

Lost Laborers in Colonial California

Native Americans and
the Archaeology of Rancho Petaluma

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time when individuals gorged on beef, but Simpson noted for the similar mission slaughters that “meat enough to supply the fleets of England is annually either consumed by fire or left to the carrion-birds” (1847:166). The ranchos would have offered an even more conspicuous case. Although rancho foods were most accessible during and immediately following harvesting and slaughtering in the late summer, stored dried beef strips and ground wheat and other crops were used year-round at the Petaluma Adobe.

Therefore, the acquisition of wild foods was more likely a choice and a preference. Native individuals sought to create a menu that included more than the meat and grains handed to them as part of their work payment. A combination of explicit restrictions on Native burning of grasslands for environmental management and the severe ecological impacts by colonial livestock grazing, farming, and unintentional weed introductions would have made indigenous wild foods all the more difficult to obtain. The presence of summer-ripening grasses and shrubs and fall-ripening tree products indicates that Native people sought these wild foods precisely when rancho food availability would have been at its highest. Although they may have been stored for later use, these wild plants were certainly gathered during the busy, at least from Vallejo’s point of view, summer months.

The conflict between rancho labor and Native seasonal subsistence practices was probably severe, but individuals devoted considerable time and effort to secure wild flora and fauna. They may have sought these wild foods as a self-conscious attempt to assert their “Native” identity in the rancho milieu, or they may have pursued these resources as a less political but no less active effort to maintain long-standing food traditions and create new ones. Dietary habits often fall into the realm of the routine and mundane, but they take on a different valence in colonial cases. It would be difficult to characterize the subsistence choices of Native Americans in Petaluma as “automatic” when they were faced with novel foods, alternate modes of obtaining nourishment, provisioning protocols, and social control. Rancho workers may not have used food to actively resist Vallejo’s operation, particularly since Vallejo probably cared as little about what foods Native people ate as he did about what they worshiped so long as the labor duties were completed, but the food remains represent attempts by California Indians to reside in the rancho world, to carve a place that drew from the past but worked in the present.

Chapter 7

Colonial Worlds, Indigenous Practices

Interpreting Rancho Petaluma

Borne to the earth by the toils of civilization superadded to the privations of savage life, they [Vallejo’s Native workers] vegetate rather than live, without the wish to enjoy their former pastimes or the skill to resume their former avocations.

—George Simpson, *An Overland Journey round the World during the Years 1841 and 1842*

On the rancho, Indians lived their pastoral customs, little influenced by ideas of personal ambition or material progress. Isolated from the main currents of Mexican social life, the rancho took its tone from the simple life of its Indians.

—Chad Hoopes, “The Petaluma Adobe”

Studies of stone tools, mass-produced colonial goods, bone artifacts, animal bones, shellfish, and plant remains for Rancho Petaluma have begun to clarify the social and cultural web of the rancho, a web that both supported and entangled Native American people. Archaeological information has revealed the blatantly unsatisfactory nature of Sir George Simpson’s views of Vallejo’s Native workers and Chad Hoopes’s historical assessment of Rancho Petaluma life. Simpson’s portrayal of California Indian workers, although addressing the difficulties endured by Native Americans in the thralls of forced labor and economic hard times and the ways that some individuals might express that burden, reflects a lack of intimate, sustained contact with them during their daily lives. The archaeological record has counteracted that unfamiliar view, revealing instead people trying to uphold cultural practices and forge

new ones. Hoopes's portrayal is equally deficient by casting Native Americans as simple, passive, and unaffected by the broader colonial world of California. These Native workers actively used, manipulated, endured, and died on Rancho Petaluma—they were in a colonial world that was *not* isolated from the “currents” of Mexican California. In many ways, this rancho epitomized colonialism and the complexity, not simplicity, of social life for the many people wrapped up in it. To baldly claim that rancho life adopted its stride from the lifestyles of Native workers denies the hardships, labor regimes, and structural inequalities that defined its very character.

Set alongside historical documents, archaeological studies have disclosed the labor relations that structured indigenous participation in and experience of rancho life. Native Americans responded to this colonial rancho world in a variety of complex ways. Their diets contained a mixture of wild and domestic plants and hunted and herded large mammals as well as a diverse assortment of fish, birds, and mollusk species taken from the local environs. California Indians acquired rock raw material, crafted stone tools, and used lithic artifacts in the material world of the rancho. Metal, glass, and ceramic goods entered the repertoire of daily life for Native people—glass beads traded and worn, wine bottles emptied and broken, metal tools used and discarded, and ceramic vessels filled and cast off.

The preceding lines of evidence each advance a clearer view of Rancho Petaluma and indigenous participation therein, both in sorting through the local contexts and offering a point of comparison to other California ranchos. But the fullest picture—the true “big picture”—of Native American interactions with colonial ranches becomes visible only when these archaeological and historical elements are considered in tandem. Doing this requires retying the knot that opened the book. I characterize this as a retying since the knot of past lives and colonialism cannot be entirely reconstructed or completely described from all possible perspectives. The past is real, but the remnants are fragmentary, the experiences recorded in it are highly diverse, and the interpretation of it has developed completely in the present. My version is not the only one possible, but I feel that it solidly integrates and accounts for the available information from material culture, dietary remains, and archival sources. It is attuned to the politics of history and to the lived experience of indigenous people on the rancho.

The integration of material culture, food remains, and documentary data offers guideposts for tracking Native American life and labor at Rancho Petaluma. Material and social practices comprised part of the constant

negotiation of life on the rancho, and many of them were political in nature. I do not mean the politics of states and nations but the infrapolitics of everyday life (after Scott 1985, 1990) in which individuals grapple with structures of domination, the possibilities of resistance, and the necessities of “making do.” Like Michel de Certeau (1984) and his approach to everyday life, I see these daily activities not as free from overarching systems of domination or as grand strategies that seek to overtake positions of power. Instead, they are social tactics, actions that “trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop” (Certeau 1984:xviii). Tactics may or may not end up being revolutionary, but they are creative practices, ones that arise and perhaps thrive in spaces that are already disciplined and colonized (Certeau 1984:30). Typically, Certeau’s “tactics are not liberatory in the material sense of the word: the little victories of everyday life do no more (but, also, no less) than disrupt the fatality of the established order” (Buchanan 2000:104–5). Unlike Certeau, however, I recognize the possibilities of seeing identity within and between these social tactics and the ways in which they manifest in material culture. With this perspective in mind, I synthesize the book along three major themes: foodways, stone tools, and labor.

