

DELTA NARRATIVES

**Sense of Place: Sacramento-
San Joaquin Delta**

Robert Benedetti,
Sac State And Pacific

DELTA NARRATIVES: PROJECT

- **Funding:** Delta Protection Commission
- **Purpose:** Link Delta History to Regional and National Experiences
- **Team:** Scholars, Archivists, Museum Professionals
- **Consulted with** Delta Cultural Organizations

DELTA NARRATIVES: RESEARCH

- *Managing the Garden: Agriculture, Reclamation, and Restoration* (Philip Garone, CSU Stanislaus)
- *Stitching a River Culture: Trade, Transportation and Communication* (William Swagerty and Reuben Smith, Pacific)
- *Building Communities: Economics and Ethnicity* (Jennifer Helzer, CSU Stanislaus)
- *Literature and the Visual Arts* (Gregg Camfield, UC Merced)

DELTA NARRATIVES: CONCLUSIONS

- Reclamation & Restoration are Instructive
- Significant Agriculture Technological Innovation
- Economic And Ethnic Mono-Cultures Struggled as Crops and Technology Changed
- Contrasting Artistic Themes: A Promised Land and Its Abuse

http://www.delta.ca.gov/delta_narratives.htm

DELTA NARRATIVES: NEXT STEPS

- Website/App for Ecological, Historical, and Cultural Materials and Sites
- K-12 School Curricula
- Annual Delta Days for Delta History and Culture
- Scholars Organization Promoting Research

A Sense of Place: Sacramento San Joaquin Delta

**How Residents and Visitors Have
Defined the Delta Over 10,000 Years**

Places said to have a strong "sense of place" have a strong identity and character that is deeply felt by local inhabitants and by many visitors. Sense of place is a social phenomenon that exists independently of any one individual's perceptions or experiences, yet is dependent on human engagement for its existence. Such a feeling may be derived from the natural environment, but is more often made up of a mix of natural and cultural features in the landscape, and generally includes the people who occupy the place. The sense of place may be strongly enhanced by the place being written about by poets, novelists and historians, or portrayed in art or music, and more recently, through modes of codification aimed at protecting, preserving and enhancing places felt to be of value.

Sense of Place:

California with a Twist

DELTA AS PLACE

- Multicultural
- Federal Godfather
- Global Economy
- Nature Subdued
- Water Abundant

CALIFORNIA AS PLACE

- Multicultural
- Federal Godfather
- Global Economy
- Nature Benign
- Water Scarce

Sense of Place:

