

OHLONE ELDERS & YOUTH SPEAK:
RESTORING A CALIFORNIA LEGACY



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Ruth Morgan, Photographs
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PREFACE

“There was never a better time to be a California Indian. We need to celebrate that!”
Ann Marie Sayers, Chairperson of Indian Canyon Nation

The Ohlone are not one people, although they are loosely connected by language roots, and some similar cultural expressions. Ohlone tribal groups extended from the Carquinez Straits southward along the coast to Big Sur. Currently there are eight Ohlone surviving languages with which many Ohlone people identify. *[See the language area map in the appendix.]*

Previous generations of Ohlone were forced to suppress cultural expression for fear of reprisal by the dominant white society. Fortunately the languages and other cultural forms did not die out, but remained underground until the time was right. When the civil rights explosion occurred in the mid-1960s, the doors began to open. The takeover of Alcatraz Island in 1969 galvanized Native people throughout the country, including the Ohlone.

The true history of the ‘founding’ of California, involving the enslavement and murder of thousands of indigenous people as well as the destruction of their living habitats, first by the Spanish invaders and finally by the gold and land-seeking Americans, has yet to be fully told.

The Ohlone people who allowed us to photograph and interview them for this project are part of a much larger cultural renaissance taking place throughout California and the United States, and represent many others who are engaged in this restoration process. They stand as living proof, that despite of the great efforts by the dominant society to wipe out thousands of years of indigenous cultures, the Ohlone people are currently thriving while living in two worlds, which in some cases creates a precarious emotional bind. The people whose stories you are about to read give voice to that struggle and to the tenets of cultural identity which often are in opposition to those of the dominant society. For example, the ancestors taught that Ohlone people do not merely live in this beautiful landscape, but are an integral part of it, the homeland being a sacred entity

which they are bound to protect. As one of the contributors, Corrina Gould, so succinctly tells us, “It is important for Ohlone to have a land base as a way of reconciling the past. It is a way that we can again be in connection with the earth and our ancestors, of bringing back the songs and ceremonies, and a way for us to bring our ancestors home so that they can be re-interred where they belong.”

The photographs and excerpts of the interviews appeared in an exhibition, Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy from September 27, 2014 through January 4, 2015 at the San Francisco Main Public Library. In future the exhibit will be shown in various venues throughout the traditional Ohlone homelands. When the venues and dates are confirmed, we will post them on this website.

We hope you acquire a new understanding about the Ohlone peoples and their efforts to keep their cultural expressions thriving for many generations to come. It was an honor to work with them on this project.

We are grateful to The Christensen Fund for their financial support and to the San Francisco Public Library for hosting the opening of the exhibit.

Janet Clinger
December 2014

INTRODUCTION

OHLONE ELDERS & YOUTH SPEAK: RESTORING A CALIFORNIA LEGACY

Ohlone peoples are emerging from a great darkness, **in spite of** ~

THE INVASION, culminating in the 'Missionization' of coastal peoples, which included forced labor, rampant disease, and cultural suppression by the Spanish invaders within the walls of the missions.

THE GENOCIDE following the discovery of gold and the subsequent American stampede to California, which included open season on Native peoples, a bounty on all heads, young and old.

NOT BROKEN TREATIES *BUT* NEVER SIGNED TREATIES as a consequence of the ongoing land grab that followed in the wake of the Gold Rush, resulting in the continuing landless state of Ohlone peoples as well as many other Native California peoples.

The fact that they were characterized by federal government officials as 'CULTURALLY UNIDENTIFIABLE' and therefore had no legal status.

The fact that they were not allowed to VOTE until 1924.

The fact that many of their children forcibly were removed from their homes and placed in BOARDING SCHOOLS where they were not allowed to speak their native language or practice their native traditions, and often were physically and/or sexually abused.

The fact that their SACRED SITES in their traditional homelands have been and continue to be desecrated, and the bones of their ANCESTORS are held in museums and universities.

