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Vickery: *Defending Eden: New Mexican Pioneers in Southern California, 1830-1890*

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Defending Eden: New Mexican Pioneers in Southern California, 1830-1890. Joyce Carter Vickery. Riverside: The Riverside Museum Press, 1977. x+130 pp., illustrations. \$5.36 (paper).

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A byproduct of research for a museum exhibit, this monograph succinctly pulls together a variety of secondary and primary evidence, recorded and oral, to present a brief but generally well-balanced examination of the origins and development of an emigrant community in the San Bernardino Valley of southern California.

While known as *Genízaros*, a term indicating mixed descent, many of the pioneers were originally Pueblo Indians who for whatever reasons had departed from their indigenous pueblos and had resettled in Abiquiu, northwest of Santa Fe. Moreover, because of intensive Indian slave raiding and trading in the region, some of the *Genízaros* of Abiquiu were probably Comanche, Ute, and Apache. Indeed, the leader of the group that ventured to California may have been a Comanche by birth. But those who made the trek west were Hispanized, culturally more Mexican than Indian.

Significantly, Indian activity in southern California led to the emigration. The San Bernardino Valley was settled in the early 1840's by the prominent Lugo and Bandini families, and their large herds of cattle and horses proved to be easy targets for local and "foreign" Indians, especially the infamous Walkara, a Ute who annually raided the valley during the 1840's and early 1850's. The *rancheros* needed experienced Indian fighters to guard their herds, thus leading to the recruitment of the *Genízaros* from Abiquiu.

In 1843, eighteen families arrived in the valley and were given land on Rancho San Bernardino. Relations with the Lugos, how-

ever, became strained and the colonists moved south onto the *rancho* of Juan Bandini. Because Rancho San Bernardino was now undefended, the Lugos invited Juan Antonio and his Cahuillas to replace the *Genízaros* as guards. Indians, it seems, whether raiders, guards, or acculturated colonists from New Mexico, were prime movers of historical events during these years.

By late 1845, the New Mexicans had established two villages on the Santa Ana River, La Placita on the southeast side and Agua Mansa on the northwest. As the author points out, the settlements, jointly known as San Salvador, "functioned as a focal point for Spanish-speaking emigrants from the United States and Mexico alike. It continued to play this role for the next fifty years despite the many setbacks which blocked their efforts to build a secure and lasting community" (p. 31). Indeed, the remaining decades of San Salvador's social existence were filled with hardships and disasters, man-made and natural, until the community was swallowed up by Anglo development of the valley.

The monograph is clearly and vividly written and handsomely printed, with only a few typographical and stylistic errors. On a conceptual level, however, I question the recounting of several well-known historical episodes (the Garra Uprising and the Irving Affair, for example) that, while taking place in and near the valley, had little if anything to do with the development of San Salvador. Was Vickery just filling in space? If so, I wonder if there is really more research to be done on the settlement, a point she strongly makes. I certainly hope there is, for the subject is indeed fascinating. But for the present, *Defending Eden* will do quite nicely, and stands as an important contribution to the ethnic and local history of California.

