

CHANGING LANDSCAPES OF CALIFORNIA PASTORALISM: 200 YEARS OF CHANGE

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Résumé

Les terres diverses de Californie ont une caractéristique essentielle en commun: une histoire récente de changements substantiels. Alors que le pâturage par des animaux domestiques, introduit au 18^{ème} siècle, a transformé irrémédiablement l'aspect des terrains de pâturage de l'état de Californie, ces changements seront mieux compris si on les replace dans le processus continu des modifications du paysage par l'Homme. Visuellement, l'agriculture et surtout le pâturage par le bétail ont dominé les collines et les vallées de Californie pendant 200 ans. Pourtant le changement continu est un processus reconnu dans l'écologie des paysages et la Californie n'est pas exempte des pressions du changement. L'urbanisation est aujourd'hui la force émergente qui menace la vie pastorale en Californie. La question importante est de savoir si le type d'élevage caractéristique du pastoralisme en Californie va survivre, et dans quelles conditions.

Summary

California's varied lands share one essential attribute: a recent history of substantial change. While grazing by domesticated livestock introduced in the 18th century irremediably transformed the feel and appearance of the state's rangelands, these alterations are best understood as part of a continuing human process of landscape modification. Visually, agriculture and especially livestock grazing has dominated California's valleys and hills for better than two hundred years. Yet perpetual change is a recognized process in landscape ecology, and California is hardly immune to such pressure. Urbanization is today so ascendant as to threaten pastoral California. How--and whether--the livestock ranching characteristic of California pastoralism will survive is now an important question.

Introduction

Lands grazed by domesticated livestock undergo great changes through the reaches of time. While the long-term physical effects of grazing are well-documented in most lands, chronicling changes wrought in human lifeways is a more speculative undertaking, although the transformations are hardly less substantial. No land not an island, however, has been so swiftly altered by introduced livestock, especially with such far-reaching social and cultural effects, as California. In scarcely more than 200 years of occupation by European, Asian, and American people arriving from every point of the compass, California has grown from an empty land to a full one. This narrow window of years, utterly insignificant in comparison to Old World chronologies, offered time enough for the lifeways of California's inhabitants to change from subsistence to a world-wide and trend-setting rôle as a dominant force in the Pacific Rim economy. Through all this, the place of grazing animals is central: California pastoralism--ranching--provided a foundation, land base, and incentive for subsequent settlement.

While California today produces highly diversified goods, a basic Spanish-era economy of land speculation and livestock grazing has continued significance. Beef, mutton, wool, mohair, tallow, hides, and horses are only a few of the historic products of California livestock raising. As is often the case in a swiftly developing region, California's pastoralism was important first for the livestock products circulated into the world economy, more so for massive changes wrought in the physical landscape, but it was compelling most of all for what pastoralism made possible: a land owning-based, yet readily-changed society with a solid, adaptable, and multi-ethnic cultural core. Systems of land tenancy, marketing, trade, transportation, religion, and experimental techniques were developed in livestock ranching that are proving far more enduring than might be expected of a simple pioneer culture. It is still rangelands, for example, that provide much of the undeveloped greenbelt land that surrounds the "golden state's" expanding cities. Grazing cattle and sheep are the first visual link between most residents and the state's agriculture, which produces twenty billion dollars a year in California. Grazing lands are habitat for wildlife, provide watershed protection, and safeguard acreage unsuited to crops or housing. Finally, strong ties bind contemporary livestock ranching--throughout the western United States--with the geographical history of the *californios*.

Although this essay largely chronicles the changing landscapes of California pastoralism, it closes with an assessment of California's influence on the livestock industry in both the American West and lands abroad. That California generally has an influence far outstepping its contemporary 28 million residents is beyond argument. Here, as writer Wallace Stegner has noted, is a land that is and always will be "America only more so." The whys and wherefores of this influence owe much to the pivotal place of California in a crucial period of world events, a time when California's growth became, in part, a model for the spread of imperial American influence around the world. Changes in California pastoralism are only the surface manifestation of more substantial changes in grazing, in California, and in its people.

