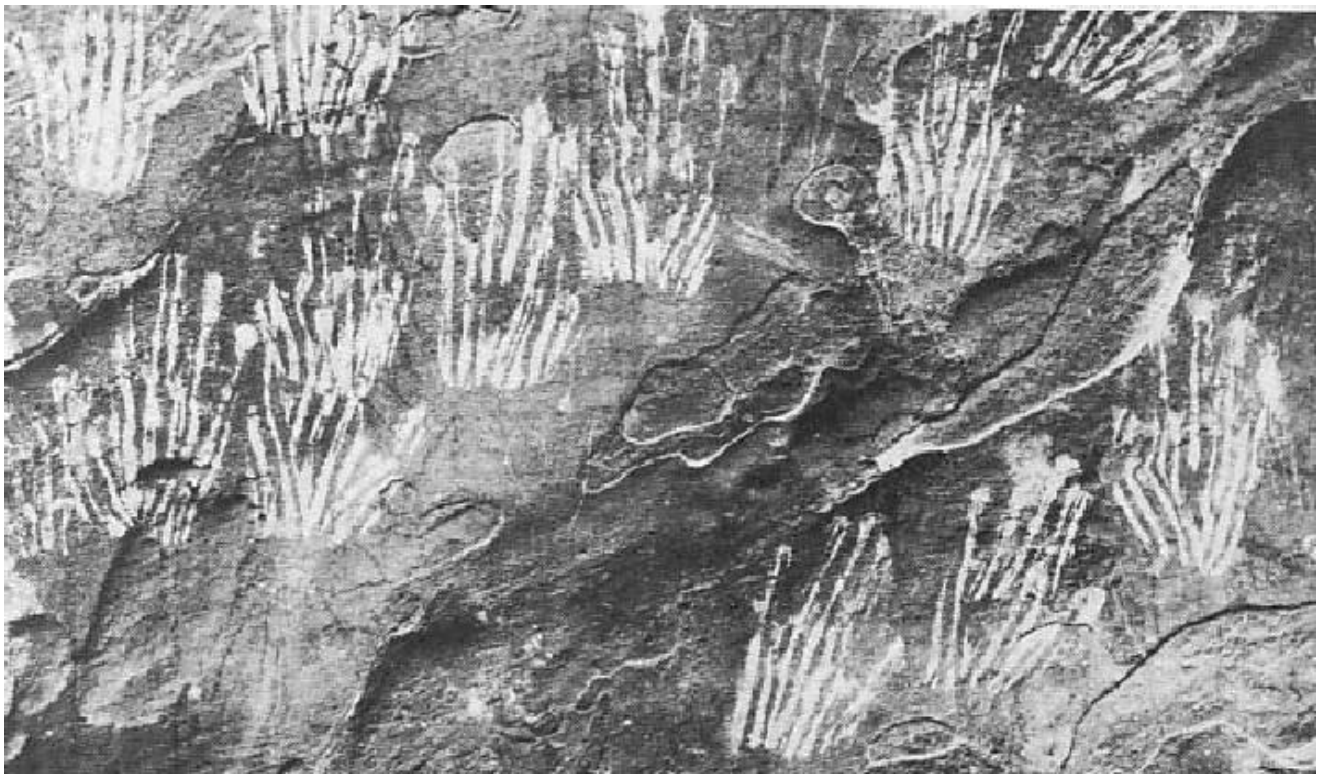
A HISTORY OF THE TASSAJARA REGION



Stylized images of hands painted on a wall at The Caves, which are about three and a half linear miles northwest of Tassajara Hot Springs.

CHAPTER ONE: THE ESSELEN PEOPLE

At the time of the Spanish occupation of California in 1769 what is now known as Tassajara Hot Springs was centrally located within the territory of the Esselen people. It is unknown if the Esselen bathed in the hot springs, but they probably did. However, their use must have been limited to the dry seasons. This is due to the immediate proximity of the hot springs to Tassajara Creek. During the rainy seasons the flow of this stream is usually at or above its average high water level, when the hot springs water is immediately swept into the cold water of this swiftly flowing mountain stream. During the dry seasons the Esselen would also have to construct pools in the rocky streambed by the rearrangement of rocks, where the hot spring water could be tempered by the cold creek water (the discharge from the most prolific springs is too hot to directly bath in—120 to 160º F.).

Over the years the name Esselen became the standard name that is applied to these people, but in past times a number of other more or less similar names have applied to them, such as Ecclemachs, Excelen, Eccelen, Eslen, Esalen, Eslenes and so on.

Although there is nothing in the historical record that suggests that the Esselen differed from other California tribes in regards to their physical appearance or in their material culture, their language was repeatedly noted in the writings of missionaries, soldiers and explorers as being radically different.[1] For example, in the journal of the French exploratory expedition that was commanded by Jean Francois Galaup comte de La Perouse, which visited Monterey and Mission San Carlos de Carmelo in September of 1786, we find the following information:

> The country of the Ecclemachs extends more than twenty leagues to the [south] east of Monterey; the language of its inhabitants widely differs from those of all their neighbors; it even possesses more resemblance to our European languages than to those of America. This grammatical phenomenon, which in this respect is more curious than any that has hitherto been observed on this continent, will perhaps interest the learned, who, from the comparison of languages, trace the history of the transplanted nations… If from these observations we should be induced to conclude that the Ecclemachs are strangers to this part of America, it must at least be admitted that they have been inhabitants of it for a long time past; for in color, features, and in general all exterior forms, they differ nothing from the other people of this country. [2]