IN SPITE OF ALL OF THESE HORRORS AND MORE ~

OHLONE PEOPLES SURVIVED

AND NOW, THANKS TO THE HELP AND GUIDANCE OF THEIR ANCESTORS,
THEY ARE RESTORING:

THEIR LANGUAGES

THEIR CEREMONIES

THEIR SOVEREIGNTIES

THEIR REGALIA

THEIR STORIES AND SONGS AND DANCES

THEIR BASKETRY AND OTHER ESSENTIAL ARTS & CRAFTS

THEY ARE CONNECTING TO:

THEIR COMMUNITIES

THEIR SACRED SITES

THEIR PURPOSE ~ *to protect their homelands and all the life forms within it*

**THEY HAVE LIVED IN THEIR HOMELANDS FOREVER AND IT WILL
ALWAYS BE SO**

For fourteen thousand years the ancestors of contemporary Ohlone peoples served as caretakers of this beautiful region, extending from the San Francisco Bay to Pt. Sur.

The Ohlone elders and youth featured in this exhibit represent a small portion of the Ohlone peoples who currently are active in various aspects of cultural revitalization throughout the traditional homelands. We celebrate their resiliency and honor their on-going struggle.

Produced by ~

Costanoan Indian Research, Inc. & Community Works West

Ann Marie Sayers, Project Director

Ruth Morgan, Photographer

Janet Clinger, Oral Historian

INTERVIEWS

ANNE MARIE SAYERS



ANN MARIE SAYERS

Mutsun Ohlone

Tribal Chairperson, Indian Canyon Nation
Founder of Costanoan Indian Research, Inc.

CULTURAL IDENTITY

When I was growing up I thought we were the only Native family in San Benito County, but there were 179 who received the California Land Claims Settlement in 1972. There are also a lot of California Native people who did not even sign up in 1928 under the special California Indian census to get a roll number, because they were afraid that they were going to send them to a reservation.

There was ceremony taking place up here at the waterfall at Indian Canyon, but the majority of people came from Monterey or the Bay area. Now that I am more conscious, some of my mother's best friends who we would visit were Native, but I never thought of them as Native, primarily because they were not the ones who participated in ceremony. They would come up for a picnic once or twice a year, or we would go down town and visit them.

Now that I look at it there were just so many things that we did naturally. I can remember Mother saying, "Ann Marie, go down the creek and get me some oregano. Just do it the right way." We would offer tobacco. My dad smoked a pipe. I would just grab some tobacco and give it to the plant and thank the plant before I picked it, and explain what it was going to be used for. To be thankful for all the life that surrounds you is ceremony. My daughter, Kanyon, does that. I don't remember any bear dance ceremonies, but I do remember my mother talking about bear dance ceremonies. She was raised in the Holy Cross Convent in Santa Cruz. Her actions were just natural, what some people today would consider ceremony. She was an amazing cook. She expressed thankfulness in how she prepared things. She was a very powerful woman with a strong voice. I

didn't realize that was ceremony. I just thought it was something that everyone did. It wasn't until I was in my mid-twenties that I realized that every day was a ceremony.

Culture is not something that is learned. It is in your DNA. For example, Howard Harris, a family friend of ours for five generations, and I were clearing an area for a road. He said, "Ann Marie, you are a tree hugger. One of these trees is going to have to come down." He put the cable around the tree and when that cable went into the bark of the tree and liquid squirted out, I felt the pain of the tree. You become one with it.

My mother would share a story and I would think that I understood it at the time. Then a decade would go by, and I would say, "Oh, *this* is what she meant!" And then another decade or two would go by – "Now I get it!" There are so many layers. One comment that has really, really helped me considerably was "The truth in history of Native people is not known to many people. Ann Marie, when you hear something negative, just don't take it personally. It is their lack of education or knowledge. That's just where they happen to be right now." That has helped me so much in not only the Native world, but just about in every facet of my life, and really allowed me to see a situation differently, and to understand that they might not even be aware of what they are saying.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Ceremony is a necessity. That is the way it should be because you do connect with your ancestors ceremonially on a spiritual level. It is so very, very important. My mother believed that when ceremony stops, so does the earth. I too believe that. There are some ceremonies that are so extraordinarily powerful, there's no way you cannot be a part of it. The more ceremonies that you connect with, just compounds that connection. When I am in ceremony and make a definite connection, for me it is a reason for living. There is nothing more powerful. You are one and

inseparable from the ancestors. Everyone is just the sole product of all their ancestors. That's a lot of energy.

