

Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the American West

Mexico's boundaries and names have changed throughout time. The Aztecs first used the word "Mexico" in their nahuatl language when they established their empire in the 13th century. Spanish colonizers called their conquered territory "New Spain" and controlled the area between 1519 and 1821. Mexico won its sovereignty in 1821 and comprised a geographic, ethnic, and economic diverse nation that included present-day California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Texas, and Wyoming. The 1845 annexation of Texas led to the Mexican-American War and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, forcing Mexico to lose almost one-half of its land—an area larger than the Louisiana Purchase. Mexicans living in what was now the United States were given a choice of continuing to live on their land and be granted full rights as citizens of the United States or move to what was now Mexico. However, those who decided to stay and become U.S. citizens eventually found that their rights and equality were almost immediately called into question and land titles held by former Mexicans were taken away.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M103796;type=101>

Object: Mexican flag

Date: 1920

Object ID: 79.L.34

Note: California was part of Mexico from 1832 to 1849.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M548145;type=101>

Object: Tobacco box

Date: Eighteenth century to early nineteenth century

Object ID: 88.127.67

Notes: Silver tobacco box with stamped floral designs; typical of those used by gentlemen in Taos, New Mexico.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M33959;type=102>

Object: Photograph

Maker: J. Walker and John Dewar

Title: *Painting Portrait of a Californio Land Owner*

Object ID: P.41749A

Notes: Californios were Spanish-speaking residents of Spanish California (1769–1832) and Mexican California (1832–1848).

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M559713;type=106>

Object: Book

Title: *Catecismo y Esposicion Breve de la Doctrina Cristiana* (Spanish-language catechism).

Date: 1819

Object ID: 93.21.160

Notes: Mexican California had no regular schools, and many people could not read. In 1819, the commander of the Santa Barbara presidio, José de la Guerra, ordered catechisms from Mexico like this one, along with primers, notebooks and paper. A local woman was hired to teach school, and parents contributed to her salary.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M530161;type=101>

Object: Bulto

Maker: Arroyo Hondo Carver

Title: Untitled (San Francisco)

Date: Circa 1830–1845

Object ID: 90.209.1

Notes: Bultos are carvings of saints made out of wood and painted with bright colors. Bultos were historically created in the Southwestern United States in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This piece is attributed to Arroyo Hondo santero (a maker of santos) who worked in the rural communities around Taos.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M559896;type=101>

Object: Serape

Date: Mid-to late 1800s

Object ID: 93.21.14

Notes: Belonged to California Governor Pio Pico. Saltillo serapes were detailed, and tightly woven cloaks or ponchos made for wealthy landowners in Mexico. Saltillo weavings became a source of national pride in Mexico and were imitated by weavers in New Mexico.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M55385;type=102>

Object: Daguerreotype

Maker: Unidentified photographer

Title: *Andrés Pico*

Date: 1800s

Object ID: 34.G.141

Notes: Daguerreotype portrait of Andrés Pico, Los Angeles, California. He led the Mexican army in California against the United States in the Mexican-American War.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M19498;type=102>

Object: Photograph

Maker: George Wharton James

Title: *At a Mexican Fiesta*

Date: Circa 1880

Object ID: P.13250

Notes: Photograph of a Mexican Fiesta in San Juan Capistrano, California, circa 1880.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M26191;type=102>

Object: Photograph

Maker: George Wharton James

Title: *Mexican Children at Riverside, California*

Date: Late 1800s

Object ID: P.14495

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M29885;type=102>

Object: Photograph

Maker: Charles Chester Pierce

Title: *A Portrait of Don Francisco Garcia*

Date: circa 1890

Object ID: P.15382

Notes: Photograph portrait of Don Francisco Garcia, Los Angeles, California, circa 1890. Caption: "Don Francisco Garcia of Los Angeles, 115 years old."



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M291264;type=102>

Object: Lantern slide

Maker: George Wharton James

Title: *Mexican Domestic Contentment*

Date: Circa 1885–1901

Object ID: LS.5546

Notes: Lantern slide of a group of Mexican men.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M534843;type=101>

Object: Drawing

Maker: Maynard Dixon

Title: *Adobe Dwelling of Isleta, New Mexico*

Date: September 1900

Object ID: 93.35.1

Notes: Pencil on paper drawing by Maynard Dixon.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M39196;type=102>

Object: Photograph

Maker: C. J. Crandall

Date: Early to mid-1900s

Object ID: P.17432

Notes: Photograph of family of Antonio Maria Lugo in front of his adobe at Rancho San Antonio, California, early to mid-1900s. Handwritten caption on back, "The Lugo Ranch House near Los Angeles. A two-story adobe with outside/verandas and staircase—a type often build by Spanish Californians."

