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IN THE MATTER  
OF  
RANCHO LAS CRUCES,  
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

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PETITION TO CONGRESS

BY

CLAIMANTS,

ASKING THE PASSAGE OF AN ACT AUTHORIZING THEM  
TO PRESENT THEIR CLAIM TO THE U. S. DISTRICT  
COURT IN AND FOR THE DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA;

TOGETHER WITH ACCOMPANYING PAPERS IN SUPPORT  
OF SAID PETITION.

MULLEN & HYDE,  
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.,  
SMITH & REDINGTON,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
*Of Counsel for Petitioners.*

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WASHINGTON:  
R. O. POLKINHORN, PRINTER,  
1876.

PETITION OF CLAIMANTS  
To the Commissioner of the General Land Office.

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, February 3d, 1876.

HON. S. S. BURDETT,

*Commissioner of the Gen'l Land Office,  
Washington, D. C.*

SIR: We have the honor, respectfully, to state, that the lands hereinafter described and situate in the County of Santa Barbara and State of California, are claimed as constituting the private land claim called "the Rancho Las Cruces."

That the records of your office, and that of the U. S. Surveyor General for California, show that this claim was, in all respects, valid under the Mexican laws.

That said lands are described as follows, to wit: Those situate in the U. S. San Francisco Land District  $S\frac{1}{2}$  of  $S\frac{1}{2}$ , sec. 26;  $S\frac{1}{2}$  of  $S\frac{1}{2}$ , sec. 27; S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 33, N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$  of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec 33;  $S\frac{1}{2}$  of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 33. All of sections 34 and 35, in T. 6 N. R. 32 W., S. B. B. and M and those situate in the Los Angeles District as follows, to wit; S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 2; lots 1 and 2, and S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 5; N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , E. $\frac{1}{2}$  of S. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ , N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , and lot 4, of sec. 8; lots 1, 2, 3, 4, and E. $\frac{1}{2}$  of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 17, and lots 1, 2, 3, of sec. 20; W. $\frac{1}{2}$  of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ , S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$  of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ , S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ , and S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$  of S. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ , sec. 11. All of sections 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22 and 23, in T. 5. N. R., 32 W. S. B. B. and M. That each and every portion of said lands so described is free from any conflict or other claim of any kind whatsoever; that the present owners of and claimants to said lands are those who have de-raigned title through and from the original Mexican grantee of said Rancho, or from his assignees.

That all of said owners and claimants have signed a petition to the Congress of the United States, asking to

be permitted to present to and establish their claim in the U. S. District Court, in and for the District of California, and which petition and the several exhibits thereunto attached and made a part thereof, we do now file in your office, and for reasons as follows, to wit:

1st. For the purpose of laying the foundation for a motion to be hereinafter made and referred to.

2d. For the purpose of better perpetuating valuable testimony taken in reference to a claim held in high respect by every tribunal, State and Federal, in California; and which being entitled to the favorable consideration of Congress is to be presented by copy to that body at its present session for such action thereon as equity demands.

The undersigned are the attorneys for said owners of said "Rancho Las Cruces," and petitioners before the Congress of the United States, and they do therefore move you as follows, to wit:

That in view of the statement made and set forth in said petition, the original of which we do now offer to file in your office, together with the affidavits and certificates thereunto attached and made a part of same; and in view of the objects and purposes of said petitioners as set forth in their said petition, and for the further purpose of avoiding any matters of conflict that might hereafter arise in relation to any disposition of any portion of any of said lands, under any existing laws of the United States; that you will, on the receipt of said petition, cause an order to be issued to the U. S. Surveyor General for California, and to the Registers of the U. S. Land Offices for the San Francisco and Los Angeles Districts, causing to be suspended from entry or disposition, any portion of any of said lands under existing laws until the said petitioners can be heard by Congress on the merits of their said petition as herein referred to,

and until the same can be determined by the action of Congress.

The said petition, and the papers thereunto attached, speak for themselves, and are entitled to your very high consideration, and for reasons among others as follows, to wit:

1st. The petitioners (and no one else) are in the actual and *bona fide* possession of all of said lands.

2d. As shown by Charles A. Thompson, searcher of records, in and for Santa Barbara County, no other parties appear of record in said County as claimants to any portion of any of said lands.

3d. The tract claimed has been defined on the ground by an actual survey by Wm. H. Norway, U. S. Deputy, and for nine years County Surveyor of Santa Barbara County, and a map of such survey filed with said petition.

4th. The affiant, Vicente Cordero, is the eldest son of the original grantee, and is now in the possession of the original Ranch House, place, vine-yards, &c.

5th. The affiant, Capt. James W. Burke (aged 77 years), is the identical *Santiago* Burke, who was a member of the Ayuntamiento, to whom was referred the original petition of said Mexican Grantee, Miguel Cordero, and who is referred to in said title papers.

6th. The affiant, Francisco de la Guerra (aged 57 years), was formerly Mayor of Santa Barbara, and is a man of high standing in that community.

7th. The affiant, Capt. Antonio Maria de la Guerra (aged 50 years), was formerly member of the counsel of Santa Barbara and Mayor of Santa Barbara, and State Senator for California.

8th. Affiant, Lewis T. Burton (aged 67 years), and who knew the grantee and the lands since 1831, is a man of

the highest standing in Santa Barbara County, California.

9th. Affiant, Gasper Orena (aged 50 years), was formerly owner of the Rancho in the vicinity of Las Cruces, and of high standing.

10th. Affiant, Augustine Jansens, for many years the assessor of Santa Barbara County, and elected as such by the people, and who assessed said lands to said petitioners, and to no one else.

11th. Wm. A. Streeter, physician, who came to California in 1843, aged now 67 years, and visited quite frequently said Rancho, and found all things as stated in said affidavit.

13th. Affiant, Miguel F. Burke, who for 30 years has known the same, and is a merchant in good standing, and living near said "Rancho Las Cruces."

14th. Affiant, John C. Kays, formerly merchant and farmer, who, since 1846, knows the facts as stated.

15th. Affiant, Thomas W. Moore, formerly President of the Board of Supervisors, and of high standing.

16th. Affiant, Judge Charles Fernald, who was the Probate Judge for Santa Barbara County, and as such administered upon the estate of said Mexican Grantee, and is a member of the bar of Santa Barbara, and in high standing in this State.

17th. Affiant, H. P. Stone is the county and district court clerk and recorder of Santa Barbara county, and who states, &c., that said petitioners, since 1850 to date, have paid taxes on all of said lands, and no one else has paid any taxes thereon.

18th. Quorum of the Board of Supervisors of the county of Santa Barbara, who testify and recommend

that favorable action in this matter may be had by the Congress of the United States.

