

Andromeda Massé (editor)

“Su Afectísimo Compadre”:

Letters of Business and Family from the Two Californias (1845–1876)

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LH28-4, Box 1.

Early California Letters.

October 6, 1845, to January 16, 1876.

Ten letters (numbered 1 to 10 below).

Introduction

The letters edited and translated below are a selection of ten from the eighty-seven letters comprising the Early California Letters Collection of the “Local History Collection” held by CSUF’s University Archives and Special Collections. The age and chain of custody of the collection are unknown, but most of its contents (including several court documents and receipts) concern the descendants and relatives of José Darío Argüello (1753–1828), a prominent soldier, politician, and landowner in Southern California, and their families and business associates. All but two of the ten letters selected are written on variants of Monarch-size paper, approximately 19 cm in width by 26 cm in length. Letter 1 is written on paper that is 16.5 cm by 22 cm, and letter 9 is written on paper that is 21 cm by 33 cm. The paper, either cream (letters 1, 7, 9, and 10) or pale blue (letters 2–6, and 8) and either lined (letters 4–10) or unlined (letters 1–3), is in relatively good condition, with only minor tears, holes, and tripartite folds that do not impede legibility, though letter 3 is substantially more stained than the others. Letters 2, 3, and 6 are written on laid paper; the rest are written on wove paper. Each is written in a cursive hand in either fading black ink (letters 1–4, 6, 7, and 9), blue ink (letters 8 and 10), or pencil (letter 5 and the back of letter 9). The quality of the cursive of each writer varies widely. Each of the letters, save letter 10, also has a summary of its recipient, sender, date, and type of content written in another hand (likely an early archivist) on the back. Letters 4 and 6 have embossed stamps in the upper left corners, though they have since worn down so as to be illegible. No envelopes from the collection, if they were used at all, have survived.

This selection of letters contains eight Spanish-language letters, one English-language letter, and one French-language letter. Each letter is authored by a different person in a different year, and only two pairs (letters 1 and 7 to Santiago Argüello and letters 2 and 6 to José Ramón Argüello) share a recipient. Each letter covers a different topic, though most deal with property, debt, finances, familial obligations, and social relations in mid-nineteenth-century Southern California and northern Baja California. Letter 1 (1845) is correspondence between Thomás

Esténaga OFM, then prior of the Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, and Santiago Argüello, one of the leading men in Mexican San Diego, wherein Esténaga pushes Argüello to enlist the help of “some friend in Los Angeles” to collect on a debt owed to him by José María Covarrubias, who had earlier received a loan from the mission on Argüello’s credit. Letter 2 (1853) is correspondence between William Pinkney Toler (writing as Guillermo) and José Ramón Argüello, wherein Toler requests Argüello come to Northern California to attend his wedding with a Peralta heiress in the coming month and send him an Indigenous child servant from Southern California for the use of his fiancée. Letter 3 (1855) is correspondence between Pío Pico, the final governor of Mexican California, and his brother-in-law José Joaquín Ortega, encouraging Ortega to “religiously” carry out the task of delivering a tithe to a local priest after the coming branding season. Letter 4 (1857) is correspondence between Trinidad Rodríguez, a rancher in northern Baja California, and Luis Argüello, one of Santiago Argüello’s sons, concerning the shipment of mules and mares to one of Argüello’s ranches near San Diego. Letter 5 (1859) is a short receipt written by tax collector Juan Mendoza for back taxes owed by Juan Bandini for mining rights on land owned by the Moreno family in northern Baja California. Letter 6 (1860) is correspondence between Rufus King Porter, a New Englander, Forty-niner, and businessman then operating out of Ensenada, and José Ramón Argüello, who may have then been scouting out land to establish a new settlement in the San Diego backcountry, wherein Porter informs Argüello that he has pawned a ring Argüello had sent him and that he has used the money to send Argüello a shipment of foodstuffs, as requested. Letter 7 (1861) is correspondence between José Matías Moreno III, then almost nine years old, and Santiago Argüello, concerning Moreno’s anxiety and happiness that an important local personage has bestowed upon him the honorable and enigmatic title of “Mr.” Letter 8 (1867) is correspondence between Juan Ávila and his close business partner Adolfo Stokes, wherein Ávila informs Stokes that he will have a shipment of cattle ready for him in the coming days and that he will soon send an update on when and where to receive it. Letter 9 (1870) is an English-language promissory note penned by Adolfo Stokes wherein Stokes promises to pay Los Angeles politician Antonio Coronel two thousand United States Dollars in gold by the end of the coming May. Of note, the back of this letter contains interest calculations written in pencil and the signature of Coronel’s brother Manuel as witness. Letter 10 (1876) is a French-language letter drafted by Bernard Etcheverry, a prominent Francophone Basque shepherd in Santa Barbara County, to a Monsieur Boisseranc (likely also a Francophone Basque), requiring him to return, through Etcheverry’s agent Adolfo Stokes, a ewe and lamb that he had taken from Etcheverry’s property.



Figure 1: Map of locations mentioned in the letters [Andromeda Massé].

The letters published here should be of interest to those studying the transition of Alta California from Mexican to American control, particularly those focusing on the relationships between bilingual Anglo-Americans and their *Californio* associates or on the systems of formal and informal debts, favors, and family ties that bound *Californio* communities across both Californias. They are relevant to transnational studies of communities on the Mexican-American border, studies of internal and international migration to California, multilingualism and everyday language use in the Mexican Cession (as well as linguistic studies of historical Spanish pronunciations and grammatical forms in California), studies of the economic and geographic history of California and its ranchos, and biographical studies of the Argüello family and those who operated alongside them in Southern California. The letters should also be of interest to those studying elite social history in the mid-nineteenth century more broadly, particularly for their glimpses into how newcomers, either by their age (as Moreno) or their recent arrival (as Toler), negotiated their ways into Californian elite society. Beyond elite society, these letters also shed light on the everyday, petty, and often boring lives of their authors, and thus re-humanize a group of people long mythologized by memorial placards and heroic statues.

