Jan 8, 1973 ~~San~~ Francisco Solano – Henry K. Evers

(A)

1) Interest in Sonoma County & General Vallejo –

Such a broad scope in life of remarkable man – This is but a chapter in his life – ~~dealing with the California Indians~~ –

A) His energy, scholarship & ambition made him conspicuous by contrast with his associates & advancement came swiftly

1) at 19 – a member of the territorial legislature in Monterey (as a substitute for a San Diego member who couldn't remain for the entire session

2) at 20 an ensign or "Alferez" of the S.F. presidial co. – transferred on paper – stayed 3 more yrs. in Monterey

In ~~It was~~ the ~~next~~ spring of (1829) ~~that~~ the new *alférez* was called upon to lead one of the most important expeditions of his career against the Indians. An Indian by the name of Estanislao, born and educated at the Mission San José, manifested a superior capacity for leadership and was rewarded with the office of *alcalde* at the Mission, a position of some authority over the neophytes. A little authority, like a little learning, may be a dangerous thing, and so it proved in the case of this particular Indian. When he visited neighboring native villages, he became obsessed with the idea of leading an Indian revolt. Accordingly he escaped from the Mission, and placed himself at the head of some 40,000 Mariposa Indians. Allied with him were the forces of Yoscolo, an Indian who had fomented a revolt from Mission Santa Clara.

Estanislao made careful preparations for the conduct of his war. He armed his warriors with bows and arrows, drilled them in military tactics, and provided generous rations through well-conducted cattle raids that kept the rancheros in turmoil. Early in May, *Alféréz* Sanchez was sent out from San Francisco to put an end to these disorders, but the Spaniards had underestimated the strength and cunning of their foes. The Indians won a hard victory over the Spaniards whose supply of ammunition was too soon exhausted. This unprecedented victory occasioned widespread rejoicing among the natives. Celebrations were held in Indian villages over an extended area, and the situation was rapidly becoming perilous for the Spanish inhabitants who were vastly outnumbered.

Indians –

The *comandante*, Ignacio Martinez, realized that swift and decisive action was necessary, and determined to place command of the punitive expedition in the hands of Vallejo who was still in Monterey, though he was under the command of Martinez since his official transfer to San Francisco. Vallejo, not yet twenty-one years of age, had just returned from an expedition in the Tulares where with a force of thirty-five men, he had killed forty-eight Indians without the loss of a single man.[22] Charges of unnecessary cruelty on his part were already circulating when Martinez ordered him to organize a company of one hundred men to be well equipped and trained, and to march against Estanislao.

On the twenty-ninth of May, the young ensign led out his army of 107 men, a large force for a California war, and crossed the San Joaquin River on rafts, carrying with them by way of heavy artillery, a small three-pounder to bolster up the cavalry and infantry attacks.

For three days in enemy territory, they fought with flame and gunfire, driving the savages from strongly entrenched positions, cleverly constructed and stoutly defended. Through chaparral thickets they cut their way dragging their artillery-piece with them. Once, some sharpshooters waiting for hapless Indians forced from a flaming wood, came by chance upon the half-burned bodies of two Spanish soldiers, captured by the Indians in the Sanchez campaign. Twisted grape vines nearby told the tale of a preliminary hanging. Inflaming news, this, that traveled swiftly through the Spanish ranks!

At evening of the third day, the savages still held positions they had taken in a new stretch of woodland. At dusk, a report was circulated that the Indians were attempting an escape by swimming down the river past the Spanish camp. A swiftly organized pursuit soon revealed that the crafty, savage chieftain had outwitted them. Bundles of grass had been tied together to float downstream while the Indians were escaping in the opposite direction.

Next morning, three old women found in the deserted grove were killed and a captured neophyte confessed that it was he who had burned the bodies of the two soldiers killed in the Sanchez campaign. Unwisely, Vallejo granted permission to his Indian forces to deal with the captive in their own way. The poor neophyte was placed in the center of a semi-circle and used as a target for Indian arrows until a Spanish cavalryman put an end to his suffering after he had stopped seventy-three arrows. The auxiliaries completed their task by hanging him. Mathias, an Indian who had deserted the enemy and had since served faithfully as a guide for the Spaniards, was shamefully shot and hanged while four other Indians who were later found hiding in the wood, met the same fate.

(C)

The Indians were dispersed, eighteen head of horses had been recovered, and Vallejo's losses had been kept at a minimum—no deaths and only thirteen wounded. But the Spaniards were far from their base of supplies and their ammunition was practically exhausted. Hence they were unable to follow up their advantage, but were compelled to return to San José where Vallejo received the congratulations of the *comandante* who at the same time expressed regret that the campaign could not have been carried to a more decisive finish.[23]

As a matter of fact, however, the revolt was broken. Estanislao took refuge with Father Duran, president of the missions, who interceded in his behalf and eventually won for him a pardon. A decade later, he was identified as a member of a horse-thieving gang, and was the object of an expedition led by José Castro. His memory is perpetuated in California in the slightly corrupted name, "Stanislaus" which has been given to a county and a river.

Charges of unnecessary cruelty were now revived against the youthful leader of the expedition. At the request of Father Duran, it is said, Governor Echeandia ordered an investigation, which was carried out under the direction of *Comandante General* Martinez. Vallejo was exonerated by this committee, though one of his soldiers was found guilty of killing a helpless aged woman and was sentenced to serve five years on the frontier of Lower California.[24]

It was important at this time for the Mexican gov't. to establish a barrier north of San Francisco against Two Forces! The Russians, who had settled at Fort Ross in 1811 after working down from Alaska, and the restless Indian tribes. ~~Sonoma Valley had been~~ A settlement of Sonoma valley had been essayed twice, but not successfully –

D) Why not send the intrepid Vallejo to accomplish this mission? It was done, but with ~~all the tribulations of~~ minimum support – a handful of ~~no more than 25~~ Mexican soldiers to accomplish this difficult task

E) When Vallejo came to Sonoma he paid several visits to the Russians at Fort Ross, to observe as carefully as possible ~~what~~ their strengths and weaknesses. He found that they had no trouble from local Indians, contrary to ~~So~~ Mexican experience, and determined that it came from treating the people honorably, as well as paying the local tribe to ~~serve~~ protect against marauders.

