

Manhattan College

From the Selected Works of Adam Arenson

2005

Ansel Adams's Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross:
Nature, Photography, and the Search for
California

Adam Arenson, *University of Texas at El Paso*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/adam_arenson/8/

Ansel Adams's *Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross*: Nature, Photography, and the Search for California

BY ADAM ARENSON

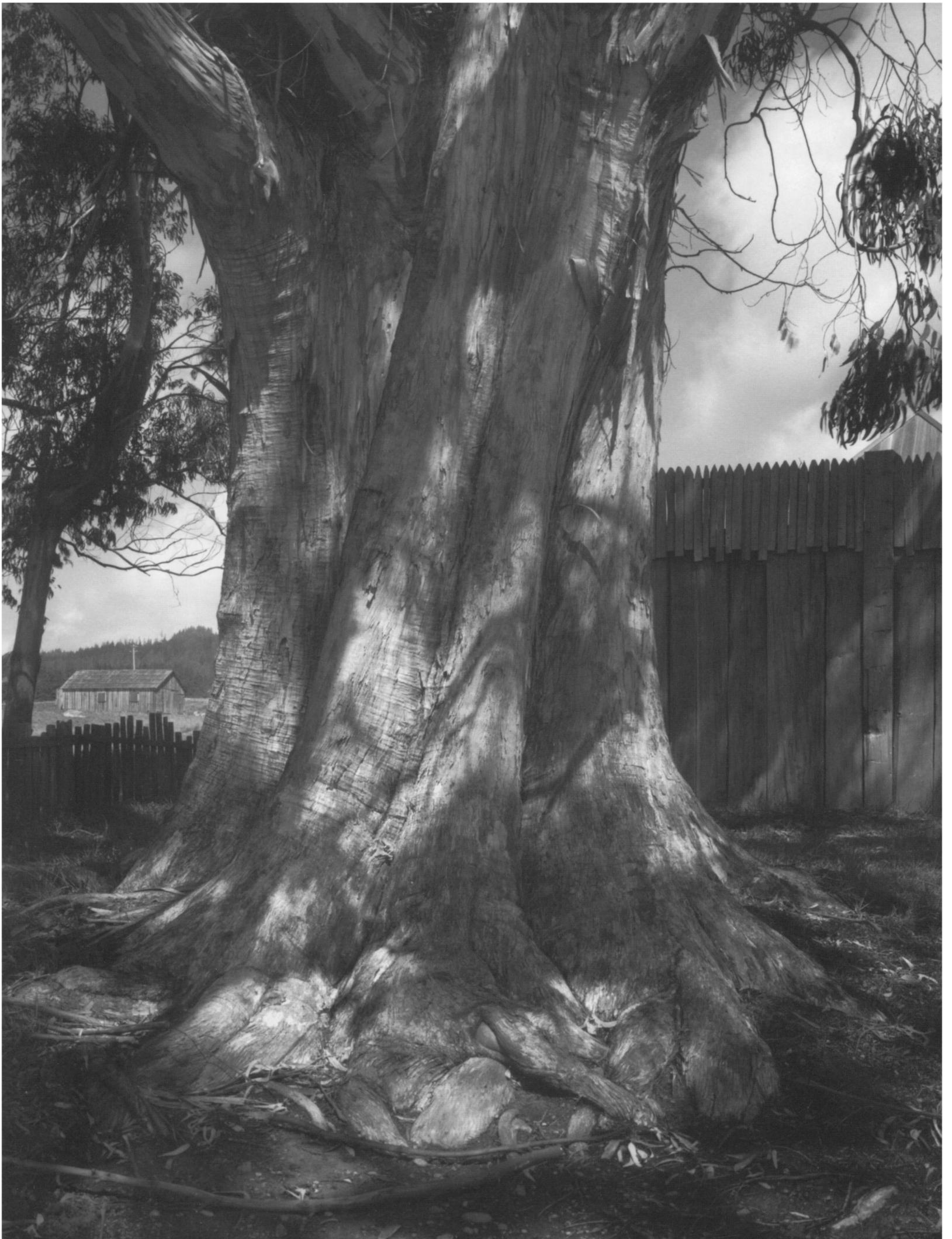
As Ansel Adams prepared for the exhibition of his *Singular Images* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1974, he looked back over his illustrious career and complained. “Curator after curator had chosen the same small group of landscapes,” he wrote. Approaching the Met exhibition, Adams argued that “I wanted this show to have a broader perspective, to show some of my portraits and a sizable excerpt of my work with Polaroid Land materials, a project that I had followed for over twenty years.” And so he presented fifty-two practically unknown images—portraits, profiles of urban architecture, extreme close-ups. Amongst these gems of the mature Adams oeuvre, one remarkable photograph stands out: *Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross, California* (1969).¹

In this vertical photograph, more portrait than landscape, the stately eucalyptus dominates the frame. Adams the modernist was of course drawn to the interplay of light and shade; the tree’s gnarls and wrinkles, roots and drooping branches, give the photograph its rich texture. Breadth predominates, but a shadow of wispy branches falls into the top edges, suggesting height. In the background, two fences converse: At right, the tall boards of the stockade bespeak strength—they are hewn thick and topped with edges sharp—while at left, the undulating pattern of a garden fence speaks softly of pastoral dreams and boasts of its barn, behind. The eucalyptus’s trunk, twisted, gives testimony to the offshore whispers of the sea breeze coming up from the cove.

The image thus has all the line play and technical mastery that one expects of an Ansel Adams photograph. Formally divided into thirds, the image presents the eucalyptus as magician, turning the large fence into the small behind its bulk. (In actuality, the stockade reaches a corner here, and continues in a line behind the trunk.) Taken in black and white, there is a timelessness to the photograph, suggesting the scene of 1809, when the Russian fur traders, the *promyshleniki*, arrived to this coast, to its redwood forest. It suggests 1873, the year an American farmer and his Chilean wife moved onto the property. And it brings to mind Adams’s own history, and the photographs of fences, trees, and roots that filled his first show in the East, at “An American Place,” Alfred Stieglitz’s gallery in 1936. Then, Adams presented images of his native California, urban

Sixty-seven years old and famous enough, Ansel Adams had stopped taking photographs regularly by 1969. Yet this Polaroid, a tourist image of a state park, holds within it the puzzle of place that is California: a visual history of Australian trees, a Russian fort, and a once-Spanish territory. Hinting at the gold rush and the redwoods, this image combines Adams’s admiration of the birth of nature photography with his growing environmental consciousness.

ANSEL ADAMS, EUCALYPTUS TREE, FORT ROSS, CALIFORNIA, POLAROID PRINT, 1969. COURTESY OF ANSEL ADAMS PUBLISHING RIGHTS TRUST.



and unpeopled, taken less than an hour's drive from Fort Ross.² In 1936, Adams's wilderness work was still mostly in the future; by 1969, such a scene had other overtones.

Beyond beautiful aesthetics, the meanings in landscape photographs have been hard to fathom. Art historian Martin Berger has begun to take a critical view of the "white sight" of American landscape photographers, arguing that the early American landscape portraitists—he explicitly

Adams the modernist was of course drawn to the interplay of light and shade; the tree's gnarls and wrinkles, roots and drooping branches, give the photograph its rich texture.

mentions Carleton Watkins, who will return in this study—used their prints to privilege a white, masculine view of wilderness. Berger argues that these photographs solidified the Eastern view of Western vistas, linking these spaces to a frontier narrative, leaving all to be interpreted in line with national priorities.³ In this light, a radical way to read this photograph—its blocked views, the fence of a military garrison—is to think about the events of 1969 and imagine in this photograph the subtle protest of an "admittedly conservative liberal," as art historian Sally Stein has described Adams. In the midst of fighting in Vietnam, the Summer of Love, and the growth of American wilderness tourism, Adams may have been reacting not only to his own developing legacy but the charged politics of the moment. A brooding resignation, which flickers through this image, may suggest a failure to express an alternative—a feeling that may add to the image's success.⁴

Such a political reading may be seductive, even stylish, and the setting of a Russian fort at the height of the Cold War is suggestive. Adams himself described the Met exhibition as occurring

amidst "grave problems—Vietnam, racism, Nixon, drugs, and so forth," though the "gentle crusader" (another critic's moniker) found the audience incredulous when he proposed facing these challenges by "[being] concerned about photography as well as about the human condition."⁵ Adams's photographs were thus more global than specific, but there remains a politics and even more so a history to these images.

