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Noah Pallmeyer

University of San Diego, npallmeyer@sandiego.edu

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Purposefully Forgetting:
Surveying San Diego's Founding Narrative During the City's Bicentennial Celebrations of 1969

Noah Pallmeyer
HIST 495: Senior Seminar
Dr. Clara Oberle
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Abstract

The city of San Diego owes much its success and prosperity to the “victories associated with colonization.” This quote comes directly from the current National Park Service description of the San Diego Presidio. This project turns to the 1969 bicentennial celebrations of San Diego’s founding. This was a rhetorically powerful period in San Diego’s historical remembrance. This project argues that native and other marginalized populations were not properly considered in the narrative of San Diego’s founding during these celebrations. To understand why and how these populations failed to be properly considered, this project turns to the narratives of colonial monuments in San Diego and asks why these spaces were/are places of celebration of the narratives of European cultural superiority, and not places of healing, recovery, and remembrance of the hardships of native and settler populations? There are three preliminary answers to this question. First, Anglo populations appropriated the city’s historical narrative in order to maintain hegemony. Second, these monuments were designed as spaces for tourism, not historical remembrance. And thirdly, these spaces failed to reflect historical accuracy, but rather served primarily as vehicles for the advancement of state-level political agendas. These claims rely on primary sources from the 1969 bicentennial celebrations, such as local newspaper clippings, period-historiographies, and period-scholarly debates. This study contributes to the scholarship surrounding contested monuments and engages with the fields of communication and rhetorical studies. This thesis interacts with this literature and attempts to understand how material forces shape the narrative of these spaces.

Introduction

Independence Hall, Valley Forge, The Liberty Bell. Growing up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania I was surrounded by nationally cherished spaces of historical remembrance. Many primary school field trips and summer programs led me to believe these spaces were some of the most sacred spaces in our nation's collective history. Park Rangers and historians told stories of great triumph over adversity. They told a story that made me feel proud to be a citizen of the United States. In my youth, I rarely questioned why these spaces were revered, but simply found myself standing in awe of their supposed grandeur. As I have become more nuanced in my understanding of this nation's history, I find myself asking questions about why these spaces were valorized and appreciated? What ought we consider to be spaces worthy of preservation and collective remembrance? What stories ought we use to inform the people and students of the present moment? These are the experiences and questions that have led me to this project.

This thesis turns to the narrative of San Diego's founding during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969 and asks why were colonial spaces of remembrance such as the San Diego Presidio and San Diego Mission de Alcala places of celebration for narratives of European colonization during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969? And why were they not places of healing, recovery, and remembrance of the hardships of native populations and colonial settlers?

This paper will examine three pivotal reasons in the formation of these celebratory colonial narratives. The first of these reasons has to do with the presence and powerful influence of Anglo-hegemony on the construction of public narratives. This argument discusses the presence of Anglo-hegemony in San Diego. It will do so through evidence of Anglo-controlled political power, through analysis of municipal policies that negatively impacted non-white neighborhoods, among other reasons. This section will also explain how the presence of this

hegemony effected the narrative of San Diego's founding during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969 by describing how racial power disparities lead to the promotion and valorization of European colonial narratives.

The second reason deals with the pressures of business interests, advertising, and local business owners who had unique influence on where and how the bicentennial would be remembered. This section will wrestle with evidence of local business owners sponsoring historical restorations, events, and media coverage preceding and during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. This section will also look to the influence of the state government and its promotion of events and programs that led to increased tourism and related spending. This section will analyze evidence of how spending was allocated by the municipal government for tourism and promotion of the bicentennial celebrations.

Thirdly and finally, this paper turns to the influence of scholars and other professionals who were responsible for providing and crafting narratives of the city of San Diego's founding during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. This section examines the work of various historians, ethnographers, and anthropologists. This section further helps this thesis to understand how a precedent of historiography leads to the promotion of colonial narratives.

This project builds on and responds to three distinct fields of literature. These are rhetorical conceptions of space, historical monument studies, and San Diego/California Mission historiography. This project aims to use insights from these various disciplines to create a cohesive and meaningful piece that works to further the debates within each of these discursive spaces. While there is often significant overlap in these fields of study, this paper will look at each individually.

This thesis builds off rhetorical conceptions of space. The study of monuments and space within rhetorical communication has provided useful context for the purposes of this project. Scholars have looked at National Parks,¹ sites of protest,² and national heritage monuments.³ These offer important insights into how purposefully constructed spaces have been rhetorically used to alter people's conception of a collective memory. Collective memory studies began with the work of Maurice Halbwachs.⁴ Halbwachs worked to define memory as not only a personal phenomenon, but also a social one. This claim has influenced conceptions of memory and become vitally important in various social scientific and humanities disciplines. The field of collective memory now strongly influences the disciplines including psychology, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, communication, and history. Conceptions of how people think of their collective pasts are important tools for rhetoricians and historians alike, providing a potent lens for this thesis.

Historical monuments are ripe with collective meaning and spaces are important rhetorical texts that are worthy of scholarly engagement. Rhetorical scholars often use historical monuments as examples of their rhetorical framework. For example, Greg Dickinson has recently popularized the work of memory landscapes within the field of rhetorical communication.⁵ Scholars such as Paliewicz & Hasian have cited Dickson's work in their

¹ Gregory Clark, *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004).

² D. Endres & S. Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no 3 (2011): 257-282.

³ Joshua Ewalt, "A Colonialist Celebration of National <Heritage>: Verbal, Visual, and Landscape Ideographs at Homestead National Monument of America," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 367-385.

