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REVIEWS

An Artist's Portfolio: The California Sketches of Henry B. Brown, 1851-52

Thomas C. Blackburn

Banning: Malki-Ballena Press, 2006,
96 pages, 37 illustrations, \$30.00 (cloth).

Reviewed by William S. Simmons

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Henry B. Brown was an artist who, in 1851-52, produced a remarkable series of drawings depicting life in the Sacramento Valley and Sierra foothills at the brief moment in time when the great ranchos, Gold Rush camps, and indigenous California Indian communities existed side by side. Anthropologists and others have long recognized that Brown's sketches are among the treasures in the visual record of early California. Thomas Blackburn notes and I would agree that "Brown's sketches and finished drawings...are exceptional in terms of both content and execution, and certainly must be ranked—along with the watercolors of Louis Choris—as being among the finest and ethnographically most significant renditions of native life in California prior to the introduction of photography." (Choris was the artist who painted the famous series of watercolors of neophytes at Mission Dolores in 1816.) Various of Brown's drawings have appeared in print, the first being three illustrations in John Russell Bartlett's monumental *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California...Connected With the United States and Mexican Boundary Commission...Volume II*, published in 1854. Brown, who by 1851 had already been engaged in illustrating his own account of California in the Gold Rush, signed an agreement with Bartlett in 1852 to provide the U.S. Boundary Commission with "drawings and sketches of the characteristic scenery of California, including scenes at some of the prominent gold diggings; also to obtain portraits of the various Indian tribes and groups of Indians, representing their amusements, customs, manners, religion, manufactures, etc." Between 1851 and 1852, Brown illustrated people and scenes

in the Wintu, Wailaki, Nomlaki, Nisenan, Patwin, and Konkow language areas of the Sacramento Valley.

Blackburn has done a superb job of locating and interpreting Brown's artistic materials, which had been dispersed over the years to a number of locations, and bringing these together in a very attractive and inexpensive volume. The book is divided into an introductory section that includes a color map of Brown's travels in California and just the right amount of historical and anthropological background to communicate the significance of Brown's portfolio, and a longer section that includes a selection of thirty-seven true-to-the-original color figures, three of which he sketched of coastal scenes in Central America on his return voyage from California to New York (the originals were in pencil, in sepia with ink wash, pencil with ink wash, pencil with gouache, and pencil with watercolor and gouache), each with a succinct but masterful ethnographic and historical explication. The originals of these thirty-seven sketches are in the collections of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University, the Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley, the Peabody Museum of Anthropology at Harvard University, and the Huntington Library in San Marino, California.

Henry B. Brown revised his field sketches once back in the studio, so in this sense his finished works were not entirely drawn from life. He was, however, a very talented artist with an attentive and uniquely positive eye for California Native people. His portraits and other sketches are the most accepting and least stereotypically distorted representations of individual California Indians that are known to exist. His work offers a glimpse of California Indian men, women, and children, at a time when their world had been severely disrupted but their social and material life was still substantially intact. In the context of nineteenth-century California, where diarists, writers, and artists generally tended to view California Indians as degraded inferiors, Brown was a brilliant exception.

Thomas Blackburn, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and distinguished author of *December's Child: A Book of Chumash Oral Narratives*, and of many

other valuable additions to California anthropology, has contributed a carefully researched and beautifully illustrated book. *An Artist's Portfolio: The California*

Sketches of Henry B. Brown, 1851–52 will be first on my gift list for family, friends, and colleagues who are enchanted with learning about California and its people.



Rolling in Ditches with Shamans: Jaime de Angulo and the Professionalization of American Anthropology

Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz

Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004, xxii + 359 pages, illustrations, and maps, \$59.95 (cloth).

Reviewed by Victor Golla

Humboldt State University.

Jaime de Angulo (1887–1950) has few rivals for being the most colorful figure ever to carry out research on Native California languages and cultures.¹ A French bohemian intellectual from a family with aristocratic Spanish roots, de Angulo emigrated to the United States in 1905 and took a medical degree at Johns Hopkins in 1912. The following year he came west to California, where he quickly carved a niche for himself in the well-to-do society of Carmel. Affecting the style of an Old California *ranchero*—shirts open to the waist, a red velvet cummerbund—he cut a Valentino-like figure and swept more than one wealthy young lady off her feet. He also developed several close friendships with the Berkeley intellectuals of the period, particularly the anthropological linguist Paul Radin, and gained considerable respect in those circles for his familiarity with the latest European work in cross-cultural psychiatry and ethnosemantics. In the early 1920s, urged by Radin, and with departmental support and encouragement from Alfred Kroeber, de Angulo began to put some of his ideas to the test in field investigations of California Indian languages.

His initial studies, beginning in the autumn of 1921, were focused on the Achumawi of Modoc County,

where he had a cattle ranch and had already established connections with the local Indians. He found the work extraordinarily stimulating, and after two months he had collected enough data to draft a preliminary grammar of the language. Kroeber was impressed by both the technical competence and the psychological insight of the work, and the following summer, on Kroeber's strong recommendation, Manuel Gamio invited de Angulo to join him as a field assistant in Mexico. De Angulo spent the academic year 1922–23 in Oaxaca, working intensively on Mixe, Chontal de Oaxaca (Tequistlatecan), and several Zapotecan languages, developing an expertise in these languages that was reflected in a number of publications in subsequent years. Before his contract had expired, however, the rigors of fieldwork in remote Mexican villages apparently precipitated an emotional crisis. He abandoned his research with no notice to Gamio, and fled back to the United States.

Great as the embarrassment of this defection was to Kroeber, the offense was compounded by de Angulo's sudden marriage to Lucy S. (Nancy) Freeland, a wealthy heiress and Kroeber's most promising linguistics student.² According to Gui de Angulo, these breaches of decorum led Kroeber to "despise" her father "to an extraordinary degree" and to take "a great deal of trouble to undermine his career" (1995:201). Decried to be *personae non gratae* at Berkeley—Freeland had to suspend her doctoral work on Sierra Miwok³—the couple nonetheless continued a program of fieldwork on California languages. For several years this work was self-financed, but when the Committee on Research in Native American Languages was set up in 1927 under Boas's chairmanship, they received significant support from that body, notwithstanding Kroeber's protests.

The Committee commissioned several major studies of California languages from de Angulo and Freeland,