The transcriptions below preserve the lines, spelling, and capitalization of the original letters. Any additions, as well as suggestions for illegible words, appear in square brackets. Words that are entirely illegible are denoted by an ellipsis in square brackets. Flourishes are marked by reversed curly brackets: }{ . All non-English letters are reproduced in their original language and style first, followed by a translation into Standard American English.

Edition: Letter 1, Thomás Esténaga OFM to Santiago Argüello, October 6, 1845, San Gabriel, California

Front:

V[iva]. J[esús]. M[aría]. y [José].¹

S[a]n Gabriel² 6 de Octubre de 1845

[+] Mi Estimado S[eñ]or D[o]n Santiago Arguillo;³

Con el objeto de indagar, si la cantidad de cien pesos que me era deudor el S[eñ]or D[o]n

¹ Reference to the biblical Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

² Misión San Gabriel Arcángel in present-day Los Angeles County, California.

³ Santiago Argüello (1792–1862). Son of José Darío Argüello (1753–1828), governor of Baja California (1815–1822) and interim governor of Alta California (1814–1815), and María Ygnacia Moraga y Arbizu (1760–1835). Uncle of José Ramón Argüello (1828–1876), the addressee of letters 2 and 6.

José Maria Cobarrubias,⁴ y cedidas por mi asu favor de U[sted]. en aquellos tiempos de [borasca?] estubieren pagados, le apure dias pasados adicho S[eñ]or, desentendiendome dela gracia disper sada en beneficio desu familia de U[sted]. Consta por la contestacion de dicho S[eñ]or, dela cesion hecha en U[sted]. pero no pagada y cubierta la deuda, y su puesto que la deuda este vigente, puede U[sted]. comisionar a algun Amigo en los Angeles⁵ para que cobre ensu nombre de U[sted]. dicha cantidad y no quedemos arustrados⁶ ambos ados por no correr esta diligencia. Se encargo a U[sted]. mucho, aora que esta ganando el sueldo de Secretario sin tener y aligar la excusa deque no tiene conq[ue] satisfacer, verifique satisfacer completamente, y no mire U[sted] con indiferencia Paselo bien y saludando asu esposa y familia U[sted]. mande asu af[ec]t[í]simo S[eguro]. S[ervidor].⁷ q[ue]. [est.o?] B[esa]. S[u]. M[ano].⁸

Fr[ay]. Thomas Estenaga⁹

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Fr[ay] Tomas Estenega

á

Santiago Argüello

Carta

O[c]t[ub]re 6º de 1845

⁴ José María Covarrubias (ca. 1802–1870). Hispanophone Basque from France and early California politician. Delegate to the 1849 Constitutional Convention in Monterey and member of the California State Assembly for Santa Barbara from 1849 to 1862.

⁵ Pueblo de los Ángeles, one of the capitals of the Department of the Californias of the Centralist Republic of Mexico. Present-day Los Angeles in Los Angeles County, California.

⁶ Probably *arrastrados*, “humiliated.”

⁷ S. S. is a standard complimentary close in Spanish-language letters.

⁸ Possibly *Beata Santa María*, “Blessed Saint Mary,” but more likely *q. b. s. m.*, a standard complimentary close in Spanish-language letters.

⁹ Tomás Eleuterio Esténaga OFM (ca. 1790–ca. 1847). Hispanophone Basque Franciscan friar stationed in various California missions from 1820. Buried in the Misión San Gabriel Arcángel.

Translation: Letter 1, Thomás Esténaga OFM to Santiago Argüello, October 6, 1845, San Gabriel, California

Front:

Long live Jesus, Mary and Joseph.
San Gabriel, October 6, 1845

My esteemed Señor Don Santiago Argüello,

In order to find out if the amount of one hundred pesos that Señor Don José María Covarrubias was indebted to me, and which was loaned by me on your credit in those times of [storm?], had been paid, I hurried some days ago to the aforementioned Señor, disregarding the grace dispersed for the benefit of your family. It is confirmed by the response of the said Señor that the loan had been made in your name, but not paid and the debt not covered, and that since the debt is current, you can commission some Friend in Los Angeles to collect the said amount in your name. And let's not both get humiliated for not running this errand. I entrust you with a lot, now that you are earning a secretary's salary. Consequently, without having and using the excuse that you are not able to fulfill [this task], be sure to fulfill it completely, and do not approach it with indifference. Be well and greet your wife and family.

Respond to your most affectionate Sure Servant who [...] kisses your hand.

Fra Thomás Esténaga

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Fra T[h]omás Esténaga to Santiago Argüello
Letter
October 6, 1845

Edition: Letter 2, William (Guillermo) Pinkney Toler to José Ramón Argüello, September 12, 1853, San Leandro, California

Front:

San Leandro¹⁰ Septiembre 12 de 1853
S[eño]r. Don José Ramon Arguello¹¹

Querido Compadre

Espero que esta le
encuentre á U[sted]. y toda la familia gozando de la
mejor salud.

¹⁰ City in Alameda County, California. Located on the territory of the 1820 Rancho San Antonio and 1842 Rancho San Leandro Mexican land grants.

¹¹ José Ramón Antonio Francisco Darío Argüello y Ortega (1828–1876). Son of Luis Antonio Argüello (1784–1830), governor of Alta California (1822–1825), and María de Soledad Ortega de Argüello. Nephew of Santiago Argüello (1792–1862), the addressee of letters 1 and 7.

Tengo el gusto de anunciarle, que en el mes que entra, me voy á casar con Doña Maria Antonia Peralta,¹² ija de Don Ygnacio Peralta;¹³ y si U[sted]. tiene intencion de venir por aca como pensaba, tendré mucho gusto de verle. Desde su vuelta á San Diego,¹⁴ no me ha vuelto á escribir U[sted].; lo que siento mucho, como yo esperaba Carta de U[sted]., y tambien pudiera darme á pensar que estaba sentido por alguna falta de atencion, lo cual no debiera ser, acordandose U[sted]. que Cuando estuvo en San Francisco,¹⁵ me acababa de quitar mi destino¹⁶ el Gobernador,¹⁷ y no estuve en estado para obsequiarle del modo que queria hacerlo.