Implantation of Livestock in the Spanish Era

A modest 220 years ago, California was an aboriginal land, inhabited by some 300,000 native Indians generally concentrated among the rich lands within a hundred miles of the Pacific Ocean (Cook, 1976). The countryside, dominated by a moderate, Mediterranean-type summer-dry climate, offered the largely peaceable native populations plentiful food supplies that derived from vast oak savannas, from grasslands, from wild game, and from indigenous fisheries both oceanic and riverine. This was native California, plentiful in its offerings, an attractive and varied series of locales where descendants of the East Asian adventurers who crossed the Bering land bridge perhaps 100,000 years ago to settle the Americas found among the easiest existences in North America (Carter, 1981). Truly a society of resource sufficiency, California before European contact might properly be portrayed as the original affluent society (Sahlins, 1972). Native Californians were already well-versed in resource management techniques before the intrusion of outsiders, but they aimed at adequacy, not exploiting surplus. This changed with new arrivals (Aschmann, 1973).

That European travelers looking for new lands to settle and occupy should find California attractive is hardly surprising. Early English explorers came and went along the California shore, leaving only a scattered record of landfalls. Unlike the forays of English, French, or Russian envoys into the New World, which required radical reorientation of goals and techniques before permanent settlements could be established, the Spanish moved into lands they knew and understood. Spanish voyagers on both land and

sea quickly recognized familiar vistas that could be occupied using colonizing methods tried and proven by Hispanic settlers since the *reconquista* of Spain from the Moors (Butzer, 1988; Bishko, 1963). Aridity, sparse vegetation, forests limited to montane regions, and even the wildlife and native human populations of the American Southwest and Pacific Slope were familiar or at least recognizable. Spanish (and later Mexican) social, political, and cultural institutions were readily adaptable to the new landscapes; that was part and parcel of the Spanish success. The question was how the empire was to be unfurled: like an octopus, the colonial Spanish realm had within its grasp a great range of territory, people, and potential riches, but it took time for the tentacles to take hold of every place within reach. And Alta California--including all of present-day California--lay at the most distant and awkward remove of the Spanish empire.

In an era when the Manila galleons controlled the Pacific, Spanish navigators not surprisingly visited California's islands early (Spate, 1979). Juan Cabrillo's expedition reached Santa Cruz Island, off the southern California coast, in 1542, but did not stay (Leighly, 1972; Bolton, 1916). Assessment reliably preceded occupation and settlement. Livestock were rarely brought on these exploratory forays, although the Channel Islands probably had populations of goats and sheep in the early 1700s, long before they were placed on the California mainland. Instead, maritime explorers examined the coast, its bays and inlets, charting the waters. Settle, though, they did not; despite a naval and mercantile dominance of the seas, ocean waters were too insecure a pathway for Spanish assertion of absolute territorial control. Instead, conquistadors and clerics habitually colonized by overland movement, not by sea (Meinig, 1969).

Slow and undramatic though the unfolding and occupation of a land realm might be, the continental Spanish empire in the New World was created by implanting a careful and easily replicated pattern of religious missions, secular settlements, and livestock and mining operations, all the while "pacifying" and proselytizing the native Indian populations (Weber, 1979). All colonial Spanish governments shared a common goal: establishing an elaborate network of self-interested settlers and communities at the least secure edges of a multi-continental empire. Both the missionizing Catholic clergy--Dominican, Franciscan, or Jesuit, depending on time and locale--and the self-interested secular landholders who later acquired properties near missions were able to apply virtually standardized settlement techniques.