Language Restoration ~

Language is such a critical part of one's culture too. We haven't had any speakers of the Mutsun language since the 1930's. We are revitalizing it just with wax cylinders and with John Peabody Harrington's notes and with Mark Oland (who did his doctoral thesis on the Mutsun language) and Felipe Arroyo de la Cuesta's notes – a priest at Mission San Juan Bautista. It's complicated. It wasn't until I went up to the waterfall and there was more water coming down the very second I asked, "Why am I doing this?" *Raum-e* in our language is water; it is also the movement of the water, the sound of the water, and the creek that contains the water. They are one and inseparable, not just H₂O. I got the connection. Then I had all the energy to continue.

There is language revitalization happening. The Mutsun Language Foundation has done a very, very good job. I know Quirina Luna was working with Lee Ann Hinton and so were a number of other descendants, including Linda Yamane. Lee Ann Hinton is the language specialist at UC Berkeley. She shared how to go through the Harrington notes in a formal way. The Mutsun Language Foundation and Costanoan Indian Research have done very, very good work in creating a little book that has Mutsun words and described what the word may have been in picture form for children. Our language has not been spoken since the 1930's and so trying to revitalize the language is not that easy. My mother was not a fluent speaker. She knew words from her grandmother. I learned some words, but words are not the language. Frequently I'll get calls from different cities, schools, or agencies wanting to give a street or a school a Native name. I will have to look up in de la Cuesta's or John Peabody Harrington's dictionaries.

I have had words come to me in dreams that I was not sure how to pronounce, and then I knew how to pronounce it. You go on vision quests. Four days and your mind is altered by what

you tap into. I don't believe the language has been lost; it has just been dormant. When you take de la Cuesta's phrases in the Mutsun language from the early 1800's, and then look at John Peabody Harrington's notes, who really highly documented the Mutsun language in the early 1900's, you can see the difference. You can see the Spanish influence in the 1900's that was not there in the 1800's. Things evolve. Lee Ann Hinton is doing a marvelous job.

I am working with Rebecca Moore and we are going to come out with a book on the Mutsun language. Kanyon Sayers-Roods has created a coloring book in the Mutsun language. Miriam Aguilar and I are looking into hologram programs. I am personally not fluent and my dream is to become proficient. I think it is critical for the Ohlone people to learn their language and hopefully the hologram process will make it easier. Holograms help us get an emotional connection to what we are seeing. We have more emotional connection when we can see something, and even more when we can see it move and hear it. We learn more easily and retain the knowledge much longer. For example, with the 3D hologram we can show a bear moving around with the Mutsun word for bear, '*ores*', and then show bear dancers actually dancing with the words '*ores ciite*' – bear dance. The viewer is not only learning the Mutsun words, but learning something about the culture in the process.

Indian Canyon ~

My personal contribution to the continuation and revitalization of the Ohlone culture is the ability to share the land, particularly for the Ohlone descendants and all Native people from all over. They can feel the ancestral presence when they come into Indian Canyon. Just that connection to me is a reason for living. I hear a lot of Ohlone people talk about it, but I live it. I'm right here. I'm in the sweat lodges. I'm in the ceremonies. I love it. Living in the country where you're off the grid and have to cut your wood to keep warm, is not the easiest thing in the world, although it is one of the richest ways to live.

Historical Background ~

The Costanoan Ohlone people, who extend from San Francisco down to Big Sur, are not recognized tribally, but they are federally recognized as individual Indians. Those descendants whose ancestors filled out a special California Indian census in 1928 were assigned a roll number and their descendants until 1972 were given a number.

