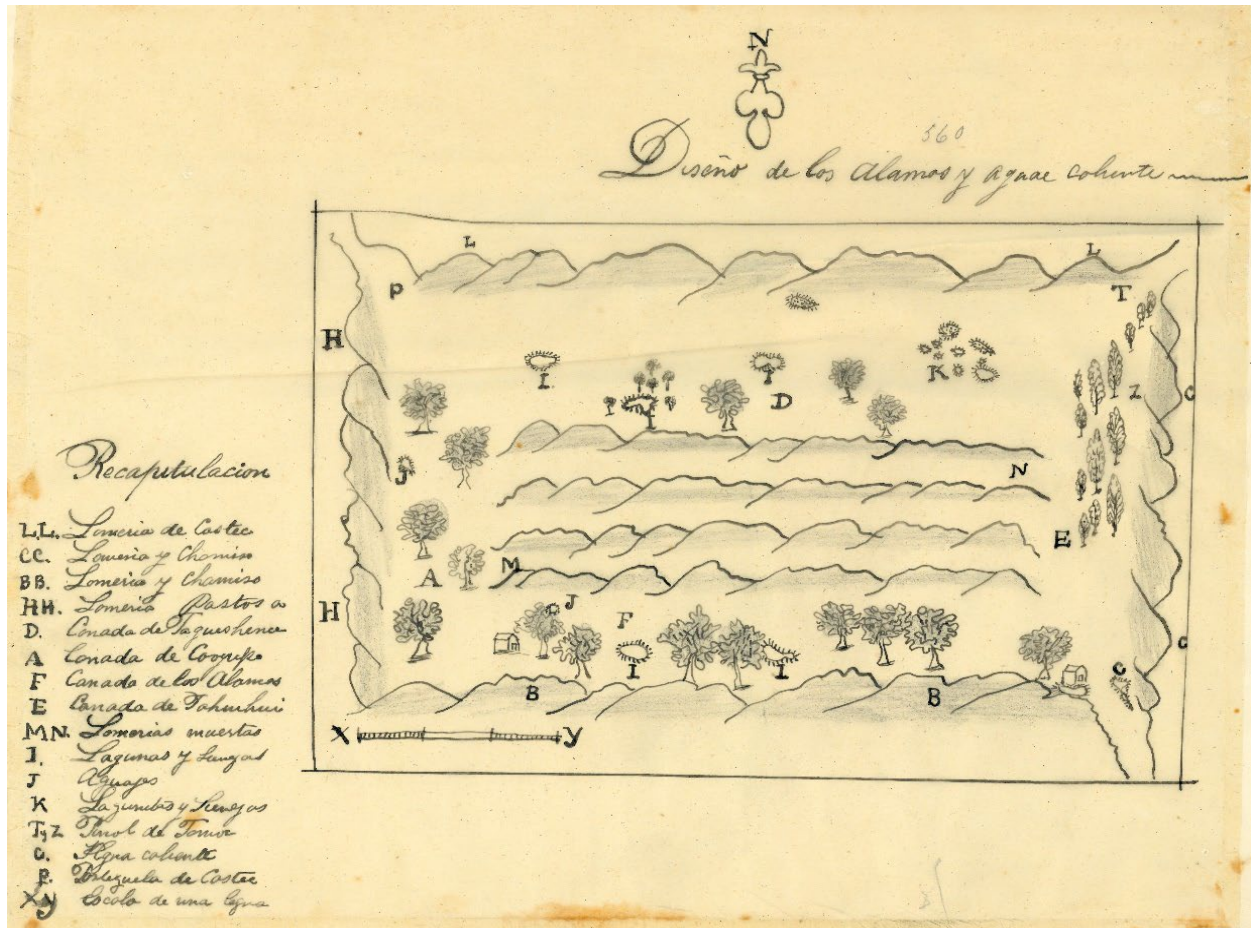


Exploring California Diseños



Alamos y Agua Caliente Rancho, Volume 2, page 199, California State Archives

A learning resource from the California State Archives, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State



Description

This education guide provides activities centered on diseños, hand-drawn sketch maps from the California State Archives' Diseños Collection that invite students to analyze and draw maps. Through diseños, students will not only acquire map skills but also learn about California's history during and after Mexican rule. The following sections and activities will allow students to learn about California diseños history, ranch life, and important historical events leading up to California's eventual statehood in 1850.

Grade Levels

Grade 4

Time

2 hours

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Curriculum Standards

History-Social Science Content Standards (Grade 4)

- Chronological and Spatial Thinking, 4. Students use map and globe skills to determine the absolute locations of places and interpret information available through a map's or globe's legend, scale, and symbolic representations.
- 4.2, 8. Discuss the period of Mexican rule in California and its attributes, including land grants, secularization of the missions, and the rise of the rancho economy.

California Arts Standards (Grade 4)

- 4.VA:Cr1.1. Brainstorm individual and collaborative approaches to a creative art or design problem

History of California Diseños

The State Archives' Diseños collection contains hand-drawn sketch maps that were hand-copied between 1866 and 1871 from the originals created between about 1827 and 1846. They are part of the Spanish and Mexican Land Grant Records, records that show what land the Spanish and Mexican governments gave to individuals to reward them for their military service or to encourage them to settle in California. These maps used natural boundaries such as rivers, mountains, rock outcroppings, and trees as markers.

Diseños became extremely important as proof of land claims after the U.S. gained large areas of Mexican territory, including California, after the Mexican-American War in 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed after the war ended, directed the U.S. government to honor the legitimate land claims of Mexican citizens in California.

