CONSUMPTION ON THE FRONTIER: AN ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS
LEDGERS AND EARLY SAN DIEGO’S ECONOMY

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Consumption on the Frontier: An Analysis of Business Ledgers and Early San Diego's Economy

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Much like the rest of America during the mid-nineteenth-century, San Diego, California was in the midst of a transformative period that altered the landscape of the region and the course of the city’s history. Through an analysis of a set of primary sources, like store ledgers, local newspapers, and hide and tallow ship manifests and ledgers, this thesis examines how the consumption of materials goods is a reflection of economic, political, social, and cultural issues in San Diego from the 1840s to 1870. By statistically analyzing this set of primary sources, this paper addresses issues during this period such as how consumer patterns of consumption parallel the state of the local economy, the reflection of social and cultural values in consumer purchases, how certain factors influenced what types of goods consumers purchased, and the cultural Americanization of San Diegans. Additionally, issues such as race, gender, cultural dissemination, and the development of the local economy and business community are addressed as well.

Through the analysis of these primary sources, this thesis reveals that from the 1840s to 1870, prior to the Horton period of San Diego’s history, San Diego underwent a transformation that impacted specific social and cultural facets of material life of San Diego. As California experienced rapid economic, social, and cultural changes during the mid-nineteenth-century, San Diegans consumption of goods paralleled these changes and serve as a reflection how these events impacted the city on a micro-level. Through their consumption of imported material goods San Diegans became increasingly assimilated into the American mainstream as they obtained American industrial and consumer tastes. Through an analysis of patterns of consumption, this research will demonstrate that even peripheral regions of the American frontier were impacted by social, cultural, political, and economic changes that were occurring throughout the United States. Furthermore, through an analysis of consumer patterns of consumption it is possible to examine that ways in which consumerism in San Diego parallels and diverges from the historiography of nineteenth-century American consumerism. In addition to this, this research adds the historiography of San Diego by providing insight into the city’s economic progression and growth of its business community. Furthermore, this thesis provides historians with a better understanding of everyday consumerism on the California frontier during the mid-nineteenth-century.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

During the nineteenth-century a wave of progress, change, growth, and even a period of instability swept across America. However, it was not just large established urban cities on the East Coast that experienced these waves of change. Even some of the most remote parts of the Union would feel the ripples of these waves. In the middle part of the nineteenth-century, California and other parts of the prospective western frontier of the United States were in the midst of a process of transformation that would dramatically alter their landscape. One frontier town that emphasizes this transformative process is San Diego, California.

Much of San Diego’s early history has been well chronicled in numerous historical narratives, journal articles, and scholarly works. Most notably, a few of authors have examined how during the mid-nineteenth-century events such as the Mexican American War, the Gold Rush, the arrival of the American governance, and the Civil War impacted San Diego. Additionally, researchers have examined how Alonzo Horton’s New San Diego project and the arrival of the transcontinental railroad in the 1870s and 1880s led to changes in San Diego and propelled the city forward. Despite the attention that has been given to these periods of San Diego’s history there are still aspects of the city’s past that remain unexamined.

Most notably, historians have tended to overlook how the material world of San Diego changed during the mid-nineteenth century and how material aspects of San Diego serve as a reflection of events during this period of the city’s past. Instead, in the historiography of San Diego’s past, historians generally tend to point to the Horton period and the arrival of the transcontinental railroad as the point in which San Diego’s material world was altered and consumerism became engrained in the city. By examining material aspects of mid-nineteenth-century San Diego it is possible to not only gain a better understanding of this city’s past and its material world before the Horton period, but it also
allows us to see how material aspects of peripheral regions of the American frontier underwent changes and reflected broader national events that occurred during this period.

This thesis will argue that changes in consumer patterns of consumption and behavior in San Diego during the late-1840s to the mid-1860s are a reflection of larger political, economic, social, and regional and national cultural issues of the time. Utilizing a set of primary sources such as store ledgers, newspapers, and hide and tallow ledgers as windows, this thesis will examine changes in the consumption habits and behaviors of consumers. Specifically, this research will examine issues such as the parallel of consumption patterns to the state of the economy, how consumer patterns of consumption in San Diego parallel and diverge from broader national patterns of consumerism during the mid-nineteenth-century, and how different sub-groups of consumers engaged in the market. Through an analysis of these sources it is also possible to examine how changes in the patterns of material consumption resulted in changes in cultural self-definition and the cultural Americanization of San Diego during the mid-nineteenth-century.

A significant aspect of this research is that it taps into a segment of historical research that past historians have tended to not focus on their own research. On one hand, the analysis of political and economic issues in a given region is not new to historical research. On the other hand, few if any historians have analyzed these types of political and economic issues from a material culture vantage point. The utilization of primary sources that deal with material culture and consumption make it possible to look at these topics from new or different perspectives. This approach and methodology combined make this project creative because it taps into a discipline that is seldom used by historians and it utilizes a body of sources that historians might not consider using in their own research. Furthermore, this project enables us as historians to better our understanding of the past and demonstrates to other researchers that there are other original avenues of research that can prove to be very fruitful.

Despite its creative approach, this research has its limitations. One of the primary limitations of this study is that it is limited due to the availability of primary sources. Since this paper deals with a time period that is over one hundred and fifty years in the past, there naturally gaps in the primary sources. As other historians have encountered, this is partially a result of the documents or sources being disposed of, destroyed, damaged, or even being
misplaced and never seen again. Therefore, some arguments here may be supported by an analysis of just one document or ledger, which is due to the limitations created by the sources available. Another limitation faced is the sheer size of one particular ledger that is used in this paper’s analysis, a daybook from Ephraim W. Morse’s store in Old Town San Diego. In order to make E.W. Morse’s store ledger manageable for statistical analysis, a systematic sample of each month was taken so that an accurate representation of the entire ledger could be used for analysis. Therefore, this projects’ analysis of E.W. Morse’s daybook does not represent an analysis of the entire ledger, rather just a sample of it. Lastly, some of the topics that are analyzed and discussed within this thesis, such as the involvement of women in consumerism and what types of goods they frequently purchased, are areas of research that have not been fully addressed by other authors. Therefore, this research is somewhat limited in its attempts to analyze how certain topics fit into the broader national historiography of a given topic.

Even though this project is somewhat innovative in its approach and methodology it still builds upon a body of work by previous historians. When reviewing the historiography, there are three main categories of works that this project builds upon. One of the primary categories deals specifically with material culture. One particular historian whose work falls under this category is the renowned James Deetz. In his work, *In Small Things Forgotten: Archaeology of Early American Life* (1977), Deetz examines everyday items such as eating utensils, pottery, musical instruments, gravestones, and household architecture to provide the reader with a better understanding of American life during the colonial period. In many ways this research builds upon Deetz’s work and similarities can be drawn between the two. For instance, many of the same items that Deetz analyzed in his work, *In Small Things Forgotten*, are also analyzed in this research project. Some examples include household goods such as eating utensils, plates, furniture, and perishable items. Additionally, in his book, Deetz analyzes how external influences like European cultures influenced the lives of colonial Americans. Quite similarly, this paper will also examine to what degree external factors such as newspaper advertisements and or European and American cultures also influenced the material world and consumption patterns of the inhabitants of San Diego.

Due his background as an archaeologist, much of Deetz’s research is based on his work in the field. In contrast, much of this thesis’ research is based on archival research of
ledgers and books that describes and lists what individuals were buying and not what they left behind. In addition, this paper relies on statistical analysis much more than Deetz’s work. Although Deetz’s work does contain a small amount of rudimentary statistical analysis, this research represents a much more in-depth and complex form of statistical analysis than Deetz presents in his work. Lastly, in Deetz’s, *In Small Things Forgotten*, his primary focus is on the eastern parts of the United States in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, this work differs from Deetz’s by focusing on a different time and place.

Another set of scholarly works that this thesis builds upon are Robert Blair St. George’s, *Material Life in America, 1600-1860* (1988) and Mark P. Leone and Parker B. Potter, Jr.’s, *The Recovery of Meaning* (1988), each provide their reader with a collection of essays that cover a wide variety of topics and issues that deal with American material culture. Although these are two separate works they both cover many of the same topics, periods, and regions, and expand the field into new dimensions. In both works, the editors expand the scope of material culture studies by including works analyzing new topics as well as, works that re-examine old topics from new perspectives.

One of the primary goals of these two works is to educate the reader about the current trends within the field of material culture. The editors of each volume are able to put together a collection of essays that examine new issues in the field and also build upon previous works. For instance, both include essays that build upon James Deetz’s work on gravestones. Additionally, both books contain sections that deal with the interactions of working class and lower class people with the material world; both of which are aspects that this thesis strives to do as well. By building upon the works of others, this thesis will add to

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the historiography by examining a set of topics from a new avenue that few historians have
traveled down before.

Another trend that both of these works present is the rising importance of statistical
analysis in the field of material culture. A handful of essays in each of these books
implement statistical analysis into their investigations to a much more complex level than
that of Deetz’s investigation. By implementing some of the types and degrees of analyses
that are found in St. George’s and Leone and Potter’s books into this paper, this project will
demonstrate how higher degrees of statistical analysis are useful for historians in the analysis
of material culture issues and can provide them with rewarding data.

However, one of the limitations of these two works is that their essays primarily focus
on the Colonial and Southeastern regions of the United States. Additionally, their works do
not encompass an analysis of regions, like San Diego, that experienced repeated changes in
governance that undoubtedly effected traditional cultural changes. Considering that the
editors of the works and authors of the chapters are all anthropological archaeologists, there
is a natural limitation to the parameters that their works cover. It is not that their works fail
to address the regions outside of the Colonial and Southeastern regions of the America, rather
that these regions make up the spatial parameters of their research and writing. The analysis
at hand strives to fill this gap in the historiography by exploring aspects and regions that
those in the field of material culture have shied away from. Through the utilization of a
unique set of primary sources such as store ledgers and ship manifests, which are not found
in these two books, will add to the historiography by demonstrating that these types of
documents are valuable sources of information and can further the reaches of the field.

Aside from Deetz’s, In Small Things Forgotten, this project is heavily influenced by
Elizabeth Perkins’, “The Consumer Frontier: Household Consumption in Early Kentucky”
(1991). In her article, Perkins analyzes a set of primary sources such as newspaper articles,
personal correspondences, probate inventories, and store ledgers to examine economic issues
and issues of consumption on the Kentucky frontier during the eighteenth-century. 3
Through her discussion of consumption and economic issues Perkins is also able to delve

into other topics such as: the roles of consumers, the transmission of social and cultural values via material items, issues of race and socio-economic class on the frontier, and the degree to which newspaper advertisements played in influencing consumer’s behavior and choices.

Two of the main similarities between Perkins’ article and this research is that their theses and arguments center around the same issue and are supported by similar types of sources. At the heart of both papers is a desire to better understand the economic development of the frontier and how this impacted or led to changes in the everyday economic activities of those that lived on the frontier in late-eighteenth-century Kentucky and mid-nineteenth-century San Diego. Despite the fact that Perkins’ article deals with an entirely different time and place, this paper will build upon Perkins’ work by demonstrating that some of her findings, such as her discussions of external influences on people’s consumption habits, are applicable to a different frontier during a later period. This paper will also build upon Perkins’ work by examining a region that underwent three changes in governance during a short period of time, which would presumably disrupt traditional cultural patterns and changes.

This paper will also build upon Perkins’ work by analyzing similar types of sources like store ledgers and newspaper advertisements, which have also provided valuable information and insight into changes in consumer’s consumption habits and behaviors in San Diego during the mid-nineteenth-century. However, the way in which these types of sources will be used in this paper will slightly differ from Perkins’ methodology. In her article, Perkins diligently compiles and presents data from a variety of sources, including store ledgers and probate records. However, she fails to do anything more complex with her data than present percentages of what types of goods people owned.4 Even though this thesis’ methodology and approach will mirror Perkins’, the analysis at hand will utilize more elaborate statistical formulas and procedures to break down the body of data and see what useful conclusions it yields, an aspect that the author avoids in her article.

In addition to the works on material culture, this thesis will also build upon the historiography of consumerism in American during the nineteenth-century. Specifically, this

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4 Ibid., 498, 500, 501.
work will build upon Peter N. Stearns’, “Stages of Consumerism: Recent Work on the Issues of Periodization” (1997). In his work, Stearns divides American consumerism into two stages, the early-modern period and the modern period of consumerism, and examines aspects of each phase. According to Stearns, the early-modern period of American consumerism began in the eighteenth-century and lasted until the late-nineteenth-century and the modern period lasted from the late-nineteenth-century throughout the twentieth-century. Within these two periods, Stearns argues each of these phases of consumerism contained characteristics such as the types of goods that consumers purchased, the nature of consumer transactions, and aspects of commercial institutions that set it apart from the other.

One of the significant aspects of Stearns’ article to this research is his discussion of the early-modern period of consumerism and its parallels to mid-nineteenth-century San Diego. As Stearns discusses in his work, this period of consumerism was broadly defined by the consumption of goods for the home and family, the spread of stores, the establishment of innovative credit arrangements with customers, and the expansion of advertising and promotional activities. As this thesis will argue through its analysis of the primary sources, throughout the mid-nineteenth-century, consumerism in San Diego began to acquire each of these of these characteristics and by the 1860s the city was immersed in the early-modern period of consumerism.

However, one of the shortcomings of Stearns’ research is that does not analyze certain aspects of consumerism and it does not provide the reader a microanalysis of consumerism during the early-modern period of consumerism. Specifically, in his work the author does not address issues such as the roles or involvement of women and minorities in consumerism during the early-modern period, nor does he provide the reader with any sort of microanalysis that examines the specific types of goods consumers purchased, the quantities in which consumers purchased these goods, or the average amount of money that customers spent on products. One of the goals of this thesis is to build upon Stearns’ work and fill in these gaps in the historiography.

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Two other works that are of relevance to this thesis are James D. Delgado’s, *Gold Rush Ports: The Maritime Archaeology of San Francisco’s Waterfront*, and Ethel D. Hoover’s essay, “Retail Prices After 1850.” In *Gold Rush Ports*, Delgado examines the business practices of Mickle & Co., a commission merchant business in San Francisco during the 1850s. Through his research the author is able to provide the reader with an analysis of the specific types of items the merchant sold, how customer demand dictated what the company imported and sold, and the motivations behind consumer patterns of consumption. In her essay, “Retail Prices After 1850,” Hoover examines and statistically analyzes reports from the 1850s through the 1870s that shed light on family expenditures and consumer behaviors on the East Coast. Through her research, the author is able to examine what family expenditures were allocated towards and statistically what types of goods families allocated the most amount of money towards.

One of the significant aspects of both of these works is that they provide this research and the historiography with a microanalysis of what specific types of goods consumers were purchasing during the mid-nineteenth-century. As a result of this, it is possible to compare this research’s findings to Delgado and Hoover’s research to demonstrate that consumer patterns of consumption in San Diego were quite similar to broader national patterns of consumption during the period in question. Additionally, Hoover’s research is of great significance because it provides statistical findings to can be compared to the statistical findings of the three ledgers in this research and support the argument that patterns of consumption in San Diego were very similar to Hoover’s findings. However, one of the shortcomings of each of these works and in general the historiography of consumerism in the nineteenth-century, is that they fail to address the role of women and minorities in consumerism during the period in question. Instead the authors in their respective works only address and analyze the topic of consumerism from the perspective of families or by lumping all consumers together in one group. What this thesis strives to do is fill in this gap.

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in the historiography and demonstrate that it is possible to examine the roles of women in nineteenth-century consumerism.

The third category of the historiography that this thesis will build upon is works that focus on the local history of San Diego. One of the preeminent pieces of literature on San Diego’s history is William E. Smythe’s, *History of San Diego 1542-1908* (1908). Through his work, Smythe is able to cover the beginning years of San Diego’s history from its discovery by Spanish explorers in 1542, up to the present day events of 1908. One of the merits of *History of San Diego,* is that it covers a wide range of aspects of the city’s early history. Most relevant to this paper are Smythe’s discussions of the local economy, trading networks, the development of the local businesses community, connections with other cities and regions, imports and exports, and lists of those who lived in the city during this period.8

Perhaps most importantly, this narrative provides this thesis with a historical framework to incorporate into its own narrative and build around.

Despite the fact that the *History of San Diego* is able to cover many topics and events in the city’s early history, there are a few shortcomings in the narrative that this thesis will help to fill. For instance, Smythe does a good job of discussing the technicalities of the hide and tallow trade which took place during the early and middle parts of the nineteenth-century. However, the author fails to address issues like how the material world of the residents of San Diego benefitted from this trade network, what impact or influence it had on San Diegan’s consumption habits and patterns, and how it laid the groundwork for a tradition of consumerism in the city in the decades following the hide trade. These are some of the issues that will be addressed and analyzed in the pages that follow.

One piece of historical work on San Diego’s history that closely mirrors Smythe’s work is Richard F. Pourade’s series, *The History of San Diego* (1960-19671).9 However, since Pourade’s work on the history of San Diego consists of six volumes, it allows the author to be more detailed and inclusive compared to Smythe’s book. Therefore, *The History of San Diego,* provides this research with a narrative that describes aspects of life and events

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in the city during this period that are indispensable in painting a more vivid picture of the transitioning nature of San Diego’s economy and material realm during this time period.

One of the most notable shortcomings of Pourade’s work, and Smythe’s as well, is that they do not adequately address changes to the city’s economy or aspects of consumerism in their narratives. Aside from mentioning obvious facts about the names of business owners, their stores, and economic swings, Pourade fails to provide the degree of analysis that he assigns to other issues and topics in his volumes. With this in mind, one of the goals of this paper is to fill these gaps that these local historians have left in their own works. By paying due diligence to San Diego’s economy, consumerism, and material world during this transitional period, this research will add to our understanding of the consumption habits and patterns of this region and the changes to San Diego’s material world during the mid-nineteenth-century.

Aside from the fact that this project will focus on a set of topics that few historians have dealt with in their own research and writing, what makes this project truly innovative is its methodology. In order to support this thesis’ argument and findings, a hybrid of both historical and statistical methodologies were employed to uncover the everyday economic activities of the people of San Diego and the economic development of the frontier during this transitional period. Through this quantitative history approach, it is possible to make an argument that is of historical importance but is supported by historical research as well as statistical data.

One of the backbones of this research’s argument and findings is a set of primary sources that detail the bottom-up economic activities of San Diegans during the mid-nineteenth-century. The three sources that this research will focus on are: a ledger from a hide and tallow trading ship named the *Tasso* (1846-1847), a ledger from an unidentified store in San Diego (1855-1857), and E.W. Morse’s daybook from his Old Town store (1865), all of which are housed at the San Diego History Center’s Document Archive in Balboa Park. In each of these books of records the store keeper or employee would write down

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general information about a customer’s purchase at their business by recording the date, customer’s name, items purchased, quantity and cost of each item purchased, and the final total of the transaction. Therefore, what storeowners like E.W. Morse left us with was a very detailed record of their businesses and their clientele’s consumption habits.

One of the problems encountered in trying to utilize these sources for analysis was that they contain an abundance of information that simply could not be processed solely by reviewing them. Therefore, the only possible way of dissecting and analyzing these types of sources was to input them into a database for statistical analysis. By creating a data matrix in Microsoft Excel, it made it possible to effectively organize and analyze the data sets collected from each source. For each primary source a separate data matrix was created that consisted of two main elements, cases and variables. In each data matrix the rows were allocated for the data set’s cases, or entities that the data describes like the customer’s name and the specific quantity and cost of what they bought. Secondly, each column of the data matrix was designated for the data set’s variables, or specific attributes of those cases such as the types of goods that a customer could procure.\textsuperscript{11} By creating this type of a data matrix to record the information from each of the sources, it made it possible to accurately collect and tabulate each data set in its entirety. However, due to the sheer size and number of transactions in E.W. Morse’s daybook, a sample of each month was taken. By inputting the first four days and the last three days of each month into the data matrix, a one-week sample of every month was collected and tabulated in order to reduce the data set to more manageable sample.

One of the benefits of using Microsoft Excel to collect and tabulate the three data sets is that it enabled the data to be analyzed within the data matrix itself. Using Excel’s pre-programmed functions various statistical analyses were performed on each data set to prove or disprove this research’s argument and research questions. One of the most basic types of analysis performed on the data sets was to find the frequency of a variable or group of variables. Through the frequency, or number of times each value occurs in the data set, it was possible to see how many customers were purchasing certain items or goods.

Another basic form of statistical analysis that was used during this investigation was to find the sum of a given variable or group of variables. By finding the sum of a variable or set of variables, it is possible to see how much the customers (cases) were buying and spending as a group on any given item. Therefore, allowing this research to analyze what items or groups of items were purchased most frequently, or how much money in total was spent on specific goods or types of goods in each ledger. Aside from using Excel’s pre-programmed SUM Function, the sum can be found by using the summation notation formula

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{N} X_i^{12}
\]

Aside from these two types of statistical analysis, another commonly used type of analysis in this research was the arithmetic mean, or more commonly known the average. By finding the arithmetic mean, it is possible to discover certain trends in customers’ consumption habits as a whole throughout each ledger. This type of analysis proved very useful when analyzing how much the sample population spent on average, whether the consumers tended to buy more of one specific item compared to another, and whether the sample population spent more on specific items on average. Similarly to Excel’s SUM Function, there is also an AVERAGE Function that computes the average of a selected variable by using the equation

\[
\sum_{i=1}^{n} Y_i^{13}
\]

Another tool that was quite useful in this research’s statistical analysis was the usage of standard deviation. One of the shortcomings of using the arithmetic mean is that it tells us little about how close or far from the mean the variables are situated. Therefore, finding the standard deviation is of importance because it “describes the amount of dispersion or diversity of the data around the mean,” and can show if the arithmetic mean is an accurate representation of what the average actually is. Furthermore, finding the standard deviation of a set of variables can reveal multiple consumption habits or tendencies within a set of

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13 Hamilton, *Data Analysis for Social Scientists*, 68.
14 Floud, *An Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Historians*, 73.
variables. Much like the previous forms of analysis, it is possible to calculate the standard deviation of a data set in Excel by using the STDEV Function, which uses the formula

\[ s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(y_i - \bar{y})^2}{n-1}}. \]

Lastly, the most complex forms of statistical analysis that will be deployed to support this thesis’ argument and findings is the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, which is a measure of correlation that describes the linear relationship between two variables. When running the data set through the correlation formula you end up with a value between +1 and -1. According to Lawrence C. Hamilton, a +1 indicates a perfect positive relation, meaning that all data points lie on a line with a positive slope; and -1 indicates a perfect negative relation, meaning that all data points lie on a line with a negative slope.\(^{16}\) Therefore, the closer the number is to a perfect positive the more the two sets of variables are similar and related.

Utilizing the Correlation Coefficient formula, shown below, the r-squared value enables this research’s statistical analysis to show the exact percentage of variance in one variable that is responsible for the variation in the other variable that is being analyzed.

\[ r = \frac{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})(y_i - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2} \sqrt{\sum(y_i - \bar{y})^2}}. \]

Therefore, if there is a change in one variable in the analysis, which could reflect change in another variable, it could potentially create either a stronger or a weaker relationship between the two variables in question. One of the beneficial aspects of this form of analysis is that it provides this research with the ability to argue and support relationships or correlations between specific items or groups of items being purchased together.\(^{17}\)

Within the data matrices, there were two columns, one for quantity and one for price, designated for each variable or item. For example, in the data matrices there would be one column labeled “Pots: Quantity” and one labeled “Pots: Price.” When recording the data into the data matrices, one entry would be inputted in each of these columns when an individual purchased that specific item. For instance, if Henry D. Fitch purchased three pots for $4 and

\(^{15}\) Hamilton, *Data Analysis for Social Scientists*, 71-73.


\(^{17}\) Hamilton, *Data Analysis for Social Scientists*, 316. Both the CORREL and PEARSON Functions in Excel are identical and provide the same results.
two cups for $.75, that data would be entered into their respective “Quantity” and “Price” columns.

However, in order to utilize Excel’s correlation functions to analyze whether certain items or groups of items were purchased more frequently with other items or groups of items, the data set needed to be coded in order to provide an accurate result. When running the correlations in the data matrix, the correlations were only performed using the “Quantity” variable columns since this was the only variable of interest to this part of the investigation. By coding every entry of data in the “Quantity” variable columns of each data matrices with a number one (1), this enabled the correlations to be performed between two variables. For instance, in the case of Henry D. Fitch a “1” would replace the 3 in the “Pots Quantity” column and the 2 in the “Cups Quantity” column, and all other columns would remain untouched with no data entered.

Through a unique blend of primary sources and a quantitative methodology, this thesis presents an innovative approach to not only filling the gaps in the historiography of San Diego’s early history but also addressing this study’s research arguments. Through the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the three business ledgers, this thesis find that consumer patterns of consumption in San Diego clearly reflect broader regional and national events of the mid-nineteenth-century. In particular, this analysis will find that consumer patterns of consumption were dictated by the state of the local, regional, and national economies. During periods of economic growth consumer spending intensified as consumers spent more money on material goods and consumed large quantities of goods, and during economic downturns consumer spending was contracted. Additionally, this research will argue and find that national political events such as the incorporation of California into the Union and the Civil War either positively or negatively impacted consumerism in San Diego. Furthermore, this study will find that social and cultural events such as the influx of migrants into California and the rise of Anglos to the dominant social and cultural group in the region can be seen within the material records of consumerism in San Diego.

Lastly, this study will argue and find that certain aspects of consumerism in San Diego parallel and diverge from the historiography of American consumerism. Specifically, this thesis will find parallels between this research and Stearns’ characterization of the early-modern period of American consumerism, Delgado’s research on the consumption of
manufactured goods during the 1850s, and Hoover’s research on family expenditures. Additionally, this study will find that aspects such as the involvement of women in consumerism in San Diego diverge from other authors’ works on the topic. By building upon the historiography and filling in certain gaps, this thesis strives to provide historians and the general public with a better understanding of this community’s past. By utilizing a unique set of primary sources to support this research’s argument and findings, this paper will demonstrate that sources like store ledgers and trading ship ledgers are valuable sources of information for historical and material culture inquiries. Furthermore, through this research, historians and those in the field of material culture might be inspired to pursue new unexplored avenues of research as well.

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CHAPTER 2

THE HIDE TRADE AND SAN DIEGO’S EARLY ECONOMY

Unlike many other American frontier towns, San Diego, California, has a long and storied past that predates the arrival of the first American settlers or the state’s inclusion into the Union. Prior to the arrival of the first foreigner settlers, San Diego was inhabited by a handful of Native American tribes who resided throughout the region for thousands of years. Starting in 1542, these tribes experienced limited contact with foreigners who infrequently anchored off Point Loma’s shores to replenish their supplies.\(^{19}\) Aside from these encounters, the native inhabitants of San Diego had no regular contact with foreigners until almost two hundred years later.