At the same time Vallejo was developing his reputation, another man was maturing at "Yul Yul" - Place of the Setting Sun, about 5 miles west of Fairfield. This was the settlement of the Suisun (west wind) Indians) - about 40,000 people, 35 branches of the Patwins. The women tattooed faces, the men tattooed little, but painted extensively with ochre and cinnebar. In 1817 Jose Sanchez crossed the Sacramento near present day Martinez, & fought the Indians back to their village - when it became evident that they were ~~lost~~ losing had been vanquished Old Chief Malica sang the Death Song, the Indians set fire to their huts & burned themselves to death rather than surrender -

Sem Yeto, whose name was variously translated as "The Big One" (he was a strapping 6 feet 7 inches), the "Mighty Arm", and the "Brave One" - had been hunting when the battle took place - when he returned he was made Chief to replace Malica.

Sem Yeto tried a new tack when Father Altimira essayed to establish a Sonoma missim in 1823 - he cooperated with the missionaries, learned Spanish, reading & writing - keeping accounts - adobe making - building - farming, cattle-raising - was Christianized with the name Francisco Solano -

With the secularization of the missions the colony fell apart & he returned to his tribe.

In 1833 and 1834 Vallejo began colonizing the North Bay area - which made the local inhabitants restless

~~bottom~~ ~~55~~ - 61 - 63 -

Vallejo, learning of an uprising among the Suisuns, organized a force of two hundred men, and marched into the Soscol Valley to a point called Thompson's Gardens north of the site of the city of Vallejo. ~~This battle is said to be the first event to record, historically in the annals of~~

The Indians were led by Chief Sem Yeto - There are Two versions of what followed: (1) The two leaders met without fighting (2)

~~inches in height~~. This chieftain had no wish to welcome white invaders to his territory, and gave fierce battle. When he saw that defeat was inevitable, however, he yielded and sought a conference with the white leader.

The conference must have been a memorable one, worthy of dramatization. The young lieutenant, seated on a rock beneath an oak tree, awaited the arrival of his vanquished foe. Though he wore his field uniform, he was well groomed as usual, and wore his dignity like a cloak about him. He wished to impress this savage chieftain concerning whom he had heard many reports. Then he saw Sem-Yeto approaching. His uniform consisted of a loin cloth and strings of wood and bead ornaments about his neck. His rank as chieftain was indicated by the black and white feathers in his headband.[16] He was unarmed, as were the group of savages who accompanied him until he bade them stop. A magnificent figure of a man, he moved forward with feline grace until he stood in silence before his conqueror. Involuntarily, Vallejo rose and for several seconds, returned the calm, scrutinizing gaze of the chief.

Meeting as man to man, mutual respect was born, and out of it developed an allegiance that lasted throughout the years. It was an alliance that made possible the peaceful occupation of the North-Bay country, the fruition of Vallejo's dream, and for the Suisuns, aid in their warfare against their implacable enemies, the Satiyomis, who held the territory to the west and north.

Vallejo, generous in victory, had laid the cornerstone of his Indian policy. He had applied the lesson he had learned at Fort Ross.

Not long after the formation of the alliance, Vallejo had occasion to test his new allies in combat against their mortal enemies, the Satiyomis. Ever interested in strengthening the northern frontier, Figueroa had ordered Vallejo to establish a new pueblo, probably at the site of the abandoned presidio, in the vicinity of Santa Rosa. He entertained high hopes for the new town which he called Santa Ana y Farias, after the president and vice president, respectively, of Mexico. Diplomacy entered into the choice of the name too. Santa Ana might be president today, but no one could tell about tomorrow. Hence, Figueroa was playing safe when he chose the name for the new settlement. A military guard was stationed there, under the command of Vallejo, but it was a dangerous post, situated as it was in the very midst of hostile territory.[18]

Once when Vallejo visited the embryo pueblo (in October, 1834), a daring Cainamero stole one of his fine mules and fled to the Satiyomis for protection. Vallejo at once demanded the return of his property and the arrest of the offender. With a rare genius for cruelty, the Satiyomis seized the envoy and bound his entire body with fine thongs. His circulation impeded, his body swelled and needled with pain, the poor wretch was found after an excruciating night by Spanish soldiers. Sympathetically, Vallejo ordered hot applications to reduce the swelling so that the bonds could be removed. It was two months before the victim had fully recovered.

Such an insult could not be passed over; the time had come for a definite offensive against these defiant savages, led by their proud chieftain, Succara. But for the first time, Vallejo too had the support of a powerful chieftain, the mighty Solano, whose Suisuns were entrusted with the task of maintaining the line of communication and supplies.

There came then a swift march into enemy territory; ceaseless vigil against lurking danger; the sudden hail of arrows, and the shriek of savage warriors bursting from the woods in desperate attack. But Succara, routed, rallied his forces for a second fierce encounter only to fall back before the vigorous onslaught of the troopers in close hand-to-hand fighting. Confident, after two smashing vic-

tards were far from home, deep in the mountains of southern Mendocino; the Cainameros were wavering in their loyalty, anxious only to be joined with the ultimate winners. A swift messenger dispatched to Monterey brought timely reinforcements led by the governor himself who joined forces with Vallejo and inflicted a decisive defeat upon the stubborn Satiyomis.[19]

Existing alliances with friendly tribes were strengthened; Solano and his people had acquitted themselves gallantly; and Don Salvador (Mariano's younger brother) had established his reputation as an intrepid campaigner against savage foes. There was peace along the border, and for a time, at least, Santa Ana y Farias was safe.