Foodways

The predominance of food-related items—charred animal and plant remains, mortar-and-pestle and other ground stone technology, obsidian projectile points, a net sinker, thermally affected rocks—in the archaeological record parallels the importance of food in everyday life on the rancho. Importance here is a two-part phenomenon. First is the obvious need for people to eat and the archaeological capacity to track dietary practices. The list of relevant material items given above is testament to that capacity. Second are the ways that dietary practices implicate daily politics. Relevant factors include the regimentation of daily activity through scheduled food distribution, the system of food provisions exchanged for labor, and the possible relationship between food availability and some Native individuals’ decisions to join or leave the rancho. The evidence suggests that these foodways also may mark individuals’ attempts to express identity.

As chapter 6 details, provisioned foods comprised the bulk of animal and plant remains. Numerous cattle and sheep bones, charred wheat and barley, and a few burned corn fragments were recovered at the site. Cattle and wheat

were the dietary heart of these rancho-based foods based on archaeological quantities and historical documents, even despite the likely archaeological underrepresentation of beef due to the practice of stripping and drying boneless meat on California ranchos (see Gust 1982:122-23). Food remains were discarded in large refuse piles such as Feature E in the Block, in general scatter as found in all excavation units, and in discrete pits such as Feature A in the Midden Trench and Features B and C in Trench 1. Some of these food products were charred during processing; others seem to have been burned as refuse.

The evidence is clear that livestock and cultigens were provisions rather than household-generated foods. In other words, Native individuals more frequently acquired these foods as part of the labor agreement rather than kept and maintained them in their households for residential use. Despite the secularization protocol that directed missionaries to give agricultural tools and livestock to neophytes when they left the mission, the likelihood of California Indians maintaining personal plots and livestock at the center of Vallejo's operation is slim. Vallejo had taken charge of many ex-neophytes' livestock and other resources in exchange for their labor, and he would never have allowed the commingling on his grazing lands of his own cattle acquired, in part, from ex-neophytes with livestock still owned by Native Americans. Individuals may have obtained meat as relatively complete carcasses at times, based on the faunal data, but workers probably received entire cattle carcasses during the late summer matanza rather than tended their own small herds.

One might speculate that pigs and chickens, not cattle and sheep, would have been more likely husbanded by Native people on Rancho Petaluma, given their smaller space and easier food requirements and their presence, at least that of domestic fowl, in some Indian living quarters at missions (Margolin 1989:90) and at postmission Native communities in the 1840s (Lugo 1950:210). Again, the Petaluma archaeological data resoundingly eliminate this hypothesis with the recovery of only one chicken bone and not a single pig skeletal element. The archaeological evidence for household gardens is similarly meager. No typical "garden" products such as tomatoes, peppers, and melons were recovered in the household debris, nor were any horticultural tools. George Simpson contrasted Native people working on a rancho in the Santa Barbara region with those on Vallejo's North Bay rancho: the Santa Barbara workers "appeared, however, to be, on the whole, more comfortable than General Vallego's [*sic*] serfs, possessing enclosures of land

with a few cattle and horses" (1847:216-17). The contrast illuminates the uniqueness of the Petaluma case and hints perhaps at the result of at least four additional decades of colonialism in the Santa Barbara region when compared to the North Bay. Yet time alone cannot explain the difference, since such a perspective inherently has to presume gradual, yet directional, acculturation. I resist that presumption.

Although provisioned foods filled many stomachs and regimented daily schedules, Native workers were not bound solely to these foods. If Vallejo's statement is accurate that he gave "freely to the Indians" from his storerooms of superabundant grains (1941:2), workers perhaps could have subsisted solely on these supplies.¹ The same goes for the matanza carnage: beef would have been plentiful, since the slaughter typically generated so much waste in the pursuit of hides and tallow that carcasses were discarded and burned as refuse or left out in the open for vultures and grizzly bears. Estimates of Vallejo's sheep herd are consistently high as well. Instead, like many mission neophytes at Santa Cruz (Allen 1998) and San Antonio (Langenwalter and McKee 1985), individuals and families at Rancho Petaluma complemented beef, mutton, wheat, barley, and corn from rancho provisions with the wild plant and animal resources of the region. Individuals and families designed their own menus within the array of available resources. Rather than cattle marking acculturation or acorns marking vestigial conservatism, I interpret this information as people constructing their diets within the complexities of rancho life. Beyond asking whether the wild foods were a necessity or luxury, I query their position in the negotiation of identity and social position.

Charred floral remains reveal that acorns, bay nuts, manzanita berries, and grass seeds remained important food resources. From ethnographic and historical sources, we know that Native Californians, typically women, leached acorns, pounded them into meal, and then cooked the flour as mush, breads, and other foods. Manzanita berries were typically made into cider, and grass seeds were often toasted and then boiled to make pinole. Aside from entire families gathering acorns in the fall (e.g., Wilkes 1845:192), women probably gathered and processed almost all of these plants. Bay laurel and oak trees may have grown near the site but would have been more common a few kilometers from the Petaluma Adobe. Manzanita definitely required treks to higher chaparral slopes. Native grasses may or may not have been locally available, given the alterations in the landscape caused by livestock grazing and agriculture. Copious seeds of filaree, introduced grasses, and mallows in

the archaeological record attest to this disturbance. In addition, Native individuals made limited use of rush, bulrush, mustard, and clover. All four probably served some food purposes, but the former two may also indicate the acquisition of these wetland resources for basket making. In total, the patterns indicate significant "logistical mobility" and efforts to secure the plants. Like the cultivated crops, these plant species also indicate harvesting between late spring and fall. This may correspond to the influx of seasonal workers and the subsequent need to feed more people or the transport of these foods with workers as they rotated into the rancho, but the pattern may also suggest the importance of storage of acorns and other wild plants for year-round consumption by the permanent Native residents.

