Meyibó

Revista de Investigaciones Históricas

Año 4, Núm. 8, Julio-diciembre de 2014

Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas
Tijuana, Baja California, México

Meyibó. Revista de Investigaciones Históricas, Año 4, Núm. 8, julio-diciembre de 2014, es una publicación semestral editada por la Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, a través del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas. Calzada Universidad 14418. Parque Industrial Internacional. Tijuana, Baja California, México. C.P. 22390. Teléfono y fax: (664) 682-1696, meyibo2010@gmail.com, www.iih/tij.uabc.mx/historicas/home.php. Editor responsable: Jesús Méndez Reyes. Reserva de Derechos al Uso Exclusivo núm. 04-2014-031218020000-102, otorgado por el Instituto Nacional del Derecho de Autor; ISSN 0187-702X. Certificado de licitud de título y contenido en trámite. Impresa por RR Servicios Editoriales, José María Larroque 1475, col. Nueva, C.P. 21100, Mexicali, Baja California, tel. (686) 582-2825. Este número se terminó de imprimir en marzo de 2015, con un tiraje de 300 ejemplares.

Revista *Meyibó*
[temporada de cosecha]

Año 4, Núm. 8, julio-diciembre de 2014

Contenido

ARTÍCULO

BAJA CALIFORNIA: A CRUCIAL TURNING POINT FOR JUNÍPERO SERRA

Rose Marie Beebe y Robert M. Senkewicz
Santa Clara University

JUNÍPERO SERRA IN BAJA CALIFORNIA

Junípero Serra spent exactly fifteen months in Baja California. He stepped ashore at Loreto on April 1, 1768. On July 1, 1769 he arrived at what he called "the famous and desired port of San Diego." These fifteen months are not as well-known as other periods in Serra's career. Indeed, contemporary scholars have tended to interpret Serra's stay in Baja California as a relatively unimportant prelude to his work in Alta California.[1] In our judgment, this is an unfortunate error, for the time he spent in Baja California was uniquely crucial in his own development. It was in Baja California, specifically during his 1769 journey from Loreto to San Diego, that Serra had his first extensive contacts with native peoples who had not been baptized. These

[1] The two most recent works are Steven W. Hackel, *Junípero Serra: California's Founding Father* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2013) and Gregory Orfalea, *Journey to the Sun: Junípero Serra's Dream and the Founding of California* (New York: Scribner, 2014). Neither work accords great significance to Serra's time in Baja California.

contacts excited and energized him more than anything else had since he arrived in Veracruz in 1749.

It was only in Baja California that he felt he was finally and for the first time becoming a true missionary. What Serra observed of the native peoples of the Baja California peninsula and the way in which he and his fellow missionaries reacted to those peoples set the course for much of the indigenous/missionary interaction under Serra's direction in Alta California. His Baja California experience convinced Junípero Serra that the native peoples of the Californias were ready and willing to receive Christianity.

Serra's appointment to Baja California happened abruptly. In July 1767 he was preaching a mission at Ixmiquilpan, about halfway between Mexico City and his former missions in the Sierra Gorda. He received an order to return to the Colegio de San Fernando immediately. When he arrived there on July 12 he discovered that the Jesuits had been expelled from New Spain, that the viceregal authorities had decided that San Fernando would take over the Jesuit missions on the remote peninsula called California, that he had been appointed as the leader of the missionaries assigned to that region, and that he would be leaving for his new post in a matter of days. Eight other Franciscans at San Fernando, including Francisco Palóu, were assigned to join Serra in this new missionary endeavor. They were supplemented by five missionaries currently working in the Sierra Gorda. This group included Juan Crespí and Fermín Francisco de Lasuén. By mid-August, Serra and the group from San Fernando were at Tepic awaiting passage to the peninsula.[2]

Serra was very excited by the chance to assume control of the seventeen missions the Jesuits founded between 1697 and 1767 in the southern two-thirds of the peninsula that is now

[2] Maynard Geiger, *The Life and Times of Fray Junípero Serra, O.F.M.; or, The Man Who Never Turned Back, 1713-1784, a Biography*, 2 vols., Washington, D.C., Academy of American Franciscan History, 1959, pp. 182-90.

called Baja California. Like most people in New Spain, he did not know very much about the peninsula but he was most likely quite aware that the Jesuits managed to attain a considerable degree of control over the military and that Baja California had not attracted a large number of civilian settlers. In other words, the balance of power was reversed from that in the Sierra Gorda. Another aspect of Baja California that attracted Serra was that the Jesuits had been in the process of expanding their chain of missions northward. There was every reason for him to hope that he would be able to continue the expansion. He anticipated that for the first time in his missionary career he would have the opportunity to come into significant contact with large numbers of un-baptized Indians. This opportunity had eluded him when he worked in the Sierra Gorda (1750-1758), for the Pame people there had been evangelized before he arrived. When he left the Sierra Gorda he spent almost a decade (1759-1767) preaching domestic missions in various regions of New Spain. This involved attempting to rekindle religious fervor in churches and communities of people who were already Christians. Thus, Baja California offered him the possibility of finally engaging in missionary activity among large numbers of native people who had not been baptized. This was the prospect that fired his desire to become a missionary in the first place and yet, seventeen years after he landed in the New World, he had never been able to do this.