The *gente de razon*, or "people of reason" who formed the landholding elite of the Spanish frontier were first and foremost livestock ranchers. They might practice dry land farming, raise some irrigated crops, and pay proper homage to the mother church, but these folk specialized in grazing livestock--sheep, goats, horses, and especially cattle--on extensive pastures acquired as *mercedes*, or grants, from colonial governments (Westphall, 1983; Meyer, 1985). Hispanic ranching was effective, and, in being dominated by elaborate traditional use practices, it was also secure:

The system of Hispanic land grants, which assigned different amounts of land according to the sorts of agriculture a grantee intended to undertake, showed acute sensitivity to physical and environmental limitations. Grants tacitly acknowledged the need for either irrigation, or a truly extensive livestock commons, which could provide forage for animals belonging to one or even a variety of owners. Hispanic settlers and their colonial government, whether in Mexico City or Sevilla, understood the difficulties of the dry Southwest, and acceded to those limitations in their colonization of semi-arid frontiers as they had originally in distant homelands. (Starrs, 1989: 116-117)

Mission Lands and Cattle

Through the seventeenth and eighteenth century, Baja California and Alta--or present-day--California lay at the northern edge of the Spanish empire. These Californias could be reached by sea, or less conveniently, overland across the Mojave and Sonora deserts. Yet colonial powers in Mexico City by the mid-eighteenth century recognized the importance of acquiring a foothold that might forestall, or at least greatly complicate, land acquisition in the Californias by rival colonial powers. By the middle 1700s, livestock raising in California was begun.

Baja was site of the first California mission, at Loreto on the Gulf of California in 1697. Livestock came with the Jesuit clergy and ranged widely through the peninsula, tended by Indian acolytes and secular Spanish laborers and soldiers (Aschmann, 1966; Aschmann, 1959; Burcham, 1982). To this day, the Baja peninsula remains a living historical museum of eighteenth and nineteenth century stock raising practices, a vast domain too little appreciated by scholars failing to recognize the land as an unequaled archive of material culture (Crosby, 1981).

As a proving place for mission agriculture, Baja was better than adequate. A string of missions moved up the Baja coast and into Alta California, where Mission San Diego de Alcalá was established in 1769. Two hundred head of cattle arrived by overland routes that same year, and within a decade, outlying missions were established up the California coast, never far inland, ultimately reaching to Sonoma in a chain of 21 missions, linked by trade and official roads.

No contrast could be more dramatic than the emerging differences between Baja and Alta California pastoral society. While Baja remained a collection of rural outposts, Alta California by the early nineteenth century was a prosperous reign courted by a sizable and international group of suitors. Casuists have attributed differences between the two Californias to historically "better government" in the north. The fact is, climate, aggressive settlement, and gold had much to do with Alta California's allure--but nothing was so lastingly attractive in the early years as the vastly better livestock range available in the northern of the two Californias.

If the missions on occasion had more success recruiting new heavenly souls for the Church than in sustaining a living work force of California Indian novices, they fulfilled admirably a secondary function, acting as a testing ground for agricultural products, and verifying the local appropriateness of crop and livestock-raising techniques that were recreated at each mission along the California chain. Agricultural Extension stations in the United States, more than a hundred years later, would employ similar testing techniques to examine what crops were most appropriate for different sites.

In its brief and tempestuous block of years (1769-1821), the mission era in California established important facts. Livestock did well in California; better than well, they thrived on their own, with virtually no continuing care. Only the increase needed to be gathered, and then only when there was demand--beyond the missions and the few substantial towns in Alta California, markets for livestock would not open up until the mission era was virtually over. Nonetheless, the die was cast, and the influences of early livestock raising on plants, landforms, economies, and California life were *faits accomplis*.

From the Californios to the Gold Era

With time, the formal Spanish missions faded with the growth of secular and international interest in Alta California. Ranching passed from the padres to private hands and eventually to a larger public (Hornbeck, 1978; Cleland, 1964). In California of the early 1800s, great changes in the politics of geography were taking place. Lands once reserved to the church and the governor in Monterey were initially passed by grant into private hands in 1786, marking the first of numerous *rancho* grants awarded during the Spanish and Mexican period (Hornbeck, 1983). As Spain's hold on its empire, control of the lands of New Spain--Mexico--was ceded to authorities in Mexico City in 1821. And Mexico was far quicker than Spain to issue patents to California land, especially under the 1824 Laws of Colonization, designed to establish a stable, loyal, and well-armed populace in sparsely settled areas. Replacing the church era was what is often described as the *californio* period, taking its name from the generic description of the Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo settlers in Alta California after mission secularization.