In 1851 and 1852, there were 18 treaties that were signed between the government and the California Indians. Those treaties were never ratified; they just disappeared. They could not push Indians further west, like they did in the rest of the country. In addition to that, there was too much natural resource, gold being one of the main items. Everyone started coming west and the Indians were in the way. Then the large railroads came in. There were four main areas where they were going to put the Indians on reservations, but those areas happened to have been too valuable and so the government just decided not to ratify the treaties. They were not located until 1904 or 1905.

Then it was, *“Oh my God, the Indians still own the state of California!”*

It took from that point in time until 1928 to come up with a workable formula to deal with this situation. If the Indians in California who were living in California in 1928 could prove that their ancestors were living here in 1851/1852, then they were assigned a roll number. They were the recipients of the California Land Claims Settlement which allotted forty-one cents an acre which they believed was the value in 1851. It took from then until 1950 to distribute when there was a \$150 of interest that had accumulated. In 1972 I believe there was \$668 distributed to the descendants. My great-grandfather and my great-grandmother, who were living in 1928, filled out this questionnaire. My great-grandfather had to have a witness verify that what he said was true and that they knew him. He signed his name with a thumb print and an X. In 1934, the government created the IRA, the Indian Reorganization Act. The government said to all the different groups of Indians in California, “This is how you have to form your tribe or your rancheria. We need the

names and the number of people who are receiving services from us. You need to have membership criteria and how you formulated that membership for your tribe.”

We’ve always been here in Indian Canyon since man started walking on the earth. We have the allodial title to this area and that’s why the ancestral spirits are still here and why the honoring ceremony took place here. The allodial title is pre-feudal; it’s before fee-simple deed which you probably have on your property. It’s the connection you have with the earth where you’ve always been from, generation after generation, century after century.

Everyone has their creation story -- just like the Bible is a creation story. Every creation story I’ve ever heard is equally valid. We are where we’ve always been, here in Indian Canyon. I love being where I’ve always been from – right here in this canyon. You can have your Big Bang theory or your migration over the Bering Strait theory, but that’s exactly what it is: theory. I have my theory too.

At the entrance -- not on our property, but where the vineyard is located, is the original village site that goes back for tens of thousands of years. When Ken Gimelli purchased the vineyard property, he came across a Native American burial when one of his workers plowed the area. We had the sheriff come out, which is what you do by law. You have to stop all construction. We had Allison Galloway, a forensic anthropologist from UCSC, determine that this individual was a twelve year-old Native boy. We had the county archaeologist record it with Sonoma State. The archaeological site record has a permanent trinomial: CA-SBN-20, but there has been no dig. We re-interred the remains ceremonially very close to where it was unearthed. There was no destructive analysis. In the 1940’s when they were originally disking the area to plant grapes, Jesus Salcido said, “It would be so frustrating because I would go ten feet on the tractor and come across another mortar. I’d have to get off the tractor, move it out of the way, and then go another five feet and

come across another mortar!” According to Frank Salano, between both of them, they removed more than one hundred mortars and pestles, just in that area right there.

My brother and I inherited the land that my mother owned who inherited it from her grandfather, my great-grandfather, Sebastian Garcia. His ancestors – his mother and his grandmother and her grandmother lived on this very site. My brother and I inherited his trust allotment that he received from President Taft in 1911. Then when I wanted to build on this site right here [indicating the cabin in Indian Canyon where she lives], because this is where he had his home and his grandmother and her grandmother had their homes. A mile away is the recorded site at the entrance of the canyon that goes back 4200 years. I say it goes back much further. When my brother and I inherited the original trust allotment, I had it surveyed. The southern boundary is three hundred feet from here. Where I want to build is not on the inherited land; it fell under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. At the time I had the money to purchase it. I went up to the BLM office right outside Sacramento. They said, “Right now we are not having any public auction for any BLM land.” This was November 1980. I said, “How about the Indian Allotment Act of 1887?”¹ In 1911 that was what my great-grandfather used to establish claim to the land in Indian Canyon as ‘an individual trust allotment’ of almost 160 acres. They said, “Ann Marie, that is a hundred year old act. It is almost impossible to meet the requirements. You have to show that you can generate revenue enough to live on and you have to live on the property exclusive of a home elsewhere. You have to do grazing without irrigation.” I worked with the Soil Conservation Service to see what we could do that this land could support. That is when we came up with West African pygmy goats. Then I had to build a home which is the log cabin I now live in. It took eight years of jumping through hoops. This allowed me to establish claim to the land adjacent to the

