

CHISPA

THE QUARTERLY OF THE TUOLUMNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 48, No. 1

SONORA, CALIFORNIA 95370

JULY - SEPT. 2008

CINCO DE MAYO IN TUOLUMNE COUNTY, 1862-1865

*A New Light Shines On
Tuolumne County's Latinos*

By David E. Hayes-Bautista
and Cynthia L. Chamberlin

Introduction

Visitors from the United States to Mexico are often surprised and disappointed to learn that the Cinco de Mayo holiday is not celebrated there; there are no parades, no music, no speeches. The reason for the lack of festivities in Mexico is very simple: Cinco de Mayo as celebrated in the U.S. is not a Mexican holiday. It is an American holiday, created in California by Latinos during the United States's Civil War to remind the public, Latino and non-Latino alike, of the importance of freedom and democracy. Moreover, the very first observance of this holiday, which now has been celebrated for nearly 150 years, was in Tuolumne County, in the Gold Rush town of Columbia.

History

The Gold Rush drew tens of thousands of prospectors and miners from Mexico, Central America, and South America to California. Many towns in the gold country were founded by these energetic Latinos, for

holders, many towns in the Gold Rush years, were in Tuolumne County, in the Gold country of Columbia.

History

The Gold Rush drew tens of thousands of prospectors and miners from Mexico, Central America, and South America to California. Many towns in the gold country were founded by these energetic Latinos, for example Sonora in Tuolumne County and Hornitos in Mariposa County. While Latinos in the gold country often have gone unmentioned in the official histories of many towns, the fact is that a substantial number of Latinos remained in these towns long after the first few years of the Gold Rush. They were a major audience for a number of Spanish-language newspapers printed in San Francisco and Los Angeles during the 1850s and 1860s: *El Éco del Pacífico*, *La Crónica*, *El Sud-Americano*, *La Estrella*, *El Clamor Público*, *El Amigo del Pueblo*, and others.¹ These city-published newspapers were delivered to towns and mining camps in the gold country on a regular basis.

Mexico had been one of the early countries to abolish slavery, in 1829, and the Spanish-speaking Californios who helped write the state's constitution were among those who insisted that California be admitted to the United States only as a free state. When

in California were vociferous in their support of freedom and democracy against slavery and secession. They, moreover, like other supporters of the Union cause, were bitterly disappointed during the first year of the Civil War, when the Union Army under George McClellan was beaten in nearly every major encounter with the Confederates.

What made prospects even gloomier for the Union's Latino supporters was that the French emperor, Napoleon III, used the United States's preoccupation with its civil war to defy the Monroe Doctrine and send his troops into Mexico in 1862, in an effort to topple the democratically elected government of Presi-

!!! NOTICIA IMPORTANTISIMA !!!

RETIRADA DE LOS FRANCESES.

!!! VIVA MEXICO !!!

VIVA LA INDEPENDENCIA!

**¡¡ Viva los valientes soldados
Mexicanos !!**

**VIVA EL HEROICO GENERAL SARAGOZA
y sus compañeros!**

Se acaban de recibir los siguientes
mensajes telegráficos, que por su impor-

y sus compañeros!

Se acaban de recibir los siguientes
mensajes telegráficos, que por su impor-
tancia nos apresuramos a publicar, felici-
tando cordialmente a todos nuestros com-
patriotas.—Redactores del "**Monitor Re-
publicano**."—Línea telegráfica entre Mé-
jico y Veracruz.—Puebla Mayo 8 de
1862.—Recibido en Méjico a las cinco y
minutos de la tarde.—Excmo. Sr. Minis-
tro de guerra.—A las cuatro de la tarde

Courtesy Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture,
University of California, Los Angeles

La Voz de Méjico, 27 May 1862, p. 2. Headline announcing the victory of the Mexican army over the French invaders on May 5, 1862. It took nearly three weeks for official dispatches and newspaper accounts to travel to San Francisco, via steamship from Acapulco. The editors of *La Voz de Méjico* then rewrote the material

CHISPA

Published Four Times Each Year

Founding Editor: Donald I. Segerstrom
Editor Emeritus: Carlo M. De Ferrari

"CHISPA," the title of the quarterly publication of the Tuolumne County Historical Society, is a word of Spanish origin which enjoys a special association with the history of the area. Although it has a variety of meanings, ranging from "sparks" or "embers" to "cleverness" or "wit," locally it acquired an additional colloquial meaning as it was also used to describe any nugget or specimen of gold, and particularly one of great beauty or high radiance. The term was introduced to the diggings of Tuolumne County by pioneer miners from the State of Sonora, Mexico, and was quickly adopted into the vocabulary of the many nationalities who mined here.

EDITOR: Sharon Marovich

EDITORIAL BOARD: Joan Bergsund, Sanford C. Grover,
Joan Gorsuch, Louise Leedy, Doris Fletcher Mills,
Mary Etta Segerstrom
John Gallagher, Publications Sales Agent

**The Quarterly of the Tuolumne
County Historical Society, Inc.**

P. O. Box 695 - Sonora, CA 95370

All rights to republication are reserved. Permission to quote or use material herein should be obtained in writing.