California with a Twist

DELTA AS PLACE

- Agriculture Rules
- Poor Jobs
- Isolation
- Powerless
- Dream Deferred

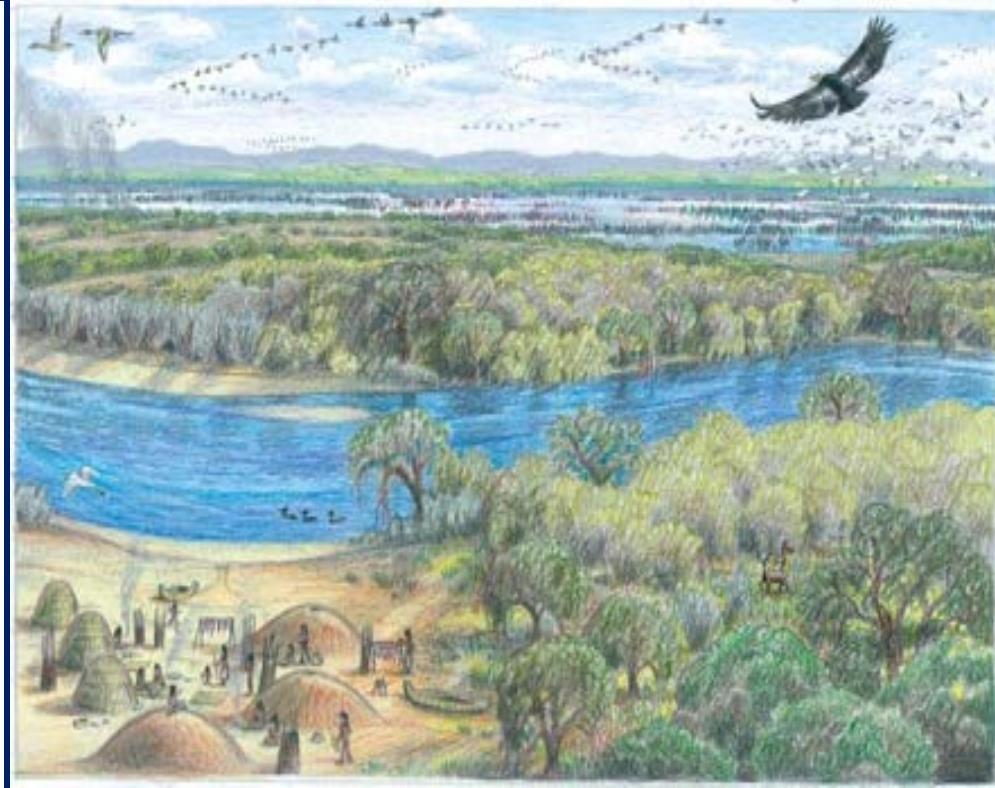
CALIFORNIA AS PLACE

- Urban Life Rules
- Jobs With Opportunity
- Cutting Edge
- Powerful
- Dream Fulfilled



NAA, Smithsonian.

Fig. 2. Chulamni man with three lines tattooed on his chin.
Lithograph (Choris 1822) based on lost watercolor by Louis Choris,
1816.



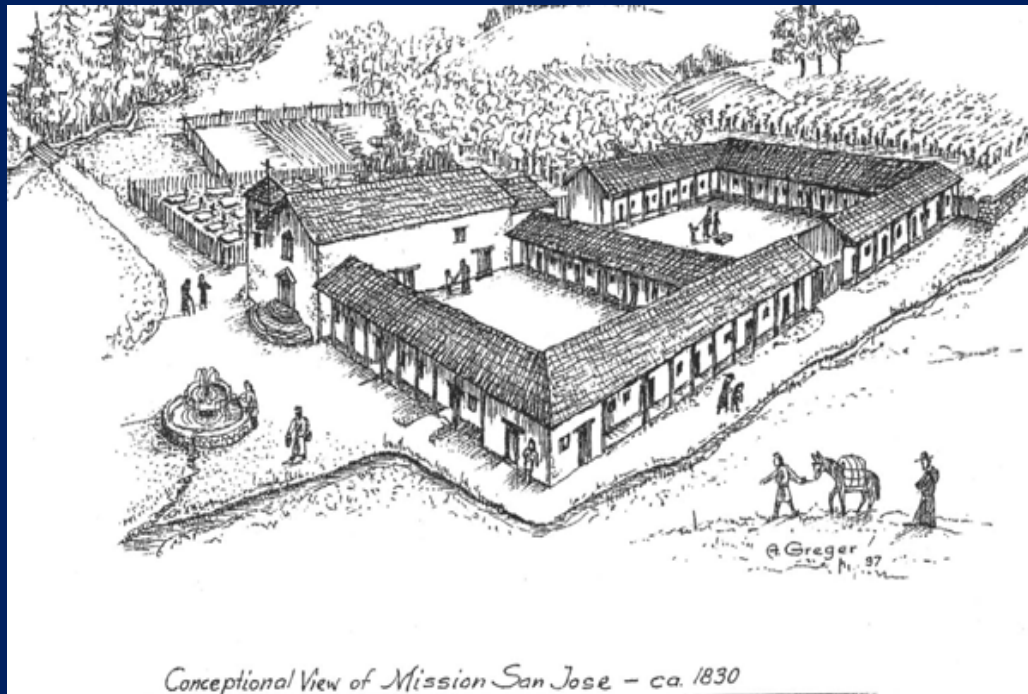
*Painting of Miwok Village
by Laura Cunningham*