This state of affairs explains an odd occurrence that happened while Serra and the Fernandinos were at Tepic in Nayarit. There were other Franciscans in the city as well, one group from the Colegio Apostólico de Santa Cruz in Querétaro and the other group from the Province of Jalisco. Both of these groups were bound for the former Jesuit missions in Sonora where Jesuits had waged hard struggles against settlers and soldiers for decades. Serra himself was at the port of San Blas inspecting

the vessel that was slated to take him and his colleagues across the Gulf of California to the Baja California peninsula.[3]

Suddenly, the viceroy ordered that the assignments were to be changed. The Jaliscans were to go to Baja California and the Fernandinos were to go to Sonora. The reason given was that since the Fernandinos and the Queretarans were from apostolic colleges, they would probably be able to work better together in Sonora. The Jaliscans, coming from another type of Franciscan institution, the province, wondered whether they would be able to work with the Queretarans on the mainland and argued that everything would be better if they were allowed to work separately in Baja California.

Serra was furious and fired off a letter to the Colegio de San Fernando. The letter made it clear that for Serra the major attraction of California was the presence of unbaptized people near the expanding Jesuit missions. The Sonora missions, on the other hand, were similar to those of the Sierra Gorda in an important aspect. The Indians there were already evangelized and large groups of unbaptized people were not available, since the area to the north of the missions was controlled by hostile Apaches. As the experience of San Sabá in 1758 had demonstrated, they were definitely not receptive to missionization. So Serra told the college authorities that he was sending Palóu and Miguel de la Campa to Guadalajara to try to find the visitor general and lobby to have the order changed. He said that he wished to work among the "thousands of infidels in California who are at the door waiting for Holy Baptism." He said that he did not wish to go to Sonora, since "There it is necessary

[3] Francisco Palóu, *Historical Memoirs of New California*, ed. Herbert Eugene Bolton, 4 vols., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1926, vol. 1, pp. 13–16; Francisco Palóu, *Recopilación de noticias de la Antigua y de la Nueva California (1767–1783),* ed. José Luis Soto Pérez. 2 vols, México, Editorial Porrúa, 1998, vol. 1, p. 17; Gómez Canedo, *Evangelización cultura y promoción social: ensayos y estudios críticos sobre la contribución franciscana a los orígenes cristianos de México: siglos 16-18*, México, Porrúa, 1993, pp. 621–22.

to travel many leagues through unpopulated areas to meet up with even one infidel."[4]

The efforts of Palóu and Campa were successful. They met Visitador General José de Gálvez in Guanajuato on November 1. He agreed with them and gave them a letter to take to the viceroy in Mexico City. They arrived there on November 9 and the viceroy rescinded the new orders a few days later. We suspect that the impetus for the proposed change in destinations was Manuel de Ocio, a Baja California entrepreneur who had long quarreled with the Jesuits about the Jesuits' significant control over the few settlers in Baja California. Ocio owned property in Guadalajara and his son had just married into a prosperous Guadalajara family. Ocio may well have hoped that Franciscans from the Guadalajara region might be more amenable to allowing settlers greater influence than yet another missionary group headquartered in Mexico City as the Jesuits had been. But Serra's strong reaction to the proposal indicated that Baja California had a particular attraction for him. With missionaries dominant over settlers, it was the mirror opposite of the Sierra Gorda.[5]

[4] Junípero Serra to the Colegio de San Fernando, October 17, 1767, Junípero Serra Collection, Santa Bárbara Mission Archive-Library (hereafter JSC), doc. 92. All English translations of Serra's correspondence in this article have been done by Rose Marie Beebe for a forthcoming publication, *California, Indians, and the Transformation of Junípero Serra*, which will be published in Spring 2015 by The Arthur Clark Co./University of Oklahoma Press.

[5] Harry Crosby, *Antigua California Mission and Colony on the Peninsular Frontier, 1697-1768*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1994, pp. 362–63. For the actual expulsion of the Jesuits from Baja California, see Salvador Bernabéu Albert, *Expulsados del infierno: el exilio de los misioneros jesuitas de la península Californiana, 1767-1768*, Madrid, Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2008, pp. 82-126; the ultimate destinations of the other groups of Franciscans can be found in Patricia Osante, "Los problemas de la administración franciscana en las misiones sonorenses, 1768-1800," *Archivo Ibero-Americano*, vol. 52, no. 205 (1992), 280-81 and José Refugio de la Torre Curiel*, Twilight of the Mission Frontier*: *Shifting Interethnic Alliances and Social Organization in Sonora, 1768-1855*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, and Berkeley, Academy of American Franciscan History, 2012, pp. 191, 199.

When the Franciscans arrived the peninsula was suffering from a series of natural disasters, including four years of drought and a plague of locusts. Mission registers counted 7,149 baptized natives at the missions. Serra set himself up at the old Jesuit headquarters– Mission Nuestra Señora de Loreto Conchó– assigned priests to staff the missions, and undertook a brief trip to the north to reconnoiter the landscape.[6]

In May, at a meeting convened by Visitador General José de Gálvez at the western Mexican port of San Blas, plans were drawn up for the initial colonization of Alta California. He decided to go personally to Baja California and direct preparations for the move northward.[7] Gálvez himself arrived in Baja California on July 5 and remained there for eleven months. In planning the expedition north Gálvez sought to avoid giving too much power to any one group. He did not want to replace the Jesuits with another powerful religious order for he believed that the Jesuits had accumulated too much power in the northern frontier regions such as Sonora and Baja California. Gálvez therefore determined to limit the potential sway of the missionary group going to Alta California. On the other hand, since he was interested, as a Bourbon reformer, in increasing the authority of the state, he did not want to give as much authority to individual colonizers as José de Escandón had received in Nuevo Santander. Thus Gálvez believed that a strong military presence in Alta California would be best. He also probably hoped that the presence of so many Catalán volunteers in the expedition

[6] Harry Crosby, *Gateway to Alta California: The Expedition to San Diego, 1769*, San Diego, Sunbelt Publications, 2003, pp. 13–14; Palóu, *New California*, vol. 1, p. 31; Geiger, *Life and Times*, vol. 1, 1959, pp. 191-99.