Well researched articles concerning local history are welcome. However, editors reserve the right to edit or reject any articles or photographs submitted for publication. The editors are not responsible for the loss of, or failure to return any unsolicited article, articles or photographic materials.

dent Benito Juárez. Not long thereafter, Confederate agents were in communication with the French government, seeking alliance between their two causes, against the Union and the Juárez government.² Although no formal French-Confederate alliance was ever made, the French-installed puppet emperor of Mexico, Maximilian, permitted Confederates settling in Mexico during his brief rule (1864-1867) to bring slaves with them.³ So closely identified was the Confederacy with the French and Maximilian in the perceptions of their opponents, that in 1864 Manuel E. Rodríguez, editor of the San Francisco pro-Juárez newspaper *La Voz de Méjico*, could use the English-language term "copperhead" - which ordinarily was the Union's derogatory nickname for a Confederate sympathizer - to refer to those who supported Maximilian.⁴ During 1862, the Spanish-language press in California carried frequent, detailed reports of the French army's seemingly inexorable advance from the port of Vera Cruz toward the capital, Mexico City. Throughout much of the North American continent in 1861 and 1862, the forces of freedom and democracy appeared to be losing.

Then, unexpectedly, the Mexican army stopped the mighty French imperial army dead in its tracks at the city of Puebla on May 5, 1862, and forced it to retreat to its coastal positions. For the first time since the Confederate guns had fired on Fort Sumter, those fighting to preserve freedom and democracy had won a major engagement. Accounts of the battle were drafted in Mexico City from battlefield dispatches, then printed in official newspapers, copies of which were transported to Acapulco and placed aboard steamships that reached San Francisco in about two weeks.

News Travels to Tuolumne County

By May 27, in San Francisco, the editors of that

city's pro-Juárez newspaper *La Voz de Méjico* had used these Mexican news reports to craft their own accounts of the Mexican victory at the Battle of Puebla. The headlines shouted in the largest possible typeface: "Long live Mexico!!! Long live independence! Long live the valiant Mexican soldiers!! Long live the heroic General Zaragoza and his comrades!"⁵ On that date, copies of *La Voz de Méjico* bearing the good news were loaded onto the steamers that ran between San Francisco and Stockton. Offloaded in the latter town, the newspapers went by stagecoach to Sonora and other communities in Tuolumne County.

First Spontaneous Celebration

To the town of Columbia in Tuolumne County goes the honor of having held the first celebration of the Battle of Puebla, which had occurred just three weeks earlier, on May 5, 1862. A correspondent in Columbia, identified only by the initials 'A.M.', wrote a letter to the editors of *La Voz de Méjico*, speaking of the "incomparable joy with which the satisfying news of our triumph against the French were received."⁶ 'A.M.' then reported on the spontaneous celebration that had erupted upon receipt of the news: "We have celebrated by firing salutes and with banquets at which we have drunk to Mexico and sung some patriotic songs."⁷ This correspondent originally had written at some length describing the festivities; but, unfortunately for us in the 21st century, the editors of *La Voz de Méjico* chose not to print the full description. Instead, they laconically noted that, at this point, "our correspondent then goes on to give us a description of the celebration,"⁸ and did not provide any further detail, other than mentioning the "ardent patriotism" of one Señora Eligia Mendoza,⁹ without specifying if this lady had given a speech, sung a song, or made some other demonstration of her patriotic joy. The festivities in Columbia ended at 10:00 that evening, 'A.M.' hastily penned his account, and the first celebration of Cinco de Mayo in California had just taken place.¹⁰ To Columbia, then, goes that honor of initiating a tradition that continues to this day.¹¹

Californian Sword of Honor

We know that these newspapers were read in Tuolumne County, thanks to the response of Latinos living in the county to the musings of the editor of a Spanish-language newspaper in San Francisco. On June 17, 1862, *La Voz de Méjico* reported that citizens in Mexico City had taken up a subscription to commission a ceremonial sword to be presented to General Zaragoza in honor of his victory. The editor added, "Wouldn't it be appropriate for some demonstration of the esteem which those brave men deserve, who have shed their blood for the homeland, to be made in California?"¹² Perhaps this originally was intended merely as a rhetorical question, but in a matter of days the newspaper's offices were being flooded with donations towards a second sword of honor, to be sent to General Zaragoza from the Latino citizens and residents of California.

REMITIDO.

Columbia, Mayo 22 de 1862.

Sres. RR. de la VOZ DE MÉJICO :

Muy señores míos,

Tengo el honor de dirigirme à Vdes. con el solo objeto de poner à Vdes. al corriente del incomparable júbilo con que fueron recibidas las satisfactorias noticias

tenidas de nuestro triunfo contra los franceses, que hemos celebrado con salvas y convites en que hemos brindado por Méjico, y cantado algunas canciones patrióticas, en medio del mayor orden y armonía.—(Pasa luego nuestro corresponsal à darnos una descripción de la fiesta en que parece sobresalió por su ardiente patriotismo, la Sra. Da. Eligia Mendoza, y concluye diciendo)—: Son las diez de la noche y todos nos retiramos tranquilamente à descansar.