Individuals hunted the neighboring hills, valleys, and plains with bow and net for deer, and they hunted and trapped rabbits, woodrats, and perhaps gophers in the vicinity. They netted nearby streams and rivers for fish using rock-weighted nets, and they also fished the bay or ocean shore or at least traded for such fish products. The fish represent mainly freshwater cyprinid minnows, but other freshwater-capture species (suckers, sturgeon, salmon) and bay species (topsmelt or jacksmelt, herrings) were retrieved as well. Birds primarily consisted of ducks and geese that Native people hunted along nearby waterways, although songbirds and a raptor were present as well. Individuals also sought out shellfish beds in San Pablo Bay and Bodega Bay, or they maintained exchange relations with those who did for marine food as well as bead-making raw material. One or more individuals even acquired a pinniped and a sea otter (or at least a part of each) while residing at the site. With the exception of shellfish gathered by both women and men, the hunting, trapping, and fishing were probably done by men, as documented ethnographically and historically.

Native cooks likely prepared food in the Petaluma Adobe quadrangle for the rancho household and for communal distribution (Hoopes 1965:36), but the archaeological evidence confirms that cooking for Native consumption also took place in Native households, outside Vallejo's purview. Yet cooking practices for the plant and animal foods are hard to track. Despite the possible use of iron kettles for cooking, individuals seem to have relied heavily on stone boiling in baskets for atole and pinole, given the large number of thermally affected rocks with contraction fractures. In 1842 Edward Vischer noted stone boiling being used by migrant Native workers a few miles south of the Petaluma Adobe (Gudde 1940), and Vallejo described it for the specific Native groups of Suisun, Sonoma, Napa, Licatuit, and Satiyomi (1875a:12),

many of whom must have filled his roster of rancho workers. According to observations made by Vallejo's son Platon, meat also may have been boiled this way, at least with the Suisun (1914:14), but it was typically roasted over coals or baked in an earth oven. The latter may have been the function of the two baked-earth pit features discovered during excavation, given the amount of unburned bone, expansion-fractured rocks, and charcoal in the nearby refuse features. The lack of significant burning on the surfaces of these bones indicates that they were not roasted over an open flame, but they very well may have been cooked in a pit over hot rocks.

Based on archaeological inference, individuals at Rancho Petaluma processed wild and cultivated plant foods primarily using mortars and pestles with some limited use of manos and (extrapolated) metates. This pattern contrasts with the noticeable presence of the latter in the missions (Allen 1998:63-64; see also Cook 1976:92; Margolin 1989:86).² Napoleón Vallejo, son of the rancho owner, recollected that Indian women were required to pound a certain amount of corn flour pinole in mortars (N. Vallejo 1890:4), and George Simpson remarked on the pounding of nut foods (1847:177). If the wheat or corn were ground rather than pounded in a mortar and pestle, these grains may have been processed off-site, perhaps before provisioning, given the paucity of milling tools such as metates recovered in excavation. The paucity of manos and metates and the lack of many charred corn remains may support this off-site processing hypothesis, but the same does not apply to wheat. The presence of unprocessed wheat seeds in the floral remains means that they had not yet undergone the transition to flour. The predominant ground stone technology to convert them to flour, based on the archaeological evidence, was mortar-and-pestle technology. From an archaeological standpoint, the association of acorns and mortar-and-pestle technology is not surprising, but the high number of charred grass seeds, the presence of corn and wheat, and the lack of many manos and any unambiguous metate fragments echo the growing concern that the technology-to-resource correlation may not be as strong or as exclusive as once believed (Basgall 1987; Wohlgemuth 1996:84). That is, mortars and pestles are perhaps best viewed as multipurpose processing tools, possibly used to grind acorns, grass seeds, and cultigens at Rancho Petaluma. However, grinding tools often have very long use-lives, and the short duration of the Rancho Petaluma enterprise may weigh against them having been discarded very often. This would account for the overall low quantities in the excavated collection but not the disproportionate recovery of mortars and pestles versus manos and metates.

Stone Tools

The continuity and form of stone tool technology trace out other kinds of daily practices at Rancho Petaluma. They do so primarily because they represent clearly the contours of Native American activities and struggles in the colonial world of the California rancho. Very few classes of artifacts at Rancho Petaluma offer such clarity, since they are products only used, rather than both made and used, by indigenous social actors. To understand stone tool production and use requires juxtaposing lithic artifacts with other classes of material culture at the site. Stone tools and associated manufacturing debris can be analyzed and interpreted in their own right, but they offer clearer insights when contextualized as they would have been during their use—as part of everyday life, as a choice among other material technologies, and as a meaningful practice (Silliman 2001a, 2003b).

Although California Indians undoubtedly contested stylistic or raw material aspects of lithic production in precontact times, stone tool technology was the accepted way to manufacture hard, durable, and sharp tools. The arrival of the colonial period and the involvement of California Indians in the rancho system changed that, as numerous material and technological alternatives were introduced. Yet in spite of exposure to nineteenth-century industrial and mass-produced items such as metal and glass, Native laborers at Rancho Petaluma remained focused on lithic technology. The choice was both a political and a functional one (Silliman 2001a).

One potential explanation for the continuity of stone tool practices could be the lack of Native access to metal or other European tools at the rancho. However, the assemblage suggests otherwise, with metal tools such as scissors, files, iron pot fragments, flatware pieces, and various other items. This suggests that various forms of metal were available to site residents, much like the ceramics, glass, and glass beads. In fact, metal artifacts supplied by Vallejo through his contacts around the San Francisco Bay area were probably the backbone of rancho labor but not of Native household labor. The available evidence suggests that Native individuals selectively introduced metal objects into their households and that the process may have been a gendered one, focusing on tools directly related to female activities.