These Californios are still in some respects a mystery group. Their lives, society, work, and play are sufficiently mythologized to have cast doubt on what the life of a typical *ranchero* might have been like (Pitt, 1966; Tays, 1941). Colonial grants of property--more than 800 were made during the Mexican period, from 1821 to 1846--fed a hunger for land that prompted a simultaneous and equal speculation in property and cattle raising. A fifth of all ranchos went to foreigners, who flocked to California in a land boom that foreshadowed the later Gold Rush. The fevered search for "real estate" remains a salient part of Californian life through today; some might say it has defined the very character of California. The Coast Ranges were dotted with ranches; property disputes arose, herds mixed, adjudication procedures were formalized (Dusenberry, 1963). A body of traditional law encouraged the formation of livestock associations that policed the behavior of their members, a practice that spread throughout North America. Land and livestock defined new forms of California; they also provided the only real livelihood and employment available to average citizens until new economies developed after cession to the United States in 1848 (Burcham, 1961).

The *californio* life, romanticized by later-arriving Anglos, was often portrayed as a swirling life of constant plenty, of silver spurs and dances and elegance. Such fictions brought newcomers to California but touched hardly at all on the reality that can be gleaned from diaries, contemporary paintings of ranches and their facilities, ranch account books, or even the *diseños* that mapped land grants after 1848 (Becker, 1964).

As a rule, ranching work, society, and profits were as threadbare as today; while some *rancheros* were affluent, far more grant holders and cattle owners were not. Land, measured in square Spanish leagues, was their wealth--but title, while well-established, was rarely well-documented. Without land there would be no cattle or sheep, and without these, there was only retreat to city life. While some *rancheros* lived in town and left their properties in the hands of a managing mayordomo, all maintained strong ties to ranching life. Then, as now, few ranchers willingly gave up rural roots to enter the metropolis (Lugo, 1950; Tays, 1941).

Hides and Tallow

Livestock found a readier market as a trading commodity in the nineteenth century than it had for the padres in the eighteenth. In periodic *rodeos* (the term is a Spanish one), cattle were gathered, slaughtered in huge *matanzas*, or killings, and the hides stripped from the carcasses. While the meat was left in place, the fat, or tallow, was

rendered in huge pots. Tallow jelled, as it cooled, finally forming an almost solid fat that was in great demand for candles and oil for lighting--especially though by no means exclusively--in the South American mines.

The landowning *californios* needed a work force, and found them in the *vaqueros*, or ranch hands. The *vaqueros* who participated in these round-ups were among the most picturesque figures in Mexican California history. They were also prototypes for the later, American-period "buckaroo," in whom the term, regalia, style of riding, economies, actions, and ideology were almost pure distillations from Hispanic roots. *Vaqueros* were, often by choice, workers, not owners, a distinction that would have continued importance in American-era ranching (Ulph, 1981). If the *californios*, with their large tracts of granted rangeland proved predecessors to Anglo-period ranchers, then perhaps the *vaquero* and the *Californio* are indeed literal antecedents of the contemporary cowhand and rancher.

What is incontestable is the blossoming relationship between the hide and tallow industry, the rise of California ports and cities from which these commodities were shipped, and the rôle of ranching society in bringing newcomers to California in the 1830s and 1840s. Before the Gold Rush was the livestock boom--not in beef, which was of almost no significance, but in products and offal that today have paltry value (*charqui*, or beef jerky, was the only way to preserve large quantities of meat, and most ranchers hardly bothered). Land speculation, however, continued and built on its ranching foundation.

English, American, Mexican, Spanish, and French boats sailed up the Pacific Coast, ferrying wool, hides, and tallow from the California entrepôts to foreign destinations. By the 1830s, California was part of a broader European and even Asian economy, caught up in a swirl of mercantile exchange that Fernand Braudel has described as well as anyone. International demand for animal products both preceded and succeeded the Gold Rush, although after 1848 California demand for beef frequently surpassed the capacity of local producers. As a location in the cycle of world trade, California had made its mark.