Soy de Vda. afmo. y s. s.

A. M.

No sabemos por que razon recibimos tan atrasada la precedente carta; y ahora diremos, que si hay algo que pueda llenar de satisfaccion à los mejicanos, es ver à sus compatriotas haciendo eco à los sufrimientos y alegrías de nuestros hermanos en nuestra tierra.—E.E.

Courtesy Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture,
University of California, Los Angeles

La Voz de Méjico, 7 June, 1862, p. 2. Letter from a correspondent known only by the initials 'A.M.' in Columbia, Tuolumne County, describing the first spontaneous celebration of the Mexican victory at the Battle of Puebla on May 5. While the date of the letter is printed as May 22, this obviously is in error; the first notices of the victory were not printed until May 27. The date probably was originally handwritten as either May 27 or May 29, but mistakenly read by the newspaper's typesetters as May 22. Whatever the date, this is the first recorded celebration of the Battle of Puebla in the state of California.

Latinos in Columbia and Chinese Camp were among the first in California and Nevada to send their donations for the sword of honor to *La Voz de Méjico* in San Francisco. Just a few weeks later, in July of 1862, thirty-one Latinos in Columbia pooled their resources and in a few days raised the sum of \$63.00. A day's wages for the average manual laborer at this time was around \$1.00, so these enthusiastic Latinos were donating nearly two days' wages each, a fairly significant sum. Eligia Mendoza, who had aroused patriotic passions at the first spontaneous celebration of the victory at Puebla, pledged the sum of \$5.00 towards this sword.¹³ In Chinese Camp, eleven more Latinos donated a total of \$27.00, again nearly two days' wages apiece.¹⁴ Significantly, nearly half of the Latinos donating to this cause in Tuolumne County – 18 out of 42 – were women. Nor was this an anomaly, for Tuolumne County's Latinas, like the ardently patriotic Señora Mendoza of Columbia, were to be found in the forefront of Cinco de Mayo activities in these early years.

Eventually, Latinos in California raised nearly \$1,100 for the sword of honor, which was designed by San Francisco artist Charles Christian Nahl and fabricated by a local jeweler, R.B. Gray & Co. on Merchant Street. Combining symbols from California and Mexico, the decoration of sword and scabbard included, among

About The Authors

David E. Hayes-Bautista is Professor of Medicine and Director of the Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture (CESLAC) at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles. His research focuses on the relationships among culture, behavior, and health outcomes in Latino populations. Since the release of his 2004 book, *La Nueva California: Latinos in the Golden State* (University of California Press), he has embarked on research in historical epidemiology and the historical demography of California's Latino populations, with an emphasis on the period between 1850 and 1930. He received his B.A. in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in medical sociology from the University of California Medical Center, San Francisco. He was on the faculty of the School of Public Health at U.C. Berkeley from 1972 to 1986 and has been at UCLA since 1986.

Cynthia L. Chamberlin, research historian at CESLAC, received her B.A. in English and Hispanic Studies at Brown University in 1983 and her M.A. and D. Phil. in history from UCLA in 1991 and 1992. She is co-translator of *A Synoptic Edition of the Log of Columbus's First Voyage*, ed. Francisca Lardicci, *Repertorium Colombianum* 6 (Brepols, 1999), and a co-author of *Searching for the Secrets of Nature: The Life and Works of Dr. Francisco Hernández* (Stanford University Press, 2000). Her current research is on crime and society in Los Angeles County in the mid-nineteenth century.

other images, a Mexican eagle and a California grizzly bear, along with the inscription "5 May 1862. To Citizen General Ignacio Zaragoza: the grateful Mexicans of California."¹⁵

Junta Patrióticas Are Formed in Tuolumne County

Caught up in the new spirit of the times, a group of 45 Latino men met in the town of Sonora on October 12, 1862. These men were firmly convinced of the threat to "our democratic and republican institutions" from the French emperor, who was trying to replace them with monarchy, a political system that "Mexico, and the entire American continent, loathes and hates and always will reject, with weapons in hand, until the tyrant who has dreamed of making such a change to our institutions has been chastised and made to repent." Therefore, they concluded, it was their duty to assist, in whatever way they could, those valiant soldiers who were on the front lines of battle, defending freedom and democracy in Mexico.¹⁶ Since they were living in the gold country, far from those front lines, evidently they decided that their best contribution to the fight would be money, the very gold they were extracting from the earth.

They thereupon organized themselves to do just that. First they created a formal organization, called the *Junta Patriótica Mejicana de Sonora* (Mexican Patriotic Assembly of Sonora), whose duty it would be to collect and safeguard donations and send them to the *Junta Central* (Central Assembly) in San Francisco. That body then would send the donations from Sonora – and eventually those of 128 other *juntas patrióticas* in California, Nevada, and Oregon – in monthly remittances to the Juárez government in Mexico. The men then elected Ignacio Carvajal as their junta's president, Lugardo Palacios as vice-president, Jesús Castorena as secretary, and José María Cabezut as treasurer. All 45 Latinos at the meeting signed the organizing papers. Among the signatories were recognized names in Sonora, such as Simón Cabezut, Alejo Plomoso, Jesús Camacho, Maximiano Soto, Isidro Camacho, Herculano Sierra, and Antonio Plomoso.¹⁷

Just three weeks later, on November 3, 1862, another junta patriótica was formed in the neighboring town of Columbia, at a meeting held in the house of Pedro Lomelín. Melchor Sánchez was elected its president, Rosario Carrasco became vice-president, José Castro was secretary, José María Hernández was treasurer, and other council members were Pedro Alvarado and Victorino Gálvez.¹⁸

Cinco de Mayo in Sonora

The Mexican triumph at the gates of Puebla was celebrated every year thereafter in California. A detailed description of the 1864 celebration in Sonora provides an idea of what occurred in Tuolumne County every year.