19th. Certificate of Judge Francis John Maguire, who is now and for 15 years last past, has been the County Judge in and for Santa Barbara County, to the effect that all the petitioners and affiants herein referred to, are known personally to him, and that they all are persons of good repute and high standing, and also his own affidavit as to facts within his own personal knowledge relative to said " Rancho Las Cruces."

19½. Affiant, James L. Ord, physician (and brother of Gen'l. E. O. C. Ord, U. S. army), who knew said Mexican Grantee and his family, the Rancho Las Cruces, from 1849 to date, and who professionally attended upon the family of said grantee.

20th. The certificates of the registers of the U. S. Land Offices that the lands are free from all claims of any kind though long since surveyed by the United States.

21st. The certificate of the United States Surveyor General for California attached to full, true and correct copies of the original title papers of said Rancho, as the same are now of record, having been turned over to the American authorities by the Mexican authorities in California after the date of its acquisition.

22d. The affiant, R. C. Hopkins, who for many years was the keeper of the original Spanish Archives now on file in the office of the U. S. Surveyor Genl. for Cal. as to the correctness of the English translation of the original Spanish title papers, and that all the signatures thereto are genuine, and that the papers are the original title papers, and that the same constituted the title papers of a Mexican grant perfect under the Mexican laws, relating to lands in California, and that said grant is contained in the Jimeno Index of Spanish and Mexican grants, &c., &c.

Therefore, in view of all the foregoing facts and for the reasons specifically set forth at large in said petition, we ask that said motion be granted, and that such suspension as asked for may continue pending the consideration of this case at the hands of Congress.

In the matter of the said motion pertaining to the said Rancho Las Cruces, in Santa Barbara County, California, we do now transmit you herewith the papers following, to wit:

1. Petition signed by owners of Las Cruces.
2. Certificate of C. A. Thompson, Searcher of Records.
3. Certificate of W. H. Norway, U. S. Deputy and County Surveyor of Santa Barbara County.
4. Map of a Survey of said Rancho by said Wm. H. Norway.
5. Deposition of Vicente Cordero.
6. " Capt. James W. Burke.
7. " Francisco de la Guerra.
8. " Capt. Antonio Maria de la Guerra.
9. " Lewis T. Burton.
10. " Gasper Oreña.
11. " Augustine Jansens.
12. " Wm. A. Streeter.
13. " James L. Ord, M. D.
14. " Miguel F. Burke.
15. " John C. Kays.
16. " Capt. Thomas W. Moore.
17. " Judge Chas. Fernald.
18. Certificate of Clerk and Recorder of Santa Barbara County.
19. " Board of Supervisors, Santa Barbara.
20. " Judge F. J. Maguire, County Judge.
21. " H. G. Rollins, Register U. S. Land Office, San Fr'co.
22. " Alfred James, Register U. S. Land Office, Los Angeles.

23. Copies in Spanish of the original title papers of said Rancho.  
 24. Copies in English, all certified by R. C. Hopkins  
 Keeper of Spanish Archives in California.

We are, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

MULLAN & HYDE;

*Attorneys for said Petitioners, and owners  
 of said Rancho Las Cruces.*

SMITH & REDINGTON,  
*Of Counsel.*

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
 GENERAL LAND OFFICE,  
 WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 21, 1876.

REGISTER AND RECEIVER,  
*San Francisco, Cal.,*

GENTLEMEN: In the matter of the Rancho "Las Cruces," in Santa Barbara County, California, I have to direct that you will withhold from disposal of any kind, until further orders the following tracts in your land district, embraced in the said private claim, in view of a proposed application to Congress for legislation in behalf of the claimants, and in order to afford time for Congress to take action thereon, viz: S.<sup>2</sup> of S.<sup>2</sup> of section 26; S.<sup>2</sup> of S.<sup>2</sup> of section 27; S. E.<sup>4</sup> of section 33; N. E.<sup>4</sup> of N. E.<sup>4</sup> of section 33; S.<sup>2</sup> of N. E.<sup>4</sup> of section 33; and sections 34 and 35, all in Townp. 6 North of Range 32 West, San Bernardino, Meridian.

You will make the proper notes on your books and plats to give effect to the foregoing, and acknowledge the receipt hereof.

L. K. LIPPINCOTT,  
*Acting Commissioner.*

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

GENERAL LAND OFFICE,

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 21, 1876.

REGISTER AND RECEIVER,

*Los Angeles, Cal.*

GENTLEMEN: In the matter of the Rancho "Las Cruces," in Santa Barbara County, California, I have to direct that you withhold from disposal of any kind until further orders the following tracts in your land district embraced in said private claim, in view of a proposed application to Congress for legislation in behalf of the claimants, and in order to afford time for Congress to take action thereon, viz: S. W.<sup>4</sup> of S. W.<sup>4</sup> of section 2; lots 1 and 2 and S. E.<sup>4</sup> of section 5; N. E.<sup>4</sup>, E<sup>2</sup> of S. E.<sup>4</sup>; N. W.<sup>4</sup> of S. E.<sup>4</sup>, and lot 4 of section 8; lots 1, 2, 3, 4, E<sup>2</sup> of N. E.<sup>4</sup> and N. E.<sup>4</sup> of S. E.<sup>4</sup> of section 17; lots 1, 2 and 3 of section 20, W<sup>2</sup> of N. W.<sup>4</sup>, S. E.<sup>4</sup> of N. W.<sup>4</sup>, S. W.<sup>4</sup> and S. W.<sup>4</sup> of S. E.<sup>4</sup> of section 11; and sections 3, 4, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22 and 23, all in Township 5 N. of Range 32 W., San Bernardino, Meridian.

You will make the proper notice on your books and plats to give effect to the foregoing, and acknowledge the receipt thereof.

Very respectfully,

L. K. LIPPINCOTT,

*Acting Commissioner.*

PETITION  
OF  
LAND OWNERS IN CALIFORNIA,  
IN THE MATTER OF  
**THE RANCHO "LAS CRUCES,"**  
IN  
**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.**

ASKING TO BE ALLOWED TO PRESENT THE CLAIM TO  
SAID RANCHO FOR ADJUDICATION, TO THE UNITED  
STATES DISTRICT COURT IN AND FOR THE  
DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA.

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**To the Honorable  
Senate and House of Representatives  
in Congress assembled.**

The undersigned, your petitioners, respectfully show:  
That they are the present owners and holders in com-  
mon of that certain tract of land, situate in the County of  
Santa Barbara, and State of California, called the Ran-  
cho Las Cruces, containing two leagues.