However, events would drastically change the isolation that the native tribes experienced, and the entire landscape of California was on the verge of transformation. One of the key events in San Diego’s early history and the history of its economy began in 1768. In that year, the Spanish government authorized an expedition to Alta California in an attempt to stretch the reaches of its empire and gain a toehold in the regions north of Mexico. One of the primary ways of achieving this goal was by establishing institutions like presidios, which were fortified military bases, and missions throughout Alta California that would in effect be extensions of the Spanish Crown. In addition to exerting the government’s influence in this foreign land, the missions acted as an agent to convert the indigenous peoples to Christianity and make them loyal subjects of the Crown. In July of 1769, the Spanish plans came to fruition when the Spanish expedition, led by Father Junipero Serra, arrived in San Diego and established the first permanent Spanish settlements in Alta California. What this series of events led to was not only a period of transition in terms of

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who controlled the region of San Diego and Alta California, but a period of economic transition as well.

When the Spanish explorers and settlers arrived in the latter part of the eighteenth-century, they initially attempted to practice a self-sufficient lifestyle. From the outset, the settlers attempted to cultivate plots of land near the Mission and Presidio. In preparation for the expedition in 1769, Inspector-General Jose de Galvez ordered that supplies for planting fields, gardens, and orchards should be brought in order to be planted once the expeditions settled in San Diego. However, the first attempts by the Spanish settlers to establish a self-sufficient way of life failed. Due to weather conditions, the crops yielded little food in the first two years.  

With the relocation of the mission farther up the valley, the Fathers were able to gain some degree of stability in their cultivation of their crops, which consisted of grapes, peaches, pears, and olives.

Aside from these crops, another vital source of food that the Spanish settlers relied on were cattle and other types of livestock brought by Galvez. Prior to their departure from Mexico, Galvez ordered that 18 head of cattle be brought to Alta California. With untouched and open land surrounding the Spanish institutions in San Diego, the original cattle that were brought were able to multiply on their own. According to Father Francisco Palou, within three years the number of cattle multiplied to 40 head; this number continued to increase and by 1800 the number of cattle had reached 600. Not only were the cattle and other livestock used for food consumption, but the cattle eventually became a business operation for the priests. With such a large surplus of cattle the priests slaughtered cattle for their hide and tallow, which were then sold to ships coming to the local port and the choicest beef was dried and eaten.

Additionally, another aspect that made the San Diego Mission and Presidio self-sufficient was the presence of workshops on the mission grounds. Surrounding the mission’s

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21 Ibid., 197-198.
23 Smythe, History of San Diego 1542-1908, 69-70.
pamphlet were several small shops that were occupied by mechanics and artisans like carpenters, blacksmiths, and hide and tallow processors.\textsuperscript{24} By having these shops within the mission’s grounds, the Fathers were able to produce everything that was essential to the operation of the mission and they were able to provide for those within its walls.

However, the mission did not operate solely under a subsistence or self-sufficient way of life. In the early years of Spain’s presence in San Diego, the Mission and Presidio struggled to fulfill the needs of the early settlers. As a result, they relied upon yearly shipments of supplies from Mexico that also included essential military supplies. By the end of the Spanish period of rule in Alta California and San Diego, the missions were more than able to provide the essentials they needed to thrive. The Mission diverged from their self-sufficient ways by rendering the cowhides and tallow from their surplus cattle and trading these elements to the masters of the ships that were coming to San Diego’s port. Another mode of commerce that the Fathers and priests took part in was the profitable fur trade. During this period, the coastal waters off of San Diego and California were plentiful with fur-bearing animals like sea otters that were coveted by foreigners and proved to be a successful venture for the Mission.\textsuperscript{25}

Once again though, San Diego and the surrounding region would be thrust into another wave of transformation as a result of Mexico’s drive for independence from the Spanish Crown. As a result of this independence movement, which lasted roughly ten years, Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, and once again Alta California would be dominated by a new entity. Under the period of Mexican rule, 1821-1848, San Diego and the Mission and Presidio would go through stages of decline and neglect that demonstrated the Mexican government’s mentality towards Alta California. Despite this, the Mission was still able to continue its tradition of cultivating its lands for the purpose of growing crops. However, as Smythe and Francis have pointed out in their works, agriculture never acquired any importance beyond a mere subsistence level during the Spanish and Mexican periods of rule.\textsuperscript{26} With the relatively low number of individuals in San Diego during this time there was

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 63.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 63, 69-70.
\textsuperscript{26} Jessie Davies Francis, \textit{Chiefly Economic}, vol. 1 of \textit{An Economic and Social History of Mexican}
no need to produce agricultural products on a large scale for their own consumption or even exportation to other regions. As Jessie Davies Francis points out, “They were, rather, men without opportunity-men without markets or accessibility to markets.”

Davies goes on to note how there was no “great natural distributory system,” like the streams and rivers that linked those in the Ohio country to periphery markets. One could argue that this aspect hindered the development or potential to develop San Diego’s economy during these two periods. The fact that there were no periphery markets aside from the urban regions of Mexico meant that there were no markets to import goods to. Secondly, up until the 1830s, there were no reliable means of transporting goods to and from the San Diego region. Aside from the supply ships sent from Mexico that infrequently brought supplies for the missionaries and army, there were no established trading ships that routinely ported in Alta California.

In contrast, one element of San Diego’s economy that did experience change under Mexican rule was the hide and tallow trade. One of the factors that contributed to this change was issuance of land grants. Prior to this period, the Spanish government was unwilling to issue land grants in the region of Alta California to private individuals. Under the Mexican flag though, these restrictions were eased, and it became even more lax when the missions were secularized in 1834-1835. As a result, more private individuals were able to obtain land and utilize them for cattle rearing. In turn, the number of head of cattle in the San Diego region increased even more rapidly than it had in the prior years.

Secondly, during the period of Spanish rule in San Diego, the raising and trading of cattle hides and tallow were never fully developed as an element of the local economy. Instead it appears as though it was more of an opportunistic trade with ships that infrequently came to San Diego’s port in Point Loma. Additionally, the Spanish administration had imposed strict laws and regulations that limited the amount of trade that foreigners could conduct. As Richard Henry Dana discusses, under the Mexican regime, the government had a very casual approach towards governing in California. Dana notes that the government of


27 Ibid., 572.

28 Ibid., 572.
California was an “arbitrary democracy; having no common law, and no judiciary.”29 This passive approach towards governing and enforcement of laws translated to the Mexican regime’s loosening of laws that enabled more trade to be conducted California. Which in turn benefited San Diego’s cattle sector and introduced one of the first true forms of exportation the region had seen. Unlike its counterpart, the fur trade began to see a major decline in San Diego during the Mexican period due to the local waters being over hunted and depleted of sea otters.30

As time progressed though, a series of events would take place that would dramatically alter the course of Alta California and the history of San Diego. Inspired by its idea of Manifest Destiny, the United States was looking towards the west where it felt it was destined and compelled to expand its territorial claim and push its boundaries beyond the Great Planes. Sparked by the United States’ annexation of Texas in 1845, the country engaged in war with Mexico from 1846 to 1848. Following the conclusion of the war in 1848 with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico ceded to the United States a handful of its territories that included Alta California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. For the second time in less than thirty years, the territory of Alta California would fly a new flag.

Even though California’s acceptance into the Union in 1850 would seemingly signal the beginning of its rise to prominence and economic progression, the seeds of the city’s future development were sown during the previous administration. In particular, the development of the city’s economy can be traced to this era. One of the first signs of a developing economy, or a shift from self-sufficient living, in San Diego can be traced directly to the burgeoning number of cattle in the region and the trading of their hides and tallow. With the Mexican government’s willingness to ease regulations that would allow foreigners to enter Alta California, the territory was essentially opened up for the reaping. Taking advantage of these factors, in 1823, John Begg and Company, an English trading firm, sent the first hide ship, the Sachem, to San Diego to engage in trade for hides and


30 Pourade, The Silver Dons vol. 3 of The History of San Diego, 50.
tallow. Shortly after other merchants and traders such as Bryant & Sturgis, Trot, Bumstead & Sons, and W.B. Sweet also became interested in this trade with the missions and eventually sent their own ships around the South American continent to capitalize on this trade.31

Although this type of trade might seem insignificant, it filled a void in the global market for a variety of goods that were in high demand and served as San Diego’s first true broad based economic engine. Due to a global population increase in the western world during the early to mid-nineteenth-century, a wide range of products were required to accommodate this change. Leather products used for clothing, such as shoes, boots, and coats, were in high demand by those on the East Coast of the United States and England. Additionally, tallow, which was rendered from the fat of the cattle, was utilized to make products such as soap, candles, and lubricants for industrial machinery.

Before these products could be made, the cowhides and tallow had to be processed and treated before they were ready for shipment to East Coast or England. This process usually began between July and October of each year when the cattle were slaughtered. After being slaughtered, the best portions of the beef were removed from the animal, left to dry, and then stored for consumption at a later time. Then the skin of the cattle, or hide, was removed from the carcasses and taken to the missions for processing. At the missions the hides were immersed for two to four days in large vats of brine to prevent insects from attacking them. After a few days the hides were removed from the brine vats, stretched out and staked to the ground, and dried to prevent them from shrinking. When they were sufficiently dry, the hides would then be beaten with flail to remove any dirt or debris, folded, and then stored until traders arrived. 32

During the act of removing the beef and hide from the cattle’s carcass, the tallow, or fat of the cattle, was also removed and taken to the missions as well. At the missions, the tallow was put into large pots to be tried out and then poured into large bags, made of hides, to be cooled. Once it had cooled sufficiently, the tallow was separated according to its

quality and stored until it was ready to be shipped. Unlike the cowhides, the tallow was generally sent to Mexico and South American nations like Peru where it was processed into its final product.33

One of the interesting aspects of this trade is the crucial role that San Diego played in its network. In order to facilitate the trade, merchants and trading companies like Bryant & Sturgis and McCullough, Hartnell & Company established storage depots along the coast. At these depots, the company would collect hides and store them until their ships arrived to bring them back to New England. One aspect that makes this unique is that San Diego not only played a role as an exporter of goods in this trading network, but it also filled a necessary role that was integral to the eventual success of the hide trade.

In the early years of the hide and tallow trade, the majority of the trading was done solely between the missions and these New England merchants. In return for the cowhides and tallow that they provided to companies like Begg and Company and Bryant & Sturgis, the missions received “products of civilization, such as clothing, farming implements, musical instruments of all kinds, kitchen utensils, a variety of food products to relieve the monotony of daily life, such as coffee, tea, cocoa, sugar, and rice, and the gold and silver threads so desired for embroidery and ornaments, and needles and buttons,” that the they would use or keep for their own shops.34 As a result of this trading network, the missions began to drift away from their subsistence and self-sufficient lifestyles and became connected to global trading networks. Although they did not engage in this trade for profit by receiving monetary returns, they did receive products in return for their work and labor.

By the 1830s, the San Diego Mission and Presidio were in the midst of a state of decline. In his work, Two Years Before the Mast, Richard Henry Dana touches upon this in his description of his visit to San Diego in the 1830s. In his writing Dana describes how the mission and presidio were in “ruinous” condition and how parts of the presidio’s adobe walls had been removed for the construction of new buildings in Old Town. Dana goes on further to describe the mission as a place where “the stillness of death reigned.”35

33 Dallas, “The Hide and Tallow Trade in Alta California,” 71-73.
34 Pourade, Time of the Bells, 185.
35 Dana, Two Years Before the Mast, 113.
the mission’s ability to participate in the hide and tallow trade was further hindered by initiatives by the Mexican administration. What furthered the decline of the Mission and Presidio was the distribution of land grants by the Mexican government. With the acts of secularization in 1833 to 1834, the Mexican government began to authorize land grants to individuals on tracts of land that were formally owned by the missions. In effect, this handicapped the San Diego Mission’s ability to raise their cattle and participate in the hide and tallow trade, which opened the door for Californios to embrace the hide trade. As a result, by 1839, Pourade notes that the hide trade had shifted “entirely away from the missions to the ranches.”

As Jessie Davies Francis notes in, *An Economic and Social History of California*, with the new partnership of the merchants and rancheros, the hide and tallow trade found new life and experienced a boom as a result. According to the author from the 1820s to the 1830s there were 18 to 20 traders arriving annually in California for the sole purpose of the hide trade. However, from the 1830s until 1846, there were between 20 and 30 traders arriving in California yearly. As the author notes, “therefore, the great bulk of the trade of 1840-47 was not with the missionaries, but with the rancheros.” What further fueled the boom in the hide trade was the fact that the Mexican government encouraged landowners to engage in trade, in particular the hide and tallow trade.

In order for these New England merchants to conduct the hide and tallow trade under a system of bartering in San Diego, they needed to obtain a variety of goods that would appeal to their clients and encourage their trading partners in San Diego to do business with them. One set of sources that provides us with insight into the preparations that were undertaken before these trade ships left their home ports is a set of invoices from the merchant company, William Appleton & Company, and their ship the *Barnstable*. Prior to their voyages to San Diego, Appleton & Co. went on a shopping spree in Boston from January 1842 to July 1842, collecting a wide range of goods to supply their ships. Some of

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37 Francis, *An Economic and Social History of Mexican California (1822-1846)*, 530.
38 Dallas, “The Hide and Tallow Trade in Alta California,” 24.
these invoices do not specify which ship the goods were destined for, however, the ship name *Barnstable* appears on a handful of the invoices. One possible explanation for the invoices is that the company was purchasing items to supply the ship itself and its crew. Another possibility is that the goods that were purchased were used for the bartering of hides and tallow while in San Diego. When examining the types of goods that were procured by the company the latter appears to the most plausible.

Some items that are included in the invoices, such as food items, paint, paintbrushes, brooms, and wood boards are all items that could be used onboard the ship and for the upkeep of the ship. However, there is a very large portion of these 27 invoices that standout as items that would have no use for a ship or its crew. For instance, one invoice from January 18th lists five cases of shutting that were purchased for over $400, and on February 2nd, over $900 worth of fancy printed cloths that were purchased by the company as well. On two separate occasions $170 worth of looking glass and picture frames were purchased. Also, on February 7th, four sets of billiards balls and multiple sets of violin strings were purchased, and on a separate occasion a handful of guitars and violins were obtained. In addition to all of these, there are hundreds of entries in Appleton & Co.’s invoices for items like tools, plates, cups, teakettles, furniture, and personal items like soap, combs, and cologne.40

Considering that there was only one store in the San Diego region for many years, which was run by the missionaries at the San Diego Mission, San Diegans were able to take advantage of this trade and gain access to a wide variety of goods and products that simply were not available in their local market. This idea is supported through an analysis of a ledger from the hide ship *Tasso*. One of 35 hide ships that traveled the California coastline during the era of the hide trade, the *Tasso* repeatedly made stops in San Diego. From 1841 to 1843, 1845, and 1847, the *Tasso* ported off of the shores of Point Loma for the sole purpose of collecting hides and tallow and engaging in commerce with the local residents.41 As part

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40 Ibid., 1-32.

41 Smythe, *History of San Diego: 1542-1908*, 104. For a full list of the hide ships that made port in San Diego from 1824-1848, see chart on page 104.
of their interactions and trade with the local inhabitants, the captain and crew of the ship kept a detailed log, or ledger, of their transactions with San Diegans. In this ledger, they note the names of their customers or trading partners, what items the customers bought, how much each item cost, the total amount of their purchase, and if they came about these goods as a result of bartering hide or tallow. With this information, this research is able to quantify this data and examine multiple aspects of this trade. In particular, through a statistical analysis of this data, it is possible to examine what San Diegans were obtaining from these trading ships, what their purchases reflect, and how they were able to circumvent the limitations of their local market and obtain a variety of goods that were desirable but not available locally.

The *Tasso*’s ledger spans from May 1, 1846 to June 22, 1847; rather than spanning the entire year, from 1846-1847, the ledger only covers May through July of 1846, and April through June of 1847. Although this might seem quite unusual, it was a common practice for hide ships to port in a harbor for a period of time and then move up or down the coast to collect more hides and tallow. However, during the ships time in San Diego the ship’s crew recorded 74 separate entries that detail their transactions with San Diegans. Of these 74 entries in the ledger, the total amount of each transaction ranged from $1.00 to $156.00, and combined these 74 entries totaled $2,364.87. On average the ship’s clientele consumed roughly $32.00 worth of goods.\(^{42}\) What this reveals to us is that the variables, or the amount that people spent, were distributed over a larger range rather than being grouped closely to the average (see Table 1 for dispersion of Total Amount Spent by the customers).

However, not all of the goods in the ledger were purchased with cash. When examining each of the 74 entries, a few of the entries indicate that the items were obtained by the customer as a result of bartering. For instance, on May 15, 1846, there is an entry in the ledger that records the purchase of a handful of goods but instead of recording the customer’s name, they wrote the word “Barter,” and at the end of the entry there is a note, “Paid with: 2 Hides $7, Cash $3.”\(^{43}\) However, in conversations with other local historians, they have noted

\(^{42}\) *Tasso* Ledger, Tom Ham Collection 1846-1847, 3-4, 19. In Smythe’s, *History of San Diego*, he notes that the *Tasso* was in San Diego in 1841-1843, 1845, and 1847. However, the presence of this source reveals that the ship was in fact in San Diego in 1846 as well.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., May 15, 1846.
Table 1. Dispersion of Total Amount Spent By Customers of Tasso Ledger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Number of Entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1-21</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$21-41</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$41-61</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$61-81</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$81-101</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$101-121</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$121-141</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$141-161</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that it in their research on hide ledgers it was common that the bartering of hides and tallow for goods was far more prevalent than people simply purchasing goods from the ship.\textsuperscript{44}

As Richard Henry Dana discusses in, \textit{Two Years Before the Mast}, at this point in time, California had no established currency. There was “no credit system, no banks, and no way of investing money but in cattle. They have no circulating medium but silver and hides – which sailors call ‘California bank notes.”\textsuperscript{45} However, cowhides did not simply serve as a form of circulating medium, instead, they acted as a universal equivalent. According to Karl Marx, a universal equivalent is an object that all other commodities are measured against, making “it the material in which they uniformly express their value.”\textsuperscript{46} Therefore, the value that a “California bank note” fetched on the market influenced the value of other commodities. Not only were cowhides the foundation of the local and regional economy, but hides also played a significant role in influencing the day-to-day fluctuations of the economy.

As the Tasso’s ledger reveals, even though on the surface this trade might appear to indicate the presence of a two divergent economic practices, bartering and capitalism, being

\textsuperscript{44} Stephen Van Wormer and Susan Walter are two local historians with whom I have consulted with during this project and who are mentioned. Although they do not have any published work on the subject, they have many years of work with hide and tallow ledgers and are extremely knowledgeable on the subject.

\textsuperscript{45} Dana, \textit{Two Years Before the Mast}, 77.

conducted simultaneously in San Diego during this period, this is not the case. Despite the fact that bartering and capitalism appear to be two distinct and separate types of economic practices, they are in fact similar and classified together. One of the key tenets of capitalism is the desire and motivation to maximize one’s profits, which is also a primary objective of bartering.\footnote{Dr. Seth Mallios, e-mail message to author, December 1, 2010.} Even though on the surface, bartering and capitalism might appear to be two entirely different systems, they both are in fact considered capitalism. Therefore, rather than two opposing economic systems being present, the \textit{Tasso’s} ledger demonstrates that capitalism was the sole system being employed in San Diego during this period.

However, a majority of the entries into the \textit{Tasso} ledger appear to be outright purchases of goods from the ship, rather than the bartering of goods for hides. So rather than being a trading system solely based on obtaining goods, hides and tallow, it was a trade that served a commercial purpose as well by making a profit from selling goods to San Diegans. Additionally, the mere presence of this ledger serves as an indicator that this trade served was also a capitalistic, profit seeking enterprise. The whole premise of traveling halfway across the globe to obtain goods for cheap prices and then turning around and selling these goods for a profit is what we would consider to be capitalism at work. What this reveals to us is that this trade was at times based on a system of barter as well as capitalism. Considering that this trade was the heart and soul of the local economy up until the transfer of power to the United States, we are presented with what could be coined as a hybrid economy, where there are elements of both subsistence and capitalistic systems simultaneously at work.

In the process of collecting and tabulating the data from the source, the data was separated into nine different categories: Kitchen (items like pots, pans, eating utensils, plates, and cups), Furniture (chairs, candles, oil/wicking, mirrors, and blankets), Clothing (shirts, pants, hats, shoes, coats, belts, and jewelry), Leisure (books, writing materials, stationary, musical instruments, and playing cards), Textiles and Sewing Accessories (thread, needles, and fabrics like silk, calico, and flannel), Food and Beverages (coffee, tea, sugar, spices, grains, bread, and meat), Household Items (matches, pocket knives, scissors, buckets/pails, and brooms), Personal Items (brushes/combs, chamber pots, handkerchiefs, medicine, and
shaving cream), and lastly Tools and Materials (screws/nails, paint brushes, lumber, metal piping, woodworking tools, and other types of tools).48

When examining the data set broadly, from a categorical standpoint, it becomes clear that people consumed a wide range of goods from the Tasso and that certain categories of goods were consumed more frequently than others. By a close margin the most frequently purchased category of items in the Tasso’s ledger was the Kitchen group, which was included in 47% of the ledger’s 74 transactions. The Tools & Materials group was the second most frequently purchased group, which was included in 40% of the transactions (see Table 2).49

### Table 2. Tasso Ledger: Percentage of Transactions that Included Each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage of Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools &amp; Materials</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 indicates, there is a characteristic that is shared by the top five most frequently purchased categories. Items from each these categories are all products that would be considered essential items, rather than luxury or discretionary items. What the Tasso’s ledger provides us with is a window into the nature of people’s consumption from this

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48 For a complete list of items in each category see Appendix.

49 Tasso Ledger, Tom Ham Collection 1846-1847, passim.
specific hide ship. Items such as cups, woodworking tools, screws and nails, shoes, and grain are all goods that were frequently purchased by the Tasso’s clientele. Rather than purchasing luxury items that were not practical or essential to their daily lives, a majority of the Tasso’s customers opted to purchase items that focused on their basic necessities and would have been used on a daily basis. Items such as bowls and grain were essential to their survival: boots, fabric, and sewing accessories provided clothing on their backs; and tools, screws, and nails were necessary goods for developing their land and ranches. Furthermore, what the ledger reveals is that the ship’s customers lived simple lives and the material world around them consisted of practical items that were essential to their daily lives. Through the conscious or unconscious use of these types of items, San Diegans were creating their own social and cultural place in San Diego.

Aside from this, the ledger also sheds light on San Diegans’ affinity for manufactured goods from the East Coast and New England (see Table 3). Among the manufactured goods that San Diegans frequently purchased were items like bowls, cups, coffee and tea pots, locks, tools, screws and nails, and brushes. More than anything, what this intriguing aspect of the ledger sheds light on is the complexity of San Diego’s economy during this period. Aside from the small shops that were located at the mission, none of the works on the city’s early history mention any other shops or manufacturers within the region that would produce these types of goods.

This evidence suggests that San Diegan’s relied upon these hide ships to provide them with manufactured goods due to the fact that they simply were not produced within the region or Alta California, and would not have been available within their local market. Rather than being an isolated case, Christopher Clark discusses how he found this trend to be true in his own research. In his article, “Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the Connecticut Valley, 1800-1860,” Clark discusses how this trend of obtaining goods from outside markets was present throughout America during this period. Clark notes that the “outside market was resorted to mainly to acquire necessities that were not available inside the region – such as iron, sugar, salt, and rum – or, in certain instances, to purchase luxury items that similarly could not be produced locally.”50

50 Christopher Clark, “Household Economy, Market Exchange and the Rise of Capitalism in the
Table 3. *Tasso* Ledger: Number of Transactions Including the Most Commonly Purchased Manufactured Items from Top Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kitchen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bowls</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coffee/Tea Equip.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cups</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Woodworking Tools</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screws/Nails</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Locks</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Items</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brushes/Combs</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chamber Pots</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handkerchiefs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sewing Access</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calico</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cloth</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Total of 75 entries in the *Tasso* ledger.*

Additionally, this research’s finding that San Diegans consumed manufactured goods from the hide ships is in agreement with other authors’ works on consumption during the mid-nineteenth-century. In his work, “Stages of Consumerism,” Peter N. Stearns discusses the characteristics of the early-modern period of consumerism. According to Stearns, the early-modern period of consumerism, which lasted from the eighteenth-century to the late-nineteenth-century, was broadly characterized by the spread of stores, credit arrangements with businesses, and the expansion of advertisements and promotional activities.

Furthermore, this period of consumerism was defined by consumers purchasing goods for their homes and families, specifically, manufactured goods, clothing, and other goods used in the home sphere. Whereas the modern period of consumerism, which began in the late-nineteenth-century and lasted throughout the twentieth-century, was characterized by the

proliferation of department stores, more elaborate and aesthetically appealing advertisements, the involvement of children in consumerism, and the consumption of a wider variety of goods that included commercialized leisure forms and new reading matter.\textsuperscript{51} Despite the fact that during the 1840s San Diego did not contain certain characteristics of the early-modern period of consumerism, such as advertisements and the spread of stores, the region did embody some of the characteristics of this period. Most notably, as the analysis of the Tasso ledger has revealed, the consumption habits of San Diegans during the 1840s falls in line with Stearns’ discussion of the types of goods that shoppers frequently purchased during the early-modern period of consumerism.

Additionally, Douglas Monroy’s research on the consumption of manufactured goods is also in agreement with this study’s analysis of the consumption of these types of goods from the \textit{Tasso}. In, \textit{Thrown Among Strangers}, Monroy discusses how Californios produced hides and tallow to “exchange for manufactured consumer goods they so powerfully desired,” specifically goods such as cloth, silk, lace, tableware, furniture, and other domestic types of goods.\textsuperscript{52} All of which were goods that were frequently obtained from the \textit{Tasso}. On one hand, this thesis’ quantitative research is in agreement with Monroy’s qualitative research that Californios and San Diegans primarily consumed manufactured goods from hide ships like the \textit{Tasso}. On the other hand, this study slightly differs from Monroy’s research because the former’s statistical analysis has revealed that other items such as tools, personal items, and food were highly desirable and frequently consumed by San Diegans as well.

What is significant about Stearns and Monroy’s research is that they note that during the early-modern period, consumerism primarily focused on the consumption of not only manufactured goods but also items used primarily in the home sphere. As this research has demonstrated (Tables 2 and 3), a vast majority of San Diegans transactions with the \textit{Tasso} entailed goods that were used in the home sphere. Not only does this reveal that during this period in San Diego, consumer culture contained characteristics of the early-modern period


of consumerism; but also that items used within the domestic sphere were essential acquisitions for consumers due to the emphasis on this sphere in frontier life.