This essay considers its puzzle of place.⁶ The photograph *Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross, California* provides a visual history of the connections between Australian trees, a Russian fort, and once-Spanish territory. Though Adams never spoke publicly about this photograph, I argue that *Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross* is a particularly good image to unravel Ansel Adams's environmental consciousness as well as Adams's unique embrace of the history and imagery of his native state, California.

Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross, California shows a trio of immigrants, the first of whom has left. The fence at right is the original stockade of Fort Ross, its redwood planks lumbered from the coastal hills in the furthest background. Ask a Californian fourth-grader about this northern Californian noteworthy, and you will hear, "While Junipero Serra and the Spanish were setting up missions in California, the Russians landed north of San Francisco, and set up Fort Ross. Ross comes from *rus*, or 'Russian,' and they were after 'furs.'" The "furs" were sea otter pelts, but otherwise the geopolitics of the situation are right: The Pomo people of this region faced Russian rather than Spanish conquest, with an outpost constructed in 1812 to warn off the friars. Like many California histories, the Pomo thus met the Western narrative from the east, not overland. As anthropologist James Clifford has written, "the fact of Fort Ross helps dislodge a dominant 'American' history, making room for other stories, other discoveries and origins." The Russians—east of their home ports, and south of their established forts in Alaska—saw Fort Ross as west of nothing in particular.⁷



Carleton Watkins' mammoth-plate prints (more than fifteen by twenty inches) attempt to grapple with the enormity of a giant redwood: a tree more than two hundred feet tall, thirty-one feet across, and more than 2,500 years old. The men Watkins placed at its base, to give a sense of scale, hardly appear. Watkins' photographs of Mariposa Grove advertise the presence of something altogether new in the visual landscape of the United States. What better place to test the power of the camera, to show this tall tale to be true?

CARLETON E. WATKINS, GRIZZLY GIANT, MARIPOSA GROVE, 33 FEET DIAMETER, ALBUMEN SILVER PRINT, 1861. COURTESY OF BOTANY LIBRARY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

After a few seasons of overhunting, the Russian soldier-traders and their eighty captive Aleut otter hunters found the search for pelts off northern California to be a bust. Having notched their progress in the local wood, the Russians turned Fort Ross into a lumber depot and farm, supplying all of Russian America. As the effects of overhunting spread north, however, the Russians lost interest in the area generally; the former Spanish rivals in the region, now independent Mexicans, were courted as purchasers for the fort. Mariano Vallejo, *comandante-general* of the Mexican state of Alta California, placed a bid, but it was rejected when he could not find the necessary funds. The buildings and the stockade went instead to a Swiss immigrant, one John Sutter. Sutter's mill on the Sacramento would be world famous within the decade.⁸

Sutter is thus a convenient bridge from Californian to American history. With word of GOLD!, the forty-niners came into the rapidly transformed territory, entering San Francisco Bay under the watch of American soldiers stationed at the formerly Spanish *presidio*, or fort, on the bluff. The miners swarmed the landscape. Their goal was to get into the hills and stake a claim. New rivers, new mountain ranges, new marvels appeared in American eyes. Miners desperate for wood to fire their engines found a different sort of mother lode when, in 1852, they came upon the first of the giant trees, taller and wider than any European men had seen.⁹

The broad eucalyptus tree speaks of massiveness—its bulk is exaggerated by Adams's cropping. Adams has deliberately made this large, twisted tree the center of attention. This, too, evokes history, for the iconic photographs of early California are full of great trees. But the low height of the first branches reveals this tree to be an immigrant. Its dominance of the frame, however, does suggest the Grizzly Giant, the treasure of the Mariposa Grove, the first, the most remarkable of those tall trees, the giant redwoods, to which Carleton Watkins brought his camera a century before.¹⁰

With gold found just after the Mexican cession was completed, the newly American San Francisco flourished. Between the mining-supply stores and the demimonde of drink and women, art and culture developed. Miners soon opened an opera house, founded library associations, and held exhibitions, where that newest of marvels, the photographs of the wet-plate camera, attracted attention and garnered some of the newfound wealth. Panoramas of the miners' adopted city could be viewed and purchased: images of ships rotting in the bay reminded them of where they had come from, and images of the gold fields kept the promise of a fortune on their mind. One historian boasts that, in the decade before the Civil War, San Francisco was the most photographed city in the world.¹¹

Carleton Watkins was one of those photographers. Born in Oneonta, New York, in 1829, he had come to San Francisco in the third year of the gold rush and set to work documenting its impact on the city streets and the mountain streams of northern California. Following the news of the giant trees, Watkins accompanied survey men into the Sierras. There were roaring waterfalls and craggy heights in Yosemite Valley, and inexplicably, right alongside, there were giant trees. The men wondered aloud. It was as if something primeval had lingered here, and made things larger, more monumental. They could hardly believe their eyes—so what better place to test the power of the camera, to document the unbelievable, to show this tall tale to be true?¹²

Part of the Trunk of the "Grizzly Giant" w/ Clark, Mariposa Grove, 33 Feet Diameter, and its companion, *Grizzly Giant*, are among the most famous of these early Watkins photographs. Taken in 1861, the 15^{-1/4"} x 20^{-3/4"} print attempts to grapple with the enormity of the tree: over two hundred feet tall, more than thirty-one feet across, more than 2,500 years old. Unlike Adams's immigrant eucalyptus, here the first branch appears ninety-five feet above the ground, and it measures six feet in diameter. In *Grizzly Giant*, the full-scale portrait, Watkins stands far enough back to take in the entire tree, the thick trunk and tree-sized



However improbable the result, this photograph is an attempt to take the giant redwood on human terms. Galen Clark, guardian of Yosemite who named the Mariposa Grove, almost disappears between the folds of the tree's base. Such inversions of normal scale might have inspired Lewis Carroll, who that year told Alice of a quite similar wonderland. The photograph's similar massing and partition of the frame suggest that Adams may have used it as a model.

CARLETON E. WATKINS, PART OF THE TRUNK OF THE "GRIZZLY GIANT" w/ CLARK, MARIPOSA GROVE, 33 FEET DIAMETER, ALBUMEN SILVER PRINT, 1861. COURTESY OF THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

branches advertising the presence of something altogether new in the visual landscape of the United States. The men Watkins placed at its base, to give a sense of scale, hardly appear.¹³

Part of the Trunk is, however improbable the result, an attempt to take the giant redwood on human terms. The tree's roots fill the bottom third of the frame, and the tree's bulk takes out

Carleton Watkins accompanied survey men into the Sierras. There were roaring waterfalls and craggy heights in Yosemite Valley, and inexplicably, right alongside, there were giant trees. The men wondered aloud. It was as if some-thing primeval had lingered here, and made things larger, more monumental.

the middle swath. A stand of younger redwood and pine screen the background, making this image, despite its horizontal orientation, more about implied height than depth. The sunlight is dappled, and the bark's texture stands in focus, grabbing the viewer's attention. The subject of the photograph could have been "Clark" himself: Galen Clark, a Yankee settler turned guardian of Yosemite who discovered and named the Mariposa Grove and guided the efforts of Watkins, John Muir, and others, to publicize and preserve the trees from his waystation among them. Yet, posed with rifle and traveling pouch, reduced to "Clark," Galen almost disappears between the folds of the tree's base. This is a giant portrait—for giant trees. The impact, to recover an overused word, was monumental. Such inversions of scale, half a world away, might have inspired Lewis Carroll, who that year had begun to tell stories to his beloved Alice, to make her tower over the landscape or disappear down into trees.¹⁴

Though other San Francisco photographers also went east into the hills to capture the giant redwoods, Watkins was notable not only for his artistry, but also for his access to the East. As early as December 1862, Watkins' images were on display at Goupil's Gallery in New York, where two young artists, Albert Bierstadt and FitzHugh Ludlow, saw them. Bierstadt and Ludlow immediately decided to extend their planned trip across America further west to reach these strange lands. Similarly, Watkins is a clear influence on Adams's work. He is like a long-lost friend, as Adams had assured the reintroduction of Watkins and his San Francisco contemporaries to art history through a 1940 Palace of Fine Arts exhibit. Though in his career Watkins went on to document the changed landscape of the West—photographing hillsides liquefied by hydraulic mining, and doing contract work for agricultural boosters in the California Southland—it is these early "first views" that seem to hold sway in Adams's mind.¹⁵

In these early photographs, California was the wonderland. *Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross* feeds on the monumentality of the first views: Adams also shows a "part of the trunk," with its roots emphasized on a similarly shallow foreground. The screen of trees in Watkins' photograph is mirrored by the wooden fences in Adams's, and the figure of Clark by the human structure, the barn. The places they depict lay a day's drive apart in the northern California wilderness. The redwood fort and the giant redwood mark out California's history. Yet the homegrown redwoods have been replaced by the immigrant eucalyptus.