[7] Herbert Ingram Priestley, *José de Gálvez, Visitor-General of New Spain (1765-1771)*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1916, pp. 170–71.

would help relations between the military and the missionaries who were led by a Catalán-speaking Mallorcan.[8]

Gálvez brought a Bourbon vision of enlightened despotism with him to Baja California. He quickly judged that the traditional lifeways of the Baja California Indians were inimical to the progress he envisioned. Therefore, in his judgment, those lifeways had to change. He perceived that the missions at the southern end of the peninsula had good agricultural prospects and was disappointed that they had become depopulated. Therefore, he decided to consolidate the remaining Pericú at Mission Santiago, which entailed moving a number of them from Todos Santos to that mission. That would free Todos Santos to receive a large number of Guaycura neophytes from two missions farther north, Dolores and San Luis Gonzaga. Because of the arid nature of the landscape, the Jesuits had never attempted to congregate large numbers of Guaycura people at those two missions. Instead, the vast majority of indigenous peoples generally remained after baptism in their traditional villages at some distance from the mission. Therefore, moving to Todos Santos would have entailed a double move– to a new territory and into a different social unit, the mission village. Gálvez realized there could be problems with this move and envisioned a larger than normal contingent of soldiers for Todos Santos. Palóu reported that the Guaycura who were forced to relocate engaged in various forms of resistance at their new mission and that the move was not a success. Of the 800 people who were relocated, only 170 remained at the mission three years later. While some undoubtedly fled, many died from diseases they contracted at the new location. Gálvez also ordered forty-four people to move from Mission San Javier to Loreto in

[8] Patricia Osante, "Presencia misional en Nuevo Santander en la segunda mitad del siglo 18. Memoria de un infortunio." *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, vol. 17, 1998, p. 114.

order to increase the population there. According to Palóu, who remained in Baja California until 1773, all of Gálvez's edicts about Indian relocation were resisted in one fashion or another by the native peoples and the ill feelings created by these moves caused the missionaries great problems. But the closure of Missions Dolores and San Luis Gonzaga did have the effect of freeing up missionary personnel for the voyage to San Diego.[9]

To win favor with the missionaries, Gálvez issued a decree ending the authority of the commissioners who had been appointed by Portolá to supervise the missions after the departure of the Jesuits. He thus handed the management of the missions' temporal affairs to the Franciscans. Serra, who had initiated a correspondence with Gálvez soon after the visitador general had landed, met him personally at Santa Ana at the end of October. Serra was enthusiastic about going north and he agreed with Gálvez that Franciscans would accompany the expedition and establish missions at the two great harbors that had been discovered by previous explorers– San Diego and Monterey. After the meeting, Serra toured the southern missions and heard from the priest at Todos Santos of the unhappiness of the 800 Guaycura who were forced to relocate there. According to Palóu, Serra communicated this sentiment to Gálvez.[10]

[9] Harry Crosby, *Doomed to Fail: Gaspar de Portolá's First California Appointees*, San Diego, Institute for Regional Studies of the Californias, San Diego State University, 1989, pp. 8-9; Palóu, *New California*, vol. 1, pp. 39-41, 166-68; Crosby, *Antigua California*, 1994, p. 388; Francisco Palóu, *Cartas desde la península de California, 1768-1773*, ed. José Luis Soto Pérez. México, Editorial Porrúa, 1994, pp. 88-89, 423-33; Rosa Elba Rodríguez Tomp, *Cautivos de Dios: Los cazadores-recolectores de Baja California durante el período colonial*, México, CIESAS, Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 2002, pp. 185, 206; Francis F. Guest, *Fermín Francisco de Lasuén (1736-1803): A Biography*, Washington, D.C., Academy of American Franciscan History, 1973, p. 43; see also Lucila León Velazco, "Conflictos de poder en la California misional (1768-1775), in *Memoria 2001: undécimo ciclo de conferencias, seminario de historia de Baja California*, 149–60, Mexicali, Instituto de Cultura de Baja California, n.d.."

[10] Palóu, *New California*, vol. 1, p. 47.

Serra had already decided on missionaries for the various stages of the colonization journey, which consisted of land and sea components. Fernando Parrón, who had been stationed at Loreto, was appointed to sail on the first vessel, the *San Carlos*. Serra hurried to La Paz to bless the vessel and its chaplain and crew before their departure. Juan González Vizcaíno, who sailed to the New World with Serra in 1749 and had preached domestic missions with Serra in the Huasteca region in 1765–1766, joined Francisco Gómez on the second vessel, the *Concepción*. Gómez was the missionary freed to join the expedition by the closing of Mission Dolores, where he had been serving. Juan Crespí, Serra's former student in Mallorca who had been at Mission La Purísima, was assigned to accompany the first overland journey that was to be led by Fernando de Rivera y Moncada, commander of the presidio at Loreto. Serra was slated to accompany Gaspar de Portolá on the second overland expedition that would follow the trail blazed by the first.[11]

Rivera y Moncada left Loreto at the end of September 1768 and headed north. He stopped at the missions along the way and requisitioned items and livestock he thought would be necessary for the Monterey expedition. Rivera y Moncada chose Velicatá as his staging point. He and the Jesuits had already determined that this site would be suitable for the next northern mission. The expedition left from Velicatá on March 24, 1769 and arrived at San Diego on May 14.