That their title thereto is derived from Miguel Cordero, to whom was granted the said land in due form by the Mexican Government, in the year 1837; that the said land was duly segregated from the public domain, and juridical possession thereof officially delivered to the said Miguel Cordero; all which, and the details thereof, are particularly set forth in Exhibit A, hereunto appended, and made a part of this petition,—as also in the title papers thereof, duly certified by the U. S. Surveyor General for California as being true copies of the original

from the Spanish archives, in his custody, and which papers are marked as Exhibit B, and made a part of this petition.

That the said Miguel Cordero had been in occupancy and possession of the same land from a previous time, namely, from about the year 1833, up to the time of the said grant, when he became the lawful owner from the Mexican Government, and received juridical possession, as aforesaid, and continued to occupy and possess the same, until his death in 1851; that he planted a large vineyard and orchard, cultivated a garden and fields; enclosed the same with fences, and built a dwelling house for himself and his family on said Rancho, in which he resided for many years, and in which he died: which improvements still continue in the occupation and possession of his family; which facts are more particularly set forth in depositions hereto annexed, and which form part of this petition.

That the said Miguel Cordero died in the month of March, 1851, within a few days after the passage of the act of March 3, 1851, entitled "An act to ascertain and settle Private Land Claims in the State of California," before information of the passage of the act was received in California, and before the said act went into practical operation.

That he left a widow who could not either read or write, and could not speak or understand the English language, and nine children, most of whom were minors.

That although the title of Miguel Cordero to the said land was, in point of fact, perfect under the Mexican law, yet, because of the ignorance of the widow and children and their inexperience in business matters, and the confused condition in which the estate of the said Miguel Cordero was left at his death (he having died suddenly,

leaving no will), and because the said widow understanding the title of her deceased husband to be complete and perfect under Mexican law as aforesaid, and being uninformed of any law requiring such land claim to be presented to an American tribunal for confirmation, no petition was presented by her to the said Board of Land Commissioners; and so also the children of the said Miguel Cordero, resting in confidence on their father's title as complete under the law of their country from which he derived it, and like their mother, never having heard of the necessity created subsequently by the act of Congress, to present their title for adjudication and confirmation before the U. S. Board of Land Commissioners, until a long time subsequent to the date limited by law for presentation of such land claims, inadvertently failed to present their claim, which facts are more particularly set forth in the annexed depositions.

That a portion of the heirs of the said Miguel Cordero, including many minor children and their mothers, still reside upon, occupy, use and cultivate the said lands of the said Rancho and make the same their home; that others of the said heirs, many years ago, disposed of interests in the said Rancho, which, by either voluntary conveyance or decrees of the Courts of California, have passed to present owners, innocent and bona fide purchasers, who, in common with the said Corderos, use and occupy the said lands for the maintenance of their families or for purposes of the business in which they are engaged.

That the said title to the said lands as thus derived from the Mexican Government has ever been recognized and respected by the courts of the country and state, as well as by the people of this county; and that both state and county taxes have been annually and regularly assessed on the said lands and paid, from the year 1850

to the present time, like other taxes upon lands having a confirmed or perfect title, as set forth in exhibits hereto annexed.

That no claim is set up to any portion of the said lands under any law either of the United States or the State of California, or in any manner whatever, other than that of your petitioners; and that there is no conflict whatsoever with any person for any portion of the said lands, but that the same are now used and occupied exclusively by the undersigned, your petitioners, and by no other person whomsoever; and no persons have used or occupied the said lands since the death of the said Miguel Cordero in 1851, to this day, except those deriving their right, title and interest therein from the said Miguel Cordero, deceased.

And your petitioners further show:

That the lines of the U. S. Surveys of Public Lands have lately been run over a large part of the said Rancho Las Cruces, whereby the title of your petitioners as thus derived from the said Miguel Cordero and the Mexican Government, is liable to be, and is in great and immediate danger by being disturbed by parties who may not respect the same; That the said lands rightfully belonging to the heirs and successors of the said Miguel Cordero, are necessary for the support of the several families and owners residing thereon; and your petitioners represent that unless they are allowed to present their title for examination and for confirmation, if pronounced valid, the said lands will be treated as public lands, whereby great injustice will be done to innocent owners of the said Rancho Las Cruces, and embarrassments and suffering be caused to the said families thereon.

And your petitioners, though citizens of the United States and of the State of California, contributing by their

said lands and the products thereof, to the revenues and resources of each, being debarred from access to and a hearing in the courts to establish their title, and consequently having no protection for their lands of which they and those from whom they derive title have been the undisputed sole owners and occupants for over forty-two years consecutively, respectfully come before your honorable body for relief, relying upon the perfect validity of their title and the strong equity of their case.

And pray, That they may be permitted to present their claim before the U. S. District Court for the District of California, and if, upon examination and investigation by the said court, it be found that the title of the Rancho Las Cruces, as held by the said Miguel Cordero was good and valid under the Mexican law, that a decree confirming the same may by the said court be made and entered, and thereupon the said Rancho may be surveyed by the U. S. Surveyor General for California, and duly patented under existing laws, to Miguel Cordero, and his successors in interest.

VICENTE CORDERO.

JUAN T. CORDERO.

CLOVIS VALENZUELA,

for himself and minor children of

YSABEL CORDERO DE VALENZUELA, his wife,

Namely : REFUGIA, FELIPA, MARIA ANTONIO, CONCEPCION, MICAELA, GERTRUDIS, JUAN and EUGENIO.

JAN. 3d, 1876, Witnessed by—

JOHN JANSENS.

THOMAS B. DIBBLEE, for himself and  
his Partners, ALBERT DIBBLEE and W.W. HOLLISTER.

A. B. WILLIAMS.

JAS. M. SHORT.

O. D. METCALF.

B. T. DINSMORE, Guardian of—

SARAH, ALBERT, BRADLEY T., FANNY E.,  
THOMAS, IRVIN W. Minor heirs of AUGUS-  
TUS I. DINSMORE, deceased.

JAN. 3d, 1876, Witnessed by—  
JOHN JANSSENS.

EMILY E. DINSMORE, Widow and—  
administratrix of AUGUSTUS I. DINSMORE, deceased.  
R. GONZALES.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, } ss.  
*County of Santa Barbara,* }

I, Charle A. Thompson, of the City of Santa Barbara,  
in the said County and State, searcher of records, hereby  
certify that I have examined the title to the lands known  
as the Rancho Las Cruces, situated in this county, and  
have searched the records in the County Recorder's  
Office, in the city of Santa Barbara, for all claims of title  
to the said lands; and I find that, as appears by the said  
records, the legal title to the said lands, in undivided  
ownership, is now vested solely in the following persons,  
the names of all of whom are subscribed to the foregoing  
petition:

1. VICENTE CORDERO.
2. JUAN J. CORDERO.
3. Heirs of YSABEL CORDERO VALENZUELA, deceased, namely:  
CLOVIS VALENZUELA, her husband,  
REFUGIA, FELIPA, MARIA ANTONIO, CONCEPCION, GERTRUDIS, JUAN, EUGENIO  
and MICAELA, her children (all minors).
4. A. B. WILLIAMS.
5. THOMAS B. DIBBLEE, ALBERT  
DIBBLEE, and W. W. HOLLISTER.
6. RAMON GONZALES.
7. J. M. SHORT.