With the decimation of the local Native American populations and the boom of the gold rush, California became a state of newcomers. Ansel Adams's grandfather came to seek his fortune—and so, in a different way, did the eucalyptus. The immigrant eucalyptus arrived with the others, from the east, to San Francisco, in the mad rush for gold in the 1850s. Like the Russian quest for furs, the tree's connection to European exploration in the Pacific began a century before. Captain James Cook had landed in the trees' native Australia in



In 1873, George Washington Call and family bought Fort Ross. They took pains to care for the redwood structures, turning the Rotchev House into the Fort Ross Hotel and promoting the fort as a tourist destination. One morning in 1886, Frank B. Rodolph led a party of tourists up from Oakland, recording some of the early photographs of the fort before the eucalypts were planted. Rodolph, a stationer and commercial photographer, traveled through California with a Bay Area group who called themselves "the Merry Tramps" (see California History, 82, 2) taking photographs of their recreation and leisure activities. With men peeking out from the cupola and women in proper Victorian dress lounging at the doorway, Fort Ross was becoming a place to visit California history.

COURTESY OF THE BANCROFT LIBRARY.



The 1935-36 California Pacific International Exposition was a Depression-era chance to promote San Diego and the marvels of touring by automobile. Amidst fanciful Spanish colonial architecture were the newly mature eucalypts, which had come to be seen as distinctively Californian. The juxtapositions continued as Ansel Adams brought snow to the sunshine: Commissioned by the Yosemite Park & Curry Co., Adams had installed a photomural of Half Dome, Orchard, Winter, Yosemite National Park inside the Standard Oil Company's Tower to the Sun pavilion.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY'S TOWER TO THE SUN PAVILION, POSTCARD, [1935]. COURTESY OF SAN DIEGO HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

1778, and by 1789 the curious specimens he sent back to Europe had received their Greek name from the French. A boutique plant, an ornament, a curiosity—at least until the acclimatizers took an interest, in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁶

In an early sort of conservation, a generation of botanists and tree enthusiasts sought to reforest areas that had been logged, and bring the serene, Romantic bounty of forests to “barren” areas. The watchword was acclimatization, bringing species from similar climates and aggressively introducing them in order to change the landscape—permanently. The eucalyptus, with its more than three hundred varieties, was the paragon in this tale of biological immigration. By 1870 eucalypts

could be found rimming the Mediterranean and shading the U.S. Gulf Coast. California received a double dose of the eucalyptus mania, as acclimatizers saw the scrubby chaparral of southern California as the place to create an Australian wilderness, while in northern California, tall, supposedly sturdy varieties were chosen, with a keen eye to replace logged redwoods as a source of timber. George Perkins Marsh, the mentor of the movement, wrote in the revised edition of *Man and Nature* that “if we may credit late reports, the growth of the eucalyptus is so rapid in California, that the child is perhaps now born who will see the tallest sequoia overlapped by the new vegetable emigrant from Australia.” As it turns

out, that never happened. From confusion over seeds to misunderstanding about what eucalypts could and could not be to Californians, the rise and fall of acclimatizers and their successors, hawking the tree as panacea, is a rich tale. Yet, in this photograph, it was a success; Adams has substituted the blue gum for Watkins' giant redwood.¹⁷

As to this eucalyptus—the specifics of this tree, in this place—the best evidence points to it being planted at the height of the California eucalyptus craze at the very end of the nineteenth century. The tree is actually part of a series of eucalypts, planted along the road from the fort up to the ranch house. On the day the seed was planted, it may have been Australia returning a favor. Luther Burbank, the southern Californian hybridist, visited the fort in 1900, vacationing from his work developing a spineless cactus for the Australian outback. Burbank stayed in the hotel maintained on the property by Ohio-born entrepreneur George Washington Call and his Chilean-born wife, Mercedes Leiva, and their 14 children.¹⁸

The story of Call and his wife marks another migration, another change in the land of Fort Ross. Out to seek his fortune in a boat in the Pacific, Call represented the generation of miners after 1849 who tracked mineral rushes across the globe and, like the urban pioneers before him, was one who traded mining for other gambles—in his case, ranching. In 1873, Call bought Fort Ross from men who had used the property for timber, and set out to ranch and raise crops. Call was the first American to care for the redwood structures of Fort Ross, even living in the Rotchev House, the Russian commanding officer's quarters, while building his own home just to the north. (It is Call's barn visible in the back of Adams's photograph.) When the ranch house was complete, Call leased out the Rotchev as the Fort Ross Hotel, and played host to Burbank.¹⁹

Burbank's visit fit within Call's plan of making Fort Ross into a tourist destination, where the combination of a colonial history and a spectacular coastline would convince Victorian visitors to put his privately owned history park on the map.

Perhaps it was as part of that effort, to beautify lands over-timbered and over-grazed, that Call planted those eucalyptus trees, with or without the advice of his noted guest. Either way, he succeeded in adding to the property's prestige: by the twenty-first century, a eucalyptus down the road from the one Adams photographed was the largest on the West Coast. It was not just Call planting these trees to attract settlers to an Edenic, forested paradise. These immigrants—Australian trees and newcomers from the East Coast—fed the image of California as a vacation land, a place to visit, to stay, to retire.²⁰

Tourist appeal links the redwoods, the world's tallest and largest trees, to this eucalyptus at Fort Ross. Seeing Watkins' photographs, tourists flocked to the groves of the giant redwoods. Call had the ambition to do the same for Fort Ross. One morning in 1886, Frank B. Rodolph led a party of tourists up from Oakland, recording some of the early photographs of the fort, before the eucalypts. When Call's family found tourist promotion too much to handle, they sold the fort to the California Historical Landmarks Committee, who did so instead. In 1906 Fort Ross became a state park—a state-promoted tourist spot. Because Call courted tourism, Fort Ross is important in the California stories we choose to tell. Were it not for tourism, it is unlikely that Ansel Adams would have photographed this eucalyptus. Promoted from among the millions of such trees, it has been similarly chosen by other visitors, even featured on a website travelogue. Even with Ansel Adams behind the Polaroid camera, the photograph is still a snapshot, a hollowed-out tourist image where one visitor records the presence of another.²¹

But that hardly seems fair, to the beauty of the image or the close identification of eucalypts with California. By the time of Ansel Adams's childhood in San Francisco, the eucalyptus trees populated the landscape, especially marking journeys to the southern half of the state. In that arid region—where stretches of inland desert meet canyons of chaparral—stubby trees, drab grasses,

and waxy bushes naturally dominate, all bent on enduring the high heat, low humidity, and scarcity of rainfall. A difficult environment for trees, perhaps, but a pleasure land for humans. With constant sunny days and mild temperatures year-round, the southern California coast became the nation's dream destination at the turn of the

“Nine-tenths of the men and women painting here on the West Coast . . . all see a desert, a sunset, a mountain or the sea with exactly the same eyes and the same minds. They are simply unintentionally making illustrations rather than creative art. I call it the ‘eucalyptus school’ of painting.” Merle Armitage, 1928

century, even before it attracted the moving-picture industry to its varied landscaping and perfect shooting weather.