DURING THESE CROWDED DAYS, VALLEJO WAS PLACING increasing trust in his ally, Prince Solano. Often, when both the *comandante* and his brother Salvador were compelled to be absent from Sonoma, Solano was left in command. Don Mariano, grateful for his faithful service, made him a special present of a beautiful steed accoutred with silver trappings; there were also gifts of a silver watch, and fine riding boots. Not to be outdone, Solano returned the compliments with rich offerings of fine furs, skins, and dried fish.

Now, Vallejo wished to bestow a signal honor upon the Chief of the Suisuns as a means of strengthening his position in his own tribe, perhaps because of Zampay's avowed intention of seizing Solano's post. Accordingly, to please both himself and his ally, he arranged a dramatic scene which was enacted in the plaza at Sonoma. Word was sent summoning Solano to appear, and when he cantered up on his beloved horse, a guard of honor stood at attention. Composed of forty-four Suisun and Napajo braves, clad in the colorful uniforms of the Mexican army, and fully armed, this bodyguard was presented to Prince Solano by the *comandante general* in a speech eloquent with praise.

With childlike delight, Solano examined the arms and trappings of his men, and then delivered an exhortation in which he urged his men to repay the General and Captain Salvador, by faithful service. Especially did he exhort them to bring in their enemy Zampay.

"Un discurso a la Yanqui," laughed Vallejo, mindful of Solano's personal interest in Zampay's capture.[1]

This guard was armed with weapons seized by Vallejo from the members of the Hijar colony when they were expelled from the country.[2] They acquitted themselves well in subsequent campaigns, and in two years, only two members of the troop lost their lives. ~~Too soon, however,~~ they ~~were~~ to face a more relentl

~~But while Alvarado was waiting in Monterey,~~ Vallejo ~~had at last been able to~~ undertake the long postponed offensive against that "hombre astuto," Zampay,[6] and his warlike Yoloytoys. Don Mariano himself did not actually participate in this campaign which was conducted by Solano and Captain Salvador Vallejo, in the mountainous region, near Clear Lake. In this campaign, Solano's bodyguard received its baptism of fire and succeeded in carrying out Solano's desire that Zampay should be captured alive. This was not accomplished without hard fighting and many dangers and the loss of all of the pack animals and camp equipment. But Solano's triumph was complete when his rival and arch enemy was lassoed by a soldier and led to Sonoma to receive sentence.

General Vallejo would have had him executed at once, but Solano begged for his life. A dead enemy afforded no satisfaction, but alive, Zampay would have to bear the taunts and the memory of being lassoed like a cow!

The rebel chieftain was finally given in custody to Solano, but evidently he did not fare so ill, for he eventually became a "good Indian," working diligently in his fields, and amassing a small fortune before he died.[7]

Succara, chief of the Satiyomis, now repented of his folly in warring against the white man, and came to Sonoma begging to make peace. Accordingly, a peace treaty was drawn up which naively suggests the conditions of frontier life. The eleven articles of this treaty provided that the *comandante general* should command his overseer at Petaluma to hand over to Succara each week eight steers and two cows; that Succara should deliver each new moon on the beach at Sonoma two bears strong enough to fight the savage bulls; that the savages were not to come to Sonoma in any number without the consent of the com-

(H)

invade the territory of Succara without first obtaining a permit to do so; and that as evidence of good faith, Succara's brother and two sons should live in Sonoma as hostages. Succara also pledged himself to restore captured children of other tribes, and to turn over fugitive Indians as Vallejo might demand.[8]

When the swarthy savage had solemnly affixed his cross, Vallejo himself marked an "X" instead of his usual elaborate rubrica. It was a gesture of tact and courtesy. This time, Vallejo did not bother to have the treaty ratified by any governmental agencies in Monterey. His power was practically absolute at this period in his principality north of the bay.

An exchange of gifts conducted with due ceremony followed the signing of the treaty, after which the festivities began. Once more the *comandante* could witness the Indian dances—the tireless jigging and jogging; the play of firelight on bronzed bodies; the ripple of firm muscles beneath satiny skin; the weird chanting; the childlike rituals.

Bull fights, always popular with the soldiery, were an important element in the jamboree. The method in use was for the toreador to be lashed to a bull whose front feet were tied tightly together. When this cord was cut and he was whipped by the rider, the bull made a wild dash for freedom. Soon several Indian *capeadores* appeared who pinned *banderillas* with points of fish bone to the sides of the belabored animal who eventually became weak from loss of blood.