LORETO TO SAN DIEGO

Serra kept an extensive diary of his own journey from Baja California to San Diego. This document is the longest text composed

[11] Maynard J. Geiger, *Franciscan Missionaries in Hispanic California, 1769-1848: A Biographical Dictionary*, San Marino, Huntington Library, 1969, pp. 51-55, 109-10, 121.

by Serra that has survived. We do not know very much about the circumstances of its creation. If Serra composed in the same general fashion as other Franciscan diarists of the period, he probably jotted down a series of notes as he was going along. When there was a lull in the expedition's progress and after reaching his final destination, he most likely organized the notes into diary form. He probably put together an almost-final version of the complete diary in San Diego while the Portolá party was engaged in its fruitless search for Monterey during summer and fall of 1769. Vizcaíno took a copy of what Serra had completed back to Mexico City in February 1770. Palóu found a complete copy of the diary among Serra's papers after Serra's death and he took that copy with him back to Mexico City. This was probably the copy that Father Maynard Geiger discovered in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City in 1945. A copy of this version is now at the Santa Bárbara Mission Archive-Library and this is the copy we used.[12]

Serra did not compose his diary for a wide audience. He always hoped that the diary of Juan Crespí would be the major diary of the journey from Baja California to Alta California since Crespí had accompanied Portolá from San Diego to San Francisco Bay and back in 1769. However, Serra became frustrated with Crespí's delays in completing a final version of his diary and thought that his former student was including too much extraneous material in his account. Serra's original intention was for Crespí's diary to circulate and attract a wide readership, which in turn would attract new missionaries to California. Letters and accounts from Catholic missionaries all over the world, especially from Jesuits, were widely circulating in eighteenth-century Europe. Thirty-four volumes of Jesuit missionary letters

[12] Junípero Serra, *Writings of Junípero Serra*, ed. Antonine Tibesar, 4 vols., Washington, D.C., Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955, vol. 1, p. 238. The Serra diary is in JSC, doc. 184. All translations of the diary in this article come from that document.

from around the world were published in France between 1702 and 1776 under the general title *Lettres* édifiantes *et curieuses* écrites *des missions* étrangères. Sixteen volumes were translated into Spanish and published as *Cartas edificantes y curiosas de algunos misioneros jesuitas* between 1753 and 1756.[13]

Serra wanted the tone of Crespí's account to be one of zealous enthusiasm which might fire the imagination of the young religious who would read it. But Crespí insisted upon writing what he thought was a more complete record, including detailed descriptions of both the landscape and the native peoples the expedition encountered. When Serra tried in 1771 to convince Crespí to rid the diary of what Serra considered to be "trivia and repetitions," Crespí became annoyed and asked Serra if he wanted him to tell what had actually happened or not. Serra sighed and let Crespí continue. But he continued to be frustrated that Alta California diaries and letters were not well known in Europe. One of his last requests to Palóu was that he try to arrange for the publication of the Crespí diary.[14] He was not anticipating the publication of his own diary. Indeed, the original intended audience of his diary was limited. He was writing for his fellow Franciscans at the Colegio de San Fernando and he probably expected that the diary would also come into the hands of the visitador general who had organized the expedition.

Serra chose to leave Loreto on the Tuesday after Easter. As was so often the case with him, the date was not accidental. In 1749 he left his ancestral village of Petra on the exact same day in the Catholic liturgical calendar. At that time he thought he was journeying to become a missionary among the unbaptized. But events had disappointed him, as he had spent two

[13] See, for example, Guillermo Zermeño P., ed., *Cartas edificantes y curiosas de algunos misioneros jesuitas del siglo XVII: travesías, itinerarios, testimonios,* México, D.F., Universidad Iberoamericana, 2006.

[14] Juan Crespí, *A Description of Distant Roads: Original Journals of the First Expedition into California, 1769-1770*, ed. Alan K. Brown, San Diego, San Diego State University Press, 2001, p. 84.

decades working among people who had already received that sacrament. Now, exactly twenty years later, he believed he was finally undertaking the journey upon which he thought he had been embarking in 1749– a journey that would enable him to work among those who had not been baptized.

Serra's first stop was Mission San Javier, staffed by Francisco Palóu, who would soon be moving to Loreto as chief administrator of the Baja California missions. There was one item of business that had to be taken care of immediately. When Portolá passed through San Javier on his way to Velicatá a few weeks earlier, he told Palóu that he was concerned about the poor condition of Serra's leg (it had grown worse during the trip Serra made to the southern missions after his meeting with Gálvez). Portolá believed that Serra's condition might slow the progress of the expedition. He asked Palóu to try and convince Serra not to make the journey and allow Palóu to go in his place. Palóu agreed, although he undoubtedly knew that Serra would vigorously refuse such a request. Palóu made the request and Serra of course refused to consider it. After that, the two of them got down to business.