The borders, opening during the Mexican period, allowed a flow of population in all directions. California *rancheros* were involved in importations of livestock to Australia, to parts of the Great Basin, including Nevada and Utah, and even to Hawai'i, where agents of King Kamehamea III brought a delegation of *vaqueros* and some of their cattle to expand herds on the islands (Martin, 1987).

In a matter of scant decades, California changed from a rural outpost--remote, impoverished, marginally successful--to part of a thriving Pacific trade economy. Nothing, though, failed like success, and by the 1840s, efforts were actively underway in the eastern United States to wrest California--as the plum among the northwestern-most properties of Mexico City--away from its rightful owners. War brought that change in ownership, and Mexico relinquished its claim to California in 1848. The Anglo period had begun.

Continuity, Compromise, and Innovation

The *Californio*, or Mexican-California period created novel California landscapes. The biological transformation of Alta California, begun when the first sheep, goats, cattle, and horses entered the summer-dry rangelands that dominate much of California,

accelerated as livestock populations increased with the number of *ranchos* and newly opening markets for livestock products (Jackson, 1985). Immigrants flocked to California like moths to fire, seeking land, wealth, livestock, or, at a minimum, a bit of the action (Holliday, 1981). As livestock numbers increased, wildlife disappeared, although through the 1860s and 1870s, accounts describe mixed herds of cattle, tule elk, deer, and grizzly bears; a formidable combination. Much of the land of California near the Pacific was embroiled in dispute, claimed in a byzantine assortment of conflicting land grant petitions that ultimately were not sorted out until United States District Court and Appellate Court judges in the 1860s ruled on the legitimacy of Spanish and Mexican land grant titles--the so-called "Land Cases" (Bowman, 1958; Becker, 1964).

Finally, sizable changes developed in the character of California itself. From a rural land occupied by relatively peaceable natives who spoke a bewildering assortment of languages--perhaps as many as 80--in the early 1700s, California by 1846 was almost cosmopolitan. From towns had grown cities, from ranches empires, from a small herd of cattle, or a band of sheep, a virtual sea of animals. Livestock herds at first decreased in the 1830s as the harvest of hides and tallow took its toll, but numbers rose again in the early 1840s as more land grants were made. People, too, were coming, and they demanded change, especially political and land concessions, and a chance to be a part of the tumult.

The Anglo Period--A "Better Mediterranean"

With the seizure of California by the United States, a further era of change was inaugurated. Different land tenure systems were crucial. Land was sought on American, not Hispanic terms; the large landholdings of the Spanish and Mexican period were not acceptable to many of the newcomers arriving in California. More important, it was generally not acceptable to the United States government, which had little sympathy for the land requirements of extensive livestock raising. Huge ranches were broken up by fraud or theft, by subdivision, or sometimes by legal action--not all titles to Mexican and Spanish grants were upheld by the Court of Claims.

The Gold Rush might have proved the undoing of California ranching. Instead, it was the kiln that hardened the mold. It increased demand for livestock products and opened up new country to settlement. In several decades, California's population doubled, then redoubled, and doubled again. Migration was inconsistent, and California was never carefully pieced together like patches on a quilt. Instead, special areas received sudden attention, found themselves in a high-powered spotlight of international dimensions, and then disappeared from focus as lands were taken up. This episodic--even sporadic--settlement established a pattern in California that would be followed throughout the American West, of discontinuous, uneven settlement, boom and bust cycles, road systems developed overnight, ghost towns, and instant cities. Speculative land development is part and parcel of the settlement of the United States, but no region shows such variation, ingenuity, and acquisitiveness as California.

None of this would have been typical of the methodical Spanish or Mexican settlement, but it proved surprisingly able to sustain, and even encourage, livestock raising. Livestock products were in constant demand in western mining communities, which extended far beyond California--cattle, especially, were trailed over distances as great as a thousand miles to market (Wentworth, 1948). Animals worth only a dollar or two in the Coast Ranges might increase in value tenfold by the time they arrived at a gold or silver boom town.