By the time the Esselen language gained the attention of linguistic scholars no fluent speakers could be found. Thus all that is known about the language is limited to the approximately 350 words, plus a few phrases and complete sentences, that have been preserved in historical literature. Although in 1890 Henshaw concluded that the Esselen language represented a monotypic linguistic family,[3] in 1913 Dixon and Kroeber assigned the language to the Hokan family of native Californian languages.[4] However, in the "Native Languages of California" section of volume eight of the Smithsonian Institution's *Handbook of North American Indians* (1978), Shipley stated that:

> In order to make a realistic assessment of what can be known about interrelationships among the languages of California, the complications and difficulties described

> above must be kept clearly in view. All sorts of things are very possible: that Esselen, for example, is not Hokan but Penutian, or that it is neither Hokan or Penutian, but the single remnant of a language family that has long since vanished. [5]

The Esselen were a small tribe who occupied a small region, all of which was within what is now Monterey County. Population estimates have ranged from as few as 500 people to as many as 1,425, and the estimates of the most informed authors range from about 1,185 to 1,285.[6]

The territory of the Esselen was mostly in the Santa Lucia Mountains, but it also included part of the Salinas Valley. The following information about the Esselen geographical regions is from Randall Milliken's "Ethnogeography and Ethnohistory of the Big Sur District, California State Park System, during the 1770-1810 Time Period" (1990), in combination with C. Hart Merriam's "Village Names in Twelve California Mission Records" (1968), University of California Archaeological Survey Report 74. Both of these texts are based on their author's reviews of the mission records of the Carmel, San Antonio and Soledad missions. The following names for these regions are spelled as they are pronounced in English:

Imunahan. This region included the middle and much of the upper watershed of the Arroyo Seco, and thus included the Tassajara region. *Cuchunu*, which was located "*A la marge del Arroyo Seco*" (on the banks of the Arroyo Seco), appears to have been the principal settlement of *Imunahan*, for it was mentioned 39 times in the Mission Soledad book of baptisms. Nothing is known about the specific locations of the four other named settlements in this region: *Enhuu-kilku*, *Ginon*, *Guayaguayasno* and *Mayayolo*. One of these names may have applied to what is now known as The Caves.

Excelen. This region occupied the upper watershed of the Carmel River, and included the Rancho los Tularcitos, Cachagua, Jamesburg and Hastings Natural History Reservation areas. This was the most populous of the Esselen regions. Within *Excelen* there were at least four villages. *Capanay* was located at the place known as the *Tulares*, and thus was on Rancho los Tularcitos. *Yppimegesan* was about eight miles beyond the *Tulares*, and thus was probably in the Jamesburg or Hastings areas. All that is known about *Aculatan* is that it was about twenty-four miles distant from the mission at Carmel. *Hasauan* (*Xasauan*) was located in the mountains about 26 miles southeast of Carmel, and was probably located in the vicinity of the confluence of the Carmel River and Cachagua Creek, and thus in the area that is now known as Cachagua. *Hasauan* was probably the same locality that was referred to as "*Jachaguan en la sierra*" (*Hachaguan* in the mountains) three times in the Soledad book of baptisms.

Eslenahan. This region was in the Salinas Valley, and may have extended from about Gonzales to near King City. The village of *Chuttesgilis* was probably the principal settlement of this region, for Mission Soledad was established at this site in 1791. Nothing is known about the specific locations of the six other named settlements in this region, which were *Ecgeymo*, *Chuculunchis*, *Macalachopos*, *Majayolo*, *Muvasno* and *Pinonai*.

Aspasniahan. This region was in the lower Arroyo Seco and in the adjacent watersheds of Reliz and Vaqueros creeks to the south, and probably east-southeastward to the watersheds of Thompson and Pine creeks west of King City. The principal settlement was known as *El Pino* (the pine; it was known at Mission San Antonio as *Tesmaymanil*), for it was mentioned 51 times in the Soledad book of baptisms. Another settlement was known as *Cheya* or *Zeya*.