⁴ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁵ Greg Dickinson, "Memories for sale: Nostalgia and the construction of identity in Old Pasadena," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 1 (1997): 1-27.

analysis of the 9/11 memorial.⁶ The 9/11 memorial while not a site of celebration is argued to also not be a site of healing and recovery. This notion of sites being spaces of healing and recovery has been affirmed by various scholars as being of the utmost importance when considering the construction of space and the commemoration of narratives.^{7 8}

While rhetorical scholars have placed significant focus on the discussions surrounding monuments and the meaning of purposefully constructed spaces, the historical community has also been vocal on the subject. There have been heated discussions in the literature that discuss the removal or maintenance of statues commemorating historical events. Many of the recent debates in America began with discussion of whether we should keep Confederate monuments that were built in the early twentieth century in public spaces. These monuments have recently gained attention by political activist groups that see them as threatening vestiges of white supremacy from the Civil War. Others see them as reminders of a shared Southern heritage and refuse to have them removed. These public debates devolved into mass protests leading to the Charlottesville ‘Unite the Right’ rally in 2017, where white supremacist groups protested the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee.⁹ This protest led to violent clashes between protesters. A white supremacist supporter murdered a counter protester, which led to the President making a controversial public comment on the situation¹⁰ and bringing the debate to the forefront of the

⁶ Nicholas S. Paliewicz and Marouf Hasian Jr. “Mourning Absences, Melancholic Commemoration, and the Contested Public Memories of the National September 11 Memorial and Museum,” *Western Journal of Communication* 80, no. 2 (2016): 140-162.

⁷ Theresa Gregor, “Decolonizing San Diego’s History: An Iiapy Reflection on the Context and Impact of 1769,” *Journal of San Diego History* 65, no. 2 (2019): 71-80.

⁸ Deacon Andrew Orosco, “A Kumeyaay’s Reflection,” *Journal of San Diego History* 65, no. 2 (2019): 115-120.

⁹ Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Brian M. Rosenthal, "Man Charged After White Nationalist Rally in Charlottesville Ends in Deadly Violence," *The New York Times*, August 12, 2017.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/12/us/charlottesville-protest-white-nationalist.html>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

collective American psyche. Today, there are scholars who have argued that moving or removing monuments is an erasure of history and heritage,¹¹ while there are others who view the moving or removal of statues and monuments as being a means of bettering a community's collective historical narrative.¹² While much of this discussion arose from the debates surrounding Confederate monuments in the American South,¹³ many of these debates are relevant for other monuments and constructed memory sites.¹⁴

These fields allow for a unique lens through which this paper will understand the history of San Diego's monuments and bicentennial celebration. But to best understand this application this paper also wrestles with San Diego historiographical studies. San Diego historiography has a wealth of literature and active debate within the academic community. There are conflicting schools of thought within how San Diego history should be remembered. While it seems that a new generation of scholars is focusing on promoting a decolonial history of San Diego,¹⁵ there are plenty of contemporary historiographies available that suggest a celebratory nature.¹⁶ There are historical overviews of contemporary San Diego history that rely on official sources and focus on the narratives of the governmental and political events¹⁷ as opposed to the experiences and significant events in city communities. There are also contemporary sources that summarize an

¹¹ David Lowenthal, "Response To The 'AHA Statement on Confederate Monuments,'" *Perspectives on History*, November 1, 2017, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/november-2017/response-to-the-aha-statement-on-confederate-monuments>.

¹² AHA Staff, "AHA Statement on Confederate Monuments," *Perspectives on History*, October 1, 2017, <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/october-2017/aha-statement-on-confederate-monuments>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Jeffery Herf, "Lessons from German History after Charlottesville," *History News Network* (Washington D.C.) September 10, 2017. <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/166864>.

¹⁵ Gregor, "Decolonizing," 80.

¹⁶ Iris H.W. Engstand, "Serra's San Diego," San Diego History Center (San Diego).

¹⁷ Richard Pourade, "Volume VII: City of the Dream, 1940-1970," In *The History of San Diego*, (San Diego, California: San Diego History Center.)

uncritical lens of the colonial histories of San Diego¹⁸ and lack critical attention to the stories of native and marginalized communities.

There is also a more recent and significant trend in the scholarship that works to illuminate the narratives of native and marginalized populations by looking at colonial narratives with a more critical lens. This lens seems to be the dominant trend within more recent San Diego historical research.¹⁹ There is endless work to do within this trend of scholarship as it works to counter the malicious narratives that have promoted colonial hegemonic dominance. This research seeks to promote historical narratives that help to heal²⁰ and help marginalized populations recover²¹ from the pains inflicted on them by contemporary and historical economic forces. This thesis hopes to operate in promoting healing through a balanced view and understanding of San Diego's complicated modern past.

I: Anglo-Hegemony

Historical and archaeological findings contain evidence of diverse populations establishing the first colonial settlement.²² The history of the settlement at the site of the original San Diego presidio site was available to those who represented the narratives of San Diego's narrative during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969.²³ Given this information, why were the narratives of European colonization glorified, as evidenced at the monuments of San Diego's founding, and why were the narratives of native and other marginalized populations were not

¹⁸ Engstrand, "Serra."

¹⁹ Gregor, "Decolonizing," 71-80.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Orosco, "Kumeyaay," 120.

²² Pourade, "Volume VII."

²³ Jack S. Williams, "The Changing Perspectives of Spanish Colonial San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 65, no. 2 (2019): 100.

accurately represented? It appears that a primary reason for this sort of representation is due to the historical hegemonic dominance of Anglo-communities in the San Diego area. Anglo-communities have exercised power in various forms in San Diego throughout the city's history²⁴ and their power over how we remember the history of our city is not exempted from this overwhelming projection of power.

This section attempts to understand hegemony as structured through institutional racism.²⁵ This hegemony has been materially manifested through various historically identifiable means. Examples of this hegemonic projection can be identified in things from municipal legislation²⁶ to expressions of cultural attitudes in public forums.²⁷ This evidence of the presence of Anglo-hegemony in San Diego during the time of the bicentennial celebrations will help to explain the public history of the monuments. Understanding how this hegemony has operated in San Diego helps to explain the construction of the public history of the city and its colonial monuments. While the concept of ethno-hegemonic dominance may at times be vague and prone to critique,²⁸ it offers an interesting and potent lens as to how to look at the formation of the narratives of a city's identity, especially in the context of a highly politicized historical event such as the city's founding. We often look to the past to understand our present. Understanding why we have remembered and valued certain populations more than others can help us to better understand the operation of power in our present.