On the morning of May 5, the thunderous noise of a cannon summoned Latinos from Sonora, Columbia,

Marmolitos, Robinson's Ferry, Melones, and American Camp to the first part of the celebration. Amid cheers from the audience, the Mexican flag was raised, as a symbol of the defense of democratic institutions being fought both in Mexico and in the United States.

The orator of the day, Eugenio Cárdenas, was introduced to the audience by the officers of the *Junta Patriótica Mejicana*. Speaking in the Spanish that most of his audience was familiar with, he congratulated them upon "your patriotic feelings, the hotly burning desire that you are showing for the success of the principles of reform and progress, which we presently find under attack." He then gave an account of the events that had led up to the battle of Puebla. French troops, sent to Mexico to collect a debt owed by the Mexican government to certain French bankers, had remained in Mexico even after President Juárez had promised to pay the debt; for, claimed Cárdenas, Napoleon III wanted to add Mexico to the French empire. The French generals had dismissed the idea that they might encounter much resistance, believing that "Mexican soldiers had neither the courage nor the military skill of their own men, given that the latter are consid-

El aniversario del "5 de Mayo" en la ciudad de Sonora, California.

JUNTA PATRIOTICA DE SONORA.

Sres. EE. de *La Voz de Méjico*.

San Francisco.

Muy Sres. nuestros :

Por disposicion de esta respetable junta, tengo el gusto de anunciar à Vda. y por su conducto à nuestros demas compatriotas; que para los mejicanos de este lugar no ha pasado desapercibido el glorioso dia "5 de Mayo" habiendo sido celebrado con toda la pompa que puede hacerse en lugares lejanos como este, donde se carece de los elementos propios para cualquiera clase de fiestas.

Courtesy Center for the Study of Latino Health and Culture, University of California, Los Angeles

La Voz de Méjico, 24 May, 1864, p. 2. "The Anniversary of the 'Cinco de Mayo' in the City of Sonora, California: Junta Patriótica de Sonora." This article describes the celebration of the Cinco de Mayo held in Sonora in 1864, organized by the local *junta patriótica*. 129 locations in California, Nevada, and Oregon had local *juntas patrióticas* (patriotic assemblies) during the 1860s.

ered the best in the world." Those Mexican soldiers, however, albeit outnumbered and outgunned, were fighting for their freedom: "Their attachment to independence was such that they devoted the last breaths of their lives only to saying... Long live liberty! Death to invasion and tyranny!"¹⁹

Alluding to notions of Mesoamerican identity then developing among Mexicans, Cárdenas at one point characterized the soldiers fighting under General Zaragoza – himself a Mexican who had been born in Texas – somewhat romantically, as "a handful of Aztecs." In this vein, he then described in detail the bloody combat that had stripped the French of any delusion they might have had that Mexican soldiers would not fight. Warming to his Mesoamerican theme, Cárdenas recounted to his audience how the proud French had learned, "at last, that the sons of Montezuma were strong," as the Mexicans had forced them to cede the battlefield.²⁰

Ramón Martínez, the junta's secretary, added that this "eloquent speech... was interrupted repeatedly by the spectators' thunderous applause and by their enthusiastic *vivas* for the immortal Zaragoza, for the illustrious Citizen Benito Juárez, and for the martyrs of the cause of liberty and independence."²¹

After Cárdenas's speech, the crowd moved on to a ball held in the Greenwood Theater, which had been specially decorated for the occasion. The flag of the United States was proudly displayed beside the Mexican flag,²² while Chile and Peru's flags flanked the two. A local Latino resident of Sonora, Cirilo Flores, had hand-lettered the inscriptions that rested above the portrait of the apotheosized General Zaragoza. Once the crowd had gathered around Zaragoza's portrait, young Rosaura Soto sang the chorus of the Mexican national anthem. She was accompanied by another woman, Dolores Romero de Cuevas, and by two men, Amado Cuevas and the day's speaker, Eugenio Cárdenas. The crowd demanded that they repeat the invigorating song again and again. Once the singing finally had died down, Señorita Soto – evidently a multi-talented girl – recited a poem that was enthusiastically applauded.