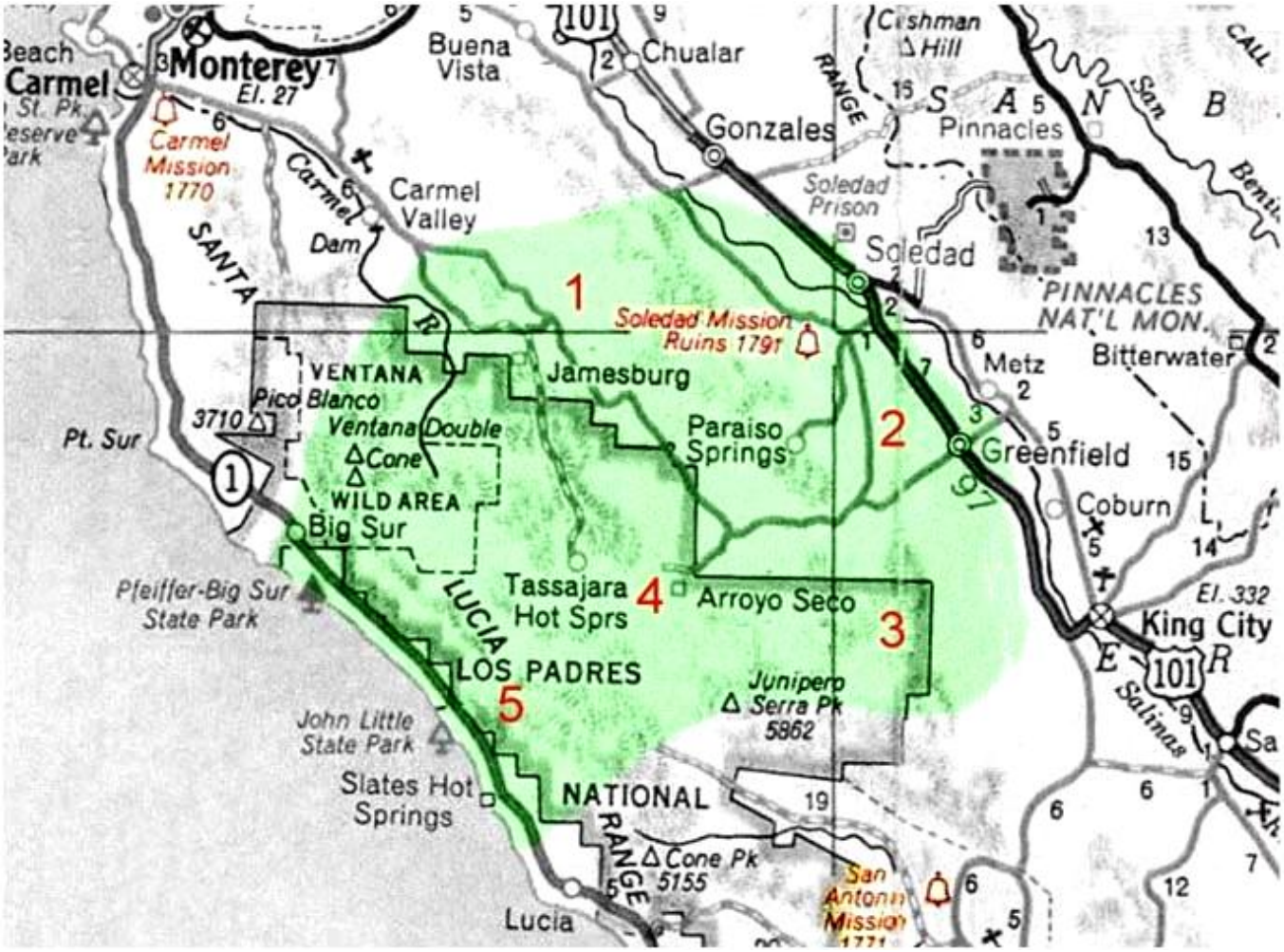
Ekheahan (or *Ecgeahan*). This region occupied a section of the Big Sur coast from about Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park to Big Creek, and it probably extended inland to Indian Valley and Lost Valley, and perhaps to Strawberry Valley. According to Milliken,[7] Indian Valley was probably the location of the key settlement of *Ekheahan*, but I suspect that it could have been in Lost Valley, where there is a substantial amount of land that is suitable for hunting and gathering purposes. Settlements in this region were *Chipicatan*, in the mountains near the beach, *Gessine*, at the beach, and *Majjanichui* near the coast. Breschini and Haversat place the northern boundary of *Ekheahan* in the vicinity of the Little Sur River.[8]

It is possible that the first contact between the Esselen and the Spanish conquistadors occurred on September 29th of 1769, while the overland Portola Expedition was passing through the Salinas Valley. At a point between the present day communities of Greenfield and Gonzalez the expedition stopped to set up camp for the night, and according to the journal of expedition member Fray Juan Crespi, shortly afterward they "Heard a great deal of shouting and uproar from some heathens not very far off in the thick woods along the river." Crespi and other members of the expedition approached to where the commotion was coming from, and they saw "A great many heathens… all of whom had their bows and arrows, seemingly hunting." The Indians where "So intent on the hunting they had not noticed us," but then "They caught sight of us and stopped their shouting. They were signaled to with a white cloth to come over, but they commenced to throw handfuls of earth into the air and play on a pipe." The Spaniards then returned to their camp. Crespi also noted that:

> The fact remains that not one of them came over nor even approached, and these are the only people of whom we have observed such behavior along the whole way since San Diego, for all of the ones met with us as far as here have stayed with us, always very friendly and tractable, making us free of whatever they possessed.[9]

It is also possible that the Portola Expedition encountered Esselen people for a second time that year, while they were en route back to San Diego. On December 14th, while they were passing through about same section of the Salinas Valley, they stopped at a place to set up camp for the night. According to Juan Crespi:

> Once having arrived, we overheard a spirited noise from a village of heathens where they were camped not very far off in the woods on the river, dancing. Some of the heathens came to our camp as soon as they heard us; they presented us with a good sized serving of river fish, appearing to be whitefish. We having been without salt for days, our captain pursued the matter with these heathen and got a little of it, very poor and yellow. He presented them beads and they were very pleased, spent a while with us, and went back to pursue their dancing.[10]



The approximate area of the Esselen territory and its geographical regions: 1. *Excelen*; 2. *Eslenahan*; 3. *Aspasniahan*; 4. *Imunahan*; 5. *Ekheahan*.

The Spanish Mission Period (1769 to 1833)

From 1769 to 1823 twenty one Franciscan Missions were established along or near the coast of California, from San Diego in the south to Sonoma in the northern San Francisco Bay Area. In brief, the purpose of these missions was to gather up the native people into communities where they would be converted into Spanish speaking Christians, so that they would become proper subjects of the king of Spain. Once a person entered these communities they were forbidden to leave, and if they did, soldiers were sent to retrieve them.