The 1850s and 1860s were giddy times for California livestock raisers. A herd might begin with modest numbers of animals and a small landholding. Yet demand for meat was so large that for a time during the gold boom on the 1850s, beef and mutton were unavailable in restaurants; wild game was harvested and put on the table instead (Stine, 1980). Flood years followed by drought in the 1860s savaged rangelands and herds, but increased profits for those who could stay the course (Burcham, 1982). When private land was not always readily available, enterprising graziers found that moving animals some distance to feed was usually possible. Unclaimed public domain lands were considered free range, and were thoroughly exploited. The ecological effects of these moving herds, their tenders on a continuing search for fodder, meadows, and bedding grounds, is both easily imagined and seen today: the despoliation of western landscapes by overgrazing was more pronounced in the late 1800s and early 1900s than ever before or since.

The social cachet and romance attributed to the life of the rancher in Spanish-speaking California attained nearly legendary status as the nineteenth century drew to a close. As California's cities grew and livestock ranching took on more and more Anglo-American aspects, reality was lost in folklore. "Zorro" and the *fandango* supplanted the rawhide *reata*, or rope, and the *matanza's* open-air abattoir. The eradication of wild-life, including free-roaming herds of once nearly-wild cattle, signaled the passing of much of Californio society. Plant species of little importance in Mediterranean lands, introduced by chance in the feed of shipped livestock, came to have great importance as invaders in California. Livestock grazing continued, of course, but with a less central place in the attention of most Californians. Other concerns--of city, industry, irrigated agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation--overcame the by-then historic significance of tallow traders, *vaqueros*, and bullfights. But if the primacy of livestock raising was lost, the animals and the broader culture that raised them were hardly gone.

New lands, new myths, drew migrants to California. Jobs, rising cities, an unequalled climate that led some promoters to bill California as a "better Mediterranean"--where everyone speaks English--created their own force and attraction. By the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, and then millions, immigrants came to California: rich and poor, agriculturalists or factory workers, city or rural people. They found a California that, in some respects, had it all: ranching, cropland agriculture, a growing industrial and transportation network, important and attractive cities in both the north and the south of the state. Right at hand were jobs, livelihood, property, and a vast, aesthetically pleasing realm. For a few brief decades in the early twentieth century, everything in California seemed to be exploding.

Yet the Hispanic ranching period of California remained important, both in symbolism and in fact. Rarely has history been so successfully blended into promotional literature directed at prospective immigrants. The missions, padres, California Indians, the *californio* period, and especially the *ranchos*, *vaqueros*, and livestock industry appeared in stories, advertising broadsides, novels, and even on orange crate labels, advertising the Golden State. Using the past to promote development that would destroy the very traditions used to draw settlers is typical of California's singular and ironic vision of progress. Only very recently has tradition and historic preservation been allowed to interfere with commerce.

"Progress," however defined, is very much a part of California life. Southern California, popularly known as the "Southland," is emblematic of the march of California's growth. In three decades from the 1890s to 1920s, Los Angeles changed from a quiet Spanish-heritage town to an endless series of orange groves. In another three decades, oranges disappeared as housing subdivisions filled lands that shortly before

were grazing land (Starrs, 1988). There is hardly another modern equal to this tale of physical modification of the earth.

This haphazard occupation of California through the World War Two years posed varied dilemmas for anyone watching the excitement. Prime lands--cropland and rangeland both--disappeared under asphalt. Speculation in land began making many forms of agriculture difficult to sustain, overcoming even California's juggernaut-like agricultural lobby. California's pastoral life was under threat, a test that has yet to be entirely met. While the invasion of livestock, alien grasses, and Hispanic resource management techniques produced substantial changes in nineteenth century California, in scope and scale twentieth century exploitation of California's environments proved far more massive and serious.

Today and Tomorrow: Prospects

Changes in California pastoralism can be traced at almost any conceivable scale; here, the canvas has been large and the brush strokes emphasize pattern over detail. What is clearly suggested is an understanding of the processes of change and interconnection that accelerated the eclipsing of California's grazing industry. "Eclipsing" is the right word, for livestock grazing really has gone nowhere substantially different in California. Instead, what changed most is grazing's emphasis and visibility.