²⁴ Phoebe S. Kropp, *California Vieja: Culture and Memory in a Modern American Place* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2008).

²⁵ Stuart Hall, "Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 5 (1986): 5-27.

²⁶ Rudy P. Guevarra, *Becoming Mexipino: Multiethnic Identities and Communities in San Diego* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012): 41-70.

²⁷ Rev. G.K. Frisbie, "Non-Christians' Influence Noted," *San Diego Union*, April 15, 1970.

²⁸ Harris, Paul W. "Cultural Imperialism and American Protestant Missionaries: Collaboration and Dependency in Mid-Nineteenth-Century China." *Pacific Historical Review* 60, no. 3 (August 1991): 304.

Anglo-populations in San Diego have been able to effectively shape the narrative of the city's founding in the pursuit of maintaining hegemony. However, this claim relies on evidence that Anglo-populations did in-fact maintain a form of cultural hegemony in San Diego during the time period. This claim could at times be difficult to prove, given the often-qualitative nature of identifying hegemony in a given population or area. Yet it is a claim that with robust evidence becomes easier to understand and defend. When considering the claim of Anglo-hegemony in San Diego, some of the most potent pieces of evidence in understanding how this hegemony's operation are found in municipal policies and discussions in public forums.

Many pieces of municipal legislation and policy that were created during the early and mid-twentieth century would have a legacy that would create racial and ethnic division in San Diego that are still present to this day. These policies were often advantageous for Anglo-populations who were afraid of nonwhite populations gaining representation and power in the city. Among the municipal policies that were most influential in ensuring unbalanced power in the city were the municipal housing-zoning policies often referred to as "Redlining." This was a set of zoning policies that established which ethnic groups could live in which neighborhoods. This was carried out via the federal government through the Home Owners' Loan Corporation. This had major impacts on San Diego's community and segregated non-white populations to the southern neighborhoods of the city such as Logan Heights and Golden Hill.

This practice has significant impacts on the mobility of citizens and limited the choices and opportunities of non-whites in San Diego. This practice was deemed illegal in the year before the bicentennial celebrations under the Fair Housing Act of 1968. Redlining has had drastic impacts on many different parts of life in San Diego and restricted the access of minority populations, even after the passing of the Fair Housing Act. It is municipal policies such as this

that negatively impacted nonwhite populations and allowed Anglo-communities to establish the sort of hegemony that we find in our discussions of power in San Diego during the time of the bicentennial celebrations.

Redlining in San Diego was one among a litany of attempts by the local government to maintain Anglo-hegemony. San Diego politicians not only attempted to segregate the populations through housing polices, but also attempted to attract more Anglo-residents to the city via means of economic incentive.²⁹ There were policies established by the San Diego Chamber of Commerce in the mid-twentieth century that attempted to halt industrial developments in the hopes of discouraging cheaper laborers of non-Anglo backgrounds from moving to the city. There is further evidence that the city courted the developments of the Navy that now dominate the city's landscape and infrastructure because city officials found these Navy men to be of a "high class."³⁰ The Navy was primarily white at the time and it would bring in large amounts of federal funding to the city. It was a pursuit that would further bring more white people to the city in the hopes of disincentivizing non-Anglo populations from moving to the city. Evidence such as this helps to identify and prove the existence of Anglo-hegemony in San Diego during the mid-twentieth century and how this legacy would impact the structure of San Diego and its racial composition for generations to come.

Evidence of this hegemony is not only found in legal processes and municipal policies, but also in cultural discussions. There is clear evidence of racial/ethnic tension during the period of the bicentennial celebration events of 1969. Multiple newspaper articles help to highlight how this sort of tension was perceived by various San Diego communities. There was a clear

²⁹ Jim Miller, "San Diego's Racial Unconscious: History is the Narrative that Hurts," *San Diego Free Press*, February 16, 2015.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

frustration with the status-quo that was identified by various peoples in op-ed sections³¹ of newspapers which claimed that the voices of certain populations had been marginalized.³² Some of the clearest forms of upset and protest came from Chicana populations who were frustrated with the dominance of Anglo-populations in areas of public discussion and legislative power. They were upset with perceived lack of value placed on the lives of the poor, and rather a focus on wealth and consumerism. People were upset with the federal government as well as the municipal and often conflated the actions of the federal government with those of the municipal. This conflation should be recognized as a general upset with the Anglo-dominance and the marginalization of Chicana communities during the times of the bicentennial celebration. This conflation seemed to be justifiable in the face of the conditions and attitudes that marginalized populations faced at the time. There seemed to be a palpable feeling of upset. And there seemed to be popular support for change in the face of a system of governance that valued the lives and prosperity of certain populations drastically over those of others.

These cultural perceptions of oppression compounded with clear examples of repressive municipal legislation help to make the case for the presence of Anglo-hegemony in the San Diego area during the time of the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. The presence of racial and ethnic divisions paired with such drastic material implications would have significant impact on the perception and shape of the city's identity. To identify this impact, this paper will look at how Anglo-hegemony in San Diego has affected the narrative of the city's founding and in particular in the history of the city's colonial monuments.

³¹ Frisbie, "Non-Christians' Influence Noted."

³² San Diego Union Editors, "Critic Of U.S. Gets Ovation Plus Criticism." San Diego Union, April 15, 1970.

Power can be projected in legislation, cultural debates, and language. But it also can be projected through collective memory.³³ What we choose to remember or forget has direct impacts on how we come to understand power. When we think about who has a claim to authority, we often look at the past to see how things have operated in the past to guide us in the future. The bicentennial celebrations of San Diego offer a unique and example in how this sort of narrative power operates. The people of San Diego have historically been led by Anglo leaders, as evidenced by the various legislative and cultural means of oppression that have been identified in this paper. It is these leaders that have been able to shape the narrative of the city through city events, such as commemorations, dedications, and celebrations. Some of these events were the dedication of the Coronado bridge, a marvel of engineering and a landmark for the city to this day, the inaugural season of the San Diego Padres in the MLB, along with various other notable events.³⁴ These events carried an additional significance in the face of the city's founding. They also helped add to the grandeur of the year and its celebrations.