Sirvase escribirme una Carta larga con las ultimas noticias de su parte del mundo, lo que yo mismo havia si hubiera algo que escribir ó avisar.

Muchas espresiones de estimacion á mi Comadre,¹⁸ y á toda la familia que todavia se acuerdan de mi. y U[sted]. Compadre, siempre

Back [The conclusion of the letter is followed by a postscript which, in turn, is followed by a vertical column written in a different hand.]:

cuenta con la segura amistad y afeccion de
Su Afectisimo Compadre
Que le aprecia.

Guillermo P. Toler¹⁹

¹² (1835–1926). Daughter of Hermenegildo Ygnacio Peralta (1791–1874) and Rafaela Sánchez (1801–1878). Married William (Guillermo) Pinkney Toler (1826–1899) on October 19, 1853.

¹³ Hermenegildo Ygnacio Peralta y Alviso (1791–1874). Son of Luis María Peralta y Valenzuela (1759–1851) and María Loreto Alviso y Trejo (1770–1836).

¹⁴ City in San Diego County, in southern California.

¹⁵ City in San Francisco County, in northern California.

¹⁶ That is, “position, office:” Toler was honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy in 1848 and was hired as an assistant to John White Geary (1819–1873), the final *alcade* and first mayor of San Francisco, in 1850.

¹⁷ Presumably a reference to recent events of this time, California Governor Peter Hardeman Burnett (1849–1851), Governor John McDougal (1851–1852), or Governor John Bigler (1852–1856).

¹⁸ Presumably María Ysabel Zacarias Alviso y Pacheco (1828–1885), the wife of this letter’s addressee, José Ramón Argüello, from October 29, 1851, until his death.

¹⁹ William Pinkney Toler (1826–1899). Son of American diplomat Hopeful Henry Toler (ca. 1793–1858) and a Venezuelan woman.

Compadre. He abierto esta Carta para pedirle un gran favor
 Maria Antonia tiene necesidad de una Indita²⁰ de dies ó doce
 años de edad; y si U[sted]. me hiciera el favor de mandarle
 una, con alguna persona que se encargare de ella, lo agradeceria
 muchisimo. Aqui hay mucha dificultad para conseguir
 una, y por eso le hago el encargo, suplicando mucho que
 me haga ese favor. Si U[sted]. me mande una Carta
 algunos dias antes que mande la Indita, estaré en el muelle
 para recibirla y traerla aqui. Si no es mucho el
 pedir que mande una que ya sepa algo, mucho lo agradeceria.
 Su Afect[ísi]mo Compadre
 G. P. T.

Guillermo
 P. Toler
 á
 José Ramon
 Argüello
 Carta
 S[ep]t[iem]bre 12 de 1853

*Translation: Letter 2, William (Guillermo) Pinkney Toler to José Ramón Argüello,
 September 12, 1853, San Leandro, California*

Front:

San Leandro September 12, 1853
 Señor Don José Ramón Argüello

Dear Friend

I hope this finds you and the whole family in the best of health.
 I have the pleasure of announcing that in the coming month I am going to marry
 Doña María Antonia Peralta, daughter of Ygnacio Peralta; and if you mean to come
 here as I had thought, I will be very glad to see you.
 Since your return to San Diego, you have not written me; I am very sorry, as I
 expected a letter from you, and it also led me to think that you were disappointed
 for some lack of attention, which you should not be, considering that when you
 were last in San Francisco, the Governor had just taken my post from me, and I
 was not in a state to oblige you the way that I wanted to.
 Please write me a long letter with the latest news from your part of the world,
 which I myself would have done if there were anything to write or advise about.
 Many expressions of esteem to my friend [i.e., your wife] and to all the family who
 still remember me. And you, [my] friend, always

²⁰ That is, a young Indigenous girl.

Back [The conclusion of the letter is followed by a postscript which, in turn, is followed by a vertical column written in a different hand.]:

count on the sure friendship and affection of Your Most Affectionate Friend Who treasures you

William P. Toler

[My] Friend. I opened this letter to ask for a big favor. María Antonia needs a young Indigenous girl of ten or twelve years of age; and if you could do me the favor of sending one, with some person who knows how to take care of her, I would be most thankful. It has been very difficult to obtain one here, and for that reason I make this request, begging that you do me this favor. If you send me a letter a couple days before sending the young Indigenous girl, I will be at the dock to receive her and bring her here. If it is not too much to ask that you send one who already knows something, I would be very thankful.

Your Most Affectionate Friend

G. P. T.

Guillermo P. Toler to José Ramón Argüello

Letter

September 12, 1853

Edition: Letter 3, Pío Pico to José Joaquín Ortega, October 10, 1855, Corunga, California

Front:

Señor D[on] José Joaq[ui]n Ortega²¹
Corunga²² oct[ubre] 10 de 18[--]

Mi apreciable hermano, esta tiene
Por objeto Recomendarle aU[sted]. entregue al S[eño]r
Presbitero D[on] Pedro Gavario²³ el parte de Diez
mo que pueda [?] corresponder [seguir?] el herradero
de mis bienes que estuve a su cargo, y que
cuidara U[sted]. religiosom[en]te de aser²⁴ este mi en

²¹ José Joaquín Gerónimo Ortega y López (1801–1865). Son of José María Ortega (ca. 1760–1822) and María Francisca López (ca. 1763–1833). Married to María Casimira Pico y Gutierrez (1804–1894), the sister of this letter's author, Pío de Jesús Pico (1801–1894), from March 4, 1821, until his death.

