

The Ohlone People and the Missions

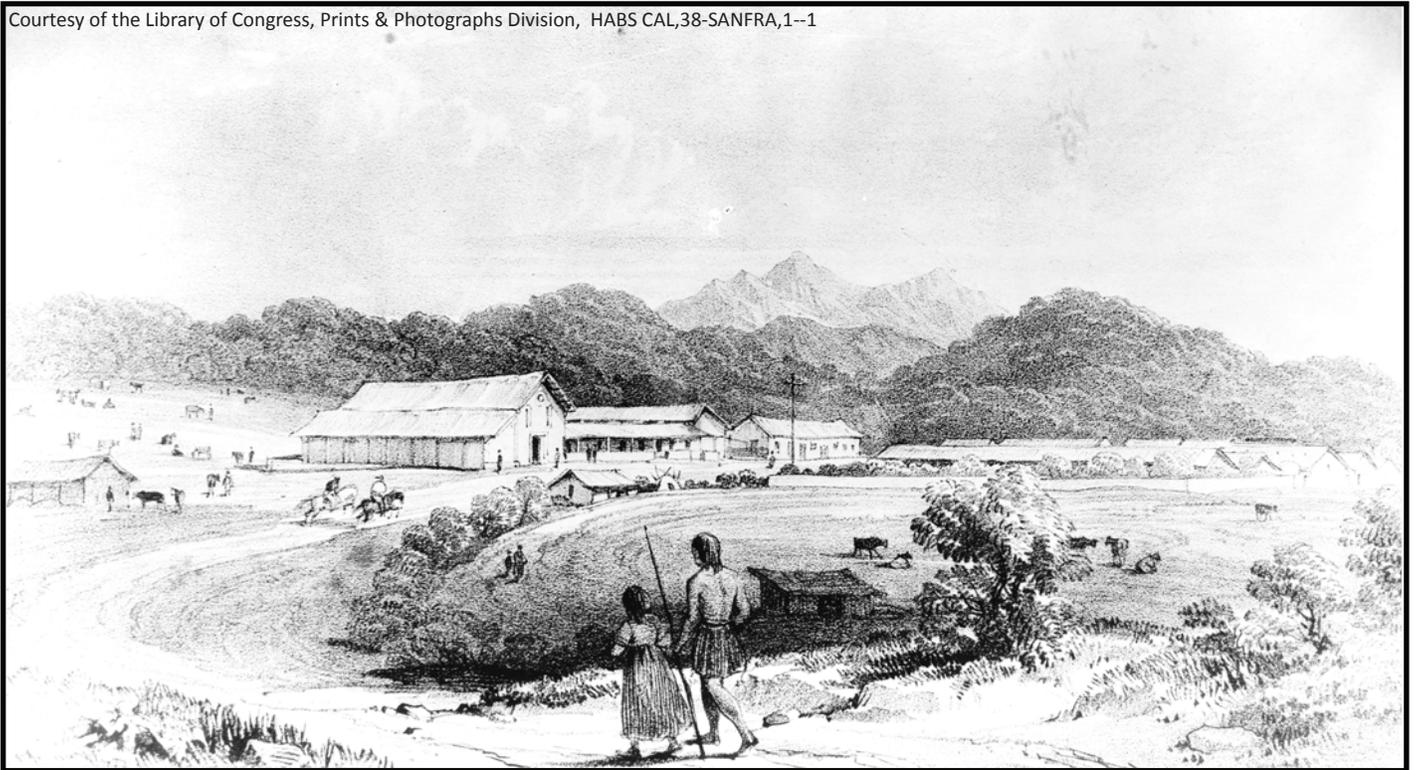
Mission Indian Fugitivism

One way that Mission Indians responded to the Spanish world was to leave it. In all the missions, Indians would absent themselves from the mission without the permission of the padres. This was especially true at nearby Mission San Francisco de Asis (Mission Dolores) in the years 1794-1797.

There were several reasons why converted Indians chose to return to either their traditional home lands or in the case of Indians at Mission San Francisco to flee to the shores of the East Bay. Once or twice a year Indians were allowed to go in relatively large groups to visit their parents, relatives, and friends in their native villages. Not infrequently, however, they would absent themselves from the missions, and remain in their native villages for several months or perhaps even longer, sometimes much longer.

Ethnohistorian Randy Milliken believes that Indians also left to escape disease: He writes that "Many Mission Indians fled Mission San Francisco in April 1795, after an epidemic (possibly typhoid fever) passed through the mission village in February and March." Some of these people were surely from the Lands End area, only about five miles to the west.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, HABS CAL,38-SANFRA,1--1



Ohlone people walking towards Mission Dolores in a drawing by Russian-Ukrainian expedition artist Louis Choris, 1816.