Baja California, Then and Now

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Introduction

Perhaps twelve thousand years ago, humans began to occupy Baja California. They may have reached the islands nearby in the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California even earlier. The earliest people were probably forced into the Baja California peninsula, a geographic cul-de-sac, by aggressive demographic pressure from the north, rather than by voluntary migration in search of game and edible plants. Once there, they were unable to retreat. The isolation of the peninsula and its rugged topography and intemperate climate of high temperatures and long periods of drought required a careful adaptation of these first inhabitants to the environment they were to survive. Such adaptation included the maximum usage of the scarce flora and fauna, population self-limitation, and fresh water conservation. Later peoples, in keeping with these fundamental strategies, selected for sustainable plants and animals historically introduced into the region.

In the twentieth century, technological developments opened transportation and communication routes, which following World War II, encouraged demographic, urban, and economic expansion in Baja California. Now, the intimate relationship between man and the environment which had existed for millennia was radically altered. These changes have been felt to varying degrees throughout the world, but they have been especially notable on the peninsula. Prior to 1950, one of the most urbanized regions of North America, southern California, and one of the most remote areas of the continent, Baja California, were separated only by an international border. Within a quarter century, between 1950 and 1975, the extraordinary contrast between the two regions largely disappeared. Only the most remote mountainous areas of the peninsula have remained somewhat free from technological influence. The modern human occupation of Baja California is now the reverse of the prehistoric one, for now man seeks to modify the environment to his needs instead of adapting himself to nature.

The history of the incredible capacity of the Baja Californian to adapt to an inhospitable environment may be divided into four periods: Indigenous (ca. 13,000 BC–AD 1697), Euro-American (1697–1848), Modern (1849–1918), and Contemporary (1919–present). This history is relevant because contemporary problems of urban development, contamination, environmental destruction, and irreversible damage to archaeological and historical sites may be solved through study of how earlier Baja California cultures were able to avoid such devastation.

The Indigenous Period, ca. 13,000 BC–AD 1697

Native inhabitants of the region that can be considered completely peninsular, between Cabo San Lucas and Arroyo El Rosario, are today tribally extinct. This is due to integration into mestizo populations in the Californias and Sonora and the introduction of European diseases to which they had no resistance. They formed three linguistically distinct but culturally similar groups: from north to south, Cochimí, Guaycura, and Pericú. These peoples were seminomads living from hunting, fishing, shellfishing, and foraging for seeds and edible fruits, but without agriculture, domestic animals, pottery, or permanent structures. Native environmental exploitation incorporated diverse resources.
Mineral Utilization

1. Basaltic rock: manos, metates, knives, axes, hammers, scrapers, projectile points.
2. Vesicular volcanic rock: manos, metates, scrapers.
3. Obsidian: dart and arrow points, blades (region of San Ignacio-Las Vírgenes; Isla Ángel de la Guarda).
4. Miscellaneous rock: sleeping circles, fire pits; boiling stones; sling stones.
5. Salt: collected in natural pans at Isla San José, Isla del Carmen, and San Quintín.

Vegetal Utilization

1. Carrizo, reedgrass (*Arundo donax*): arrow, dart, harpoon shafts; poles for gathering of *pitahaya* fruit; small baskets, beads, necklaces, women’s aprons; huts; the tender roots as food, the sweet sap as a beverage.
2. Corcho, cork (*Erythrina flabelliformis*): logs for rafts of three or five trunks.
3. Zalate, wild fig (*Ficus palmeri*): fruit eaten; seeds toasted and ground.
4. Palo chino, (*Acacia peninsularis*), dipía (*Cercidium microphyllum*): seeds eaten.
5. Palo blanco (*Lysiloma candida*): seeds in pods toasted and ground (*medesá*).
6. Mezquite, mesquite (*Prosopis juliflora*), palo verde (*Cercidium peninsulare*): seeds in pods toasted and ground (*medesá*).
7. Datilillo (*Yucca valida*): leaves pounded for cordage, nets, and bags; roots eaten.
8. Palma, palm (*Washingtonia robusta*; *Erythea brandegeei*): leaves for mats, aprons, and women’s capes; leaves and bark pounded for cordage, nets, bags, and trays.
10. Tule, cattail (*Juncus* sp.): tender roots as food.
11. Teddá-San Miguel (*Antigonon leptopus*), ortiga (*Urticaeae* sp.): seeds eaten.
12. Nopal, prickly pear (*Opuntia basilaris*): pear fruit eaten; leaves cooked.
14. Biznaga, barrel cactus (*Ferocactus acanthodes*): seeds eaten; spines used as needles.
15. Cardón, giant cactus (*Pachycereus pringlei*): seeds eaten; sap boiled as antiseptic.
17. Mezcal, agave (*Agave shawii, deserti, sobria, aurae*): root roasted as basic food; stalks and leaves sucked for sweet sap (aguamiel); leaves pounded for hemp.
18. Tabaco silvestre, wild tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*): burned and smoke inhaled.
19. Pimentilla (*Peperonia umbilicata*): seed toasted and eaten.
20. Pitahaya agria, sour pitahaya (*Machaerocereus gummosus*): fruit eaten.
21. Pitahaya dulce, sweet pitahaya (*Lemaireocereus thurberi*): fruit eaten as basic food; seeds recovered from excrement, toasted, and eaten in “second harvest.”
22. Miscellaneous woods: fire-hardened for digging sticks, arrow, dart and harpoon points; construction of huts or fences against the wind; friction to make fire.

