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.

A picture containing text, trouser, fabric

Description automatically generated

<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.

A picture containing indoor, table, cup, sitting

Description automatically generated  
<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.

A person riding a horse

Description automatically generated

<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).

A block of wood

Description automatically generated with low confidence

<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.

A close up of a statue

Description automatically generated  
<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.

<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.

An old photo of a person

Description automatically generated  
<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.

<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.

A picture containing text, old

Description automatically generated

<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

<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.”

A picture containing text, posing, people, group

Description automatically generated<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.

  
<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.

A group of people standing in front of a house

Description automatically generated  
<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.”

A picture containing text, tree, plant

Description automatically generated

<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.

A picture containing indoor, old

Description automatically generated

<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.

A picture containing text, person, photo, holding

Description automatically generated  
<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 Angele*.  
Date: 1907  
Object ID: P.15770  
Notes: Photograph of a Mexican horse rider at La Fiesta de Los Angeles, California.

A picture containing text, several

Description automatically generated

<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.”

<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 Willliam 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.”

A picture containing text, cow, outdoor, group

Description automatically generated

<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

A group of people standing in front of a painting

Description automatically generated with low confidence

<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

<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.