Even beyond eucalyptus, southern California was an acclimatizers' paradise. After the success of planting Australian navel oranges in the 1880s, new communities from Pasadena in the hills to Venice at the beach were planned and prospected—and each plot was sold with Australian seedlings, eucalyptus and acacia. Farmers planted eucalypts as windbreaks and up untillable canyons, hoping to prevent erosion losses. From the Berkeley Hills and San Francisco's Presidio to the groves of Irvine and the canyons of San Diego, the eucalyptus became a defining feature of California south of the redwoods. By 1935, the tree had gained an air of permanence. One authority declared, “The eucalyptus is now one of the outstanding trees over almost any California landscape where trees have been planted. Many people fail to realize that the tree is not a native.”²²

Eucalyptus trees were enshrined in the state's heritage that year, in the massive festivities of the

1935-1936 California Pacific International Exposition in San Diego's Balboa Park. The largest urban park in the country after New York's Central Park, its fanciful Spanish colonial architecture had been built as setting for the Panama-California International Exposition of 1915, celebrating the opening of the Panama Canal and inviting the world to see how San Diego was an up-and-coming city with a spectacular natural harbor. By 1935, the Great Depression had dampened such enthusiasm, but San Diego followed Chicago and San Francisco in trying to coax good times from the repeat performance of a successful exhibition. The Mission Revival architecture of the original fair had become iconic; the eucalyptus trees planted in 1915 had matured. The trees had come to be seen “as something distinctively Californian,” with “cultural heritage already established,” according to their chronicler, Ian Tyrrell. Their dappled bark and drooping branches combined with the stuccoed walls and red-tile roofs to create a seductively iconic—if completely constructed—southern California scene.²³

Among the eucalypts in the San Diego sunshine, the thirty-three-year-old Ansel Adams had brought the Yosemite winter. In the Standard Oil Company's Tower to the Sun pavilion—walking from the Plaza del Pacifico past the Foreign Nations Hacienda, stop before the Firestone Singing Fountain and the Palace of Varied Industries—Ansel Adams had installed the photograph *Half Dome, Orchard, Winter, Yosemite National Park* in a photomural 3-1/3 feet tall and 5 feet wide. Adams had been commissioned by the Yosemite Park & Curry Co. to provide the gigantic enlargement, which sat among various photographs and dioramas of national parks and monuments in the Standard Oil exhibit. Fewer visitors could afford cars in the depths of the Depression, but the fair's sponsors nevertheless encouraged the touristic drives to national treasures. Just beyond the *Standard Oil* exhibit and the *Firestone Singing Fountain* stood the *Ford Building* (in the shape of the figure eight, for the V-8 engine), where fairgoers could test out the newest Ford automobiles on the “Roads of the Pacific,” constructed



Hanson Puthuff's Brimming Cup of Summer is unlike other plein air paintings—mostly local landscapes of feathery eucalypts and long ocean horizons, which critic Merle Armitage derided as "the usual output of pleasant calendars" and "the 'eucalyptus school' of painting." Puthuff's painting has an allegorical title, a shallow foreground, and the impact of the large, twisting trees against the shimmer of the lake. This is a quite different eucalyptus. The rough strokes and the interplay of light and dark suggest importance for the trees, much as Ansel Adams would do, forty years later, on film.

HANSON PUTHUFF, BRIMMING CUP OF SUMMER, OIL ON CANVAS, 24 x 30", c. 1928. COURTESY OF DONNA FLEICHER

down into the canyon. The automobile owner could drive from the eucalyptus coast of southern California, out to Fort Ross, past the giant redwoods, and up to the wonders of Yosemite Valley.²⁴

Somewhere at the San Diego fair, amidst the eucalyptus, along with the Adams photograph, were paintings that Los Angeles art critic Merle Armitage despised. “Nine-tenths of the men and women painting here on the West Coast are grinding out the usual output of pleasant calendars,” Armitage had written in 1928, with “pleasant” and “calendars” intended as insults. “They all see a desert, a sunset, a mountain or the sea with exactly the same eyes and the same minds. They are simply unintentionally making illustrations rather than creative art.” With derision, he provided a moniker: “I call it the ‘eucalyptus school’ of painting.”²⁵

The group of *plein air* painters who Armitage disparaged are better known today as the California Impressionists, who translated the fervor for quick brushstrokes in France into an American style of landscape painting, fashioned in the open air and bent on capturing the play of light over the trees, sea, and sky of American wonderlands. Easterners settled in artist colonies at Pasadena, Laguna Beach, and San Diego from the 1890s onward; their local landscapes emptied of humans, animals, or architecture emerged from a Regionalist desire to find in the native landscape the subjects and moods for American art. The irony, of course, is that this was not much of a native landscape. The eucalypts that dominate these paintings are hardly more rooted in the land than the itinerant eastern-born painters come to capture them as typical.²⁶

By the time of the 1935 San Diego fair, the *plein air* painters were on the decline. “The combined forces of modernism, urban growth, and the California Impressionists’ own repetitious output” eroded the status of their art, according to art historian Will South. But these painters had provided a dramatic reorientation of art in California. By consciously avoiding the Big Trees, Yosemite, Mt. Tamalpais, and other northern California icons in favor of their local landscapes, these artists,

such as Edgar Payne and Marion Kavanagh Wachtel, asserted a new view. Some contemporaries went as far as to say this switch represented an opposition to tourism, and a call to environmental awareness. *Los Angeles Times* writer Fred Hogue wrote in 1926 that “landscapists and genre painters are writing the contemporary history of the first half of the twentieth century in Southern California,” for “the groves they paint will disappear.” Hogue, however, was fooled into thinking that these painters depicted “the primitive beauty” of areas long since transformed by eucalypts.²⁷ Adams’s choice of a eucalyptus along the northern California coast suggests a melding of this southern California musing on tourism and the environment with the earlier history of photographing Big Trees north of San Francisco. Less like the feathery trees Armitage derided as far too common, Adams’s eucalyptus takes after the large, twisting eucalypts dominating the foreground of Hanson Puthuff’s *Brimming Cup of Summer*, completed in the late 1920s. The trees are cropped just where the leaves begin, and the dark palette accentuates the size and mass of the eucalyptus trunk. The foreground is shallow and roughly painted, and the background, a lake scene, fades to lighter colors, with the impact of the light on the eucalyptus trunks the most striking feature of the painting. Whether or not there is a direct link, as Adams walked down the gravel path and into grassy meadow between Fort Ross and the ocean, waiting for the perfect light, Adams selected a vista reminiscent of the California Impressionists’ masterpieces. His noble grouping serves as a portrait of place, representative of the varied landscapes and histories of California.²⁸

By 1969, sixty-seven years old and famous enough, Adams had stopped taking photographs regularly. Yet Adams was not retired from public view. Every year he was more aggressive in advocating for wilderness spaces, aware of the changing times around him, if not always comfortable with them. *Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross, California* is an image all of wood, yet every inch shows the im-

pact of man. So there is a politics here—less of counterculture and the Cold War than an environmental consciousness of Ansel Adams and others who came to see the eucalyptus as a villain.²⁹

To approach the present is to follow the eucalyptus to its acrid, explosive end. Some had seen the tree's fall early on; in 1877, amidst the clamoring against the Chinese, one San Francisco paper took on another foe, this "craze all over the state about the eucalyptus." Aping promoters' claims, the *Argonaut* declared that "in moderate quantities (say a forest a day) it will restore the hair to a castiron dog and reason to a partisan." Are you a Californian on the make? "Two or three trees planted along the boundary-line of a ranch will gradually annex the ranch adjoining, poisoning its owner and driving away the widow." Hope that tree nearby will prevent malaria? "In Australia, where this tree grows wild, the country is so healthy that the people have to go to New Zealand to commit suicide." The *Argonaut* noted gleefully, "such are a choice of the many virtues this abominable tree is ignorantly asserted to possess." Letting us in on the secret, the *Argonaut* announced, "of course it is utterly useless." The editors described how "its odor is so immatchably unpleasant that nothing but man can endure it. In point of beauty it is about as desirable as the scaffolding of a factory chimney." And yet, almost in desperation, the *Argonaut* observed that "this absurd vegetable is now growing all over this State. One cannot get out of its sight."³⁰

One hundred and twenty-five years later, acclimatization is pseudoscience and the *Argonaut* is being vindicated. An article in a recent issue of *Audubon Magazine* listed what is now scientific certainty about "America's Largest Weed": the eucalypts didn't cure disease; they make lousy lumber; they steal water from local species; they drive away endangered native birds; they create mountains of leaves and bark; their gummy sap causes birds to suffocate. Eucalyptus trees topple over. Botanists have labeled the unique mix of problems associated with the trees "eucalyptus desolation."³¹

Some evils of the eucalyptus have come to pass more recently. Firefighters nickname eucalypts "gasoline trees," as their highly flammable oils, abundant litter, and hanging bark strips quickly string the fire from tree to tree and from brush to crown. This is by design. The eucalypts—like the redwoods—have evolved to use fire to reproduce, with each fire-exploding pod sending seeds in all directions. Quaint, clever, and deadly: in

From when they marveled at redwoods to when they acclimatized eucalyptus to when they cut down the Australian firebombs someone had planted behind their homes, Californians have always been anxious to find an environment they can live with.

