

## A POPULATION MAP OF CALIFORNIA, 1798

DAVID HORNBECK

*California State University, Northridge*

The historical geography of California during the Spanish period, 1769-1821, has received relatively little attention. This lack of attention is most apparent when one attempts to locate maps for classroom use. To the author's knowledge, no detailed map of California's population exists for any time during the Spanish period. The accompanying map of California's population in 1798 is an attempt to provide such a map.

The base upon which the map was drawn came from Jose Narvaes, *Carta Esferica de los Territorios de la Alta y Baja California y Estado de Sonora, 1823*. Data for the map were obtained from a Spanish census of all presidial districts dated 31 December 1798. The census was found in the California State Archives, Sacramento. Each presidio gathered for its district demographic information on age, sex, race, marital status, and total numbers present. The census also contained other material, the nature of which varied considerably from presidio to presidio. For example, the Santa Barbara Presidio added a few notes concerning teaching the Christian doctrine to the mission Indians, principal industries of the region, and the type of crops planted most frequently within the district.

Regional data accompanying the map reveals that at the end of the eighteenth century both the Spanish and mission populations were primarily in the southern part of the state. The heaviest concentration of mission Indians occurred in the San Diego District, while the largest number of Spaniards was found in the Santa Barbara District. The overall population distribution reveals a steady



decrease by district from south to north. Additional census data, which should broaden the perspective presented here, are currently being tabulated and mapped.