

4. A California Newspaper Condemns Violence Against Mexicans, 1856

El Clamor Público, July 26, 1856

... We do not wish to excuse or justify the disorders that occurred on the unforgettable night of Tuesday. The behavior of the people that fomented that meeting is quite mistaken. Their thinking is bad—if they wanted to attack the Americans who have entrenched themselves in the walls of the city. They can never accomplish this with security, because at the same time they take on grave responsibilities, endangering the life of their families and causing hardships to their properties. The death of Don Antonio Ruiz has exasperated the feelings of all Mexicans. It is be-

coming a very common custom to murder and abuse the Mexicans with impunity. And the Mexicans are growing tired of being run over and having injustices committed against them: but to take up arms to redress their grievances, this is an act without reason. We desire to re-establish peace: those misguided Mexicans should return as before to their homes and we hope for an immediate reform to take place.

El Clamor Público, August 2, 1856

The first occupants of this sort were of Spanish descent and when California came to be an integral part of the Northern Republic, many citizens remained to enjoy their properties that they had just obtained from Mexico via cession, sale, etc. These people from the mere fact of having remained obtained the same rights and privileges of American citizens. But no sooner had order been re-established when the National Congress dictated a law that established a commission to revise land titles. This measure cost uncountable expenses for the property owners and many had spent all their fortune to defend their property. Before their titles were approved, they had to make two or three trips to Washington and finally their labors and watchfulness yielded them nothing. After three years of continuous litigation most of the landowners are ruined. At the end, not satisfied with having uprooted from the hands of the Californians and Mexicans their possessions, the last session of the Legislature passed a law whose object was to declare as public property all California land, except that which had a government title.

This latest blow has extinguished forever the hopes that they had in the new government that had just been inaugurated on the Pacific beaches. But this isn't all, for not content with having plundered their properties under the shadow of the law, they have subjected all Hispano-Americans to a treatment that has no model in the history of any nation conquered by savages or by civilized peoples.

All are convinced that California is lost for all Hispano-Americans and here in Los Angeles because of the latest revolution if before they asked for favors, now they will ask for justice on their knees and for freedom to pursue their jobs.

Almost all of the newspapers of the North are continually full of lynchings that happened in the mines. And, oh fate! Mexicans alone have been victims of the insane furor of the people! Mexicans alone have been sacrificed on ignominious gallows which are erected to hurl their poor souls to eternity. Is this the freedom and equality of the country that we have adopted?