An alternative explanation of lithic use could be that there simply were not enough metal tools for everyday tasks or even for rancho duties required by the overseer. In other words, perhaps the large numbers of Native workers present during the late summer matanza taxed even the wealthy Vallejo's

ability to equip them for the task at hand. If true, individuals would not have made formal bifacial tools for these jobs, since retouched flakes and steep-sided scrapers generally work very well for cutting and scraping, respectively, and can be repaired or discarded as needed. Yet formal bifacial implements were major components of the stone tool collection. Further complicating the scenario is the fact that many of the butchered animal bones have V-shaped cut marks more characteristic of metal knives than stone ones, but the archaeological record provides virtually no examples of such metal tools. Perhaps Native men produced stone projectile points to hunt wild game because guns were in restricted supply, but this would still explain only a small component of the lithic assemblage (i.e., projectile points and associated manufacturing debris).

With these alternatives offering less than satisfactory accounts for the continuity of lithic technology, I argue that stone tool technology was practiced as part of the active daily involvement in colonialism (Silliman 2001a, 2003b). The fact that lithic artifacts occur in refuse characterized more by residential activity than rancho tasks further accentuates their use in Native household practices, despite the evidence that metal tools may have been used to butcher the animals found in residential trash deposits. These stone tools may or may not have been conscripted into rancho duties, but they certainly held strong currency in the space of domestic and off-work life and may have had strong implications for gender relations in the context of procurement, manufacture, and use.

As a social tactic, lithic working and use may have done little to subvert rancho labor, but it was an active way for individuals to stake a claim in the colonial world. This claim may not have been an overtly political or resistant one but rather an active attempt to craft a stable place of residence, figuratively speaking, in the nineteenth century. Given the control of space and time exerted by labor regimentation, stone tool manufacture would have occurred primarily during off-work hours, those times when friends and families regrouped during an early afternoon siesta or at the end of the workday. The prevalence of lithic production and use at the site suggests strong Native control over the residential sphere and widespread interest in these tools across the site. Contrary to models of "acculturation," individuals conscripted these stone artifacts as active materializations rather than passive symbols of Native practice.

The raw material used in stone working offers additional insight, especially given the roughly equal amounts of obsidian and chert raw materials.

The critical point is that stone tool production was not simply a decision of convenience, since lithic sources were not located in the immediate vicinity of the living quarters on the rancho. Some chert and igneous stones were available somewhat locally, but the nearest obsidian sources—both primary and secondary deposits of Annadel, Franz Valley, Napa Valley, and Oakmont—were at least 23–35 kilometers away, with two other artifacts of obsidian obtained from even farther afield (Borax Lake, Mount Konocti). None of these occur within the bounds of the vast Rancho Petaluma. The presence of common sources such as Napa Valley and Annadel is not surprising, given their prevalence in the archaeological record for the general area and their geographical proximity, but the array of more localized and little-recognized sources such as Franz Valley and Oakmont in the obsidian collection speaks a pattern very different from that of precontact groups in the region. The difference means either that rancho workers tapped into obsidian sources that very few individuals in precontact times had ever utilized or that previous attempts by archaeologists to assign sources to obsidian artifacts based only on macroscopic characteristics have overlooked the unexpected sources. I have argued that the “truth” is probably a combination of the two (Silliman 2006b, 2005).

The source identifications indicate that Native people at Rancho Petaluma maintained trading relationships with nonrancho groups controlling the obsidian sources or made forays to these localities to obtain raw material during either work times or off-season mobility. At some level, disparate sources may reflect the geographical origin of Native workers and/or their seasonal mobility. Perhaps the single arrow point from Borax Lake denotes the capture of a Native man from the Clear Lake region who carried the weapon on his person or the presence of a seasonal worker who arrived at the rancho from a region outside of Vallejo's immediate landholdings. Alternately, Native laborers may have traded rancho or indigenous products to outlying villages for lithic raw material or finished products along the lines recorded in Pomo, Coast Miwok, and Wappo ethnographies (Barrett 1908; Collier and Thalman 1996; Driver 1936). Either way, time, effort, and connections were necessary for individuals to access these lithic raw materials, variables that underscore the significance of lithic technology in the rancho period. Obsidian may have served a common material and symbolic “currency” that linked Native people ensnared in the rancho system with those outside of its reach.

Maintaining access to lithic sources seems even more significant when

contrasted with the worked bottle glass assemblage. As was the case at many other colonial sites, Native individuals at Rancho Petaluma used techniques of lithic technology on glass bottles. Bottle fragments were struck with rocks or other knapping equipment to produce usable flakes, to reduce the glass mass into a functional shape, or to sharpen a glass edge by removing flakes on one or both sides of a margin. Yet unlike other contact period assemblages in the West such as Colony Ross (Silliman 1997) and Mission San Antonio (Hoover and Costello 1985), the modification and utilization of bottles at Rancho Petaluma involved primarily expedient use rather than formal tool manufacture. That is, no glass projectile points or other bifacial tools were discovered, although some shards display bifacial retouch. This modest use is notable, since glass bottles were numerous and readily available for tool manufacture, and they are a “superior” raw material for controlled flaking in contrast to some of the microcrystalline silicates (e.g., chert) and igneous rocks found in the Petaluma lithic collection. Nevertheless, Native laborers at Rancho Petaluma sought actual rocks for the majority of expedient and formal tool production, despite the distance and presumed effort involved.

To complete the discussion, the prevalent lithic technology can be juxtaposed with the relative lack of substantial bone, shell, and other stone technology. The incised bird-bone tubes, a larger bone tube, several miscellaneous bone artifacts, and two clamshell disk beads represent the only unequivocal organic artifacts in the assemblage. The lack of more clamshell disk beads is perplexing, given the proximity of the site to Bodega Bay and their frequent co-occurrence with glass beads in Napa Valley (e.g., Heizer 1953) and at Colony Ross (Silliman 1997). Gone are the common bone and shell artifacts of late precontact and historic sites in the North Bay region such as scapula saws, bone awls, abalone pendants, and *Olivella* beads of various sorts (e.g., Beardsley 1954; Bennyhoff 1994; Dietz 1976; Fredrickson 1984; Heizer 1953; Moratto 1984:218–83). Streatite beads, magnesite pipes, and charmstones are also missing from the Petaluma site assemblage, despite their common occurrence prior to contact in sites across the North Bay. The lack of charmstones is particularly intriguing in light of the large quantities found approximately 6–7 kilometers southeast of the Petaluma Adobe in precontact sites (Elsasser 1955), in a probable contact period site near Lake Tolay (Phebus 1990:128), and in the adjacent Napa Valley to the east (Heizer 1953).

