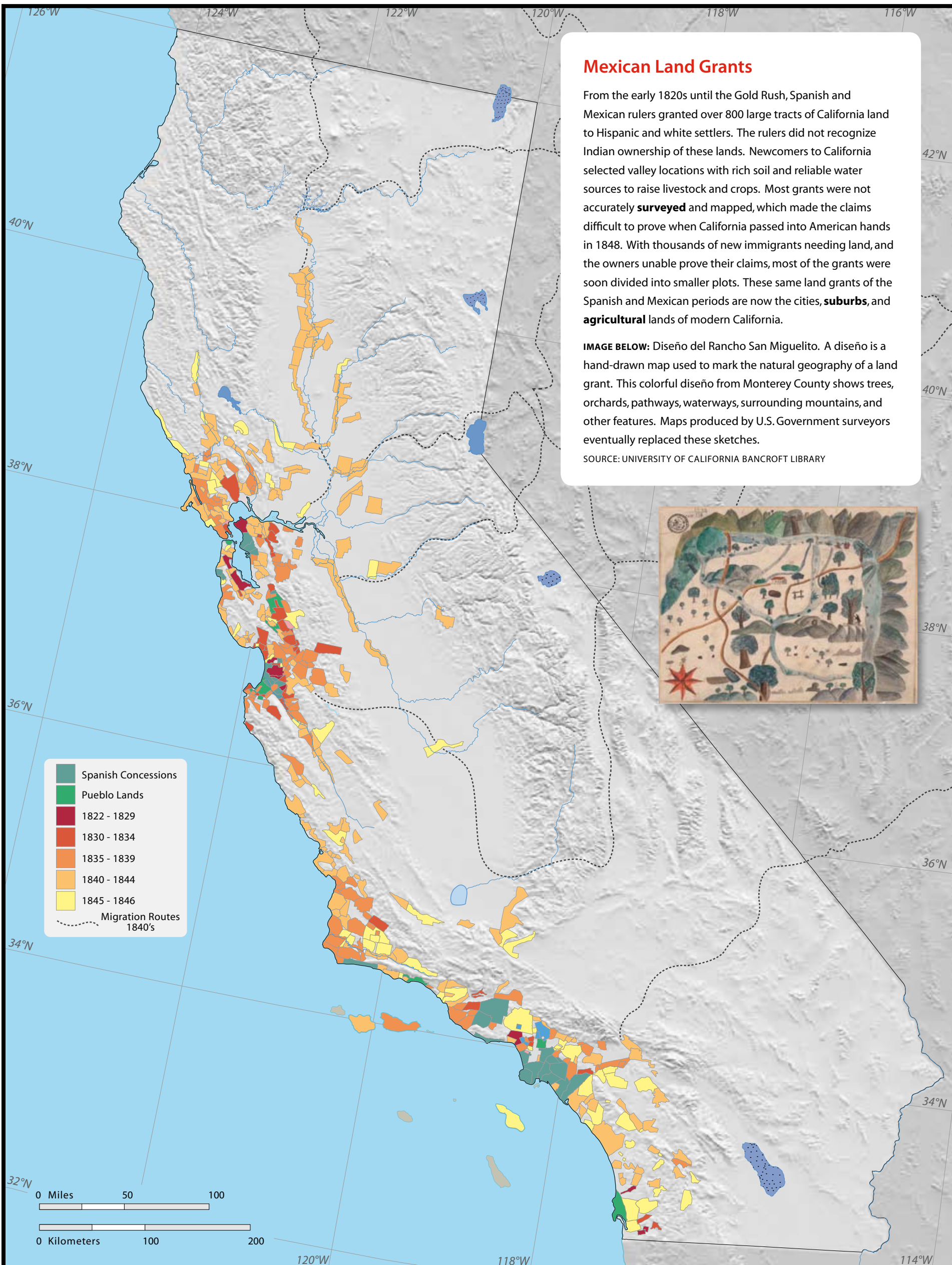


## Mexican Land Grants

From the early 1820s until the Gold Rush, Spanish and Mexican rulers granted over 800 large tracts of California land to Hispanic and white settlers. The rulers did not recognize Indian ownership of these lands. Newcomers to California selected valley locations with rich soil and reliable water sources to raise livestock and crops. Most grants were not accurately **surveyed** and mapped, which made the claims difficult to prove when California passed into American hands in 1848. With thousands of new immigrants needing land, and the owners unable to prove their claims, most of the grants were soon divided into smaller plots. These same land grants of the Spanish and Mexican periods are now the cities, **suburbs**, and **agricultural** lands of modern California.

**IMAGE BELOW:** Diseño del Rancho San Miguelito. A diseño is a hand-drawn map used to mark the natural geography of a land grant. This colorful diseño from Monterey County shows trees, orchards, pathways, waterways, surrounding mountains, and other features. Maps produced by U.S. Government surveyors eventually replaced these sketches.

SOURCE: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BANCROFT LIBRARY



The sources and credits for this map are listed at <http://humboldt.edu/cga/atlas-sources-credits>. Note that this map is an 11x14 page, and not meant for 8.5x11 printing or use.