Animal Utilization

1. Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), desert sheep (*Ovis canadensis*), puma (*Felis concolor*), wildcat (*Lynx rufus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*): meat eaten raw or roasted; bone for arrow or harpoon points; bone ground as food; skins for aprons or small caps for women, covers, bags; rawhide for sandals and cordage.
2. Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*): meat eaten raw or roasted; skins for aprons and shoulder coverings for women; rawhide for cordage.
3. Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus auduboni*), squirrel (*Ammospermophilus leucurus*), woodrat (*Perognatus baileyi*, *Peromyscus eremicus, maniculatus*): meat eaten raw or roasted.
4. Fox (*Vulpes macrotry*, *Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), seal (*Phoca vitulina*): meat eaten raw or roasted; skins for shoulder coverings for women.
5. Whale (*Eschrichtius glaucus*): when washed ashore, meat eaten raw or roasted.
6. Badger (*Taxidea taxus*): not eaten; meat reputed to taste like that of humans.
7. Shark (*Carcharhinidae* sp., *Lamnidae* sp.): meat eaten; teeth as knives or arrow points.
9. Sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*): meat eaten; shells as cribs, vessels, trays, adornment.
10. Quail (*Lophortyx californica*), dove (*Zenaida macroura, asiatica*, *Columbina passerina*), goose (*Branta nigrans*, *canadiensis*), duck (*Mergus serrator*, *Anas platyrhynchos, acuta, carolinensis*, *american*, *cyanoptera*, *Bucephala albeola*, *Aythya americana*, *affinis*, *valisineria*, *Malanitta perspicillata*, *Oxyura jamaicensis*): meat eaten raw or roasted; plumage for adornment.
11. Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*): meat eaten; skins as capes, covers, pillows.
13. Miscellaneous birds: meat eaten raw or roasted; plumage for adornment.
14. Miscellaneous fish: all varieties as basic food; large fish stomachs for water vessels; bones for utensils.
15. Pearl shell (*Pinna rugosa*, *Atrina tuberculosa*): meat eaten raw or roasted; shells for adornment.
16. Oyster (*Pinctada mazatlanica*): meat eaten raw or roasted; pearls for adornment.
17. Octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*): meat eaten raw or roasted.
18. Miscellaneous shellfish: all varieties gathered as basic food.

**Discussion**

The prehistoric indigenous population utilized the scarce peninsular resources to a maximum degree, with few exceptions. Shelters barely existed and were temporary, clothing was minimal and generally limited to women, utensils and weapons were those essential for existence, and all possessions were portable and/or expendable. Small bands (15–20 members) were mobile with abundant time for searching for animal and plant foods and locating fresh water. This high level of adaptation and utilization of resources notwithstanding, on many occasions the indigenous peoples suffered from hunger and privation. Their response was to adapt themselves physically by adjusting their metabolism to a system of eating in excess and later spending days without food and without seriously suffering from hunger or weakness, by employing the “second harvest,” or re-digestion of evacuated seeds, and by the *maroma*, or swallowing a piece of meat tied to a cord which after a period of digestion was removed to be passed among other companions or family members providing all with some protein nutrition. Native peninsular groups, self-limiting the birth rate and suffering or prospering in accordance with nature, never reached a population level to present a danger to their environment. In the struggle for survival, environment dominated man until the arrival of Euro-Americans (Cooke 1712; Shelvocke 1726; Baegert 1952; Mathes 1965, 1981; Barco 1973; Andrews 1979; Venegas 1979; Crosby 1997).

The indigenous population of Baja California north of 30° 25’, composed of Yuman-speaking Kiliwa, Paipai,
Kamia, and Diegueño (Kumiai) on the Pacific coast and mountain interior, and Cocopa, Halikwamai, Kohuana, Yuma (Quechan), and Halchidoma along the Colorado River, is culturally differentiated from that of the peninsula proper by virtue of topographic and climatic extremes and, thereby, highly distinctive environments. The Pacific coast and western slope of the Sierra Juárez and Sierra San Pedro Mártir enjoys a temperate maritime climate, with accompanying flora and fauna, while the eastern slope to the Colorado River lies within a rain shadow and is extremely arid to true desert, subject to high summer temperatures. Common linguistic roots apart, these Yuman groups developed markedly distinct material cultures compatible with their local environments. An abundance of shellfish, game, and edible plants permitted sedentary rancherías among coastal Diegueños and Kiliwa. Those of the Sierras Juárez and San Pedro Mártir, as well as the Paipai, were successful enough hunter-gatherers to be semi-sedentary, with summer and winter rancherías. Although surrounded by true desert, the extensive flood plain of the Gila and lower Colorado River provided sufficient arable land to support sedentary agricultural cultures from the delta Cocopa to the Halchidoma to the north of the Gila confluence. Furthermore, a symbiotic relationship was established between mountain hunter-gatherers and riverine agriculturalists, the former providing sustenance to the latter in years of low floodwater, the latter returning the favor to the former during years of diminished rainfall.

Numerous natural resources exploited by Yuman groups were identical to those used by peninsular groups, with some notable differences. Mineral use was the same, as was vegetable use of carrizo, mesquite, mimbre, tule, nopal, biznaga, garambullo, mescal, tabaco silvestre, pitahaya agria, and miscellaneous woods. Mescal root and pitahaya agria fruit occupied a more important position as foods, and available woods were used for the construction of huts (jacales), often of wattle and daub, among the riverine groups. Notable differences in the use of flora among the hunting and gathering Yumans was the importance of acorns from coast live oak (Quercus agricola) and pine nuts from piñón and sugar pine (Pinus monophylla, lambertina) as foodstuffs, with resin from the latter also used medicinally. The agricultural Colorado River peoples cultivated seed grasses, dry beans, pumpkins, gourds, and maize. Animal use was also similar, and although sometimes of distinctive subspecies, the same large mammals, lagomorphs, rodents, marine mammals, reptiles, amphibians, game birds, seabirds, miscellaneous birds, fish, and mollusks were employed as among peninsular peoples. There is no indication that, where available, badger was not eaten. Among coastal groups there was higher consumption of seabirds such as seagull (Larus sp.), black brant (Branta nigrans), and pelican (Pelecanus occidentalis), and there was the addition of California spiny lobster (Panulirus interruptus) and abalone (Haliotis sp.) to the diet. Unlike isolated peninsular groups that were culturally stagnant, because of their geographic location, Yuman peoples were subject to direct or indirect cultural exchanges and adaptations from groups in coastal Alta California and the pueblo areas of Arizona and New Mexico, and thus they underwent gradual modification (Wagner 1929; Forbes 1965; Rojo 1972, 1996, 2000; Kelley 1977; Mathes 1992; Velázquez Morales 2002).

The Euro-American Period, 1697–1848

Unlike any other region of the Western Hemisphere where European settlement followed close upon initial discovery, the first stage of Euro-American contact with the peninsula of Baja California lasted for a century and a half. During this very long period, no permanent settlement was established, and only brief encounters of little direct cultural influence took place with Native inhabitants. Just as the rugged terrain, harsh climate, and scant rainfall made subsistence tenuous for indigenous inhabitants, these were even greater obstacles to settlement by sedentary,
agrarian peoples. Until a regular supply system from the coast of Sinaloa-Sonora to the peninsula was established, permanent settlements could not be initiated.