Through their production of hides and tallow, and connections with the New England merchants and traders, San Diegans were given access to goods that were produced in far-off lands. Despite the geographical isolation of the city, markets and producers of manufactured goods from the East Coast were much closer than they would have been without this trade. Even though the internal economy and modes of production were minimal, San Diegans were able to branch out and establish ties with more developed markets in order to provide them with access to manufactured goods and materials.

However, this was not the first time that maritime commerce had been introduced to California for the purpose of trade. In “Ships and Sherds: Ceramics at the San Diego Presidio,” Jean Krase examines how far back as the late-eighteenth-century the Spanish government exchanged goods with those in California for sea otter and seal skins. During this era, the Spanish galleons frequently sailed to the Philippines and engaged in trade, bringing back items such as Chinese silk, gilt china, and other porcelain ware.53 A few times each year Spanish ships set sail for Alta California bringing with them supplies for the missions and presidios in Alta California. In addition to supplying the San Diego Mission and Presidio with the necessities that they needed, they engaged in trade with them. In exchange for their sea otter and seal skins, the Mission and Presidio received luxurious items from Mexico and the Far East, like pewter plates, copper covers, crystal glasses, glazed earthenware, Spanish liquor, and Chinese fabrics.54 All of which were goods that were not available in California during this period. This initial trade between the Spanish government and those in Alta California laid the foundation for a maritime commerce tradition in the region that was continued by the American traders and hide ships like the Tasso. However, instead of seal and otter skins being the foundation of the trade, hides and tallow became the new foundation and were traded for items that were highly desirable but unavailable to the inhabitants of Alta California.


54 Ibid., passim.
Much like modern day shoppers, San Diegans of this period were more apt to buy or trade for more than just one item from the trading ship. Although, some customers did leave with just one or two items, the vast majority of the ship’s customer base acquired multiple items per transaction. Due to the fact that hide ships like the *Tasso* would only port in San Diego’s harbor once a year, it would be logical for the ship’s customers to purchase multiple items. The question arises though, what types of items were they purchasing together most frequently?

By statistically analyzing the correlations between specific types of items within the ledger is it possible to uncover what types of goods customers purchased together most frequently. At first, each of the categories were compared and analyzed against one another to find which categories had the strongest relationship, or most significant correlation. Then the top three significant relationships were further analyzed to see which specific items in those categories had the most significant relationship with the items in the other category, or which items were purchased most frequently together. When analyzing the correlations between the categories using an Alpha Level of .01, the three most significant relationships between the categories of items were: Kitchen vs. Clothing, Leisure Items vs. Personal Items, and Textiles and Sewing Accessories vs. Household Items.56

When analyzing the correlations of the specific items in these categories to one another, the results were rather surprising. In the case of the relationship between Kitchen and Clothing items, there were significant relationships between 34 pairings of items, which equates to 10 percent of the total relationships between those two categories. Even more surprising is that that there was a perfect positive correlation of +1 between Forks and Socks. However, there appears to be no association associated with this perfect positive correlation. These two items, which were only purchased on one occasion by a customer and no other items were included in the transaction. Therefore, this led to a perfect positive correlation with no association to a third item. As for the second most significant categories, Leisure Items and Personal Items, there were 11 significant relationships, which equal 5 percent of

55 This portion of this study’s analysis utilized Microsoft Excel’s CORREL function.

the total relationships between those two categories. However this number is somewhat misleading because there was a lack of data for almost half of the analysis due to certain items not being purchased at all by the Tasso’s customers. The last set of categories that was analyzed was the Textiles and Sewing accessories and Personal Items. In the analysis of these two categories there were also 11 significant relationships between items, which equated to around 5 percent as well.

Delving deeper into the data there are noticeable trends within each of these correlations that provide us with more insight into the consumption habits of those in San Diego during this period and the lack of local manufacturers. When looking at the correlations between the items that were analyzed, the data reveals that there is a certain degree of consistency in what items frequently had a significant correlation. For example, in the analysis of the correlations of the Kitchen and Clothing items, goods such as pots and socks consistently had high, or significant correlations. Additionally, in the analysis of the Leisure Items and Personal Items, there were highly significant correlations associated with items like writing materials and handkerchiefs. In the final analysis of the Textiles and Sewing Accessories and Household Items there were consistently high correlations with items like silk and matches. What is intriguing about this analysis is that all of the items that registered the most number of significant correlations have the unifying factor of being manufactured goods (see Table 4).

What this aspect of the ledger provides us with is a window into the state of California’s economy and people’s behaviors during this period. Historian David J. St. Clair argues that it was not until after the Gold Rush that California underwent a period of industrialization and manufacturing became prevalent in the state.57 Furthermore, industrialization and manufacturing were never economic aspects that were emphasized by either the Spanish or Mexican governments due to California’s peripheral location. Instead, California’s economy was primarily agrarian and pastoral in nature during the Spanish and Mexican periods. Industrialization and large scale manufacturing, which had already begun to happen elsewhere in the world, had not taken place in this specific region. Therefore, the

### Table 4. Manufactured Items with Significant Relationships Between Top Categories in Tasso Ledger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of Items with Significant Correlations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Items with Significant Correlations to Clothing</td>
<td>Socks</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knives</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pots</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cleavers/Saws</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Equip</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing Items with Significant Correlations to Kitchen Items</td>
<td>Gloves</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scarves</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under Garments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Items with Significant Correlations to Personal Items</td>
<td>Writing Materials</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Musical Instruments</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items with Significant Correlations to Leisure Items</td>
<td>Shaving Goods</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handkerchiefs</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chamber Pots</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access. with Significant Correlations to Household Items</td>
<td>Silk</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flannel</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lish</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cloth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calico</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items with Significant Correlations to Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</td>
<td>Scissors</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pocket Knives</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trunks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matches</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pails/Buckets</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note- According to Heiman, the significance level for a correlation for a data set of this size is .256.

Residents of San Diego relied upon hide ships like the *Tasso*, to import manufactured goods that were in high demand on the frontier due to the absence of these products in the local market. In essence, San Diegans utilized the hide and tallow trade to connect them to the rest of the world.

Even though San Diegan’s consumed a relatively high number of manufactured goods from the *Tasso*, there are certain unfinished products listed within the ledger. In particular, San Diegans frequently consumed unfinished products such as textiles and sewing accessories from the *Tasso*. Of the 74 entries in the ledger, there are 48 instances of either fabric or sewing accessories like needles and sewing thread being purchased, which equated
to these items being included in 64% of all entries. With these types of materials (fabric, needles, and thread) individuals had all of the necessary goods to sew their own items. Although the ledger does not discuss what individuals did with these items when they were in their homes, we can only assume that they were used to create their own clothing, bedding, drapes, or other household items made from these materials.

Not only does the frequency in which these items were purchased standout, but the quantity in which they were purchased stands out as well. Of the seven types of fabric purchased (silk, satin, muslin, flannel, lish, cloth, and calico) all of them were bought in fairly high quantities. On average, individuals purchased a little less than 10 yards of each of these fabrics. Although this might not seem like a large amount of fabric, 10 yards would be more than enough material to create several shirts or pants, window curtains or drapes, or even a blanket or bed spread. When combining this fact with the references to needles and thread being purchased, it leads us to believe that this was the intended use for these specific materials. Additionally, the consumption in large quantities of fabrics and sewing accessories by San Diegans is consistent with Monroy’s finding that these types of goods were highly desirable by Californios during this period.

What also has become clear through an analysis of the Tasso’s ledger is that individuals were given access to certain types of food that were not available to them locally. For instance, items such as coffee and tea are not native to the San Diego region and can only be grown in climates near the Equator. Additionally, items such as rice, sugar, and certain types of grain that the ship provided were not found in the wild or grown locally during this period. Therefore, all of these types of foods and goods would not be accessible to the local population unless they were imported. One of the problematic aspects of transporting perishable items like food was that the goods could go bad or spoil before they reached the various ports of California. By selecting items like coffee and grain that would not spoil while at sea, the merchants were able to provide fresh goods that were also appealing due to their limited availability, so that those in San Diego would be encouraged to do business with them. Aside from simply providing San Diegans with different types of goods, this trade

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58 Tasso Ledger, Tom Ham Collection 1846-1847, passim.
59 Monroy, Thrown Among Strangers, 155.
system led to a diversification of people’s diets and introduced them to foods from different regions and cultures.⁶⁰

As Smythe notes in *History of San Diego*, with the coming of the Americans in the latter years of the Mexican era, the old Spanish and Mexican styles of dress began to give way to the English style of dress.⁶¹ Aside from providing the inhabitants of San Diego with goods that would otherwise be inaccessible to them if it were not for the hide trade, this form of importation gave individuals access to the clothes and clothing styles of New England and Europe. For instance, one of the more popular items of clothing that was purchased from *Tasso* was the “Paris Robes.” What makes this particular item stand out from the rest is that its name indicates that it is a high quality good from Europe or that it was made to resemble the styles of European women. This also gives us insight into the cultural and social aspects of San Diego during this period. In her work, “Emulation and Power: Material, Social, and Economic Dynamics in Eighteenth-and Nineteenth-Century Virginia,” Alison Bell discusses how material culture can be manipulated to either distinguish oneself from another group or serve as a way to emulate others. In her article, the author points out that as a whole during the nineteenth-century, Americans desired to imitate the styles of European centers and that those in the countryside, like San Diego, emulated the trends of urban sophisticates to appear more urbane. Furthermore, the author discusses how the affluent class was able to use material culture to maintain boundaries between themselves and lower classes of people. By acquiring “newly fashionable goods,” like Paris Robes, this class of people was able to maintain distinctions between themselves and the ordinary people. On the other hand, lower classes of people were able to use material culture to emulate the dress of the more prosperous in an attempt to close the gap culturally and socially between themselves and the elites, which Perkins also found to be true in her research.⁶² Therefore, not only did

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⁶² Alison Bell, “Emulation and Empowerment: Material, Social, and Economic Dynamics in Eighteen-and Nineteenth-Century Virginia,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 6, no. 4 (December 2002): 253-
imported goods contribute to more than just variety, convenience, and beauty, “but they carried social meanings and communicated relationships.”

Quite similar to the way that an individual’s dress could distinguish themselves from a certain group of people, what they ate and drank could produce the same results. One of the most distinguishable items that could serve this purpose would be tea. As Rodris Roth discusses in, “Tea-Drinking in Eighteenth Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage,” for many years the drinking of tea in Western cultures was reserved for the upper class due to its high prices and limited availability. Over time, as the price of tea dropped and it became more readily available, the drinking of tea became part of the everyday life of many socioeconomic classes in the Western world. However, due to San Diego’s location on the far reaches of the frontier and the limited availability of luxury goods like tea, the drinking of tea might have been limited to the upper class much like it was in the early parts of the eighteenth century. Through its purchase, the procurers of this luxury good would be able to separate themselves from those in the socioeconomic classes below them.

Aside from shedding light on the economic conditions and consumption habits of those in San Diego during this period, the Tasso’s ledger gives us a rare glimpse into other social aspects of the city, most notably issues of gender. One of the advantageous aspects of the ledger is that they consistently recorded both the first and last name of the customer. Thanks to this detail it is possible to conduct further analysis not just on the types of goods that were bought, but who actually purchased them. When analyzing the customer names that are listed in the ledger there is a stark contrast between the representations of women to men in the source. Of the 75 entries in the ledger, women are only listed as customers in five of the transactions, which equates to a ratio of 11:1 for men to women.

Not only does it appear that women are significantly underrepresented in the ledger, but their patterns of consumption differ from the norm as well. For instance, male customers in the ledger spent an average of roughly $33.00 on goods from the ship, with the median

256; Perkins, “The Consumer Frontier: Household Consumption in Early Kentucky,” 497
being $20.00. In contrast, on average, women only spent $11.53, with the median being $9.40. Not only were they spending far less than their male counterparts, they were also purchasing fewer items. When analyzing the entries in the account book with women’s names one can see that they bought an average of three items per transaction, where as the males in the ledger bought an average of multiple items.

When examining the specific types of items that women bought, there seems to be little consistency in their consumption habits. However, there are certain facets of their habits that do standout. When analyzing categories like the Textiles and Sewing Accessory category, a group of items that one would assume women would be equally represented in, there was only one women, Guadalupe Wilder, listed as a purchaser of these goods. When breaking down the types of items that were listed in the ledger, the only distinguishable items that were clearly meant for women were Paris Robes. One would assume that the women listed in the book would be the only customers that purchased these items since it was a piece of women’s clothing. However, there were no instances where a woman purchased this item; rather, men were the only consumer of this good.

Even though women customers are significantly underrepresented in the Tasso ledger, the appearance of their names in the ship’s account book is of significance because it reveals a disagreement between this thesis and other research on women consumers in the nineteenth-century. In their works, other historians such as Lori Merish, T.H. Breen, and Mary P. Ryan discuss how women were active shoppers, starting in the eighteenth-century and throughout the nineteenth-century. However, as the analysis of the Tasso ledger indicates, female customers account for only fifteen percent of the customers in the Tasso ledger. Due to this factor it must be concluded that women were not active consumers in San

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65 Tasso Ledger, Tom Ham Collection 1846-1847, passim. However, there is a lack of available data to determine if this difference between men and women’s spending habits in the ledger was the result of a higher level of disposable income for one group or the other. Or, whether widowed or single women had more disposable income than married women.

66 Tasso Ledger, May 12, 1847.

Diego during the 1840s. However, it is still possible that females indirectly shaped the consumer choices of males during this period. As a result, this research’s findings regarding women’s involvement in consumerism in San Diego during the 1840s goes against Merish, Breen, and Ryan’s arguments in their works. Furthermore, historians have produced no literature on what specific types of goods women typically purchased during this period. Due to this, this research is somewhat limited in comparing the consumption habits of women in San Diego to broader national trends during the period in question.

Even though the ledger provides us with no explanation for why women were not active consumers of goods from the Tasso, there are possible explanations for this. One possible explanation is that women played a role in selecting the goods that were purchased, but were not listed as the customer because they did not do the actual purchasing. Instead, their husband or family members were the ones that handled the financial end of the experience and were recorded as being the purchaser. It is also possible that the women listed in the ledger as customers were from the elite class of Californio families who controlled a majority of the ranching in San Diego. Due to these factors, these women were afforded the opportunity to engage in this type of commerce. Therefore, other women who were not from the elite class of Californios were not able to participate in this specific type of consumerism.

Aside from issues of gender, another realm of the ledger that can be analyzed utilizing the list of customer names in the account book are issues of ethnicity. However, utilizing customer names to determine the customer’s ethnicity this is not the most accurate way of conducting an analysis of ethnicity within a data set. This research is limited due to the lack of available data on the city’s population and their ethnicity. Additionally, the presence of intermarriage in California between Anglos and Californios during the mid-nineteenth-century also makes this portion of the analysis somewhat difficult. As Tomas Almaguer discusses in, Racial Fault Lines, intermarriage between Anglos and Californios in California during this period was rather common. According to the author, roughly 12 to 35 percent of marriages in Los Angles from the 1850s to the 1870s were between Californios.

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68 Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers*, “To Join as Neighbors.” In this chapter, Monroy discusses how the elite Californios and their families were the sole participants in hide trade with New England merchants.
and Anglos. Due to this, it is somewhat difficult to distinguish Californios from Anglos in the ledger and to analyze the consumption habits of these different ethnicities. However, some of the names separated and analyzed for this portion of the research were cross-referenced with the 1850 Federal Census, which identifies a person’s ethnicity.

In the ledger there are 33 names that are listed that have distinctly Hispanic surnames, such as Jose Aguirre, Francisco Alvarado, and Pedro Carrillo, which equates to a little less than half of the entries in the ledger. When examining the entries with Hispanic surnames there are rather significant differences between the purchasing habits of this group and the customers with Anglo surnames in the data set. First, the two groups were separated so that they could be separately analyzed. Then for each group, the total number of items purchased for each category of goods was calculated. The total from this was then divided by the number of customers who purchased these types of goods from each category. What resulted from this calculation was the average number of items purchased per capita for each group, customers with Anglo surnames and Hispanic surnames. As Table 5 reveals, in only two instances, the Furniture and Household categories, did those with Hispanic names have a higher per capita pattern of consumption than those with Anglo surnames. For instance on May 10, 1846, Jose Aguirre, a Hispanic customer, purchased 12 items from the Furniture category. Compared to Henry Fitch who only purchased one item from the Furniture category on May 5, 1847. In general though, customers with Anglo surnames in the ledger purchased more goods per capita than those with Hispanic surnames. This pattern of consumption between the two groups reveals a rather significant difference in the consumption habits of the Tasso’s Anglo and Hispanic customers.

In a number of the categories customers with Anglo surnames had a much higher consumption of goods per capita, specifically the Kitchen, Leisure, Textiles and Sewing Accessories, Food and Beverage, and Tools and Materials categories. One possible

69 Almaguer, Racial Fault Lines, 58.
70 Tasso Ledger, Tom Ham Collection 1846-1847, passim.
71 If an individual purchased goods from a category on more than one occasion, their name was only counted one time. Thus, accurately reflecting he per capita consumption
72 Tasso Ledger, Tom Ham Collection 1846-1847, passim.
73 Ibid., Jose Aguirre purchase on May 10, 1846; John D. Fitch purchase on May 5, 1847.
Table 5. Hispanic vs. Anglo Sample: Number of Items Purchased Per Capita

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Hispanic Names</th>
<th>Anglo Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/Beverage</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools &amp; Materials</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

explanation for the much higher per capita consumption of these types of goods could possibly be attributed to ethnic divisions by profession. Possibly due to their more prosperous business endeavors or successful cattle raising Anglo consumers in the *Tasso* had more disposable income or more hides to exchange for goods. Or, perhaps these aspects of the ledger reflect other aspects of life in San Diego during this period. For example, Anglos attempts to build new homes or improve their ranches led to their higher per capita consumption of tools and materials, or that Anglos favored the imported foods that the *Tasso* provided leading to their higher per capita consumption of food.74

Native Americans comprise the one ethnicity that is clearly missing from the *Tasso’s* list of customers. When cross referencing many of the names in the ledger with the 1850 Federal Census none of the names come back as being listed as an “Indian.” Although this type of commerce appears to be a sphere in which both Anglos and people of Mexican or Spanish ethnicity freely took part in, it was exclusive of Native Americans. Whether Native Americans were unintentionally excluded due to their lack of land and subsequent inability to participate in the hide trade, or whether they were intentionally excluded is an issue that remains unanswered due to the lack of additional information and sources on the matter.

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74 One of the limitations of this research is that there is a limited amount of data and information on certain aspects of life in San Diego during draw conclusions on. Perhaps future researchers could build upon this work to explain why Anglo’s per capita consumption was so much higher than those with Hispanic surnames.
The hide trade had two significant impacts on San Diego that has been overlooked in the historiography of the city. One impact is that the hide and tallow trade led to a shift in San Diego’s economy in the transitional years between the Mexican and American periods. The *Tasso’s* ledger provides us, as historians, with a window with which to view the economic changes that were occurring in San Diego during this transitional period. According to Allan Kulikoff, the shift from a noncommercial system to a capitalistic system that San Diego experienced during this period, was not an isolated event. Rather, this was happening across America. In his work, “The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America,” the author discusses how rural economies across America during this era were clearly transitional. As the author notes, these economies were experiencing either “an intensification of capitalist production or a transformation from a noncommercial or at least non-capitalist economy to a capitalist one.”

Prior to the secularization of the missions, San Diego’s economy clearly revolved around the mission and its limited production. With the rise of the hide trade in the early part of the nineteenth-century, the local economy experienced a transformation from a noncommercial economy to a capitalistic economy as the missions actively engaged in trade with hide merchants. Through this trade the missions experienced a short period of revival that was cut short by the Mexican governments secularization of the missions and increased bestowing of land grants throughout the region. As a result, the hide trade shifted from the missionaries at the mission to private landowners. When private individuals took up the cattle raising in the region during the 1830s, the local economy experienced a clear intensification of capitalist productions as this sector of the local economy became less about procuring goods and more about making profits and generating income.

Through the trade and the attention it brought to the region, more people began to flock to the city. By 1846, on the eve of the American takeover, the population of this sleepy little frontier town reached 350 people and this number was increasing yearly. With more

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76 Pourade, *Time of the Bells*, 204.

people residing in the region, the city underwent a period of growth and transformation. This notion is highlighted through the growth of the business community during this transitional period. At the beginning of the hide trade, and for many years, San Diego only had one store, which was located at the mission. By 1851, the business community had grown to ten stores, all of which were located in Old Town, the new nucleus of life in San Diego. At the heart of this growth, both in population size and the size of the business community, was the hide and tallow trade. Not only did this trade alter San Diego’s economy, but it sowed the seeds for the city’s growth and development in the years to come. This is a facet of the city’s history that neither Smythe nor Pourade tend to focus on in their works.

In addition to this, the Tasso’s ledger provides a window into how consumers’ consumption habits and behavior changed as a result of the hide trade. What Pourade and Smythe have shied away from focusing on in their works is the way the hide trade affected the residents of San Diego and altered the material aspects of the region. As the ledger reveals, hide ships like the Tasso broadened San Diegans access to goods and allowed them to obtain goods that would otherwise be unavailable to them. Taking into consideration that for many years there was only one store operating in the city, the residents of this town had a limited selection of goods to choose from. Compounding this problem was the fact that California and San Diego were on the fringe of the frontier and were untouched by the wave of industrialization that was altering the rest of the world. With the introduction of the hide and tallow trade and its growth towards the end of the Mexican period, this opened up doors for the inhabitants of the city to procure manufactured goods that were not available to them locally.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the ledger is that provides us with a window into how the material aspects of San Diego evolved during this period. The residents of San Diego were given access to manufactured goods from the industrialized parts of the United States and the rest of the world. Through an analysis of the ledger, it was revealed that San

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78 Smythe, History of San Diego: 1542-1908, 105.
Diegans, regardless of their race or gender, sought out and purchased the manufactured goods that the *Tasso* offered. Even though the customers of the ledger tended to purchase only necessary items rather than luxury items, the ledger provides insight into how materialism in San Diego changed during this period and reflected the nature of life in San Diego. Through their consumption of goods such as woodworking tools, screws and nails, lumber, and other agricultural tools, people’s consumption patterns reflect the primarily pastoral nature of San Diego’s economy during the mid-1840s. By purchasing these types of goods, San Diegans would have the necessary items that they needed to maintain or improve their land and ranches, and provide for themselves and their families. Furthermore, through their consumption of manufactured Kitchen, Sewing Accessories and Textiles, and Clothing items, San Diegans’ patterns of consumption reflect the emphasis on the domestic sphere on the frontier. Aside from the Tools and Materials category, all of the other items that were purchased from the *Tasso* were items that have a direct association to the domestic sphere or activities performed within the home. Both of these patterns of consumption in the *Tasso* ledger are of significance because they reflect the primary emphases of life on the frontier, the home sphere and pastoral production.

Additionally, this aspect of the analysis is significant because it parallels other research on consumption during this period of American history. As Stearns discusses, during the mid-nineteenth-century consumer patterns of consumption focused on consuming manufactured goods for their families and goods that were used within the home, which was also found within the statistical analysis of the *Tasso* ledger. Even though aspects of consumption in San Diego differed slightly from what other authors have discussed, such as the degree of women’s involvement in consumerism and the lack of local merchants and advertising, as a whole this research’s findings are quite similar to the historiography on this topic.

As a whole, through the hide and tallow trade, San Diegans were exposed to American industrial and consumer tastes. Despite the fact that San Diego was a peripheral region, it still felt the effects of the limited American presence and the introduction of American culture and American material goods. In effect, this trade led to the Americanization of San Diego’s culture prior to the arrival of American governance.
CHAPTER 3
A LEDGER AS A WINDOW INTO THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE EARLY AMERICAN ERA

During the transitional period between the Mexican and American eras in San Diego, the hide and tallow trade became the staple of San Diego’s economy. This thriving trade enabled the local economy to develop more than it had since the arrival of the Spanish missionaries in 1769. As a result of this trade and the secularization of the missions from 1833 to 1834, the local economy shifted away from the San Diego Mission and towards the private landowners. With the private landowners taking up the livestock rearing in the region, the first signs of capitalist elements began to emerge in the local economy. Just when the local economy began to thrive, in the latter years of the 1840s, a series of major events began to unravel that would have a profound impact on the town of San Diego. Not only would these events play a large role in the shaping of everyday life in the city, but also it would largely determine the course of the city’s history in the years to come.

One of these events that altered the course of San Diego was the outbreak of war between the United States and Mexico in 1846. During the early to mid-nineteenth century, the United States began an aggressive campaign to expand its borders beyond the western slopes of the Appalachian Mountains. Driven by its idea of Manifest Destiny, the United States began claiming new territories throughout the Mid West and Southeastern portions of the continental United States. The conflict originated between the two nations when Mexico failed to recognize Texas’ independence and its annexation by the United States in 1845, actions that Mexico viewed as acts of war. War was officially declared on May 13, 1846, when President Polk signed a bill authorizing war between the two nations. After two years of war, the United States emerged as the victor and the war was officially settled with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. 81

81 Pourade, The Silver Dons, 71, 134.
Aside from ending the war, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had much larger implications in regards to the western frontier of the United States. As part of the treaty, Mexico ceded control of a majority of its territory in the north to the United States. In addition to gaining territories like Nevada, Utah, parts of Colorado, Arizona, Texas, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and New Mexico, the United States also obtained Alta California. As a result, in a time span of less than two hundred years, Alta California was flying its third different flag.

One other event that had a profound impact on the course of San Diego’s history was the disintegration of the hide and tallow trade. Around the time of America’s acquisition of California, the hide and tallow trade practically ended in California. The end of the hide trade in California was primarily driven by economic causes on the part of the New England merchants and the saturation of the New England market with hides.82 Therefore, what had been the core of San Diego’s economy for the last twenty years was no longer a viable staple for the region’s economy.

Despite the turbulent years of the late-1840s, with loss of the hide trade, the transition from Mexican to American rule, and the disruption of traditional cultural customs and values due to the repeated change in governance, San Diego saw great improvements in its early years under the American flag. During the Spanish period and parts of the Mexican period in San Diego, the nucleus of life, society, and culture in the San Diego region centered around the San Diego Mission. With the secularization of the missions from 1833 to 1834, this institution of life in San Diego lost its importance and luster. As a result, the nucleus of life and society in the city shifted elsewhere.

One of the most notable physical changes that took place between the late-1840s and early-1850s was the blossoming of the area just below Presidio Hill known as Old Town. Established in the 1820s, Old Town San Diego was originally a small community that was primarily made up of small adobe buildings. At the center of Old Town was the large and open Plaza that was surrounded by homes that were built in the 1820s by some of San Diego’s prominent residents at the time, like the Carrilos, Picos, Maroon’s, Bandinis, and

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Estudillos. However, after the secularization of the missions, this little enclave began to assume more importance in the city as more people began to flock to the region and reside in and around Old Town.