The Missions San Carlos de Carmelo and San Antonio de Padua

In 1770 Junipero Serra founded Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, which was about 16 miles to the northwest of the Esselen territory, and in the following year he founded Mission San Antonio de Padua, about 9 miles to the south-southeast. From that time onward the Esselen people of the *Eslenahan* and *Aspasniahan* regions had many encounters with the Spanish missionaries, for the road between these missions ran through these regions (the original El Camino Real ran through Reliz Canyon). In a letter to the Viceroy of New Spain in Mexico City, which was dated August 24, 1774, Junipero Serra stated:

> From rancherias very far distant, and lost in the folds of the mountains, they arrive every day [at Mission San Carlos in Carmel]. At the present time there are some who come from Eslen [Eslenahan], called La Soledad, a place about halfway on the road from this mission and that of San Antonio, about twelve leagues distant from both. They tell us very frankly about how delighted they would be if they had Fathers in their country. They see the church, and how nice it looks; they see the cornfields which appear wonderful in their eyes; they see the throngs of people, how they are all clothed, and sing and eat in plenty, even though they have to work. All of this, together with the workings of Our Lord God in their souls—who doubts but this entices them?... Many times I have passed through their territory, and have seen the large numbers of all ages who live there, besides many rancherias all around. All are as friendly as can be—so much so that they ordinarily accompany me for quite a stretch of the road—young and old, crying out: "Love God, Father! Hail Jesus!" Since they were told to use that expression, they have taken to it with much enthusiasm—either because they know that they please us by doing so, or because without knowing why, that greeting falls like sweet music on their ears—in any case, it is the first one hears from them, when we meet them. Formerly, after that, there followed immediately a request for beads, but now it is for tobacco. The origin of the name Soledad

was as follows: when, three years ago, I came back from the foundation of San Antonio [in 1771], I passed the night in that place. On my arrival there, in the evening, some gentiles approached us bringing presents of seeds ready to eat. I accepted them, gave them some glass beads, and was engaged with making friends with them when they asked me, by signs, if I would allow some women, who were close by, to be presented. After obtaining permission, two came forward; and never, either before or since, have I seen any others like them. In dress they were like gentile Indian women, but in other respects no. And of the one who came forward with a present, I asked her name, as I knew that expression in their language. She answered me, as I understood: "Soledad." I was astonished, and turning to my companions said: "Here, gentlemen, you have Maria de la Soledad!" And, without more ado, the name stuck to the place. O Sir, if only the solitude of these poor people would come to an end! Your Excellency has the power to decide—I stand ready to carry out your orders and to bring solace to them. With them in the fold, we would have a full twenty-five leagues of Christian lands without a break.[11]

According to Culleton,[12] the Esselen were at first reluctant to dwell at Mission San Carlos de Carmelo on account of their dislike of the *Rumsen* people of the Monterey Peninsula and lower Carmel Valley.

The first Esselen baptism occurred in the northern region of *Excelen* in May of 1775, and in the same year two individuals from the region of *Eslenahan* were baptized at Mission San Antonio. As tabulated by Milliken,[13] by 1786 at least 190 Esselen had become neophytes at Mission San Carlos. In September of that year this mission was visited by members of the French exploratory expedition that was commanded by Jean Francois Galaup comte de La Perouse. The life of the Indians at Mission San Carlos was described as follows in the unabridged English translation of the expedition's journal:

The men and women are assembled by the sound of the bell, one of the religious conducts them to their work, to church, and to all their exercises. We mention it with pain, the resemblance [to other Spanish missions] is so perfect, that we saw men and women loaded with irons, others in the stocks; and at length the noise of the strokes of a whip struck our ears, this punishment being also admitted, but not exercised with much severity… Corporal punishments are inflicted on the Indians of both sexes who neglect pious exercises, and several sins, the punishment of which in Europe is reserved only to divine justice, are punished with chains and flocks. In a word, to make an end of the comparison with religious communities, from the moment a new convert is baptized, he becomes the same as if he had pronounced eternal vows; if he makes his escape for the purpose of returning to his relations in the independent villages, they cause him to be summoned to return three times; and if he refuses, they claim the authority of the governor, who sends soldiers to force him away from the midst of his family, and conduct him to the mission, where he is condemned to receive a certain number of lashes with the whip…

We wished to be present at the distributions which took place at every meal, as every day, with this species of religious, resembled the preceding one, by giving the history of one of these days, the reader will be in possession of the whole year's proceedings. The Indians as well as the missionaries rise with the sun, and go to prayers and mass, which last an hour, and during this time there is cooked in the middle of the square, in three large kettles, barley meal, the grain of which is roasted previous to being ground; this species of boiled food, which the Indians call atole, and of which they are very fond, is seasoned neither with salt nor butter, and to us would prove a very insipid mess… This meal continues three quarters of an hour, after which they all return to their labors; some go to plough the earth with oxen, other to dig the garden; in a word, everyone is employed in different domestic occupations, and always under the superintendence of one or two of the religious… At noon the dinner was announced by the bell; the Indians quitted their work, and sent to fetch their rations in the same vessels as at breakfast; but this second mess was thicker than the first; there was mixed in it corn and maize, and peas and beans; the Indians name it poussole. They return again to their labor from two o'clock till four or five, afterwards they attend evening prayers, which continue near an hour, and is followed by a new ration of atole like that of breakfast.[14]