²² Alternate name for Rancho Paso de Bartolo (or a piece of property on that site), an 1835 Mexican land grant owned by Pío Pico in present-day Whittier, in Los Angeles County, California. See Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California, Vol. V, 1846–1848* (San Francisco: The History Company Publishers, 1886), 390–91n10.

²³ While spelled "Gavario" here, this is Pedro Bagaría (unknown–unknown), a Spanish resident priest officiating at the Misión San Juan Capistrano from November 1853 to October 1856.

²⁴ Probably *hacer*, "to do."

cargo. Sin otro Asunto [Ordene?] a su
hermano y Comp[adre] q[ue] b[esa]. S[u]. M[ano].²⁵

Pío Pico²⁶ }}{

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Pío Pico

á

José J. Ortega

Carta

o[c]t[u]bre 10 de 1855

*Translation: Letter 3, Pío Pico to José Joaquín Ortega,
October 10, 1855, Corunga, California*

Front:

Señor Don José Joaquín Ortega

Corunga, October 10, 18[??]

My appreciable brother, this [letter] has the purpose of recommending that you deliver to Señor Father²⁷ Don Pedro Bagaría the part of the Tithe that may correspond [...] the branding of those goods of mine that will be in your charge, and that you religiously take care of doing this assignment of mine.

Without any other [matter of?] business to your Brother and Friend, who kisses your hand.

Pío Pico

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Pío Pico to José J. Ortega

Letter

October 10, 1855

²⁵ *q. b. s. m.* is a standard complimentary close in Spanish-language letters.

²⁶ Pío de Jesús Pico (1801–1894). Son of José María Darío Pico y Bastida (ca. 1765–1819) and María Eustaquia Gutiérrez y Arballo (ca. 1773–1846). Appointed governor of Alta California by Mexican President José Joaquín de Herrera in February 1845, a position he held until his ouster by the U.S. Navy in August 1846.

²⁷ The word used in Spanish is *presbítero*, “priest.”

Sr. D. Luis Argüello
 Manco de Sonora
 sobre N.º de 1857

Muy señor mío de mi
 aprecio de ser lo que bien, señor recibido
 la de b. Impuesto de su contenido, le digo
 a b. lo siguiente que estoy con la mejor dis-
 posición, de verbi a b. como le dicho
 en la g. teniente g. me trajera mis mulas
 junto con las Dhas. Seguras, que b. me traía
 si no es así, como puedo ponerme en el mis-
 mo la berinto g. estando con ~~esta~~ mu-
 las le aseguro a b. que lo abraze si b.
 tiene en este Manco, Dhas. así males,
 siendo g. sea mis mulas, Dhas Seguras, y no
 tengo mas que de sí a b. Dispense me
 b. el que ^{yo} no puedo hacer ^{me} con
 v. Sin mas asunto, Dis ponga b. de su
 atento servidor, Trinidad Rodríguez




Figure 2: Letter 4, Trinidad Rodríguez to Luis Argüello, November 12, 1857 [front].

Edition: Letter 4, Trinidad Rodríguez to Luis Argüello,
November 12, 1857, Rancho de Sonora, Baja California

Front:

S[eñ]or D[o]n Luis Argueyo²⁸
Rancho de Sonora²⁹
n[oviem]bre. 12. de 1857

Muy señor mio de mi
aprecio de Seo³⁰ lo pase [?] bien, Señor recibido
la de U[sted]. Ympuesto de su contenido, le digo=
a U[sted]. la siguiente que estoy con la mejor dis=
pocicion de Serbir áU[sted]. como le dicho –
en la q[u]e le mande q[u]e me trajera mis mulas
Junto con las D[ic]has. Yeguas. que U[sted]. metra la
isino [?] es así, Yono puedo poner me enel mis=
mo la [berinato?] q[u]e [étenido?] con D[ic]ha mu=
las le aseguro a U[sted]. que lo abiare di U[sted].
tiene en este rancho, D[ic]hos. animales,
siendo q[u]e Sea, mis mulas, Y las Yeguas, Y no=
tengo mas que de sirle a U[sted]. Dispenseme=
U[sted]. el que Yo no puedo his [?] me aberme con=
U[sted]. Y Sin mas asunto, Sin ponga U[sted]. de Su
atento [?] Y Serbidor, Trinidad, Rodriguez³¹

[*sign manual*]

Back [two vertical columns, the second written in a different hand]:

S[eñ]or D[o]n Luis, Argueyo
En el Balle de los Biejos³²
Mano [?] [*monograph*]

²⁸ Presumably Luis Gonzaga Mariano Argüello y Ortega (1824–1868), son of Santiago Argüello (1792–1862) and María del Pilar Salvadora Ortega y López (ca. 1794–1878).

²⁹ Mexican land grant in inland northern Baja California, about 80 km (50 mi) southeast of Ensenada, in present-day Ensenada Municipality, Baja California, Mexico. Not to be confused with the Mexican State of Sonora.

³⁰ Possibly *deseo*, “I wish.”

³¹ Possibly José Trinidad Rodríguez (ca. 1810–ca. 1900), of Sonora, Baja California. Husband of María Dolores Remedios Valenzuela y Benítez (ca. 1831–1899).

³² That is, Valle de los Viejos. Settlement in San Diego County on the southwestern edge of the Rancho Cuyamaca land grant, near present-day Alpine, California (possibly where the El Capitan Reservoir is today). See William Ireland, Jr., *Eighth Annual Report of the State Mineralogist. For the Year Ending October 1, 1888* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1888), 521.