1991, proud old eucalypts fueled the Oakland Hills fire, which killed twenty-five people, destroyed three thousand buildings, and has gone down as the most destructive "wild" fire in U.S. history. The ironies almost are too cruel, for many of the best Eucalyptus School paintings were in the Oakland Hills homes of University of California professors, and were incinerated by those trees they so harmlessly depicted.³²

The area of northern California from Fort Ross in the north to Santa Cruz in the south—a ring about 125 miles wide around San Francisco—has become the epicenter of the fight to remove the eucalyptus trees. The eucalypts at Fort Ross, given their bulk, have found their way into the record book and out of controversy, but in San Francisco, the eucalypts at the fort are under attack. Not stooping to call it "an absurd vegetable," the *New York Times* chronicled the efforts to remove a few thousand eucalypts and Monterey cypress. Government scientists are busy removing the trees on federal property in and around San Francisco—not only at the Presidio but also on Angel Island, in the middle of the bay, in an effort to revive native species.³³

And it seems more than the Eucalyptus School aficionados are upset. Almost every effort to remove the trees has met with vocal resistance. In Marin County, advocates have been called “plant Nazis,” planning a vegetal “ethnic cleansing.” At county meetings and in court, eucalyptus cough drops have been distributed and eucalyptus branches waved. In statement after statement, individuals link the heritage of the immigrant eucalyptus to their own: “Plants and trees without proper papers to show their pre-Mayflower lineage are called ‘invasive exotics’ and are wrenched from the soil to die,” wrote Leland Yee, an ethnic Chinese member of the California State Assembly (who, evidently, was named for the railroad boss Leland Stanford). “How many of us,” Yee asks, “are ‘invasive exotics’ who have taken root in the San Francisco soil, have thrived and flourished?” Universalizing the point, a supporter in Marin testified that “humans aren’t native either.”³⁴

This foray into the fate of the eucalyptus tree in California may seem far afield from the consideration of a photograph. But Ansel Adams understood the connection. He was long active in debates about the direction of the Sierra Club, and long lent his name to the drive to create Redwoods National Park. And trying to discourage eucalyptus plantings in Marin County in the 1970s, Adams declared that “I cannot think of a more tasteless undertaking than to plant trees in a naturally treeless area, and to impose an interpretation of natural beauty on a great landscape that is charged with beauty and wonder, and the excellence of eternity.”³⁵

From when they marveled at redwoods to when they acclimatized eucalyptus to when they cut down the Australian firebombs someone had planted behind their homes, Californians have always been anxious to find an environment they can live with. It is no accident that two of the greatest accounts of Los Angeles describe its “ecology of fear” and its obsession with “the control of nature,” or that environmental historian William Cronon’s revolutionary essay on “getting

back to the wrong nature” evolved as he sat at the University of California, Irvine, while the eucalyptus trees of the nearby Laguna Hills burned. Wars for the environment have centered on the Fort Ross region, amidst the remaining redwood trees on the California coast. Activists have taken up residence in trees, under *noms de guerre* like “Butterfly”—or, in Spanish, *mariposa*, the name Galen Clark gave to the Grizzly Giant’s grove. The redwood groves had once been full of monarch butterflies. Some of the monarchs have become accustomed to eucalyptus trees instead, but the changes the gum trees have wrought on the landscape are blamed in threatening the bay checkerspot butterfly, and making the Xerces blue butterfly extinct. The place of California is deeply entwined with the fate of its natural elements—even while those natural places have a mark of human hands.³⁶

Cronon’s point on getting back to the wrong nature is that we believe Ansel Adams at Yosemite and forget him at Fort Ross. “‘Nature’ is not as natural as it seems,” Cronon writes, and parks—Yosemite and its redwood groves as much as Fort Ross and its eucalyptus—are not outside of history. “Far from being the one place on earth that stands apart from humanity,” Cronon asserts, “[wilderness] is quite profoundly a human creation—indeed, the creation of very particular human cultures at very particular moments in human history.” From the time of Carleton Watkins’ later photographs, showing washed-out hillsides and about-to-be-destroyed valleys, the link between development and destruction has made for poignant art. These alterations have even affected national parks, as art historian Mary Sayre Haverstock has found, for the National Park Service has preserved “classic” vistas by cutting down disobedient vegetation.³⁷

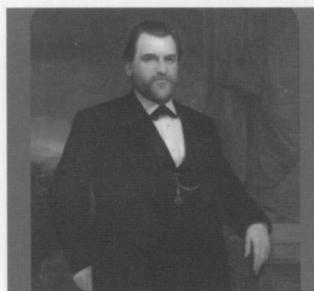
With the work of Ansel Adams, we tend to assume we are seeing the beauty of nature untouched. But just like the portraits and the buildings that Adams brought back into the Met exhibition in 1974, this photograph evokes other forgotten

characteristics: the intentioned aesthetic considerations, the extensive technical work, and the sheer physical requirements upon humans to create these images. We cannot begin to understand *Half Dome*, *Orchard*, *Winter*, *Yosemite National Park* and the dozens of “wilderness” images like it without considering the man behind the camera—where he is standing, how he got there, what he is wearing. *Eucalyptus Tree*, *Fort Ross*, *California* is still beautiful even as it jars the human presence back into the frame.

The images taken by Watkins, the paintings of the Eucalyptus School, and the most famous Adams photographs have shaped the visual vocabulary by which we see and do not see things in the California landscape. Lawrence Buell has argued for a canon of environmentally sensitive works in American literature; students of place should be equally sensitive to how human impact constructs images of nature in painting, sculpture, and photography.³⁸ An accretion of images, of emotions, questions of people and a location, their hopes, their dreams, their fears form the puzzle of place; in California—vast, sprawling, variegated—it is complex indeed. Yet through the environmental consciousness of Ansel Adams, one can evoke the place of photography and the history of nature in this photograph, *Eucalyptus Tree*, *Fort Ross*, *California*.

A native of San Diego, Adam Arenson is a Ph.D. candidate in history at Yale University. His work concerns the intersections of American cultural history, the history of communication, and the history of westward expansion. His dissertation is tentatively titled “One Night Only: Politics, Culture, and Fate in the Performances of St. Louis.”

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
MEN IN THE HISTORY OF
CALIFORNIA AND THE WEST



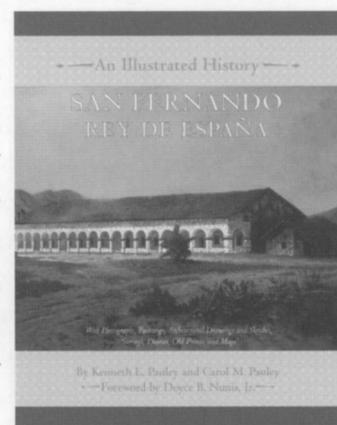
THE GOVERNOR
The Life and Legacy of
LELAND STANFORD
A California History
By Norman E. Taylor

“More than a century after his death, Leland Stanford, a founder of California and the Far West, has at long last received the biography he so richly deserved.”
—Dr. Kevin Starr

THE GOVERNOR:
THE LIFE & LEGACY OF
LELAND STANFORD

A LAVISHLY ILLUSTRATED HISTORY
OF MISSION SAN FERNANDO

“[T]he finest and most complete treatise ever published on any of the twenty-one missionary outposts along California’s El Camino Real.”
—Msgr. Francis J. Weber



SAN FERNANDO, REY DE ESPAÑA:
AN ILLUSTRATED HISTORY

THE ARTHUR H. CLARK COMPANY

publishers & booksellers since 1902

WWW.AHCLARK.COM · (800) 842-9286

ANSEL ADAMS' EUCALYPTUS TREE, FORT ROSS: NATURE, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND THE SEARCH FOR CALIFORNIA, PP10-25

Thanks to Alexander Nemerov, the "Sense of Place" course, Writing History at Yale, and the anonymous reviewers.