Mission Nuestra de la Soledad

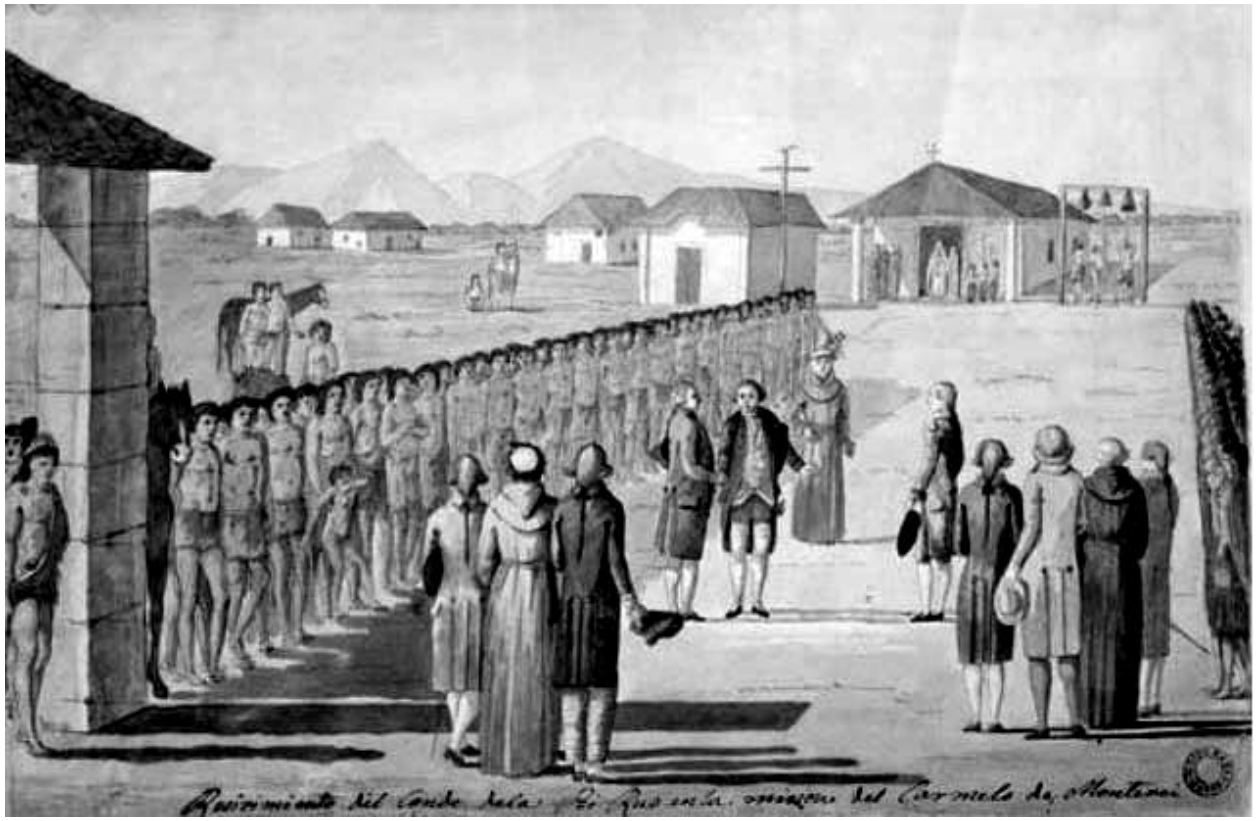
By 1791 at least 358 Esselen had been baptized—305 at Mission San Carlos de Carmelo and 53 at Mission San Antonio.[15] On September 9th of that year eleven proselytes from Mission San Carlos were dispatched to the *Eslenahan* village of *Chuttesgilis* to begin construction of Mission Soledad, which was dedicated on October 9th of that year. According to Culleton, [16] all of the early servants at Soledad were from Mission San Carlos and Mission San Antonio, and this group included about half a dozen families from the Esselen region of *Excelen*, who "Served as leaven to Christianize their brethren in the watershed of the Arroyo Seco." After 1791 most of the new Esselen converts went to Mission Soledad.

In 1808 the San Carlos, San Antonio and Soledad missions ceased proselytizing for new converts. As enumerated by Milliken,[17] by that time at least 798 Esselen had been baptized at these missions. Of these 442 (52%) had been baptized at Mission San Carlos, 87 (10%) at Mission San Antonio, and 320 (38%) at Mission Soledad.

As for the residents of *Imunahan* (the mid and much of the upper watershed of the Arroyo Seco, and thus including the Tassajara region), 22 (15.6%) of its residents went to Mission San Carlos (11 of these before the founding of Mission Soledad), 14 (10%) went to San Antonio (6 of these before the founding of Mission Soledad), and 105 (74.4%) went to Mission Soledad.

As for the northern region of *Excelen* (the upper watershed of the Carmel River), 236 (96.3%) of its inhabitants were baptized at Carmel, and 9 (3.67%) were baptized at Soledad.

As for the Salinas Valley region of *Eslenahan*, 81 (78.6%) of the residents went to Carmel (78 of these before the founding of Mission Soledad), 2 (1.94%) went to San Antonio (both before



Neophytes of Mission San Carlos de Carmelo lined up in two opposing rows in order to greet members of the La Perouse Expedition in September of 1786.

the founding of Soledad), and 20 (19.4%) were baptized at Soledad.

As for the southeastern region of *Aspasniahan*, 18 (10.4%) went to Carmel (16 before the founding of Soledad), 54 (31.2%) went to San Antonio (45 before the founding of Soledad), and 101 (58.38%) went to Soledad.