The lack of these bone, shell, and other stone items at Rancho Petaluma is intriguing vis-à-vis the continuity of lithic technology. Many of these organic and stone artifacts typically have been found as burial goods, suggesting that

their absence from Petaluma may relate directly to the lack of mortuary contexts. Yet Bennyhoff (1994:53) noted that historic burials in the Napa region are also marked by a lack of abalone artifacts, although they commonly contain magnesite pipes and painted stone tablets. Ultimately, the social context of use (e.g., trade, ritual, ceremony, gender) for many of these goods may have shifted significantly in the rancho context and in the historic period more broadly. Context certainly changed for chipped stone lithic technology, but the change was one that individuals apparently negotiated with continued practice.

Labor

The underlying theme throughout this work has been the significance of labor in the Native experience of the California rancho. As historical sources make very clear, labor was the primary node of interaction between indigenous people and California and other rancheros. Except in rare instances of actual rancho ownership or interethnic marriage, California Indians participated at ranchos solely as workers. They prepared and served food; herded, branded, and butchered cattle; processed and hauled hides and tallow; made bricks, candles, shoes, and blankets; plowed, planted, and harvested crop fields; and performed household chores for rancho families. For these laborers, Native individuals and families typically received provisions of food, clothing, and shelter rather than monetary payment.

Historical sources outline this broad labor structure for Rancho Petaluma, but what historical records do not relay are the ways that labor translated into social relations and daily lives for California Indians. What did these tasks mean to Native workers? How did this labor impact household life and identity? Archaeology provides some tantalizing clues, which I combine with archival data to make three points: (1) the types of mass-produced goods reveal that site occupants were primarily those individuals who worked in and around the Petaluma Adobe rather than in the fields and herding camps; (2) some of the material goods may reveal the expression of identity along the lines of gender and worker "occupation"; and (3) the labor regime rigidly structured daily life, but individuals did not surrender completely themselves or their traditions to it.

Site Residents and Material Goods

My first point regarding site occupants and their association directly with the Petaluma Adobe hinges on the discovery of specific material items rather than on the silent historical record. Colonial labor served as the primary venue for indigenous people at Rancho Petaluma to use and acquire mass-produced European goods. For instance, cooks and household servants handled silverware, plates, bowls, glasses, and bottles, while field hands worked with plows and harvesting tools. Vaqueros rode horses with saddles, bridles, and spurs, while butchers and hide processors worked with knives, kettles, and other implements for preparing the cattle carcasses, tallow, and hides. Native artisans used looms, needles, thread, and leather to make woven and other goods. Many of these items could have been stolen, scavenged, or acquired through payment in kind for labor services.

In that light, the Rancho Petaluma artifacts have produced an ambiguous yet telling collection of objects tied explicitly to rancho labor. The ones retrieved relate strongly to tasks that would have occurred inside the adobe rather than in the fields. For example, the site produced sewing artifacts such as thimbles, needles, and scissors, but not a single mass-produced artifact could be attributed unambiguously to the duties of planting and harvesting crops or herding, branding, and butchering cattle. Only one metal buckle may indicate a harness of some sort. All recovered knives and utensil handles were tableware and not the heavy-duty tools of cattle processing, and the rasps and kettles may have been used in and around the adobe quadrangle. Absent are the large metal knives, cleavers, and axes used for butchery and the bridles, brands, and spurs used in vaquero tasks. Plows were probably primarily wooden with perhaps an iron piece at the end for breaking the soil and therefore may not have offered much in the way of preservable artifacts or space for storage in Native living areas. Yet hand sickles would have probably been used for harvesting (Hoopes 1965:39).

Given that agricultural and livestock tasks were the timepiece and economic center of rancho activity, at least from the manager's or owner's perspective, the associated material goods should have been numerous. That is, they "should have been" discovered in excavations if individuals from all types of rancho work lived at the site and brought these items home. Certainly, some of these material objects would have been too bulky to pilfer, too expensive to be let out of an overseer's sight, or too specific in function to be useful in a Native household. However, I would not expect these conditions

to apply to tools such as metal knives, cleavers, and spurs.³ To account for the restricted array of colonial tools and the spatial location of the site in close proximity to the Petaluma Adobe, I argue that the evidence suggests instead that site residents were primarily individuals involved in the day-to-day activities of the adobe rather than those involved in livestock herding and butchery. Residents would have included workers such as household servants, cooks, and artisans who lived on the rancho for much of the year rather than the seasonal influx of people during agricultural or matanza seasons. Native herders, who often came from unmissionized communities, more typically lived in field camps near livestock watering holes for convenience (Híjar 1988:20; G. Vallejo 1890:185), and such sites have not yet been located on Rancho Petaluma. As workers inside and around the Petaluma Adobe, these site residents probably comprised the more "trusted" workers in the eyes of Vallejo and Alvarado. Many were probably ex-neophytes from Mission San Francisco Solano or Mission San Rafael who had been trained in the mission trades.

The involvement of site residents in activities in and around the Petaluma Adobe may have granted Native individuals the opportunity to acquire colonial household goods such as the ceramic vessels, glass bottles and tableware, and flatware evidenced in the deposits. These were the items that servants and cooks used to set the Vallejo table and serve food at Petaluma; they formed the material base of required labor. Vallejo probably did not give many ceramic plates, bowls, and other vessels to Native workers as part of his provisioning system, since the standard fare was clothing and food. However, he may have paid workers in kind, as was often done with glass beads and alcohol-filled bottles, a practice that would account for the abundance of these two artifact types in the archaeological record. Native people obtained no currency from Vallejo to purchase ceramics from him or anyone else, but they may have acquired the goods as trade goods, hand-me-downs, or scavenged items.