The 1535 maritime expeditions of Fernando Cortés contacted Pericú and Guaycura. Francisco de Ulloa in 1539 contacted Pericú, Guaycura, and Cochimi, Hernando de Alarcón in 1540 contacted Yumans, and Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542 met all these groups. All exploring parties sailed in ships of varying sizes, which carried horses, fighting dogs, chickens, hogs, sheep, and cattle. Contact familiarized the Natives not only with white men, but their dress, domestic animals, vessels, armaments, and tools. Since these expeditions were male-only, most unlikely no sexual contact between Europeans and Indian women took place.

Indigenous Baja Californians remained technologically unacclimated until the arrival of the pearl-fishing expeditions to the Gulf of California of Sebastián Vizcaino (1596), Nicolás de Cardona (1615), Francisco de Ortega (1632–1636), Pedro Porter y Casanate (1644–1648), Bernardo Bernal de Piñadero (1664), and Francisco de Lucenilla (1668). Now, for the first time, exchanges made for pearl oysters and pearls brought limited quantities of iron knives, axes, kettles, nails, glass beads, mirrors, and wool and cotton cloth. These expeditions, hopeful of settlement initially in or around the Bahía de La Paz, also brought domestic animals (horses, mules, cattle, sheep, goats, chickens, dogs) that on various occasions fell into the hands of Natives who probably slaughtered and ate them immediately. The Europeans also frequently built housing and fortifications once ashore, demonstrating new methods for shelter from inclement weather or enemy attack. While such enterprises familiarized Baja California Natives with aspects of European civilization, the newcomers founded no permanent settlements. The aggregate time spent by these explorers-colonizers on the peninsula between 1535 and 1683 did not exceed five years (Wagner 1929; Mathes 1965, 1970, 1989).

A shift in Spanish policy regarding colonization from privately financed expeditions to religious evangelization through mission establishments initiated the second stage of the Euro-American period. In 1679 the Society of Jesus received a bequest permitting the founding of a mission on the peninsula. Following lengthy litigation and petitions, in 1683 the ill-fated mission of San Bruno to the Cochimies was begun by Jesuit Father Eusebio Francisco Kino and Admiral Isidro de Atondo y Antillón. Attempts to establish herds of cattle and cultivate fields of corn, beans, and other basic crops failed through drought. The mission, left dependent upon supply by irregular voyages from the Sinaloa coast, was abandoned in 1685. Despite mission San Bruno’s failure, it introduced agriculture and domestic animals among the Cochimí.

During the following twelve years the Jesuits advanced their missionary efforts in Sonora to such a degree that agriculture in the Mayo, Yaqui, and Sonora river valleys provided a surplus that could be made available to Baja California enterprises. Thus, in October 1697, Father Juan María de Salvatierra, financed through extensive donations (The Pious Fund of the Californias), founded the first permanent mission and Euro-American settlement, Nuestra Señora de Loreto, on the Baja California Peninsula. Seventy-five years of occupation were thus initiated by Jesuit missionaries from regions as diverse as Spain, Honduras, New Spain, Italy, Austria, Croatia, Bohemia, and Alsace. They principally came to the watershed of the Gulf of California between Cabo San Lucas and 30° north latitude. To reduce the problems met by Kino and the dependency upon maritime supply from Sinaloa and Sonora, the Jesuits systematically explored the peninsula, observing geographical and climatologic factors, water supply, and, in great detail, Native methods of adaptation and survival. The Jesuits possessed a high level of academic preparation and therefore, as they
had in other corners of the world, eclectically employed their own technological knowledge together with the more basic concepts of the Native population.

Learning from their neophytes, the missionaries added to their diet with deer, sheep, rabbit, quail, dove, goose, duck, shellfish, sea turtle, pitahaya, and prickly pear fruit, as well as mescal root. They also used cactus fibers for cording, nets, string, thread, and bags; mesquite seed and branches as forage for livestock; bark of palo blanco as tannin; sap from *palo brea* (*Cercisium praexos*) to repair jugs and other pottery; *huisache* (*Acacia farnesiana*) seed to make ink; and *jojoba* (*Simmondsia chinensis*) for medicinal applications.

Despite access to native products, the missionaries nevertheless depended for sustenance principally on introduced plants and animals and on European technology. These introductions, occurring between the years 1702 and 1720, were the efforts of Father Juan de Ugarte. Familiar with agriculture and animal husbandry, he had spent his youth on a family hacienda in his native Honduras. Greatly aware of the special nature of the peninsula, Ugarte carefully studied the environment of each area between La Paz and Santa Rosalía de Mulegé to select and thus assure the definitive adaptation of olives, pomegranates, peaches, lemons, oranges, figs, date palms, corn, beans, garbanzos, wheat, melons, sweet potatoes, watermelon, squash, and grapes (determined by the presence of wild grape [*Vitus arizonica]*) at the respective missions. Ugarte also noted the rapid adaptation of horses, mules, burros, and goats brought from the mainland, as well as the difficulties met in expanding the flocks of sheep that suffered from the heat and cactus spines that caught in their wool and of hogs that lacked adequate forage and also fared poorly in the heat. In his own mission of San Francisco Xavier Viggé-Biaundó, Ugarte built the first irrigation works on the peninsula, and at the *visita* of San Miguel de Comondú in 1714, he initiated land reclamation by transporting thousands of mule loads of soil to create arable fields (Barco 1973; Mathes 1974; Venegas 1979). Between 1744 and 1758, Miguel del Barco supervised the mining of tezontle, a vesicular basalt, that was cut and crafted to build the Mission San Javier. (see Reygadas et al., this Quarterly double-issue).