As for the coastal region of *Ekheahan*, 85 (62.5%) of its residents went to Carmel (30 before the founding of Soledad), 17 (12.5%) went to San Antonio (all after the founding of Soledad), and 34 (25%) went to Soledad.

One can only speculate on what became of the remaining Esselen who did not enter the mission communities.

The Mexican War of Independence from Spain began in 1810. According to Geary:

> With the outbreak of hostilities in Mexico, Spanish support was cut off and the regular supply ships failed to make their appearance in California… For practically the whole decade California got neither its money allowances nor its supplies. The cutting off of supplies placed the presidios in dire straits… On the other hand, the missions did not suffer the want of the presidios. Organized on the basis of self-support, they did not find it difficult to maintain their large population of neophytes.[18]

During the Mission Period the Indian populations of the missions were greatly diminished, and according to some estimates, it was by as much as 75%.[19] Most of this decline was due to the introduction of diseases to which the native people had no immunity, such as measles, influenza, pneumonia, diphtheria, small pox, tuberculosis, scarlet fever and so on. Introduced venereal diseases were also a factor. Susceptibility for contracting these diseases was greatly increased by the crowded and unsanitary living conditions at the missions, in combination with poor health due to the monotonous and nutritionally inadequate diet at the missions. Some casualties were the result of uprisings against the missionaries and soldiers, and in conflicts that occurred while the soldiers were engaged in their efforts to return fugitive Indians to the missions.

The Mexican Period, 1821 to 1848

Mexico won its war of independence from Spain in 1821, and thus California became a territory of Mexico. Prior to 1833 various plans for the secularization of the missions had been debated and sometimes put into laws, but these were non effective due to the political instability of the Mexican government. Thus it was not until August of 1833 that the Mexican congress passed an act that made the secularization of the missions a reality.[20]

Conceptually the Spanish colonial missions were to serve as detention and training facilities for about ten years, after which the neophytes, who had by then been converted into proper subjects of the Spanish Empire, would be granted tracts of mission land. Towns would then form around the missions, and the mission churches would become parish churches. However, when implemented in California, the secularization of the missions overwhelmingly resulted in the sale of, and more often, the granting to, huge tracts of mission and other lands to non Indian settlers.[21] The saying, 'If you're not at the table, then you're probably on the menu,' comes to mind. Thus the principal economy of California abruptly shifted away from the missions to that of privately owned estates. According to Castillo:

> At the end of the mission period the Indians formerly under mission influence scattered. Some went into the civilian pueblo areas to seek work, others became laborers on the private ranchos, and many returned to the mountains to seek refuge in their aboriginal homelands. Those who went to the pueblos to seek work found only a life of poverty and debauchery. Sad indeed was the plight of the former missionized Indians who had nowhere else to turn since their original homeland had begun to fill with foreigners… Those who remained at or near the white settlements could find subsistence only as domestics and were ruthlessly exploited by their employers. In fact many who employed Indians would pay them only with alcohol, thus further contributing to their destruction.[22]

Although the Esselen region in the Salinas Valley, *Eslenahan*, was divided into a number of private ranchos, and Rancho los Tularcitos was created in the Esselen region of *Excelen*, the remainder of the Esselen homeland remained unaffected. Thus returning to the Santa Lucia Mountains was an option for those Esselen people who still had the knowledge and skills needed to live off the land.

It has been estimated that during the Mexican Rancho period (1833 to 1848) the native population of California declined by about 108,000, and diseases continued to be a major factor for this loss. It was also during this period that the number of private ranchos greatly proliferated, and they spread into the interior, such as into the densely populated central valley and the surrounding foothills, which resulted in a further loss of Indian lives, especially among the tribes that most vehemently resisted the incursions. It was also during this period that live stock raiding by landless, starving Indians became common, and the retribution against the Indians was severe.

The Gold Rush

The next phase of California's history is most commonly known as the California Gold Rush years, but another name that has been appropriately applied to this period is the California Genocide years.

Mexico's defeat in the Mexican-American War resulted in California becoming a territory of the United States in February of 1848. In the previous month gold had been discovered at Sutter's Mill in the Sierra Nevada foothills near Sacramento, which resulted in a mass migration of fortune seekers to California. Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft (for whom the renowned Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley is named) summed up this period as follows:

> That part of the early intercourse between aboriginal Americans and Europeans which property belongs to history may be briefly given, for short work was made of it in California. The savages were in the way; the miners and settlers were arrogant and impatient; there were no missionaries or others present with even the poor pretense of soul-saving or civilizing. It was one of the last human hunts of civilization, and the basest and most brutal of them all.[23]

According to C. Hart Merriam, the eminent multidisciplinary natural scientist (zoologist, ecologist, geographer, ethnographer, physician, etc.):

> As these adventurers spread north and south over the flanks of the Sierra and penetrated the rugged mountains of the northwest, they everywhere invaded the territory of the Indians and decimated the native populations… Villages were broken up and the inhabitants were scattered or massacred; men and women were debauched with whisky; men were ruthlessly killed; women were appropriated, and the seeds of disease were sown which undermined the constitutions of succeeding generations. This is not the place to recite the sickening details, which blacken many pages in the history of the Golden State.[24]

Although the native peoples of far Northern California and the Sierra Nevada were most affected by this onslaught, those of the remainder of State were subject to new laws that were detrimental to all California Indians.