Man in Nature: Miwoks, Yokuts and Others 10,000 Years



*Father Fermin Francisco
de Lasuen*

Spanish View: Dangerous Peoples 1790-1849



Conceptional View of Mission San Jose - ca. 1830

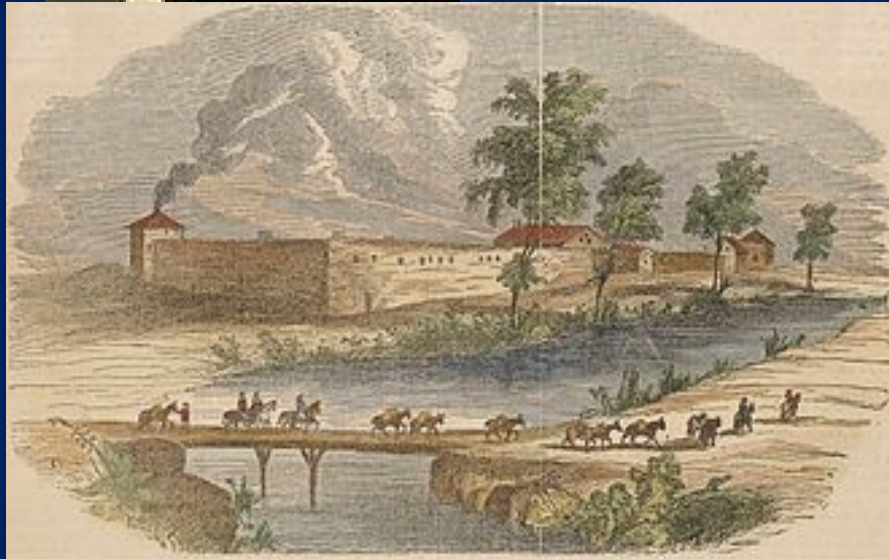


Louis Choris, 1816.