Due to these careful selections and the application of European technology, the missions of Baja California became self-sufficient in field and orchard crops and livestock. By the time of their expulsion in 1767, the missionaries of the Society of Jesus had established missions and accompanying visiting stations from San José del Cabo to Santa María de los Ángeles, each incorporating lands devoted to livestock and agriculture (Figures 1 and 2). Replacing the Jesuits in 1768, Franciscan friars advanced the mission frontier northwest from San Fernando Velicatá to San Diego, transporting livestock, seed, and plant cuttings from peninsular missions for the new establishments. Succeeding the Franciscans in 1773, the Dominicans founded 10 new missions among the Yuman groups of the Pacific coastal watershed from Nuestra Señora del Rosario de Viñadaco to San Miguel la Nueva (El Descanso) and maintained the earlier peninsular missions until the mid-nineteenth century. Each of these new foundations brought agriculture and livestock husbandry to their locale, with some notable successes in the cultivation of orchard fruit and cattle at the coastal missions and in the Valle de Guadalupe (Meigs 1935; Nieser 1998).

Notwithstanding the development of the mission temporalities and the dietetic advances, the Native population declined due to the introduction of European diseases and acculturation into Euro-American lifestyles. In 1769 the concession of lands to civilian settlers was begun by Visitor General José de Gálvez who granted ex-mission San Luis Gonzaga to Pablo de la Toba. By 1820, 98 cattle ranches had been granted to 66 title-holders in Loreto, Comondú, Mulegé, La Paz, Todos Santos, San Antonio, and San José del Cabo. Just as the Natives and missionaries before
them, these new arrivals sought lands with the greatest availability of water. In some cases these were lands abandoned by the missions following the decline of the Native population. The new colonists availed themselves of prior experience by cultivating plants previously established by the missionaries and Natives. Generally, livestock ranchers, the civil settlers, began with semi-feral cattle that foraged openly, the chinampo, direct descendants of the first cattle brought to the New World. The breed proliferated on the peninsula during the first half of the eighteenth century, adapting to mesquite, cactus, and other peninsular shrubs, which permitted the animals to go several days without water (Martínez Balboa 1981).

Following the establishment of the Mexican Republic in 1824, colonization laws were promulgated to permit homesteading in uninhabited regions. The generally waterless coast of the peninsula did not attract such settlement, but mission lands became desirable and were in high demand. Nationally, this resulted in the secularization of missions and the opening of lands to colonization as decreed by Valentín Gómez Farías in August 1833. Although Baja California was exempted from immediate secularization, those missions with no Indian population were closed. Between 1822 and 1857, 223 cattle ranches were granted to 183 settlers,
and from 1834 to 1852, 11 grants of 20 half-sections of cultivated agricultural lands were made. This growth of ranchos encouraged the adaptation and proliferation of *chinampas* and mules, resulting in a decree of Jefe Político Luis del Castillo Negrete in 1838, ordering the control of wild herds by roundup on the Llanos de Xiray and Magadalena and the obligatory branding of stock.

The overwhelming majority of the population was now concentrated along the Gulf of California from Mulegé to San José del Cabo. The population’s isolation and self-sufficiency substantially reduced the impact of central Mexican political instability and created a strong sense of territorial identification among its inhabitants. The United States invasion of Mexico in 1846 led to battles in Baja California in 1847, with strong resistance in Mulegé, La Paz, San Antonio, and San José del Cabo, permitting Mexican retention of the peninsula through the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. Nevertheless, the United States acquisition of Alta California created an international border north of El Descanso through the sparsely populated former northern Dominican frontier. As a means of defending the northern frontier through increasing its loyal population, in 1855 land concessions were made by the Ministry of Development to Matías Moreno at San Vicente and San Quintín and to Ricardo Palacios at Santa Catarina. The following year, Custodio de Sousa received San Miguel and Guadalupe, and in 1857 Miguel Arrioja was granted San Felipe de Jesús.

Established in 1849, the colony failed by the end of 1850, however Santo Tomás remained as the seat of government for the Partido Norte, with jurisdiction southward to Dolores. A new threat by United States filibusters began in 1853 when William Walker occupied La Paz. He was defeated near Ensenada in 1854, but the following year Juan Napoleón Zerman made another attempt to take La Paz.

In 1855 the nonindigenous population of the frontier numbered, from south to north: San Fernando, 3; El Rosario, 24; Santo Domingo, 19; San Pedro Mártir, 1; San Vicente, 40; Santa Catarina, 0; Santo Tomás, 24; San Miguel, 5; and El Descanso, 24. In 1857 the entire territory from San José del Cabo to Santo Tomás reported 12,585 nonindigenous inhabitants, 88,015 head of cattle, 3,041 mules, and 6,976 horses. As a means of defending the northern frontier through increasing its loyal population, in 1855 land concessions were made by the Ministry of Development to Matias Moreno at San Vicente and San Quintín and to Ricardo Palacios at Santa Catarina. The following year, Custodio de Sousa received San Miguel and Guadalupe, and in 1857 Miguel Arrioja was granted San Felipe de Jesús.

The Modern Period, 1849–1919

With the establishment of a new international boundary with the United States, the creation of military colonies adjacent to it was decreed by the national government in July of 1848. The site of former Mission Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in 1840, the population moved southward to San Ignacio (Rojo 1972, 1996, 2000; Mathes 1978, 1988; Lassépas 1995; Cariño Olvera 1996; Trejo Barajas 1999).

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The beginning of land concessions for the settlement of population in the vacant northern portion of Baja California led to the establishment by José J. Alva-rez and Rafael Durán of an official transpeninsular overland route from Cabo San Lucas to the frontier in 1856. Travel had changed little over three centuries. The descriptive itinerary was very precise regarding the availability of natural plants and cultivates, game, and potable water, and clear warning of areas unsuitable for grazing and watering of stock was provided. With the growth of the nonindigenous population, external commerce developed by the mid-nineteenth century. Small urban seaport settlements at Mulegé, La Paz, capital of the territory since 1830 following the flooding of Loreto, and San José del Cabo were all open to legal trade and relatively easily reached.
from the port of Mazatlán in Sinaloa by coastal cruising. While most Baja Californians continued to live from the land, trade with the mainland enabled their acquisition of foreign and domestically manufactured cloth and clothing, metal utensils and tools, and foods and oils, in exchange for salt from Isla del Carmen and San Quintín, cheese, dried figs and raisins, pearls, mother of pearl, hides, raw sugar, cured and dried meat, dates, palm logs, hides and tallow, and silver from the mines opened in Cacachilas between 1857 and 1860 (Walther Meade 1983; Mathes 1988; Lassépas 1995; Velázquez Morales 2002).