A pioneer activity requiring extensive tracts of land, livestock ranching is under increased threat of decline. It has survived surprisingly well through the 1980s, thanks in part to a continuing public affection in the United States (and, indeed, abroad) for livestock raising as a picturesque way of life. The "cowboy" is widely accepted as characteristically American, but abstract support and enthusiasm for ranching rarely translates directly into protected lands, ranches, and economies. Ranching cannot always be sustained. Especially as cities encroach on ranches, choices must be made between ranch land and suburban home, corral and playground, open space and residential community, ranch road and commuting highway. Ultimately, though, the five-acre exurban ranchette is not a ranch, backyard animals do not a livestock industry make, nor is the accountant who dons a Stetson to become a weekend cowboy transformed into a rancher except in her or his own mind.

California is certain to become still more urbanized, as people arrive in the state at a rate of some 750,000 a year. California society risks polarization between an urbanized population--92 percent of Californians are city or suburban dwellers--and their rural lands. Grasslands--rangelands--can temper the relationship between cities and their people, but not without help and a great deal of popular support. Rising to the "progressive" challenge of governments managing natural resource use, federal and state agencies have sought--with varying sensitivity--to protect California lands from exploitive development since the turn of the twentieth century. To try hard is not necessarily to succeed, and the effects of sprawling cities, conversion of agricultural lands, changing views of what land uses are deemed acceptable, and inconsistent government actions have taken a continuing toll on traditional agriculture such as ranching.

What might Californians expect or want for the future? No doubt all people, the world around, carry with them an idiosyncratic vision of an ideal world that is partly wilderness, partly urban. The precise proportions that each person cherishes vary enormously--individually, socially, culturally. We, in fact, know very little about just what California was actually like just 220 years ago--a great deal of money, time, and effort is allotted constantly in an attempt to accomplish even this modest bit of time-travel.

That it was an alien land is certain. How different it would appear, sound, smell, taste, and feel is something we today will never know.

California is a created landscape, made by a great conjunction of varied people and land. All landscapes are, in J.B. Jackson's phrase, "a collection, a system of man-made spaces on the surface of the earth (Jackson, 1985)." The pace of biology, geology, and climate are pushed aside by aggressive human intervention. The place of people in creating their own environments (by choice or accident) is the fundamental fact of any landscape; the most important, but not always acknowledged basis for landscape ecology (Tuan, 1989). And California, especially, is a land still subject to significant changes, its people bringing visions of landscapes that they would like to create, sometimes seeking to preserve other realms, while simultaneously (by their very numbers) making survival impossible for past California landscapes.

Livestock ranching is the oldest culture of California, aside from the long-gone landscapes of native Americans. Yet many of the state's landscapes--Southern California orange groves, farming around Sacramento, the Mother Lode gold country, logging towns along the north coast, are disappearing or gone. Change can, though, be directed. Our obligation is to create landscapes of interest, richness, and depth; pastoralism in California has long provided a historic, well-appreciated, and still-evolving landscape. Two hundred years' duration is no guarantee of future survival or protection. As cities, suburbs, ranchettes, and their people spread, California's pastoralism is being required to evolve faster than perhaps any activity feasibly can.

Europeans are far more sophisticated than we in the United States in understanding of the dilemmas of land use, geographical culture history, and preservation. With thousands of years of recorded history to our centuries, Europe has a time reference without American equivalent. But in the United States, perhaps, is a surer sense of how quickly and ambitiously change can come, and how drastic the effects can be. From Europe we can learn new forms of management, new concepts of parks, new visions of how societies can choose to impose their will on the land. We must all, however, be wary of the unconscious and permissive acceptance of promiscuous change for its own sake. In California such changes characterize the past. They may be our destiny. That may not bode well...yet coming to appreciate and preserve the different landscapes that people create in their interactions with the earth seems only wise and not beyond our capabilities.

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