

SUBMISSION BY THE AUTHOR
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ALTA CALIFORNIA
RUINS TO RENOVATION, TOUCHSTONE OF
ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AND NATIVE CULTURE
THE REDISCOVERED GLASS PLATE IMAGES OF THE FIRST ALTA CALIFORNIA STRUCTURES

ALTA BOOK PROJECT

SPECIFICATIONS

Publication title: Alta California, Touchstone of Architectural Heritage and Native Culture

Format choices: 8"x10", 8.5"x11", or 9.375"x12.375" landscape format, photo edition hardcover/softcover book

Specifications: 2 Chapters / 180 pages, plus Cover / 30,000 word count

Materials: Glossy pictorial cover, 80lb text matte paper, Hardcover and Dust Jacket

Media: PDF CMYK, 300dpi print files, InDesign files, Web Landing Page, manuscript media sources, and e-Book

PROLOGUE

On my exploration of California highways through the expansive canyons and abandoned ghost towns of the Sierra Nevada, I uncovered many legendary treasures and hidden tales of California's early history. At an estate sale in Grass Valley, a tattered box caught my attention, containing over seventy antique glass plate negatives, each carefully preserved in envelopes dated from 1928 to 1937. The images depicted imposing structures that preview the architectural heritage of a long-forgotten appreciation of Alta California and its Indigenous inhabitants. The discovery of these images can offer a deeper insight into how Native Americans lived along the Spanish Mission Trails. As the builders of the massive mission buildings, they faced confrontations from the arrival of seafarers, missionaries, and Spanish conquistadors across the Pacific Ocean to the rugged shores. Together, this visual display of California's foundational colonies features images of its monumental mission buildings during a lineage of the Mission Period, dating from 1769 to 1840. They document a period of transition for California Native Americans and signify a profound disruption of their traditional rights, negated by the New World migrations. Along the 600-mile stretch of El Camino Real, the images combine comprehensive stories of the Indigenous freedom fighters' plight in dispelling the disruptive loss of their homeland. Often relegated to the role of builders and laborers, dominated by and subjugated under a higher authority, the importance of these monumental landmarks has been well-known for decades, with the founding history of Alta California.

MISSION STATEMENT

The premiere edition of Alta California, Touchstone of Architectural Heritage and Native Culture, a pictorial of the founding architectural structures of California, unveils 70 previously 'lost images' as a single collection by an unidentified photographer. The images taken during the Works Progress Administration (WPA) era, dated 1928 to 1937, include the foundational architecture of the Spanish Mission Period, emphasizing the monumental structures built by Indigenous Californian laborers at settlements along El Camino Real. The accompanying historical narrative analyzes the mission culture landscape, its processes of indoctrination, and the role of Indigenous builders as laborers of the earliest settlement structures in Alta California. The development of Spanish colonial settlements, for decades under the oversight of friars, represent a significant period of decision-making for many tribal Nations. In a chronological record spanning the 18th and 19th centuries, the vintage glass plate photographs clearly depict the immense structures, as once constructed by California Natives. This edition also establishes potential collaboration with Native American bands, regional California State Historic Parks, cultural institutions, and private foundations. The project aims to expand public access and serve as an educational resource of California's earliest founding sites, with the facts imbued within the history of California's first people, intended as a benefit for all.

I ask for Native American tribal bands, California State Historic Parks, and private foundations to join in this important work. Your support will be essential in continued public access and a deeper understanding of these historical landmark sites, honoring California's heritage. We are planning alignment with this project and the 2026 National AMERICA 250 commemorative, which helps preserve California's legacy. I encourage supporting the initiative for exhibits at museums, and reaching State officials.

RUINS TO RENOVATION

A concise series of historical narratives featuring 70 sepia-toned glass plate images is presented in a chronological gallery of 24 geographical locations. The subchapter stories describe the growing settlement throughout California, with each architectural mission structure's impact and interplay of romance and conflict, specifically the suppression, subjugation, and rebellious uprising at a time of significant transition. Today's renovations of the historical landmarks offer a real sense of the dramatic backdrop in the history of both California Natives and its settlers.