## 8. O. D. METCALF.

9. Heirs of AUGUSTUS J. DINSMORE, dec'd,  
namely: EMILY T. DINSMORE, his widow; SARAH,  
ALBERT, BRADLEY T., FANNY E., THOMAS  
and IRVIN W., his children (all minors.)

And I further certify, that I do not find of record any other claim to title or ownership of the said lands, or any part thereof.

C. A. THOMPSON.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 19th day of January, A. D. 1876.

A. S. COOPER,  
*Notary Public.*

[NOTARY'S SEAL.]

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,      }  
County of Santa Barbara.    } ss.

I, William H. Norway, now and for nine years the County Surveyor of Santa Barbara County, do hereby certify that I am well and familiarly acquainted with every part of the Rancho Las Cruces in the said county, and with all the adjoining lands, having at times spent several days in going over the said Rancho and adjoining lands engaged in surveying—on one occasion as deputy U. S. Surveyor running the lines of the Rancho Najoqui; on another occasion the lines of the Rancho Santa Rosa; on another occasion the lines of the Ranchos San Julian and Nuestra Senora del Refugio (more particularly that part of the latter called the Gaviota Rancho which adjoins the southerly end or side of Las Cruces); and on another occasion, by order of the U. S. Surveyor General for California, surveying as public land a portion of Townships 6 North, Range 32 West, San Bernardino base and meridian, and subdividing the same; and on still another occasion by similar orders of the said U. S. Sur-

veyor General, surveying as public land a portion of Townships 5 North, Range 32, West, San Bernardino base and meridian, and subdividing the same, the entire Rancho Las Cruces falling within the said two Townships, and the lines of the said public survey running through the said Las Cruces.

That I have carefully examined the original diseno in the grant of Las Cruces, and now on file in the Spanish archives in the U. S. Surveyor General's office in San Francisco, and have also had with me in the field on some of the occasions above referred to, a certified copy of the said diseno, and I find the same to correspond in all important points with the topography, and natural and artificial land marks of the ground of the said Las Cruces Rancho.

That the accompanying map of the lands claimed for the said Las Cruces Rancho is made by me from the lines of official surveys as run, and notes made by me upon the ground itself, and that the said map is in all respects correct and true.

That I have carefully calculated the area embraced within the lines shown on the said accompanying map as true boundaries of the said Las Cruces Rancho, according to the calls of the original grant and diseno, and that I find the total of the actual area within such boundaries to be 8,144  $\frac{86}{100}$  acres, being less than the two leagues stated as the quantity contained in the original grant of the said Rancho Las Cruces.

I further certify, as to character of the land; that except a few spots varying in extent from 5 acres to 10 acres each, the lands included within the said boundaries consist almost entirely of steep hills and narrow cañadas, and are mostly adapted to grazing but not to cultivation, though the soil is good; and in part (the east side of the Rancho) of the slope of the mountain which is ex-

ceeding rocky, and broken by ravines, the soil of this portion being light and producing principally scrub-oak and other brush.

WM. H. NORWAY,  
*County Surveyor.*

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 19th day of January, A. D., 1876.

{ NOTARY'S  
· SEAL. }

A. S. COOPER,  
*Notary Public.*

### Deposition of Vicente Cordero.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }  
County of Santa Barbara. } ss.

Vicente Cordero, on first being duly sworn, does on his oath depose and say: That he is a citizen of the United States, born in the State of California; aged about fifty-one years, more or less; is by occupation a farmer, and resides with his family upon lands of the Rancho Las Cruces in the County of Santa Barbara and State of California.

That his father was named Miguel Cordero, and died in the year 1851 at his residence at the Ranch House on the said Rancho Las Cruces; that the said Ranch House in which his father died was situated within a few feet of the dwelling house of this deponent and in which he (deponent) now resides with his family; that his father, Miguel Cordero was born in the State of California, had long served there as a soldier in the Mexican Army, and at the date of his death was aged near or about seventy years. That the said Miguel Cordero, at his death, left a widow named Maria Antonio Jimeney Cordero (mother of this deponent) and nine children, issue of his marriage with the said Maria Antonio, most of whom were minors,

and all of whom, at the date of their father's death, resided upon the lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces.

That this deponent's father at the date of his death and for many years, to wit: about eighteen years prior thereto, was in the actual occupation and possession of the lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces and the whole thereof, consisting of about two leagues; and for fourteen years prior to his death the said Miguel Cordero was the sole owner of the said Rancho, having been granted the same by the Mexican Government in the year 1837, in consideration of military services rendered by him to his said government and for other reasons.

That as such sole owner he had continuously occupied the said Rancho Las Cruces, with his live stock, until his decease; when he left on his said Rancho over one-thousand head of cattle and a considerable number of horses.

That this deponent's father, during his possession of such Rancho had two fields thereon under cultivation with wheat, barley, &c., and enclosed with fences; also a garden near his residence; also a vineyard planted by him, deponent's father, containing about two-thousand grape vines; also an orchard of pear, apple, peach and other kinds of fruit trees; and to which this deponent afterwards added another orchard of fruit trees, now in full bearing, and eight or ten years old.

That the date of the grant of title to his father was, as aforesaid, in 1837, but he was in the actual occupation and possession of the same lands and had his residence thereon about four years prior to the said grant, to wit: about the year 1833, and that from the said last mentioned date to the date of his death in 1851, he continued in the occupation and possession of all the lands of the said Rancho.

This deponent further states that he, the deponent, was present on the ground at the date when his father, Miguel Cordero, was officially put into the judicial possession of the said Rancho Las Cruces, in due form and by the custom of the laws then in force, by the first Alcalde of Santa Barbara, Nicholas A. Den, now deceased; that he well remembers the said Alcalde, and the occasion of his presence at the Rancho, and what took place at such juridical possession, the ceremony being one of much moment and importance in the quietude and monotony of the family life at that time; that the boundaries of the said Rancho Las Cruces, as claimed and held and occupied by the deponent's father, and according to which the said juridical possession was given him as aforesaid by the said Alcalde, are as follows: On the North by the lands of the Ranchos Santa Rosa and Najojin; on the Northeast and East by the Cuchilla or ridge of the Najoqui, and the brushy sierras or mountains; on the South by lands of the Rancho La Gaviota (which is part of the Rancho Nuestra Señora del Refugio), and on the west by lands of the Rancho San Julian, and that during the lifetime of his father, no person whomsoever ever disturbed or disputed the said boundaries of the said Rancho Las Cruces as above described, and no person except his father ever occupied, or attempted to occupy, or claimed any right to occupy any part of the said lands within the said boundaries.