In order to process these land claims, the Board of Land Commissioners was created by the Land Act of 1851 through the U.S. Congress. The Board would review and resolve the land claims if the landowners presented their claims within two years. The Board operated for five years, primarily out of San Francisco. Former Mexican citizens with land claims had to rely on translators and lawyers to help them through the submission and appeals process in federal courts, which took an average of thirty years to complete. Travel fees, along with legal fees, led many to bankruptcy. In addition, falling cattle prices and a few years of drought worsened the financial conditions of landowners. This led most of them to sell their lands at reduced prices to those who could afford the legal fees. The Board reviewed 813 land grant claims but only approved 553.

Learning Activities

A.) Looking at a Diseño

Directions: Examine the Diseño and read the sections below. Then, answer the following questions.



[Diseño de los Alamos y Agua Caliente Rancho](#) (Sketch map of the Alamo and Hot Spring Ranch) from the [State Archives Diseño Collection](#), Volume 2, page 199, California State Archives

Tools for Reading a Map

Compass rose: A compass rose is a figure on a map that shows north, east, south, and west directions. It helps us know the correct perspective of where we are. A compass device and a map with a compass rose provide a helpful navigation tool.

Legend or map key: A list on a map that explains the meanings of symbols. For example, a map might have railroad, road, or forest symbols to help users identify important landmarks. The diseño depicted above uses uppercase letters as symbols on a map key. The uppercase letters are located next to symbols of hills, hot springs, and lagoons.

Scale: A map's scale is a ratio of the distance on a map to the actual distance on the ground. For example, 1 inch on a map's scale might equal 1.5 miles in real life. This measurement on a map will estimate how far the distance is between two places in real life.

Spanish to English Language Translation of the Diseño Map Legend

Recapitulacion (Map Legend)

Line	Letters	Original Spanish	English Translation
1	L.L.	Lomeria de Castec	Castec Hills
2	C.C.	Lomeria y Chamizo	Chamizo Hills
3	B.B.	Lomeria y Chamizo	Chamizo Hills
4	H.H.	Lomeria Pastosa	Grassy Hills
5	D.	Cañada de Tagueshence	Tagueshence Glen
6	A.	Cañada de [Cooy...]	[Cooy...] Glen
7	F	Cañada de los alamos	Alamo Glen
8	E	Cañada de [...]	[...] Glen
9	MN	Lomerias muertas	Dead Hills
10	I	[Lagunas] y [...]	Lagoons and [...]
11	J	Aguajes	Watering hole
12	K	[...]	[...]
13	TyZ	[...]	[...]
14	C	Agua Caliente	Hot Spring
15	P	[...] de Castec	Castec [...]
16	XY	Escala de una legua	One league scale

[...] means that words cannot be read because they are unclear.

Life on a California Ranch

Huge cattle ranches were an important part of the economy in pre-statehood California. The area that would become California was a remote province of Mexico after it gained its independence from Spain in 1821. Mexican independence led to the secularization (the transformation from religious values and institutions to non-religious one) of missions, which the Franciscan priests previously controlled. In addition to land grants from the Mexican government, landowning families also received mission land. The maximum limit for a ranch grant was 11 square leagues – about 50,000 acres. Some individuals received multiple grants. The golden period of ranches is typically considered from 1833 to 1846.

Cattle were the most important part of the ranch economy. Their hides (animal skin used for making leather) and tallow (animal fat used for making soaps and candles) were used to trade for goods from foreign traders. Vaqueros or

cowhands were not only skilled at herding cattle but also in making hides and fallows. In addition to the cattle economy, there were also orchards and vineyards. Crops such as wheat or corn were also cultivated.

People worked from morning until sunset on the ranch with food breaks and siestas in the afternoon. Horse races, bullfights, bull and bear fights, singing, and dancing were favorite pastimes of those living in Mexican California. Wedding festivities among wealthy families were grand and lasted from three days to a week or more.

Questions

1. What is the title of the diseño? Can you locate the compass, scale, and map legend on the diseño?
2. Locate each legend item on the diseño
3. What is the importance of legend and scale on the map?
4. Identify the naturally occurring boundaries of the ranch on the diseño.
5. What were diseños often used for after California became part of the United States in 1850?

B.) Drawing a Diseño

Directions: Imagine that you received a land grant from the Mexican government in 1830, which you plan to use as a ranch.

First, answer the following questions on how you plan to organize your ranch based on the history of California Diseños section on page 4 and information in Section A on page 5.

1. How will you use the ranch land?
 - a. What will be the role of cattle and horses in the ranch?
 - b. What crops will be grown?
 - c. Where will you (ranch owner) and workers live?
2. What tasks will be completed by you and the workers?
3. How will workers and your daily and social life look like (e.g., daily routine, meal breaks, free time, and entertainment)?

Second, draw a ranch map using the diseño map in Section A as an example. The map should include at least 4 of the following items. This is not a complete list; other items can also be added. Use square, circular, rectangular, other shapes, or icons as symbols for buildings, living quarters, processing, and animal areas.

1. Map Legend
2. Compass
3. Scale
4. Naturally occurring boundaries such as rivers, hills, etc., to mark your ranch territory
5. Water bodies such as hot springs, lakes, or lagoons
6. Horses and stable area
7. Cattle and barn area
8. Hides and tallow processing area
9. Farmland
10. Agricultural processing area for crops such as wheat or corn
11. Living quarters for the landowning family and workers