French occupation during the Maximilian period had little impact on Baja California, but with the reestablishment of the Mexican Republic in 1867, extensive land concessions were made to foreign-owned corporations under the proviso that they populate given areas within a determined period. Initiated by Benito Juárez’ 1864 concession to Jacob P. Leese, these grants included the sale of coastal and gulf islands and monopolies over mineral development. All these schemes failed due to exaggerated promises, and concessions were constantly cancelled and regranted to other entrepreneurs. They did, however, augment the population and increase commerce.

From 1870 to 1890, the processing of orchilla (Tilandsia recurvata) collected near Bahía Magdalena for the manufacture of red dye brought short-lived importance to the area, but after 1890 it was replaced by aniline. Of greater impact was the rebirth of mining with the exploration of the formerly silver-rich area to the south of La Paz between 1870 and 1880. Numerous mines in La Trinchera, Cacachilas, Tescalama, and El Triunfo were opened. In the north the discovery of gold and silver by Ambrosio Castillo in 1870 led to a decade-long rush from southern California as well as from the southern peninsula. This resulted in the relocation of the capital of the Partido Norte to Real del Castillo in 1872, establishment of the Tijuana customs house in 1874, and the opening of the port of Ensenada to trade in 1878. In 1885 a major mining concession was made to the French company of El Boleo. It established a company town, Santa Rosalia, north of Mulegé, where in 1868 José Rosas Villavicencio had discovered large copper deposits. By 1900 Santa Rosalía had a population of almost 10,000 and was exporting 11,000 tons of copper annually to the United States and northern Europe. Salt exportation from Isla del Carmen, Isla Cerralvo, Ojo de Liebre, and San Quintín increased, as did the production of dried fruits, cheese, dried beef, wine, and, in San José del Cabo and Todos Santos, processed sugar.

Baja California now experienced rapid commercial growth and urbanization. In 1882 its population was 30,000, of whom 4,000 were Indians in the extreme north. Eighteen federal, two municipal, and four private schools numbered 1,114 pupils. The average resident remained a rancher, his life fundamentally unchanged from the Jesuit mission period. Food was acquired from corrals and gardens, and the usual diet was cooked or dried beef (asada or machaca), corn or wheat flour tortillas, beans, goat cheese, lima beans, and pitahaya fruit. Coffee, the only import, was sweetened with local sugar. Housing was of adobe or of daubed reed-grass, with a palm or reed-grass roof; furniture was of wood and leather, palm-frond mats, and wool and straw mattresses. Food was prepared with mano and metate and cooked over charcoal. Clothing, cloth, shoes, kettles, and griddles, primarily from the United States, and dishes and tableware manufactured in Asia and Europe, were the only items not produced locally, usually acquired by barter. Specific areas were known for their superior products: San Ignacio, dates; San José del Cabo, figs; Loreto, olives; Comondú, raisins; and Primer Agua, oranges (Mathes 1988; León-Portilla and Maria Murià 1992; Padilla Corona 1998; Samaniego López 1999; Velázquez Morales 2002).

Extraordinary growth in the northern peninsula resulted from the mining boom. The seat of government
was transferred from Real del Castillo to Ensenada in 1882. The latter settlement, well established as a seaport, with a customs house and steamship and road connections to San Diego, underwent expansion through colonization activities by the International Company of Mexico during the following six years. In 1888 the Territory of Baja California was divided into two districts of equal political jurisdiction. The gold discovery at El Álamo that same year further encouraged commerce and population. Ensenada added telephone and telegraph to mail service with San Diego and installed streetlights, electricity, and potable running water in 1890–1891. To the north on lands granted to Santiago Argüello in 1826, the colony of Tijuana de Zaragoza was founded adjacent to the international border in 1889, and the new British Compañía Mexicana de Terrenos y Colonización at Ensenada planned a railway to San Quintín. A second border settlement, Tecate, was established in 1892. In 1895 the population of both Baja California districts was calculated at 43,282 inhabitants, its adult males numbering 1,347 farmers, 2,328 ranchers, 4,762 rural laborers, and 2,005 miners. The population of the Northern District alone was reported at 7,583 in 1900.

In 1902 a telegraph line was strung between Santa Rosalía and Guaymas, and seven years later, from San José del Cabo to Mazatlán, the port for mail dispatch to the Southern District. La Paz had a population of 5,184 in 1900. Suela Viosca industrialized leather tanning there, and in 1903 there began pearl production in protected oyster-growing tanks. In 1906 came internal telephone service. Extensive Chinese migration started in 1907, augmenting many small businesses.

Gradual, early twentieth century urban growth in the south was rapidly eclipsed by the Northern District. A colonization grant of the lower Colorado River land to Guillermo Andrade in 1888, the opening of the Alamo irrigation canal from the river to the Imperial Valley of California in 1901, and the creation of the Colorado River Land Company in 1902 resulted in the 1903 founding of Mexicali, which had a population of 177 in the following year. The first settlement reflecting twentieth century technology, the new town was joined by rail with Yuma, Arizona, in 1906; the line subsequently extended through Tecate to Tijuana by 1919. Levees were constructed in 1907 to prevent flooding from the Colorado River and irrigation canals, and in 1908, 2,807 hectares were under cultivation in the Mexicali Valley. Additional agricultural production in the north was achieved in 1907 through settlement in the Valle de Guadalupe by Russian Molokons, who began the cultivation of wheat and other grain crops (Walther Meade 1986, 1996; Mathes 1988; Piñera Ramírez and Ortiz Figueroa 1989; Martínez Zepeda 1991; Padilla Corona 1998; Busto Ibarra 1999; Rivas Hernández 2000).