The Gold Rush was one of the primary reasons why people began to flock to the San Diego region and why Old Town experienced a growth during the late-1840s and 1850s. In the early months of 1848, James W. Marshall discovered small flakes of gold while working at John Sutter’s Mill on the American River, outside of Coloma, California. Despite the fact that Marshall and Sutter tried to keep their discovery quite, word slowly began to spread that gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill in 1848. Over time, word of the discovery spread farther and farther, and by December of 1848, the news had reached the East Coast where it was published in newspapers for everyone to read. With word of the discovery reaching Washington D.C., President Polk confirmed the discovery to the entire nation in his State of the Union address on December 5, 1848.

Over the next few months and years, people from all across the Union packed up their belongings and headed west in the hopes of striking it rich in the hills of Northern California. In much larger terms, “the discovery of gold gave a sharp impetus to a westward movement already underway,” and thrust California into the national spotlight. Even though the Gold Rush and mining for gold largely took place in the hillsides of northern California, the discovery of gold had a ripple effect that profoundly impacted San Diego throughout the late-1840s and 1850s.

For many people the decision to head west was an easy decision to make, but deciding how they would reach California was quite difficult. The prevailing question “for most prospective American emigrants was which route to California was the best, quickest, safest, and most economical.” As Fred Rosen discusses in, *Gold! The Story of the 1848*

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83 Pourade, *The Silver Dons*, 12.
84 Ibid., 139.
86 Ibid., 140.
Gold Rush and How it Shaped the Nation, there were a number of ways of getting to California. One means of reaching California was to travel by sea. Travelers who opted to reach California this way could either board a ship that traveled around the southern tip of South America and then north to California. Or, they could disembark from a ship that ported in Latin America, cross either the Isthmus of Panama or Isthmus of Nicaragua, and re-board a ship that was sailing to California.88

There were also multiple land routes that prospective miners could take to reach the hills of Northern California. One of these land routes traveled to across the Great Plains and over the Rocky Mountains. This route was perhaps the most arduous and time-consuming way of reaching.89 Perhaps the two most pertinent land routes in terms of San Diego’s history were the Southern Route and Sonora Trail. A majority of those that opted to take the Southern route started in cities like Independence, Missouri, New Orleans, Louisiana, or Memphis, Tennessee. One of the variations of the route headed in a southwestern direction to San Antonio, Texas, and then west towards El Paso. The other variation led the travelers across the Great Plains and then south to El Paso. From El Paso the trail, known as the Gila Trail, followed the Gila River across Arizona and ultimately ending in San Diego (see Figure 1).90 Cave J. Couts, who was traveling along the Southern Route in 1848 with his Army battalion, wrote in his journal that, “persons, Mexicans, from Sonora, are passing us daily (on the Southern Route) on their way to the abundancia, the gold mines!”91

Aside from the Southern Route and the Gila Trail, there was also another trail that led miners from Mexico, north into California. Known as the Sonora Trail, the trail traveled north from Mexico and zigzagged its way through parts of Arizona and Mexico again before it led into the Anza Borrego Deserts and terminated in San Diego (see Figure 2).

Another factor that facilitated the growth of Old Town, in terms of its size and population, was that the San Diego region became less geographically isolated during the late-1840s and 1850s. One of the key factors that had hindered the region’s growth during

88 Rosen, Gold!, 97-98.
89 Ibid., 97-98.
90 Pourade, The Silver Dons, 6, 7, 143.
91 Ibid., 140.

the periods of Spanish and Mexican rule was the isolation of the region. San Diego, which is located in the southwestern region of California, was days away from other towns of significant size in the region. Aside from Point Loma, which made the city accessible to ships, the city maintained only a handful of trails that led into the city. To compound this problem, there were no means of transportation between San Diego and other cities like Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. If an individual wanted to travel to the cities north of San Diego, the only option was to travel by land, which was quite laborious and time consuming.

However, by 1850, the geographical isolation that San Diego experienced was about to change. In 1850, the first steamship line between San Diego and San Francisco was established by a San Franciscan named Wright and was later run by two other companies. In addition to stopping in San Diego, the steamship line made stops in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and San Pedro. According to Smythe, some of the first steamships to take part in this trade were small side wheeled ships like the Ohio, Goliath, and Fremont. By 1851 though, other companies like the Pacific Mail Steamship Company began to send steamers from Panama to San Francisco, which made stops in San Diego twice a month while it was traveling along the California coastline.

San Diego also became connected to northern cities through the formation of numerous stagecoach lines. In 1852, Phineas Banning and D.W. Alexander established the first of these stagecoach lines. Using the El Camino Real, the line provided irregular service between Los Angeles and San Diego. The following year, J.L. Thompson and others formed rival companies that connected Northern and Southern California with connections in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Buenaventura. Through their transportation of goods and people, these modes of transportation filled a vital role left by the loss of the hide trade by connecting San Diego with the other large cities within and outside of the state.

On one hand, the rise of these modes of transportation was fueled by enterprising businessmen who were seeking to take advantage of the Gold Rush. With people all across the Union wanting to make the migration west to the goldmines in California, these

companies were able to provide a service that was in high demand and made many of these transportation businesses very wealthy. Not only did the steamship lines help facilitate transcontinental travel, but like the stagecoach lines they also aided in inter-state travel. On the other hand, these modes of transportation helped fulfill the American desire to move westward. According to one author, the “acquisition of California had heightened the dreams of new land and new opportunities for many thousands of people… To some, land was even more precious than gold.”

Over the first few months of the Gold Rush, there were approximately 35,000 people who traveled either by land or by sea to California, and hundreds of thousands more who would follow in their footsteps. One of the commonalities between people’s attempts to reach the goldfields in Northern California was that many of the route and modes of transportation to the goldfields led to San Diego. Whether they were traveling north on the Sonora Trail, taking the Southern route east, or traveling aboard a ship that traveled up the Pacific coastline, all of these routes led to San Diego at one point or another. As Richard Pourade recalls, at one point, “hundreds of immigrants’ tents were pitched along the beach at La Playa,” as they waited to embark on the next leg of their journey to the goldfields in Northern California. Due to this influx of migrating people passing through the town the landscape of San Diego, and Old Town in particular, began to change.

Mainly due to the influx of migrants and the impetus on western migration during this period, the population of the once sleepy frontier town of San Diego began to multiply in the late-1840s and 1850s. According to a Mission census in 1840, the district of San Diego included 150 white people and 2250 Indian neophytes. According to an 1847 census, conducted by Captain Davis of the Mormon Company, the numbers of whites had risen to 248 and the number of Indians had decreased to a little over 2,000. Additionally, the region had gained three “Negroes” and three individuals from the Sandwich Islands, better known as

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95 Pourade, *The Silver Dons*, 140.
96 Ibid., 140.
97 Ibid., 149.
98 Ibid., 46.
Hawaii. By the time of the seventh national census in 1850, the white population of San Diego had skyrocketed to a total of 790 people in the county, of which 650 resided in the city. Unfortunately though, the national census of 1850 failed to include Indians in its calculations (see Table 6).

Table 6. Growth of San Diego County’s Population: 1840-1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>White Population</th>
<th>Non-White Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>2250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>2039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of San Diego’s new connections with the rest of the Union, the Gold Rush, and its subsequent population increase, San Diego and Old Town in particular underwent an era of development and progress in the late-1840s and 1850s. This progress resulted in a rapidly developing business community that local historians have not focused on in their works. As a result of this blossoming business community, consumption habits and everyday consumerism in San Diego were positively affected.

One of the primary effects of the increase in the city’s population and the increase in the flow of people passing through the town as they headed north to the goldfields, was that the local business community began to flourish in the late-1840s and 1850s. It was during this period that Old Town began to emerge as the epicenter of San Diego’s business community and commercial activity. Up until this point in the city’s history, Old Town had primarily served as a concentration of homes for some of San Diego’s most notable residents. With the emergence of the Gold Rush, Old Town began to evolve and physically change.

One of the primary physical changes that Old Town underwent shortly after the American acquisition of California was the transformation of the land surrounding the Plaza in Old Town. According to Spanish and Mexican traditions, the focal point of a town, its

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100 Smythe, *History of San Diego: 1542-1908*, 255. Pourade, *The Silver Dons*, 164. The usage of “white” and “non-white,” are specific terms that were used in each of the respective censuses. The usage of the term “white” refers to both Hispanic and White Anglo residents of San Diego.
plaza, was a place for social and cultural interactions. Generally, the land surrounding the plaza was used for residential purposes rather than for commercial and political purposes. However, when the Americans arrived in the region they brought with them their own social and cultural ideas of land use.

In contrast to Spanish and Mexican traditions, Americans viewed town centers, like the Plaza and surrounding land in Old Town, quite differently. In the American tradition, rather than being used primarily for private residential purposes, the town center was a place of more public uses and a place of social and cultural interactions. Due to its proximity to public institutions like courthouses, churches, and schoolhouses, the town center was a place that people were drawn to and frequented because it was the center of social and cultural affairs. As a result of this, the land surrounding the town center, or plaza, had a much higher value under the American tradition because it was the prime location for commercial institutions such as businesses because they could generate the most revenue in this location due to their proximity to other public institutions that people frequented daily. As Newland discusses in his work, “the Americans quickly changed the Old Town plaza to meet their needs. Shops and businesses began to replace plaza-front residences. Merchants soon built hotels, saloons, and stables for the new wave of visitors and residents.”

This evolution of Old Town and the Plaza was not solely the result of American values and traditions being projected onto a landscape. Instead, it was also a result of changes that the region was undergoing during the time period, most notably the momentum that was interjected into the region as a result of the Gold Rush. With more and more people passing through San Diego, this led to a period of growth for town’s economy. As Lawrence D. Taylor notes, “The prosperity resulting from the flow of miners northward sparked a construction boom” in Old Town and elsewhere in San Diego. With prospective miners passing through San Diego on their way north, they needed to obtain supplies and provisions in San Diego to hold them over until they reached the next town. In many of their

102 Ibid., 43.
entries, travelers discuss how they stopped in San Diego to obtain goods and provisions, which were exceptionally pricey according to their accounts.\(^{104}\)

During the late-1840s and early-1850s, Old Town emerged as the hub of San Diego’s business and commercial community as it was transformed from an area of residential buildings to a mixed-use area that also included storefronts, hotels, and saloons surrounding the Plaza. By 1851, many of the old adobe houses that once surrounded the dirty Plaza had been converted to storefronts that housed a number of businesses. Perhaps the best description of what Old Town looked like in terms of its layout comes from Richard F. Pourade’s *The Silver Dons*.

Pourade describes how on the south side of the Plaza, next door to the courthouse and office of the *alcalde*, Cave Couts had converted a store into a hotel and saloon known as the Colorado House. Next to Couts’ hotel and saloon, George Tebbits operated his one-story adobe Exchange Hotel. Up the street from these establishments, Judge John Hays and Councilman Charles P. Noell were partners in a mercantile store. Two new arrivals to San Diego, James Marks and Charles Fletcher, also had opened a store. Two blocks away was M.M. Sexton’s slaughterhouse that also included a small store. On the northeast end of the Plaza, across from the old Carrillo-Fitch adobe, Josefa Fitch operated her family’s store.\(^{105}\)

> “Other merchants were A. J. Matsell, a farmer and Army forage contractor who was to sell out before the end of the year (1851); Francis Hinton, a wagon master turned merchant, and his new partner, R. E. Raimond, a well-respected businessman who later would move to San Francisco. Louis Rose, a man of many ventures, was just beginning his business career in his first store near the corner of present Juan and Wallace Streets, next to Pio Pico’s old house. San Diego would remember him for Rose’s Store, Rose’s Tannery, Rose Canyon, Roseville, Rose’s Hotel and Rose’s Wharf. Two other newcomers to San Diego that year were two San Francisco associates of William Heath Davies. They were Lewis Franklin and Thomas Whaley, who opened their Tienda California. Both were to play major roles in San Diego’s future as businessmen and civic leaders. P. A. Goldman, a San Francisco merchant and associate of Louis Strauss, opened a store in San Diego that year destined to become one of the city’s biggest.”\(^{106}\)

The prosperity that resulted from the flow of miners northward not only affected Old Town, but it also affected other parts of San Diego. In an attempt to take advantage of the recent turn of events, a group of local businessmen began an ambitious construction project

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104 Ellis, *Gold Rush Desert Trails to San Diego and Los Angeles in 1849*, 33-34, 81, 104.
105 Pourade, *The Silver Dons*, 169-170
106 Ibid., 169-170.
outside of Old Town that they hoped would capitalize on San Diego’s topography and its pristine harbor. Spearheading the project was Andrew B. Gray, a former land surveyor and major general in the Confederate Army, who recently relocated to San Diego. What Gray envisioned for his project was to develop a new town site that was close to the water and that could be sustained by San Diego’s emergence as a seaport for the newly established steamship lines and trade ships. For many years, ships had used La Playa due to the close proximity that ships could anchor to the shore, its hard sandy beaches, and the lack of surf in the harbor.\(^{107}\) Despite these attributes, the small peninsula that La Playa rested on proved unsuitable for the development of a new section of San Diego due to its lack of land. Instead, Gray and his investors, William Davis Heath, Jose Antonio Aguirre, Miguel de Pedrorena, and William C. Ferrell, targeted a plot of land on the eastern edge of the harbor that would become known as New Town.\(^{108}\)

With construction beginning in 1850 on New San Diego, the new town site showed signs of prosperity in its early years. A handful of businesses moved into the new buildings in New San Diego, as did many of the newest residents to the region. Even though there was much optimism about the project, it was ultimately hindered by the lack of a viable water source and its fight for supremacy with Old Town.\(^{109}\) By 1853, businesses began to abandon New Town and returned to Old Town. In the end, Old Town won the struggle as New Town eventually failed and would later become known as a “Davis’ Folly.”\(^{110}\) Despite the failure of New San Diego, the series of events that had taken place in the late-1840s and early-1850s set the stage for Old Town’s prosperity throughout the mid to late-1850s.

In all, what resulted from these events was that San Diego underwent a period of progression during the late-1840s and 1850s, and one of the key benefactors of this era of progression was San Diego’s economy and business community. Although local historians such as Smythe and Pourade discuss these topics individually in their respective works, they do not focus enough on how these events enabled the local economy and business

\(^{107}\) Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast*, 117.


\(^{109}\) Ibid., 318-319.

\(^{110}\) Ibid., 318-322.
community to blossom during this period of the city’s history. As a result of the growth of the economy and business community, the residents of San Diego at the time were the ones that benefitted the most from these developments.

One source that highlights the notion that the local economy and business community became more developed during this period and that San Diegans were the benefactors of this progress is a ledger from a local store. The ledger, which comes from an unnamed store, records the daily transactions that the store made with their clientele. Through a statistical analysis of this ledger it is possible for this research to analyze how the developments in San Diego during the late-1840s and early-1850s enabled San Diego’s economy to become more developed by the mid-1850s. Additionally through this analysis, it is possible to see how the events of the preceding years allowed San Diegans to consume a wider variety of goods, in turn altering their consumption habits.

Although there is some uncertainty about which exact store the ledger belonged to, there is sufficient evidence within the ledger to support the assumption that it came from a store in San Diego. One piece of evidence that helps support this assumption, is that a handful of the customer names listed in the ledger are those of notable San Diegans who resided in the city during the timeframe that the ledger covers. These names include: Cave Couts, who would later become one of San Diego’s prominent civic leaders; Ephraim W. Morse (E. W. Morse), who came to the city during the Gold Rush, served on the Board of Supervisors from 1853 to 1855, and later opened a store in Old Town with Thomas Whaley; Judge Murray Morrison, who served as the district judge in San Diego from 1868 to 1870; and Joseph Snook, who would later become a prominent in San Diego.

Another bit of evidence that supports the argument that this ledger came from a local store is the appearance of a sale to “Brught of the Sea Bird.” At first glance this entry appears to make little sense because it does not appear to be the name of an actual person, but when researching deeper an answer is provided for whom this mysterious customer was. In

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111 The ledger is housed at the San Diego History Center’s Document Archive in Balboa Park.


113 Unidentified Store Ledger 1855-1857, Tom Ham Collection Vol. 5, December 28, 1855.
William E. Smythe’s discussion of the rise of the coastal trade in 1850s, he mentions that a ship named the *Sea Bird*, which was owned by the Pacific Mail Company, participated in coastal trade during the 1850s.\footnote{Smythe, *History of San Diego 1542-1908*, 250.} Through this mention of the *Sea Bird* in Smythe’s work, it can be concluded that the word “Brught,” in the ledger entry, most likely refers to the surname of the customer and the words “*Sea Bird,*” is a reference to the name of the ship. With this information it can be concluded that Brught was most likely a member of the *Sea Bird’s* crew, and that while the ship was in port, Brught visited this unknown store to purchase goods. However, this does not appear to be an isolated instance. According to one historian, ships stopping in San Diego frequently shopped at the local stores for supplies.\footnote{Mario T. Garcia, “Merchants and Dons: San Diego’s Attempts at Modernization, 1850-1860,” *Journal of San Diego History* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1975): 61.} The ledger, which will be referred to as the Unidentified Store ledger, records transactions that the store made with their customers from January 1855 to June 1857. Much like the *Tasso’s* ledger, the account book from the Unidentified Store also records the customer’s name, the date of the purchase, what items they bought, the quantity and cost of those items, and the total amount of the customers’ purchases. Within the ledger there are 133 entries that record a variety of items that customers purchased from the store. In all, the ledger records $13,972.50 worth of goods being purchased from the store. On average, each customer spent roughly $105 per transaction. However, this average is somewhat misleading due to the large range of total amounts. For instance, on some occasions, outliers like E. W. Morse only spent $1 on goods. This contrasts with outliers on the opposite end of the spectrum, like C. Berg’s purchase on June 14, 1855, when he spent $297.17 at the store. In general though, the majority of the customer’s grand totals are grouped closely to the average of $104 (see Table 7 for how the total amount spent by the customers was dispersed).\footnote{Unidentified Store Ledger 1855-1857, Tom Ham Collection Vol. 5, passim.} Much like the large range of the amount of money that people spent, the quantity of goods that people purchased varied greatly. On some instances, people like E. W. Morse, only purchased one or two items when they visited the store, and others, like C. Berg, purchased large quantities...
Table 7. Unidentified Store Ledger: Dispersion of Total Amount Spent by the Store’s Customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1-41</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$41-81</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$81-121</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$121-161</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$161-201</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$201-241</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$241-281</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$281-$301</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

of various goods. However, on average, customers who frequented this unidentified store generally purchased multiple goods at the same time.

One noticeable change in consumer behaviors from the Tasso ledger to the Unidentified Store ledger can be seen in the increase in the average amount of money spent by customers in the respective ledgers. In the Tasso ledger, customers spent an average of $32 per transaction. However, in the Unidentified Store ledger customers spent an average of $105 per transaction. One of the significant aspects of this increase is that it speaks to the economic impact that the Gold Rush had on San Diego’s economy. As Rawls discuss in, *A Golden State*, the Gold Rush acted as an economic multiplier and impacted numerous parts of the state’s economy.\(^{117}\) One impact that the discovery of gold had was that it injected large amounts of money into the economy. The Gold Rush also led to an increase in wages across the board in California. As a result, it gave Gold Rush area Californians and San Diegans more money to spend on goods and led to an increase in consumption.\(^ {118}\) This resulted in the increase in average amount spent by the customers of the Unidentified Store.


When examining the names that were listed in the name column of the ledger, there was a very distinct and predominant trend throughout the ledger in regards to the customer’s names. In some instances, the ledger lists the first name and surname of the purchaser. On other occasions, the ledger only lists an initial followed by the customer’s full surname, for example, Dan Gibb or D. Gibb. However, there are a startling number of entries in the ledger that diverge from this trend. Instead of listing a single person’s name, the ledger often lists two people’s surnames. For example, the names, “Hohe & Locher,” appear frequently as the purchasers of goods. On other occasions, the customer’s first and last name are recorded with an abbreviation following it. For instance, the names James Tobin & Co. and Lindlander & Bros. appear frequently in the Unidentified Store’s ledger as customers. Lastly, on only one occasion the ledger fails to list a name for the customer.\(^{119}\)

Of the 133 entries in the ledger, 66 of the customer names indicate that a single person made purchase. The remaining 67 transactions recorded in the store’s ledger were either made by two individuals or what appear to be businesses. Therefore, roughly half of the purchases that were made by the customers of the Unidentified Store were made by a single individual, and the other half of the transactions were made by multiple individuals or businesses (see Table 8).\(^{120}\)

### Table 8. Analysis of Customer Names from the Unidentified Store Ledger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Name (e.g. Cave Couts)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Names (e.g. Hohe &amp; Locher)</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Co.” in Name (e.g. Jones Tobin &amp; Co.)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Bros.” in Name (e.g. Lindlander &amp; Bros.)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Name</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Less Than 1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{119}\) Unidentified Store Ledger 1855-1857, passim.

\(^{120}\) Ibid., passim.
Within the account book there are a significant number of entries that indicate that the purchases were made by more than one person or for a company. One indication that some of these purchases were made by companies can be attributed to the presence of the word “Co.” at the end of the name, which is an abbreviation for the word “Company.” For instance, names such as Jones Tobin & Co., Eugene Kelly & Co., Smiley Yerker & Co, and Anger, Wolf, & Co appear repeatedly throughout the ledger. Other entries in the ledger, such as those with the word “Bros.” in them, also indicate that the purchase was made for a company. One common trend amongst companies, past and present, is to use the word “Bros.” in their name, which is an abbreviation for “Brothers.” The usage of this abbreviation generally denotes that the company was formed by brothers or families, one modern day example of this is the entertainment company Warner Bros. Additionally, the entries that have two names written in the column for the customer’s name, such as Hohe & Locher, Lecount & Strong, Hardie & Rutenberg, and Newhall & Gregory, also appear to be the names of business partners or the names of a business.121

Aside from the clues that the customer’s names provide, there is a discernible difference between the amounts of money that were spent by the entries with only one name compared to the other entries. When adding up the totals from the entries where just one person’s name is listed, these individuals spent to an average of $82.83 per transaction. However, the entries in the ledger with two names listed spent an average of $136.91 per transaction. Those entries with the abbreviation “Co.” in the name spent an average of $111.22. Lastly, the entries that include the abbreviation “Bros.” in the name spent an average of $138.09.122 From this analysis, it reveals that not only were there differences in the average amount of money spent by those with one name listed compared to the rest of the sample, but the degree of differing expenditures between the two is rather substantial. On one hand, the entries with only one name listed spent well below the average amount spent for the whole data set, which was roughly $105. On the other hand, the remaining entries all spent well above the average amount spent for the entire data set. Furthermore, those with

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121 Ibid., passim.
122 Ibid., passim.
two names listed and those with abbreviations outspent the latter group by an average of $30 to $50 (see Table 9).

Table 9. Comparisons of the Average Amounts Spent by the Different Groups in the Unidentified Store Ledger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Total Amount Spent</th>
<th>Average Amount Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Customers</td>
<td>$5,550.21</td>
<td>$82.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Names</td>
<td>$5,476.77</td>
<td>$136.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names w/ “Co.”</td>
<td>$2,669.35</td>
<td>$111.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names w/ “Bro.”</td>
<td>$276.17</td>
<td>$138.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: One Unknown entry was included in the Individual Customers Group

This difference in the amount of money spent on average by the entries with only one name listed compared to those transactions by companies or partnerships is attributed to the amount of resources that companies have available to them compared to individual citizens. One of the basic principals of any business is that they have a commodity that people will pay for, whether it is labor, goods, or services. In exchange for their labor, goods, or services, the business receives payment from the clientele. Therefore, they have more available funds than the ordinary citizen would. Due to this aspect, they have more funds to spend when it comes to procuring goods, which explains the tendency for the businesses listed as customers in the Unidentified Store’s ledger to spend more than those entries with only one individual listed as the customer.

One question that arises from this finding is why were businesses buying goods from this store in San Diego? When comparing the names of the businesses that are listed in the Unidentified Store’s ledger to various sources that discuss businesses in San Diego during this period of the city’s history, no insight is gained. In the historiography of early San Diego and local business directories from this period, there are no references to any of the businesses that are listed in the ledger aside from the transaction by Brught of the Sea Bird. Additionally, many of the individual customers that are listed in the ledger are not mentioned in Smythe’s chapters, “Prominent Spanish Families” and “American Families of the Early Times,” which discuss many of the residents of San Diego during the period in question.
When cross-referencing the names from the ledger, both individual names and business 
names, with the Probate Records from the time, only a handful of individuals are directly 
linked to living in the city. Furthermore, a few more names are indirectly linked due to 
similarities in last names with other individuals from the Red Probate Records. For example, 
one of the company names listed in the store’s ledger is Anger, Wolf, & Co., which could 
potentially be indirectly linked to a William Wolf in the Red Probate records, who was a 
possible ranch owner in Warner’s Ranch.\footnote{Ibid., May, 1857. Red Probate Records, Red P# 196, 1867-1876, Box 8, San Diego History Center Document Archive, San Diego, CA.}

In \textit{Rooted in Barbarous Soil}, Robert Phelps discuss how during the Gold Rush, San 
Diego’s economy became very specialized as a layover point for migrants and seafaring 
businesses that would stop in San Diego to resupply and rest, which possibly explains the 
how a flood of businessmen and entrepreneurs came to California in the hopes of cashing in 
on discovery of gold.\footnote{James J. Rawls, “A Golden State: An Introduction,” in \textit{A Golden State}, 18.} What the ledger provides historians with is a window into the 
specialized nature of San Diego during the Gold Rush. During this period, San Diego’s 
economy and the Unidentified Store became specifically directed towards these migrants and 
businessmen who were stopping in San Diego. By doing so, the local economy and local 
businesses were able to cash in on the Gold Rush despite the fact that San Diego was 
hundreds of miles away from gold mines in the foothills of Northern California.

This conclusion is supported by the appearance of R.E. Raimond’s name in the 
Unidentified Store’s ledger. On eight occasions there are entries in the ledger that record 
purchases made by an individual named R.E. Raimond, spanning from January 1856 to 
March 1857. Although R.E. Raimond’s name does not appear in any of the sources on the 
city’s history, his name does appear in the local newspaper, the \textit{San Diego Herald}. On 
February 22, 1856, and on other occasions, there are advertisements in the \textit{San Diego 
Herald’s} San Francisco Ads section for R.E. Raimond’s General Shipping and Commission
Merchant business, which was based out of San Francisco.\textsuperscript{126} Through his advertisement, R.E. Raimond’s advertises that his business provided shipping services in California. In addition to this, as Commission Merchants, Raimond’s business would receive orders for goods from customers and then ship the customer’s order to them. As a result of these services that Raimond’s business provided, their line of work required them to regularly travel throughout California.