Selecting this year for celebration carried drastic implications for how we understand the heritage and history of this city. Under the weight of this celebration and grandeur the people of San Diego were effectively forced to regard the founding of the city as the year of 1769. There was no available alternative historical approach, none that did not consider the planting of a cross by Spanish missionaries as the moment the city was established. This was a powerful statement made by those in power in San Diego that established what the public should see as important and valuable. It was the actions of the colonial forces that should be seen as the beginning of this city. With this in mind the question of this paper becomes easier to understand. The city's

³³Cindy Minarova-Banjac, "Collective Memory and Forgetting: A Theoretical Discussion," Bond University Research Repository.

³⁴ Pourade, "Volume VII."

founding narrative is based upon the actions of European settlers, without the consent of the native or settler populations. The symbolic gestures of European colonizers were the historical founding of the city.

This was an event that was advantageous for Anglo peoples to celebrate, as it worked to justify the presence of peoples of European descent in the San Diego area. This was a rhetorically powerful event and celebration that would further work to perpetuate the already clear hegemony of Anglo-peoples in the San Diego area. There is evidence in everything from newspaper articles to homilies where we can see how Anglo-hegemony has operated in constructing an incohesive³⁵, yet powerful narrative of the city's founding. A narrative that paints history in a way that celebrates the achievements of European colonization in America and one that fails to recognize the impacts of native peoples in the development and lineage of this city. It not only fails to recognize, but purposefully forgets the contributions of native and other peoples who played a major role in the development of the city during the early settlements of 1769 and the years that follow. It was a narrative that helped to justify the presence and power of Anglo-communities. This narrative was an extension of the power of Anglo-communities in San Diego.

As this paper moves on to further understand why the narrative of San Diego's founding during the bicentennial celebration was celebratory of narratives of European colonization, it will be useful to remember the reasons that were outlined in this section. Anglo-hegemony was present in San Diego during the time of the bicentennial events. While this could be a difficult label to place on any given population in the city, the evidence provided in this section helped to

³⁵ There was clear evidence that native populations played a key role in the city's founding, yet this evidence had been irrelevant in some of the discussions of the city's founding during the bicentennial celebrations.

support the claim of Anglo-hegemony in San Diego. This evidence stemmed from municipal policies that attracted Anglo residents to San Diego over those of other ethnic populations. There was evidence of federal housing policies that enabled racial divisions for generations that left a legacy of segregation that disproportionately benefited Anglo populations. There was also evidence of a clear upset with the status quo from marginalized populations such as the Chicana community. This helped to reveal that the cultural values of the city were dominated by Anglo populations and failed to consider the cultural values of other populations that were seeking cultural representation.

After establishing a case for the presence of Anglo-hegemony in San Diego, this section worked to highlight the implications that this hegemony would have on the narrative of the city's founding. These implications helped explain why narratives of European colonization were prioritized over the narratives of remembrance, recovery, and healing of native and settler populations. Since Anglo leaders could dictate the events and celebrations of the bicentennial, given that they maintained power in the city government and various other arenas, they could focus on events that further served their interests. The events that local leaders chose to celebrate was a narrative of colonization, the planting of the cross on Presidio Hill. This was not an action that was mediated between native populations and the European colonizers. It served to justify the unilateral actions of European populations in San Diego. It is a rhetorically powerful shaping of the events of early settlement in San Diego that works to further Anglo-hegemony.

II: Market and Political Influence

In this paper's attempt to understand the construction of the narratives that defined the history of San Diego and its colonial monuments during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969, this paper turns to some of the key economic and political factors that have influenced the physical spaces and events that helped to define the narrative of this city's founding. These political and economic factors deal with municipal and state financial incentives, private interests, and the perpetuation of existing power structures.

To best understand the effects of economic and political interests on the construction of the city's founding narrative during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969 this section first intends to look at how a municipal focus on tourism presented biases in the accuracy of the city's historical narratives. This section will also look at how political influence at the state level impacted San Diego's decisions in how it celebrated and commemorated the events of 1769. This will help this paper to further understand the operation of power that is wielded by the state legislature. Finally, this section looks at the debates surrounding the attempt at designating Old Town San Diego as a State sponsored historical site, as a demonstration in the operation of these various influences on the city's founding narrative. Through an understanding of how political and economic factors operate in shaping the narratives of San Diego's public history, this paper hopes to be able to answer the question as to why narratives of colonial settlers were promoted over those of narratives of remembrance, healing, and recovery for native and settler populations?

The impacts of economic incentives and their impact on the construction of the narrative of San Diego are profound and help us to understand the answer to this question of why certain peoples were remembered and others were not. Financial incentives had a major impact in how

this paper understands the reasons for the celebration of colonial narratives over those of native and other marginalized populations. One of the most influential of these incentives is a focus on tourism. The emphasis on tourism makes a direct correlation to the relevancy of historical accuracy in the site's construction. When a site or monument is constructed with the aim of attracting certain populations for financial gain, the site is inherently biased to focus its representations on things other than historical accuracy. It seems clear that a monument or event that is focused on tourism, such as those constructed in San Diego for the 1969 bicentennial celebrations, would fail to properly consider the factuality of historical narratives.

The focus of tourism is to attract nonlocal populations to invest the local area in any number of ways. A site built for tourism would also almost certainly not consider how local populations would be affected by the construction of the physical space or planning of an event. This is an important note in understanding why certain populations were prioritized in the construction of this city's founding narrative. As noted earlier, the presence of localized Anglo-hegemony had a drastic impact on the city's founding narrative. It should be further understood that this was hegemony was not a simply local presence, but rather was present throughout the near entirety of the nation. This was understood by the city of San Diego which was keen on attracting more Anglo inhabitants to the city in the hopes of maintaining this hegemony.³⁶

Given that Anglo-hegemony was a mainstay of the United States' status quo in the mid twentieth century, it would be unsurprising that capital would drastically and disproportionately accumulate in Anglo-communities.³⁷ This capital could be spent in any number of ways, but relative to this argument, it provided Anglo communities with extensive opportunities for leisure

³⁶ Jim Miller, "San Diego's Racial Unconscious: History is the Narrative that Hurts," *San Diego Free Press*, February 16, 2015.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

time and travel. The municipal government was intent on attracting tourists for the celebrations of 1969, and subsequently those tourists would almost entirely be those from Anglo-communities. This meant that the narratives of any celebratory site had to be catered to the interests of Anglo populations.

