

Tejon Reservation est. 1853

On the advice of General Edward F. Beale, in 1853, Congress established a working farm next to a U.S. Army fort in the mountainous southern gateway to the San Joaquin. The Tejon Reservation, known also as Sebastian Reserve, was modeled on the old mission system but in secular guise, with obligatory quotas of labor from the Indians. The inhabitants of the Tejon Reservation were mainly Yowlumne, a Yokuts tribe, and Kitanemuk, a Shoshonean people who were local to the territory.

We do not know whether threats or force were used to convince Indian leaders to move their bands onto the new reservation. They may have hoped that the military would protect them from the Americans. It is hard to believe, but laws soon permitted indenture and outright slavery of California Indians. Prosecution of Americans for abuse or murder of Indians was the rare exception. Shooting off Indians under any pretext was appallingly common.