Aside from R.E. Raimond’s advertisement, the \textit{San Diego Herald} also provides additional insight into another customer that is listed in the Unidentified Store’s ledger. In the ledger there are four separate purchases by Jones Tobin & Co. between March 1, 1855 and May 15, 1857. Much like the previous example, on multiple occasions there are advertisements in the San Francisco Ads section of the \textit{Herald} for Jones Tobin & Co., which was also based out of San Francisco. In their ads, Jones Tobin & Co. describe how they are “Importers of Fancy Millinery, Trimmings, Cutlery, Perfumery &c...&c...,” and advertise that they have just received a stock of a variety of cloths, ribbons, feathers, boots, handkerchiefs, and laces.\textsuperscript{127}

Learning that these two San Francisco-based businesses were in San Diego on multiple occasions during this period, 1855-1857, leads to the conclusion that many of the businesses and individuals listed in the Unidentified Store’s ledger were perhaps businesses and individuals from outside of the San Diego region. Knowing the R.E. Raimond’s business dealt in shipping and Jones Tobin & Co. were importers of goods, it leads to the assumption that these businesses, and possibly many more in the ledger, were sailing along California and the Pacific Ocean during this period conducting business. While sailing along the coastline conducting business, they stopped in San Diego to obtain supplies for their ship and goods for their crewmembers.

Another possibility that arises from the discovery that some of the customer’s of the Unidentified Store were businesses is that these customers were buying goods and supplies for their own stores. Through an examination of the purchases made by Jones Tobin & Co.


\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., December 23, 1854.
this seems to be a feasible possibility. Among the goods that Jones Tobin & Co. bought from the Unidentified Store were items like sewing thread, sewing needles, silk, lish, and ribbon. Aside from simply buying these goods, the company almost always bought these goods in large quantities. For instance, on one occasion they purchased sixty yards of lish for $12, and on another occasion they purchased eighteen sewing needles for $18.25.\textsuperscript{128} Recalling that Jones Tobin & Co. was an importer of cloths, ribbons, laces trimmings, millinery, and many other goods, it seems plausible that they were procuring goods to sell in their own store in San Francisco. Therefore, it appears that the Unidentified Store was not only a store that sold goods to local individuals, like Cave Couts and E.W. Morse, but it also acted as a distributor or supplier of goods for other businesses, which is somewhat expected.

Although there is no direct connection within the ledger, there is also a possibility that the Unidentified Store acted as a distributor or supplier of goods for local rural stores as well. In Smythe’s, \textit{History of San Diego 1542-1908}, he mentions that after “the cattle business began to assume importance and private residences were established in the country, at every important rancho was maintained a general store and depot of supply for the surrounding country.”\textsuperscript{129} Building upon this argument, at Warner’s Ranch, north of San Diego, J.J. Warner built a trading store along the trail that passed through his ranch. The trail, which was regularly used by travelers during this period, split at Warner’s property and led travelers west towards the coastline or north towards Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{130} Furthermore, in Garcia’s work he discusses how the Californios were some of the local merchants’ most frequent customers.\textsuperscript{131} Even though a cross-reference between customers’ names in the ledger and the names of ranch owners yielded no further support to this argument, it remains plausible that some of the customers may have been rancho owners outside of the area and were obtaining goods for their own stores.


\textsuperscript{129} Smythe, \textit{History of San Diego 1542-1908}, 105.

\textsuperscript{130} Pourade, \textit{The Silver Dons}, 164.

\textsuperscript{131} Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 61.
In addition to these aspects, the account book reveals distinct patterns in regards to the types of items that the store’s customers generally purchased. When analyzing the categories of items that people most frequently purchased, from a statistical point of view, there are distinct patterns that reveal what groups of items people purchased the most. One of the categories of items that people purchased most frequently was the Food and Beverage category, which includes items alcohol, coffee, spices, grains, and butter. Throughout the ledger, items from this category were included in sixty-one transactions. When comparing this number to the total number of transactions in the ledger (133), reveals that items from this category were included in forty-five percent of all transactions. The second most frequently purchased category of items in the ledger was the Clothing category. Items from this category were included in forty percent of all transactions. Lastly, the third most frequently purchased group of items according to the data set was the Furniture category, which was included in twenty-five percent of all transactions (see Table 10).132

Table 10. Comparison of Tasso and Unidentified Store Ledgers: Percentage of Transactions that Included Each Category and Average Number of Items Bought

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Tasso Ledger</th>
<th>Unidentified Store Ledger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of Its Purchase (%)</td>
<td>Average Number of Items Bought Per Transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Items</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools and Materials</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For the Textiles and Sewing category, the average amount of textiles bought was 50 yards and the average amount of thread and accessories bought was 23 units.

** For the Tool and Materials category the average is slightly skewed due to the inclusion of lumber and metal piping, which were recorded in the amount of feet that they were bought in. Excluding these two items, the average for the category was 9 items.

132 Ibid., passim.
Even though there is a significant gap between the top and bottom tiers of categories that were purchased the most, there was one overarching trend amongst all of the categories. Regardless of the category, a large majority of the transactions that were conducted at the Unidentified Store involved rather large purchases in terms of the quantity of items that were bought. For example, in the transactions in which clothing items were included in, an average of twenty-five items of clothing were purchased. In other categories of the data set this trend was also present. In the Food and Beverage category and average of 67 items were purchased per transactions and in the Kitchen category an average of 28 items were purchased per transaction (see Table 10).\textsuperscript{133}

When comparing this pattern of consumption to those in the \textit{Tasso} ledger, there is a very noticeable difference. In the \textit{Tasso} ledger, consumers tended to purchase goods in low quantities, meaning that they only bought a small number of each item. However, as Table 10 reveals, this was not the case in the Unidentified Store ledger where customers tended to buy goods like food and clothing in bulk. This change in the patterns of consumption is explained by the fact that during the Gold Rush, California’s population increased dramatically within a short period of time. As a result of this population increase there was an unlimited demand for clothing and food, which is reflected in the Unidentified Store ledger.\textsuperscript{134}

During this period, San Diego was used as a layover point for migrants who were traveling to California and the gold mines. Even though a majority of the migrants traveling to California did not utilize the southern land routes and stop in San Diego, a significant number of migrants did utilize this route and pass through the town. Consequently, San Diego’s economy and business community became directed towards these travelers who did stop in the city. As John Walton discusses in, \textit{Western Times and Water Wars}, miners traveling to Northern California traveled with very few material possessions. Since they traveled with just the bare requirements, they relied on the markets to supply them with

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., passim.

necessary items like food and clothing.\textsuperscript{135} Since San Diego was a few days away from Los Angeles, the next stop for traveling miners, they would have purchased large quantities of necessary items like food and clothing to hold them over until they reached Los Angeles.

Additionally, the same argument could be made for seafaring businessmen and steamship passengers who stopped in San Diego and wished to replenish their supplies. This argument is supported by Mary Ellen Jones’, \textit{Daily Life on the Frontier: The Nineteenth Century American Frontier}. In her work, Jones discusses how ships transporting people to Northern California provided passengers with daily meals. However, as Jones notes, much of the food that the ships provided for the passengers was rotten or had spoiled during the course of the voyage.\textsuperscript{136} Therefore, it is quite possible that passengers who disembarked in San Diego sought out and purchased food and other supplies from stores in San Diego, like the Unidentified Store, that they then brought back on the ships to consume.

What the Unidentified Store ledger provides us with is a window into changes in the nature of consumers in San Diego during the late-1840s and 1850s. Rather than being settled people, it appears that a majority of the Unidentified Store’s customers were people who were possibly passing through the town as they made their way to Northern California. When comparing the customer names in the Unidentified Store ledger to the 1850 Census and the historiography of early San Diego a majority of the names such as Dan Gibbs, Otis Sawyer, and E.W. Eddy do not appear, leading to the assumption that the customers were not from the region but rather simply passing through the town. Whether they were traveling by land or by sea, the store’s customers were sojourners rather than settled people who had roots in San Diego. Due to their nature as sojourners they needed to travel with a quantity of essentials that could hold them over until they reached their final destination or the next town. As the analysis of the Unidentified Store’s clientele’s patterns of consumption will reveal, their nature as sojourners rather than settled people, dictated the types of goods that they bought from the store.

\textsuperscript{135} John Walton, \textit{Western Times and Water Wars} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 64.
\textsuperscript{136} Johnson, \textit{Roaring Camp}, 107.

When examining the specific types of items that were bought from the Unidentified Store, instead of the general categories of items, it is possible to better understand what exactly the customers of the store were buying. When analyzing the frequency in which certain items were purchased, a significant number of items were included in over ten percent of all transactions. Some of the most frequently purchased items throughout the ledger were alcohol, tobacco, shirts, grains/rice, pants, shoes, and cloth fabric (see Table 11 for a list of some of the most frequently purchased necessary items). In almost all of the item categories, the most frequently purchased goods were all essential items, like candles, blankets, cups, soap, combs and brushes, and basic clothing items, as opposed to luxury items. Although on occasion luxury items such as mirrors, wine decanters, jewelry, and fabrics were bought they were not purchased as frequently as the previously mentioned items; which is understandable, considering that they were luxury commodities.

This evidence that the Unidentified Store’s customers tended to purchase essential items rather than luxury items is of significance because it parallels James D. Delgado’s research on consumption in California during the Gold Rush period. In his work, *Gold Rush Port*, Delgado examines Mickle & Co., a commission merchant firm based in San Francisco. Through an analysis of Mickle & Co.’s business practices, Delgado discusses how the company diligently paid attention to their consumers and imported goods based on consumer demands. Through an analysis of Mickle & Co.’s newspaper ads, Delgado argues that the company’s “advertisements reveal consistent shipments of commodities that aimed to serve the actual needs of the growing city and region.” 137 Specifically, Mickle & Co. routinely imported commodities such as barley, flour, beans, wine, fresh fruits, clothing, and other essential items that fit the actual needs of their customers and that consumers demanded. Even though the company did import and sell some luxury items, Delgado argues that “the majority of shipments to Mickle were not luxury items but staples and basic commodities that spoke to the need for food, shelter, and clothing,” because, “in the long run, staples account for more of man’s economic thrusts than luxuries.” 138 Therefore, the pattern of

138 Ibid., 110.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen</td>
<td>Cups</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pewter &amp; Containers</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Shirts</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pants</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>Linens/Blankets</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oil/Wicking</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candles</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</td>
<td>Cloth</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Silk</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sewing Access.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverages</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grain/Rice</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cologne</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brushes/Combs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consuming necessary items over luxury items in the Unidentified Store ledger appears to be part of a much larger pattern that was present throughout California during this period.

In the ledger, items from the Clothing category were included in 40 percent of the total transactions, compared to Textiles and Sewing Accessories, which were included in only 19 percent of transactions. Through this observation, the assumption can be made that the customers of this specific store preferred to purchase pre-made clothing opposed to making their own. Despite the fact that textiles and sewing accessories were not purchased as frequently as other categories, this does not mean that they should be overlooked. Typically, individuals purchased an average of 56 yards of fabric, which is a rather considerable amount of fabric. Although, there are outliers like F. Henderson who purchased
278 yards of fabric on June 13, 1855. However, with an average consumption of 56 yards of fabric the customer could have made multiple pairs of pants which usually requires about two yards of fabric per pair of pants, numerous shirts which generally require one to three yards of fabric per shirt, multiple dresses with require between one to nine yards of fabric per dress, or a few blankets which generally requires nine yards of fabric per blanket. Without knowing what individuals did with the fabric once they brought it home, it is impossible to say for certain what the material was specifically used for. However, the consumption of fabrics in such a large quantity undoubtedly points to the remnants of domestic economy in San Diego during this period, where individuals did not solely rely on the market to provide them with certain types of goods that could be made by hand.

Additionally, this specific portion of this analysis is significant because it provides quantitative data to supplement the qualitative research that other historians have performed, in particular, Delgado’s archaeological research. Material goods such as clothing and fabric are types of goods that have a tendency to decay in the ground over time and are hard to quantify through an analysis of newspaper advertisements. Therefore, this research has built upon Delgado’s research by analyzing the specific types of clothing and fabric that consumers purchased and examines the quantities of these goods that customers purchased.

One other trend that is present within the ledger is the tendency of the Unidentified Store’s customers to purchase an assortment of different items at the same time. For instance, on an unknown day in 1856, R. Krambach made a purchase at the store that totaled $240. Among the goods that he purchased that day were coffee, spices, sugar, spittoons, chamber pots, wood screws, eating utensils, a variety of plates, bowls, and cups, and various pieces of furniture. By statistically analyzing the ledger it is possible to see which categories and items where most frequently purchased together. Furthermore, through this analysis it is possible to better understand the consumption habits of the store’s customers. Due to people’s tendency to purchase multiple different items at the same time, there was a rather

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139 Unidentified Store Ledger, June 13, 1855.
140 The amount of fabric needed for each of these items is based on my conversations with individuals who have experience with making clothing and blankets by hand.
141 Microsoft Excel’s CORREL Function was utilized to analyze the correlations between categories and items.
high number of significant relationships within the ledger, in both the analysis of the categories to one another and the individual items against other items. When analyzing the correlations between the categories, the three most significant correlations were between: the Kitchen category and Household Items, the Kitchen category and Personal Items, and the Furniture category and the Textiles and Sewing Accessories category.

Aside from shedding light on San Diego’s economy and the consumption habits of the store’s clientele, the Unidentified Store ledger provides a glimpse into social and cultural aspects of San Diego during this time period. Using the customers’ names in the ledger that contain both a first name and surname, it is possible to analyze issues of gender within the ledger. When reviewing the complete names that are listed in the ledger, none of the customers appear to be females; rather, all of the names appear to be male names. Additionally, within the ledger, there are specific items that are clearly products that are intended for women, such as Paris Robes and jewelry. Despite the lack of women’s names in the ledger, there is one instance where a Paris Robe was purchased and three instances where jewelry was purchased.142

What these findings reveal is that the Unidentified Store was a commercial sphere that was dominated by men. It may not be the case that women were intentionally excluded from the store, rather, that social and cultural factors of the time led to a higher rate of male customers in the Unidentified Store’s ledger. One explanation for the absence of women in the ledger is attributed to the fact that ideologues of the time urged women to be content in the home. Essentially cutting them off from the world of cash and commodity exchange.143 In her article, “The Consumer Frontier,” Perkins discusses how, “many men, retained control of their family’s economic relations,” and that males tended to dominate commercial activities.144 Another explanation for the absence of women in the ledger is that during this

142 Unidentified Store Ledger, A. Manape, June 3, 1855; C. Berg, March 1, 1855; Jones Tobin & Co., June 14, 1855, May 15, 1857.


144 Perkins, “The Consumer Frontier,” 496. Tomas Almaguer, Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 26. In his research Tomas Almaguer discusses how in 1850, “73 percent of the residents in the state were between the ages of 20 and 40, and 92 percent of them were males.”
period commercial and business activities on the frontier was a male-dominated sphere. Since roughly half of the transactions in the ledger were made by businesses, women were underrepresented in the ledger as a result. Lastly, and perhaps the most plausible explanation for the absence of women in the ledger, is that the ledger is a reflection of the demographics of California during the Gold Rush. As Susan Johnson discusses, with the onset of the Gold Rush in the late-1840s a flood of male miners traveled from around the world to California. As a result of this, by mid-1850s, males made up over ninety percent of California’s population.  

Therefore on one hand, the Unidentified Store ledger provides additional quantitative evidence to support Johnson and Almaguer’s research on the disproportionate number of males to females in California during this period. While on the other hand, the absence of women in the ledger goes against other authors’ arguments that women were actively involved in consumerism during the mid-nineteenth century.

One segment of San Diego’s population that is noticeably absent from the ledger is those with Hispanic surnames. Whereas, in the Tasso’s ledger there was a significant amount of customers with Hispanic names, there are no such names in the Unidentified Store’s ledger. This finding is somewhat striking considering that a large portion of San Diego’s residents during this time were Hispanic. During the early stages of the Gold Rush, some of the first people to reach Northern California were people from Northern Mexico. By the early-1850s, the flow of people from Mexico subsided and San Diego saw an influx of migrants coming from the Eastern United States due to the Gold Rush hysteria and emphasis on westward migration in American culture. Many of the individuals that made the journey west during this period were from the East Coast and Midwest, where the populations primarily consisted of Northern Europeans and people who recently emigrated from Europe. With an influx of people migrating to California from these regions during the early to mid-1850s, there were more people settling in the region or passing through it with Anglo surnames. Therefore, since the Unidentified Store was oriented towards miners and businessmen, the ledger is a reflection of the pattern of who was migrating to California during the mid-1850s.

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145 Johnson, _Roaring Camp_, 142, 280.
146 Ibid., 107-109.
In addition to social and cultural aspects, the ledger also provides insight into the economic conditions of San Diego during this period. On the most basic level, the presence of the ledger itself indicates that by this time in the city’s history, capitalism was a key component of the city’s economy. The fact that the city had multiple stores, including the one that this ledger came from, indicates that capitalism was beginning to become engrained in the local economy. When reviewing the transactions that are recorded in the ledger, there are no clues or notes within the ledger that indicate that any of the transactions were settled as a result of bartering, like in the Tasso’s ledger. Instead, all of the transactions appear to be settled through the payment of cash.

Even though this might seem like a drastic change from the Tasso, it seems reasonable when considering the clientele of the Unidentified Store. The ledger reveals that half of the store’s customers were businesses from outside of the San Diego region. Since they came from outside of the region, they would be unable to barter labor or products in exchange for goods. Therefore it can be hypothesized that they would solely rely on paying for goods in cash. Since many of the store’s customers were businesses themselves, they would have cash readily available to pay for goods from the store. Additionally, many of the individuals who were passing through San Diego on their way to Northern California would not have a surplus of goods to barter. Due to the fact that the Gold Rush injected millions of dollars into the state’s economy it is not surprising that all of the transactions were paid for in full with cash.¹⁴⁷ Through this analysis, the ledger provides us with a window into how San Diego’s economy changed following the end of the hide and tallow trade. Between the late-1840s and early-1850s, San Diego’s economy shifted away from a system based on bartering and towards a sophisticated cash and carry system. Even though San Diego was on the periphery of the Gold Rush, it was still feeling the economic multiplier effects.

This aspect of the analysis of the Unidentified Store’s ledger seems to go against what other authors have argued about consumerism during this period. In their works, scholars such as T.H. Breen, William Leach, William Cronon, and Daniel E. Sutherland have argued that credit played an integral role in consumption during the early-modern period of consumerism. These scholars have noted that credit was readily available for consumers who

wished to purchase goods from stores like the Unidentified Store.\textsuperscript{148} However, none of the entries in the ledger indicate that the transactions were purchased on credit, which goes against these scholars’ arguments. Although, this aspect of the ledger does not indicate that credit was not readily available to customers in San Diego. Rather, it can be hypothesized that the sojourner nature of the customers that prevented them from buying their goods on credit. As Daniel E. Sutherland discusses in, \textit{The Expansion of Everyday Life 1860-1876}, “shopkeepers universally sold on credit to local people who requested it.”\textsuperscript{149} Since a majority of the customers in Unidentified Store’s ledger were not local residents of San Diego, it would have been impractical for them to sell goods to these sojourner customers on credit. Furthermore, it is also possible that the merchant who operated the Unidentified Store did not extend lines of credit to his customers; therefore, transactions were not purchased on credit.

One of the interesting aspects of the historiography of San Diego’s early history is that there is no mention of any form of production of goods in the region during the 1850s. For example, in Pourade’s discussion of the businesses in San Diego during the early-1850s, he does not mention that there were individuals or shops that manufactured or produced goods, aside from a blacksmith, carpenter, and M.M. Sexton’s slaughterhouse and small store.\textsuperscript{150} Besides this, there are no direct references in either author’s works to individuals who produced items like furniture, candles, clothing, or foodway items like plates, bowls, cups, or eating utensils. Additionally, in his work, Garcia discusses how “manufacturing in San Diego during this period barely existed.”\textsuperscript{151} This presents a dilemma of how the local stores, such as the Unidentified Store, obtained goods and products that they in turn sold to their customers. This problem is further compounded when taking into consideration the high volume of goods that the Unidentified Store was selling to its customers. With the


\textsuperscript{149} Sutherland, \textit{The Expansion of Everyday Life}, 190.  

\textsuperscript{150} Pourade, \textit{The Silver Dons}, 163-165.  

\textsuperscript{151} Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 61.}
tendency of the store’s customer base to purchase numerous goods and large quantities of
goods simultaneously, the store would need to have a direct link to producers or
manufacturers of goods in order to keep their shelves stocked.

Without any form of local production to be found in the works in San Diego’s early
history, it must be concluded that the local economy relied on importation to supply its stores
and residents with the products they needed and desired. This conclusion is supported by
David J. St. Clair’s argument in his essay, “The Gold Rush and Beginnings of California
Industry.” In his essay, St. Clair argues that California relied on importation because the
state lagged so far behind in the production of goods. Due to the emphasis on mining,
California and its limited number of manufacturers were more focused on the mining
industry and mining technology rather than the manufacturing of material goods. Therefore,
businessmen were “content to put their capital into the finished goods that came from the
East.”152 Despite the fact that San Diego’s economy had made great strides in the early part
of the 1850s, it appears that it was not developed enough to sustain the growth that it
experienced and manufacturers simply had no motivation to produce anything unrelated to
mining.

One other source that supplied San Diegans, and possibly even the local stores, with
the goods that they desired, was from outside of America. According to an 1854 bill of
lading, which was written in Spanish, Prudenciana L. de Moreno had ordered that a large
quantity of goods be shipped to her in San Diego. Within the bill of lading is a note from the
sender, Jose Matios Moreno, that the goods were loaded from an unknown location onto the
_Goliath_ on December 9, 1854, and shipped to Prudenciana.153 One aspect of the document
that stands out is the note that the order was sent on the ship _Goliath_, which was one of the
first steamships in California and was later operated by the Pacific Mail Company.154 The
second aspect of the bill of lading that stands out is the description in Spanish, of how the
goods were sent to America, which leads to the conclusion that the goods possibly came from

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153 Jose Matios Moreno, “Bill of Lading for Items for Prudenciana L. de Moreno,” Doc. File: Moreno, San
Diego History Center Document Archives, San Diego, CA.
154 Smythe, _History of San Diego: 1542-1908_, 150.
Mexico or Panama, where the Pacific Mail Company’s ships like the *Goliath* frequently ported.

Within the bill of lading is a description of 115 items that Prudenciana had sent to her in San Diego. Among the items that Prudenciana had shipped to her were children’s toys, chairs, tables, sofas, beds, blankets, clothing, carpet, fabric for curtains, wood window molding, lamps, picture frames, musical instruments, plates, cups and beer mugs, eating utensils, pitchers, and a gun. It is unclear though whether the items were ordered from a store, vendor, or due similarities in their last names, whether a family member had them shipped to Prudenciana. Despite this uncertainty, the presence of this bill of lading demonstrates that the residents of San Diego had the ability to turn to foreign or outside sources to provide them with goods.

Aside from obtaining goods from urban areas south of California, it appears that San Diegans, and possibly the local stores in the city, also relied upon businesses in San Francisco to supply them with goods. Due to its proximity to the Gold Rush, San Francisco became the commercial hub of importation during the 1850s. The *San Diego Herald* speaks to the rise of San Francisco as the commercial center of the state during the 1850s. Beginning in May of 1851, the *San Diego Herald* began publishing the city’s first weekly newspaper and continued operating until April of 1860.\(^{155}\) In their weekly publications, the *Herald* informed their readers on local, state, and national events and issues. In addition to these aspects, the *Herald* also included a rather extensive advertisement section in order to subsidize the newspaper’s publication and printing costs.

Considering that the newspaper was locally published and covered many local topics and issues, it is intriguing that there was always an emphasis on the San Francisco based businesses and companies who advertised in the paper over the ads for San Diego based businesses and companies; which indicates the degree to which San Diegans relied upon San Francisco merchants to provide them with goods. Throughout the newspaper’s run, the layout of the paper generally stayed the same, with the advertisement section on the first pages and the news stories on the preceding pages. Within the *Herald*’s advertisement section, there were two separate subsections, one for the San Francisco ads and one for the

\(^{155}\) Pourade, *The Silver Dons*, 171.
San Diego ads. In the actual layout of the paper, the newspaper always gave the most noticeable advertising space to the San Francisco ads over the local ads. Rather than placing the San Diego ads on the front page, the newspaper always placed the San Francisco ads on the front page and second page. Furthermore, the San Francisco section of the advertisements generally took up eight columns, whereas the San Diego ads were generally allotted only two columns. Aside from issuing the prime advertising space to outside advertisers, the newspaper included a disproportionate number of San Francisco ads compared to local ads. For example, in the July 31, 1851 edition of the Herald, there are 91 ads for San Francisco based companies and only 17 ads for San Diego based businesses, which equates to a 5:1 ratio of San Francisco advertisements to San Diego advertisements.\(^{156}\)

One justification for this imbalance could be due to the fact that San Francisco-based businesses had the funds to advertise in the Herald and local businesses opted not to advertise because the residents of San Diego were familiar with what stores were operating in town.

In the San Francisco advertisement section of the Herald, there are ads for an array of businesses and company that are based in San Francisco. For instance, there are ads in numerous editions of the Herald for Hobe & Weihe’s store, describing them as “Importers, Wholesale, and Retail Dealers of Choice Cigars, Smoking and Chewing Tobacco, Snuff, and Cigarritos.”\(^{157}\) Quite similarly, there are recurring ads in numerous editions of the newspaper for Jones Tobin & Co, who are “Importers of Fancy Millinery, Trimmings, Cutlery, Perfumery &c…&c.”\(^{158}\) As a whole, these ads for San Francisco based businesses cover everything that an individual would want or need. For example, in the July 31, 1851 advertisement section of the newspaper, there are a total of 91 advertisements for San Francisco based businesses. Of these 91 ads, there are five for luxury items like jewelry, three for clothing stores or companies, three for stores that specialize in food, tobacco, and

\(^{156}\) Advertisement Section, San Diego Herald, July 31, 1851.

\(^{157}\) Ibid., December 16, 1854.

\(^{158}\) Ibid., December 23, 1854.
liquor, five for stores that specialize in tools and building materials, and thirty-five for shipping companies and importers/commission merchants.\textsuperscript{159}

Of these advertisements, there are a disproportionate number of ads for companies that specialize in shipping and commission merchants. Commission merchants, like R.E. Raimond and J. Seligman & Co., were entrepreneurial businessmen who imported goods from the East Coast and Europe and then sold these imported goods to individuals or businesses. By employing the services of a commission merchants like R.E. Raimond or J. Seligman & Co., a resident of San Diego could place an order with one of these companies for certain items that they wanted and then have their order shipped to them. This is why many of the commission merchants who advertised in the \textit{Herald} also noted in their ads that they were a shipping business as well, which could explain the presence of Raimond’s name in the Unidentified Store ledger.