For variety, there were bear and bull fights, more popular with the Spaniards than with the Indians. Savage battles took place between the enraged animals, however, and there was no lack of excitement or feasting either, throughout the festivities.[9]

After several days, Succara and his Indians took their leave, in seeming friendliness. But Succara had not been blind during his visit to Sonoma. He had seen how small was Vallejo's force. Once in the wilds again, he immediately launched another attack, and this time succeeded in winning over the Cainameros who had always been wavering in their allegiance. ~~When the battle was joined, at the~~ a fierce battle ensued, from ~~in~~ which Vallejo and Solano emerged victorious

In March of this year, he must have been gratified when some of his friendly Indians appeared at Sonoma with bands of horses they had recovered from the Moquelumnes who had stolen them from the settlements. As a reward for this virtuous conduct, Vallejo decreed a whole week of feasting in Sonoma where once again the [illegible] blazed and the weird rhythmic cries of native dancers destroyed the tranquility of early spring evenings. A feature of the celebration was the presentation of an Indian maiden named Yoto to Chief Solano who had assisted the friendly tribes in recovering their horses.[6]

Horse thieving was especially prevalent during this period. Mission authority had dropped away. The Mexican government's control was at low ebb; native Californians were engaged in civil strife; and the borders from north to south were ravaged by bands of horse thieves from the savage tribes. A memoranda that has come down to us noted a request from Don Juan Bandini, asking for aid from Vallejo. He said that the savages had raided his rancho leaving his family destitute and starving. Vallejo immediately sent him corn, wheat, flour, money, and other things.[7]

One hot August morning, Vallejo was hastily summoned by the arrival of a messenger from the Soscol, the national rancho, who brought news that the Moquelumnes were on the way to Sonoma with a band of tame horses to stampede the horses of the settlement.

Swift orders, soldiers running in from the fields, from their homes, from the barracks; Indian boys saddling well-groomed horses; the clank of steel; shouts and laughter as men swung into their saddles; the sound of thudding hooves; a diminishing cloud of dust—the troopers were off to the fray.

When the Spaniards came upon the band of half a hundred savages, the Indians at first were loud in their protestations of innocence, and then suddenly contrite in their guilt. Begging for mercy, they handed over some weapons to the soldiers with whom they mingled closely. Then without warning, they fell upon the Spaniards in a vicious, swift attack. Three Californians were wounded and some of the guns recaptured before the soldiers could rally to defend themselves. The fighting was fierce and at close range, but when it came to an end, thirty-four braves were found dead upon the field. The remaining sixteen surrendered and under question, admitted that their actions were part of a general plot to harry the settlements with horse thieving operations as a preliminary to a general attack on the towns as far south as San Juan. As a grim lesson, Cumuchi, the chief of the Moquelumnes, was brought to Sonoma and executed for his misdeeds.[8]

In an effort to control horse thieving, Vallejo entered into an agreement with his brother-in-law, Jacob Leese. To Leese, the trader, Vallejo gave exclusive rights to navigate the Sacramento, the Feather, and the San Joaquin Rivers. Up and down the streams went his little launches, doing a thriving business with the numerous Indians. At the same time, in compensation for the franchise, Leese and his agents kept their eyes and ears open, gathering information as to the activities of the neighboring tribes, hideouts for stolen horses, and the whereabouts of Indian robbers. Sometimes for a price, he could recover stolen property, but when he could not, he could report his information to the general who could act upon it.[9]

In October, an unprecedented crisis arose in Sonoma, a crisis that saddened the *comandante general*, but that nonetheless tested his courage and proved his metal. Solano and some friendly chiefs were holding a conclave at Soscol when into their camp rode a group of strangers from south of the bay. Solano greeted them with the hospitality he had learned from the Californians. They had come to trade for wheat, they said, and with disarming friendliness, brought forth little red jugs of Peruvian *pisco* whose contents they shared generously with their new found friends.

Soon, complaints began filtering into headquarters at Sonoma. Indian children were being seized and sent south of the bay. Incredulous at first, Vallejo heard rumors that Solano himself was implicated. Without delay he dispatched scouts to learn the truth and was soon possessed of convincing evidence against his favorite, Prince Solano. Vallejo's force was small in comparison with the Indian forces in the vicinity. Secretly he sent to Fort Ross for reserve supplies of powder. Arms were placed in the hands of every available Californian. The barracks were stored with food.

Then Solano was placed under arrest and locked in the *calabozo*, charged with having given consent to the kidnapping of thirty Indian children. There was tension in the air. Stolid, silent savages filtered into town from neighboring rancherias, armed with whatever weapons they could command. Suisuns, Napajos, Cainameros gathered in groups, filling the plaza, resenting the white man's insult to their chief, the great Sem-Yeto, the Mighty Arm.

Their numbers gave them confidence, and they soon grew loud in their anger, demanding the release of their chief. Then the youthful Vallejo appeared in front of the *calabozo*, faultlessly clothed in his dress uniform—black plumed hat, purple velvet waistcoat with scarlet jacket heavily embroidered in gold, and light blue trousers; tall, broad-shouldered, erect, he was indeed a fine figure of a man. His black eyes flashed, but not in anger, for he was heavy-hearted at this defection of his trusted friend. Yet there was steel in his voice when he spoke. Guards stood about the building, and around the guards, the general had placed a circle of reatas, proclaiming death to any Indian who dared to step across the line. Then he entered the guard house, leaving the savages silent and obviously impressed.

Without mincing words, he pictured to Solano the wrong he had done to his people and to his friend, the *comandante*. Solano, now repentant and eager to make amends, exclaimed:

"I am the owner of many green fields. My cattle number more than two thousand, I count Satiyomi children by the dozen, and if the *comandante* wishes to take them from me as punishment, I will tell my people it is as it should be."[10]

Vallejo, however, declared that this could not right the wrong he had done, and that all he asked was for Solano to tell him the names of the men with whom he had worked. Solano himself had had contact only with the Castros, but he assured Vallejo that he could secure a confession from Lacay, the subordinate chief who had carried on the negotiations. Vallejo issued a proclamation to the Indians denying indignantly his knowledge of the affair or complicity in it, making known Solano's repentance, and stating that a party of men had been sent forth to recover the stolen children and return them to their parents. Solano addressed his people and sent them home content. Afterwards, he went from rancheria to rancheria proclaiming his repentance and his confidence in the *comandante general*. Never again did he violate the trust that was placed in him.[11]

These incidents serve to illustrate the corner-stone of Vallejo's Indian policy—that policy which Figueroa had placed in his hands; the same policy he had seen the Russians use with good effect. He gratified the Indian's love of ceremony, he was lenient and generous in times of peace, and he knew how and when to strike swiftly and surely.