John Sutter

*Charles
Weber*

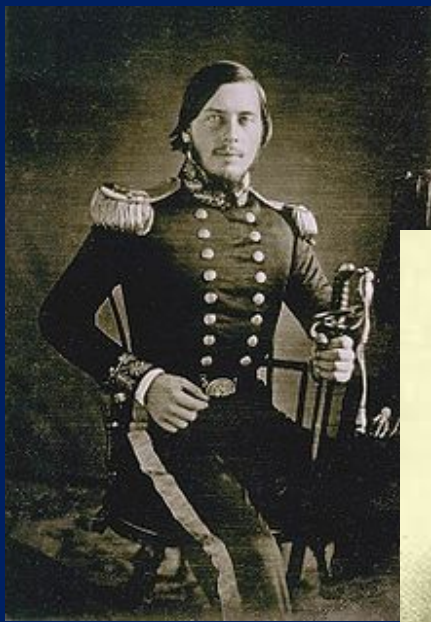


Sutter's Fort

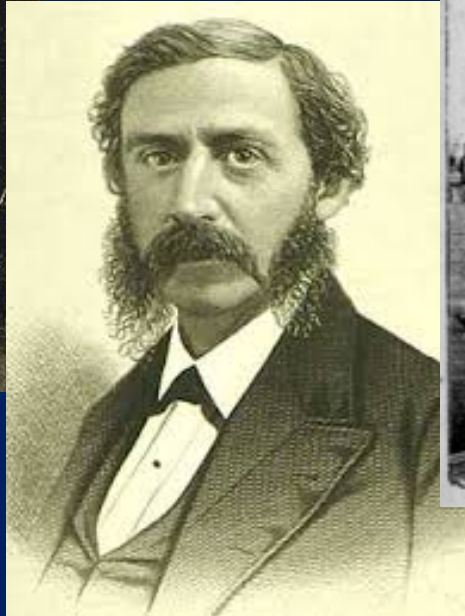


Weber's Home

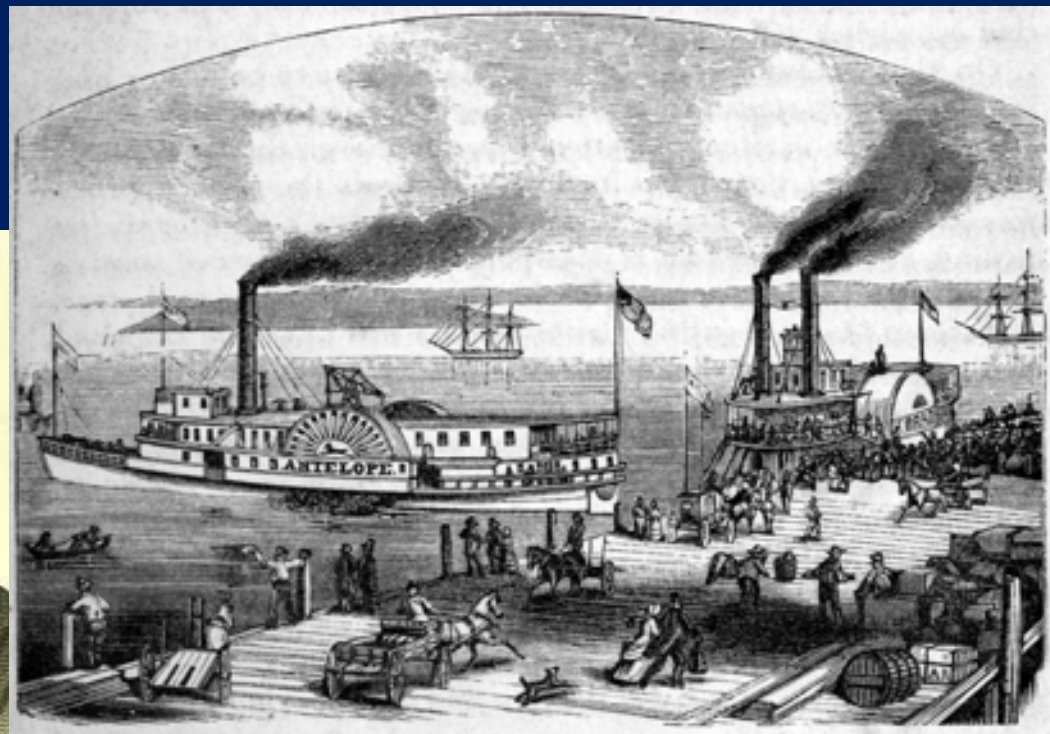
Plantations and Market Towns 1830-1850



George Derby

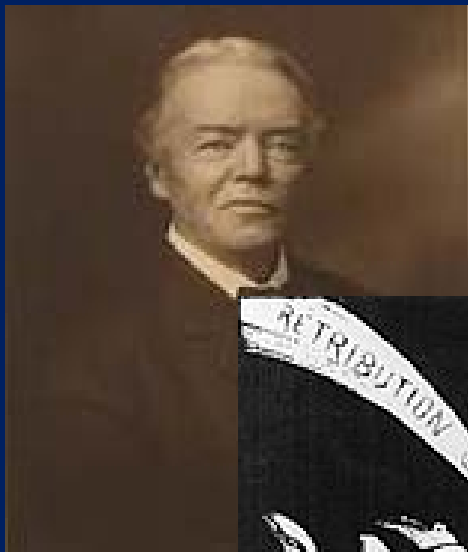


Bret Harte



Steamboats on the Delta

Delta as Highway for Gold Seekers, Agriculture, and Civilization 1850-1880



Josiah Royce

George Shima

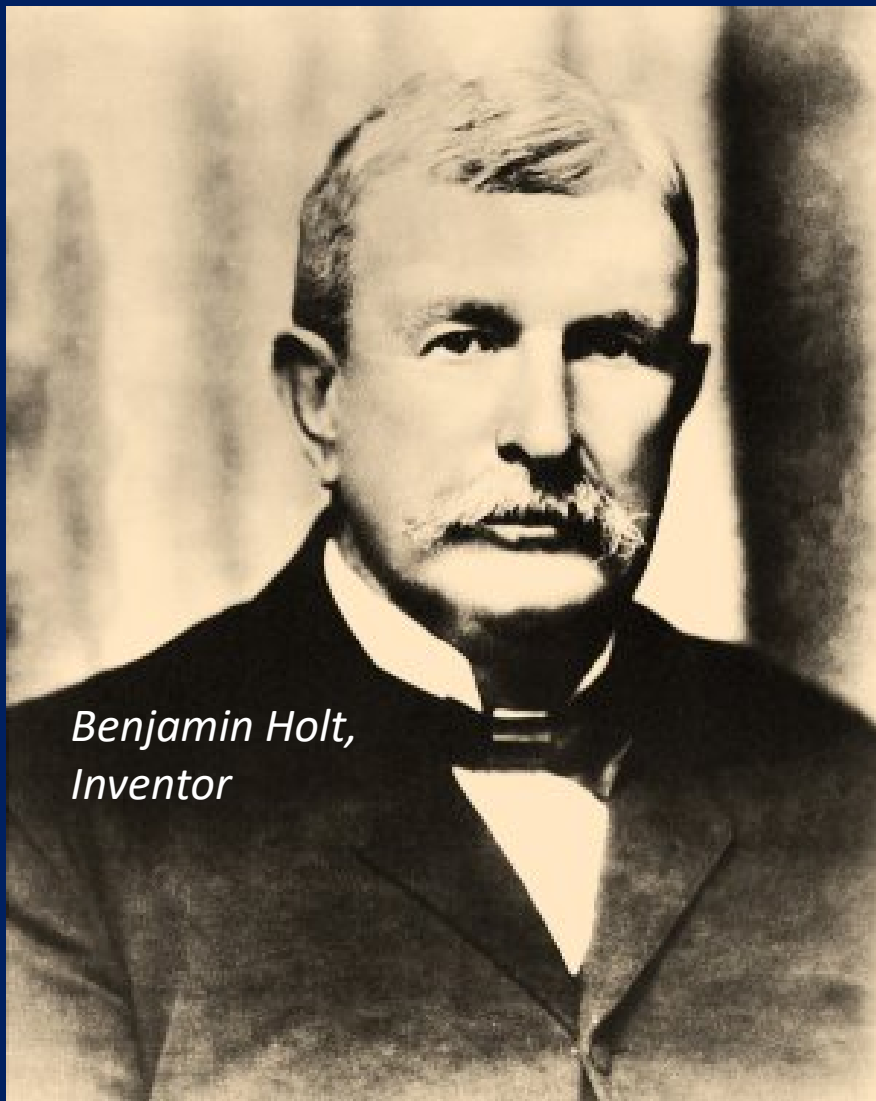


Corporate Greed



Yellow Peril

Struggle Between Classes for Right to Land, 1880-1920



Benjamin Holt,
Inventor



Delta as Techno-Agricultural Paradise 1880-1930



*Jack and
Charmian
London*



Erle Stanley Gardner

In the Delta country one can make rental reservations, leave from almost any part of California in the morning, and be sleeping that night on a houseboat tied up in some little cove away from all the noises of civilization, slumbering in the calm tranquillity of utter silence and sleeping as late as anyone wants the next morning.

I have recently made it a point to talk with people who have rented boats for their vacations and find them so enthusiastic that I feel convinced the rental business is going to be booming during the next few years.



One can cruise in secluded waters . . .

Delta as Hideaway, 1910-1970

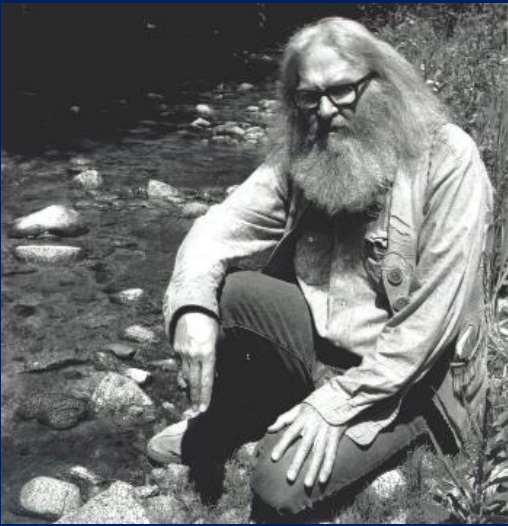


Joan Didion, Author, Run River