Commission merchants like Raimond and Seligman were the key links between San Francisco’s economy and San Diego’s economy. With the addition of steamships to the California coastline during the early part of the 1850s, it facilitated the movement of people northward to San Francisco and the movement of goods southward to San Diego. By advertising in the \textit{Herald}, San Francisco based businesses and companies were trying to attract the business of the residents of San Diego. Considering that it would be impractical for the residents of San Diego to travel to San Francisco to simply shop for goods, commission merchants and shipping companies provided the link between San Diego’s commercial sphere and their neighbors to the north.

Not only would this connection be beneficial to the citizens of San Diego, but to the local businesses as well. Considering that neither Smythe nor Pourade discuss the production of goods and products in the city during this period, there must have been a distributor or supply of goods that the local stores relied on to supply them with goods to stock their shelves. Although there is no definitive link between San Diego stores and these companies in San Francisco, aside from some of their names appearing in the Unidentified Store’s ledger, it is likely that these businesses and companies in Northern California provided some of San Diego’s stores with their merchandise. However, this is somewhat expected.

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., July 31, 1851.
considering that industrialization began in San Francisco much earlier than any other region on the frontier due to the need to supply gold miners with manufactured goods. Furthermore, it is quite possible that R.E. Raimond and his shipping business were one of the companies that were hired to transport these goods to the local stores.

Aside from simply trying to gain the business of San Diegans, these ads from companies and businesses in San Francisco could possibly have influenced San Diegans’ consumption habits. In many of the ads, businesses in the north advertise the more luxurious items that their stores carry, such as jewelry and fancy fabrics. Also, in many of the ads, the word “fancy” is used to describe items. For instance, in J. Seligman & Co.’s ad on July 31, 1851, they specifically note that they are importers of fancy American and European clothing and cutlery. Not only were these types of businesses advertising their higher end items to San Diegans, they were exposing them to American and European styles. Much like how the hide traders exposed the residents of the region to European styles of dress with their selection of Paris Robes. However, this is not an isolated instance of newspaper advertisements being used to influence consumer behavior. In, “The Consumer Frontier,” Elizabeth Perkins notes how the Kentucky Gazette contained similar ads to those in the Herald. Perkins discusses how there was a “flood of advertisements offering the latest goods and styles from Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and even London.” Rather than focusing on advertisements from the core market, both newspapers focused on ads from businesses in the periphery markets.

A significant aspect of the Unidentified Store ledger is that it provides historians with a window into how the focus of San Diego’s economy and business community shifted during the 1850s. With the onset of the Gold Rush in the late-1840s, countless numbers of individuals migrated to California with the hopes of striking it rich in the hills of Northern California. Aside from the miners who traveled to California as a result of the Gold Rush, there were also countless entrepreneurial businessmen who arrived in California in the late-1840s and 1850s who were hoping to “seize the opportunities that gold offered.”

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160 Ibid., July 31, 1851.
the Unidentified Store ledger it is possible to see how the Gold Rush and the subsequent flow of people to the state changed San Diego’s economy and business community during the 1850s. Even though a majority of these migrants and businessmen did not settle in San Diego, their layovers in the city benefitted the local economy. As more and more people utilized San Diego as a layover point during their voyages to and throughout California, San Diegans seized the opportunity by specializing their economy and focusing the gaze of their businesses towards these men. By targeting these types of customers and carrying the essential supplies that they needed, local businesses were able to capitalize on the Gold Rush and see a period of economic prosperity that enabled the local business community to flourish.

Even though San Diego was a peripheral region and there was hardly any form of production within the state, local businesses like the Unidentified Store found ways to circumvent these shortcomings. Through the emergence of steamships as the primary mode of transportation in the region, San Diego’s businesses were able to utilize these modes of transportation to import goods from other urban areas. By importing goods from urban regions like San Francisco and the East Coast, local businesses were able to stock their shelves with items that were highly desirable to their migrating customers. Furthermore, by shifting from a bartering system that was practiced during the hide trade, to a sophisticated cash and carry system in the late-1840s and 1850s, the local businesses were able to see high monetary returns. Through these actions, the city’s economy and business community went through a period of prosperity during the 1850s.

Aside from this, the ledger provides a window into how consumer tastes and consumption habits changed during this period of San Diego’s history. As the analysis of the ledger revealed, the majority of the store’s customers were people who were not from the region and were utilizing the city as a layover point. Since a majority of the store’s customers would be moving on from San Diego, either by land or by sea, they needed to travel light with only the bare essentials. Therefore, the store’s clientele tended to only purchase necessary items like clothing and food, as opposed to nonessential items like furniture and luxury items like jewelry and wine decanters. This pattern of behavior within the ledger is of significance because it reinforces the pattern of consumption that was found in the Tasso ledger as well as Delgado’s work, Gold Rush Port.
When comparing this pattern of behavior to the patterns of consumption in the *Tasso* ledger, there is a noticeable shift in the motivation behind people’s behaviors and patterns of consumption in the Unidentified Store ledger. In the *Tasso* ledger, the pattern of consumption by consumers was more directed towards consuming an array of manufactured goods that were useful within the home. However, this was not necessarily the case in the Unidentified Store ledger. Like their counterparts in the *Tasso* ledger, the store’s customers did have a tendency to purchase imported manufactured goods like clothing. However, the motivation behind the purchases recorded in the Unidentified Store ledger were more oriented towards purchasing necessary goods that could be transported and carried with them on their travels. Since a majority of the store’s customers were traveling from town to town and on their way to Northern California, they would need enough provisions and supplies to last them until they reached the next town. Due to the settlement patterns of California, the next town was usually a few days away. Therefore, people were purchasing these goods to ensure that they would have enough food and adequate clothing to survive the journey north. This is of significance because it represents a divergence and a shift in the reasoning behind consumers’ behaviors. In the *Tasso* ledger, consumers were purchasing goods as settlers and their patterns of consumption reflect this. In contrast, as the analysis of the Unidentified Store ledger reveals, consumers were purchasing as sojourners and their patterns of purchasing essential items that they then carried with them on their travels is a reflection of this. This transformation is of importance because it reveals a shift in the consumer culture in San Diego from the 1840s to the 1850s. Even though San Diego was still primarily pastoral at heart in the 1850s, changes in its consumer culture during this period reflect its progression towards a mercantile-based economy during this period of the city’s history.

Another continuing pattern of consumption that was present in both the *Tasso* ledger and the Unidentified Store ledger was the consumption of clothing. Much like the *Tasso* ledger, the consumption of clothing by the Unidentified Store’s clientele can be viewed as their attempts to assimilate into American culture. Through the importation of goods from San Francisco and New England, American industrial tastes and American consumer tastes were projected onto the people of the frontier. By purchasing goods such as clothing and food, people on the frontier were being introduced to these aspects of American culture. Furthermore, for those who came from the eastern parts of the Union, through their
consumption of these goods they were able to maintain certain cultural aspects even in this foreign land.\textsuperscript{163}

Aside from these aspects, the analysis of the Unidentified Store ledger is of importance because it reveals a handful of similarities and differences with other works on consumerism during this period. As has been discussed, the pattern of consumption by the customers of the Unidentified Store ledger is very similar to Delgado’s analysis of Mickle & Co.; in particular, his discussion of the consumption of necessary goods over luxury goods in California during this period.\textsuperscript{164} Additionally, this research’s analysis on the absence of female customers in the ledger supports other scholars’ observation regarding the disproportionate number of males to females in California during the 1850s. However, this research has analyzed certain aspects of the ledger that seem to go against other works on consumerism during the period in question. While San Diego contained certain characteristics of the early-modern period of consumerism, such as the spread of stores, the expansion of advertising, and the consumption of clothing, other characteristics were absent. For instance, at least at the Unidentified Store, shoppers avoided purchasing goods on credit and shied away from purchasing household items.\textsuperscript{165} Lastly, this thesis’ analysis of the consumption of clothing is of importance because it provides additional quantitative data to supplement other qualitative research. For example, this thesis has provided additional insight into certain types of goods such as clothing and fabric that might last in the ground and therefore be available for analysis by archaeologist like Delgado.

As a whole, the Unidentified Store’s ledger is of significance because it reveals that San Diego’s economy and business community became very specialized during the late-1840s and 1850s. By specializing as a layover point for travelers, the local economy was able to experience a period of prosperity that resulted in an injection of money into the region. Furthermore, by orienting their businesses to these travelers, the local businesses were able to capitalize on the Gold Rush and see a period of success for their businesses. In

\textsuperscript{163} Ray Allen Billington, \textit{The American Frontier} (Washington: Service Center for Teachers of History, 1965), 27.

\textsuperscript{164} Delgado, \textit{Gold Rush Port}, 110.

\textsuperscript{165} Stearns, “Stages of Consumerism,” 106.
turn, both of these acts led to a short period of growth and success for the city. In addition to these, the ledger is of significance because it demonstrates how consumers in San Diego still relied on importation to provide them with highly desirable manufactured goods. Despite the fact that luxury items were available in the market, consumers continued their pattern of purchasing only essential goods. Even though their motivation for purchasing these goods changed from the time of the Tasso ledger, consumers still relied on the market to provide them with essential items. Furthermore, the Unidentified Store ledger documents San Diego’s Anglo-American roots and is a reflection of how the Gold Rush brought a period of prosperity to San Diego that led to the city becoming increasingly settled during the 1850s.
CHAPTER 4

E.W. MORSE, A BUSINESS AND CONSUMERS IN
ROUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

For many of the gold prospectors who had traveled to Northern California, they dreamed of striking it rich and making a new life for themselves and their families on the new frontier. However, shortly after the Gold Rush began, these miners began to realize that most of the gold that was easily accessible had already been collected. Although there was a short period of hope and excitement about the potential profits that could be had, in the end, the Gold Rush and its allure fizzled away.

Much like the experience of the gold miners in Northern California, San Diego’s period of prosperity had reached its apex. As San Diego entered into the latter part of the 1850s, the city was riding a wave of success and optimism that was fueled by events that occurred in California during the early years of the American period. As a result of the Gold Rush, the emergence of steamships traveling the coastline transporting people and goods, and the mass migration of people coming to California from all parts of the world, San Diego’s economy and business community was steadily progressing and becoming more complete. In addition to this, by the end of the 1850s San Diego shifted from a sojourners town to a town of settled people with roots in the city. By the late-1850s, the tides began to change and this period of prosperity in San Diego began to wane and give way to harder times.

Throughout the Mexican and early-American periods of San Diego’s history, cattle and ranching had formed the basis of the city’s economy. During the Mexican period of San Diego’s history, American merchants from the East Coast sailed to California in order to procure cattle hides and tallow from San Diegans. However, by the end of this period, the trade virtually disappeared due to economic factors on the side of the East Coast merchants. Although this would seemingly hurt San Diego’s economy, Californios and rancheros found new customers for their products. With the influx of people from all over the world migrating to Northern California in the search for gold, the gold miners became the primary consumers of the local rancheros cattle and beef.
However, by 1855, San Diegans’ business with their neighbors in Northern California began to diminish. The decline of this trade can partially be attributed to events in Northern California. As Mario T. Garcia points out in “Merchants and Dons,” when a downturn in mining activities occurred during the middle and later part of the 1850s, the result was a decrease in the demand for beef by those in the goldfields.\(^{166}\) To further compound the problem, the California cattle market began to depress in 1855, leading to diminished returns for the rancheros. In 1851 a head of cattle fetched as much as $500, and by 1855 the market price had dropped drastically to $5 a head. To make matters even worse, in the winter of 1856-1857 San Diego received hardly any rain, and the grazing lands that the local rancheros used dried up and could not support the large numbers of cattle that rancheros were accustomed to rearing.\(^{167}\) With the decline and lack of success of the ranching industry in San Diego in the mid-to-late-1850s, San Diego was left with no broad-based economic engine to drive the economy.

The repercussions of the economic downturn in the 1850s became publically evident in December of 1854 when the \emph{San Diego Herald} began publishing lists of delinquent taxes owed by local residents. With the rancheros losing their customers in Northern California and the general economic downturn, many people simply could not afford to pay their taxes and Californios were forced to sell their lands.\(^{168}\) To make matters even worse, in the early-1860s San Diego was dealt another harsh blow to its economy when war broke out between the Northern and Southern states. As Beatrice Knott and Bruce Canton discuss in their respective works, during this period of American history there was a national shortage of money primarily due to the Civil War.\(^{169}\) Due to this shortage, people barely had enough currency to provide for themselves and their families, and San Diego’s economic problems worsened.

Despite the economic downturns that the city experienced during this period and the lack of a broad-based economic engine, the residents of the city were determined to

\(^{166}\) Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 68.

\(^{167}\) Pourade, \emph{The Silver Dons}, 169, 212.

\(^{168}\) Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 68. Pourade, \emph{The Silver Dons}, 206.

persevere and make San Diego into one of the premiere cities on the western frontier. According to Mario T. Garcia, by “the mid-1850s, it became apparent to a number of San Diegans, principally the merchants, that the economy of the town needed stimulation” and diversification.\(^{170}\) As Pourade discusses, during this period, San Diego was virtually walled off from the rest of the commercial world.\(^{171}\) Throughout the city’s history, San Diego had been plagued by its remoteness and its inaccessibility to the rest of the world, and now the rest of the Union. More than any other period in San Diego’s early history, during the mid-1850s and into the 1860s, there was a conscious effort on the behalf of the citizens of San Diego to transform the city’s economy and establish ties and connections with the rest of the Union in order to enable their city to thrive economically and commercially.

Even though the cattle sector of San Diego’s economy took a turn for the worst in the mid- to late-1850s, another one of San Diego’s natural resources became of great interest to New England merchants in the latter part of the 1850s. As Pourade discusses in *The Silver Dons*, the prosperity of the United States and the growth of its national population during the nineteenth-century created an increased demand for products like oil, lubricants, and candles. Rather than using cattle tallow, Americans became more reliant on whale blubber and bones for these products.\(^{172}\)

However, whaling was not a new activity in California and San Diego. In fact, it had been practiced in the region dating back to before the Mexican American War. One of the primary targets for whalers prior to the Mexican War and during the late-1850s and 1860s was the California Gray Whale, which migrated from the northern Pacific Ocean down to warmer waters in Lower California every winter. Much like the hide trade in the previous decades, the New England whalers used San Diego and its harbor as a place to port for repairs and to obtain supplies. Additionally, like the hide traders, these whalers brought goods from New England to barter for service on their ships and supplies for their crew.\(^{173}\) At first, San Diegans were excited about the possible success of whaling in San Diego. In

\(^{170}\) Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 72.  
\(^{172}\) Ibid., 231-233.  
\(^{173}\) Ibid., 233-234.
the early months of the 1859 editions of the *Herald*, the paper reported with delight the ability of whalers to kill and capture whales off of the coast. The paper reported that about a dozen whales had been killed in the first months of the year, five of which were successfully brought to port. From these whales, the paper estimated 1509 barrels of oil could be extracted from the five whales, netting $2,000 worth of oil. Due to the initial success of the whaling fleets, the Herald suggested that as many as one hundred jobs could be created from this trade.\textsuperscript{174} Although there was much optimism about the possible success of whaling in San Diego, for the local merchants and the creation of jobs, it remained a limited venture and its full potential was never realized.

One of the first attempts by the inhabitants of San Diego to stimulate the economy and create commerce was through trade ties with Mormon settlements in San Bernardino and the Great Salt Lake Valley. The initial idea of establishing trading ties with the Mormons began in 1852 when Mormon settlements in San Bernardino began looking for an outlet on the Pacific to supply them with goods. With an outlet on the Pacific, the Mormon settlements could have goods shipped to San Diego and then transported to San Bernardino and the Utah territory. However, the idea to establish a trading relationship was initially hindered by the inability to find a suitable route through the San Bernardino Mountains. The idea was shelved for two years until Colonel W.C. Ferrell resurrected the idea at a public meeting in 1854. According to Ferrell, despite all of San Diego’s natural advantages, chiefly its harbor and climate, the city remained economically retarded. Ferrell argued further that if a road could be opened from Temecula to the San Diego, essentially connecting the city and the San Bernardino Valley, then the city and its merchants could reap millions of dollars worth of trade.\textsuperscript{175} Despite the possible financial gains and the best intentions of San Diegans to stimulate their economy, the plan fell apart due to a lack of funding for the proposed road. In the May 12, 1855 edition of the *Herald*, the paper’s editor John Ames, spoke out against the businessmen of San Diego for their failure by saying, “It seems to us that the merchants

\textsuperscript{174} Ibid., 237-238.

\textsuperscript{175} Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” “IX.”
of this place, who will be the ones to reap the most immediate benefits… do not stir on this matter.”

Despite the failure of the trade route between San Diego and the Mormon settlements in San Bernardino and the Utah territory, other possibilities arose that would potentially benefit San Diego’s economy and connect the western frontier to the rest of the Union. On June 14, 1857, John Birch, president of the California Stage Company, was awarded a federal contract to carry mail between San Antonio and San Diego. The mail route, which would operate a two-way service, twice a month, would carry mail and passengers along the Southern Route and Gila Trail. In addition to simply carrying mail from the Southwest to San Diego, the mail service would provide San Diego with a permanent link to the rest of the Union that the city and its residents desired for many years.

During the 1850s, the idea and desire arose to construct a transcontinental railroad that would connect the new western frontier with the rest of the Union. In both state and national politics during this decade, there was a heated debate as to whether the transcontinental railroad would be built on a central route across the Sierra Nevada Mountain range to San Francisco or a southern route to Southern California. Birch’s contract to carry mail between San Antonio and San Diego was of great importance to San Diegans because it was seen as a precursor to the establishment of railroad if it was successful. From 1857 to 1861, the southern mail service operated between San Diego and San Antonio. Aside from delivering mail, the mail service also transported people from the Midwest and Southwest to San Diego. Despite the fact that the Great Overland contract for the transcontinental railroad was awarded to John Butterfield and his central route to San Francisco instead the southern route, the mail service still continued.

Instead of sitting around idly and letting political entities decide the fate of the transcontinental railroad, San Diegans took an active approach towards campaigning for San Diego to be the western terminus of the Atlantic to Pacific railroad. As one author points out, San Diegans knew that if the transcontinental railroad terminated in San Diego it would

176 San Diego Herald, May 12, 1855, 2.
177 Pourade, The Silver Dons, 218.
178 Ibid., 219-222.
do much more than connect their city with the states in the east. According to Garcia, “San Diegans, specifically the merchant class understood that without such a railroad connection, San Diego had little hope of prospering and even less of a chance of becoming a great commercial center.” One of the most significant steps that the inhabitants of San Diego took to improve their chances of winning the western terminus of the railroad was the formation of the San Diego and Gila, Southern Pacific and Atlantic Railroad Company. Local merchants are residents, such as Louis Rose, George Lyons, Louis Strauss, E.W. Morse, J.W. Robinson, and others who had the most to gain from the potential establishment of the western terminus in the city, became heavily involved with the company and invested in its stock. The efforts of San Diegans and the San Diego and Gila, Southern Pacific and Atlantic Railroad Company proved futile when in 1859 the U.S. Senate struck down the Pacific Rail Road Bill, which would have authorized the southern railroad route, and the Pacific Railroad Convention voted in favor of San Francisco instead of San Diego to be the western terminus.

Even though San Diego fell upon hard times in the late-1850s and early-1860s, the city’s population still continued to grow as more and more people continued to migrate to the western frontier from other places in the Union. From 1850 to 1860, San Diego’s population grew from 798 residents to 4,324 by the end of the decade. Although this would seemingly benefit San Diego’s economy and rejuvenate its business community, this population increase proved problematic. As Richard Pourade discusses, many of the city’s new residents chose to reside outside of the town in order to pursue farming and ranching opportunities. Despite the dramatic increase in San Diego’s population during this decade, there were still undeveloped sectors of the city’s business community. In one of the Herald’s weekly publications there were complaints about how the town still lacked a tailor, watchmaker, gunsmith, and mechanics. The paper went on to comment about the lack of

179 Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 73.
180 Ibid., 73, 76.
181 Ibid., 76.
182 Ibid., 76.
183 Pourade, The Silver Dons, 243.
development in the city by saying, “San Diego is now the largest and thinnest populated county in the state, yet it could be made richest, most populous. A little wise statesmanship and masterly activity is all that is necessary to make everybody rich, happy and contented.” Rather than pursuing professions in the city, many of San Diego’s newest residents hoped to follow in the footsteps of the Californios and try their hand in the cattle sector where the Californios had made great profits in the past.

During the late-1850s and early-1860s, San Diego fell upon hard economic times as the economy slowed down and the honeymoon of the Gold Rush began to wear off. Recognizing this, San Diegans made conscious efforts to develop their economy and diversify their business community in order to enable their city to thrive and secure their town’s future prosperity. At each turn though, when San Diegans tried to improve their local economy, branch out, and diversify their commerce, they were dealt a harsh blow. Whether it was competition from other cities in the region taking away their business or the federal government’s inability to recognize the potential of San Diego to become a prominent town on the frontier, the residents of San Diego just could not catch a break.

San Diego’s economy was dealt another harsh blow in 1861 as a result of tensions between Northern and Southern states in the Union that led to the Civil War. Although a majority of the Civil War’s conflicts and military actions took place in the Eastern and Southeastern states, the war between the North and South had a profound impact on San Diego and the western frontier. During the course of the war, the flow of goods from the East Coast to the West Coast was halted due to wartime conservation efforts and fears of foreign forces capturing California. As a result of the discontinuation of the flow of goods from the East and the general economic downturn that was occurring, San Diego’s economy sunk even deeper into depression. What hindered San Diego’s economy even more was lack of available money due to wartime conservation. In an 1861 letter to Thomas

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184 Ibid., 243.
Whaley, A.S. Ensworth reiterated this fact by writing that, “The fact is, there is literally & truly no money in this country,” and that, “things down this way, have come to head.”

Even though San Diego had fallen upon hard times, many businesses in San Diego carried on and continued to fight through the turbulent economic times. One of San Diego’s most prominent businessmen during this period of the city’s history was Ephraim W. Morse, who operated a general merchandise store in Old Town. Ephraim W. Morse, also known as E.W. Morse, was one of the hundreds of thousands of people who came to California during the Gold Rush. In 1853, Morse entered into San Diego’s business community when he became a partner in Thomas Whaley’s general store in Old Town and then ran the business by himself from 1854 until 1858. After leaving the mercantile business in 1858, Morse opened his own general store in Old Town in 1861, and operated it until 1869. Although Morse’s own store was not always profitable, the collection of his store ledgers from the 1860s indicates that he maintained a large clientele and had a high volume of daily customers. Through an analysis of E.W. Morse’s ledger from the year 1865, it is possible to gain insight into the economic conditions of this period in San Diego’s history, as well as the consumption habits of Morse’s customers.

E.W. Morse’s ledger from the 1865 business year contains thousands of entries that record the daily business transactions that he conducted with the residents of San Diego. One of the problematic aspects of statistically analyzing this source is the sheer size of the ledger. In order to make the source more manageable for statistical analysis, a one-week sample was taken of each month. By recording and tabulating the first four days and last three days of every month, a one-week sample of every month was gathered and statistically analyzed. Therefore, the data and findings that are presented do not represent the entire ledger, rather a sample of the ledger.

\[186\] The letter from A.S. Ensworth to Thomas Whaley is discussed in, Pourade, *The Silver Dons*, 249.


\[188\] E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, MS 144, Box 4, San Diego History Center Document Archive, San Diego, CA.
Much like the other ledgers that have been analyzed thus far, E.W. Morse’s store ledger provides a wealth of detail about the store and its customers. In the process of recording customers’ purchases in the ledger, Morse recorded the customer’s name, what they bought, the quantity and cost of what they purchased, and the total price of their transaction. Within the sample of data from E.W. Morse’s ledger, there are 1,080 separate transactions that were analyzed. In all the entries analyzed, E.W. Morse’s customers spent a total of $7,776.73 at the store, which equates to an average of $7.53 per transaction.\(^\text{189}\) When comparing this average to the \textit{Tasso} and Unidentified Store ledgers, there is a noticeable decline in the average amount of money that customers spent. In the \textit{Tasso} ledger, customers spent an average of $32 per transaction, and in the Unidentified Store ledger customers spent an average of $105 per transaction. This dramatic decline serves as a reflection of the downturn of the economy in the 1860s as well as the lack of continued success in gold mining.\(^\text{190}\) Additionally, this decline in the average amount of money spent by Morse’s customers is possibly an indication that his customers shopped at his store more frequently than the customers of the other two ledgers. Therefore, their spending was dispersed over a period of time rather than concentrated in one purchase.

Despite the fact that there are 1080 transactions in the data set, there is little difference between how much money people spent. However, there are certain outliers within the data set in terms of total. On one hand, there are outlier entries, like Martin Trimmer’s transaction on January 4, 1865, where customers only spent ten cents.\(^\text{191}\) On the other hand, there are transactions where customers such as Delfina Mining Co. spent as much as six hundred dollars.\(^\text{192}\) In general though, as Table 12 demonstrates, a large majority of the store’s customers spent between $1 and $10. Despite the fact that there is a bimodal distribution of the data, with two distinct peaks in the sample, a vast majority of the store’s

\(^{189}\) E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, passim.

\(^{190}\) The decline in the average amount of money spent by Morse’s customers could also be an indication that his clientele shopped at his store more frequently than the customers of the other two ledgers. Therefore, their spending would have been dispersed over a period of time rather than being concentrated in just one purchase. However, since this study is analyzing a sample of the ledger it is difficult to support this claim. If future researchers conduct an analysis of the entire ledger it might support or disprove this claim.

\(^{191}\) E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, January 4, 1865.

\(^{192}\) Ibid., August 29, 1865.
Table 12. Bimodal Dispersion of Transaction Totals in E.W. Morse Ledger

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$0-$10</td>
<td>888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10-$20</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20-$30</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30-$40</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40-$50</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50-$60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60-$70</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70-$80</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80-$90</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$90-$100</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 &amp; Beyond</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: There were 46 entries that did not have a total, thus they were excluded from the table.

Customers spent close to the average spent for the ledger. This pattern is of significance because it further emphasizes how the economic downturn of the 1860s effected consumers on a daily basis and led to a retraction of consumers’ spending habits.

One of the most interesting aspects of the ledger is that Morse almost always recorded the customer’s first name and surname when he tabulated their purchases into his account book. Morse went to great lengths in recording the names of his customers that he regularly included abbreviated titles, such as Miss Walker and Mrs. Anderson, in his records. Morse’s meticulous attention to detail enabled the analysis of his customer base and differences between consumption habits of different groups. One of the most noticeable aspects of Morse’s customers is that a vast majority of them were local customers who were residents of San Diego. Many of the names that are listed in the ledger as customers of Morse’s store, are also found in the works of Smythe and Pourade. This aspect is of importance because it reflects a transition in the nature of who is shopping in San Diego. Whereas in the Unidentified Store ledger where many of the customers were sojourners and not residents of
San Diego, the customers of Morse’s store had established roots to San Diego and were settled people.