Serra spent three days at San Javier, mainly briefing Palóu on the issues he would be facing after Serra left. Palóu offered Serra some additional provisions for his journey, provisions that he sorely needed. Serra's departure was very emotional. He and Palóu had known each other for almost thirty years and they had no idea if they would ever see one another again. Serra certainly hoped they would. According to Palóu, Serra's words of farewell were, "Goodbye until we meet in Monterey, where I hope we shall see each other in order to labor in that vineyard of the Lord." Palóu was less certain. His farewell was simply, "Until we meet in eternity."[15]

[15] Francisco Palóu, *Palóu's Life of Fray Junípero Serra*, ed. and trans. Maynard J. Geiger, Washington, D.C., Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955, pp. 61-63.

Serra then spent a week traveling to San José de Comondú and La Purísima. On April 7, at El Cardón on his way to Guadalupe, he met about ten Indian families. They communicated to him that they were from Mission Guadalupe, but since food was scarce at the mission the resident priest there, Juan Sancho, had told them that they had to go out to the hills and find food for themselves. He wrote of them, "Because there was not enough food, the Padre had been forced to send them back to the mountains to look for food. Since they were not accustomed to doing this, they were not having much success. It was very hard on them, especially seeing their children suffer and hearing them cry. I felt very sorry for them." At the end of the encounter Serra reported, "They ended by singing a tender hymn about the love of God. The Indians from that mission are reputed to have a talent for singing sweetly. Their reputation is well deserved, for the time I spent listening to them was of great consolation to me."[16]

This meeting left a deep impression on Serra, for the devotional song they sang for him convinced him that Christianity had taken root among these people. This filled him with hope for the project he was undertaking farther north. On the other hand, his perception that the Indians were unable to feed themselves after close to half a century of mission life increased his sense that the missionaries' responsibility for the welfare of their flock was going to be a very deep and profound one.

Serra did not record who else was with him during this encounter. He only remarked that the pack train was not there because it had been delayed. Therefore, it is not entirely clear what the quality of communication between him and the native people actually was on this occasion, and what they actually

[16] Carlos Lazcano Sahagún, ed., *Diario de fray Junípero Serra en su viaje de Loreto a San Diego*, Ensenada, Provincia Franciscana de San Pedro y San Pablo de Michoacán, Gobierno del Estado de Baja California, Fundación Barca, Museo de Historia de Ensenada, 2002, p. 54.

told or tried to tell him. But whatever did happen, Serra chose to interpret it as a sign of hope for the future and in a way that increased the importance of the role of the missionary in providing for the livelihood of converted Indians.

When he was at Guadalupe, Sancho entrusted Serra with a young boy, named Juan Evangelista Benno, after Benno Ducrue, the Jesuit who had baptized him. Serra wrote that Juan was "a young, ladino, Indian page to help me. The boy, who is fifteen years old, knows how to assist at Mass, he can read, and he can serve in many other ways. The Padre provided him with a change of clothing, a leather jacket, boots, etc. He also outfitted him with everything he would need to ride on horseback, such as a saddle, saddlebags, and so forth. The Padre gave him one of the mules that he himself would ride, which made me very happy. The boy and his parents viewed this as a stroke of good fortune and this pleased everyone." That such a boy could be found in an established mission filled Serra with hope about the long-range success of the mission enterprise upon which he was engaged.[17]

Serra next traveled to San Ignacio where he spent a few days before he journeyed to Santa Gertrudis, which he reached on April 20. At that mission he met a very lonely and depressed missionary, Dionisio Basterra. The two of them had preached domestic missions together for a number of months in 1763 and 1764 in Puebla and Oaxaca and this was their first meeting in a year. It was an emotional encounter and Serra stayed at Santa Gertrudis for six days.

While there he became personally involved in Gálvez's plan to shift Indian populations among various missions. Some of the people at Santa Gertrudis were slated to be removed south to the missions of La Purísima and San José de Comondú. The people resisted that move and indicated that

[17] Lazcano Sahagún, ed., *Diario,* 2002, p. 55; Juan Evangelista Benno died at San Diego in February 1770. Serra*, Writings*, vol. 4, 1955, p. 343.

they would end their affiliation with the mission rather than move south. Four months earlier the priest at the nearby mission of San Borja, Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, had reported similar resistance among the people of that mission to Gálvez and the visitador general had rescinded the order relating to San Borja.[18]

Serra undoubtedly knew of this situation, yet he and Basterra spent a good amount of time going around and urging the Indians to accept the move. He stated in his diary that Gálvez's plan was "very much to my liking." He clearly implied that the Indians were persuaded to move. But he never precisely said that. Rather, he merely stated that things were "in good order."[19]

It is hard to imagine Serra going against what he knew was the opinion of his resident missionaries on this score. In fact, the Santa Gertrudis Indians continued to refuse to move and Serra had to know that this would be the most likely outcome. The important thing was that any colonial official in Mexico City who read the diary would learn that Serra had supported the policies of the visitador general.

Serra next spent a couple of days at San Borja and then proceeded to Santa María. He arrived there on May 5 and met with Portolá. Since Santa María was the most northern of the Jesuit missions, Serra knew that he was about to enter "gentile" territory for the first time in his life. His excitement began to mount. On the way from Santa María to Velicatá, he noted that he saw signs of the presence of Indians, and was disappointed that they did not reveal themselves. When he founded Mission San Fernando de Velicatá on May 14, he was saddened that "not a single gentile appeared." He speculated

[18] Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, ed. Finbar Kenneally, 2 vols., Washington, D.C., Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965, vol. 1, pp. 17-20.

