

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:
COMPRISING THE COUNTIES OF
IMPERIAL, LOS ANGELES, ORANGE
RIVERSIDE, SAN BERNARDINO, SAN
DIEGO, VENTURA**

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Southern California: Comprising the Counties of Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Ventura by John Steven McGroarty

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JOHN STEVEN MCGROARTY

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Southern California

Comprising the Counties of
Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange
Riverside, San Bernardino
San Diego, Ventura



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Commission
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Southern California

By JOHN STEVEN McGROARTY

Author of the "Mistion Play"



IN the old days of the Conquistadores and the sandaled, brown-robed brothers of St. Francis, there was an Alta California and a Baja California, which was to say an Upper and a Lower California. You will still find on the maps, as a part of the Republic of Mexico, this same Lower California—a vast peninsula, laved on its western shore by the waves of the Pacific, while from the east it keeps amid desert silences its immemorial watch upon a yellow Gulf into which pours the tawny, silted waters of the Rio Colorado.

It was from this historic peninsula that the expeditions set out by land and sea in search of golden empires and the fabled straits which were to cut a shorter passage to Spain for the treasure-laden ships. It was from these shores that Cortez, the grim Conqueror, sent Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo on that immortal voyage of 1542 which resulted in the discovery of our California of to-day. And from thence came also Don Gaspar de Portola and Fray Junipero Serra with the fateful expedition of 1769, driving the first stakes of the white man's civilization and taking the first actual possession of the country.

For more than half a century after 1769, in the first loosening of the grip of Spain on half the world, many archives were filled with fine writing in Madrid concerning the government and conduct of "Las California", the term including in its meaning both Alta and Baja California. But, while Baja or Lower California was specifically defined and mapped as it is at present, including the peninsula only, Alta California was apparently limitless in its scope. Practically, it began at San Diego in the south as now, but it was supposed to stretch northward as far as ships could sail, or the foot of man could travel by land.

There came at last a time, however, out of the glamoured centuries, when a flag that whispered to the breeze no memories of Spain or of those who had sprung from its heroic loins, floated over the far-flung hills and vales of Alta California.

And it was then that the magic name took a distinct and well-defined meaning in the understanding of the world. Then, at last, California was mapped as a state of the American Union, and it was so mapped that even the stranger to the atlas might instinctively know when he had crossed either of the imaginary lines which still mark its northern and southern boundaries,



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO.



SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

so unerringly does it include certain physical and climatic characteristics. It is the Kingdom of Light. It begins and concludes like the Cantic to the Sun. From end to end, the same royal purple enfolds its kingly mountains in evening's dusk; the same mystic fire flames upon all its valleys in the miracle of the dawn. From Siskiyou to San Diego, amid endless hills and along a thousand miles of the sea's white shores of glory, it is "Just California".



FRAY JUNIPERO SERRA

Sun and dews that kiss it,
Balmy winds that blow,
The stars in clustered diadems
Upon its peaks of snow,
The mighty mountains o'er it,
Below the white sea swirled—
Just California, stretching down
The middle of the world.

It is an empire within itself, vast in its proportions, having everything it needs or could desire, so situated and constituted that a wall could be built around it and yet leave it absolutely beyond the necessity of hailing the outside world for succor in any way. And also within our American State of California there are still really two Californias as there were once the Californias of the peninsula and the limitless, unexplored territory beyond.



VENTURA MISSION.



SAN LUIS REY MISSION.



PALA.

The great dyke of the Tehachepi, looming like a barrier, cuts California in two with an effectiveness not less than that which, in the world's history, has divided human communities into different races speaking different languages, following different modes of life and swayed by wholly different habits of thought. The dyke of the Tehachepi does not do all this, for Californians are certainly of one mind in their devotion to the state, and of one heart in their love for it. But, quite as surely does that great mid-state barrier have the effect of giving us a Southern and a Northern

California, even as the seas and the deserts in the days of old made a Baja and an Alta California for the swords of the Conquistadores and the wandering sandals of Franciscan dreamers.

These pages have to do with Southern California only, and their purpose is to enlighten the outlander and the stranger concerning a distinct portion of the earth's surface which is, in a thousand ways peerless, and in a thousand other ways actually and potentially unrivalled.

It was California of the South which the Spanish discoverers saw first, of course, since it was up from La Paz and Navidad on the Peninsula that they sailed. The first port they reached was the Port of San Diego, even as the same luring and forever beautiful Harbor of the Sun must be the first port at which the ships shall call as they speed from the seven seas through the Panama Canal.

But there was many a galleon and many a daring fleet wrecked in the waves before the first of the white man's sails hailed the Port of San



SAN LUIS REY MISSION.