When analyzing the customers of Morse’s store, there are a few distinct trends that the ledger reveals. One of which is the contrast between the consumption habits of males versus females. According to the 1860 Census, San Diego had a total population of 4,324 people in 1860. Furthermore, there were 2,016 females and 2,308 males in the county at the time of the census. In the ledger there are 180 instances in which a female’s name was listed as the purchaser of the items, compared to 842 entries in which male’s names are listed as the purchaser. Even though there were far more transactions made by males, the ledger reveals that this sphere was one where both men and women actively participated. In addition to these entries, there were 57 instances in which a company name was listed in the name column, and only once was there no name. Therefore, female names account for 17 percent of the transactions in the ledger, male account for 78 percent of the transactions, and businesses account for the remaining 5 percent of the transactions in the E.W. Morse ledger.

When analyzing the consumption habits of females compared to males, there is a rather stark difference between the two groups. Females, who spent a total of $368.95 at Morse’s store, spent an average of $2.05 per transaction. This is compared to males, who spent a total of $6,902.03, or an average of $7.34 per transaction. Even though there were far more men in the ledger, which would tend to dilute the averages, the males in the ledger still managed to spend more than three times the amount of money than their female counterparts.

Despite the disparity in the total amount of money spent and average transaction totals between men and women, their purchasing habits were quite similar. As Table 13 shows there was uniformity in the consumption patterns of males and females within the E.W. Morse ledger. The largest difference in the consumption patterns between the two groups was in the Food and Beverage category, with a difference of only four percent. Of

194 E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, passim.
195 Ibid., passim.
Table 13. Similarities in Male and Female Consumption Habits in E.W. Morse Ledger: Percentage of Transactions that Included Each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Items</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Items</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Items</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools &amp; Materials</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the nine categories in the data set, male customers purchased only three categories more often than females. Similarly, females purchased only three of the data set’s categories more than males. One of the largest differences between the two groups is in the consumption of goods from the Food and Beverage category. Items from this category were in sixty-six percent of women’s transactions and only sixty-two percent of men’s transactions.

Although this might appear to be a slight difference, the tendency of women to purchase these types of items more frequently is in agreement with other research on women’s roles during this period. In her work, *Women’s Roles in Nineteenth-Century America*, Tiffany K. Wayne discusses how during the nineteenth-century, “women were still primarily defined by their roles in childbearing and rearing, food preparation and cooking.”

Due to Wayne’s observation regarding the roles of women as the primary caretaker of food preparation and cooking in nineteenth-century households, the higher consumption of items from the Food and Beverage Category by women in the ledger seems to be in agreement with Wayne’s research. However, throughout the ledger women only account for roughly seventeen percent of all of the transactions recorded in the ledger. Even

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though women are more present in the Morse ledger than the Tasso ledger and the Unidentified Store ledger combined, they are still do not make up a significant percentage of the store’s clientele. Due to this, this specific aspect of the ledger appears to go against Merish and Breen’s arguments that women were active consumers during this period.197

As Table 13 reveals, Morse’s female customers were more likely to purchase items used in the home sphere, such as furniture, sewing accessories and textiles, and food and beverages. This pattern of behavior by the store’s female customers is of significance because it provides us with a window into social and cultural aspects of early San Diego. In his work, The Mexican Frontier, Weber discusses how in Mexican frontier culture, women “were responsible for maintaining the household.”198 Additionally, in their works, Laslett, Perkins, and Myers discuss how in American frontier homes, the home was primarily the women’s sphere.199 The pattern of behavior in the E.W. Morse ledger reveals that earlier Mexican and American social and cultural values of the roles of women in the domestic sphere were still engrained in San Diego’s culture during the 1860s. Or perhaps these differences between the consumption habits of males and females is a result of women from more affluent families or higher classes shopping at Morse’s store.

Due to the social and cultural emphasis of women in the domestic sphere, Brian Roberts points out that frontier women were essentially, “Cut off from the world of cash and commodity exchange.”200 One aspect of the three ledgers that reflect Roberts’ claim is the limited appearance of female customers in the three ledgers. In the Tasso ledger female customers accounted for only eleven percent of the total transactions, in the Unidentified Store ledger this group was not present in any of the transactions, and in the Morse ledger female customers accounted for only sixteen percent of the total transactions. This pattern of consumption within the three ledgers not only reflects the limited role of frontier women in

200 Roberts, American Alchemy, 73.
cash and commodity exchanges but it also reflects how social and cultural values regarding the roles of men and women during this period transcended these three ledgers.

In addition to analyzing the consumption habits of males and females, the diligence of E.W. Morse in his recording of names enables this research to analyze issues of ethnicity within the ledger as well. By comparing the spending habits of customers with Hispanic and Asian surnames to those with Anglo surnames, it is possible to see if there were any differences in the consumption habits of these two groups. In the ledger there are 139 instances where the customer’s name has a distinctly Asian or Hispanic surname, such as Valdivia, Alvarado, or Jue. However, one group that is noticeable missing from E.W. Morse’s ledger are Native Americans, who accounted for 3,067 of San Diego’s total population of 4,324 people.201 On occasion, Morse even referred to his customer’s ethnicity in the ledger when he recorded their names.202 As a group, those with Hispanic and Asian surnames spent a total of $782.05 and the rest of the data set spent a total of $6,994.69. This equates to an average transaction of $6.41 for those with Hispanic and Asian surnames and $6.71 for those with Anglo surnames.203

When comparing these figures, the data reveals that there was only a slight difference of thirty cents between the average transactions total for those with Hispanic and Asian surnames and those with Anglo surnames.204 Much like the analysis of males and females in the ledger, there was very little difference between what types of items those with Hispanic and Asian surnames and Caucasian surnames consumed. Therefore, their consumption habits in terms of how much money they spent and what they purchased differed only slightly.

201 University of Virginia Library, “Census Data for the Year 1860.”
202 In her article, “Reading Between the Lines (Of a Business Ledger),” Beatrice Knott also found this in her analysis of Morse’s ledger from 1864. Beatrice Knott, “Reading Between the Lines (Of a Business Ledger),” 209.
203 E.W. Morse Daybook, passim.
204 One of the limitations of this specific part of the study is the inability to state what portion of San Diego’s population were Hispanic and Asian. In the 1860 Census, there is no category for people of Hispanic descent; rather, Hispanic residents were categorized as being “White” by the census takers. According to the Census though, the city’s “White” population was 1,249 in 1860. Also, the Census fails to list any Asian residents of the city at the time of the census. University of Virginia Library, “Census Data for the Year 1860.”
This similarity between the consumption habits of customers with Asian and Hispanic surnames compared to the customers with Anglo surnames is somewhat difficult to justify due to a lack of research on this topic by other scholars as well as the limited amount of data included in the census records of the time. However, within the ledger, customers with Asian and Hispanic surnames are rather underrepresented. One possible explanation for the higher number of customers with Anglo surnames compared to Asian and Hispanic surnames in the ledger is due to social shifts that occurred in California during the 1860s. From the 1840s until the 1860s, with the increased flow of Anglos arriving in California the pendulum began to shift, as Anglos slowly became the dominant group in California and controlled a majority of the state’s wealth. By the 1860s though, Anglos had clearly replaced the Californios as the dominant group in California. Additionally, other authors have added how by the 1860s Anglos had obtained the better paying and more stable jobs in California and presumably had more disposable income to shop at stores like E.W. Morse’s store regularly. Taking both of these social shifts into consideration, it provides a possible explanation for why customers with Anglo surnames appear in the ledger more regularly.

In addition to providing insight into issues of race and gender, the list of customers’ names in the ledger adds to our understanding of who was in San Diego during this period. Amongst the lists of customers’ names are some of the most well known residents of San Diego during this period. For instance, names such as Juan Bandini, Cave Couts, Thomas Whaley, Louis Rose, Jose Estudillo, John Forster, and Robert Israel regularly appear in the ledger. However, there are certain names in the ledger that standout from the rest, such as Captain Dye, Captain Lord, Lt. Haycock, Captain Wilcox, and other names that have official abbreviations before the name. When cross-referencing these names, such as Captain Wilcox, with the works on early San Diego’s history it is revealed that some of these


207 Further statistical research of the 1860 census, in particular on the distribution of wealth and land in San Diego, might prove or disprove this specific argument.
individuals were captains of ships that frequented San Diego. Other abbreviations such as the “Lt.” before Lt. Haycock’s name, clearly communicate that the individual was a member of the United States military. During the early to mid-1860s, there was a sizeable Union military presence in San Diego due to the fear that the Confederacy or foreign forces were planning to capture portions of the Southwest. This explains the presence of individuals with military ranking abbreviations before their name in the ledger. Additionally, the spending habits of these individuals were rather modest and their purchases generally contained civilian types of goods such as food and other essential items. What this observation hints at, is that Morse’s store not only supplied the residents of San Diego with goods and necessities, but it also served people who were visiting the city or perhaps that the military forces that were stationed in San Diego used Morse’s store as a base commissary. This observation demonstrates that the business practice of targeting visitors to San Diego from the Gold Rush days were still practiced in San Diego during the 1860s.

Aside from examining the ledger based on the customers’ gender and ethnicity, it is also possible to examine broader issues that pertain to the entire sample. One means of shedding light on the daily consumption habits of San Diegans is to analyze what types of items Morse’s customers bought most frequently. The most frequently purchased item in the sample of the ledger was the Food and Beverage category, which was included in 675 of the 1080 transactions. This equates to sixty-two percent of all of the transactions. The second most frequently purchased category of items was the Clothing category, which was included in thirteen percent of the purchases. The third most frequently purchased categories of items were goods from the Personal Items category and the Tools and Materials category, items from both categories were included in over eight percent of all transactions. What is most interesting about these findings is the large difference between the frequencies in which these categories were purchased. As Table 14 demonstrates, the Food and Beverage category was included in far more transactions than any other category of items. Whereas foods and

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208 Smythe, History of San Diego 1542-1908, 95.
210 E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, passim.
Table 14. E.W. Morse Ledger: Number and Percentage of Transactions that Included Each Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
<th>Percentage of Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverages</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools &amp; Materials</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Items</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Items</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: Total of 1080 transactions in E.W. Morse ledger

beverages were included in over sixty percent of all transactions, seven of the nine categories were included in less than ten percent of all transactions.

Another important aspect of Table 14 is that it reveals the wide variety of goods that Morse sold at his store. Through this, it is possible to see similarities between Morse’s store and other stores that researchers discuss in their own works. In Mark Groover’s, *An Archaeological Study of Rural Capitalism and Material Life*, and Daniel Sutherland’s, *The Expansion of Everyday Life 1860-1876*, each author discusses and analyzes the types of goods that merchants typically sold in their stores. According to each author, general merchants like Morse, during this period of early-modern consumerism, typically sold goods such as groceries, hardware, kitchen goods, personal items, furniture, and dry goods such as clothing and textiles. Based upon the analysis of the types of goods listed in the E.W. Morse ledger, it appears as though Morse’s store is quite similar to Groover and Sutherland’s research on the inventory of goods that general merchants sold during this period. Thus, drawing a parallel between Morse’s store and broader national patterns of commerce during the mid-nineteenth-century.

As the Table 15 demonstrates, Morse’s customers tended to purchase items that were essential to their daily activities instead of purchasing luxury and expendable items. Throughout the ledger, one of the most commonly purchased categories of items by far was the Food and Beverage group, which also had some of the highest frequencies as well. Within this category some of the most frequently purchased items were sugar which was purchased 171 times, tobacco 134 times, and alcohol 127 times, coffee 109 times, species/extracts 105 times, fruits/vegetables 94 times, and bread and flour which were both purchased 69 times. All of these are items that both Smythe and Clarence McGrew found to be typical of the diets of San Diegans during this timeframe. In fact, no other items outside of the Food and Beverage category were purchased more than one hundred times. Despite this, other essential items that would be used on a daily basis, like shoes, soap, candles, and shirts also had high frequencies. This data reveals there is a rather large and significant drop-off from the pattern of consumption of necessary items to nonessential items in the ledger.

This pattern of consumption within the ledger serves as a window into the tendency of Morse’s customers to purchase necessary items over items that could be considered expendable and nonessential to their daily lives. Due to the economic downturn and lack of money in San Diego during the 1860s, it appears that San Diegans’ limited their spending to items that were essential to their daily lives. Items such as food, beverages, soap, candles, and clothing are items that would fall under the category of immediate consumption. Morse’s customers would use these types of items on a daily basis; therefore, they were more essential than other items and would need to be purchased more frequently. By limiting their purchases to these types of essential items, Morse’s customers were reflecting the poor state of the economy during the 1860s and how consumers tend to economize their spending during rough economic times and make due with less.

One aspect of this part of the analysis that stands out is the consumption of clothing from Morse’s store. Despite the fact that clothing items were purchased far more than

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213 E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, passim.
Table 15. Top Three Most Frequently Purchased Items From Each Category of E.W. Morse Ledger in 1865

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of Transactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverages</td>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shirts</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pants</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>Soap</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Handkerchiefs</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brushes/Combs</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools &amp; Materials</td>
<td>Rope</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Screws/Nails</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles &amp; Sewing Access.</td>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calico</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thread</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>Candles</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linens/Blankets</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oil/Wicking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Items</td>
<td>Caps/Wads/Powder</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stationary</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Books</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>Matches</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pocket Knives</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pails/Buckets</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Items</td>
<td>Tea/Coffee Equipment</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pans</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cups</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
textiles and sewing accessories, the analysis reveals that these items were purchased together with some frequency. In the 81 entries in which textiles and sewing accessories were included, the data reveals thirty-seven percent of the time these items were purchased with clothing items as well.\textsuperscript{214} Even though people preferred to buy pre-manufactured clothing, they still consumed unfinished products like textiles and sewing accessories that would enable them to create their own household goods, or perhaps, alter or repair their own clothing.\textsuperscript{215} Or, another possibility that is of significance, is that due to the harsh economic times people reverted back to making some of their own goods as a way to save money.

Another significant aspect of consumers’ pattern of consuming clothing is that it potentially serves as a reflection of their attempts to assimilate into American society and culture. As Starr discuss in, \textit{Rooted in Barbarous Soil}, the American frontier was about “amalgamation, assimilation, and transformation of peoples and cultures.”\textsuperscript{216} Through their consumption of imported American clothing, individuals on the frontier could assimilate into American culture and society by adopting an American style of dress.\textsuperscript{217}

As a whole though, the types of goods that were purchased from E.W. Morse’s Store seem to be on par with research on consumerism during the 1860s and 1870s. In, “Retail Prices After 1850,” Ethel D. Hoover analyzes family expenditures during the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century and the specific types of goods that shoppers were purchasing during this period in the eastern and southeastern part of the United States. Utilizing weekly retail price indexes Hoover argues that during the mid-nineteenth-century family purchases and expenditures in America primarily focused on food, clothing, rent, fuel and light, and other items such as furniture and household equipment.\textsuperscript{218} Additionally, the author utilizes a

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., passim.

\textsuperscript{215} In “Reading Between the Lines,” Beatrice Knott makes this same argument (211), using Morse’s store ledger from 1864.


survey of families from Massachusetts in 1875 to examine how family expenditures were distributed amongst these five categories. According to Hoover, families in the study allocated 57.4% of their family’s expenditures to food, 17.7% to rent, 15.2% to clothing, 7% to fuel and light, and 2.7% to other items. This aspect of Hoover’s analysis is of significance because it parallels this research in terms of the consumption of clothing and food. As discussed in Table 14, items from the Food and Beverage category were included in 62.5% of the transactions in the E.W. Morse ledger and clothing was included in 13.2% of the transactions. Comparing this to Hoover’s research there is a considerable degree of similarity between the two.

What this presents us with is evidence that the consumption of food and clothing from Morse’s store was on par with broader national trends of consumption in the eastern part of the United States during the 1860s and 1870s. Even though there was a slight difference of 5% increase in the consumption of food in the Morse ledger and a 2% increase in the consumption of clothing in Hoover’s research, there are possible explanations for these differences. One explanation to explain the higher consumption of food in the Morse ledger could possibly be due to the lack of need for items included in Hoover’s fuel and light category. Due to the warm climate of San Diego and limited amount of change between seasons, there is less of a need to heat one’s home during the winter in San Diego. Therefore, San Diegans would have spent less money on goods such as coal and wood to heat their homes, and had more money to spend on food. Furthermore, due to the limited amount of agriculture and family gardening in San Diego, consumers in San Diego would have been more reliant on the market to acquire these goods than in other regions such as Massachusetts. In terms of the consumption of clothing between the two studies, the possible remnants of a homespun economy in San Diego that has been discussed throughout this thesis could result in San Diegans being less reliant on the market to acquire clothing. Thus, they spent less money on these types of goods. As a whole though, the similarities between Hoover’s research and this research provide a significant degree of evidence that supports similarities between consumerism in San Diego and broader national patterns of consumption during the period in question.

219 Ibid., 150.
Even though a majority of the entries in the ledger only list one person as the customer, 57 of the 1080 entries were made by groups of people or businesses. Among the business that made purchases at Morse’s store were groups and businesses such as Bill Vettiger & Co., Mannasee & Co., San Diego Sheep Camp, Washo’s Outfit, Snow and Weeds Expedition, Escondido Mining Co., Santa Rosa Mines, and Delfina Mining Co. On average, these groups and businesses spent an average of $9.49.220 This number is somewhat surprising because one would assume that businesses would have more available funds than individuals or citizens and therefore spend more money. Perhaps, due to economic conditions and the inability of their businesses to see a profit, this was not the case locally during the 1860s. Another interesting facet of this group’s consumption habits is that 43 of the 57 purchases made by this group of consumers were made in the final days of the month opposed to the beginning of the month. This pattern by businesses in the Morse ledger supports the argument that even businesses in San Diego were struggling during this period due to the economic downturn. It appears that the businesses in the ledger collected their debts from their customers at the end of the month, and after doing so, they then had the money available to make their purchases.

When analyzing what specific types of items that these groups and businesses purchased, their consumption habits closely resemble the habits of the entire sample. As Table 16 shows, the consumption habits of the groups and businesses in the ledger only slightly deviate from the entire sample. The greatest difference between the two was seen in the consumption of the Food and Beverage category where there was an eight percent difference. Considering that a majority of the businesses that were listed were mining companies, it is surprising that they did not consume items from the Tools and Materials category more frequently. As part of mining, tools and materials such as lumber, metal piping, hammers, screws/nails, rope, and other tools are essential to miners. However, the fact that these items were scarcely purchased by these individuals, leads to the assumption that the miners possibly shopped for these types of items at more specialized stores in San Diego, Baja California, or outside of the region.

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220 E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, passim.
Table 16. Analysis of Purchasing Habits of Groups and Businesses in E.W. Morse
Ledger Compared to Entire Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>% of Transactions for Groups and Businesses</th>
<th>Deviation from Entire Sample (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverages</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>+4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen Items</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>+6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>+2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Items</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>+1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools and Materials</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the fact that Morse’s customers spent a small amount of money at his store, which is possibly a reflection of the tough economic times during the 1860s, they still had a tendency to purchase multiple items at one time. Meaning that each transaction in the data set listed multiple items rather than just one. Even though this observation would seemingly contradict this research’s argument that customers were economizing their spending and making due with less as a result of the poor state of economy, the type of items that the store’s customers were routinely buying in groups were items that had a short consumer life. Unlike goods such as shovels, dustpans, and tea pots, which can be used frequently and for long periods of time without having to replace them, the types of items that had significant relationships with other items could only be used a small number of times before they had to be replaced. For instance, goods such as soap and matches, which had significant relationships with other items in the correlation analysis, are items that individuals would use frequently and need to purchase regularly. Additionally, items such as sewing thread, sewing needles, and fabric which also routinely had significant relationships with other items, are types of goods that could only be used a handful of times before they would need to bought again.

Even though the Food and Beverage category was most commonly bought and included in the most transactions, the items in this category had no significant relationship.
with items from the other categories. However, this absence is somewhat misleading due to the type of analysis that was performed. When statistically analyzing the correlations between items, the analysis looks for similarities in the two groups of items that are being analyzed.\textsuperscript{221} However, since items in the Food and Beverage category were purchased so often, the result was weak relationships with other items from the other categories since they were not purchased as frequently.

Another interesting aspect of this part of the data analysis is the appearance of strychnine. Derived from the Strychnos nux vomica plant, which is found in parts of Asia and Australia, strychnine was used in the past by people primarily for its stimulating effects and to cure stomach ailments. However, as we now know, strychnine is an extremely poisonous alkaloid and its consumption can lead to muscle convulsions, muscular rigidity, respiratory failure, and even death.\textsuperscript{222} Aside from the appearance of this lethal powder in the ledger, it is interesting that this product originates from the Asia and Australia. Since the plant is not found in North America it means that the strychnine must have been imported to America or that the plant itself was imported to America and then processed into the final product. In either case, it demonstrates that during this period, San Diegans still maintained trading relationships with those outside of North America or traders who specialized in international importation. Even if San Diegans had indirect connections with international markets, the presence of this product in San Diego demonstrates that San Diegans had access to goods from far-off lands during this period.

Aside from simply selling goods to the residents of San Diego, Morse’s store altered its style of economic exchange and engaged in other altruistic and humanitarian acts that were vital to the community. As Knott and Bruce Canton discuss in their respective works, during the early-to mid-1860s there was a national shortage of money, primarily due to the Civil War.\textsuperscript{223} In order to accommodate his clientele and compensate for the lack of currency in the local and national economies, Morse frequently allowed his customers to buy products

\textsuperscript{221} Microsoft Excel’s CORREL function was utilized for this portion of the analysis.

\textsuperscript{222} Takayuki Shibamoto and Leonard F. Bjeldanes, \textit{Introduction to Food Toxicology}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (Burlington: Academic Press, 2009), 149.

\textsuperscript{223} Knott, “Reading Between the Lines (Of a Business Ledger),” 208. Cotton, \textit{The Civil War}, 170-171.
on credit with the hope that they would pay him back in the future. As a result of Morse’s system of credit and kind-heartedness, it appears that Morse devised a technique to track how much credit his customers had accumulated. Next to almost every name in the ledger is a number that was specific to that customer. For example, next to Chris McAleen’s name the number 374 always appears. On some occasions, customers had multiple codes that were always in sequence. For instance, in the early parts of the ledger Lucy Fisher’s name is followed by the number 102, later on the number 103 appears next to her name, and by the end of the ledger the number is 105. This change could be the result of Lucy Fisher paying off her original debt to the store and beginning a new line of credit. By providing each customer with a code, Morse would be able to track their purchases on credit each time they shopped at his store.

However, the process of providing customers with credit was not limited to Morse’s store. As other historians have found, the act of purchasing goods on credit at local stores was common practice in American consumerism since at least the eighteenth-century and possibly earlier. This similarity is of importance because it further demonstrates that not only did E.W. Morse’s store employ business practices that other stores throughout the nation practice, but also, that during this period San Diego began to more fully fit the criteria of the early-modern period of consumerism that Stearns discusses in his work.

In addition to allowing his customers to purchase goods on credit, Morse found other ways to allow his fellow residents of San Diego to acquire goods during rough economic times. It was not until 1870 that the first bank opened in San Diego. As William Leach discusses in, Land of Desire, prior to and during the mid-nineteenth-century banks did not loan people money for consumer spending. Therefore, local merchants like E.W. Morse filled this role in society by performing tasks that were generally delegated to banks.

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226 Smythe, History of San Diego 1542-1908, 282.

227 Leach, Land of Desire, 124.
instance, in 131 of the ledger’s entries, there are notes that Morse loaned people money and presumably added it to the customer’s account. On some instances, Morse loaned the customer a rather small amount of money. For instance, on July 3, 1865, Morse provided Lucy Fisher with .125 cents.\footnote{E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, July 3, 1865.} On other occasions, Morse loaned his customers rather large sums of money; for example, on August 1, 1865, Morse loaned Martin Trimmer $129.70.\footnote{Ibid., August 1, 1865.} In addition to loaning customers cash, Morse also provided his customers with money to pay off other debts. In some cases, Morse himself paid debts for his customers. On a regular basis Morse either paid for or loaned his customers money for things such as legal fees, rent, stage driver’s fees, freight for shipping, repairs for their personal items like watches, poll taxes, and repairs to the customer’s homes.

Aside from simply selling things to his customers, E.W. Morse frequently purchased items from local residents and then sold these goods at his store. As Garcia discusses in his article, throughout the 1860s manufacturing in San Diego “barely existed.”\footnote{Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 61.} As the 1860 National Census reveals, there were only four known manufacturers in San Diego in that year. According to the census the four manufacturers in the city were John Van Alst (a carriage maker), Kriss and Rose (butchers), John Compton (a harness maker), and W.D. Brown (a blacksmith).\footnote{San Diego Genealogical Society, Census 1860, San Diego County (San Diego: San Diego Genealogical Society, 1984), 1-6.} With only four known manufacturers in the city in 1860, it appears as though San Diegans routinely supplied Morse with goods for his store. In return for these goods and products, Morse would provide individuals with store credit. As Perkins discusses in her work, this system of bartering goods with stores was also present in her research.\footnote{Perkins, “Consumer Frontier,” 506.} One of the most common types of goods that Morse frequently acquired from his neighbors was perishable food, such as beans, fresh and dried fruit, vegetables, different types of meat, butter, cheese, and eggs. During this period of San Diego’s history large-scale agricultural production was relatively nonexistent. As Lawrence James Jelinek note, during the 1850s and 1860s large-scale agriculture was not widely practiced in San Diego due to its population...
size. Due to this, the author reveals that, “local consumption (of agricultural products) was too limited for extensive planting,” because it would not have been profitable for growers.\textsuperscript{233} Instead, according to Garcia, “the farming that did exist was restricted to small family gardens.”\textsuperscript{234} What appears to have taken place was that families produced and grew food on their small gardens or ranches, kept what their families needed, and then sold their surpluses to Morse in order to acquire other goods that they needed or could not produce on their own.