[19] Lazcano Sahagún, ed., *Diario,* 2002, pp. 58-59.

that the sound of the gunfire that the soldiers used to celebrate the establishment of the church perhaps scared them away.[20]

But that changed on the next day, May 15, 1769, one of the most significant and intense days of Junípero Serra's life. He wrote in his diary:

"Since candles had already arrived on the pack train, the two priests and I celebrated Mass in succession. For me, it was a day of great consolation. Soon after the Masses were said, while I was quiet with my thoughts in the small hut that was my dwelling place, they alerted me that the gentiles were approaching and that they were close. I praised God, kissed the ground, and gave thanks to Our Lord for granting me this opportunity to be among the gentiles in their land, after longing for this for so many years. I quickly went out and there I saw twelve gentiles, all of them grown men, with the exception of one boy who was about ten years old and the other who was about sixteen years old. I saw what I could hardly believe when I would read about it or when I would be told about it, which was that the gentiles were totally naked, like Adam in paradise before the fall. That is how they went about and that is how they presented themselves to us. We interacted with them for quite some time and not once did they show any sign of embarrassment seeing that we were clothed and they were not. I placed my hands on the head of each gentile, one at a time, as a sign of affection. I filled both of their hands with overripe figs, which they immediately began to eat. We received a gift from them and with signs we showed them how much we appreciated it. The gift was a net full of roasted mescal and four beautiful fish".[21]

Three days later, while he was at San Juan de Dios, Serra received word from Velicatá that cheered him up greatly. The Indians there were seeking baptism. Serra believed that the

[20] *Ibid*., pp. 62-63.
[21] *Ibid*., p. 64.

mission of evangelization was proceeding with divine help. Yet there was another level to all of this activity that he only dimly understood. For the Jesuits had established a presence in the territory of the northern Cochimí by 1762 when they founded Mission San Francisco de Borja. They solidified that presence five years later with the establishment of Mission Santa María de los Angeles de Cabujakaamung. Serra noted in his diary that Jesuit explorer Wenceslaus Linck had visited Velicatá itself in 1766. Linck stated that the indigenous people there, after some hesitation, welcomed them and shared some seeds with them. Linck baptized an infant girl who soon died. A day later he baptized an old man and placed a cross around his neck. According to Linck, the man promised that he would never remove it. It appears that this group of people had already decided on their own, three years before Serra met them, that they would seek to accommodate themselves in some fashion to the newcomers .[22]

But Serra persisted in his enthusiasm for the rest of the journey. For instance, on May 28, they had two encounters with different groups of Indians. The first one, at La Cieneguilla, was very difficult and involved gunfire. The Indians tried to block their way and two soldiers had to fire their weapons to get them to disperse. However, the second encounter, about twelve kilometers past La Cieneguilla, was viewed by Serra as a much more friendly encounter. Serra wrote, "It so happened that after we had eaten and rested, the Indians came down to where we were with their nets filled with cooked mezcals and

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 66-67; Wenceslaus Linck, *Wenceslaus Linck's Diary of his 1766 Expedition to Northern Baja California*, ed. and trans. Ernest J. Burrus, Los Angeles, Dawson's Book Shop, 1966, pp. 58-59; Carlos Lazcano Sahagún, *La primera entrada: descubrimiento del interior de la antigua California*, Ensenada, Fundación Barca, Museo de Historia de Ensenada, Seminario de Historia de Ensenada, 2000, p. 205; Luis Sales, *Observations on California, 1772-1790*, trans. and ed. Charles N. Rudkin, Los Angeles, Glen Dawson, 1956, p. 63; Crosby, *Antigua California*, 1994, pp. 191, 348-49.

with their weapons, which they placed on the ground. They began to explain to us how they used each of the weapons in battle. They acted out the parts of attacker and victim so cleverly and vividly, which kept us quite entertained for a good while." In others words, this group produced a staged battle in front of the Spaniards and then insisted that they would accompany the expedition out of their territory. Serra interpreted these actions simply as entertainment and friendliness, although they were likely fraught with much greater meaning than he realized. But Serra persisted in his growing enthusiasm. Indeed, he believed that God had sent him the second group of Indians so that his spirits would not lag.[23] And on the very next day, when a large group of native people tried to obstruct the progress of the expedition, Serra similarly interpreted their actions as motivated by happiness and their shouts as enthusiastic greetings. He reported, "They were running, shouting, and gleefully crossing in front of our path."[24] He believed the people were saying how much they would welcome a mission among them. Portolá and the soldiers saw things differently and once again had to fire a warning shot to get the group to disperse. And, for the next week, it encountered very few Indians. Serra's enthusiasm does not appear to have been shared by the Indians themselves or by his military companions on the expedition.

The expedition marched steadily during the first five days of June without encountering any native peoples. On June 2 they came across the grave of Manuel Valladares, an Indian from Mission San Ignacio who had died during the Rivera y Moncada expedition. The grave had been disturbed, so they gathered what bones they could and performed a reburial. On June 6, an Indian came into their camp and told them that the first group of the expedition had come this way and that the expedition

[23] Lazcano Sahagún, ed., *Diario,* 2002, pp. 71-72, note 60; the Serra quote is on p. 74 ; Crosby, *Gateway to Alta California*, 2003, p. 69.

