



# Marriages Between Gente de Razón at Mission San Gabriel, 1770-1869

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# Introduction



- In order to gain a better understanding of the California Mission System, we were tasked with an investigation of the marriage records between Gente de Razon in the San Gabriel Mission.
- We analyzed the mission records from the Early California Mission Project - a database of Baptisms, Death, Marriage, and other demographic records over time.

# Process

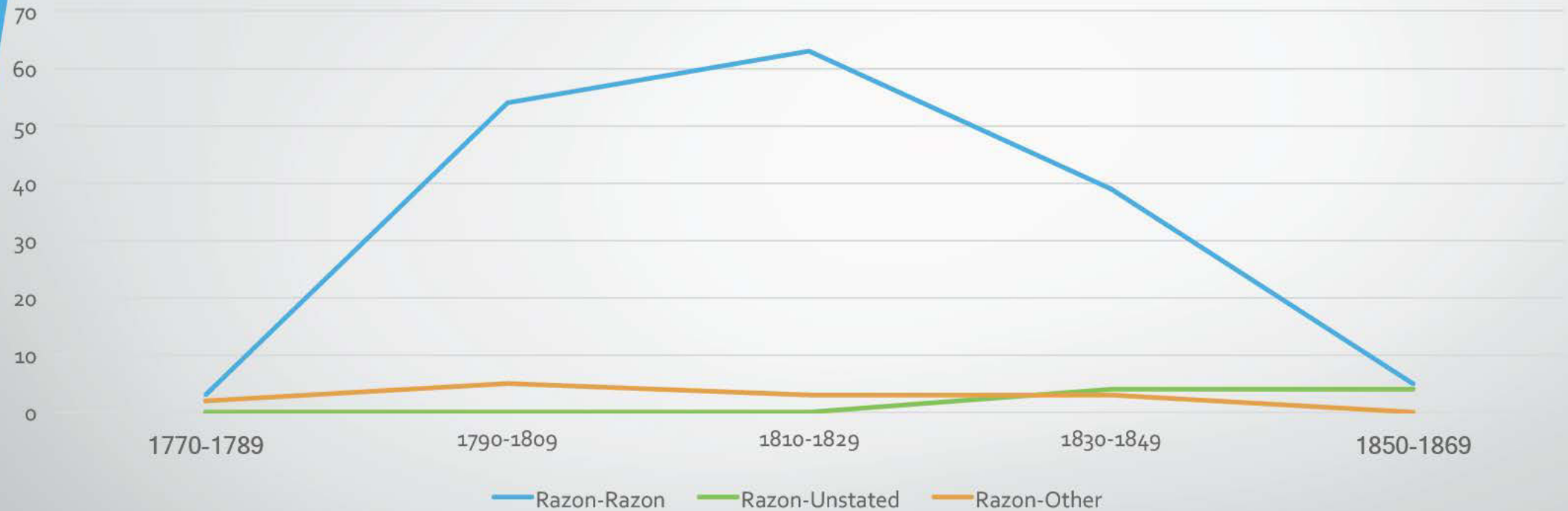
- Gente de Razón: Literally translates to “people of reason,” a term used in colonial Latin America to describe people who were from Spain or of Spanish descent
- Our data fields included the names of the bride and groom, their ethnicities, the date of marriage, and their parents’ names and ethnicities.
- Using SQL was helpful in that it helped us categorize our data and visualize it effectively.
- A challenge in using SQL was that it confined us to purely quantitative modes of inquiry.
- What went well: primary and secondary sources provided historical context, trip to San Gabriel with Dr. Macías was helpful.
- Struggles: not all of our original data fields ended up being applicable.