That the deponent's father could not either write or read; that he died suddenly after less than twenty-four hour's illness, and left no will; that from and after the date of his death, his widow, the mother of this deponent and of the other children aforesaid, continued to reside with the said children at the same Ranch House where their father had died, and the said widow and children continued in the actual occupation and possession of all

the lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces, and in the same manner as these had been occupied by the deponents father prior to his death, and also in possession of the above mentioned live stock and property left by him; that the personal property, after the death of the said Miguel Cordero, was divided between his widow and his said nine children,—the said live stock, except such part as was sold for payment of debts, taxes and expenses, remaining on the said Rancho, and in the same manner as it had continued during the lifetime of the said Miguel Cordero.

That the mother of this deponent never again married, and after surviving her said husband about six years, died in or about the year 1857, and in the same house on the said Rancho Las Cruces in which her said husband died.

That the deponent's mother also could not either write or read, and left no will; that after her death the children divided the personal property but left the said lands of Las Cruces undivided and held in common among themselves, each one of the children keeping thereon what live stock he or she owned, pasturing it promiscuously with that of the other children and owners on all parts of the said Rancho Las Cruces up to the boundaries thereof above described.

That most of the said nine children of the said Miguel Cordero were born in the said Ranch House on the said Rancho Los Cruces (though this deponent was not born there, but was aged about eight or ten years when he first came to the said Rancho and when his father first entered into the possession thereof).

This deponent further states that of his father's children, six sons are now living, namely: this deponent Vicente, Juan, Jose Antonio, Jesus Antonio, Jose Jesus, and Salvador, and that two sons and the only daugh-

ter are deceased; of which deceased, one (Gregorio) left a widow and children now living, and the daughter of the said Miguel Cordero (Ysabel, who died in October, 1874,) left her husband, Clovis Valenzuela and eight children, all minors still, and who with their father, the said Clovis, still own and hold the interest or share of said Ysabel in the said Rancho Las Cruces, together with their home thereon; and that the names of the children of deponent's deceased sister are as follows: Refugia, Juan, Felipa, Maria Antonio, Eugenio, Concepcion, Gertrudis, and Micaela.

That Juan Cordero, owner of one interest or share, (one-ninth part) in the said Rancho, and of his separate dwelling house thereon, is, and for a long time has been in ill health and unable to work, and has a wife and eleven children, of whom two, namely, Estamislado and Francisco Cordero are married, and both reside with their families on the said Rancho, the former having a wife and two minor children, and the latter a wife and three minor children.

That this deponent has a wife and five children, all minors, and all residing with him in his said house on the said Rancho.

That other co-owners, successors of undivided interests of some of the children of the said Miguel Cordero deceased, (and deriving title solely through him), reside in their separate houses on the said Rancho, and carry on their business there.

That such of the children of the deponent's father as are now living and are not now on said Rancho, still regard the Rancho as their home, and are in the habit of returning thereto as such from time to time each year.

This deponent further states that during all the minority of himself and his brothers and sister, there was no

school within many miles of their said home on Las Cruces, and none where it was practicable or within their circumstances to attend, and that except Jose Antonio and himself (who had learned a little before coming to the said Rancho), none of his father's family could either write or read, and no member of his family could speak or understand the English language; that there were no newspapers published in English or Spanish language in Santa Barbara County until many years after his father's death, or until about the month of May, 1855; and that neither his father or mother ever knew or heard of any American law which made it obligatory upon any one to present his title-papers to any American tribunal either for examination or confirmation; that his father and mother and also their children, understood that the title of the said Miguel Cordero was complete and perfect under the Mexican laws, and had never been questioned or disturbed by any one, and therefore they could not understand that anything remained to be done under the American laws; and further, that this deponent likewise had never heard of any law requiring the presentation by land claimants of their title-papers to any American tribunal, until long after the expiration of the time limited for such presentation under the laws of the United States.

In consequence of all which, as well as because of his father's sudden death just at or before the time when the said act requiring presentation of such land claims went into operation; and because of the unsettled condition of his father's estate for several years afterwards; and because also of the ignorance and inexperience of his father's family and the minority of many of his children, as set forth above, the claim to the said Rancho Las Cruces never was presented to the U. S. Board of Land Commissioners.

This deponent further states that he is residing with his wife and family aforesaid at the same place occupied by his father on the said Rancho Las Cruces, in a house erected by this deponent immediately adjoining the site of the old Rancho House, after the latter had become decayed through age, and that he has there resided continuously from the death of his father to this day. That this deponent still has possession of the original vineyard and orchard of his father, and has continuously cultivated the same each year, and has planted additional lands in vines and fruit trees, and enclosed these with fences, and has enclosed, cultivated and planted other portions also of the said lands of Las Cruces, and erected improvements thereon; and that his cultivation, occupation and possession of the said lands have never been disputed or questioned by any person; and that not only this deponent, but the other members of the said Cordero family aforesaid, have, since the death of the said Miguel Cordero, continued to use, and still do use the said lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces in the business of wool growing, and of breeding, raising and maintaining their live stock, consisting of sheep, cattle and horses, and have cultivated, and do still cultivate such portions of the said lands as were and as are necessary to yield a support to themselves and families; and that they and their co-owners, successors in interest of some of his brother's undivided portions in the said Rancho, are the only persons now in the actual occupation or possession of the lands of the said Rancho, and that no person whomsoever, except those deriving their title through the said Miguel Cordero by virtue of the grant to him from the Mexican Government, now use, occupy or claim the right to occupy any portion of the said lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces.

That all the interests in the said Rancho are still un-

divided, and that the said lands are held and used in common by all the owners thereof, and have been and so continued ever since the death of this deponent's father as aforesaid, in the month of March, 1851, to this day.

This deponent further states that he is now poor, and that he and his relatives aforesaid, residing on the said lands, are entirely dependent upon the products of their manual labor on the said lands and in their said business thereon, to support themselves and wives and children, and that although possessed as aforesaid of what is a perfect title under the Mexican law, none of the said owners have any title recognized by the laws of the United States, to any portion of their said lands or their homes thereon, and they are in imminent danger of being deprived of their said lands, and of having their business destroyed; and in such case, this deponent's family, and the wives and families of all those whose homes are on the said Rancho would be left without the means of support, thereby causing great hardship to himself and to all those owning the undivided interests as aforesaid in the said Rancho Las Cruces.

