of city documents.

⁶Joseph L. Brent, *The Lugo Case: A Personal Experience* (New Orleans: Searcy & Pfaff, Ltd., 1926), pp. 4-5; Major Horace Bell, *Reminiscences of a Ranger or Early Times in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Yarnell, Caystile & Mathes, Printers, 1881), pp. 237-241.

⁷Jonathan J. Warner, Benjamin Hayes, and Joseph P. Widney, *An Historical Sketch of Los Angeles County California: From the Spanish occupancy, by the Founding of the Mission San Gabriel Archangel, September 8, 1771, to July 4, 1876* (Los Angeles: Louis Lewin & Co., 1876), p. 39.

⁸"Letter from Stephen C. Foster to P.H. Burnett, Governor of California March 12, 1850," quoted in Henry Splitter, "Los Angeles in the 1850's As Told by Early Newspapers," *Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, 31 (March and June 1949):116. For a concise analysis of early Anglo-American prejudice, see Richard H. Peterson, "Anti-Mexican Nativism in California, 1848-1853: A Study of Cultural Conflict," *Southern California Quarterly*, 62 (Winter, 1980): 309-327 and Raymund A. Paredes, "The Origins of Anti-Mexican Sentiment in the United States," *New Scholar*, 6 (1977): 139-165.

⁹Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California 1853-1913, Containing the Reminis-*

cences of Harris Newmark, ed. by Maurice H. Newmark and Marco R. Newmark (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1926), pp. 137-165; John W. Audubon, *Audubon's Western Journal: 1849-1850: Being the record of a trip from New York to Texas, and an overland journey through Mexico and Arizona to the gold-fields of California* (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1906), p. 178; Benjamin Hayes, *Pioneer Notes: From the Diaries of Judge Benjamin Hayes 1849-1875*, ed. by Marjorie Tisdale Wolcott (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1929), p. 92.

¹⁰Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, p. 31; Bell, *Reminiscences of a Ranger*, pp. 28-29; Brent, *The Lugo Case*, pp. 3-4, 7, 19, 29; John S. Griffin, *Los Angeles in 1849: A letter from John S. Griffin, M.D. to Col. J.D. Stevenson, March 11, 1849* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1949), pp. 9-10; James Clarke to Mrs. James Clarke, November 3, 1854, HM21247, Huntington Library, San Marino; James Clarke to his brother, December 6, 1854, HM21351; Hayes, *Pioneer Notes*, p. 108.

¹¹"A Man Killed," *Los Angeles Star*, July 26, 1856, p. 2; "Local," August 2, 1856, p.2.; *El Clamor Publico*, July 26, 1856, pp. 2-3; August 16, 1856, p. 2.

¹²Major Horace Bell, *On the Old West Coast: Being Further Reminiscences of a Ranger*, ed. by Lanier Bartlett (New York: William Morrow & Co. 1930), pp. 240-244; H.D. Barrows, "Early Clericals of Los Angeles," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California*, 5 (1901): 129; Newmark, *Sixty Years*, pp. 139-141. For a thorough examination of vigilante activity in Los Angeles, see Robert W. Blew, "Vigilantism in Los Angeles, 1835-1874," *Southern California Quarterly*, 54 (Spring 1972): 11-30.

¹³"A Man Killed," *Los Angeles Star*, July 26, 1856, p. 2; "Local," *ibid.*, August 2, 1856 p. 2; *El Clamor Publico*, July 26, 1856, p. 2; *ibid.*, August 16, 1856 p. 2; Bancroft, *Popular Tribunals*, 1:496; Hayes, *Pioneer Notes*, p. 108-109.

¹⁴*El Clamor Publico*, July 16, 1865, p. 2; August 16, 1856, p. 2. Vigilante fever escalated in the town. When Judge Hayes learned of an elusive felon hiding in a nearby rancho he asked advice and assistance from an old friend. He considered matters urgent and urged B.D. Wilson to come to town in the morning to help avoid any possible vigilante activity. Benjamin Hayes to B.D. Wilson, July 19, 1856, WN368, Huntington Library.

¹⁵*El Clamor Publico*, July 26, 1856, pp. 2-3; August 16, 1856.

¹⁶Bancroft, *Popular Tribunals*, 1:496-497.

¹⁷Los Angeles District Court Records for July 24, 1856, Case No. 271, *People vs. Fernando Carriaga* [Carieiga] who was accused of shooting Marshal Getman during the riot of 1856. Much of this testimony was also printed in *El Clamor Publico*, August 2, 1856, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸*Los Angeles Star*, July 26, 1856, p. 2; August 2, 1856, p. 2.

¹⁹This man may have never existed being a fictitious scapegoat or was related to the witnesses, who were reluctant to identify him. In either case, like the Frenchman, he diverted suspicion away from the Hispanic community, drawing it to another minority group. Los Angeles District Court Record No. 271.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*

²²Antonio Coronel Papers, Item No. 30, Broadside, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History Library (here after LACM NHL); "Junta Publica;" "Proceedings of Public Meeting," *Los Angeles Star*, July 26, 1856, p. 2; *El Clamor Publico*, July 26, 1856, pp. 2-3.

²³*Los Angeles Star*, July 26, 1856, p. 2.

²⁴"Local," *ibid.*, August 2, 1856, p. 2.

²⁵According to the 1850 federal census for Los Angeles, Anglo-Americans comprised only 14% of the population. Including whites born in other countries the proportion would still only comprise approximately 19% of the population. Mexicans made up close to 15% but native-born Californios comprised 56%. The remaining 10% comprised of Indians and other people of color. Maurice H. Newmark and Marco R. Newmark, eds., *Census of the City and County of Los Angeles California For the Year 1850: Together with an Analysis and an Appendix* (Los Angeles: The Times-Mirror Press, 1929), p. 117. In Rev. James Woods, "California Recollections," Ms. LASM NHL, estimates the Hispanic population of Los Angeles in 1854 to

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be 4,000 of the 5,000 residents. The other thousand were comprised of one half Anglo-American, and the other half foreign-born whites, primarily from Europe. John Albert Wilson, *A History of Los Angeles County California with Illustrations Descriptive of its Scenery, Residences, Fine Blocks and Manufactories, From Original Sketches by Artists of the Highest Ability* (Oakland, CA: Thompson & West, 1880), p. 91.

²⁶"First District Court," *Los Angeles Star*, August 16, 1856, p. 2; "First District Court," *ibid.*, August 23, 1856, p. 2; "Judicio de William W. Jenkins pr el Asesinato de D. Antonio Ruiz," *El Clamor Publico*, August 23, 1856, p. 1-3.

²⁷"Resistance to Officers," *Los Angeles Star*, September 6, 1856, p. 2.

²⁸*El Clamor Publico*, May 10, 1856, p. 2; May 17, 1856, p. 2; Bell, *On the Old West Coast*, p. 1-2.

²⁹Work Progress Administration, *Chronological Record of Los Angeles City Officials 1850-1938: Compiled from the Minutes of the City Council* (4 vols., Los Angeles: Municipal Reference Library, 1938), 1: [43-49].

³⁰*El Clamor Publico*, August 23 and 30, 1856; Los Angeles District Court Record No. 271.

