Rosario Curletti Collection of Ortega Family Papers MS-04

Chris S. Ervin CA
Presidio Research Center

2020-03-04
215 East Canon Perdido St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
chris@sbthp.org
URL: http://sbthp.org/research.htm
Abstract: This collection of historic documents dating between 1796 and 1855 relates primarily to the Ortega family of Santa Barbara. The documents include legal and financial letters and notices, title documents, and receipts relating to the property and finances of Jose Francisco Ortega and his heirs. Also included is a baptismal certificate for Maria Magdalena Josefa Cota. Especially noteworthy are the itemized list of all cattle, horses, and mules from Rancho del Refugio and the land grant title for the rancho with conditions of use, as established by the Mexican government. Transcriptions and translations of all the documents were made by Ruth Adams, Elaine Miller, and Amelia Acosta.

Biographical / Historical
Jose Francisco Ortega was on Gaspar de Portolà's 2nd land expedition to Alta California in 1769. He was the chief scout on this expedition, which discovered San Francisco Bay. In 1773 Ortega became Lieutenant and Commandant of the Presidio of San Diego, a post he held until 1781. In the spring of 1782, Ortega was on the expedition that founded Mission San Buenaventura and he became Commandant in charge of the military guard chosen to construct the temporary Santa Barbara Presidio in 1782, a post he held for two years. After that, he commanded the presidio in Monterey. He ended his career in 1795 in Loreto, Mexico where he was transferred. According to historian Walker Tompkins, Ortega owed a large debt to the Mexican army, due to bad bookkeeping, and asked Governor Borica for land north of Santa Barbara in Refugio Canyon to raise cattle on to pay off his debts. Several of Ortega's sons also moved up to Refugio and claimed land for themselves, although they did not yet own the title. Eventually the Ortega family was one of the first families to receive titles to land grants distributed by the Mexican government in 1834.

References

Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift, Jean Menzies 1992; purchased at auction May 12, 1987, from the Rosario Curletti estate. Rosario Andrea Curletti, who died in 1986, was a respected Southern California anthropologist, genealogist, historian and book collector. Her main specialties were Santa Barbara history and the Chumash Indians.

Conditions Governing Access
Collection is open to researchers.

Conditions Governing Use
All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Archivist and Librarian. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation Research Center as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the reader.

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements
Photocopies of the original documents are available to researchers.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Hollister Ranch (Calif.)
Ortega Family
Goicoechea, Felipe Antonio de, 1747-1814
Cota, Maria Magdalena Josefa
folder 1  Ortega, Jose Francisco de. Legal contract to Phelipe de Goycoechea 13 December 1796
   Physical Description: 2 p. legal size
   General
   Document states that Ortega and his family will pay back an outstanding debt through
   revenue and products from their ranch. Signed by Ortega and his three sons, Ignacio Maria
   de Ortega, Visente Maria de Ortega, and Francisco Maria de Ortega.

folder 2  List of all cattle and horses on Refugio Ranch 3 December 1796
   Physical Description: 2 p. legal size
   General
   Document not signed but it is related to document in Folder 1.

folder 3  Fray Pedro de San Josef Estevan. Certificate of baptism 8 April 1800
   Physical Description: 1 p.
   General
   Document certifies the baptism of Maria Magdalena Josefa, daughter of Guillermo Cota Cabo
   of the Royal Presidio of Santa Barbara and his wife Manuela Lizaldi, in Mission San Gabriel.

folder 4  Mata, Jose Maria. Statement of paymaster, account of Jose Francisco Ortega 11 July
   1815
   Physical Description: 1 p. legal size
   General
   Statement of payments and debts of deceased Ortega and the amounts left for his heirs.

folder 5  Arguello, Gervasio. Document 6 October 1817
   Physical Description: 1 p.
   General
   Note written to Jose de la Guerra, stating that Arguello will pay the draft handled by the
   paymaster of the Presidio of Loreto for Jose Maria Ortega.

folder 6  Mata, Jose Maria. Warrant for payment 3 June 1823
   Physical Description: 2 p.
   General
   Copy of draft dated 26 April 1817 for money owed to Jose Maria Ortega, son of Jose Francisco
   Ortega.

folder 7  Mata, Jose Maria. Request for payment 3 June 1823
   Physical Description: 1 p.
   General
   Duplicate request as in Folder 6 of payment owed Jose Maria Ortega.

folder 8  Ruiz, Jose Manuel. Letter to Antonio Maria de Ortega 3 June 1823
   Physical Description: 1 p.
   General
   Ruiz tells Ortega that the draft for money owed is no longer valid and he has done what he
   was asked to do. He also sends greetings to Ortega's family.
folder 10  

**Herrera, Jose Maria. Legal document certifying draft 10 August 1827**

Physical Description: 1 p. legal size  
General  
Document, signed and sealed, certifying that money was paid out of the account of Jose Francisco Ortega to his son Jose Maria Ortega.

folder 10  

**Ayala, Juan P. Document of land grant title 3 April 1846**

Physical Description: 3 p. legal size  
General  
Copy of original document which certifies granting of land at Refugio to Don Antonio Maria Ortega and Dona Magdalena Cota de Ortega and explains the conditions of its use. Original, dated 1 August 1834 and recorded in land grant title book in Monterey, signed by Jose Figueroa and Agustin Vicente Zamorano Serio. Copy signed by Ayala, Juan Camarillo and Joaquin de la Guerra.

folder 11  

**Ortega, Francisco. Notice of sale of land 10 July 1852**

Physical Description: 2 p. legal size  
General  
Notarized document that states that Ortega has transferred all property and land of Rancho del Refugio and Las Carzas to his mother-in-law, Dona Magdelena Cota de Ortega, in exchange for 640 pesos. Notarized by Raymundo Carrillo.

folder 12  

**Pico, Pio. Letter to Miguel Noriega 4 February 1855**

Physical Description: 1 p.  
General  
Pico writes to his godson asking him to send the black horse to him care of Pico's brother in law, Don Joaquin Ortega.