¹ The Indian Allotment Act of 1887 -- “The Dawes Act” was a federal act that “freed up” Indian-owned land for the people who were migrating west. Between 1887 and 1905, 91 million acres of Indian-owned land disappeared. The act was drawn up in such a manner that the government could convert Indians into being ‘farmers’ and give each adult male 160 acres, adult females, 80 acres, and each child, 40 acres. The balance was considered ‘surplus’ land.

original trust allotment. In 1988 I got the trust patent title for this property which consists of 123 acres. This is the land my current cabin rests on and the original site of my great-grandfather's cabin and of the cabins of my people for many generations back.

It is an individual trust allotment, which is considered 'Indian Country'. "The term 'Indian Country' has been used in many senses. Broadly speaking, it is all the land within an Indian reservation and any other land which has a special relation to Indians and their government. As a general rule, Indian Country is controlled by tribal and federal law as opposed to state law." This is from The Rights of Indians and Tribes, Stephen L. Pevar.

We've opened up my great-grandfather's trust allotment to all indigenous people who are in need of traditional lands for ceremony. We have seven sweat lodges here. We have between thirty to forty different sites where individuals can come for their '*hamblechiya*' or vision/nature quest where they can commune with nature without being disturbed by anyone outside the natural life. We have workshops that take place here. For the last twenty-eight years we've put on the Storytelling Event where people have the opportunity to hear Native stories told by Native people. We have Bear Dances, naming ceremonies, crossing-over ceremonies. That is why we are here.

We hosted the Peace and Dignity Runners here for three days and it was absolutely spectacular. They start in Alaska and at the tip of Chile and meet together at the Panama Canal every four years. This particular year they met in El Salvador where the eagle meets the condor. Alaska to El Salvador is fourteen thousand miles. It used to be a prophecy and now it is a reality. It is a continual run for peace and dignity.

A Pomo Native person said, "I was here four years ago with the Peace and Dignity Runners. The healing pole was lying on its side and now it is standing up. The dream of this arbor is now a reality." Dreams are coming true here at Indian Canyon. I didn't realize that we are moving forward in such good way. I truly believe that the ceremonies and all the prayers that took place

here are connecting with the ancestral spirits -- the energy and then the youth. My daughter, Kanyon, has come into this Canyon with such tremendous energy. I was working at an archaeologically sensitive area, monitoring over at Moss Landing for PG &E. There were weeks on end when I was working ten hours a day, seven days a week. My daughter, Kanyon, almost single handedly organized an entire Storytelling event for this year. It was incredible.

One intern, Russ, who was going to UCSC, did our website that won a national award. He did 30 units and was up here for six months. We had some interns who did an ethno-botanical display. There was an intern who catalogued all the plants in the Canyon. We've had students come up here for the last twenty years. San Francisco State comes regularly with 150 – 200 students who are taking Native American classes.

The Canyon attracts Native peoples who are in dire need of ceremony and from all over the world who want to share ceremony. We are just very fortunate. That is how important a land base is for indigenous people.

We have a **seven generations in the future** plan. You are responsible for the consequences of your actions seven generations in the future. Currently we are working with Hollister Hills Recreational Vehicular Area, a motorcycle park. They are developing an Indian visitors' center which will include a history of the local indigenous people, and also an Indian village. This is just really, really exciting. Sixty percent of those quarter of a million people who come there annually are under the age of twenty and so we can get them to be aware that *we are still here!* I'm really excited about that.