The Mexican Revolution in Baja California was mostly political maneuvering, leavened with Santa Rosalía labor conflicts and invasions in Tijuana and Mexicali in 1911 by Magonistas and IWW “wobblies.” Baja California suffered few of the disastrous social and demographic effects so common in mainland Mexico and has, in fact, been largely ignored by many “revolutionary historians.” The appointment of Esteban Cantú as Jefe Político of the Distrito Norte in 1915 initiated marked advances. Cotton became the principal crop in the Mexicali Valley in 1912–1913, and the first gins were opened in 1916–1917. Eighty thousand acres came under irrigation in the latter year through a series of canals from the Colorado River, an extension that doubled within five years. Chinese migration to Mexicali began in 1915, augmenting the farming and commercial population. In 1919, 55,273 hectares were under cultivation in the valley. By 1910 the population of Tijuana had grown from 242 to 733. In 1914, along with Tecate, Tijuana received electric service, and both settlements combined into a single municipality in 1917. By 1919 Cantú had supervised the construction of dirt-gravel highways from Mexicali to San Felipe and to Tijuana, Ensenada, and Calmali, the earliest automobile roads on the peninsula (Piñera

The Contemporary Period, 1919–Present

The end of World War I witnessed major changes in Baja California. While urbanization advanced at a great rate in both north and south, the traditional primacy of the southern region of the peninsula, with its dominant population in Mulegé (Santa Rosalía), Loreto, La Paz, and San José del Cabo, shifted northward, and the new towns of Ensenada, Tijuana, and Mexicali became the political and economic regional centers. Not all change resulted from internal influence; proximity to the United States clearly played a major role. Tourism, the new source of economic growth, began slowly in 1890–1910 with steamship travel from San Diego to Ensenada and overland outings from San Diego to Tijuana. The most notable adventure was Arthur Walbridge North’s 1905–1906 transpeninsular trip. New roads for automotive travel made northern Baja California readily available to visitors from the United States (Figure 3). The 1919 passage of the National Prohibition Enforcement (Volstead) Act, prohibiting the manufacture, sale, and consumption of alcoholic beverages in the United States, brought not only an influx of thirsty weekend tourists to the border areas but also stimulated the manufacture and sale of beer, wine, and liquor both for local consumption and smuggling into southern California by boat. Numerous bars opened in Tijuana. In 1928 a world-class hotel in suburban Agua Caliente, adjacent to horse and dog-racing tracks, was opened. The following year in Ensenada a similar hotel, the Playa (Riviera del Pacífico) opened, and in 1931 Rosarito inaugurated the Rosarito Beach Hotel, all providing alcohol, entertainment, and gambling.

Alongside this windfall growth, more sustainable economic development continued in Ensenada and

Figure 3. The gringo weekend influx to Tijuana, Baja California, ca. 1920. Commercial postcard, Matthew A. Boxt collection.
on Isla de Cedros, where fish and abalone packing factories were opened between 1919 and 1922. In Mexicali, 87,782 hectares came under cultivation in 1925. In 1927 a cottonseed processing plant opened with 16,454 bales of cotton ginned. Outside Tijuana in the following year, Presa Rodriguez created a large reservoir to supply the town and surrounding areas. Overland communications begun by Cantu were continued under the governorship of Abelardo L. Rodriguez with the 1927 establishment of a graded route from Ensenada to Santa Rosalia and planning for a paved route from Tijuana to Ensenada.

Although growth in the Northern District was notable, with a population of 23,537 in 1921, the Southern District still retained its population edge with 39,384 inhabitants. Commerce and industry changed little in the south, and the way of life in the district was little changed from the late nineteenth century despite some progress in transportation and communication. Maintained dirt roads were opened between La Paz and El Arco via Comondú and between La Paz and San José del Cabo between 1920 and 1930. In 1929 a landing strip was built at La Paz, permitting flights between Santa Rosalia, San José del Cabo, Ensenada, Tijuana, and Los Angeles.

The Great Depression slowed development throughout Baja California between 1930 and 1940. The population of the Northern District surpassed that of the south in 1930 (48,327 to 47,089) and by 78,907 to 51,471 at decade’s end. In 1931 the two districts became separate territories, retaining their capitals in Mexicali and La Paz, respectively. Northern tourism declined substantially as a result of the Depression, prohibition of gaming, and the 1933 repeal of the Volstead Act. Nevertheless, in 1936 the road from Tijuana to Ensenada was paved, and between 1930 and 1940 dirt roads connected La Paz and Loreto via La Purisima. Although of little impact in the south, agrarian reform broke up large holdings into collective farms (ejidos), occasionally accompanied by violence, in the Mexicali and Ensenada-San Quintin areas. Fishing cooperatives were established in Ensenada and La Paz, and unionization became universal in urban areas as well as in the mining center of Santa Rosalia. In 1937, to renovate the economy, the peninsula was declared a duty-free zone. In 1938 an irrigation district was created in the Mexicali Valley, and by 1940 there were 78,907 hectares under cultivation (Piñera Ramírez and Ortiz Figueroa 1989; Martínez Zepeda 1991; Walther Meade 1993a, 1996; Samaniego López 1999; Castorena Davis 2000; Velázquez Morales 2002).

As it did throughout the world, the Second World War ended the depression and revived growth in Baja California. In 1941 regular air travel between La Paz and Mazatlán was initiated, and in 1942 the Agua Caliente and Riviera del Pacifico hotels were converted into military installations. Joint Mexican-United States air patrols were flown along the Pacific coast, and a paved transpeninsular highway was planned. High demand for cotton and other agricultural products benefited the growth of Mexicali, and demand for shark liver for pharmaceuticals aided fishermen in the Southern Territory. While the feared Japanese invasion of the sparsely populated central peninsular region did not materialize and the area remained seriously isolated because of gasoline shortages, WWII brought Baja California fully into the twentieth century. The extraordinary southern California population boom, the legacy of war industries, military bases, and subsequent economic growth again placed the peninsula in the unusual position of a relatively undeveloped region adjacent to one overdeveloped. Postwar Baja California was the last frontier of temperate North America. For almost 800 miles, from Ensenada to La Paz, it had been remained a vast region, little changed during two and a half centuries.

In 1942 the colony of María Auxiliadora in the Valle de Santo Domingo opened irrigation that drew on subterranean aquifers. Put into full development in 1946 under governor Agustín Olachea Avilés, this
was the first agribusiness of the Southern Territory. In the following year La Paz and the surrounding areas were opened to tourism through regular flights from Mazatlán by Trans Mar de Cortés. Flights were then extended to Guaymas, Ensenada, and Tijuana by 1952. Meanwhile, enterprising private plane owners, both Mexican and gringo, hired locals to grade dirt strips, sometimes with mule-powered scrapers, so that they could land at favored fishing spots. Many of these informal airstrips later became official. Although El Boleo ceased operations in 1948, the industrialization of salt at Guerrero Negro was initiated in 1950, opening the vast Desierto de Vizcaíno to population. Graded roads from La Paz to San José del Cabo and Todos Santos led to the first automobile agencies in the capital city and to the development of commercial agriculture near San Juan de los Planes.