[24] Lazcano Sahagún, ed., *Diario,* 2002, p. 75.

was camped farther north at a spot close to the ocean. This was true, for the two vessels had arrived at San Diego in April and the first leg of the land party had reached there in the middle of May. Serra also understood the Indian to report that the priests in San Diego were already baptizing people. That was not accurate, but his willingness to credit it demonstrated the depth of his faith that California's native people were anxious for Christianity. The news energized Serra, although its major significance, which he did not appreciate at the time, was in indicating how effective the communication networks among the native peoples of northern Baja California were.[25]

On June 10, they encountered a man they called "The Dancer." Serra reported that a lone man "approached us with a club in one hand and a rattle in the other." They tried to give him something to eat, but he insisted that the Spanish place the food on the ground so that he could dance around it. Then "he danced around all of our provisions and animals." Serra surmised, "It seemed he was preparing himself to eat everything we had brought." After his dance was completed, the party tried to get some information out of him, but suddenly, "He ran off to the hill as if he were a deer, leaving everything we had given him behind, except for the club and rattle he had brought."[26]

Serra told the story in a whimsical, almost bemused fashion: the man said that he had to dance around the food he was offered before he could eat it, and then, after they had placed some food in the center, he widened his circle of dancing and even began to dance around their provisions and animals. Was he planning to eat everything the expedition had? And then, after having done all of this, he inexplicably left. Maybe someone had inadvertently said something untoward to him, Serra thought.

But on April 16, in this same territory, the first leg of the expedition had captured an old man who said he was some sort of

[25] *Ibid.,* p. 81.
[26] *Ibid.,* pp. 82-83.

shaman. José Cañizares, who was on that first leg of the expedition and kept his own diary, described him as "arrogant," and said that his actions disgusted the members of the expedition. Another man with him became so angry that "he yanked out bits of his hair." Juan Crespí stated that he did not know "how this [old] man might be distinguished from the ugliest demon ever depicted ... For a single glance at his face with its bands of white, yellow, and red paint was enough to horrify one." Since the Baja California Indians accompanying the expedition did not understand the man, communication proved impossible. Rivera sent him away with some beads and ribbons, and he and those with him "left well pleased."[27]

Such sketchy descriptions make it difficult to ascertain what actually occurred, let alone its significance to the native peoples involved. It seems reasonably clear, however, that the Spanish had captured and insulted one of the group's leading figures and it is doubtful that they actually "left well pleased." There is no reason to assume that the old man who visited Serra was the same person who had been captured by Rivera but it seems that, whoever he was, the object of his dancing was perhaps to purify the land that had been contaminated by this new group of interlopers, to engage in a ritual that would protect the people from them, or to effect some kind of damage upon them. For many indigenous groups in the Californias song and dance were an integral part of the way in which the core identity of the group was expressed. Whatever the man was doing, he was

[27] The translation is from José de Cañizares, "Putting a Lid on California: An Unpublished Diary of the Portolá Expedition," eds. Virginia E. Thickens and Margaret Mollins. *California Historical Society Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1952, pp. 268-69; see also Salvador Bernabéu Albert, "Por tierra nada conocida". El diario inédito de José de Cañizares a la Alta California (1769). *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, vol. 60, no. 1, 2003, p. 265; Crespí, *A Description*, 2001, p. 211. Dennis H O'Neil, "The Spanish Use of Glass Beads as Pacification Gifts Among the Luiseño, Ipai, and Tipai of Southern California." *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly,* vol. 28, no. 2, March 1992, pp. 1-17.

hardly dancing for food.[28] But Serra was so filled with hope for the success of the evangelization of the native peoples of the Californias that he interpreted this episode in the most benign manner he possibly could.

His hope increased as the expedition continued northward. Serra's positive attitude towards the native peoples extended to the mission Indians who were accompanying the expedition. When some of them deserted on June 18 , he spoke generously of their contribution. He said, "Little by little, companions who are more necessary to us than what some people may think, are drifting away from us. Only someone who sees the situation firsthand can attest to how hard they work and how little they are fed without receiving a salary."[29]

On June 20, the expedition arrived at Ensenada de Todos Santos. The indigenous peoples between here and San Diego had developed a sophisticated and effective communication system. It is extremely likely that every Indian group they encountered for the rest of the journey knew some days in advance that they were approaching.[30]

Serra's enthusiasm for the native peoples he encountered between here and San Diego was generally quite high, for he interpreted their behavior as indicating that they were friendly and anxious for the gospel. On June 23, for instance, he wrote of the people at Punta de San Miguel, just north of Ensenada, "A large ranchería of gentiles lives right here. The time we have spent with them has been most pleasurable. Their beautiful physique, comportment, friendliness, and happiness

[28] Roger C. Owen, Nancy E. Walstrom, and Ralph C. Michelsen, "Musical Culture and Ethnic Solidarity: A Baja California Case Study." *Journal of American Folklore,* vol. 82, no. 324, 1969, pp. 99–111.

[29] Lazcano Sahagún, ed., *Diario,* 2002, p. 89.