Because of the number of people who do come to the Canyon and the number of ceremonies that take place, I would like to set up a kitchen area. We would like to build a roundhouse, another place for ceremony to bring Native people together.

Honoring Ceremony for Women Elders at Indian Canyon, 2005 ~

Many women who have come up to the Canyon have said, “Ann Marie, my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandmother says I am Mexican, but my great aunt said we were Indian from right here. I want to know more about my heritage!” I see tears and anger. There is so much emotion, and there is good reason for this. In 1854 this government paid in excess of 1.4 million dollars -- five dollars a head, fifty cents a scalp, and that included the gun powder and other supplies for the professional Indian killers to carry out their work. It was called the California Indian Genocide Policy. An Indian woman living in 1852 saw so much destruction of her culture and her people with the gold seekers coming west. She sees her husband and sons killed. She says to her daughter, “Say you are Mexican for sheer survival.” In the 1850’s to say you were Indian was suicidal.

We have six generations of Indian denial, and it stemmed from a form of survival. It is amazing when elders come to the Canyon how they feel at home, how they feel they have connected with something that has been absent from their lives. I just felt we had to honor these women. Many of these Ohlone elders believe they don’t know that much about their Native heritage, but when you talk to them when they are together, they’ll go, “Well, do you remember when grandma used to sing that Indian song?” They will go right into a Mutsun song that has not been sung for many decades. I literally can feel my heart expand when that happens. Selfishly, I love that experience. And so what better way but to honor the elders with honoring gifts and a place for them to feel acknowledged and for their ancestral spirits within them to be honored. That brings out so much. You are the sole product of all your ancestors and we’ve awakened that! For me it is a reason for living.

My mother, who was a very proud, much respected and very strong woman, died in 1974. I was down in Beverly Hills. I wanted out of the Canyon! I wanted electricity! I wanted paved roads! I never knew how hard it would be to get back to build here. I'm living my dream now, just watching life come alive in so many people. I'm smiling seeing my daughter, Kanyon, come around. All she knew was ceremonies from day one, because there were so many ceremonies that took place up here. She was really involved and then when she got into school, she no longer had an interest. Now she's gone full-circle. It's been special.

My daughter made her regalia to wear for the dance honoring the Ohlone women elders. She not only created the dance, but also the song for them. Kanyon said, "Mom, I've got the dance!" She did this dance and it was beautiful. She picked up the book and said, "These are the words that are coming out: *Honorable elders/Thunder rain wake up!*" The entire song is as follows:

Mak-et tcite/We dance for you
Amani auye tura/Rain awaken thunder

I feel that Kanyon's ancestral spirits are still alive here and are bringing in the people who are meant to be here. No wonder those words were attracted to Kanyon.

It took us about a year and a half to make the regalia, specifically for this very, very special day. The regalia that Kanyon wore I found so amazing. I'm monitoring for CALTRANS at Yerba Buena Island – an Ohlone burial, 3500 BP. Some of the burials were buried with *olivella bicopata* shells. The shells on her regalia were the exact same size, the exact perforations and location. That is the ancestral memory that is in our DNA that we are still continuing on with. We went over to the Pacific Ocean at Spanish Bay in Pacific Grove and then up north just south of Half Moon Bay and collected the *olivella* shells from the ocean. It was so beautiful watching the young make their necklaces for the ceremony. When we were making the necklaces that we gave to the elders at this

honoring day, as we put the sinew into the shell, every shell became a prayer that honors our ancestors. The power of prayer is so amazing. It is giving thanks and a positive expression for our ancestors, and for the individuals for whom the necklaces are being made. Just like the necklace goes full-circle, that energy is collected and what you give out goes full circle and goes back to you. I believe that my gift was to see my daughter wearing something that she had made herself that I did not teach her how to do, that our *ancestors did*.