¹Quotes are from Ansel Adams and Mary Street Alinder, *Ansel Adams, an Autobiography* (Boston: Little Brown, 1985), 232. The exhibition catalog is Ansel Adams and Edwin Herbert Land, *Singular Images* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Morgan & Morgan, 1974). *Eucalyptus Tree, Fort Ross, California* is Plate 52.

²On Fort Ross, Robin Joy, Heidi Horvitz, and Park Rangers, *Fort Ross State Historic Park Russian Colony* ([cited March and April 2003]); available from <http://www.mcn.org/1/rparks/fortross/>; Robert A. Thompson, *The Russian Settlement in California Known as Fort Ross; Founded 1812, Abandoned 1841. Why the Russians Came and Why They Left* (Santa Rosa: Sonoma Democrat Publishing Company, 1896), 7. On Adams's early fame, Andrea Gray Stillman, *Ansel Adams: An American Place, 1936* (Tucson: Center for Creative Photography University of Arizona, 1982). For the connections in personnel, timing and in Adams's mind, see Adams and Alinder, *Ansel Adams, an Autobiography*, 232.

A good account of the relationship between Ansel Adams and Group f/64, in style and politics, is Sally Stein, "On Location: The Placement (and Replacement) of California in 1930s Photography," in *Reading California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000*, ed. Stephanie Barron, Sheri Bernstein, and Ilene Susan Fort (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

³Martin Berger, "White Sight: Race in American Visual Culture," New Haven: History of Art Department, Yale University, November 13, 2003.

⁴For quote, see Stein, "On Location," 177. For California generally, see Howard N. Fox, "Tremors in Paradise 1960-1980," in *Reading California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000*, ed. Stephanie Barron, Sheri Bernstein, and Ilene Susan Fort (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 193-202.

On such "failures" and the meaning ensconced in silences, see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader:*

Philosophy and Painting, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 81-84, 116-120. Merleau-Ponty wants to exclude photographs from comparison with paintings, but the language he chooses to do so—"Cézanne wanted to paint this primordial world, and his pictures therefore seem to show nature pure, while photographs of the same landscapes suggest man's works, conveniences, and imminent presence"—plays directly into my argument here. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," in *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting*, ed. Galen A. Johnson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), 64.

⁵Quotes from Adams are from Adams and Alinder, *Ansel Adams, an Autobiography*, 235, 234. "Gentle Crusader" is from Jim Wood, "The Gentle Crusader: Ansel Adams," *Historic Preservation* 33, no. 1 (January-February 1981): 32-39.

In San Francisco, Russian-born leftist Anton Refregier's murals of Chinese workers, labor difficulties, Soviets signing the U.N. charter—and the Russian Fort Ross—covered the walls of the Rincon Annex Post Office. The murals were a target of McCarthyists and U.S. Senators called for their removal. They remain in the building today. The best account of the Refregier controversy is in Jane de Hart Mathews, "Art and Politics in Cold War America," *American Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (October, 1976): 763-768. It is also discussed in Susan Landauer, *The San Francisco School of Abstract Expressionism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 215, n. 268, Harriet Senie and Sally Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy* (New York: Icon Editions, 1992), 145. The current status of these murals is discussed at <http://www.page-turnbull.com/organization/projects/comm/rincon/rincon.html>.

⁶A key expert on notions of place is Yi-Fu Tuan, whose *Topophilia* and *Space and Place* are touchstones for this essay. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974). Kent Ryden has described place as "grounded history," with "experience fuse[d]

to terrain, events constantly recurring and always present." Kent C. Ryden, *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1993), 243, quoted in Janice Simon, "Images of Contentment: John Frederick Kensett and the Connecticut Shore," in *Images of Contentment: John Frederick Kensett and the Connecticut Shore*, ed. Janice Simon and Amy Y. Smith (Waterbury, CT: The Mattatuck Museum, 2001), 33. Simon draws from both Ryden and Tuan's arguments that the viewer as well as the artist must have the phenomenological experience to make art speak of a sense of place: "Place demands human engagement, of perception, though [sic] emotion, and even, imagination, for it to be realized." Simon, "Images of Contentment," 33. Simon's article is one of the most successful efforts to grapple with the sense of place in art.

⁷The author was a fourth-grader in San Diego and learned about Fort Ross; the current social studies curriculum also requires students to "Identify the locations of Mexican settlements in California and those of other settlements, including Fort Ross and Sutter's Fort." See the state Grade Four History-Social Science Content Standards, <http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards/history/grade4.html>. Accessed May, 2003.

For the Pomo people and the interconnected crossroads of Fort Ross generally, see James Clifford, "Fort Ross Meditation," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 299-347. Quote is from p. 303. Thanks to Aaron Sachs for pointing out this source.

⁸Clifford, 304-310, 323-324; Joy, Horvitz, and Rangers, *Fort Ross State Historic Park Russian Colony*; Thompson, *The Russian Settlement in California Known as Fort Ross; Founded 1812, Abandoned 1841. Why the Russians Came and Why They Left*, 5-22.

⁹A good overview of this period in California history is Robert V. Hine and John Mack Faragher, *The American West: A New Interpretive History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 234-251.

¹⁰The *Sequoia* genus has three varieties: the coastal redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), the giant redwood (*Sequoiadendron gigantea*) and the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) in China. The trees were nick-

named “sequoyahs” by Union soldiers who had recently been capturing Native American lands, either through violence or coercion, as in the case of Sequoyah’s people, the Cherokees. This misuse was adopted unthinkingly by nineteenth century scientists. Instead of calling the largest species sequoias, as they are often known, I will generally call them giant redwoods, but will I retain references to sequoias in quotations. Etymology from entry in *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1987.

¹¹Scholarship that grapples with the connections between the art and the times of gold-rush California includes Nancy K. Anderson, “‘The Kiss of Enterprise’: The Western Landscape as Symbol and Resource,” in *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920*, ed. William H. Truettner and Nancy K. Anderson (Washington, DC: National Museum of American Art-Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination* (New York: Norton, 1986), especially 124-182, Martha A. Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), especially 121-155.

The claim about San Francisco is made by Peter Bacon Hales, *Silver Cities, the Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915* (Philadelphia, 1984), 49-50, quoted in Goetzmann and Goetzmann, *The West of the Imagination*, 138.

¹²The best volume on Carleton Watkins is Peter E. Palmquist, *Carleton E. Watkins, Photographer of the American West* (Albuquerque: Amon Carter Museum-University of New Mexico Press, 1983). For a discussion of Watkins’ influence see Thomas Weston Fels, *Carleton Watkins, Photographer: Yosemite and Mariposa Views from the Collection of the Park McCullough House, North Bennington, Vermont, June 11-September 5, 1983* (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1983). For a Watkins chronology and a broader view, see Anderson, “The Kiss of Enterprise,” 271-276; Thomas Weston Fels, “Visualizing California: Early Photography, 1849-1890,” in *Watkins to Weston: 101 Years of California Photography, 1849-1950*, ed. Thomas Weston Fels, Therese Thau Heyman, and David Travis (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Museum of Art-Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1992), 17-22, 184.

An overview of the painting and photography of the giant redwoods is provided by Jed Perl, “The Vertical Landscape: ‘In the Redwood Forest Dense,’” *Art in America* 64, no. 1 (January-February 1976). Perl discusses the novelty of the view one was required to take of the giant redwoods, and of various strategies to capture the trees. Tim Flannery considers the attraction of superlative trees (“oldest,” “tallest”) in Tim Flannery, “The Secrets of Methuselah Grove,” *New York Review of Books* March 13, 2003.