Trinidad Rodríguez
 á
 Luis Argüello
 Carta
 Nov[iembre] 12: de 1857

*Translation: Letter 4, Trinidad Rodríguez to Luis Argüello,
 November 12, 1857, Rancho de Sonora, Baja California*

Front:

Señor Don Luis Argüello
 Rancho de Sonora
 November 12, 1857

My dear sir, I [...]. Sir, [I have] received your [letter?], [I have] enjoined its contents, I tell you the following: that I am in the best disposition to serve you as [you have] said. [...] that I sent you that you might bring me my mules along with the aforementioned mares. That you treat me [as if it is not like that?], I cannot put myself in the same [...] that [...] with said mules[.] I assure you that I will be prepared to say [that] you have the said animals on this ranch, [be that as it may?], my mules, and the mares, I have nothing more than [...] to you. Excuse me for I cannot [...] with you, without further ado, without placing yourself in your [...] and
 Servant, Trinidad Rodríguez

[*sign manual*]

Back [two vertical columns, the second written in a different hand]:

Señor Don Luis Argüeyo
 In Valle de los Viejos
 By the hand of [*monograph*]

Trinidad Rodríguez to Luis Argüello
 Letter
 November 12, 1857

*Edition: Letter 5, Juan Mendoza to Juan Bandini,
 January 12, 1859 [Rancho Guadalupe, Baja California]*

Front:

Recivi del S[eñ]or. Don Juan Ban
 dini³³ cinco pesos por da[ñ]os del

³³ Juan Lorenzo Bruno Bandini (1800–1859). Son of José Bandini (1771–1841) and Ysidora Blancas (unknown–1801). Married to María del Refugio Francisca Lugarda Argüello y Ortega (1817–1891), the daughter of Santiago Argüello (1792–1862), from February 7, 1835, until his death.

canon territorial³⁴ por el presente año correspondientes al rancho de Guadalupe³⁵ por cinco sitios de ganado mayor.³⁶

Tijuana³⁷ En[er]o 12 de 1859

Juan Mendoza³⁸
Recaudador

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Juan Mendoza
á
Juan Bandini
Recibo \$5.
Derechos
Enero 12 de 1859

Translation: Letter 5, Juan Mendoza to Juan Bandini, January 12, 1859 [Rancho Guadalupe, Baja California]

Front:

I received five pesos from Señor Don Juan Bandini for losses incurred by [the nonpayment of] the mining levies for the current year, corresponding to five *sitios* of the Rancho de Guadalupe.

Tijuana, January 12, 1859

Juan Mendoza
Tax collector

³⁴ That is, “levy, fee (on land).” Likely refers to the payment required to secure mineral rights on a piece of land for a certain period, probably one year.

³⁵ Land grant surrounding the Misión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe del Norte, in the Valle de Guadalupe in inland northern Baja California. Owned by José Matías Moreno y Carrillo (1819–1869), the father of the author of letter 7, at time of writing.

³⁶ Land survey unit defined as a square five thousand *varas* (one *legua*) on each side, approximately 17.6 km² (4340 acres). Five *sitios* comprise one *hacienda*, approximately 87.8 km² (21,700 acres).

³⁷ Rancho Tía Juana, an 1829 Mexican land grant in northern Baja California (present-day Tijuana) owned by Santiago Argüello (1792–1862).

³⁸ Presumably Juan Mendoza (unknown–1865). Godson by *compadrazgo* of Cave Johnson Coutts (1821–1874) and Juan Bandini’s daughter María Ysidora Bandini y Estudillo (1829–1897). Coutts fatally shot Mendoza in an altercation on February 6, 1865. See María Irene Moyna, “Back at the Rancho: Language Maintenance and Shift among Spanish Speakers in Post-Annexation California (1848–1900),” *Revista Internacional de Linguística Iberoamericana* 7, no. 1 (January 2009): 175.

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Juan Mendoza to Juan Bandini
 Receipt for \$5 in dues
 January 12, 1859

*Edition: Letter 6, Rufus King Porter to José Ramón Argüello,
 June 25, 1860, Sausal de Camacho, Baja California*

Front [containing an indented list and a postscript]:

Sausal de Camacho³⁹
 25 de Junio
 de 1860
 A Señor Don
 Jose R. Argüello⁴⁰

Estimado Amigo

Como
 U[sted]. dice que tiene mucha necesidad de algunas cosas tomo empeñado el anillo en tres pesos y le mando lo siguiente

1 peso maiz
 4 reales frijol
 1 real tabaco de hoja (no hay de otro)
 4 reales de jabon
 1½ [reales de] arroz
 4 [reales de] azucar
 1½ [reales de] café. que son 3 pesos

Le mando el valor del cuero en harina. Guardo el anillo para U[sted].
 Su Amigo

³⁹ Port town on the Bay of All Saints in northern Baja California, now in Ensenada Municipality, Baja California, Mexico. Today known as El Sauzal de Rodríguez. See John Ross Brown, *A Sketch of the Settlement and Exploration of Lower California* (San Francisco: H. H. Bancroft and Co., 1869), 9.

⁴⁰ José Ramón Antonio Francisco Darío Argüello y Ortega (1828–1876). Son of Luis Antonio Argüello (1784–1830), governor of Alta California (1822–1825), and María de Soledad Ortega de Argüello. Argüello may have been surveying the Santa Maria Valley of San Diego County, in southern California, for potential settlement locations with Adolfo Stokes (then the partial owner of the 1843 Rancho Valle de Pamo Mexican land grant that encompassed the valley) at time of writing.

R[ufus] K[ing] Porter⁴¹

El cuero vale 14 reales y le man
do el valor en harina

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

R. K. Porter

á

José R. Argüello

Carta

Junio 25 de 1860

*Translation: Letter 6, Rufus King Porter to José Ramón Argüello,
June 25, 1860, Sausal de Camacho, Baja California*

Front [containing an indented list and a postscript]:

Sausal de Camacho

June 25, 1860

To Señor Don José Ramón Argüello

Esteemed Friend,

As you said that you had much need for some things, so I took and pawned the ring for three pesos and sent you the following:

1 peso of rice

4 reals of beans

1 real of leaf tobacco (there was not anything else)

4 reals of ham

1½ reals of rice

4 reals of sugar

1½ reals of coffee,

which altogether is 3 pesos.