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M130295;type=101>

Object: Painting

Maker: Eva Scott Fenyes

Title: *The Fernando Morales Adobe, at San Fernando, California*

Date: 1905

Object ID: FEN.211

Notes: Handwritten caption on back, "The boy who stands before the door is a Mexican lad who helps Morales take care of the mission property." Missions in California were secularized (made non-religious) by the Mexican government in 1833 and the land was sold off as ranchos.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M295347;type=102>

Object Name: Lantern slide

Maker: Unidentified Photographer

Title: *Class of Students at Mission San Juan Capistrano*

Object ID: LS.6192

Notes: This image is of Mexican and Native American students at school at the former Mission San Juan Capistrano. After Mexican secularization of the missions (making them non-religious), while some were sold off as privately-owned ranchos, others became Catholic churches for worship and schools for Mexican communities. Many local Native American children were forced to attend school.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M217006;type=101>

Object: Drawing

Maker: Carl Eytel

Title: *Mexican Hauling Water at Mexicali*

Date: 1900–1906

Object ID: EYTEL.39.151

Notes: Ink on paper drawing by Carl Eytel.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M31355;type=102>

Object Name: Photograph

Maker: Warren C. Dickerson.

Title: *A Mexican Horseman at Fiesta De Los Angeles.*

Date: 1907

Object ID: P.15770

Notes: Photograph of a Mexican horse rider at La Fiesta de Los Angeles, California.

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M29679;type=102>

Object Name: Photograph

Maker: Charles Fletcher Lummis

Title: *Apricot Sorters and Packers*

Date: Early 1900s

Object ID: P.15327

Notes: Handwritten caption on back, "Apricot packers, immigrant [sic] Mexican workers."



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M98374;type=102>

Object Name: Photograph

Maker: Unidentified Photographer

Title: *Vicente Blasco Ibanez at Unidentified Mission Ruins*

Date: Circa 1920

Object ID: P.32400

Notes: Handwritten caption on back, "With love to Uncle Charlie from his niece Virginia."

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M307086;type=102>

Object Name: Photograph

Date: 1931

Object ID: S5.123

Notes: Photograph of Florence Schoneman and Marion Parks sitting below the tile plaque commemorating Henry William O'Melveny at the Casa de Adobe, Los Angeles, California, July 1931. Handwritten caption on back: "Mrs. Florence de Schoneman and Miss Marion Parks at Casa Adobe before Hispanic tablet."



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M558503;type=102>

Object Name: Postcard

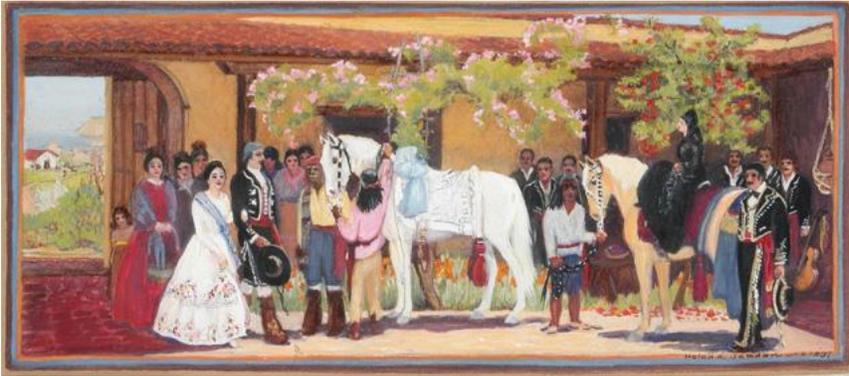
Maker: Detroit Publishing Company

Title: *A Mexican Wood Train on the Road to Santa Fe, New Mexico*

Date: Circa 1930

Object ID: 89.119.36

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M298547;type=101>

Object Name: Painting

Maker: Helen Jordan

Title: *The Wedding*

Date: 1937

Object ID: 14.C.19

Notes: Painting completed under the Works Progress Administration, job number 282.



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M190073;type=101>

Object Name: Hat

Maker: Unknown

Date: 1956–1960

Object ID: 1.A.104

Notes: Straw hat

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<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M210193;type=101>

Object Name: Figure

Maker: Unknown

Date: 1956–1960

Object ID: 564.G.14A

Notes: Skeleton band figurines



<http://collections.theautry.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=record;id=M624233;type=101>

Object Name: Painting

Maker: Paul Pletka

Title: *Tears of the Lord*

Date: 2005

Object ID: 2012.17.1

Notes: Fascinated by Native and Hispanic cultures since childhood, Paul Pletka's work looks at the mingling and clashes that happen when Christianity is imposed upon Indigenous peoples. The figure of Christ is shown nailed to an Aztec cross. At his feet a group of Mexican people wear a combination of traditional and contemporary dress, which in turn reflects both Indigenous and Western designs.