Also in 1836-37 Vallejo was having a great deal of trouble getting recognition from the weak & corrupt provincial administration — he was owed money & no one listened to his suggestions —

In September, the *California* arrived from Mexico bringing news of Vallejo's appointment as colonel of *defensores de la patria*, and official correspondence approving his suggestions and promising aid in carrying them out.[14]

Emboldened, perhaps, by this recognition, he now determined upon a bold step. In 1836, Alvarado had invited Solano to pay him a visit in Monterey. The royal savage now decided—undoubtedly at Vallejo's suggestion—to visit the capital, taking with him an escort of his own people. The sight of a few Indians might convince the smug politicians that the Indian menace still existed. It might also emphasize Vallejo's importance as the guardian of the *frontera del norte*.

Vallejo, at any rate, made the most of his proposed

step. He noised it about for weeks in advance, and as early as September 3 received letters from Santa Barbara, begging him not to run the risk of visiting Monterey with two thousand savages! There is also a letter from Salvador in which he states that he has been unable to persuade his brother not to allow Solano to make the trip, but hoping to persuade the chief to take only one thousand Indians with him.[15] These figures are apparently gross exaggerations, but Vallejo probably thought it well enough to let the people stew for a while in anxiety. He issued a statement in October that Solano had asked and received permission to visit Monterey taking with him eighty of his fellow countrymen. Some accounts say that Vallejo was escorted to San Francisco by Solano and thirty-one Indians, enroute to Monterey, remaining there October 22 and 23. Fernandez, a chronicler of events in San José, reports that the cavalcade of several hundred Indians led by Vallejo and Solano passed through that city on their way to the capital. He asserts that the savages were elaborately dressed in costumes fashioned from feathers, and were fully armed with lances, bows and arrows, and rode on fine steeds.[16] Perhaps his imagination colored his memory, but at any rate, the authorities at San José were only too glad to comply with Vallejo's request for adequate provisions for Solano and his escort.

There was very real terror in Monterey when Solano, the Mighty Arm, led his company—however large it may have been—into the placid little village. From barred windows (there was but little glass in California), frightened senoritas peered stealthily forth, and on the straggling streets, stout-hearted *caballeros* reined in their horses to watch, not without apprehension, the progress of Solano and his band down to the plaza where the neglected cannon stood in rusty silence, belching forth no salvo of welcome to this amazing ambassador from the northern frontier. Here Solano ordered a halt while in quite excellent Spanish, he inquired of a thoroughly surprised and frightened inhabitant, the way to the governor's home.

Dorotea Valdéz, daughter of a Spanish family, has recorded her recollections of this visit. She says:

> "I took particular notice of the tall figure of that dark colored savage who was dressed like the people of my race; his many followers, however, were dressed like Indians and wore feathers around their heads; many of them were tatooed around their wrists, arms, and legs. Their presence was disliked very much because their conduct was really overbearing. Solano and his Indians were all mounted on fine horses, all had adimas, but few of them had saddles. They wore long hair, carried their bows and arrows, and their appearance was such as to inspire fear. I really believed them to be devils let loose from hell.
>
> "I heard my mistress say that the arrival of these savages in Monterey was a plague sent by God for the purpose of punishing us for our sins."[17]

Solano returned laden with many gifts he had purchased in this white man's city, leaving behind him a vast relief, and no doubt, a wholesome respect for Vallejo's allies. But whether they came from the Devil in hell as the maid believed, or from God in heaven as her mistress avowed, Vallejo himself, secure in the trust of his savage friend, could only chuckle at the discomfiture of Casarin and his associates.

(M)

Sonoma during these times was not always tranquil — an attempted massacre of the inhabitants including including Solano and his ~~military~~ cavalry was thwarted by the alertness of a small boy who overheard the plotters — Vallejo, who was fascinated by new ideas

~~Once, Vallejo~~ was taken in by one of his visitors—a French deserter from a ship, Octavio Custot, who promised to make sugar from sugar beets and lived at Vallejo's expense in lazy luxury at the Petaluma rancho for a year and a half awaiting the fulfillment of his enterprise. At the end of the growing season, he sent a messenger to Sonoma with a package for the general. Vallejo was delighted to find that it contained several loaves of fine white sugar. Instantly his plans soared. With Indian labor and unlimited land, he could soon be shipping sugar abroad, instead of importing it.

Dona Francisca, however, had a different story to tell. Her fine Peruvian sugar had all been stolen. Custot confessed his guilt, admitting that he knew nothing about the manufacture of sugar.

In carrying out the sentence of banishment pronounced by the general, Solano conducted Custot to Yerba Buena. When they arrived, it was ebb tide, and they were forced to await the rising tide to land at the dock. With a gleam of mirth in his eyes, Solano approached the prisoner, shouting angrily at him:

"This is where we stop."

Custot would have protested, but when he saw the towering Solano's angry countenance and the black looks of the boatman who quickly took the warrior's cue, the terrified Frenchman leaped overboard and waded through three hundred yards of soft mud to the shore. There he was greeted by the anxious keeper of the port, Richardson, who thought the messenger must be the bearer of important news that could not wait the incoming tide.

There was also the attempted abduction of Lady Helena Gagarin, wife of the Count Rotchef, Commandant at Fort Ross, a niece of the Czar who had just taken a jaunt across country to the mountain that now bears her name —

~~But to return~~ to the fair lady and her party ~~who~~ were now enroute back to their home. News of the expedition had reached General Vallejo who sent Don Salvador and Solano out with a party of Indians to learn what was transpiring. They took up a concealed position not far from the site of the present city of Santa Rosa and awaited events.