I sent the value of the leather in flour. I will keep an eye on the ring for you.
Your Friend,

Rufus King Porter

The leather was worth 14 reals, and I sent the value in flour.

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

R. K. Porter to José R. Argüello

Letter June 25, 1860

⁴¹ Probably Rufus King Porter (1820–1903). Son of artist and inventor Rufus Porter (1792–1884) and Eunice Twombly (ca. 1795–1848), of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Porter moved west shortly before the California Gold Rush, working as a businessman, translator, and legal advisor for Spanish-speaking *Californios*.

Al Excmo. Señor Marqués Don Santiago Argüello, Presidente
de la Academia de la Lengua de San Diego, S. S. S.
Guadalupe, en la frontera de la Baja California, Agosto 20 de 1861.
Excmo. Señor Marqués.

Altamente agradecido á las bondades de V.E. que con prodigalidad
derrama por donde pasa, me obliga esta vez á tomar la pluma para da-
ros las gracias, y manifestaros mi mas profundo agradecimiento
por vuestro generoso cumplimiento. Yo, que desiendo de una es-
te humilde, y sin haber cursado las cátedras literarias, ni conocido
las grandes notabilidades que hermosean la república de las letras,
me veo inesperadamente ennoblecido y elevado al noble rango de
notabilidad, merced á la bondad generosa de vuestro magnanimo
corazon. Vuestro Despacho de 20 de Mayo de este año de Gracia
de 1861, en que, por vuestra voluntad, me habeis condecorado con
el honroso y noble título de "Mr.", ha llenado mi corazon de gratitud
y entusiasmo á vuestra noble persona. Sin embargo, Señor Marqués,
algun temor le queda á mi regocijado corazon, por no comprender
muy bien lo que significan las dos bellas letras "Emé" "Ere" en la
forma que V.E. las coloca para titularme "Mr." - Puestas en esa for-
ma, en la Lengua Castellana, significan: "Mártir"; en la Lengua Fran-
cesa, significan Monseur ó Monseñor, y en la Lengua Inglesa, sig-
nifican "Mister". Ahora, pues, Muy Ilustre Marqués, desearia que
V.E. las interpretara, para saber, si soy "Mártir", "Monseñor" ó "Monse-
ñor", ó "Mister". Estoy inclinado á creer que por ahora soy "Mártir",
por que sufro mucho tormento al no poder darle á la "Emé" "Ere"
la interpretacion debida, y privarme del placer de saber lo que
soy entre las demás notabilidades. Servase, pues, Muy Noble y Muy

Figure 3: Letter 7, José Matías Moreno III to Santiago Argüello, August 20, 1861 [front].

Edition: Letter 7, José Matías Moreno III to Santiago Argüello, August 20, 1861, Rancho Guadalupe, Baja California

Front:

Al Exc[elentísi]mo Señor Marqués⁴² Don Santiago Argüello.⁴³ Presidente de la Academia de la Lengua de San Diego⁴⁴ &. &. &. Guadalupe,⁴⁵ en la frontera de la Baja California, Agosto 20 de 1861.

Exc[elentísi]mo. Señor Marqués.

Altamente agradecido á las bondades de V[uestra].E[xcelencia]. que con prodigalidad derrama por donde pasa, me obliga esta vez á tomár la pluma para daros las gracias, y manifestaros mi mas profundo agradecimiento por vuestro generoso cumplimiento. Yo, que deciendo de una estirpe humilde, y sin haber Cursado las cátedras literárias, ni conocido las grandes notabilidades que hermocean la república de las létras, me veo inesperadamente ennoblecido y elevado al noble rango de notabilidad, merced á la bondad generosa de vuestro magnanimo corazon. Vuestro Despacho de 20 de Mayo de este año de Gracia⁴⁶ de 1861, en que, por vuestra voluntad me habeis condecorado con el honroso y noble titulo de, “Mr.”,⁴⁷ ha llenado mi corazon de gratitud y entusiasmo á vuestra noble persona. Sin embargo, Señor Marqués, algun temór le quéda á mi regocijado corazon, por no comprendér muy bien lo que significan las dos bellas létras “Eme” “Erre” en la forma que V[uestra].E[xcelencia]. las coloca para titularme “Mr.”. Puestas en esa forma, en la Lengua Castellana,⁴⁸ significan: “Mártir”, en la Lengua Fran

⁴² Argüello held no title equivalent to marquis, though Moreno may be referring to Argüello's large landholdings on either side of the California–Mexico border.

⁴³ Santiago Argüello (1792–1862). Son of José Darío Argüello (1753–1828), governor of Baja California (1815–1822) and interim governor of Alta California (1814–1815), and María Ygnacia Moraga y Arbizu (1760–1835). Uncle of José Ramón Argüello (1828–1876), the addressee of letters 2 and 6.

⁴⁴ Unknown organization. May have been a school or Hispanophone social club in San Diego, or may be a metaphor used by Moreno to represent Argüello's influence in the Hispanophone communities on the California–Mexico border. The first national Academia de la Lengua Española outside of Spain was founded in Bogotá, Colombia, in 1871, but this does not preclude a similar local organization being founded in San Diego a decade prior.

⁴⁵ Land grant surrounding the Misión de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe del Norte, in the Valle de Guadalupe in inland northern Baja California. Owned by José Matías Moreno y Carrillo (1819–1869), the father of the author of this letter, at time of writing.

⁴⁶ That is, in the year of Our Lord.

⁴⁷ The rest of the text is slanted, but “Mr.” appears upright.