Subsequently, the narratives of the founding of European colonial settlements throughout this territory would be the primary focus when constructing narratives, as these events reflected a symbolic legacy of Anglo people settling and claiming rights to an ‘unsettled land.’ This is clearly a narrative that is not reflective of the historical reality of the land which San Diego was built upon. This is because this land was inhabited for millennium before the arrival of any sort of Anglo presence by the Kumeyaay.³⁸ However, reflecting this narrative would not encourage Anglo peoples to come, visit, and spend. While there is a legacy of tourism to spaces that display historically accurate narratives of oppression, marginalization, and abuse,³⁹ this was not the focus in San Diego. These events ended up being ‘party’⁴⁰ like celebrations that were meant to praise the histories of European peoples in San Diego as well as a larger celebration of European colonization throughout California. As established earlier, hegemonic projection can often be found in acts of collective remembrance⁴¹ and the San Diego bicentennial celebrations of 1969 are clearly no exception.

However, celebrations such as this came at an immense cost to the taxpayer and, for this reason, were not always popular even among the elites of San Diego.⁴² The bicentennial

³⁸ Deacon Andrew Orosco, “A Kumeyaay’s Reflection,” *Journal of San Diego History* 65, no. 2 (2019): 115.

³⁹ Ian Convery, Gerard Corsane, and Peter Davis, *Displaced Heritage: Responses to Disaster, Trauma, and Loss*. Woodbridge, (United Kingdom: Boydell & Brewer, Boydell Press. 2014): 9.

⁴⁰ San Diego Union Editors, “Three Day Party Planned in Park,” *San Diego Union*, July 16, 1969.

⁴¹ Minarova-Banjac, “Collective Memory”

⁴² Pourade, “Volume VII.”

celebrations ended up costing taxpayers over one million dollars. This increase in spending for the purposes of tourism did not lead to a substantial relative increase in tourism revenue when compared to the previous year's increase.⁴³ It is unclear whether those in the municipal government knew that this spending would have a direct correlation or not to overall revenue brought in by tourists. There would be serious implications to the understanding of San Diego's founding narrative if they knew that it would likely do little to boost revenue. The city of San Diego has historically identified that its interests align with Anglo interests, but this could not have been done without the financial and legislative support of outside interests, among these being the State government and private donors.

1969, was not only seen as the symbolic founding of San Diego, but also the symbolic founding of California.⁴⁴ Father Serra was the first white settler to lay claim and found a settlement on what is the present-day Pacific Coast of the United States.⁴⁵ This meant that the events in San Diego and its celebrations during the 1969 bicentennial were no longer the sole discretion of the municipality, but would also be considered at the state level.⁴⁶ Representatives from San Diego county were tasked with presenting legislation and propositions to the state legislative body in Sacramento. However, the legislature was not solely composed of San Diego residents or inhabitants. And this meant that there were plenty of people with the ability to exercise power in the happenings of the San Diego area who did not have a direct interest in or

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴ American Association for State and Local History, "Year of Celebrations," *History News* 24, no. 6 (1969): 119.

⁴⁵ Francis J. Weber, "California's Serrana Literature," *Southern California Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (1969): 342.

⁴⁶ While this paper lacks the ability to go into full and complete detail of the influence of Anglo-hegemony at the State level during this time period, applying such a lens may be helpful in understanding the influences of State legislators who were charged with deciding the fate of San Diego's celebratory narratives and events.

an intimate knowledge of the cultural and racial complexities of the metropolitan area. The state legislature could decide things such as allocations of funding for various tourism initiatives and the recognition of historical sites.

The impact of considering the founding of California to be the symbolic act of a Spaniard in 1769, as the state proposed in 1969, seems historically difficult to understand. The United States did not officially annex the territory now known as California until 1848 following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.⁴⁷ So to claim that the California that was founded in 1769 is the same as the California that was established as a state in 1849 seems to be only possible when considering the lineage of San Diego as the lineage of the present Anglo populations in the area. These Anglo populations had waged war against each other,⁴⁸ so to consider California as being founded as a united Anglo entity at the time of the first presence of white settlers seems fallacious. This again simply helps to explain why the narratives of the city's founding, as constructed during the 1969 bicentennial celebrations, did not accurately reflect evidence-based historical accounts of the events of 1769. But rather they simply worked to celebrate European colonization as well as justify the presence of Anglo populations in the San Diego area.

To further understand the influence from State authorities on San Diego's founding narrative, this paper turns to the debates surrounding Old Town San Diego in the state legislature as a case study in understanding the intentions and priorities of the San Diego elite during the planning of the celebrations of 1969. Old Town offers a unique case because its restoration was contentious even among San Diego's elites. The restoration of Old Town was the lone physical historical vestige for the events of the bicentennial. In the years before the celebrations the space was

⁴⁷ "Mexican-American War," Encyclopaedia Britannica, last modified December 06, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Mexican-American-War>.

⁴⁸ Millard F. Hudson, "The Battle of San Diego," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 7, no. 2 (1907-1908): 103-113.

mired in conflicts between private landowners and municipal tourism interests.⁴⁹ Many of the old houses were in disrepair, yet the site had eventually found revival in the repairs of a few wealthy donors who wanted to see the legacy of the Old Town historic center preserved and present in San Diego's present and future.⁵⁰

Proposals for recognition of the historic park were eventually approved by the National Historic Registry in 1965.⁵¹ This was helpful for Old Town to receive national recognition as a space worthy of continued remembrance. This recognition along with the economic support from private and governmental funds helped to establish Old Town a significant space of colonial remembrance that would be influential to the public history of San Diego during the bicentennial celebrations. This was a space that was valued not only as a space of remembrance as the former center of San Diego, but more importantly as the space where Anglo-settlers resided in the early 19th century.⁵² This space operates as further evidence of the celebration of European colonial actions in San Diego.

