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### **Come to the Hanging**

Tiburcio Vasquez will stand out on the pages of the history of California, as the second greatest bandit of California. Joaquin Murietta roamed, robbed and murdered, but in his time there was but little law in California, and the means of arresting and bringing law breakers to justice were scant and inadequate.

Decades had elapsed between the time of Murietta and the years 1873 and 1874, in which Vasquez committed his greatest depredations, and during that time the complete organization of the counties of the state under the proper authorities of law, police, judges and jury, had taken place.

Hence it is that the exploits and escapades of Vasquez excel those of Murietta, in being performed at far greater hazards, and against greater odds. One thing, however, was greatly in his favor, for in all those counties where he operated, he had the moral support and physical aid of his countrymen, and especially his countrywomen, the native Californians.

The bitterness and hate engendered by the Mexican war was strong. The influx that followed the announcement of the discovery of gold, bringing with it industry and progress, but also vice, crime and outlawry, made the native Californian intensify the original feeling of dislike and distaste to everything American, and caused them to view with sympathy and to lend practical aid to any man of their own language, who made his prey the hated interlopers. Many writers who have studied the exploits of Vasquez explain this as the reason that the bandit could, for so long a period, set the law of God and man at defiance.

After a reign of terror throughout the state Vasquez was captured with three of his gang where they were for the moment making their headquarters, the house of Greek George, on the Brea rancho, 10 miles from Los Angeles. He was taken to San Jose and tried for murder. On being found guilty, he was hanged there March 19, 1875.

Vasquez replied to a newspaper reporter's request for the story of his life with the following account: "I was born in Monterey County, California, August 11, 1835. My parents are both dead. I have three brothers and two sisters. Two of my brothers reside in Monterey

County and the other in Los Angeles. My sisters are both married; one of them lives in San Juan Bautista and the other at New Idria quicksilver Mines.

"I was never married but I have one child in this county, a year old.

"I can read and write, having attended school in Monterey. My parents were people of ordinary circumstances, owning a small tract of land and always had enough for their wants.

"My career grew out of the circumstances by which I was surrounded. As I grew up to manhood I was in the habit of attending balls and parties given by the native Californians, into which the Americans, then beginning to be numerous, would force themselves and shove the native born men aside, monopolizing the dance and the women. This was about 1852. A spirit of hatred and revenge took possession of me. I had numerous fights in defense of what I believed to be my rights and those of my countrymen.

"I determined to leave the thickly settled portions of the country and so gathered together a small band of cattle and went to Mendocino County, back to Ukiah, and beyond Falls Valley. I went to my mother and told her that I intended to commence a different life. She gave me her blessing which I asked for, and at once I commenced a career as a robber because the law and officers were continually after me."

Vasquez, when young is said to have been unusually bright, intelligent and smart for his years. He went to school and received a fair English education which he continued to cultivate in after years. As a man he possessed more than the average command of the English language, while his handwriting was "beautiful" according to a reporter writing for the Hollister Free Lance in 1875. "In manner he was frank and earnest, with no disposition to make himself a hero. It is said of him that his general demeanor was that of a quiet, inoffensive man, and no one would have taken him for the terrible Tiburcio Vasquez, the leader of a band of outlaws."