⁴⁸ That is, Spanish.

cesa, significan Monseur ó Monseñor,⁴⁹ y⁵⁰ en la Lengua Ynglesa, significan “Mister”. Ahora, pues, Muy Ylustre Marqués, desearía que V[uestra].E[xcelencia]. las interpretara, para saber, si soy “Martir”, “Monseur” ó “Monseñor”, ó “Mister”. Estoy inclinado á creer que por ahora soy “Martir”, por que sufro mucho tormento al no poder darle á la “Eme”-“Erre” la interpretacion debida, y privarme del placer de saber lo que soy éntre las demás notabilidades. Sirvase, pues, Muy Noble y Muy

Back [The conclusion of the letter is followed by a vertical column written in a different hand.]:

Ylustre Marqués, el desarrollar, como Presidente de la Academia, toda la Elocuencia de su hermosa y fecunda Lengua, para darme cuanto antes la interpretacion que le pido, y quedaré mas obligado á sus favores. Tengo la honra, Serenisimo Señor Marqués, de ofrecermé á sus nobles pies, como su muy humilde y obediente Servidor.

Mr. Matias Moreno⁵¹

José M Moreno

al

Ex[celentísimo] Señor

Marques Don

Santiago

Argüello

Presidente

de la lengua

de San Diego

& & &

Agosto 20. 1861

Translation: Letter 7, José Matías Moreno III to Santiago Argüello, August 20, 1861, Rancho Guadalupe, Baja California

Front:

To the Most Excellent Señor Marquis Don Santiago Argüello, President of the Academy of Language of San Diego & cetera & cetera & cetera

⁴⁹ That is, *monsieur* and *monsignor*.

⁵⁰ Text below is wiped away and overwritten.

⁵¹ Probably José Matías Moreno III (1852–1902). Son of José Matías Moreno y Carrillo (1819–1869), personal secretary to Pío Pico and the son of a Scots whaler named Joseph Matthew Brown (bef. 1799–bef. 1851), and Prudenciana María del Refugio López-Vallejo (1832–1920). Moreno would have been eight years old at time of writing.

Guadalupe, on the border of Baja California, August 20, 1861

Most Excellent Señor Marquis,

Highly grateful to the kindness of Your Excellency, who lavishly pours out wherever you go, who this time obliges me to take up my pen and express my deepest gratitude for your generous compliments. I, who descend from humble stock, and without having attended the literary circles, nor known the great notables who beautify the republic of letters, see myself unexpectedly ennobled and elevated to the noble rank of notability, thanks to the generous kindness of your magnanimous heart. Your Dispatch of the 20th of May of this year of Grace 1861, in which, by your free will, you have decorated me with the honorable and noble title of, "Mr.", has filled my heart with gratitude and enthusiasm for your noble person. However, Señor Marquis, some fear remains in my joyful heart, for not understanding very well what the two beautiful letters "M" and "R" mean in the way that Your Excellency places them to title me "Mr.". When placed like so, in the Castilian language, they mean "Martyr", in the French language, they mean "Monsieur" or "Monsignor", and in the English language, they mean "Mister". Now, then, Very Illustrious Marquis, I would like Your Excellency to interpret them, to know if I am "Martyr", or "Monsieur" or "Monsignor", or "Mister". I am inclined to believe that for now I am a "Martyr", because I suffer much torment by not being able to give the "M"- "R" their proper interpretation, and to deprive myself of the pleasures of knowing what I am among the other notables. Please, then, Very Noble and Very

Back [The conclusion of the letter is followed by a vertical column written in a different hand.]:

Illustrious Marquis, develop, as President of the Academy, all the Eloquence of your beautiful and fertile language, to give me as soon as possible the interpretation I ask of you, and I will be more obliged to your favors. I have the honor, Most Serene Señor Marquis, to offer myself at your noble feet, as your very humble and obedient Servant.

Mr. Matías Moreno

José M Moreno to the Most Excellent Señor Marquis Don Santiago Argüello,
President of the [Academy of] Language of San Diego, & cetera & cetera & cetera
August 20, 1861

*Edition: Letter 8, Juan Ávila to Adolfo Stokes,
July 9, 1867, San Juan Capistrano, California*

Front:

D[on], Adolfo S[tokes],⁵²

⁵² Adolfo (or Adolpho) Benjamin Stokes (ca. 1843–1898). Son of English sailor Edward (Eduardo) Stokes (unknown–ca. 1846) and María del Refugio de Jesús Ortega y Pico (1823–1896).

S[an], J[uan], C[a]p[istra]no⁵³ Julio 9. de 1867.

Querido, Adolfo despues de saludarte te pongo estos cortos renglones para decirte que para el dia 13. de este, bengaz⁵⁴ sinfalta á recibir los becerros que tengo que entregarte pues para esta fecha loz tengo, todos juntoz por luego te mando Ábizar⁵⁵ con tiempo para que tenga lugar de benir para este dia por tus animalez.
y no ofreciendose maz manda como gustes á tu aff[ectísi]mo Tio que berte decea

Juan Abila⁵⁶

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Juan Abila
á
Adolfo Stokes
Carta
Julio 9 de 1867

Translation: Letter 8, Juan Ávila to Adolfo Stokes, July 9, 1867, San Juan Capistrano, California

Front:

Don Adolfo Stokes,
San Juan Capistrano, July 9, 1867

My dear Adolfo, after greeting you, I write you these short lines to tell you that by the 13th of this [month], you must come without fail to receive the calves that I have to deliver to you, because by that date I will have them all together; at that point I will send you a notice in time so that you know where to come on that day for your animals.

And not having anything more to offer, respond as you like to your most affectionate Uncle who wishes to see you,

⁵³ City in present-day Orange County (then part of Los Angeles County), in southern California.

⁵⁴ That is, *vengas*, “you may come:” Ávila regularly uses ⟨b⟩ for ⟨v⟩ and ⟨z⟩ for ⟨s⟩. The respective sounds (/b~β/ and /s/) are identical in most North American Spanish dialects.

⁵⁵ That is, *avisar*, “to advise.”

⁵⁶ Probably Juan Ávila (1812–1889). Son of Antonio Ygnacio Ávila y Urquidez (ca. 1774–1858) and Rosa María Ruiz y Monreal López (1789–1866). Grantee of the 1842 Rancho Niguel Mexican land grant, encompassing present-day Laguna Niguel, Laguna Hills, Laguna Beach, and Aliso Viejo in southern Orange County, in southern California. Ávila is not closely related to Stokes, despite the use of the term “uncle.”

