

**ARGUELLO, MARÍA DE LA CONCEPCIÓN (SISTER MARÍA DOMINICA)
(1791–1857)**

“The Juliet of California.”

María de la Concepción Arguello's life spans a period of sixty-seven years during which California evolved from Spanish colonial rule to Mexican rule to U.S. conquest in 1848. She was born in San Francisco, where her father served as commandante establishing presidios and missions. Despite the Crown's ban on trade with Russia, Commandante Arguello allowed Count Rezanov's entrance and Rezanov was taken by fifteen-year-old Concepción Arguello. The forty-two-year-old Rezanov asked for her hand in marriage. It took a very strong and daring young woman to stand up to all the authoritative figures. The two planned to marry within two years upon Rezanov's return with the necessary dispensations. After her fiancé failed to return, due to a fatal accident, Arguello traveled up and down the California coast, ministering to the poor as a secular nun. In her sixties, Arguello petitioned for admittance to the first convent in California in 1851, and became Sister Maria Dominica, California's first native-born nun.