The reasons for the celebration of European colonization seem clearer after an analysis of the operation of economic and political interests in the construction of San Diego's founding narrative during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. Economic interests inherently bias the ability to tell accurate and evidence-based historical narratives, as the main objective of the project is not accuracy, but rather profit. In the case of San Diego, the economic motivation for the celebrations and construction were to likely to increase municipal revenue from tourism, not to unify the city in a way that properly considered the representations of native and other

⁴⁹ Pourade, "Volume VII."

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form for Old Town San Diego Historic District," 1971, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/123858036>.

⁵² Ibid.

marginalized populations. The influence of the State government and political biases that stemmed from the motivation of state-level politicians similarly led to a focus on catering the celebrations and activities associated with the bicentennial disproportionately toward Anglo populations in an attempt to justify their presence and attract more Anglo populations to San Diego in the pursuit of maintaining hegemony. The restorations of Old Town operated as evidence for the convergence of these forces in their attempt at crafting the narrative of San Diego's founding to celebrate the actions of European colonial actors in California.

The use of the city's physical spaces for celebratory events seemed to be motivated by commercial means. This meant that the municipal and state government's intentions were not primarily historical or commemorative, but rather financial and hegemonically motivated. The cultures that were represented in the monuments were not properly considered and were rather appropriated by the city and state government for the purposes of profit and municipal recognition.⁵³ This seems to have led to the narratives surrounding these spaces becoming uncritical celebrations of European cultural superiority and not spaces places of healing, recovery, and remembrance of the hardships of native populations and colonial settlers

⁵³ Ibid.

III: Scholarly Influence and Bias

This paper so far has attempted to understand the construction of the city's founding narrative as represented in the celebrations and events of the 1969 bicentennial celebrations. In this paper's attempt to understand this construction, it has looked at cultural, political, and economic factors that seem to have had significant impact on the events and celebrations that define the narrative of San Diego's founding. This paper has yet to understand how the narrative of these events and celebrations were understood by period journalist, historians, anthropologists, ethnographers, etc. These are the people who were responsible for producing public histories and community narratives. These scholars and authors helped shape how people understood the history and stories of the San Diego community and played an important role in the construction of San Diego's founding narrative.

It is important for this thesis to understand the motivations behind these writers and researchers. Through understanding the motivations of these writers, this paper can better understand how bias operates in the research process and how these biases may have influenced the narrative of San Diego's founding. To best do this, the section will look at mid to late twentieth century historiographies of San Diego. This section will also look at ethnographic research from the same period to best understand the attitudes of authors and researchers and how they perceived communities in San Diego. Finally, this section will survey the work of anthropologists to understand what researchers of the period understood about the history and original uses of these colonial places of remembrance. Through a proper understanding of these various disciplines and how they operate in the construction of a city's collective memory, this paper will be better equipped to understand why the colonial spaces of remembrance in San Diego were remembered as sites of celebration for the actions of European colonization and why

they were not remembered as sites of remembrance, recovery, and healing for the hardships of colonial and settler populations.

This section begins with a historiographic survey of San Diego's colonial monuments to understand why some narratives were represented and valued in the city's collective memory over others. Historiographic studies offer potent insights into how historians of the past understood the narrative of San Diego's history. The discipline allows us to understand how historians valued certain populations and events in the past. The way historians understand the narratives of the past, helps shape the public memory of the citizenry. The way historians craft works often influences that of other researchers. For example, if a historian focuses on the history of a war and spends their time researching all the specifics in great detail, historians in the future are likely to look at that research as being significant and important. This leads other historians to take interest in that moment and prioritize it as a time of significance, possibly inspiring others to better understand the conflict and its outcomes. This same process happens for all sorts of events and people.

The history of San Diego is no exception from this sort of process. The work of historians of the past influences what other historians and the public come to understand as being significant in terms of historical remembrance. In San Diego, the narratives of the colonial settlers such as Father Junipero Serra⁵⁴,⁵⁵ ⁵⁶ ⁵⁷ and the Spanish colonial expansions operate as times of historical significance that the city and people have come to understand as important.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Engstrand, "Serra's San Diego"

⁵⁵ Weber, "Serrana Literature"

⁵⁶ Maynard Geiger, "Fray Junipero Serra: Organizer and Administrator of the Upper California Missions, 1769-1784," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (1963): 195-220.

⁵⁷ Jack D. Forbes, *Native Americans of California and Nevada* (Happy Camp: Naturegraph Publishers, 1968.)

⁵⁸ Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz "Complex and Tragic Tensions: California Mission Historiography and San Diego's Past," *The Journal of San Diego History* 65, no. 2 (2019): 89-90.

The historical emphasis on these moments in history has led to people celebrating the anniversaries of these events and the spaces where these historical events occurred. This is effectively the process of what has shaped San Diego's historiography during the mid to late twentieth century. While other narratives of history have been offered and promoted by scholars, many have not garnered the attention and financial backing that these other narratives have. They have not been given the attention from generations of privileged scholars and have subsequently been sidelined in the historiography and its material manifestations.⁵⁹

Anthropological research offers another unique and potent lens through which we can understand the construction of San Diego's founding narrative during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. Anthropologists and archaeologists have worked to uncover what the sites of remembrance such as the San Diego Presidio and the Mission de Alcala looked like at the period which historians have traditionally considered as the city's founding, 1769. Reading this research is some of the most powerful in understanding how the dynamics of power operate in narrative construction over those of evidence-based historical accuracy.

There is evidence that was available to historians of the period which indicated that the colonial sites of remembrance in San Diego were not solely settled by Anglo peoples, but rather via multi-ethnic coalitions of peoples under the direction of the Spanish Empire.⁶⁰ There is also evidence that native populations played a significant role in the creation and construction of the original settlements of the Spanish Empire.⁶¹ These two claims were available to scholars of the period. The story presented by this evidence in conjunction with the evidence presented by Anglo-centric historians paints a different picture of the founding of San Diego.