¹³Anderson, “The Kiss of Enterprise,” 271-272; Perl, “The Vertical Landscape: ‘In the Redwood Forest Dense,’” 60-61.

¹⁴For information on Clark’s remarkable contribution to Yosemite, see Shirley Sargent, *Galen Clark, Yosemite Guardian* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1964). Sargent states that Clark named the grove, but does not emphasize that he did not coin the use of the Spanish *mariposa*. He simply borrowed from the name of the county in which the grove was situated and the name of the trail they were on. See Sargent, 60-61. On the timing of the Alice stories and the writing, see the introductory material to, for example, Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass* (1864; rpt., Signet Classics 2000).

¹⁵Anderson, “The Kiss of Enterprise,” 271. For more on Bierstadt and Ludlow’s trip, see Ralph A. Britsch, *Bierstadt and Ludlow: Painter and Writer in the West* ([Provo]: Brigham Young University, 1980). On the exhibition organized by Ansel Adams, see Fels, “Visualizing California: Early Photography, 1849-1890,” 119. Watkins’ late work is described in Claire Perry, “Cornucopia of the World,” in *Pacific Arcadia: Images of California, 1600-1915*, ed. Claire Perry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 88-90.

¹⁶There is some debate over who first brought the eucalyptus to California, but it is clear it happened sometime in the 1850s. For the opinions of various scholars, see Robin W. Doughty, *The Eucalyptus: A Natural and Commercial History of the Gum Tree* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) 66-67; Claire Shaver Haughton, *Green Immigrants: The Plants That Transformed America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 118; Kenneth Thompson, “The Australian Fever Tree in California: Eucalypts

and Malaria Prophylaxis,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 60, no. 2 (June 1970): 234; Ian R. Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods: Californian-Australian Environmental Reform, 1860-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 58.

“Eucalyptus” comes from the Greek for “well-covered,” referring to the buds, a name given it by French botanist Charles-Louis L’Héritier de Brutelle. On the etymology and exploration in Australia, see Haughton, *Green Immigrants*, 114.

¹⁷For an excellent account, Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 56-87. The quote from Marsh comes from the posthumous 1885 edition of *Man and Nature*, 325; quoted in Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 25.

For the plural of “eucalyptus”—which itself is a genus, and so at times can stand in for the plural—I have chosen to use the European “eucalypts,” rather than the more common American “eucalypti.”

¹⁸On Call and the tree, see Joy, Horvitz, and Rangers, *Fort Ross State Historic Park Russian Colony*. The history of these specific trees was confirmed in phone conversations and e-mail with Lyn Kalani, of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, on March 31 and April 1, 2003. See also the discussion of the “Russian Orchard” and the mention of eucalypts at Fort Ross in Clifford, 299-304. On Burbank, see “Fort Ross State Historic Park,” (California State Department of Parks and Recreation, July, 1993); Joy, Horvitz, and Rangers, *Fort Ross State Historic Park Russian Colony*; Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods* 207.

¹⁹Joy, Horvitz, and Rangers, *Fort Ross State Historic Park Russian Colony*.

²⁰On the notable tree, phone conversations and email with Lyn Kalani, of the Fort Ross Interpretive Association, on March 31 and April 1, 2003. The eucalypts figure prominently in contemporary pictures of Fort Ross; see, for example, the photographs of park ranger Dan Murley at the “Fort Ross State Historic Park” website.

On the eucalyptus’ reach, Doughty, *The Eucalyptus: A Natural and Commercial History* 85-95. Tyrrell notes that, despite the rise and fall of the acclimatizers, the ornamental pull of the eucalyptus remained steady; Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 14, 59, 82. California was promoted widely as an Edenic paradise, from fruit cartons to the

NOTES

state's exhibits at world fairs. See Perry, "Cornucopia of the World."

²¹Joy, Horvitz, and Rangers, *Fort Ross State Historic Park Russian Colony*. For Rodolph's photographs, see the eleven Fort Ross photographs in the *Frank B. Rodolph Photograph Collection*, BANC PIC 1905.17151, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Eight of the images are available online at <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/tf7s2010k4>. Thanks to Kathy Talley-Jones for this reference. For an amateur photograph, see one taken July 11, 1999 by Elena Emelyanova, a Russian school-teacher, on the "Irkutsk-Fort Ross Club" website, at <http://ifrc.irk.ru/usa99/photos/071111.jpg> Accessed March, 2003.

James Clifford, in his book linking travel to the roots/routes of culture—whether pilgrimage, tourism, exploration, or immigration—saw Fort Ross and its region, known as Métini in the local Kashaya Pomo language, as a uniquely qualified rupture in traditional stories. "Pried out of the continuum of a triumphal (or tragic) American History, the moment of 'Fort Ross' offers strands of historical contingency," Clifford wrote. "In its entwined stories I glimpse the rise and fall of empires, the historical shallowness of U.S. American hegemony, the perseverance and renewal of native peoples, the unfinished relations of north and south in the continent, the ongoing Asian influence in North Pacific history." On Clifford's wide sense of travel, p. 11; quote is from p. 343.

²²Doughty, *The Eucalyptus: A Natural and Commercial History*, 68-74, 89-95; Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 56-71. Quote is from H. M. Butterfield, "Introduction of Eucalyptus into California," *Madrono: A West American Journal of Botany* 3 (October 1935), 152, quoted in Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 83.

²³Richard W. Amero, "San Diego Invites the World to Balboa Park a Second Time," *The Journal of San Diego History* 31.4 (Fall 1985), chapter 1; <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/calpac/35expo99.htm> Accessed March 2003. Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 83. San Diego, with its natural harbor, hoped to show up its rival, Los Angeles, who had to construct its own. General information about the progression of fairs in Balboa Park drawn from the author's native knowledge of San Diego, as well as Virginia Butterfield, "Born-

Again Balboa Park," *San Diego Magazine* 48.12 (December 1996), begins p. 110; <http://www.sandiego-online.com/issues/december-96/balboa.shtml> Accessed March, 2003. An incredible resource on the history of Balboa Park is the clippings archive of Richard Amero, housed at the San Diego Historical Society.

²⁴Amero, "San Diego Invites the World to Balboa Park a Second Time," especially chapters 3 and 7. For the Tower to the Sun pavilion and the Fair map, Larry and Jane Booth, "Do You Want an Exposition? San Diego's 1935 Fair in Photographs," *The Journal of San Diego History* 31.4 (Fall 1985), <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/calpac/35expo12.htm> Accessed March 2003. Most of the water spaces from the fair were turned into parking lots, while most of the industry buildings are extant, if used for different purposes. The national cottages maintain their original purpose. The Ford pavilion is now the San Diego Aeronautics and Space Museum, and the "Roads of the Pacific" were integrated into the off-ramps and on-ramps of California Highway 163, the "Cabrillo Parkway."

The photomural was Ansel Adams' first, but led to a Depression-era series of such works, which recall the panoramas of Watkins and Muybridge. For more on these projects, in the 1930s and later in 1941 for the Department of the Interior, see Adams and Alinder, *Ansel Adams, an Autobiography*, 187-189, 271.

²⁵Merle Armitage, in the *West Coaster*, June 15, 1928, 24, quoted in Nancy Dustin Wall Moure, "Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and the Eucalyptus School in Southern California," in *Plein Air Painters of California, the Southland*, ed. Ruth Lilly Westphal and Terry DeLapp (Irvine: Westphal, 1982), 11-12. Moure notes the original read "creature" instead of "creative," but deems it a typographical error. Capital letter was silently lowered.

²⁶For a consideration of California Impressionism, *plein air* painters, and the "Eucalyptus School," see Susan Landauer, Donald D. Keyes, and Jean Stern, *California Impressionists* (Irvine: Irvine Museum, 1996); Moure, "Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and the Eucalyptus School;" Will South and William H. Gerdtts, *California Impressionism* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1998). For the definition of terminology, see South

and Gerdtts, *California Impressionism*, 89. For the connections to other Regionalist movements in the United States and the ties to Europe, see Deborah Epstein Solon and Will South, *In and Out of California: Travels of American Impressionists* (Laguna Beach: Laguna Art Museum, 2002).