Even though the ledger reveals that there was some degree of locally grown food reaching the market, presumably from small family gardens, the fact remains that San Diego lacked any true form of agriculture during this timeframe. As Garcia discusses in “Merchants and Dons,” San Diegans were still heavily reliant on outside entities to provide them with certain types of food. One of the primary agricultural products that San Diegans had to import were grains, like wheat and flour. Even though wheat and barley were grown locally throughout the 1850s and 1860s and the city even constructed a flourmill in the middle of the 1850s, San Diego as a whole was unable to produce enough grain to keep up with the local demand. As a result of their inability to produce an adequate amount of grain, local residents were forced to import grain at great costs from San Francisco.\textsuperscript{235} According to the Agricultural Census of San Diego County in 1860, the county contained only 4,143 acres of improved land, which includes farms and ranches, and 499,863 acres of unimproved farmland. As Garcia points out, “These figures clearly reveal the retarded conditions of agriculture which existed in San Diego.”\textsuperscript{236}

However, the limited amount of agriculture in the region was not a result of the “California fever.” Instead, governmental issues and policies such as large landholdings, the existence of previous land grants from the Spanish and Mexican periods, and the weakness of public land policies adopted by the state hindered the improvement of land for large-scale agricultural use. In addition to these issues, environmental issues such as the lack of fertile

\textsuperscript{233} Lawrence James Jelinek, “Property of Every Kind: Ranching and Farming During the Gold-Rush Era,” \textit{A Golden State}, 243.

\textsuperscript{234} Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 63.


\textsuperscript{236} Garcia, “Merchants and Dons,” 64.
soil and low amounts of rainfall in San Diego contributed to an absence of agricultural production in the region.\textsuperscript{237} Due to these factors, it is not surprising that San Diego’s economy lacked any form of large-scale agricultural production from the 1840s to the late-1860s.

These observations regarding the lack of agricultural production in San Diego are contextualized in the Morse ledger. As discussed, one of the most commonly purchased groups of items in the ledger was the Food category. Despite the fact that a small amount of locally grown food from small family gardens did find its way to the market, the lack of large scale agricultural production in San Diego left the residents of the town with no other option but to obtain these specific goods from local stores like E.W. Morse’s.

Additionally, Morse also acquired items such as shoes, hats, cigars, candles, soap, and hay. On some occasions, people purchased goods from Morse’s store, used these items to produce certain products, and then resold them to Morse for a profit or store credit. For instance, on a few occasions Mariano Valdivia and Francisco Lopes (Lopez) both purchased loose-leaf tobacco and rolling papers from the store. Then at a later date, they resold the rolled cigars and cigaritos to Morse for store credit.\textsuperscript{238} In addition to than providing insight into the consumption habits of Morse’s customers, the ledger provides insight into the consumption habits of Morse and what types of goods he was procuring for his own store. Morse’s pattern of consumption indicates that he imported goods that were more luxurious goods, while obtaining perishable and simple goods locally. By obtaining goods locally in exchange for store credit, Morse’s store ledger demonstrates how during this period San Diego’s economy still maintained elements of capitalism while simultaneously containing elements of a domestic economy.

However, Morse did not solely rely upon local families to provide him with goods to stock the shelves of his store. As Knott and McGhee discuss in their respective works, Morse had established relationships with merchants and distributors in San Francisco who provided him with goods for his store. One of the merchants was his cousin Andrew Chase,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{237} Ibid., “IV-V.”
  \item \textsuperscript{238} E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, April 1, 1865. Beatrice Knott also makes this same observation in her article “Reading Between the Lines,” 208-209.
\end{itemize}
who was a partner in a firm named Breed & Chase in San Francisco. Within the ledger itself, there are a handful of instances where Morse notes that he had sent money to Breed and Chase to pay off his debt and pay for shipments of goods. Another San Francisco merchant, who Morse also relied upon to supply him with goods was a company named Jobbers, a wholesalers of “groceries, provisions, and case goods.”

Despite the limitations of the local economy, Morse was able to reach outside of the local market sphere and obtain a wide variety of goods and provisions to keep his store stocked and operating, just like the residents of San Diego and local merchants had done in the past.

Lastly, the ledger reveals that people also received store credit for their labor. In 1857, E. W. Morse and Thomas Darnall entered into a copper mining partnership in Baja California. Their company, Delfina Mining Company, was somewhat unsuccessful and plagued by unproductive labor. Due to their lack of success and inability to profit from the venture, on some occasions Morse and Darnall paid their mining employees with credit at Morse’s store in Old Town. Aside from paying his own mining employees, Morse provided individuals with store credit for labor that they performed for him. For instance, on June 16, 1865, Morse notes in the ledger that Joshua Sloane was to receive $2.25 in store credit for weighing hay for Morse. Additionally, on a few occasions other individuals, like E.W. Morse’s friend and former business partner Thomas Whaley, used their store accounts to pay people for work that they had done for them. For example, on December 1, 1865, Morse wrote in the ledger that Jack Stuart was to receive $6.50 for work that he had done to the Whaley and Nichols house. Once again, these findings point to the broadened nature of Morse’s store. Due to the lack of a bank in San Diego during this time, Morse’s store filled vital social roles that banks would normally perform.

By the mid-1860s the progression of San Diego’s economy and business community had become relatively stagnant. Part of this stagnation was due in part to events and decisions that were made outside of San Diego. Leading up to the beginning of the decade,

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240 “Folder Inventory”, Thomas Rylan Darnall Papers, MS 19, Box 1, San Diego History Center Document Archives, San Diego, CA.
241 E.W. Morse Daybook 1865, June 16, 1865.
242 Ibid., December 1, 1865.
California and San Diego were riding a way of prosperity that resulted in the biggest economic progression that the city had experienced in its history. This in turn, enabled the local business community to grow and flourish. However, this economic boom wore off shortly after it began. When the Northern California Gold Rush bubble busted in the latter years of the 1850s, the reverberations of this event were felt as far south as San Diego. Furthermore, the reverberations of end of the Gold Rush impacted numerous aspects of life in San Diego.

With the cooling of Gold Rush fever in the late-1850s and 1860s, the local merchants no longer experienced the success that the Gold Rush had brought, as the flow of people making their way West began to ebb and San Diego became a settled town where people had roots established in the city. Additionally, the increase of wealth across the board and the injection of money into the economy that was brought on by the Gold Rush began to diminish during this period. To make matters even worse, the Civil War and its economic impact hindered San Diego’s economy from recovering from this post-Gold Rush economic downturn. All of these events combined had a profoundly negative impact on San Diego’s economy in the 1860s.

One of the significant aspects of E.W. Morse’s ledger is that it provides historians with a means of examining how the end of the Gold Rush era in California negatively affected the consumption habits of the residents of San Diego. Due to the state of the economy and lack of available currency, the residents of San Diego simply did not have the money to engage in commerce like they did in the past decades. In a letter to Thomas Whaley, E.W. Ensworth reiterated this by stating to Whaley that cash was no longer readily available in San Diego during this period. This lack of cash in the local economy can be seen in a comparison of the average amount of money spent by the customers of each respective ledger. In the Tasso ledger, customers spent an average of $32 per transaction and in the Unidentified Store ledger this amount rose to $105. However, in the Morse ledger, this average amount plummeted to roughly $7 per transaction. This dramatic decline in the statistics reveals that not only did the economic downturn have a profound impact on consumers’ consumption habits, but it also resulted in a smaller profit margin for merchants.

Pourade, *The Silver Dons*, 249.
like Morse. Even Morse himself supports this conclusion, that the decline in consumer spending in the 1860s negatively impacted his business and the businesses of other merchants. In a letter to his father, Morse stated, “I’m still keeping the store here but not making money. There is but little business here.”

In the hopes of maintaining his customers, Morse frequently allowed his clientele to purchase items on store credit. Even though this was a commonly occurring business practice during this period, the pervasiveness of it throughout the ledger provides us with a window into how Morse and his customers negotiated the tough economic times. On one hand, Morse’s policy of store credit allowed the store’s patrons to be consumers even if they did not have the funds to pay for their goods at the time of purchase, thus engraining a cash and carry system into their consumption habits. On the other hand, Morse’s willingness to allow his customers to become heavily indebted to him reflects the necessity of businesses during this period to maintain their customers and the altruistic and warmhearted nature of E.W. Morse to help his neighbors.

Another facet of Morse’s ledger that provides us with insight into how the state of the local economy negatively impacted people’s consumption habits is through this research’s analysis of people’s consumption patterns. As the statistical analysis of the data revealed, Morse’s customers tended to avoid purchasing luxurious items and goods that were nonessential to their daily lives. Instead, there was a clear pattern within the ledger that revealed that people engaged in the market to acquire essential items that were for immediate use. As the statistical analysis discovered, a majority of Morse’s customers shopped at his store to purchase necessary items such as food, beverage, clothing, candles, and soap. Forgoing luxury items such as mirrors, jewelry, and Paris Robes. Additionally, their purchases contained relatively few items, instead of buying items in numerous items in large quantities. On a micro-level, these two findings, that Morse’s customers spent less money on goods and that their consumption of goods was severely limited in terms of cost and quantity, strongly support this research’s argument that the economic downturn of the 1860s

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244 Pourade, The Glory Years, 6
negatively impacted and altered consumers’ consumption habits in San Diego during this period.

Through their consumption of these types of goods and their patterns of consumption the residents of San Diego provide historians with direct evidence of the overall lack of production in San Diego during the 1860s. As this research has discussed, during the 1860s the production of material goods and agricultural products was nonexistent in San Diego and there was no broad-based economic engine in the town either. With no means of obtaining these goods from local producers the residents of San Diego were forced to turn to other sources to obtain these goods. As a result, San Diegans turned to local stores like E.W. Morse’s store to obtain their material goods and food. This argument is supported by the low consumption of meat from E.W. Morse’s store. Within the ledger meat is only purchased 12 times, which is rather unusual since meat is a staple of people’s diets. However, San Diegans would have been inclined to purchase this type of product directly from the producer rather than a third party.245

Aside from issues of consumption, Morse’s ledger provides this research with a window into social and cultural aspects of San Diego during this period of the city’s history. As the statistical analysis of the ledger revealed, there was a high degree of uniformity in the consumption habits of males and females in the ledger. This finding is of significance because it proves that both males and females had the same consumer tastes and bought similar types of items. Additionally, the ledger provides us with insight into a degree of equality in the market between men and women. As the analysis of E.W. Morse’s ledger demonstrated, women were much more active in the market than they were in the two previous ledgers. This observation leads to the conclusion that even though socially and culturally, the home was the women’s sphere during this period of history, women still ventured outside of this sphere and actively participated in the market.

In addition to this, E.W. Morse’s ledger provides further insight into social and cultural aspects of San Diego during the 1860s. One of the larger social trends that the ledger reflects is the social nature of San Diego during the 1860s. In the Unidentified Store ledger a

\[245\] Clare V. McKanna, Jr., “An Old Town Gunfight,” *Journal of San Diego History* 44, no.4 (Fall 1998): passim. In her article, McKanna, Jr. references the presence of a butcher shop in Old Town San Diego in February of 1865.
vast majority of the store’s customers were sojourners who were passing through the city and had no connections to San Diego. However, in the Morse ledger almost all of the individuals listed in the ledger were residents and local consumers who had established roots in San Diego. This change reflects the transition that San Diego underwent during the 1860s as the town shifted from a layover point for sojourners to a more settled town.

Another noticeable social and cultural pattern that emerged from the analysis of this specific ledger was that Morse’s clientele was composed of an array of people from different backgrounds. As this research has revealed, the data set was comprised of a very diverse sample. Unlike the Tasso and Unidentified Store ledgers, the E.W. Morse ledger also included the names of Chinese and African American individuals. Not only does this aspect of the ledger reveal the wide range of people in San Diego during this period, but it also emphasizes that this was a sphere of society that all ethnicities participated in.

This aspect of the ledger is of great importance because it reveals that people of all different backgrounds and cultures shopped at the same location and consumed the same types goods. Since a majority of the goods in Morse’s store were goods that were imported from San Francisco and New England, a very diverse portion of San Diego’s residents were being introduced to American industrial tastes.\(^{246}\) Through their consumption of these goods, like clothing and food, this diverse group of customers would have acquired the same American consumer tastes and been exposed to the same material aspects of American culture. Therefore, during the 1860s, people of different ethnicities and backgrounds in San Diego were in the process of becoming more culturally homogenous.

Lastly, E.W. Morse’s ledger provides us with a window into the lack of social institutions in San Diego during the 1860s. Aside from selling goods to his customers, Morse’s business performed many other tasks that generally would not be associated with a general store. Through the analysis ledger it became very evident that E.W. Morse’s store performed tasks that usually would be delegated to social institutions like banks and post offices. In addition to his usual business of selling goods, Morse frequently loaned people money, paid people’s personal debts, paid for his customer’s postage, and exchanged gold

\(^{246}\) For personal letters that discuss Morse’s importation of goods see, E.W. Morse Papers, Doc. File, San Diego History Center Document Archives, San Diego, CA, passim.
dust and checks for cash. Through these acts, Morse was able to broaden the scope of his business while simultaneously compensating for the lack of certain social institutions in San Diego.

As a whole, Morse’s store ledger reveals a few similarities and differences with the literature and research on consumerism during the mid-nineteenth-century. As has been discussed in the preceding pages, the type of goods that E.W. Morse’s customers routinely purchased directly parallels Hoover’s research on consumerism and family expenditures during the 1870s. Not only did Morse’s customers purchase similar types of goods but the frequency in which they were purchased was very similar to Hoover’s findings on family expenditures in Massachusetts in the 1870s, connecting San Diegans’ patterns of consumption to broader national patterns of consumption during the period in question.\textsuperscript{247} In addition to this, the disproportionate number of Anglo customers to Hispanic and Asian customers in the ledger provides quantitative data to support scholars’ discussions on the increased settlement of Anglo-Americans in San Diego during from the 1850s to the 1860s. Lastly, as this thesis has discussed, there were similarities between E.W. Morse’s business practices and broader national business practices that other merchants employed during this period. For instance, Morse’s business practice of loaning customers money, allowing customers to purchase goods on credit, and the types of goods that Morse sold in his store. Due to these aspects, it can be argued that by the 1860s, San Diego fulfilled Stearns’ criteria and characteristics of the early-modern period of consumerism.

However, the analysis of E.W. Morse’s store ledger revealed a few differences between this research and other research as well. Scholars such as Lori Merish have argued that women were active consumers throughout the nineteenth-century.\textsuperscript{248} However, through Morse’s ledger it has been revealed that women shoppers in San Diego did routinely shops at stores like E.W. Morse’s, however, they did not actively engage in shopping to the degree that Merish argues in her book. Even though others have discussed the difficulties of studying gender consumerism due to the difficulty of locating gender in material records, this research has proven that there are still viable options in material records for studying the role

\textsuperscript{247} Hoover, “Retail Prices After 1850,” passim.

\textsuperscript{248} Merish, \textit{Sentimental Materialism}, 16.
of women in consumerism. Specifically, as this research has demonstrated, topics such as the quantitative participation of women in shopping, the types of goods that women frequently purchased, and comparisons between men’s and women’s patterns of consumption on a micro-scale are topics that can be explored by future researchers.

In conclusion, E.W. Morse’s store ledger is of significance because it provides a window into many facets of life in San Diego during the 1860s. The E.W. Morse ledger reveals how the economic downturn not only affected consumers but businessmen as well. This specific ledger provides historians and those who study material culture with valuable evidence of how consumers’ behaviors and patterns of consumption were altered due to changes in the local economy. Furthermore, the E.W. Morse ledger provides this research with an example of how local businessmen were affected by the economic downturn of the 1860s and how businessmen like Morse had to broaden the scope of their businesses to compensate for the economic downturn and lack of social institutions on the frontier.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As this thesis has argued, changes in consumer patterns of consumption and behaviors in San Diego during the mid-1840s to the mid-1860s are a reflection of larger political, economic, social, and regional and national cultural issues of the period. Through an analysis of primary sources such as newspapers, hide and tallow ledgers, and store ledgers this thesis has supported its argument that patterns in the consumption habits and behaviors of consumers reflect these broad changes in San Diego during the period in question. Furthermore, as the analysis of the three ledgers has revealed consumer patterns of consumption in San Diego at times parallel and diverge from the broader national historiography of consumerism during the nineteenth-century.

Through the statistical analysis of the Tasso, Unidentified Store, and E.W. Morse ledgers it became very evident that consumer patterns of consumption directly parallel the nature of the regional, state, and national economies. In the Tasso ledger, consumers were the beneficiaries of trade system in which New England hide merchants bartered or sold imported manufactured goods from the East Coast to the residents of San Diego. Due to the primarily agrarian and pastoral nature of San Diego’s economy and the lack of manufacturing and production locally, San Diegans had no other option but to rely on the hide trade to provide them with goods from the industrialized world that they desired. Through their patterns of consuming imported manufactured goods for the home sphere and work sphere, San Diegans were reflecting the emphasis on the domestic sphere in San Diego but also the nature of San Diego’s economy during the mid-1840s.

In addition to this, this aspect of this thesis’ argument is in agreement with both Monroy and Stearns’ research on consumerism during this period. According to Monroy, Californios engaged in the hide trade by producing “raw materials to exchange for manufactured consumer goods that they so powerfully desired.”250 Specifically, Monroy

250 Monroy, Thrown Among Strangers, 155.
discusses how the Californios desired goods such as cloth, tableware, furniture, and other manufactured goods from hide merchants, which this research found that Californios in San Diego regularly obtained from the Tasso. Furthermore, the consumption of goods for their families, clothing, and manufactured goods used within the home sphere by the customers of the Tasso parallels Stearns’ characterization of the early-modern period of consumerism.\(^{251}\)

However, by the mid-1850s this pattern of consumption had changed as the local and state economies experienced a wave of success due to the Gold Rush, which served as the local broad based economic engine of the period. As a result of this economic success, consumer patterns of consumption were greatly altered. As the analysis of the Unidentified Store ledger revealed, the increase in the amount of money that customers spent dramatically increased from the Tasso ledger, which reflects the overarching period of economic prosperity that the Gold Rush brought to San Diego. Secondly, as the analysis of the ledger revealed consumers tended to purchase only essential items such as food and clothing due to the fact that they were migrating from town to town and could only carry with them the bare essentials. This specific portion of the analysis of the Unidentified Store ledger is significant because it is in agreement with other works on consumerism in California during the 1850s. According to Delgado, the consumption patterns of consumerism in California during this period revolved around the procurement of essential items over luxury items. As Delgado discusses in his work, merchants such as Mickle & Co. oriented their business towards the actual demands of consumers and provided “commodities that aimed to serve the actual needs of the growing city and regions,” because, “in the long run, staples account for more of man’s economic thrusts than luxuries.”\(^{252}\)

By the 1860s the success of the Gold Rush had faded and San Diego experienced a prolonged economic downturn and lack of available currency. As a result of this, and the lack of a broad based economic engine, San Diegans’ patterns of consumption were severely altered during the mid-1860s. As the analysis of the E.W. Morse ledger revealed, due to the state of the local economy San Diegans economized their spending and made due with less. By spending less and purchasing only essential items San Diegans’ patterns of consumption


\(^{252}\) Delgado, Gold Rush Port,” 110.
reflect on a micro-level how the poor state of the regional, state, and national economies impacted their behaviors as consumers. What is of significance is that consumer patterns of consumption not only parallel the economy but their demand for goods reflects San Diego’s retarded economy from the mid-1840s to the mid-1860s. Due to the lack of a broad based economic engine and the lack of production and manufacturing in San Diego, the demand for goods by the customers of the three ledgers reflects the limitations of the local economy during this period. Without any significant form of manufacturing or production in the region from the 1840s to the late 1860s, San Diegans were forced to rely upon importing goods and food from more developed regions.

However, this pattern of consuming also serves as a reflection of a much broader national pattern of consumption during this period. In her essay, “Retail Prices After 1850,” Ethel Hoover discusses how during the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century family purchases and expenditures primarily focused on food, clothing, rent, fuel and light, and other household items. Furthermore, this research has demonstrated that Hoover’s research on family expenditures in Massachusetts in the 1870s closely mirrored the consumption patterns of E.W. Morse’s customers.

Another significant pattern that was revealed through the analysis of these three ledgers was the changing patterns of who consumers were and who was in San Diego during this period. As the Tasso ledger reflects, during the 1840s San Diego consisted of primarily settled people who had ties to the city or Anglos who had recently arrived on the frontier. Furthermore, many of the Tasso’s customers were individuals who can be connected to the city through the works of other historians.

However, this was not the case with the Unidentified Store ledger. As the analysis of the ledger revealed many of the store’s customers were Anglo males, whose names could not be found in either the 1850 Census or works on early-San Diego. As a result, it was hypothesized that many of these customers were simply passing through the city. Rather than being settled people, the customers of the Unidentified Store ledger were male sojourners who were simply passing through the city on business or migrating to the gold fields in Northern California. Furthermore, this aspect of the ledger reflects the homogenous

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253 Hoover, “Retail Prices After 1850,” 147-149.
nature of California’s population during the late-1840s and 1850s, where males accounted for 97 percent of the state’s population. 254 Through this thesis’ analysis of gender and ethnicity in the Unidentified Store ledger is became clear that certain aspects of consumerism in San Diego during this period did and did not fit into other works on consumerism and social aspects of life during the mid-nineteenth-century. For example, the lack of Hispanic names in the ledger quantitatively parallels other authors’ arguments on how Anglos became the dominant group in California due to the influx of Anglo-Americans to California in the 1850s. 255 Furthermore, the lack of female customers in the ledger is in agreement with scholars’ arguments about the disproportionate ratio of males to females in the state during the 1850s. 256 While at the same time, the lack of female customers in the ledger goes against the discussion in the historiography about the active involvement of females in consumerism during the nineteenth-century.

During the 1860s, as the E.W. Morse ledger demonstrates, San Diego’s population underwent another shift as the city became more settled and diversified in terms of ethnicity. Through the ledger, it became apparent that a majority of the store’s patrons were local consumers who had settled in the region and established roots in San Diego. Furthermore, a vast majority of the store’s customers can be tied to the city through primary sources and the works of other historians. What the three ledgers reveal is a changing pattern of who San Diego’s consumers were during from the mid-1840s to the mid-1860s. What is of significance is that the three ledgers reflect the diversification and settlement of San Diego and California during the period in question. Furthermore, as the analysis of the Morse ledger revealed, women became more involved in consumerism in the 1860s. More closely resembling the involvement of women in consumerism that authors such as Merish and Breen discuss in their respective works. 257

From the 1840s to the 1860s, aspects of consumerism in San Diego shifted and began to closely resemble the picture that Stearns paints of the early-modern period of

254 Johnson, Roaring Camp, 142.
consumerism. By the 1860s, consumerism in San Diego contained almost all of Stearns’ characteristics of the early-modern period of consumerism. Most notably, the types of goods that consumers purchased, the availability of credit in stores, the spread of shops, and the rise of advertising.258

Lastly, the three ledgers are of great importance because they reflect the increasing cultural Americanization of San Diego from the mid-1840s to the mid-1860s. One of the unchanging patterns throughout the three ledgers was the importation of goods from urban regions outside of San Diego, such as San Francisco and New England. Not only were goods and products being imported to San Diego but aspects of American society and culture became further embedded in San Diego in the process. Through their consumption of these imported material goods, San Diegans were able to begin the process of assimilating into American culture prior to the arrival of the American governance and the transcontinental railroad. Furthermore, even though San Diego was a peripheral region of the frontier, San Diegans were able to acquire American industrial and consumer tastes and engrain the American cash and carry system into their consumption habits. As a whole, it was not just aspects of the material world of this peripheral frontier region that transformed during this period; rather, numerous other aspects of San Diego’s society and culture were altered in the process.

One of the limitations of this research was its focus on only three primary sources that dealt with material consumption in a thirty-year time span. This aspect of the research framework and methodology, prevented a complete picture of San Diego’s economy, business community, and the consumption habits of San Diegans during this period could not be attained. While this might have been a limitation for this specific research, it presents an opportunity for future work to be done by historians or students of history. If future researchers wished to build upon this work and add to its findings, the San Diego History Center’s Document Archive possesses other hide ledgers from the 1820s to the 1840s that might provide valuable insight and statistical data. Secondly, the San Diego History Center’s Document Archive possesses additional ledgers from E.W. Morse’s Old Town store that might further add to the understanding of the consumption habits of San Diegans during the

period in question. The possibility exists that other historical societies or libraries in California or other states possess similar types of sources that could be used for further research.

Even though San Diego’s early history has been analyzed in countless pieces of scholarly literature and journal articles, there are still certain gaps in the historiography of San Diego’s early history that we as historians strive to fill. A goal of this research was to fill in some of these gaps and provide historians with a more complete understanding of this city’s past and aspects of its material culture. More broadly, this research strived to contextualize changes on the America frontier during the mid-nineteenth-century. As America expanded west and pushed its borders to the Pacific Ocean, the entire nation was in the midst of a transformative process, not just the frontier. By focusing the scope of this research on one town on the new American frontier, it has been demonstrated that it was not just the geographical location of the frontier that was transforming. Rather, many other facets of life on the frontier were in the midst of a transformative process.
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APPENDIX

ITEMS IN EACH CATEGORY OF DATA SET
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>Table Linen, Chairs, Tables, Mattress/Ticking, Lighting Devices (ie. Oil Lamps), Candles, Oil/Wicking, Mirrors, Oriental Drops (ie. Rugs), Globes, Linens/Blankets, Furniture (ie. Items denoted generically as furniture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure</td>
<td>Books, Writing Materials (ie. Pencils), Stationary, Stamps, Musical Instruments, Buck Shot, Caps/Wads/Gun Powder, Fishing Goods (ie. Fishing String), Playing Cards, Umbrellas/Parasols, Pistols, Pistol Holsters, Flower/Seeds, Spectacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles and Sewing Accessories</td>
<td>Sewing Accessories (ie. Needles and items generically denoted as Sewing Access.), Thread, Silk, Shutting, Satin, Wool, Cotton, Muslin, Ribbon, Flannel, Lish, Cloth, Calico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage</td>
<td>Alcohol, Tobacco (ie. Loose Leaf Tobacco and Rolling/Cigar Papers), Lard, Oil, Fruit/Vegetables, Coffee, Tea, Seafood, Meat, Sugar, Candy, Spices/Extracts, Grain/Rice, Bread, Crackers, Butter, Cheese, Jelly/Jam, Flour, Eggs, Beans, Vinegar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Items</td>
<td>Bells, Matches, Roach Cloth, Tape, Brooms, Pails/Buckets, Duster/Dust Pan, Rule, Pocket Knives, Trunks, Scissors, Scale, Bellow, Bath Bricks, Washboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Items</td>
<td>Tooth Brushes, Brush/Comb, Cologne, Shaving Goods (ie. Packages of Facial Shaving Items, Chamber Pots, Wash Balls, Shaving Cream, Soap, Wash Basin, Pomade, Spittoons, Handkerchiefs, Strychnine, Medicine/Oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tools and Materials</td>
<td>Rope, Tools (ie. Wrenches and Screwdrivers, Woodworking Tools (ie. Chisels and Files), Screws/Nails, Locks, Plows/Plow Points, Metal Piping, Lumber, Paint Brushes, Paint/Varnishes/Lacquer, San Paper, Hinges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Items separated with a forward slash (ie. Pitchers/Basins) are items that were grouped together for analysis.*