As the afternoon shadows lengthened, they heard the sounds of horses and men's voices and a lady's laughter. Then Solano beheld the Baroness as she passed close to where he stood screened from view by a manzanita thicket. He saw her white face flushed slightly by sun and wind, her white throat, the curving contour of her bosom—

Suddenly he gave the signal. The valley instantaneously sprouted Indians who popped up on all sides, outnumbering and surrounding the Russians and their escorts. The startled Russians caught the flash of muskets in savage hands and whipped out their weapons, prepared to defend themselves to the end. At that moment, Don Salvador appeared, warned the Russians not to shoot lest they should all be killed, then turned in question to Solano.

Solano smiled before he spoke. Then he grunted, "The men—," and he quickly drew his hand across his throat in expressive gesture. "The woman, Solano keep!"

Vigorously Don Salvador protested; stubbornly the stalwart chieftain stood his ground. The debate resolved itself into a compromise when Salvador promised to send for his brother, and Solano agreed to await his decision.[6]

The next chapter in this story of adventure and romance may indeed tax the reader's credulity, but Dr. Platon Vallejo is the authority for this version of the tale.

Salvador had at once dispatched a messenger to Sonoma on the swiftest horse available, telling his brother to come at once with the Spanish troops. But the scene was changed to a camp not far away where a group of camp followers were stationed. Word of a severe battle in Lake County was brought into camp not long after one of the soldier's wives had given birth to a son. When she was told that her husband had been killed in the battle, she became crazed with grief, and broke from her tent with the baby in her arms. She threw the infant into the waters of a nearby stream, and was rescued by friends just before she could leap in to her own death. The babe could not be found.

As Salvador's messenger, Cesario, came riding by, he chanced to see a queer white object in the waters of the stream. Without a pause, he scooped it out of the water as he rode and was astounded to discover that it was a boy baby, still alive. He tucked it carefully inside his coat and rode with even greater haste to the great adobe where he delivered the child into the keeping of Dona Francisca[7] and his message to the general. Soon swift orders were issued, and ere long, Don Mariano rode forth at the head of his troops like some medieval knight, not only to save a fair lady, but to avert the consequences of any ill-starred act for Russia, for Mexico, and for California.

The sun was already high in the eastern sky when they arrived at the camp where Don Salvador still stood guard over the little group of Russians. It did not take long for

Don Mariano to point out to Solano the folly of his plan, the chieftain issued his orders, and his warriors withdrew almost miraculously from sight.

The Lady Helena was delighted with her adventure, now that it was safely consummated, and the courtly *comandante* considered it a not unpleasant duty to escort her in person back to Ross to prevent the recurrence of any untoward events.

Dr. Platon concludes his narrative by saying:

"In regard to the infant, inquiry at once cleared up the mystery. The frantic mother had been seized with fever and had died. The name of the father killed in the Indian battle was Enrique Licaldo. But the little orphan child was brought up in the Vallejo family just like the rest of us, and we willingly shared with him our name. He was my brother Enrique Vallejo, who grew to be a fine man and known throughout California. He always thought himself a Vallejo, had the proper family pride, and it was not until late in life that he learned the strange story of his birth.

The year 1838 saw the beginning of the end of the Indian problem which was solved with such tragic finality. In 1837, a Spanish corporal, Ignacio Miramontes, came to Sonoma from Fort Ross with the report that smallpox had appeared there. Before many days, he himself took sick, and for the Indians, it was as if Pandora's box had opened. With ever quickening steps, the *"plaga horrorosa"* descended alike upon the Christian and the gentile tribes. The white inhabitants, Solano and a few other natives, submitted at once to vaccination, but once the dread disease was started among the savage tribes, there was no checking its awful scourge. It swept like wild fire through the back country where the ignorant savages leaped into the icy streams to kill their burning fever, or resorted to incantations of their medicine men to dispell the evil spirit. By the thousands they died until there was a stench in the air and despair in every heart.

Vallejo did what he could to urge vaccination, requesting Governor Alvarado to invest him with authority to compel its use. He also sent a boat to Santa Cruz to secure lime which was used to whitewash the insides of the homes of the Indians. Under the tutelage of Father Quijas, Salvador Vallejo and Sergeant Pina, they made crude brushes from lamb's wool fastened to the ends of long sticks with which they painted their poor dwellings. In reporting the epidemic to the authorities, Vallejo wrote on May 23, 1838, "Vaccination, dieting, and cleanliness are the only means of escaping that horrible contagion which has carried off, during the last few months, hundreds of human beings, especially among the natives. Impurity, the use of liquor, and very spicy dishes serve as fuel to the disease." His soldiers dug trenches or built funeral pyres in a vain endeavor to make the best of the situation, but Julio Carrillo reported that the bones of hundreds bleached upon the hills of the Sonoma and Napa Valleys.[12]

There was no real way of estimating the extent of the pestilence. Estimates as to the number of victims vary from forty thousand to seventy-five thousand. Vallejo himself estimated that seventy thousand Indians died be-

valley that still bears their name, were said to have been completely annihilated. Out of the forty thousand Suisuns over whom Solano had so proudly ruled, only two hundred remained. He was a king without a kingdom.