VICENTE CORDERO.

Signed by the deponent, and by him sworn to before me this 4thday of January, 1876, after the above had been carefully and fully read to him by me in Spanish, and the contents fully and correctly made known and explained to him by me.

U. YUDART,

[NOTARY SEAL.]

*Notary Public.*

### Deposition of Captain Burke.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }  
County of Santa Barbara, } ss.

Captain James W. Burke of the said county, aged 77

years, formerly Master of the Merchant Ship "Joseph Porter" of Liverpool, England, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

That he first came to California in the year 1820; that after leaving and returning in the year 1824, he remained and settled in California; and in the year 1828 he became a resident of the town of Santa Barbara, and his family has ever since been residents of what is now Santa Barbara County.

That this deponent became a member of the Ayuntamiento of Santa Barbara, under the Mexican Government, and held that office in the year 1837; that his first name, James, being in the Spanish language "Santiago," he was called and known as Santiago Burke by the inhabitants of California, and is the same person so mentioned in the official proceedings in the matter of granting title by the government in the said year, 1837, to Miguel Cordero for the Rancho Las Cruces, in Santa Barbara.

That previous to the last mentioned date, this deponent had known the said Miguel Cordero, and also the said Rancho, and previous to such date, and many times afterwards, this deponent has been at the said Rancho during the life time of the said Miguel Cordero; that the latter became sole owner of the said Rancho by virtue of the Mexican grant to him, and with his live stock occupied the lands, and had a fine vineyard and orchard thereon, fenced and cultivated; also a house in which he lived with his family, and in which house this deponent has slept and eaten at various times while the said Miguel was living there, as aforesaid.

That at a later period, to wit: in 1854 or 1855, this deponent stopped for a large portion of his time on the Rancho Salsipuedes, then belonging to his son-in-law, Mr. John C. Kays, and which is distant but a short ride (about

one-and-a-half hours,) from Las Cruces, and during the last mentioned two years this deponent frequently went to Las Cruces, and through the lands thereof; that the same were then occupied solely by the widow and children of the said Miguel Cordero, who had died some three or four years previously; that a few years after this the said widow died, and the children of the said Miguel continued to occupy the said Rancho as undivided, and they and their subsequent co-owners claiming through them as successors of the said Miguel Cordero still own and occupy the said Rancho, which still remains undivided.

That this deponent has never heard disputed or questioned the genuineness of the said Mexican grant or the ownership thereof by Miguel Cordero, or his actual and sole possession and occupation of the whole of the said Rancho, nor does he believe that any doubt or question thereof has ever arisen.

And this deponent further says, that he has not and never has had any interest or ownership in the said Rancho.

JAMES W. BURKE.

Sworn and subscribed before me this 18th day of January, 1876.

{ SEAL OF COUNTY COURT  
of Santa Barbara. }

H. P. STONE,  
*County Clerk.*  
By JOHN JANSSENS,  
*Deputy Clerk.*

### Deposition of Francisco de la Guerra.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }  
County of Santa Barbara. } ss.

Francisco de la Guerra; aged 57 years, formerly

Mayor of the city of Santa Barbara for about six years, being duly sworn, deposes and says :

That he was born in the said county of Santa Barbara, and, except about one year, has resided all his lifetime therein. That his father (El Capitan José de la Guerra y Noriega, formerly Habitado General of the two Californias under the dominion of Spain, and afterwards Commandante under the Mexican Government, with headquarters at Santa Barbara) was, from the year 1837 to the year 1858, owner of the Rancho San Julian, which adjoins the Rancho Las Cruces in Santa Barbara County; and during all that time, and also for many years afterwards, this deponent was in the habit of passing a great part of his time on the said Rancho San Julian in looking after his father's interests there, and his large stock of cattle, horses and sheep, and became well acquainted with all the neighboring Ranchos, including Las Cruces, frequently visiting and passing over all parts of the latter.

That he well knew Miguel Cordero in his lifetime, and the fact that he, the said Miguel, had received from the Mexican Government the grant to him of the said Rancho Las Cruces. That from the commencement of the time when this deponent used to frequent the said Rancho San Julian, the said Miguel Cordero was in the actual occupation of the said Las Cruces Rancho, and afterwards received juridical possession therof from the 1st Alcalde of Santa Barbara; and, of his own knowledge, this deponent knows and states that the said Miguel Cordero occupied, as sole owner, all the lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces, and had the same stocked with his cattle and horses, and resided on the same with his family until his death thereon in 1851; having on his said Rancho a dwelling house; also fields, a fruit orchard, garden, and large vineyard, all in cultivation and enclosed in fence.

That this deponent knew the widow and children of the said Miguel Cordero, and that these continued to reside in the said Ranch house of the said Miguel after the death of the latter; that the said widow died in the same house about 5 or 6 years after her said husband deceased; that the same place continued to be occupied by the children of the said Miguel, and is still in the occupation and possession and cultivation of some of the said children and their children.

And this deponent further says that the said widow and children (most of the latter being then minors) were entirely ignorant and uneducated, and lived in seclusion in their said Rancho, uninformed of, and indifferent to the transactions of the world at large, and the news thereof; that because of their want of understanding, and because the then recent and sudden death of the said Miguel Cordero had left the widow and children without any person capable of managing such affairs, their said grant was not presented before the Board of U. S. Land Commissioners, and the time limited by law for such presentation having expired, the opportunity was lost to them, and ever since they have been helpless in the matter.

That the said grant of Las Cruces was for two leagues embracing the lands from the Rancho Gaviota on the south to the Ranchos Santa Rosa and Najoqui on the north, and from the Rancho San Julian on the west, to the Cuchilla of the Najoqui in the north-east, and the rough mountains in the east; the whole of which lands so described were in the sole undisputed occupation and ownership of the said Miguel Cordero, and after his death, to the present time, have continued undivided and in the sole and undisputed ownership, possession, and occupation of the family and successors in interest of the said Miguel Cordero.

This deponent further says that he was and is well and thoroughly acquainted with every Mexican Land Grant in the county of Santa Barbara, and the land thereof; that this deponent, and as well his father and all the neighboring Rancho owners, and in fact the whole community of Santa Barbara, always recognized the said Mexican Grant to Miguel Cordero of the said Rancho Las Cruces, as genuine, complete and perfect, and equal in force and validity to any grant of lands in California ever made by the Mexican Government. And so well has this been understood and recognized that from the date of the said grant to this date it has been respected by all. And this deponent has never heard of any person having attempted to disturb the ownership or possession of those holding under the said Mexican Grant to Miguel Cordero, and has never heard of any person claiming, or pretending to claim, any adverse title thereto.