The ball followed, and a late supper was served afterwards. The menu was not recorded. *La Voz de Méjico's* correspondent noted that a number of toasts were made, the most memorable of which was offered by one Paula Álvarez de Tapia. The dancing picked up again after supper, and the celebration continued until 5:00 in the morning.²³

Latina Women Speak Up:

The *Junta Patriótica de Señoras*

Latina women had been very involved in Tuolumne County's Cinco de Mayo celebrations since the first spontaneous outburst in 1862. Feeling a need for another outlet for their enthusiasm, forty-five Latinas, "the Mexican ladies residing in that place," assembled at the house of María Noriega in Sonora, on September

30, 1863, to organize themselves into the *Junta Patriótica de las Señoras de Sonora* (Ladies' Patriotic Assembly of Sonora). The purpose of this new women's organization was to provide aid and assistance to "the orphans, widows, and unfortunate invalids" of the war in Mexico, rather than to focus on contributing to the purchase of guns and ammunition as the male junta did. The women had participated in the men's junta before now, but evidently had reached the conclusion that issues of importance to them were not being addressed satisfactorily by that body. The women elected a slate of officers, with the toast-making Paula Álvarez de Tapia as president, hostess María Noriega as vice-president, and Dolores Romero de Cuevas as secretary. The heavy responsibility of treasurer fell to María Ramírez de Cabezut, and Josefa Brambula and Inés Plomoso were council members.²⁴ After organizing themselves, they established a subscription list separate from the male junta's list, and thereafter sent their donations to the Junta Central in San Francisco separately from the male junta's contributions. They seem to have gone out of their way to encourage children to become involved, as well; their first list included all 45 women present at the organizational meeting, along with eleven children, primarily girls.²⁵

The monthly meetings of the *Junta Patriótica de Señoras* in Sonora provided opportunities for some of the women to hone their speaking skills, as every meeting included at least one speech. At the organizational meeting on September 30, María Noriega delivered an enthusiastic speech, which was printed in *La Voz de Méjico*.²⁶ This newspaper soon was inundated by transcripts of speeches given by 129 juntas holding monthly meetings across California, Nevada, and Oregon, and as a result came to print only the ones its editors thought most significant. Thus, it is a credit to the Latinas of Sonora that, two months later, another speech given by María Noriega, at the third monthly meeting in November, was also printed; as were the March 1864 speech given by Rosaura Soto, the July 1864 speech given by Inés Plomoso, and the address delivered by Dolores Romero de Cuevas on the first anniversary of the *Junta Patriótica de Señoras's* foundation.²⁷ The latter proved so popular that it not only was printed in San Francisco's *La Voz de Méjico*, but also was picked up by the Mexican newspapers *El Republicano* in Chihuahua and *La Estrella de Occidente*, published in the state of Sonora, Mexico.²⁸

Señora Romero de Cuevas's oratory was conspicuous at Sonora's Cinco de Mayo celebrations in 1865, as well. At dawn, the Mexican flag was raised to the sound of a twenty-one-gun salute, and a band played the Mexican national anthem and "other martial American marches." A Latino color guard was featured, and a group of (male) *Junta Patriótica Mejicana* members accompanied the orator of the day, Amado Cuevas, to the outdoor stage, where he delivered a speech. The color guard and band then led the

Footnotes Continued

Mendoza." *Id.*

10. *Id.*

11. Hayes-Bautista and Chamberlin, "Cinco de Mayo's First Seventy-five Years," *passim*. But *nostra culpa!* An unfortunate error in this article mistakenly placed Columbia in Mariposa County, instead of Tuolumne. Future reprints of the article will carry an *errata* notice correcting the error.

12. "¿No sería conveniente que en California se hiciera alguna demostración del aprecio que merecen los valientes que han derramado su sangre en defensa de la patria?" "El General Zaragoza!" *La Voz de Méjico*, 17 June 1862, p. 2.

13. "Lista de las personas que espontáneamente suscriben para comprar una Espada de Honor, que se ofrecerá al C. General Ignacio Zaragoza, como tributo del reconocimiento y admiración de sus conciudadanos de California," *La Voz de Méjico*, 22 July, 1862, p. 2.

14. "Lista de las personas que espontáneamente suscriben para comprar una Espada de Honor, que se ofrecerá al C. General Ignacio Zaragoza, como tributo del reconocimiento y admiración de sus conciudadanos de California," *La Voz de Méjico*, 9 August, 1862, p. 2.

15. "La espada de honor del General Zaragoza," *La Voz de Méjico*, 1 November 1862, p. 2. In Spanish, the inscription read: "5 de Mayo de 1862: Al C. general Ignacio Zaragoza; Los mejicanos de California reconocidos."

16. They explained that their donations were intended for the Mexican army, which was defending "nuestras instituciones republicanas-democráticas," and declared that monarchy was "Sistema que Méjico y todo el continente americano detesta y odia, y repelerá siempre con las armas en el mano, hasta castigar y hacer arrepentirse al tirano que ha soñado efectuar tal cambio en nuestras instituciones." Ignacio Carvajal, Jesús Castorena, and José María Cabezut to editor Manuel E. Rodríguez, *La Voz de Méjico*, 23 October, 1862, p. 2.

17. *Id.*

18. "Junta Patriótica de Columbia," *La Voz de Méjico*, 25 November 1862, p. 2.