In the north, prewar roads received postwar attention, the pavement now extending south from Ensenada to Arroyo Seco, the highway graded from there to San Quintín by 1948. The new roads encouraged commercial lobster fishing at San Quintín, viticulture at Santo Tomás, and the cultivation of olives and grains to its south. In 1948 the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California connected Mexicali by rail with the Sud-Pacífico route to Guadalajara, and in 1952 a highway bridge over the Colorado River at San Luis was opened. At mid-century the Northern Territory counted 226,965 inhabitants, with 59,954 in Tijuana, this one town almost equal in population to the entire Southern Territory of 60,684, of whom only 13,081 lived at La Paz. Population growth elevated the Northern Territory to statehood in 1952; it became the State of Baja California. The highways from Mexicali to Tijuana and San Felipe were paved, and the Tecate-Ensenada paved highway through the Valle de Guadalupe opened in 1958. The first university on the peninsula, Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC), opened in 1958 in Mexicali, where air conditioning encouraged even more population growth (Piñera Ramírez and Ortiz Figueroa 1989; Martínez Zepeda 1991; Walther Meade 1993a, 1996; Samaniego López 1999; Castorena Davis 2000; Velázquez Morales 2002).

By 1960 tourism had become a major source of income in the Territory of Baja California Sur. With the construction of luxury hotels, elite tourism via private aviation to hunting and sport fishing areas in La Paz, Buena Vista, and San José del Cabo had opened the Southern Territory as an international destination. A paved highway reached from La Paz to San José del Cabo, and the highway to the Valle de Santo Domingo was graded; there was a paved branch to Santo Carlos opened on Bahía Magdalena by 1967. This encouraged maritime shipments of cotton, citrus, sesame, and safflower now cultivated in that region. Regular government ferry service from Mazatlán to La Paz began in 1960 and expanded throughout the decade, with special voyages devoted entirely to cargo.

After mid-century, the northern state became increasingly urban, commercial, and industrial. In 1960 Baja California numbered 520,165 residents, and Baja California Sur numbered only 81,594. Agriculture in the Mexicali Valley increased from 105,000 hectares under cultivation in 1950 to 187,000 hectares in 1960. Geothermal electricity at Cerro Prieto was first generated that same year. In 1961 a second campus of the UABC was established in Tijuana. In 1963 a thermoelectric plant was opened at Rosarito, with lines to Tijuana and Mexicali, reducing dependence upon foreign electricity. In 1966 Ensenada became a primary tourist destination overnight with the opening of a four-lane toll highway from Tijuana.

The 1970–1980 decade brought the most revolutionary change to the Baja California Peninsula since that of 1697–1707. Regular national and international flights by Aeronaves de México (Aeroméxico) began in 1970 from the new Aeropuerto General Manuel Márquez de León in La Paz, and ferry routes were expanded between Santa Rosalía-Guaymas and Cabo San Lucas-Puerto Vallarta. Of greatest importance,
however, was the advance of paved highway from Arroyo Seco to San Quintín, opening an immense export agribusiness in tomatoes, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, artichokes, and chili peppers directly by truck to Tijuana-San Ysidro. A special 1973 federal project joined Baja California and Baja California Sur via the Carretera Transpeninsular Benito Juárez, an asphalt ribbon extending 1,711 km from Tijuana to San Lucas, finally elevating the Southern Territory to statehood in 1974. Subterranean aquifers in the Desierto de Vizcaíno were developed, bringing agribusiness to this previously uninhabited area. With the new road came assembly plants (maquiladoras) at La Paz, Tijuana, Mexicali, and Tecate in 1975. Hotels, mobile home parks, and services opened along portions of the highway, bringing extraordinary increases in tourism to sparsely settled and little-known areas of the peninsula between Ensenada and La Paz. Locations such as El Rosario, Santa Inés-Cataviña, Guerrero Negro, Bahía de los Ángeles, San Ignacio, Bahía Concepción, Mulegé, Loreto, and Ciudad Constitución experienced sudden influxes of visitors and much economic growth.

The final two decades of the twentieth century witnessed the full impact of development. There were industrial parks in Tijuana, Mexicali, Tecate, and La Paz. Agribusiness thrived in Camalú, San Ramón, San Quintín, Vizcaíno, Santo Domingo, and Los Planes, with crop diversification in the Mexicali Valley adding the cultivation of wheat, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli, eggplant, tomatoes, carrots, asparagus, sesame, squash, onions, and radishes to that of cotton and alfalfa. Throughout the two states, rural electrification and telephone microwave transmission followed the highway, reaching all but the most remote areas. Many of these areas already had small generating plants, permitting use of radios, satellite television, cellular telephones, and microwave ovens. Increased availability of petroleum fuels expanded the use of motor vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles, while propane and butane replaced wood for cooking and heating. Air, land, and sea travel, along with telephone communication, radio, and television, all moved Baja California from millennia of isolation into the modern world. However, these changes have had their price: uncontrolled development; illegal immigration; increased crime; narco-trafficking; air, water, and land contamination; undesirable flora and fauna invasion; depletion of subterranean aquifers; and the destruction of historical and archaeological sites (Cárdenas de la Peña 1976; Piñera Ramírez and Ortiz Figueroa 1989; Martínez Zepeda 1991; Walther Meade 1993a, 1996; Samaniego López 1999; Velázquez Morales 2002; Busto-Ibarra, this Quarterly double-issue).

The Future of History

The incredible rate of recent growth in the Baja California Peninsula has major implications for archaeological and historic preservation. The 2000 national census reported 423,516 inhabitants in Baja California Sur, with 196,708 living in La Paz, increases of 70 and 15 times, respectively, in only a half century. Baja California population was reported at 2,487,700, of which 1,212,232 inhabitants lived in Tijuana, growths of 109 and 202 times in just 50 years, respectively (INEGI 2000). In the north the overwhelming majority of the population had immigrated from other Mexican states or other nations. After the creation of the Transpeninsular Highway and the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, the non-native population in the south also grew rapidly. These twentieth-century arrivals, as did their predecessors, came to the peninsula to improve their economic status. They knew little of Baja California’s past, and few cared to learn of it. Teachers, professors, and public officials, all natives of other regions, were ignorant of Baja California history and therefore could not impart it to their students or to the public. Industrialists, agronomists, and land developers, concerned with economic success and often unwilling to be distracted from it, endangered the historic and archaeological patrimony of their new land more and more each passing year. This was because the limited areas most appropriate for modern settlement and
agriculture are also often those most historically and archaeologically significant.