⁵⁹ Gregor, "Decolonizing," 74.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 101.

⁶¹ Paul Ezell, "The Excavation Project at the San Diego Presidio," *The Journal of San Diego History* 22, no. 4 (1976).

Anthropological evidence also brings into question why the narrative of San Diego's founding is based on the actions of Father Junipero Serra in 1769. Anthropological texts of the time considered what should the definition of a founding be? The municipal government clearly considered the birthday of San Diego to be the events of 1769.⁶² However some scholars of the period consider the mission system to not be a legitimate point to define the founding of a city.⁶³ Not only today, should we reconsider the criteria or legitimacy of the "founding" of a city, it is clear that scholars of the period similarly questioned this definition. This evidence further complicates the question of this paper. Given that this evidence was available why was the founding of the city considered as the colonial actions of the Spanish settlers, dominant in the public eye? As opposed to the alternative definition of a city's founding such as its date of incorporation? Which, again, in the case of San Diego was March 27, 1850. This question of what should be considered the founding of the city is central to understanding the question of this thesis. This evidence from anthropologists of the period helps to clarify as well as complicate how we should think about the overrepresentation of Anglo-populations as well as the underrepresentation of marginalized populations. It seems, again, as if the dominance of Anglo-narratives in the academy and the scholarly precedent led to the public's conception of the narrative of the city's founding.

Ethnographic studies similarly shed a light on to the reasons for the disparities in representation in San Diego's founding narrative. These studies help to focus on small groups,

⁶² San Diego Union Editors, "Here's A Birthday Salute to Fascinating San Diego," *San Diego Union*, July 16, 1969.

⁶³ J. N. Bowman, "Determination of the Birthdays of Urban Communities," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1948): 52.

neighborhoods, and peoples to try and understand disparate social realities. Ethnographic research is important for context to the lives of peoples in San Diego and will help this paper better understand how people perceived their communities and how they interacted with the physical spaces they inhabited. This sort of research gives a rich context for understanding how these physical spaces and events of celebration had material consequences that have led to the misrepresentation of certain populations and the overrepresentation of others. It helps us to understand the dynamics of power within the city and country and how this sort of operation of power has affected the narrative of the city's founding.

There is also evidence in ethnographic research of the disparities among various ethnic groups and their presence or lack thereof in certain San Diego neighborhoods.⁶⁴ These ethnographies help to highlight the unique and troubling racial and ethnic disparities that we see in San Diego and other major cities of the period. The late sixties were a turbulent time in the United States as the full swing of the civil rights movement began to take hold and gain the momentum it needed to enact federal and local legislation that would ensure the equal legal treatment of different peoples.⁶⁵ This not only prompted everyday citizens to protest and organize against what they saw as unjust legislation and treatment by authorities,⁶⁶ it also prompted academics and ethnographers to write about the injustices that they saw around them and how these disparities were materially manifested in their own communities and the communities of those who shared a common cultural heritage.⁶⁷ This could be seen in all sorts of different communities in much of the country. Significant movements in San Diego and

⁶⁴ Guevarra, *Becoming Mexipino*.

⁶⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Fair Housing Act," Last modified April 04, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Fair-Housing-Act>.

⁶⁶ Guevarra, *Becoming Mexipino*.

⁶⁷ Forbes, *Native Americans*.

California were made by all sorts of different racial and ethnic groups in the stride toward equal rights, representation, and treatment. Among some of the most vocal, were arguments from African American,⁶⁸ Chicano,⁶⁹ and Native peoples.⁷⁰ These arguments were being made in various political arenas⁷¹ and had drastic impacts on how communities were able to operate and began to carve a more equal and representative space for themselves in the San Diego community.⁷²

These sorts of vocalizations help us to understand the complexity of the narrative of San Diego's founding. There were clearly peoples who understood that the voices of those most marginalized were fighting for a space in San Diego's collective consciousness, but at the same time there were various scholars and politicians who were working vehemently to counter this sort of stride towards equal rights.⁷³⁷⁴ This can be seen in the narrative of San Diego's founding during the events of 1969. The adamant celebration of colonialism could be a means of contesting these new emerging and powerful narratives from marginalized groups, to hold onto a power structure that was, finally, being effectively challenged.

These various forms of scholarship seem to have made significant impacts on the development of San Diego's founding narrative. This section helps this paper to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the forces that influenced how scholars and the public alike

⁶⁸ Jack D. Forbes, "Black Pioneers: The Spanish-Speaking Afroamericans of the Southwest," *Phylon* 27, no. 3 (1966): 233-246.

⁶⁹ Michael Soldatenko, "The Genesis of Academic Chicano Studies, 1967-1970: Utopia and the Emergence of Chicano Studies," In *The Genesis of a Discipline* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press 2009): 12-37.

⁷⁰ Forbes, *Native Americans*.

⁷¹ Schooling, Labor, Etc.

⁷² Jack S. Williams, "The Changing Perspectives of Spanish Colonial San Diego," *Journal of San Diego History* 65, no. 2 (2019): 100-101.

⁷³ Elinor Richey, "Tenant Oppression: Our Smoldering Housing Scandal," *The Antioch Review* 24, no. 3 (1964): 348.

⁷⁴ Beebe and Senkewicz "California Mission."

synchronously developed the narrative of the city's founding. The precedent of historiography clearly had a major influence in shaping the research interests of scholars and established an evidentially weak narrative of the origins of San Diego. This focus on the colonial settlers helps us to understand why the narrative of San Diego's founding was so intimately linked with the actions of colonial settlers in 1769.

However, it seems also that competing narratives of the city's founding were available. This complicates the story in that there was an existence of challenging narratives that did not accept the Anglo dominant narrative that was so heavily emphasized for so long. There were new and protesting forms of scholarship that emerged with the civil rights movement that not only helped to challenge laws but also the general frame of how people thought of the history of not only San Diego, but the United States. This is evidenced in the ethnographic sources as well as the archaeological sources that provided historical evidence of an ethnically diverse history compared to that which is seen in the narrative of San Diego's founding during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969.

