

DEPOSITION OF ARCHIBALD H. GILLESPIE
CONCERNING MISSION SAN DIEGO

(Furnished by Mary M. Bowman)

State of California,
City and County of San Francisco, ss:

Heirs of the Estate of Santiago Arguello

vs.

The United States.
Mission San Diego.

The undersigned, Archibald H. Gillespie, of the city and county of San Francisco, in the state of California, being duly and solemnly sworn, declares that during the war between the United States and Mexico he was a First Lieutenant of the United States Marine Corps on special service, under orders of the President of the United States, James K. Polk, and organized the California Battalion of Mounted Riflemen, from the foreign settlers assembled at the Mission of Sonoma, July 5th, 1846, and was Adjutant and Inspector, with the rank of Captain, of the volunteer forces of California, mustered into the service of the United States; that on the 31st day of July, 1846, this deponent landed with a portion of the aforesaid Battalion, under Major J. C. Fremont, and took possession of the town and district of San Diego in the Territory of California, in the name of the United States; that in the second week of August, 1846, this deponent was left in command of said district of San Diego and became well acquainted with the Mission of San Diego and its surroundings, had the friendship of Padre Don Vicente Olivas, who was and had been in charge of the church property of the said mission for many years, and frequently visited him in the company of Dr. Edward Gilchrist, of the United States Navy, on duty with the land forces; on one of these visits, in the month of August, 1846, to the aforesaid Padre, Don Vicente Olivas, this deponent was shown about the mission aforesaid and inspected its buildings and surrounding grounds, then in possession of the United States, when the following described property was exhibited, viz:

A large square of houses and corral, or stable yard, including a house for the Padres (or priests); a house for the servants and working people, several store houses and offices; a large church or chapel with ancient and rich adornments.

Separate from the aforesaid square were several outhouses for manufacturing purposes and victualing places for the Indians. In the store houses were many pipes of wine and brandy and several

casks of olives, all the products of the aforesaid mission, in good order and of fine quality. There were also farming utensils and many agricultural implements, as well as a variety of tools for mechanics. In the outhouses were quantities of wheat, corn, barley to a considerable amount, and in one of them were several weaving looms for making blankets.

There were two orchards and gardens, containing vines and various kinds of fruit trees; the pear and olive trees, which were numerous, were in good condition and fine preservation. These orchards were enclosed by good fences.

And this deponent further declares that the aforesaid Padre, Don Vicente Olivas, stated to this deponent, and in which statement this deponent has the most implicit trust and confidence, that there were upon this mission lands over 400 head of cattle, of which some 300 had been given to him, the said Padre, Don Vicente Olivas, for the benefit of the Church and the remainder for the subsistence of the mission.

There were also a considerable number of wild horses, mares and colts, exact number not remembered, but certainly over 200 in all, a portion of which had been given to the Padre, Don Vicente Olivas, aforesaid. There were also several hundred head of sheep, number not recollected, but over 500, of which this deponent drove into the Garrison and town of San Diego over 350 sheep. There were also a few tame farm horses and jackasses in use about the mission.

And this deponent further testifies and declares that whilst Military Comandante of the Southern Department of the then Territory of California, and at that time having his headquarters at San Diego, as aforesaid, to-wit: In the months of November and December, A. D. 1846, this deponent frequently visited the aforesaid Mission of San Diego and at various times occupied it with troops of the United States forces, operating in the southern portion of the then Territory of California, under command of Robert F. Stockton, Commander-in-Chief of the United States forces on the Pacific Coast, at which time such articles of subsistence or means of transportation actually necessary for the use of said troops were freely taken. And also this deponent declares that of his own knowledge the aforesaid mission was occupied by troops of the United States, under command of Brigadier-General Stephen W. Kearny, in February, 1847, and from reports of officers of the United States Regular Army, in service in San Diego, its buildings and grounds were occupied and held by the forces of the United States for a long time after the close of the war between the United States and Mexico in one continued occupation from the first day of August, 1846.

And this deponent further declares and testifies that during the month of August, 1846, he became acquainted with and knew one

Don Santiago Arguello, an old and retired officer of the Mexican service, who placed in this deponent's hands, as the commanding officer of the United States of the District of San Diego, the necessary papers and documents in relation to his right and proprietorship of the aforesaid Mission of San Diego, and the said Don Santiago Arguello stated and confirmed to this aforesaid deponent that which is hereinbefore described in relation to such property.

And this deponent further declares that he knows that much of the perishable property of the aforesaid Mission of San Diego, hereinbefore described, was appropriated and made use of by the said United States troops, soldiers of the Regular Army and Volunteers, also by the Sailors and Marines of the United States Navy, under command of Commodore Robert F. Stockton and Brigadier-General Stephen W. Kearny, Commander-in-Chief in the years 1846-1847, and afterward under Col. R. B. Mason, United States Army, Provisional Governor of the Territory of California, the exact amount it is impossible to state, but this deponent declares that the amount of property used, lost and destroyed during the occupation of the aforesaid Mission of San Diego, by the United States forces, was to such a degree to deprive the said Don Santiago Arguello of the entire perishable property and from all occupation and uses of the said houses, tenements and gardens or adjacent grounds of the aforesaid mission thereunto belonging.

And this deponent further declares that all the herds of stock and horses, mules, oxen, beef cattle and sheep used by the United States forces on duty in the aforesaid District of San Diego and around about said mission, were pastured, fed and kept upon the lands of the aforesaid mission, to the number of several thousand, certainly over 5000 head of stock of all kinds, from the first day of August, A. D. 1846, to May 15th, 1847, and subsequently when the aforesaid District and Mission of San Diego was held and occupied by the troops of the United States Army and the United States Boundary Commission, whose herds of horses, mules, beef cattle were pastured, fed and kept on the lands of the aforesaid mission, at different times and periods up to the year 1851, and the lands of said mission were used by the United States to a later date, long subsequent, the precise time this deponent cannot state, and for which occupation and use the aforesaid Don Santiago Arguello did not receive any compensation nor pay.

(Signed) ARCHIBALD H. GILLESPIE.

Sworn and subscribed February 25th, 1868, before me,

W. H. CHEVERS, *Notary Public.*