In 1984 the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH), through its Dirección de Monumentos Históricos, completed a survey of historical structures in both states of Baja California. The results were published in two large volumes: *Catálogo nacional monumentos históricos inmuebles Baja California* and *Catálogo nacional monumentos históricos inmuebles Baja California Sur* which, while carefully describing each item cataloged, had their respective shortcomings (INAH and Programa Cultural de las Fronteras 1986a, 1986b). The first volume includes some post-WWII structures and various buildings that are important, unusual, or the first of their kind, as well as dams and canal machinery. Border markers, monuments, factories, railroad stations, schools, hotels, factories, cemeteries, and mines are also cataloged, although occasionally their historical value is questionable. While possibly overly thorough in some areas, the catalog for the State of Baja California fails to include ruins on Isla de Cedros and at Bahía San Luis Gonzaga. Contrasted with the Baja California volume, the Baja California Sur catalog holds more closely to antiquity, listing older houses, public buildings, and mining structures, however, these listings are mostly limited to urban areas and sites accessible by paved or graded roads. As with similar studies north of the border, urban researchers seldom ventured beyond their comfort zones into the hinterland. Notably absent are entries from San Bruno, La Presentación, Bonó, Chuenqué, San Juan Malibat-Liguí, La Pasión, La Presa, Nuestra Señora de los Dolores, San Javier Viejo, Las Parras, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Isla Espíritu Santo, Isla San José, San Blas, and Santa Ana.

The *Catálogo nacional monumentos históricos inmuebles Baja California* lists historical structures as follows: Municipality of Ensenada—151 sites in Ensenada, Valle Verde, El Álamo, Isla Guadalupe, Bahía de los Ángeles, Calamajue, El Desengaño, El Mármol, El Arco, Las Flores, Rancho Hamilton, Rancho Meling, La Misión, Real del Castillo, El Rosario, San Fernando, San Borja, San Miguel, San Pedro Mártir, San Quintín, Guadalupe, San Telmo, San Vicente, Santa Catarina, Santa Gertrudis, Santa María, Santo Domingo, Santo Tomás, and El Sauzal; Municipality of Mexicali—59 sites in Mexicali, Colonia Abasolo, Los Algodones, Ejido Monterrey, Morelos, Colonia Castro, Colonia Cerro Prieto, Ejido Chiuhuahua, Ejido Hidalgo, Ejido Islas Agrarias, Ejido Jalapa, Jalisco, Ejido Michoacán de Ocampo, Colonia Progreso, Colonia Rivera, Colonia Venustiano Carranza, Colonia Zaragoza; Municipality of Tecate—17 sites in Tecate, La Rumaosa, Valle de las Palmas, El Sauz Chino; Municipality of Tijuana—45 sites in Tijuana, El Descanso, Rosarito, Aguaje Mariano, La Misión, Las Delicias, El Toro, Medio Camino (Samaniego López 1999).

The *Catálogo nacional monumentos históricos inmuebles Baja California Sur* lists historical structures as follows: Municipality of Comondú—46 sites in Loreto, La Purísima, El Rosario, San Javier, San José de Comondú, San Juan Bautista Londó, San Juanico, San Luis Gonzaga, San Miguel de Comondú, Tinajitas; Municipality of Mulegé—67 sites in Santa Rosalía, Mulegé, Ejido San Bruno, San Ignacio, San Joaquin, San José de Gracia, San José de Magdalena, San Marcos, Santa Águeda, San Luciano, Vizcaíno; Municipality of La Paz—44 sites in La Paz, Las Canoas, Dos Palmas, La Huerta, El Novillo, San Pedro; Municipality of San Antonio—46 sites in San Antonio, Ensenada de los Muertos, El Oro, El Rosario, San Bartolo, Santa Elena, El Tecuán, El Triunfo; Municipality of San José del Cabo—34 sites in San José del Cabo, Cabo San Lucas, Palo Escopeta, San José Viejo, Santa Anita; Municipality of Santiago—16 sites in Santiago, Caduano, Miraflores; Municipality of Todos Santos—39 sites in Todos Santos, Santa Genoveva, El Pescadero, El Refugio, San Jacinto, San Pedro, San Venancio (Samaniego López 1999).
Since 1970, active historical preservation on the peninsula has varied between the two political entities. Prior to the completion of the Transpeninsular Highway, restoration work on those mission structures adjacent to it (San Ignacio, Loreto, San Javier, San Miguel de Comondú, and San Luis Gonzaga) was carried out, but buildings and ruins in more remote areas remained untouched, and no archaeological research was carried out prior to or during restoration. Once the highway opened, uncontrolled tourist facility growth, particularly in Loreto, Puerto Escondido, La Paz, and San José del Cabo, seriously disturbed or destroyed numerous historical sites. Other than restoration at San Javier primarily by Adopte Una Obra de Arte, further work on historical sites and historical archaeology in Baja California Sur has diminished in favor of prehistoric and rock art sites. In Baja California intense urban growth from Tijuana to Maneadero and Tijuana to Tecate destroyed or disturbed many historical structures and sites. A more balanced approach between prehistoric and historic archaeology is now being employed in the north, with some archaeological research done prior to restoration of historic sites.

Unlike many prehistoric sites, especially in areas inhabited by nomadic and seminomadic peoples, historic areas have frequently been in continual use since initial settlement. Some sites, especially those related to churches or mining, attract treasure hunters, while decorations, art, or other remaining curiosities are subject to theft. These factors often place historical locations at far greater risk of destruction than more widely distributed and frequently buried prehistoric sites. Prehistoric site locations can be less predictable than historic ones and are more often subject to accidental destruction through nonrecognition, but so are unrecorded historical sites like campsites, waterholes, and short-lived settlements. All are now endangered in a Baja California undergoing rapid development. Our history and prehistory can only be preserved through site identification and recording prior to construction or agricultural land-leveling, then through conscientious conservation and protection.

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