California was admitted as the 31st state of the United States in 1850, and in an address to the State Legislature the State's first governor, Peter Burnett, stated that:

> They [the Indians] have not only seen their country taken from them, but they see their ranks rapidly thinning from the effects of our diseases. They instinctively consider themselves a doomed race, and this idea leads to despair, and despair prevents them from providing the usual and necessary supply of provisions. This produces starvation, which knows but one law, that of gratification; and the natural result is that these people kill the first stray animal they find. This leads to war between them and the whites, and war creates a hatred against the white man that never ceases to exist in the Indian bosom… The white man, to whom time is money, and who labors hard all day to create the comforts of life, cannot sit up all night to watch his property, and after being robbed a few times, he becomes desperate, and resolves upon a war of extermination… That a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races until the Indian race becomes extinct must be expected. While we cannot anticipate the result with but painful regret, the inevitable destiny of the race is beyond the power and wisdom of man to avert.[25]

In 1850 the first session of the California State Legislature enacted two pieces of legislation concerning militias. One provided for the establishment of "Volunteer or independent" militias that were to "Be armed and equipped in the same manner that similar corps are in the army of the United States," and which were to be summoned "In case of invasion, or for the suppression of rebellion, riots, insurrection, or resistance to the execution of the law."[26] The other piece of legislation made it mandatory that "All free, white, able bodied male citizens, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years," be "Subject to military duty," and it also stated that "The Treasurer of the State shall be ex officio Paymaster General."[27] In other words:

> Any white man could raise a volunteer company, outfit it with guns, ammunition, horses, and supplies, and be reasonably sure that the state government would honor its vouchers. The state legislature passed Acts in 1851 and 1852 authorizing payment of over $1,100,000 for the suppression of Indian hostilities. Again in 1857 the legislature issued bonds amounting to $410,000 for the same purpose. Congress eventually reimbursed the State for nearly all bonds issued, indeed a dreary story of subsidized murder.[28]

Also enacted at the first session of the California State Legislature in 1850 was "An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians." [29] This act was known to its critics as the Indian Indenture Act, for six of its twenty sections contained statutes that legalized the indenturing of Indians. Separate regulations were enacted for the servitude of adult and minor Indians. An able bodied adult could, by means of a complaint from a white person, be arrested for "Loitering and strolling about," and have his servitude hired out to the highest bidder for up to four months. Children of all ages could be indentured, for up to the age of 18 for boys and up to 15 for girls. Section six of this legislation stated that: "Complains may be made before a Justice of the Peace, by white persons or by Indians; but in no case shall a white man be convicted of any offence upon the testimony of an Indian or Indians." This act also included laws pertaining to the corporal punishment of Indians, and to the treatment of Indians who were residing on privately claimed lands. [30] This act was followed by other of acts and amendments that were detrimental to the rights and freedom of the native people of California. According to Johnston-Dodds:

> In 1860 the California Legislature amended Sections 3 and 7 of the 1850 Act. These amendments granted broad powers to county and district judges to, when requested, execute articles of indenture of apprenticeship on behalf of Indians. The 1860 amendments to the Act also provided that male Indian children under fourteen years could be indentured until they were twenty-five, and females under fourteen until they were twenty-one years old. If they were over fourteen but under twenty, males were indentured until they were thirty, and females until they were twenty-five years. Indians over twenty years old could be indentured for an additional ten years. Due in part to a decade of state-financed expeditions against the Indians, there were many young Indian children without parents.[31]

Slavery and indentured servitude were abolished in the United States with the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the U. S. Constitution in 1865, and Indians did not become citizens of the United States until the passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924.

Prior to European colonialism in North America, California was the most densely populated region of continent north of Central Mexico. Researchers have made various estimates for the native population, and it appears that 310,000 (plus/minus 30,000) has become the most widely accepted approximation. During the Spanish Mission Period (1769 to 1833) the native population of the coastal region of California that was under the influence of the missions declined by about 65,000. Thus the native population of California as a whole fell to about 245,000. During the Mexican Rancho Period (1833-1848) it has been estimated that the native population of California declined to about 137,000. By 1860 the native population had declined to about 25,000 to 30,000, and according to the U. S. census of 1900 it was fewer than 16,000. [32]

In 1905 C. Hart Merriam concluded his text on the Indian population of California with the following paragraph:

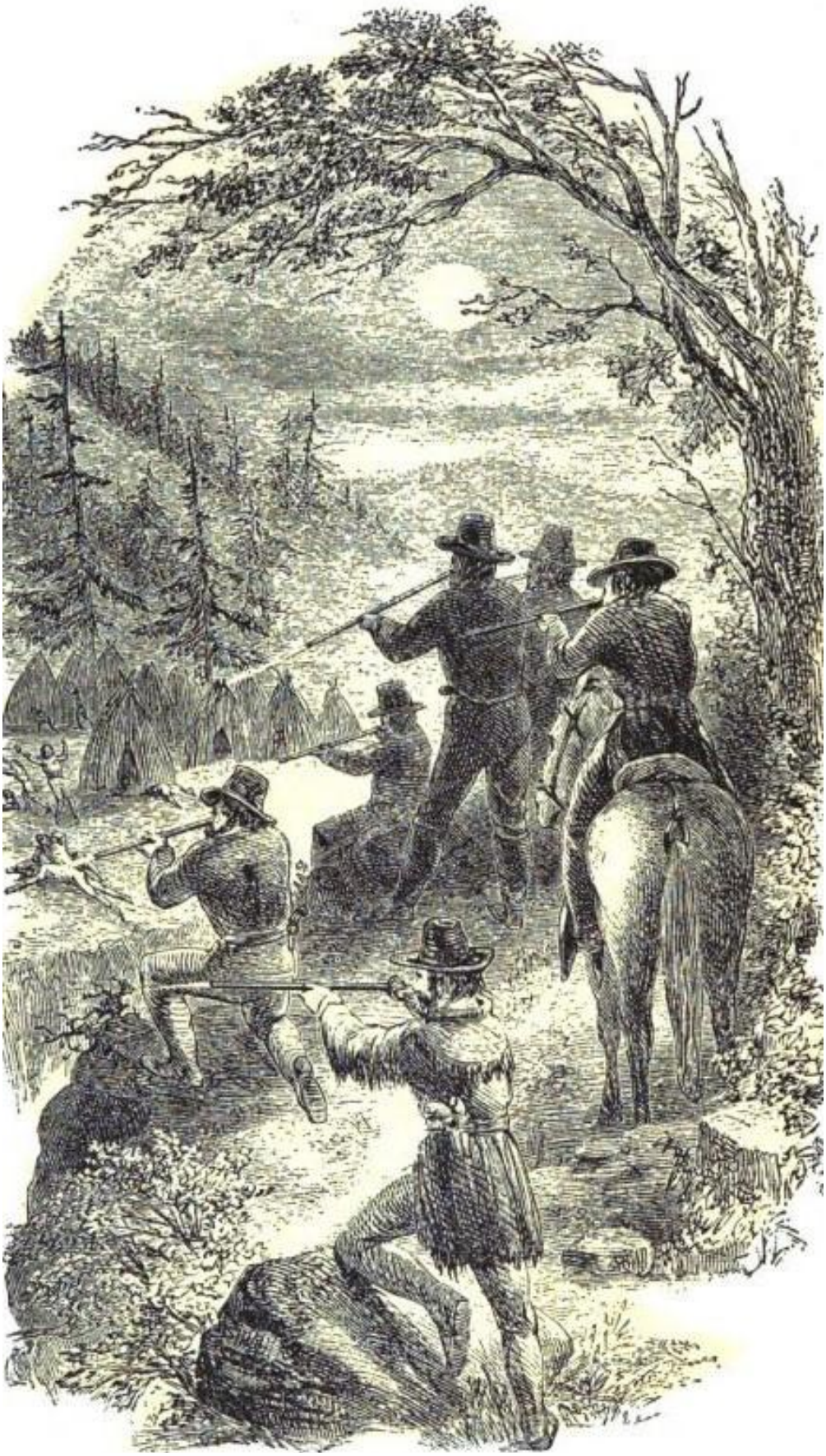
> The principal cause of the appallingly great and rapid decrease in the Indians of California is not, in my judgment, the number directly slain by the whites, or the number directly killed by whisky or disease, but a much more subtle and dreadful thing: it is the gradual but progressive and relentless confiscation of their land and homes, in consequence of which they are forced to seek refuge in remote and barren localities, often far from water, usually with a impoverished supply of food, and not infrequently in places where the winter climate is too severe for their enfeebled constitutions. Victims of the aggressive selfishness of the whites, outcasts in the land of their fathers, outraged in their most sacred institutions, weakened in body, broken in spirit, and fully conscious of the utter hopelessness of their condition, must we wonder that the wail for the dead is often heard in their camps and that the survivors are passing swiftly away.[33]

Archaeological evidence indicates that native people continued to inhabit the Santa Lucia Mountains of Monterey County during the Mexican Period of California's history (1821-1848), and some may have found refuge in the more remote areas of this region as late as the early American Period (1848-1870). In 1952 the grave of a child was unearthed during the excavation of the Isabella Meadows Cave (CA-Mnt-250), which is located near the Church Creek Divide. Based on dateable artifacts included with the burial (glass trading beads, a leather belt fragment and a wool blanket fragment), it was estimated that the grave dated to about 1825.[34] Evidence suggesting even later occupation in this region comes from the skeletal remains of two individuals that were discovered in the 1990s. Those of one person were found in a small cave in the Church Creek area,[35] and those of the other were unearthed during a landscaping project at Tassajara Hot Springs in April of 1994.[36] The remains of both were determined to have died about 150 years before the date of their discovery, and thus in the early 1840s. A report that suggests that Indians remained in the most remote areas of the Santa Lucia Mountains until the early American Period (1848-1870) is from John Coulter's 1921 M. S. thesis on the geography of the Santa Lucia Mountains:

> An old Spanish rancher told me he remembers having seen corpses of Indians in the trees in Indian Valley when he first came to the mountains in his boyhood. Professor Kroeber of the Anthropology Department tells me that as far as he knows air burial was not practiced. Indian Valley is in a section of the mountains most remote from the influences of the Spanish missions.[37]

Indian Valley is about five linear miles southwest of Tassajara Hot Springs, and it was in the coastal region of the Esselen territory that was known to them as *Ekheahan*. *Ekheahan* was not only the most remote of the Esselen regions, but it was also the most belated in sending converts to the missions. As stated earlier, Indian homicide was common during the early American period.

Although it has often been stated that the Esselen were the first native Californian tribe to have become culturally extinct, they did not become genetically extinct, for people have been able to trace their Esselen ancestry back to the records of Monterey County missions. Presently there are two organizations that represent the Esselen. One is the Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation, and the other is the Esselen Tribe of Monterey County.



An illustration from John Ross Browne's *The Indians of California*, 1864. It was subtitled "Protecting the Settlers."

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