ALTA CALIFORNIA & THE AMERICA 250 PROJECT

The author, Robert A. Bellezza, seeks to acquire agreement and approval for a collaborative partnership with AMERICA 250, promoting media related events and distribution. Also, the book's publication furthers potential capabilities producing future formats exhibiting the photographs, material specifications, ancillary products, or accessories regarding the book production. The potential production of e-books, websites, brochures, videos, photography exhibits, and media marketing materials all may be considered. With the hardcover edition, press-ready in early 2026, the book release coincides with www.AltaCalifornia250.com, the edition's website.

MARKETING AND TARGET AUDIENCE

Visitors discover California's first buildings, the Spanish California Missions, often remote, classic romantic settings worth visiting. These sites were significant for historical connections to Spanish colonies, stretching from San Diego to Monterey, to as far north as Sonoma County. Among the main 21 California missions, the architectural features seen today commonly reflect the styles of Spanish, Moorish, and Mexican designs, blending Latin, European, American, and Californian Indigenous influences. The author, Robert A. Bellezza, spent over a year traveling to each mission site, visiting special collection libraries, photographing, and interviewing staff. Under contract with Arcadia Publishing, he organized the collaboration, making as author, all decisions and determine the final editing, format, specifications, and materials used for the production of five photographic books. Also, the new Alta California book and the rediscovered high-quality photographs are potential subjects of future traveling informative exhibits. Other considerations include e-book availability, websites, brochures, videos, and media marketing materials. The design includes a landscape-style hardcover book for early 2026, and is in sync with nationally recognized AMERICA 250 projects.

HIGHLY MARKETABLE FACTOR INFLUENCES OF THE ALTA CALIFORNIA PUBLICATION:

- California residents account for more than 80% of inbound holiday travel, equaling 268 million person-trips in 2024.
- A premiere magnitude edition allows a new form and concept of Native American contextual reading in root history and culture.
- High-quality and visually appealing photographs in full page formats.
- Strong research and narrative from primary sources coincides with the National AMERICA 250 program and extended audience.
- Strategic targeting of the specific historical and photographic enthusiast markets.
- There's a demonstrated existing interest in books about California missions. Various titles available involve history, art, and preservation.
- Major attractions like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and State and National Parks draw millions of international and domestic visitors.
- Niche Market specific audience history, antique photographs, and local history.
- San Diego County has more Indian reservations than any other county in the United States, with 18 federally recognized reservations is an estimated 58,000 American and Alaska Natives.
- Mission San Juan Capistrano receives an annual 500,000 visitors, with 80,000 of those school children at the Mission each year.
- Many 4th-grade students visit the missions as part of their California history studies.
- Key out-of-state markets include Arizona, Texas, and New York. Key international markets include Canada, Mexico, and China.

PROLOUGE
RUINS TO RENOVATION
THEN & NOW

24 SUB-CHAPTERS

1769 Mission San Diego de Alcalá
1770 Royal Presidio Chapel
1770 Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo
1771 Mission San Antonio De Padua
1771 Mission San Gabriel Arcángel
1772 Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa
1776 Mission San Francisco de Asis
1777 Santa Clara de Asis
1782 Mission San Buenaventura
1787 Mission Santa Bárbara, Virgen y Martir
1787 La Purisima Concepcion de Maria Santisima
1791 -La Exaltacion de la Santa Cruz
1791 Nuestra Senora del la Soledad
1797 Mission Del Gloriosisimo Patriarca San José
1797 Mission San Miguel Arcangel
1797 Mission San Juan Bautista
1797 Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana
1798 -San Luis Rey de Francia
1804 Mission Santa Inés, Virgen y Martir
1810 Mission San Antonio de Pala
1817 Mission San Rafael Arcangel
1818-Santa Ysabel Asistentia, Santa Ysabel
1823 Mission San Francisco Solano

TIMELINE
PHOTO INDEX

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