Dorothea Lange

Delta and Harvest of Shame 1900-1960



William Everson



Pat Brown



Wayne Theibaud



**Delta as Conservancy
and Conveyance, 1970-**

Sacramento San Joaquin Delta National Heritage Area?



*Cultural and Ecological Tourism and
Preservation*

Sense of Place Over Time in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

| Visioners | Era | Vision Of Place | Exemplars |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Native Americans | 10-13,000 Years - 1750 | Harmony with Nature | Unknown |
| Spanish | 1780-1830 | Place of Danger | Mission Fathers |
| Mexican Land Grantees | 1830-1850 | Personal Empire | Sutter, Weber |
| Gold Seekers | 1850-1880 | Highway to Wealth, Civilization | Derby, Harte |
| Corporations and Immigrants | 1860-1920 | Struggle for Land | Royce, Shima |
| Agricultural Inventors | 1880-1950 | Techno Agricultural Paradise | Holt |

Sense of Place Over Time in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

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|---------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Labor | 1900-1960 | Oppression | Lange, Didion |
| Drop Outs | 1900-1980 | Escape from Civilization | London, Gardner |
| Engineers and Environmentalists | 1960-Date | Water and Habitat | Brown, Everson |
| Cultural Tourists | Future | Immersion in History, Back in Time | Delta Protection Commission |