Bale Mill nr. St. Helena

Sonoma, however, had other matters of an exciting nature during the mid-summer days. The murder of Captain Salvador Vallejo was attempted in broad daylight in the very center of town! Salvador's enemy was a certain Doctor Bale, a Britisher who had recently moved to Sonoma from Monterey where he had been practicing medicine for some years. His wife was Don Salvador's niece, but apparently, he was not fond of his uncle by marriage. He is said to have cast aspersions upon the integrity of the captain, and as punishment, was given a public flogging. Another version has it that he became jealous when his wife showed more affection for her uncle than he approved, and in a fit of anger, he challenged the captain to a duel. Unfortunately, he had picked as his opponent, the finest swordsman in California. When he had tied his opponent into figurative knots, Don Salvador added insult to injury by using the sword as if it had been a whip to give the poor medic a thoroughly humiliating spanking.

Smouldering inwardly, Bale bided his time until one day in late summer when he saw Don Salvador crossing the plaza, and approaching from behind, took two shots at his enemy, one of which grazed the captain's neck. Although the assailant sought refuge with *Alcalde* Leese, he was captured by Chief Solano and a band of Indians bent upon avenging the injury to Don Salvador. As the Indians were escorting their prisoner to a great oak that bore the sinister name, "The Punishment Tree", General Vallejo himself appeared to insist that the prisoner be turned over to him for a fair trial. Already a group of hot-headed foreigners were gathering, preparing to intervene on behalf of the Englishman, and the general's action came just in time to prevent what might have been a serious conflict between the two elements of the population.

Ultimately, Governor Micheltorena ordered the release of the prisoner, fearing trouble with England if punishment were inflicted. Vallejo ordered him to leave Sonoma, an order which he was doubtless glad to obey.[15]

Shortly afterward came the mistaken Capture of Monterey by an american, Commodore Jones, who apologized when Thomas O. Larkin showed him the latest dispatches, donated a set of uniforms for the band, and sailed on up the Coast.

So decimated was the tribe that in 1842 Solano sold his 4 leagues of land to Vallejo for $1,000 - the acres that had been granted in 1837 on the petition that these were his lands by inheritance - there was no one to cultivate or maintain the property -

While in the north, Commodore Jones determined to pay a visit to Sonoma. Perhaps he was interested in seeing more of the country, for he chose a round-about route that led through the hills of Huichica. While Vallejo waited to receive him with full honors at Sonoma, he was arriving in a manner not contemplated by either host or guest. Prince Solano, Lt. Ramon Carrillo and a body of troopers were riding across the hills when they came upon a group of armed Americans. Solano placed them under immediate arrest and started swiftly for Sonoma. It was midnight when they arrived, and he threw them unceremoniously into the *calabozo* while his orderly hastened to carry the news to the general.

Something of the state of mind in the province is apparent from Vallejo's account of the incident in which he states that he was alarmed, believing that this must mean that the long expected invasion had come at last.[5] He dressed hastily in his best uniform and hurried under escort to the guard house where explanations were soon offered. The commodore who had just made a mistake himself, could afford to be generous now, and Vallejo at once sought to make amends for this breach of hospitality. The guests were taken to the quarters prepared for them, the servants were roused, a sumptuous supper was served, and the friendliest of relations established. The official welcome was postponed until morning when the entire garrison promenaded in full dress, and thirteen salvos from the cannon boomed the official salute. The general found his guests most pleasing, and during the following days, left no stone unturned in providing royal entertainment.

In the adjacent kitchens and on the wide verandahs, the Indian women were busy all day pounding corn, tossing tortillas from one plump fore-arm to the other until they were paper-thin, and baking them on the hot soapstone griddles; preparing the frijoles, the dumplings, the chickens, venison, and the meat of a freshly killed young bullock. The tables were heavy with food; there was wine from the general's own vineyards, that were heavy with fruit each year now; there were fruits from the orchards planted by the padres—the fat of the land, supplemented even by delicacies imported from abroad—Oh, it was a gay time in old Sonoma!

A rodeo was arranged, and once again the Vallejo vaqueros amazed their guests by displaying all the skill for which they were justly famous. Indians from nearby rancherias gathered in Sonoma for tribal ceremonials and festive dances. So intrigued were the visitors with the dances that they wished to join the Indians, but were restrained from doing so because of the fact that some of the soldiers, jealous of Solano's precedence, disapproved of their intimacy with the savages.

They visited the camp at Leese's Huichica rancho in the Napa Valley where some fourteen hundred Indians were being drilled for another campaign against the Satiyomis and Vallejo's erstwhile allies, the Cainameros. Jones observed the heavy lances, the sturdy bows, quivers crowded with arrows. But where were the guns for such an army? Few indeed were the firearms that could be

Back at Sonoma, there was a gay gathering in the general's sala by night as smiling senoritas led the visitors through the mazes of the dance. The gallant commodore was most attentive to Dona Francisca who hoped no doubt, that he would not fail to notice her new tortoise shell comb that held her black locks coiled high as befitted a matron! There was only four such combs in California—brought here from Peru by her brother-in-law, the daring Captain Fitch of elopement fame. No wonder she was proud. Don Mariano had paid him six hundred dollars for that comb![7]

And if the commodore had conquered the capital by mistake, there was no mistake about his conquest of Sonoma. Vallejo remembering the haughtiness of Duflot de Mofras, and the somewhat forced friendliness of Sir George Simpson, found himself yielding to the infectious quality of "Yankee" friendliness.

(R)

In 1846 came the "Bear Flag" Rebellion (Bear Flag designed by Mrs. Abr. Lincoln's nephew - Wm Todd - 32 armed Americans marched on Sonoma, succeeded Vallejo's home & demanded Surrender of California! Vallejo invited them in, and parleyed with the leaders over their demands, at some length -

Outside, the remainder of the men were growing impatient. Finally, they decided to elect a new captain to succeed Merritt, and chose for the honor one John Grigsby. Grigsby entered the house, but seems to have taken small part in the negotiations. After a time, the men outside grew restless once more, and chose another leader in the person of William B. Ide to represent them.