The trade possibility is unlikely, for labor provisioning arrangements would have overshadowed any trading relationships between site residents and Vallejo. Furthermore, beads, blankets, clothes, and tobacco were more typical trade goods between Vallejo and neighboring groups (e.g., Vallejo 1875c:13, 252; Vallejo n.d.a:2). The more than thirteen hundred beads at the site indicate their popularity among Native workers, regardless of how they obtained them. Southern California rancheros such as Manuel Nieto also offered tools or "whatever else struck an individual Indian's fancy" in exchange for labor

(Mason 1993:181), and a similar deal might have been worked out between Native workers and Vallejo.

The high fragmentation of the glass, ceramic, and metal objects could support the scavenging hypothesis if ceramics or bottles rarely entered Native hands as whole vessels. However, as discussed earlier, the processes of secondary or tertiary deposition seem a more likely cause of the grossly incomplete artifacts. The pattern does parallel the high fragmentation of both glass and ceramic items at a Native living area at Fort Ross, which has been forwarded as evidence of the use of these industrial goods as raw material in Native hands (Farris 1997:130; Silliman 1997:170-71). However, the relatively low incidence of glass working and the very low frequency of ceramic modification at Rancho Petaluma suggest that individuals did not seek these goods, at least initially, as raw material. Only the presence of a few weathered glass specimens indicates possible scavenging.

A more convincing interpretation is that Native individuals used ceramics and glass as vessels and bottles and not primarily as sherds and shards, regardless of how they actually procured them. Glass shards are ubiquitous across the site, many as fragments of alcohol bottles. This suggests a widespread availability of the commodities, both glass and alcohol, among the Native community. Similarly, the ceramic sherds may point to the use of ceramic vessels in some cooking and eating practices in their households, but the small quantity of ceramic artifacts suggests that such practices were not widespread or were restricted to very specific uses. Many of the European and Asian ceramic containers made of porcelain, stoneware, and earthenware would not have functioned as direct-heat vessels for cooking. If used as designed, they would have been storage containers for solid or liquid food or as serving and eating vessels for prepared food. Without additional analysis or excavation, ascertaining their actual function, meaning, and symbolism for site residents remains difficult.

Occupation, Gender, and Identity

The conclusion that many of the site residents spent their laboring time around the Petaluma Adobe sets the parameters for my second point, that individuals at Rancho Petaluma used these artifacts in part for statements about identity. Although the site excavations may not cross-section anywhere near the full variability of the Native workforce, they do offer keen insights into these particular individuals' negotiations of identity and labor in the

material world of the Native household. Material items associated with colonial tasks obviously served their functional purpose in daily duties and in household activities, and they were perhaps assigned by a labor overseer to complete required tasks. However, the material culture of colonial labor may have taken on a different meaning in Native social worlds. Individuals could have introduced some objects of labor into Native households as a way to alter "off-work" activities and social relations or as a way to affiliate symbolically with a task-based identity that brought them status on the rancho. At the same time, household members may have excluded some items from the residential space as a way to distance the home from colonial labor. Consequently, to find an artifact of colonial labor in a Native archaeological context is to find something other than simple "acculturation."

The likelihood that site residents were involved in tasks at the Petaluma Adobe itself opens a window for gender and identity issues. The adobe-based workforce was a strongly but not exclusively female one centered around activities such as spinning, weaving, cooking, and processing food (see, however, Alvarado n.d. for males listed as loom workers). All are the colonial duties represented in the artifacts of the site. Many of these Native women would have had spouses or been relatives of men who worked the fields and tended the livestock, and they would have coresided at this site. This recognition expands the perspective slightly from my previous point to include the presence of potential field workers living on the site. However, the lack of artifacts associated with most men's required activities on the rancho is striking. The discrepancy suggests that women materialized certain aspects of their identities with colonial goods, whereas men negotiated theirs in other ways, perhaps with lithic access and use or hunting. Identity politics may have played out as much in the "workplace" as they did in the household, although the latter is the only one that I can address here.

Native women spent many hours in cloth- and leather-working activities inside the Petaluma Adobe, and the recovered pins, scissors, and thimbles suggest that individuals, probably women, introduced these objects into their households because of the presumed usefulness of such items in residential activities such as repairing tailored clothing or sewing embroidery beads. There is no evidence to suggest that Native women did home piecework—labor based on quotas such as making a certain number of shoes or blankets rather than on time. Simultaneously, women may have used the artifacts to affiliate actively with their rancho task despite being in their own domestic spaces. Vallejo's spouse, Francisca Benicia, illuminates this possibility: "Indian

women are not much inclined to learn many things. For this reason, she who is taught cooking will not hear of washing clothes, and, on the other hand, a good washerwoman will regard herself insulted if she were to be compelled to sew or spin" (Engelhardt 1915:136; see also chapter 4). Although Francisca Benicia referred to her home in Sonoma, the same issues undoubtedly played out at the more populous Rancho Petaluma.

Rather than a lack of inclination or trainability on the part of female workers, the pattern intimates that Native women frequently used their labor tasks to stake an identity claim. They may have made this claim in their working lives and in their home worlds. In addition to being California Indians, women, and mothers, some were also seamstresses. The expression of each was probably highly contextual, but actively affiliating with a labor task may have been a way for women to reside in as much as resist colonial labor. The presence of sewing items such as scissors and thimbles in neophyte residential areas at Missions Santa Cruz (Allen 1998:88), San Antonio (Hoover and Costello 1985:65), San Juan Bautista (Farris 1991:35), and La Purisima (Deetz 1963:184) may indicate a similar phenomenon.⁴ These "occupations" probably entailed differences in status as well, perhaps demarcating trusted household servants and adobe workers with better access to living quarters and food than field hands and unmissionized gentiles. Furthermore, refusing to be trained in other tasks may have allowed women more time for other preferred activities, since they could not be called upon for multiple duties. Their image as untrainable in multiple tasks provided them with a certain freedom to not be overextended in their tasks, and they may have promoted this stereotype to their own benefit. This ability to choose (or what some might call "passive resistance") demonstrates a particular power, albeit circumscribed, held by Native women in the colonial world.