19. "Vuestros sentimientos patrióticos, el deseo tan ardiente que manifestais por el feliz éxito de los principios de reforma y de progreso que se ven hoy atacados..."; "...los soldados mejicanos no tenían ni el valor ni la pericia militar que los suyos, puesto que son considerados como los primeros del mundo"; "...su adhesión a la independencia era tal, que consagraban los últimos alientos de su vida, solo a decir... ¡viva la libertad! ¡muera la invasion y tiranía!" "Sociedades patrióticas mejicanas," *La Voz de Méjico*, 24 May 1864, p. 2.

20. "...[U]n puñado de Aztecas..."; "por fin, que los hijos de Moctesuma eran fuertes." *Id.* Visual and verbal references to similar ideas of Mesoamerican identity frequently have featured in Cinco de Mayo celebrations ever since.

21. "...[E]locuente discurso... fué repetidas veces interrumpido por los estrepitosos aplausos de los espectadores y por sus entusiastas vivas al immortal Zaragoza, al esclarecido C. Benito Juárez, a los martires de la cause de la libertad y a la independencia." "El aniversario del '5 de Mayo' en la ciudad de Sonora, California," *La Voz de Méjico*, 24 May 1864, p. 2.

22. This paired display of the Mexican and U.S. flags also has been a regular feature of Cinco de Mayo celebrations since their inception.

23. "El aniversario del '5 de Mayo' en la ciudad de Sonora, California," *La Voz de Méjico*, 24 May 1864, p. 2.

24. "...Las señoras mejicanas residentes en dicho lugar. ...Los huérfanos, las viudas e infelices invalidos." *La Voz de Méjico*, 15 October, 1863, p. 2.

25. "Lista de donativos patrióticos para auxiliar Al Ejército de operaciones contra los invasores," *La Voz de Méjico*, 8 October 1863, p. 2.

26. "Discurso pronunciado, por Doña María Noriega, en la ciudad de Sonora, California, el 30 de Setiembre de 1863," *La Voz de Méjico*, 15 October, 1863, p. 2.

27. "Discurso pronunciado por Da. Maria Noriega en la tercera sesion de la Junta Patriótica de señoras de Sonora, el dia 29 de Noviembre de 1863," *La Voz de Méjico*, 15 December 1863, p. 2; "Discurso pronunciado por la Señorita Rosaura Soto en la sexta sesion ordinaria de la Junta Patriótica de Señoras de Sonora, celebrada el 20 de Marzo de 1864," *La Voz de Méjico*, 14 April 1864, p. 2; "Discurso pronunciado por la Sra. Da. Inez Plomosas, en la decima sesion de la junta patriótica mejicana de Señoras en Sonora, celebrada en el mes de Julio prócsimo pasado," *La Voz de Méjico*, 11 August 1864, p. 2; "Discurso pronunciado por la Sra. secretaria Da. Dolores R. de Cuevas, en el aniversario de la instalacion de la Sociedad Patriótica de Señoras de Sonora, California," *La Voz de Méjico*, 19 November 1864, p. 2.

28. "Da. Dolores R. de Cuevas," *La Voz de Méjico*, 8 April 1865, p. 1.

29. "...[O]tras marchas marciales americanas"; "...con elocuencia y dulzura pronunció un pequeño discurso que le mereció repetidos aplausos y las mas entusiastas y sinceras felicitaciones de todos sus amigos." "Aniversario del 5 de Mayo de 1862 en Sonora," *La Voz de Méjico*, 8 June 1865, p. 2.

30. "Juntas Patrióticas," *La Voz de Méjico*, June 18, 1863, p. 2; "Celebracion del 5 de Mayo en Sutter Creek," *La Voz de Méjico*, 18 May 1865, p. 2; "Comunicado," *La Voz de Méjico*, 25 May 1865, p. 2.

31. "El 'Alta California,'" *La Voz de Méjico*, May 7, 1864, p. 1; "Entusiastas festividades en Los Angeles, sur de California, con motivo de los triunfos alcanzados en Puebla por los hijos de la republica," *La Voz de Méjico*, 6 June 1863, p. 1; "Junta patriótica de Nuevo Almaden," *La Voz de Méjico*, 28 June 1864, p. 3; "El 5 de Mayo en Stockton," *La Voz de Méjico*, 16 June 1864, p. 2; "La celebracion del 5 de Mayo en Virginia City, Estado de Nevada," *El Nuevo Mundo*, 15 May 1865, p. 1.

32. Hayes and Chamberlin, "Cinco de Mayo's First Seventy-Five Years," pp. 46-55.

33. "Mexican Benevolent Society," *Sonora Union Democrat*, 12 October 1869, p. 3.

34. "The Mexican Celebration," *Sonora Union Democrat*, 19 September 1868, p. 2.

35. California State Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit, "Historical Census Populations of California State, Counties, Cities, Places and Towns, 1850-2000," <http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/ Histtext.htm>. Accessed 25 February 2005.

36. For example, some members of the Cabezut family relocated to Merced County; see the "About the Author" note on the dustjacket of Delores J. Cabezut-Ortiz's *Merced County: The Golden Harvest* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1987).