When Ide entered the room, he refused to accept the capitulation which had been drawn up, and insisted upon taking the men to the Sacramento. He brought the reassuring information, however, that the whole undertaking was planned and executed under the direction of Captain Fremont. When Vallejo heard this, his fears subsided at once, for he felt certain that the U. S. army officer would deal justly with him. He was therefore willing to go with his captors to the Sacramento, and hurried his preparations accordingly.

His old friend, Solano, was a guest in his home at the time. When he understood that Vallejo had been made a prisoner, the loyal old chieftain was all eagerness to gather together a band of his now scattered warriors and come to the rescue of the man whose every command had long been law to him. But Vallejo would not hear of it. He entertained no fears for his own safety since he had learned that Fremont was back of the movement, but he did fear for the safety of his family should any move be made to provoke any reprisals.

In the interval allowed him, he succeeded in secretly dispatching a messenger to Captain Montgomery at San Francisco, advising him of the facts and requesting a

U. S. officer to be sent to Sonoma to offer protection to his family.[7]

At eleven o'clock, the three captives, General Vallejo, Captain Salvador, and Victor Prudon, mounted their horses and rode away to the Sacramento under the armed escort of Merritt, Semple, Grigsby, Knight, and four or five others. Jacob Leese accompanied them at Vallejo's request, to serve as interpreter. A garrison of twenty-five men was left at Sonoma with Ide as the elected captain.

Solano watched them ride away and despair was in his heart. He could not understand Don Mariano. How strange that he should submit so tamely. How unlike him to refuse any aid or attempt any escape! A great loneliness overcame him as he watched the receding figures. His people were gone—exterminated by the white man's smallpox. He was a chieftain without a tribe. Now his great friend had yielded to the invaders and had ridden off to be killed. Solano remained to see that no harm would befall Francisca and the five small children,[8] but then one day not long afterwards, he was to stride unnoticed out the back door, mount his favorite horse, and ride away in lonely dignity into the sunny hills.[9]

California was annexed by the U.S. A ~~became~~ a ~~state~~

gold was discovered

Vallejo participated in organizing the state — but Solano was gone —

During these days, one question disturbed Vallejo. What had become of his old friend, Solano? Francisca knew nothing of his whereabouts. None of his own Indians could give him any information. Day after day went by, and still the chief did not return. Investigations carried back into the interior yielded no news. Gradually, Don Mariano sorrowfully faced the conclusion that his loyal ally had retired into the mountains to die in solitude by his own hand, despondent over the destruction of his people wrought by smallpox, and finally over the downfall of his idol, Don Mariano. For years, his wives and daughters continued to live on the Vallejo estate, receiving the kindest care as a lasting evidence of friendship for the lost chieftain.

Christian wife "Isadora" - several daughters + son "Angel" lived with Vallejos in Sonoma til mid 70s -)

For twelve years there was no news

One morning in 1858 Vallejo sat talking with his son Platon, now a medical student in the Eastern U.S., home for a visit.

"They sat thus in conversation one morning on the long, shaded verandah of Lachryma Montis, father, mother, and son. Suddenly, as they talked, the general's attention was caught by the figure of a man walking up the long avenue of trees toward the house. He looked for a long moment at the tall figure striding with familiar dignity along the lane. Then he leaped from his seat and ran to meet his guest. It was Solano, Prince of the Suisunes, Sem Yeto, the Mighty Arm! Returning as one from the ranks of the dead, the great Indian was stirred by an emotion that overpowered his native stolidity. Tears coursed down his bronzed cheeks, as he said simply,

"Senor, I have come to offer you my service again."[4]

It was a touching reunion. Twelve years had passed since that fateful morning when Solano had watched his master ride off a captive to what he believed was certain death. Twelve years had passed since Solano had ridden away into the sunshine, a chieftain without a tribe, a man without a master. There was so much to tell. Through the hours of the afternoon and late into the night they talked—

Solano told how he had believed Vallejo to be dead, and in despair had sought the hills. Then a desire to escape from any sight of white men had overpowered him. He had never much liked the Americans, and now they had killed his friend! It had occurred to him in his loneliness, that he might somewhere find a people who needed a chieftain, and with that thought in mind, he had wandered northward through Oregon, Washington, British Columbia, and into the land of the long darkness. Still he found no people to his liking, and after years of restless roving, he determined to return to California once again. Here, he was astonished to learn that his friend Vallejo still lived, was still a "great chief", and that the land was filled with many people. This must mean much fighting, he declared, and was a bit dismayed to learn that all lived peacefully together. He had hoped to fight once more side by side with the general he had served in his younger days.

Solano visited for several days at the home of the general. His daughters still made their home on the Vallejo estate, and rejoiced in the return of their father. Old friends came to see him. The old days lived again. Soon Solano left to go to Fairfield to visit some Suisun friends who lived there. Death came not long afterwards, and he was buried beneath a great oak tree, in this, his native land. Vallejo had often declared that in rugged human virtues,

he had never known a better man nor a keener untrained mind than this faithful Indian chieftain.[7]

There has been erected in the city of Fairfield not far from the burial place of the old chieftain, a beautiful bronze statue of Solano, prince of a lost tribe. With hand uplifted in friendly greeting to the white settlers, he watches long over the hills and vales that once were the home of the powerful Suisunes. Appropriately enough, it bears the tribute of the only master he ever acknowledged, having this inscription:



FRANCISCO SOLANO
(Sem Yeto)
Chief of the Suisun Indians, friend of the white man.

"To the bravery and in particular to the diplomacy of that great chieftain of the Suisun Indians, civilization is indebted for the conquest of the territory which today composes the counties of Solano, Napa, Sonoma, and Lake."

GENERAL MARIANO G. VALLEJO.