Juan Ávila

Back [vertical column written in a different hand]:

Juan Ávila to Adolfo Stokes

Letter

July 9, 1867

Los Angeles,
October 22^d 1870.

\$ 2,000 7/100

On or before the
31st day of May, A. D. 1871, for
value received, I promise to
Antonio, F. Coronel, or order,
the sum of two thousand dollars,
payable only in Gold coin of the
United States, with interest thereon
at the rate of two per cent
per month, from the first
day of November, proximo,
until paid.

(This mortgage, of even date
herewith, to secure the pay-
ment of this promissory note,
is duly stamped with two
dollars, Internal Revenue stamps.)

A. Stokes

Figure 4: Letter 9, Adolfo Stokes to Antonio F. Coronel, October 22, 1870 [front].

*Edition: Letter 9, Adolfo Stokes to Antonio F. Coronel,
October 22, 1870, Los Angeles, California*

Front:

Los Angeles.

October 22[nd]. 1870.

\$2000 ^{00/100}

On or before the
31st day of May, A[nno].D[omini]. 1871, for
value recieved [*sic*], I promise to
Antonio, F, Coronel,⁵⁷ on order,
the sum of Two Thousand Dollars,
payable only in Gold Coin⁵⁸ of The
United States, with interest thereon,
at the rate of Two per cent
per month, from the first
day of November, proximo,⁵⁹
until paid.

(The mortgage, of even date
herewith,⁶⁰ to secure the pay=
=ment of this promissory note,
is only stamped with Two
Dollars, Internal Revenue Stamps.⁶¹)

A[dolfo] Stokes⁶²

⁵⁷ Antonio Francisco (or Franco) Coronel y Romero (1817–1894). Son of José Ygnacio Coronel y Salazar (1795–1862) and María Josefa Francisca Romero y Rosel (1802–1871). Former mayor of Los Angeles (1853–1854) and Los Angeles County Assessor (1850–1856). State Treasurer of California (1867–1871) at time of writing.

⁵⁸ May be referring either to gold coins minted by the United States Mint, such as the \$10 eagle, the gold one-dollar coin, and the gold three-dollar coin, or to any gold-based representative money produced by the United States, such as gold certificates. Privately-issued coin-like tokens, collectively referred to as “California gold coinage,” were common in California from 1849, but had been demonetized under the Coinage Act of 1864.

⁵⁹ That is, the beginning of the next month, in nine days’ time.

⁶⁰ That is, having the same date as this letter (October 22, 1870).

⁶¹ Stamp placed on a legal document to indicate that a tax, duty, or fee has been collected as part of the process of making the document legally binding. This particular stamp would have been a Scott #R82a, 1862–1871 U.S. Internal Revenue Stamp, \$2 Mortgage, imperforate, red.

⁶² Adolfo (or Adolpho) Benjamin Stokes (ca. 1843–1898). Son of English sailor Edward (Eduardo) Stokes (unknown–ca. 1846) and María del Refugio de Jesús Ortega y Pico (1823–1896).

Back [Following the addressee's name, there are several text fields and vertical columns written in different hands, including a list of numbers in pencil]:

A. F. Coronel

Adolfo Stokes

to

Antonio F Coronel

Promissory

note

2000 ^{00/100}

october 22[nd]. 1870

sin recurso [without appeal]

Manuel F Coronel⁶³

12	9
7	[<i>deletion</i>]
	6
19	15
40	
760	
20	
780	
2780	
5000	
2220	

[...]

6/872

Edition: Letter 10, Bernard Etcheverry to M. Boisseranc, January 16, 1876, Santa Maria, California

Front:

S[an]ta Maria⁶⁴ 16 Janvier 1876

Monsieur Boisserand⁶⁵ ayez la complaisance
de remettre la brebis avec son agneau
a la même place que l'avez prise, sinon

⁶³ Manuel Francisco (or Franco) Coronel y Romero (1830–unknown). Brother of Antonio F. Coronel (1817–1894). Presumably acting as a witness for this transaction.

⁶⁴ City in Santa Barbara County, in southern California.

⁶⁵ Unknown person, probably surnamed Boisseranc. Presumably a Francophone Basque shepherd.

vous serez responsable des dommages et intérêts.

Vous serez⁶⁶ que Mr. Adolfo Stokes⁶⁷ est enchargé pour tous les animaux m'appartenant pour reclamer.

B[ernard]. Etcheverry.⁶⁸

Translation: Letter 10, Bernard Etcheverry to M. Boisseranc, January 16, 1876, Santa Maria, California

Front:

Santa Maria, January 16, 1876

Monsieur Boisseranc, be amicable to bringing the sheep and its lamb back to the same place you took them from, or else you will be responsible for damages and interest.

You will know that Mr. Adolfo Stokes is in charge of claims concerning all the animals that belong to me.

Bernard Etcheverry.

ABOUT THE EDITOR: Andromeda Massé of Walnut, California, earned an A.A. in History (2020) at Mount San Antonio College and a B.A. in History (2023) at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), where she is a member of the Theta-Pi Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta (History Honor Society).

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⁶⁶ That is, *saurez*, "you will know."

⁶⁷ Adolfo (or Adolpho) Benjamin Stokes (ca. 1843–1898). Son of English sailor Edward (Eduardo) Stokes (unknown–ca. 1846) and María del Refugio de Jesús Ortega y Pico (1823–1896). This letter is likely a copy of the one sent to Boisseranc, intended to alert Stokes to upcoming business.

⁶⁸ Bernard Etcheverry (1836–1912). Son of Jean Etcheverry and Marie Elissetche, of Labourd (Lapurdi), in southwestern France. Not to be confused with Bernard Alfred Etcheverry (1881–1954), his son by Louise Earle, after whom Etcheverry Hall at the University of California, Berkeley, is named.