These forms of scholarship, while not as influential at the time, have made significant impacts on scholars today. There is a surge in decolonial literature available today that has and continues to help bring more historically accurate and less power-biased forms of scholarship.⁷⁵ This sort of scholarship is incredibly valuable in properly representing our communities and making for a more just and representative narrative.

⁷⁵ Gregor, "Decolonizing."

Conclusion

This paper has so far attempted to understand why the monuments of the San Diego Presidio and the San Diego Mission de Alcalá and were places of celebration of the narratives of European cultural superiority, and not places of healing, recovery, and remembrance of the hardships of native populations and colonial settlers during the 1969 San Diego Bicentennial celebrations? This thesis offered three potential answers to this question.

The first of these arguments had to do with the presence and powerful influence of Anglo-hegemony on the construction of public narratives. This argument first established the presence of Anglo-hegemony in San Diego. It did so through evidence of Anglo-controlled political power, through analysis of municipal policies that negatively impacted non-white neighborhoods, among other reasons. After establishing this hegemony, this thesis then went on to explain how the presence of this hegemony effected the narrative of San Diego's founding during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. It helped to describe how this racial power disparity led to the promotion and valorization of European colonial narratives.

The second of these arguments highlighted the influence of local political interests and economic incentives which had undue influence on where and how the bicentennial would be remembered. There was evidence of local business owners sponsoring historical restorations, events, and media coverage preceding and during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. This section also covered the influence of the state government and its promotion of events and programs that would lead to increased tourism related spending. Through careful analysis and reasoning, this section provided more evidence for why narratives of European colonization were promoted, and other more historically accurate narratives were obscured.

Finally, this paper turned to the influence of scholars and other professionals who were responsible for providing and crafting the narrative of San Diego's founding during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969. This section examined the work of various historians, ethnographers, and anthropologists. This section helped this thesis to understand how the precedent of historiography led to the promotion of colonial narratives, but also began to lay the foundation for new forms of decolonial narratives which would eventually lead to the prominence of more representative founding narratives for the city of San Diego.

These three sections help explain and provide a, by no means complete, but more comprehensive understanding of why San Diego's founding narrative during the bicentennial celebrations of 1969, and to some degree today, praised the narratives of European colonization in San Diego as opposed to those of healing, recovery, and remembrance of native and colonial settler populations. With this better understanding this paper hopes to add to a wealth of literature that grapples with the proper representation of peoples.

In this paper's attempt to understand this question, it has touched upon themes of memory, rhetoric, and power. This paper has shown evidence of patterns in the operation of power in a postcolonial San Diego. This paper emphasizes and attempts to understand the relationship of history and collective memory. This paper has hopefully made it clear that how we remember the past often does not correlate with evidence based historical realities. This can be confusing and troubling when we try to make sense of our past and present. Even the historical realities that we attempt to craft narratives out of are often fraught with contradictions and paradox. The facts that we use to craft stories of the past can lack substantial evidence. Historical claims that are thought to be true can be based on fallacious or biased evidence that is later challenged and proven wrong. The claims in this paper are certainly subject to this potential

bias and many of the claims made in this paper could potentially be thought of as false or troubling by historians of the future. This relationship helps us to understand why some of the historical claims and facts that were available to the historians and people of San Diego in 1969 were overlooked or went unutilized when remembering the events of 1769. This process of overlooking historical evidence is in itself evidence of the operation of power on the construction of the San Diego's founding narrative. Evidence that does not correlate directly with the interests of the elite was often purposefully forgotten. The operation of power on collective memory needs to be recognized for this paper to be able to understand the construction of the historical narrative.

The historical narrative presented in the celebrations of 1969 in San Diego provided evidence for the operation of power on collective memory. How people remembered the founding of San Diego during the events of 1969 was directly influenced by power disparities. These power disparities were multi-faceted. There were economic, political, and cultural influences on the distribution of power. The public narrative of San Diego's founding was crafted in the vision of the powerful. It seems as if power operates on our collective memory in a unique and dramatic way. Our understanding of the collective past can be crafted by many people and groups who have dedicated themselves to gaining or maintaining representation in the collective memory of a populace. However, it is also possible to understand this influence as the work of individuals such as politicians, business executives, and even historians and other scholars.

This paper highlights the rhetorical power of the historiographic process. The way we remember our collective past helps to enable the privilege of certain populations. It seems that those who have historically had power can maintain it through a process of crafting and lobbying for justification of their power via historical precedent. This is despite the historical realities or

evidence. The historiographic process is often manipulated and skewed for the advancement of the agenda of those who maintain power. These people in power can use history as a rhetorical tool through funding scholars and celebrating events, such as the 1796 “founding” of San Diego.

This paper, however, does not intend to make a political argument, yet simply attempts to understand the process of historiography and the influences that shape our collective memory and our public histories. The colonial monuments of San Diego and the narrative of San Diego’s founding during the 1969 bicentennial celebrations simply offer an interesting and dynamic lens through which we can understand this process. This sort of understanding is important especially as contentious monuments begin to be discussed more often in the public discourse.

Whether thinking of the revolutionary sites of Philadelphia, the Confederate monuments of the South, or various war memorials around the world there are ways that monuments can be built and framed so that they best represent both privileged and marginalized populations. Monuments can be built so that they reflect evidence-based historical facts and help to heal the pains that were caused by conflicts of the past. While the public is beginning to take a deeper look at contentious monuments there are still plenty of stories that have yet to be reexamined. This paper operates as an example of how we can look at the stories of our past to understand and identify the trappings of a lack of representation and unequal distributions of power. This paper offers a new way to remember our shared past, not through the lens of promoting the “heroic” actions of a few colonial leaders, but rather offers a new and productive narrative that promotes community and a shared healing of the pains in our past. Through patience and continued scholarship, unrepresentative and power-laden narratives can be challenged and altered to better reflect our shared reality.

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