This deponent says he has not and never has had any interest or ownership in any part of the said Rancho Las Cruces.

FRAN'CO DE LA GUERRA.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 7th day of January, 1876.

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SEAL OF  
NOTARY PUBLIC,  
*Santa Barbara.* }  
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U. YUDART,  
*Notary Public.*

#### Deposition of Captain de la Guerra.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,  
*County of Santa Barbara,* } ss.

Antonio Maria de la Guerra; aged 50 years; born in

the State of California, and brother of Francisco de la Guerra, last above named—being duly sworn, deposes and says: He has held and filled, among others, the following public offices in California, since its acquisition by the United States, namely: Member of the Council of Santa Barbara, for two years; Mayor of the City of Santa Barbara for four years; State Senator in the Legislature of California, for two years; and was, for many years, member of Board of Supervisors of this County; and was also Captain (Company C, of 1st Battalion, Native Cavalry) in the U. S. Federal service, stationed in Arizona, in 1865,—66. That except about four years' absence from California, thirty years ago, and also his absence, as aforesaid, in 1865,—66, he has, all his life, been a resident of Santa Barbara.

That he was personally acquainted with Miguel Cordero, resident upon, and owner and occupant of, the Rancho Las Cruces, adjoining the Rancho San Julian, then belonging to this deponent's father, and well knew the said Las Cruces' Rancho itself; and was acquainted also with the wife and children of the said Miguel Cordero.

And this deponent says, that (exclusive of the period of his absence as aforesaid, and the circumstances during that time) all the facts and circumstances particularly set forth in the foregoing annexed deposition of his brother, Francisco de la Guerra, concerning the said Rancho Las Cruces, its ownership, occupation and possession by the said Miguel Cordero, and after his death, by his family, and successors in interest, to the present time; and concerning the title to the said Rancho Las Cruces, and all the matters and things in the said deposition by this deponent's said brother, set forth and mentioned, are within the personal knowledge of this deponent, and are by him affirmed hereby.

And this deponent says he does not own or claim, and

never has owned or claimed, any part of, or interest in,  
the said Rancho Las Cruces.

ANT'O MA. DE LA GUEARRA.

Sworn to before me, this tenth day of January, 1876.

{ SEAL OF  
NOTARY PUBLIC,  
*Santa Barbara.* }

U. YUDART,  
*Notary Public.*

**Deposition of Lewis T. Burton.**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, {  
County of Santa Barbara. } ss.

Lewis T. Burton, a native of the State of Tennessee,  
aged 67 years, and owner of the Rancho Jesus Maria, in  
the said county, distant about three hour's ride from the  
Rancho Las Cruces, below mentioned; being duly sworn,  
deposes and says:

That he came, in the year 1831, to what is now known as  
Santa Barbara County, and has been a resident thereof  
ever since that date.

That many years before the acquisition of California  
by the United States, and about thirty-five or thirty-six  
years ago, he became acquainted with the said Rancho  
Las Cruces; at that time (in the year 1840), Miguel  
Cordero was in the possession and occupation thereof,  
and had it stocked with his cattle, horses, &c., and lived  
there with his family; he had, immediately near his  
dwelling house, a vineyard and orchard, both in fence  
and under cultivation; and from the date last mentioned,  
and during five or six years next ensuing, this deponent  
was frequently at the said Rancho Las Cruces, and slept  
at the said house of the said Miguel Cordero, and ate  
there many times.

That a long time previously, and many years before  
the acquisition of California by the United States, as  
aforesaid, the said Miguel Cordero had become the owner  
of the said Rancho Las Cruces by grant thereof to him

from the government of Mexico—which fact was well known among the neighboring Ranch owners and by the public; and the said grant was universally recognized as genuine, and as valid as was any Mexican grant in California, and was always respected accordingly; which statement this deponent is confident would willingly be corroborated by all old residents of Santa Barbara, of those times, who may yet be living.

That this deponent never heard of any doubt of the genuineness and completeness of the grant, and in fact no one has ever questioned it. Nor has this deponent ever heard of any claim adverse thereto.

That Miguel Cordero died in possession of his said Rancho, and his widow and children possessed and occupied it until the death of the widow, and from that time the said children and their co-owners deriving their title through them as heirs of the said Miguel Cordero, have occupied and possessed the said Rancho in undivided interests.

That since the death of the said Miguel Cordero and of his said widow, this deponent has continued at short intervals to go to, and to pass through the said Rancho Las Cruces, and that in each and every such occasion he has found the family of the said Miguel Cordero still in the occupation thereof, and Vicente Cordero, son of the said Miguel, still living with his family at the site of the original Ranch house and dwelling, aforesaid, of his father, the said Miguel, and still cultivating the original vineyard and orchard of his father.

And this deponent says, he has not and never has had any interest or ownership in the said Rancho.

LEWIS T. BURTON.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 18th day of January, 1876.

{ SEAL OF NOTARY PUBLIC }  
Santa Barbara.

A. S. COOPER,  
Notary Public.

**Deposition of Gasper Orena.**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA,  
County of Santa Barbara. } ss.

Gasper Oreña, a native of Santander, in the Kingdom of Spain, aged 50 years, being duly sworn, deposes and says: That he is, and for about 33 years has been, a resident of Santa Barbara, in California. That he has been the owner of several Ranchos in that part of Santa Barbara County where is situated the Rancho Las Cruces, below mentioned (and among them, the Rancho Zaca, which he purchased in 1846,—the Rancho La Espada, being a subdivision of Punta de la Concepcion, and the Rancho San Julian), and that he spent much of his time on some of the above Ranchos and in the country contiguous to the said Rancho Las Cruces; that in or about the year 1842, he became acquainted with the said Rancho Las Cruces and with Miguel Cordero, who claimed, and was understood, to be the sole owner by virtue of a grant of the same to him from the Mexican Government, and who occupied the said Rancho Las Cruces, and resided thereon with his family; that when this deponent first saw the said Rancho Las Cruces, the said Miguel Cordero had thereon the dwelling house wherein he resided, as aforesaid, also an orchard and vineyard in bearing, and fenced fields in cultivation, corrals for stock, &c., &c., and which improvements had evidently then been made several years previously.

That the said Rancho continued to be owned and occupied by the said Miguel until his death in or about the year 1851; that from that time it remained undivided and in the sole occupation and possession of his widow and his children, and who resided in his late dwelling house, where the said widow died some 5 or 6 years after her husband's death; and after the death of his

widow, the said Rancho continued still undivided and in the sole occupation and possession of his said children and of their co-owners, successors in interest of the said Miguel Cordero, and has so continued to the present time. That the said vineyard and orchard are still in the possession of, and cultivation by, the said children of the said Miguel Cordero, particularly by his son, Vicente Cordero, who, with his wife and children, reside in the dwelling house of the said Vicente, adjoining the original dwelling, aforesaid, of his father, the said Miguel; that there are five or six other houses on the said Rancho Las Cruces used as dwellings by the said Cordero family and co-owners, also stables, corrals, fenced fields, fruit trees, &c., &c.