For the importance of capturing light in nature to California Impressionists, see Jean Stern, "Masters of Light," in Jean Stern and William H. Gerdtts, *Masters of Light: Plein-Air Painting in California 1890-1930* (Irvine: Irvine Museum, 2002), 24.

²⁷Quotes are from Fred S. Hogue, "The Art of Edward Alwyn Payne," *Los Angeles Sunday Times*, May 23, 1926, quoted in Susan Landauer, "Impressionism's Indian Summer: The Culture and Consumption of California Plein-Air Painting," in Landauer, Keyes, and Stern, *California Impressionists*, 43; and South and Gerdtts, *California Impressionism*, 240. On the shunning of Yosemite, Tamalpais and other established California icons, see William H. Gerdtts, "The Land of Sunshine," in *Masters of Light: Plein-Air Painting in California 1890-1930*, ed. Jean Stern and William H. Gerdtts (Irvine: Irvine Museum, 2002), 35. On the decline, see Gerdtts, "The Land of Sunshine," 66; South and Gerdtts, *California Impressionism*, 240-243. On the rise of Modernism in Californian painting, see Ruth Lilly Westphal and Janet B. Dominik, *American Scene Painting: California, 1930s and 1940s* (Irvine: Westphal Publishers, 1991). Marion Kavanagh Wachtel is often cited in relation to Armitage's snipe; see Gerdtts, "The Land of Sunshine," 37.

²⁸*Brimming Cup of Summer* is the best of a number of similar paintings of eucalyptus skirting a body of water; see for example, William Wendt's 1914 painting *Serenity*, which also carries an allegorical title, in South and Gerdtts, *California Impressionism*, 130. On Puthuff's art and legacy, see the references in Gerdtts, "The Land of Sunshine," 69 n. 24.

²⁹The suggestion that Ansel Adams was "burned out" is his own; see the summary in Allison N. Kemmerer, "Reinventing the West," in Adam D. Weinberg, et al, *Reinventing the West: The Photographs of Ansel Adams and Robert Adams* (Andover, Mass.: Addison Gallery of American Art Phillips Academy, 2001), 21 n. 14, which refers to Adams and Alinder, *Ansel Adams, an Autobiography*. Biographers point to the fallout over Sierra

Club politics and the changing winds of the late 1960s—along with age—for Adams' world-weary attitude behind the camera at this time. See Jonathan Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 327-349.

Similar changes afoot in California art, "redefining the relationship between people and nature," as automobiles, the sinister side of marketing, and other counterculture trends highlighted a sense of "encroachment." See Fox, "Tremors in Paradise 1960-1980," especially 193-202. For Ansel Adams' images, see the exhibition catalog, Adams and Land, *Singular Images*.

³⁰*The Argonaut*, April 22, 1877, p. 4, quoted in full in Thompson, "The Australian Fever Tree in California: Eucalypts and Malaria Prophylaxis," 243. The article is also quoted in Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 68.

³¹Ted Williams, "America's Largest Weed," *Audubon* January-February, 2002, 26. Even in the first generations of the eucalyptus in California, some citrus growers learned these lessons when they noticed their trees were losing water to their eucalyptus windbreaks. They ripped out the interlopers and planted native trees instead. Tyrrell, *True Gardens of the Gods*, 68.

³²Williams, "America's Largest Weed," 24, 30.

³³Patricia Leigh Brown, "By the Bay, Ancient Dunes Fight Exotic Trees," *New York Times*, March 9, 2003. Williams describes how, in 1996, once the eucalyptus trees had been removed, the California Department of Parks and Recreation received angry phone calls, asking how a building had been constructed on Angel Island without a formal hearing for those with sensitive bay views. The department patiently explained that the building had been built in 1904 as an Army hospital, and had been hidden away by the eucalypts for nearly a century. Williams, "America's Largest Weed," 30-31.

³⁴Williams, "America's Largest Weed," 28, 30. Leland Yee is quoted in Brown, "By the Bay, Ancient Dunes Fight Exotic Trees," A1.

A calmer voice calls for balance: commenting on the Presidio, Robert Z. Melnick of Eugene, OR, wrote that it "represents an essential conflict between two legitimate sets of

values: the continuity of place, on one hand, and the protection of fragile ecological systems, on the other. These values do not necessarily have to be in conflict." Letters, *New York Times*, March 12, 2003, p. 24.

³⁵Quote is from Williams, "America's Largest Weed," 26. On Adams's wilderness activism, see Adams' article from the period, "A Naturalist's Plea: The Conservation of Man," *AIA Journal* 45.6 (June 1966): 68-74. The pamphlets of the Save-the-Redwoods League had always melded the iconography of Watkins and Adams in order to suggest an eternal space, while warning it was almost too late; see *Saving the Redwoods* pamphlets and *Bulletin*, (Berkeley, Calif: Save-the-Redwoods League, 1941-1951). These activities are chronicled in Spaulding, *Ansel Adams and the American Landscape*, 334.

³⁶Mike Davis, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998); John A. McPhee, *The Control of Nature* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1989). William Cronon, "Introduction: In Search of Nature," and "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature" in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, William Cronon, ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1995). Quote is from p. 25. For Butterfly's account, see Julia "Butterfly" Hill, *The Legacy of Luna: The Story of a Tree, a Woman, and the Struggle to Save the Redwoods* ([San Francisco]: Harper San Francisco, 2000). On the butterflies, Williams, "America's Largest Weed," 28.

³⁷"Nature' is not as natural" is from Cronon, "Introduction," 25; "Far from being the one place" is from Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 69. Earlier works on this theme include Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Hidden Wars of the American West* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1994); Emmet Gowin, and Jock Reynolds, et al. *Emmet Gowin: Changing the Earth: Aerial Photographs* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Art Gallery-Corcoran Gallery of Art-Yale University Press, 2002); Mark Klett, et al. *Second View: The Rephotographic Survey Project* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984). When considering such messages in art, the poetry of Thomas Bolt is also relevant. Thomas Bolt, *Out of the Woods* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

The grooming of nature in national parks is examined in Mary Sayre Haverstock, "Can Nature Imitate Art?" *Art in America* 54.1 (January-February, 1966): 73-81.

³⁸The case is made in Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995). Janice Simon advocates this connection, comparing Buell's account of Thoreau's "responsiveness to nature as a presence" to Kensett's development of an "ecocentric view" in his Contentment Island paintings, where "natural and human histories are inextricably implicated." Simon, "Images of Contentment," 34-35.

MARMORATA: THE FAMED MUD TURTLE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO MARKET, PP 26-42

Acknowledgements: Special thanks are in order to Michele Welck, California Academy of Sciences Special Collections; Leslie Overstreet, Smithsonian Institution Libraries; Amelia Hellam, Bancroft Library, U.C. Berkeley; Richard Wahlgren, ISHBH; Igor Danilov, Zoological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Robert Hansen, Hansen Consulting; herpetologists Frank Slavens, Dan Holland, Jim Buskirk, and the herpetological community at large, who shared their research and private libraries with me; Dana Terry, friend, colleague, and translator; and my loving wife Sarah, for all of her support.

¹Scientific: Dan C. Holland, "The Western Pond Turtle: Habitat and History. Final Report," U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration (1994): section 2, page 13; Dan C. Holland, "Synopsis of the Ecology of the Western Pond Turtle, *Clemmys marmorata*," *Report to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*, National Ecology Research Center (Fort Collins, CO: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1989): 13-14. Historic: Andrew Rolle, "Turbulent Waters: Navigation and California's Southern Central Valley," *California History* no. 2 (1996): 135; Gerald Haslam, "The Lake That Will Not Die," *California History* no. 3 (1993): 263, 271. Popular: Mentioned briefly in Edward Hume, *Mean Justice* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 18.

²Throughout California, the only other native turtle is the Sonoran mud turtle (*Kinosternon sonoriense*), constrained to the southeastern corner of California along the Lower Colorado River; Carl H. Ernst, Jeffrey E. Lovich, and Roger W. Barbour, *Turtles of the United States and Canada* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1994), 191.