This interpretation in no way implies that Native women abandoned "traditional" practices when they allied with colonial labor roles, nor should the data be construed to address all women at the site but rather the subset who may have been responsible for these particular material remains. The grass, nut, and berry remains demonstrate great effort in obtaining them on foraging trips, and visitors to the area noted the continued focus on grinding plant foods (e.g., Simpson 1847). The mortars and pestles recovered archaeologically provide additional support. The mixture of "Native" and "Western" foods and material objects suggests instead a complex material world and identity.

In contrast, Native men spent much of their time herding cattle, riding horses, plowing fields, and butchering and skinning livestock, yet their "tools

of the trade" did not make it into the residential deposits. Some women spent considerable time processing hides and harvesting crops as well. Several explanations for the paucity of these field and livestock items are possible: (1) Vallejo held tightly to the essential commodities involved in such duties, and Native people were not allowed to take them into their own living quarters; (2) items such as knives, axes, and spurs may have been not as easily broken or discarded as thimbles, pins, and scissors; and (3) men discarded their broken tools such as knives and cleavers where they were mainly used, which may have been activity areas outside of the excavated site. All three are potentially applicable explanations, but these reasons are also equally valid for the "adobe-focused" tools actually recovered. In fact, butchery knives and cleavers should be just as likely to break under typical workloads as would thimbles and scissors. Therefore, another factor underlies the discrepancy.

With the intensity of cattle butchery at the rancho and the numerous cattle bones found during excavation, the lack of metal cutting tools in the refuse deposits requires additional consideration. How were these carcasses processed? Could stone tools have been the primary tool for butchery and its widespread occurrence an index of laboring tasks? The numerous stone tools, both formal and expedient, may have been occasionally used to skin and butcher livestock and thereby to bring colonial labor duties into material familiarity. Deetz advanced a similar argument for the tanning vats at Mission La Purisima (1963:172). However, not all and perhaps not even most butchery at Rancho Petaluma was performed with stone tools, which begs the question of why no metal knives made it into the refuse deposits. Since non-Native residents in nineteenth-century California would not have thought of bifaces and flakes as "knives," most historical accounts imply that the knives used to remove hides and strip meat were metal. As noted earlier, my preliminary examination of cut marks on the excavated bones also indicates that butchers commonly employed metal knives, since relatively few show the wider cut marks characteristic of stone tool butchery. Native butchers also used large metal cleavers or axes, given the deep and wide cuts-to-break on ribs and other elements. A similar pattern of metal knife butchery (Wake 1997b) with few such knives recovered in archaeological deposits (Silliman 1997) characterizes the Native Alaskan neighborhood at Russian Colony Ross.

A possible interpretation is that individuals involved in these field tasks did not incorporate their common rancho tools into residential practices. That is, butchers may have used metal implements on the slaughtering ground

but not back at home. The pattern contrasts sharply with uncritical expectations that Native Americans would have quickly adopted metal knives in contact or colonial cases to replace stone tools. Neither components of this process—adoption or replacement—can be seen in the Rancho Petaluma data. These rancho laborers, primarily men, may have had notions of identity different from the women and adobe-focused workers described above. Since only men could be vaqueros, the lack of horse equipment may signal their lack of interest in claiming a vaquero identity in the daily realm of the household, despite the fact that riding horses and herding cattle formed the core of many Native men's experiences of Rancho Petaluma. Native groups were famous for raiding colonial settlements in California for horses, both to ride and to consume (e.g., Davis 1929:63; Wilkes 1845:174). Yet it seems that little of this took place in Native living quarters just outside the adobe, given the lack of horse remains and riding materials. To find Native American men distancing themselves from the vaquero lifestyle is perhaps unexpected, given the research that suggests that Native Americans in many parts of the Spanish, Mexican, and then American West adopted ranching as a unique way to remain "Indian" in the face of European and Euro-American settlement (Iverson 1994). The difference in the Petaluma case may lie in the ways that individuals chose *not* to use ranching material culture as an element of identity in the rancho setting, despite the intense and sustained activities of livestock herding and butchering, and in the lack of reservation land and community autonomy for Native Americans living on the Rancho Petaluma. That is, unlike the Native American communities in Iverson's study, indigenous people at Rancho Petaluma were not adopting cattle ranching as a "symbol for a new day" (1994:14), since it was a labor choice made under duress rather than a community or family effort anchored in a tenuous but defensible land base. In addition, I contend that the adoption and expression of identity in this rancho setting, as in most other social contexts, was contextual and gendered.

The implication is that Indian men chose to forge or negotiate their identities outside of rancho life, perhaps through other means such as hunting, trading, and flint knapping. These three activities are strongly represented in the assemblage and are traditionally the realm of Native California men, as recorded in ethnographic and historic texts. Alternately, men may have cultivated their connection to labor through the acquisition of crop and livestock products for meals. That is, beef rather than metal cutting tools might have been their material connection to labor tasks, but the data cannot be

used to address such a subtlety. The affiliation with labor for its ends (e.g., food) rather than its means (e.g., tools) could be a critical distinction between the strategies of men and women on Rancho Petaluma.

Complementing the gender differences, the dissimilar presence of labor tools in this excavated area may also point to disparities between the missionized, "trusted" workers at the Petaluma Adobe and the unmissionized gentiles who worked seasonally in the fields and herds. That is, workers living near the adobe may have had more permanent, closer ties with Vallejo's provisions and supplies. This social and spatial proximity might have provided opportunities to acquire industrially produced goods or the contexts in which to display or use them.

Scheduling

My final point concerns the impact of colonial labor on the scheduling of daily life. Historical archives hint at the ways that required daily labor occupied many waking hours for rancho workers. For instance, Native workers were called into the quadrangle of the Petaluma Adobe at dawn, given a breakfast of atole, and assigned their daily tasks (Hoopes 1965:36).⁵ Vallejo himself states that "every morning the laborers met to call the roll, before dispersing for their various occupations" (1941:2). After a siesta break of approximately two hours around noon, work probably continued until dusk, although this is only an educated guess based on broader work patterns in Spanish America. How this work schedule played out on a weekly or monthly basis is unknown.