37. An example was George Hernández, born in Placerville in 1863, who moved to Los Angeles and became a minor silent-screen movie star, appearing in 126 films from 1910 until his death in 1922. Internet Movie Data Base, www.imdb.com/name/nm0379580/. Accessed 10 September 2005.

38. "Inyo," *La Crónica*, 17 May 1873, p. 1; "Inyo," *La Crónica*, 28 May 1873, p. 2.

39. Untitled, *Sonora Union Democrat*, 22 September 1877, p. 3. Definitive analyses will be forthcoming, with more concrete numbers provided at a later date.

40. State of California, Department of Finance, "California County Race/Ethnic Population Estimates and Components of Change by Year, July 1, 2000-2004" (Sacramento, March 2006), http://www.dof.ca.gov/HTML/DEMOGRAP/ ReportsPapers/Estimates/E3/E3-00-04/E-3_2000-04.xls. Accessed 11 September 2008.



Courtesy
Tuolumne
County
Museum

José María Cabezut



Courtesy
California
Historical
Society,
FN-36621

María Noriega



Courtesy
California
Historical
Society,
FN-36623

Teresa Salas



Courtesy
Tuolumne
County
Museum

Jesús Camacho

UPPER LEFT: José María Cabezut. One of the early settlers in Sonora, California, he originally came from the state of Sonora in Mexico. A landowner and merchant, he was also a member of the *Junta Patriótica Mejicana de Sonora*, in which organization he held many offices during 1862-1867. (His restaurant, the Sonora Restaurant, was located "between the two bridges in Sonora," according to an advertisement in the May 17, 1862, *Union Democrat*. One bridge was over Sonora Creek at today's Coffill Park. The other, at Linoberg St., was removed and the streambed filled in. Ed.) UPPER RIGHT: María Noriega. The women's patriotic assembly in Sonora, the *Junta Patriótica de Señoras de Sonora*, was organized in her house on September 30, 1863. During the organizational meeting, she made an address to the women present. In 1864, she served as president of the *Junta Patriótica de Señoras* in her town. LOWER LEFT: Teresa Salas was an active member of Sonora's *juntas patrióticas*, at first in the general junta and subsequently in the women's group, the *Junta Patriótica de Señoras*. LOWER RIGHT: Jesús Camacho. An early settler in Sonora, he was also a member of the *Junta Patriótica Mejicana* there. (Camacho, a native of Mexico, became an American citizen in 1873, according to records on file at the Carlo M. De Ferrari Archive. Born in 1813, the records also indicate that his occupation changed from laborer to shoemaker in later years. A District Court Case (#1010, 1866) indicates he was a plaintiff in a mining dispute which he, several other Latinos and E. F. Hunter won. Neighboring miners using hydraulic mining techniques caused flooding in the tunnel Camacho and his partners were digging. The judgment on file in the case required the defendants to stop using water to make their cuts. The site of the dispute was the St. Cyr ranch on the eastern edge of Sonora. The significance of the letter "P" on Camacho's lapel is related to the "Pioneers of Tuolumne County," so called because they arrived here in 1849. A similar initial appears on the lapels of several people in a composite picture of the "Pioneers" taken in 1891 and on file at the Tuolumne County Museum. Ed.)

audience into the theater, decorated as it had been the year before, with the Mexican, United States, and Peruvian flags and with portraits of General Zaragoza and Benito Juárez. Before the festivities could continue, however, the audience insisted that Señora Romero de Cuevas make a speech, too. She hesitated only briefly, then mounted the stage, and "with eloquence and sweetness, she made a short speech, which merited repeated rounds of applause and the most enthusiastic and sincere congratulations of all her friends." Her highly successful speech was followed by dinner and the singing of an all-female quartet consisting of Señora Romero de Cuevas, Inés Plomoso, Carmen Yáñez, and Clodomira Gaxiola.²⁹

Cinco de Mayo: A California Institution

By the first anniversary of its first spontaneous celebration in Columbia just three weeks after the original Battle of Puebla, the commemoration of the victory of the forces of freedom and democracy on the Cinco de Mayo became institutionalized up and down California, and has been celebrated every year since. From 1863 on, other towns in the gold country joined Columbia and Sonora in celebrating the Battle of Puebla on the Cinco de Mayo, including Chinese Camp, San Andreas, Sutter Creek (celebrating jointly with Jackson), and Hornitos (celebrating jointly with Merced River, Mariposa, Santa Cruz and Oso).³⁰ Larger communities adopted the annual celebration, including San Francisco, Los Angeles, New Almaden, and Stockton in California, and Virginia City in Nevada.³¹ In large cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles, the Cinco de Mayo has been celebrated every year since then, to the present day.³²

After the Gold Rush

During the 1860s and early 1870s, the Latino population base of Tuolumne County was large enough to support a number of Latino activities. A second Latino organization was founded by 1869, the *Sociedad Mexicana de Beneficencia Mútua* (Mexican Mutual Benefits Society), to provide social benefits and health insurance. The officers of this new group previously had been officers in the local men's junta, including Ignacio Carvajal, Herculano Sierra, Pomposo Lepe, and José María Cabezut.³³ The *Junta Patriótica* continued to celebrate Mexican holidays, although the group turned its attention to celebrating Mexican Independence Day on September 16, and dropped Cinco de Mayo celebrations from its activities list, even though in the meantime celebrations of the latter holiday were growing in number and scope in the Central Valley and coastal regions of California. Nevertheless, 16th of September celebrations in Tuolumne County were, initially, quite large. In fact, the editor of the *Union Democrat* noted that the 16th of September celebration in 1868 "excelled that of the Fourth of July."³⁴