[30] Rodríguez Tomp, *Cautivos de Dios*, 2002, p. 193; Carlos Lazcano Sahagún, *Pa-tai: la historia olvidada de Ensenada*, Ensenada, Museo de Historia de Ensenada, Seminario de Historia de Ensenada, 2000, p. 96.

have won all our hearts."[31] Two days later he wrote of another group of indigenous people, "They stay close to us along the road, as well as when we arrive at a stopping place. They act as if they had known us and interacted with us their entire lives. This is why I do not have the heart to leave them like that, so I invited them all to go with us to San Diego."[32] On June 26 he wrote of still another group, "As to their friendly nature, I cannot find the appropriate words to describe it. In addition to the countless number of men, a large group of women and children sat around me in a circle. One of the women wanted me to hold the infant she was nursing. I held him in my arms for a while, so wishing that I could baptize him, but I then returned the child to his mother. I make the sign of the cross and bless each of them. I have them say "Jesus and Mary". I give them what I am able to give and cherish them in the best way I can."[33] The next day, near Rosarito, Serra reported what he took to be an amusing incident with his eyeglasses:

> "After a while, more and more gentiles– men, women, and children– gathered together with us. There were so many that I could not count them. Their friendliness transformed into a comfortable form of familiarity. If we placed our hand on their head or back as a gesture of affection, they would do the same to us. If they saw that we were seated, they would sit down and cozy up next to us with the hope that we would give them anything they asked for. They were not pleased with mere trifles. They would ask me for my habit and the governor for his leather jacket, waistcoat, breeches, and anything else he was wearing. They would do this to everybody. They pestered me quite a bit to give them my spectacles. The actions of one of the gentiles led me to believe that he just wanted to borrow the spectacles so he could see what they were. So I handed them to him. God knows how hard it was for me to get them back

[31] Lazcano Sahagún, ed., *Diario,* 2002, p. 93.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 95.
[33] *Ibid*., p. 96.

> because he ran away with them. Finally, after much difficulty, I got them back, but only after the women, and anybody else who wanted to, had handled them. The only thing they refused was food".[34]

His time between Ensenada and San Diego convinced Serra that the native peoples were anxious for the Gospel. His excitement and enthusiasm continued to grow. On June 30 Sergeant José Francisco de Ortega warned Serra that the native peoples were actually more "insolent" than he thought they were, but he refused to put much credence in Ortega's assessment. He arrived at San Diego on July 1 full of hope for the future. In his diary, he wrote out the phrase "PUERTO DE SAN DIEGO" in capital letters, and that manner of writing offered a textual confirmation of his excitement and his hopes.

But, as had been the case at Velicatá in May, more was being signified by the indigenous peoples' behavior than he realized. Indeed, the first land leg of the expedition that had passed through the same territory in May had received a much different reception from the indigenous people of the area. José Cañizares, a member of that expedition, had reported that native peoples at Punta de San Miguel "were shouting at us from a hill. They were armed with bows and arrows, and this put us on our guard....They indicated a desire to fight." Another member of the expedition, Fr. Juan Crespí, had described a group whom the Spanish met, "All of them naked, heavily armed, with their large quivers on their backs and bows and arrows in their hands, and all went running along the crests of the hill in view alongside of us; and they kept following us in this way nearly the whole day's march with loud shouting." And at Rosarito, six weeks before Serra and Portolá passed through, Crespí had reported a much more aggressive approach by the indigenous people. The Indians refused to share their fish unless the Spanish bartered for it. The leader of the group was "rummaging

[34] *Ibid*., p. 98.

through our entire camp" and spurs and blankets were stolen. In all, Crespí summarized, the Indians were "great thieves."[35]

On the whole, the people of the region demonstrated considerably more public friendliness to the second leg of the expedition than they did to the first. Because of their communication system, every leader who interacted with Portolá and Serra knew that the first expedition had arrived at San Diego and that it had demonstrated no sign of leaving. This new expedition was most likely destined to reinforce that first outpost. The indigenous inhabitants had no reason to believe that this second expedition would be the last incursion into their territory. The situation therefore called for caution and an appearance of friendliness while the indigenous people tried to decide how most effectively to deal with the newcomers whose numbers were increasing. Serra also noted that native women would come into the camp and move freely around all the Spanish livestock and possessions. He was puzzled by this. But the inhabitants had undoubtedly come to realize that the entirely male Spanish groups they were encountering did not regard women as significant actors in military, political, or religious affairs. Since the Spanish basically thought of them as dim-witted nuisances, they were the perfect people to spy out the strengths and weaknesses of the Spanish encampment. But, carried away by his own enthusiasm for the missionary task upon which he was embarking, Serra interpreted their behavior much as he had interpreted the behavior of the northern Cochimí he had met at Velicatá at the beginning of the expedition.

However, the indigenous people of San Diego did not return Serra's hopes. After Portolá took most of the soldiers north on

[35] José de Cañizares, "Putting a Lid on California: An Unpublished Diary of the Portolá Expedition," eds. Virginia E. Thickens and Margaret Mollins. *California Historical Society Quarterly*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1952, p. 349; Bernabéu Albert, "Por tierra", 2003, p. 272; Crespí, *Description,* 2001, p. 245.

the journey to find Monterey, on August 15 they attacked the fledgling mission. Serra's personal servant was killed in the attack. A few months later, when Serra thought he had received permission to baptize a baby, the child's parents snatched him from Serra as he was beginning the ritual. Before he left for Monterey in April 1770, Serra was not able to perform even one baptism.[36]

But Serra was not a man who could easily be swayed from a path he had chosen. Especially after what he had seen in Baja California, he was deeply convinced that the native peoples of the Pacific coast were anxious to receive the gospel he was preaching. When the beleaguered group at San Diego spotted a supply ship on the horizon on the very day Portolá had set for the abandonment of that port if no relief vessel arrived, Serra believed that the evangelizing hopes he had nurtured on the peninsula had received divine approbation. Within a few years, the colonial authorities would begin referring to the area north of San Diego as "New" California. But Junípero Serra always regarded the peninsula of "Old" California very fondly, for that was the place where he believed that his whole life had been made completely new.

[36] Palóu, *Palóu's Life*, 1955, p. 78.