# Research Questions

- How many Razon/Razon marriages are there?
- How many [razon] entries/marriages are there?
- How many razon-razon marriages in each nineteen year block of time between 1770 and 1869?
- How many razon-unstated marriages in each block of time?
- How many razon-[other ethnicity] marriages in each block of time



# Razón-Razón Marriages, 1770-1869



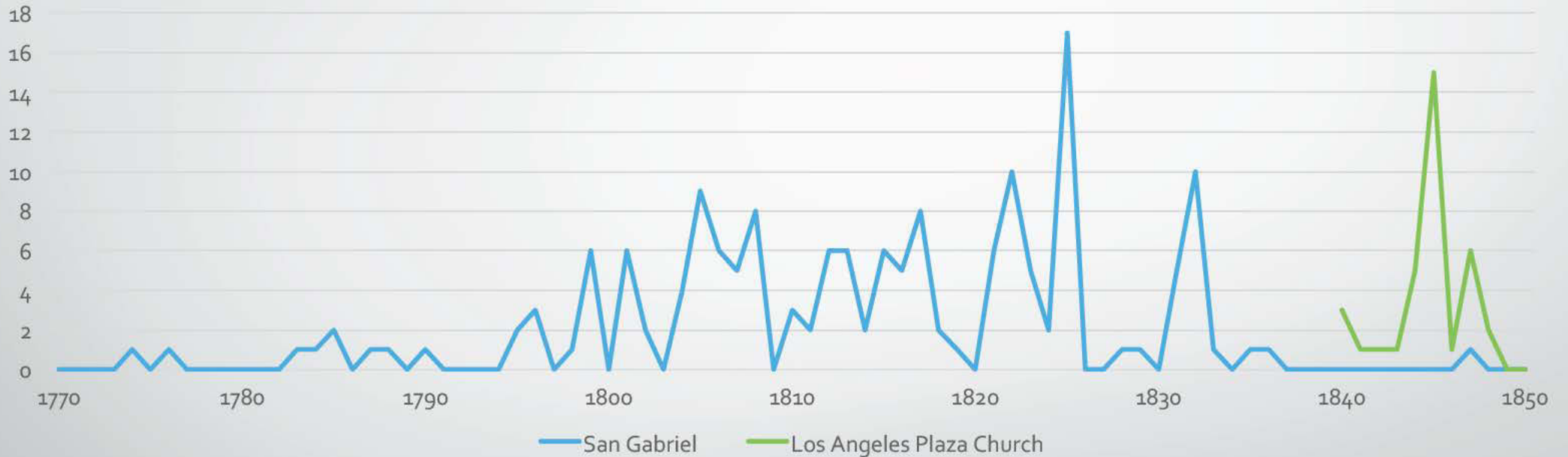
- Throughout the 1840's and the subsequent years, we observe a steady decline in marriage rates at the mission.
- Between the California census of 1836 and that of 1860, overall population increased from 2288 to 4385 people.

# The Mission Secularization Act of 1833

- The governor of Alta California signed into law the secularization of all Californian missions in 1833. The act took effect in 1834.
- This was done partly out of fear that the Roman Catholic administrators of the missions would maintain loyalty to the Spanish crown instead of the postcolonial Mexican government.



# Marriages at Mission San Gabriel vs. Marriages at Los Angeles Plaza Church, 1770-1849



- The spike in marriages taking place at the Los Angeles Plaza Church coincides with the lowest rate of marriage at the Mission since its founding in 1770.
- Why?



# Historical Context

- During the period in question, California was becoming significantly more urbanized.
- An influx of Anglo-Saxon immigrants was arriving in California. The growing population reflected in the censuses of 1836 and 1860 may not have entirely been the product of a growing Gente de Razón presence in Alta California.
- Traditional notions of family were somewhat eroded. In previous generations, children of Mission San Gabriel residents valued the tradition of getting married where their parents did.





# Hypotheses and Future Inquiries

- Our main hypothesis is that Los Angeles' growing population was increasingly deciding to marry at urban churches instead of the rural San Gabriel Mission.
- Family structures may have been altered by a changing economy. This may have caused the increase in marriages at the Los Angeles Plaza Church (SGL) and the corresponding decrease in marriage records at the rural San Gabriel Mission itself.
- 1840's Alta California existed in a culturally volatile environment. The events of the Mexican-American War from 1846-48 and the subsequent annexation of California may have made California Catholics reticent to engage with such strong symbols of Catholicism as the missions in a Protestant cultural climate.

# Marriage and Baptism, 1821-1849



- While marriages at Mission San Gabriel were declining during the 1840's, baptisms at the mission were increasing.
- This might be because while marriage as a practice became secularized and individuated, baptism remained a strictly religious, ritualistic, and traditional ceremony.
- This trend opens avenues for possible future research into the question of religiosity in Alta California in the 1840's.

# Bibliography

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