But by the late 1870s, the changing demographic situation of the gold country had affected all parts of the population, including Latinos. After hitting a peak

in 1860 of 16,229 inhabitants, the total population in Tuolumne County dropped by nearly 50% in ten years, to 8,150 in 1870 and down to 7,848 by 1880.³⁵ Along with the non-Latino portion of the population, Latinos were leaving the gold country and moving to new agricultural communities in the Central Valley,³⁶ to urban centers on the coast,³⁷ or to new mining towns outside the Mother Lode; and Cinco de Mayo began to be celebrated in new places such as Lone Pine and Lida in Inyo County.³⁸ Caught up in this later nineteenth-century population outflow, the *Junta Patriótica* in Sonora tried to continue functioning, but the crowds were dwindling. In 1877, the *Union Democrat* noted, "The number participating was very much less than in former years, but enthusiasm for liberty and independence was as warm as ever."³⁹

This study has brought Tuolumne County's role to light in the hope of educating the rest of the state about that singular night in 1862, when the "ardent patriotism" of Eligia Mendoza first inspired her fellow Latino residents of Columbia to celebrate, "by firing salutes and with banquets, at which we have drunk to Mexico and sung some patriotic songs," the victory of the forces of freedom and democracy at the Mexican city of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

FOOTNOTES

1. *La Estrella* was not a separate paper, but rather the Spanish-language pages of the *Los Angeles Star*, which were a feature of the latter between 1851 and 1855. The *Star* discontinued publication of pages in Spanish after the editor of those pages, Francisco P. Ramírez, went on to found an independent all-Spanish newspaper, the *Los Angeles Clamor Público*, in 1855. Similarly, *El Eco del Pacífico* was not an independent newspaper, but rather the Spanish-language pages of San Francisco's French-language *L'Écho du Pacifique*.
2. The diplomatic dance between the French and the Confederacy is well covered in a study by Mexican scholar Gerardo Gurza Lavalle, *Una vecindad efímera: Los Estados Confederados de América y su política exterior hacia México, 1861-1865* (Mexico City: Instituto Mora, 2001). For the explicit identification of the Union and Juarista causes by their respective supporters, see David E. Hayes-Bautista and Cynthia L. Chamberlin, "Cinco de Mayo's First Seventy-five Years in Alta California: From Spontaneous Behavior to Sedimented Memory, 1862 to 1937," *Southern California Quarterly*, 89 (2007), p. 40; David E. Hayes-Bautista, Cynthia L. Chamberlin, Brandon Jones, Juan Carlos Cornejo, Cecilia Cañadas, Carlos Martínez, and Gloria Meza, "Empowerment, Expansion, and Engagement: *Las Juntas Patrióticas* in California, 1848-1869," *California History* 85 (2007), pp. 15, 18.
3. Jasper Ridley, *Maximilian and Juárez* (London: Phoenix Press, 1992), pp. 216-217.
4. "El autor del comunicado que pretende defender à Derbec y à su copperhead Echo, supone que nosotros no conocemos al caballero que escribió el artículo que alude..." ("The author of the communication that attempts to defend Derbec and his copperhead Echo, supposes that we do not recognize the gentleman who wrote the article he is referring to..."). "La desunión franco-americano," *La Voz de Méjico*, 12 May, 1864, p. 2. The passage in question actually was a translation into Spanish by *La Voz de Méjico's* editor of an article originally appearing in the contemporary English-language newspaper *American Flag*; nonetheless, it clearly was anticipated that the Spanish-speaking readers of *La Voz de Méjico* would understand the term "copperhead" and find it applicable to a newspaper whose editorial policy supported Maximilian in Mexico. The Echo here referred to was the San Francisco French-language newspaper *L'Écho du Pacifique*, which supported the French intervention in Mexico, and subsequently Maximilian's rule there; Étienne Derbec was its editor.
5. "¡¡¡Viva Méjico!!! ¡Viva la Independencia! ¡Vivan los valientes soldados Méjicanos! ¡Viva el heroico General Zaragoza y sus compañeros!" *La Voz de Méjico*, 27 May 1862, p. 2.
6. "Tengo el honor... de poner à Vdes. al corriente del incomparable júbilo con que fueron recibidos las satisfactorias noticias tenidas de nuestro triunfo contra los franceses." "Remitido," *La Voz de Méjico*, 7 June 1862, p. 2.
7. "...[H]emos celebrado con salvas y convites en que hemos brindado por Méjico, y cantado algunas canciones patrióticas." *Id.*
8. "Pasa luego nuestro correspondiente à darnos una descripción de la fiesta..." *Id.*
9. "...[P]arece que sobresalió por su ardiente patriotismo, la Sra. Da. Eligia