That ever since the death of the said Miguel Cordero, to the present time, this deponent has been in the habit of frequently going to and of passing over the lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces, in watching and looking after his stock, and in passing back and forth to and from his Ranchos, and has purchased cattle on the said Las Cruces from the sons of the said Miguel Cordero, and has assisted in making a road through that part of the said Las Cruces which adjoines the Rancho San Julian, and has had various other matters to attend to on the said Las Cruces during all the years of his acquaintance, as aforesaid, with that Rancho. And this deponent knows and says, that the continuous sole use and occupation of the said Las Cruces Rancho by the owners thereof, aforesaid, has been, and is actual, genuine and bona fide, and for the true and legitimate purposes of their business, namely: raising of live stock and wool growing, and in parts for cultivation; and that several of the owners in interest, and residents and various minor children and their mothers are dependant upon the said lands for their support. That the said

Rancho is understood to extend from the Rancho Gaviota to the Rancho Santa Rosa, and from the Rancho San Julian to the Rancho Najoqui on the northeast, and to and including a portion of the side of the Brushy and Rocky Mountains on the east, and to include two leagues of land.

And this deponent states that in the district of country wherein the said Rancho Las Cruces is situated, the Rancho owners and old residents of the times anterior to the occupation of California by the military forces of the United States, have always been unanimous in regarding the said Mexican grant to Miguel Cordero, of the Rancho Las Cruces, as a genuine and perfect one under the Mexican laws, and have always so treated the same; and the title of the said children and their co-owners as derived from the said grant, which has remained undisturbed and respected to this time.

And this deponent says he does not own, and never has owned or claimed, any interest in the said Rancho Las Cruces.

GASPER ORENA.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this 12th day of January, 1876.

{ SEAL OF  
NOTARY PUBLIC,  
*Santa Barbara.* }

U. YUDART,  
*Notary Public.*

#### Deposition of Augustin Janssens.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, }  
County of Santa Barbara. } ss.

Augustin Janssens, formerly Assessor of the said county, aged 59 years; a native of the city of Brussels (now in the Kingdom of Belgium), and now a citizen of the United States, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

That in the year 1834 he came to what is now the State of California, but was then territory of the Government of Mexico, and ever since that time has been a resident of California; and from the year 1841 to the present time, a resident of that portion of California now forming the county of Santa Barbara.

That in the year 1844, this deponent became the owner of, and commenced to reside upon the Rancho Los Lomas de la Purificacion, in this county, and continued to reside on his said Rancho with his family until about the year 1855, when he sold the said Rancho and removed to the town of Santa Barbara.

That during the whole of the period of his residence on his said Rancho, he was in the constant habit of visiting the Rancho Las Cruces, which was distant from his residence only about one hour's ride, and was well acquainted with the owner of the last named Rancho, Miguel Cordero, from the year 1844, until the death of the said Miguel in the spring of the year of 1851.

That during all that time, the said Miguel Cordero claimed to be the sole owner of the said Rancho Las Cruces, which was co-lindante with (bounded by) the lands of the Ranchos Gaviota, San Julian, Santa Rosa, and Najoqui, and understood to contain two leagues; and that the said Miguel Cordero used and occupied as his property, all the said lands of the said Rancho Las Cruces, and that no other person occupied or claimed any right to occupy any part of the said lands of Las Cruces; that the said Miguel Cordero had the same stocked with his cattle and horses; that he had also on the said Rancho a dwelling house wherein he resided with his family, also an orchard of fruit trees, a large vineyard, and fields in cultivation, and fenced; that the said Mignel Cordero died in his said residence in Las Cruces, and that he left a widow and nine children,

many of the latter being under the age of twenty-one years.

This deponent says that he remembers that in the autumn following the death of the said Miguel, he (deponent) was appointed appraiser of the personal property of the said Miguel, deceased, and went to Las Cruces and performed there his appointed duties, and on that occasion, and on many subsequent ones, he saw the widow and children of the said deceased there residing in the same house where the said Miguel Cordero had died. This deponent being well acquainted with all of the said family, knows that the said widow and children were uneducated, not being able to write or read (except a son Vicente); unacquainted with any language except Spanish, and wholly inexperienced in, and ignorant of, all business other than the raising of live stock on their Rancho; which was the reason why their title to their said Rancho Las Cruces was not presented by them before the Board of Land Commissioners.

That the widow of the said Miguel Cordero continued to reside with his children in his said dwelling house in Las Cruces until her death, which took place in the same house five or six years subsequent to her husband's decease: and after the death of their mother, the said children still continued to reside in the same house, until some years later, when they built at the same place adjoining the original house, another dwelling house, and in which one of the sons of the said Miguel Cordero, namely, Vicente Cordero and his wife and family still reside, and still have in possession and cultivation (besides other portions of the said lands of Las Cruces), the original orchard, vineyards, &c., of his father, Miguel Cordero.

That this deponent has held the office of County Assessor of this county for several terms, to wit: eight

years, consecutively, commencing in 1862; during all which time he annually assessed the lands of the Las Cruces, contained in the boundaries aforesaid, as the private property belonging to the family of Miguel Cordero, and his successors in interest, deriving title through him, and held by them in undivided interests or ownerships.

And this deponent further says that though he has resided as aforesaid in Santa Barbara, from a period long anterior to the acquisition of California by the United States, and has known the said Rancho Las Cruces and every part thereof, and all its owners, for over thirty-one years, and to the present time he has never heard of any claim to any of the lands thereof adverse to that of the said Miguel Cordero and his successors in interest, deriving title only from the grant to him from the Mexican Government; and that this deponent has never heard of any doubt or question as to the validity and good faith of the said grant.

And the sole ownership of the said lands by the family and successors in interest of the said Miguel Cordero has always been and is universally respected by the people of this county, and the said Rancho Las Cruces regarded as the private property of the said Cordero family and their co-owners deriving title as aforesaid from the Mexican Grant to the said Miguel Cordero.

And deponent states that he has no interest in any part of the said Las Cruces Rancho.

#### A. JANSSENS.

Subscribed by deponent, and sworn to by him, before me this 6th day of January, 1876.

{ SEAL OF COUNTY COURT,  
SANTA BARBARA. }

H. P. STONE,  
*County Clerk.*

By JOHN JANSSENS,  
*Deputy Clerk.*