Similarly unknown is how Vallejo and Alvarado assigned individuals to labor tasks. If it was at all like its labor cousins, the missions and plantations, Rancho Petaluma may have had a combination of task and gang labor. In task systems, individuals worked on certain activities until finished; in gang systems, individuals worked for a certain amount of time during the day on a long-term project. Examples of the former might include weaving blankets and making candles; examples of the latter might include plowing fields and slaughtering cattle. As some plantation archaeologists have shown, the differences in labor type have significant effects on social life and the endurance of enforced labor (e.g., Singleton 1985; Young 1997), and this would be a fruitful topic for rancho studies.

It is currently impossible to ascertain the severity of the work schedule for Native Americans at Rancho Petaluma because the available documents are simply too coarse-grained, but we can be sure the schedule was strict and

consistent. However, the archaeological record reveals that Native individuals and families had time to pursue other practices. If individuals were tethered too tightly, they would not have been able to procure obsidian, to gather manzanita berries from the chaparral slopes away from the adobe, to hunt deer and waterfowl, to gather shellfish and other resources in coast and bay settings, and to maintain trade relations with outlying groups to acquire these products. They would have eaten only those foods (e.g., beef, wheat, corn) provided and/or readily available and used only those raw material and tools (e.g., precontact obsidian on the surface, broken glass bottles) near at hand.

I discuss this latitude in opportunity only to illustrate the resilience of Native individuals involved in Rancho Petaluma and their dedication to other pursuits outside the colonial core. I do not mean to deny the hardship that many people endured at the rancho or the difficult times that led them to it. The varieties of recruitment methods were often severe, and Vallejo had a tendency to run his operations with a heavy hand. As Charles Brown, a resident in the area during the late 1830s, stated, Vallejo's "will was law, and no one dare[d] gainsay it" (1878:8). Native individuals having or perhaps making the opportunity to pursue practices outside of those required in a labor regime does not lessen the burden of colonial labor. What the pattern does indicate are many individuals' interests in holding tightly to some traditional practices and in using them in novel ways to live in and through the rancho labor regime. In parallel ways, archaeologists have shown that enslaved Africans on plantations in the American South and Caribbean could seek resources and relationships outside the plantation despite the known hardships of slave labor (e.g., Reitz, Gibbs, and Rathbun 1985; Thomas 1998; Wilkie and Farnsworth 1999).

Conclusion

To investigate social aspects of nineteenth-century Native American life at Rancho Petaluma required placing Native archaeological remains in a spatial and temporal context. Diet, stone tool technology, and labor formed key aspects of the archaeological record at Rancho Petaluma, much as they did in the everyday lives of Native Americans working at the rancho during the 1830s and 1840s. Food, rocks, and European and Asian goods were part of a complex social scene played out in daily activities. Earlier chapters related the specifics of activities that Native people participated in on a regular basis: finding food, grinding plants, butchering animals, preparing meals, making

stone implements, working bone and shell raw materials, decorating themselves with beads and bird-bone tubes, and using ceramic, glass, and metal items. This chapter situated these activities in broader theoretical arenas.

More than simply subsistence, dietary remains denote a Native negotiation of practical politics on the rancho. Individuals accepted Vallejo's provisions, but they sought out acorns, grass seeds, deer, rabbits, and other foods to complete their meals. They felt the pressure of controlled food distribution, as many of them had witnessed in the Franciscan missions, but they managed to subvert its domination of their menus. More than simply an "old habit," lithic technology served as a node of practical politics on the rancho. Individuals procured raw material from a variety of sources (or trade networks connected to them), made these rocks into particular tool forms, and used them in a range of tasks. They did this in spite of the availability of metal tools for at least some tasks, the colonial "preference" for mass-produced goods, and the abundance and workability of glass bottles. Finally, more than simply the economic impact of labor, Native individuals felt the regimentation of their daily lives, household arrangements, and gender relations under the heavy hand of rancho labor. The hold was frequently tight, but individuals managed to reside within it. This "residence" provided access to food and goods, and it may have served as a site of identity negotiation between California Indian men and women. Some opted to introduce their labor duties and its associated toolkit into the household, whereas others did not.

The evidence, both archaeological and archival, suggests that Native people forged new identities in the colonial world of Rancho Petaluma. They held tightly to some traditional practices amidst new political and material choices, but they also adopted European items and perhaps associated practices. The glass, ceramic, and metal artifacts hint that these items may have been used, at least initially, in their designed forms. That is, Native people may have used ceramic bowls, glass bottles, metal containers, and manufactured clothing. Interestingly, the most prevalent practices were those surrounding stone tools, glass beads, and the creative mixture of wild and domesticated foods in the diet. This amalgamation comprised the material parameters of nineteenth-century Native American life and set the stage for Native persistence, changes, struggles, and identities in the latter half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Stepping Back and Moving Forward

Exploring the entanglement of colonial worlds and indigenous practices on nineteenth-century California ranchos required an integrated suite of theoretical and methodological approaches and a focused case study. Notions of labor, agency, and practical politics provided unique entry points for chasing the various historical and social strands that held Rancho Petaluma together. As the results show, some strands were bound tightly, reining in and holding California Indians on the rancho, while others were wrapped more loosely, allowing Native people to control various aspects of their lives and relationships within or despite the labor regime. Some strands were anchored to the larger colonial system spread over the region, while others grew out of everyday interactions and goals in the local setting.

To study the past, we must study the actions of individuals within larger social and cultural settings. Even though certain individuals may be under severe domination and control, they still act with meaning and purpose. Classic cases are Native Americans swept up in colonial expansion, a process that archaeologists and historians have studied diligently for many decades. In this milieu, Native people frequently forged both a residence in and a resistance to the colonial world of the rancho, and they did so in very material ways. Illuminating these actions is possible only through the interplay of numerous archaeological and historical methods.

A multifaceted approach is the backbone of historical anthropology and archaeology. Each data source offers a way to evaluate the accuracy of another, and a multitude of data sources permits one to fill gaps left by others (Deagan 1991; Deagan and Scardaville 1985; Leone and Potter 1988; Wylie 1992). More importantly, the varieties of information provide an opportunity