When we were participating in the ceremony, the best part was when we danced the dance that Kanyon created, and sang the song in our language. Those words that just popped out at her from the three or four different dictionaries connected with the elders. You can feel that energy, vibration and frequency. That energy is so strong that it will be part of you forever. When we gave the elders their honoring gifts, the tears that were forthcoming, were very beautiful, but it was their actual awakening when we were singing “awaken grandmothers” in our language when they connected. A part of them awakened. As we continue to honor them and acknowledge their Native heritage, another part of them will awaken. People, who think they know nothing about their heritage, will realize how much they do know. For me, that’s a reason for living. Terry Alderete’s aunt said, “All these visions kept coming at me”, from her childhood when her mother or father would share something with her. When that takes place, you know that Spirit is working.

Memories can be shared. Elders possess wisdom that frequently they are totally unaware of; sometimes it just may be a sentence that could be life-altering. Everyone’s reality is filtered through their own experience. There are layers on top of layers on top of layers. I can remember my mother sharing something with me when I was a teenager. I thought I understood her then. When I was in my twenties I thought oh this is what she meant when she said that. Then I’m in my thirties or forties: this is *really, really* what she meant! As years go by, there are so many layers that I may never catch up to what she really may have meant.

Monitoring ~

I am on the Most Likely Descendant list (MLD) held by the Native American Heritage Commission. When there is earth movement taking place within Ohlone territory that is archaeologically sensitive, I am called upon to monitor in the event that cultural materials or burials are encountered. Usually there is an archaeological monitor on site too.

I have participated in monitoring work for the last twenty years. It started shortly after the Loma Prieta earthquake which took place in 1989. An example would be the Moss Landing Marine Lab. Their classrooms and the entire school basically were destroyed due to the earthquake. Because it's a public facility, part of the California State University, primarily out of Long Beach, they use public funds. FEMA came in to help them. When they come all the way up here to Indian Canyon from Washington, D.C., I know they *have* to do it by law. Because of the new location for the Moss Landing Marine Lab on the ocean in an area that was archaeologically sensitive, the most likely descendants, meaning the Ohlone descendants in the area, developed a memorandum of agreement as to what should transpire if they did come across any human remains, how they would be cared for, how they will be stored and reinterred, and how much land would be designated for the re-interment of these individuals, and then for potential museum display and educational purposes for the cultural materials that were not burial-affiliated. It took them ten years before they met all the requirements because it was right along the ocean. They had to deal with many different commissions. There was difficulty to begin with, but after people realized they still had to deal with the Indians, because this is the law and federal funds are being used, the scientists came full circle. If they wanted to see the Moss Landing Marine Lab, this was just another hurdle they were going to have to jump over. Upon that realization, we started going forward in a good way. Until that took

place it was rather challenging, particularly when you have descendants who are really quite different. Understanding the Native American post-colonial psychology – what happens to the psyche of the suppressed – it makes it a little bit easier. I was one of the descendants who helped create the memorandum of agreement and then monitored. We went by consensus. There was Tony Cerda, Ella May Rodriguez, Linda Yamane – there were probably about a dozen of us. I've been monitoring since the mid 1980's, if not earlier. Ella Rodriguez was working in the 1970's. She was the grandmother of monitoring.

When I'm actually monitoring on site I am watching earth being moved, along with archaeological monitors and environmental monitors, to make sure that there are no cultural materials or burials that are being disturbed. If indeed there are, the archaeologist will remove them. Usually when an individual is unearthed, the archaeologists I've worked with are amazingly sensitive. They are using a dental pick to remove the earth. It's very beautiful to watch the sensitivity in what they do for a living in their profession. Then usually when the individual is totally exposed before it's removed, we'll have a ceremony. I will ask the archaeologists and the field technicians to form a circle around the ancestor and we will smudge to purify ourselves and say some words for this individual. I wish my mother were alive because she watched bulldozers go through burials with no regard at all here locally in San Benito County.

Usually I'm making necklaces when I'm monitoring. Every time I put a bead or a shell on the sinew, prayers are being said; it signifies that this individual goes back to the spirit world in a good way. There are times when the necklace will go back with that individual when it is reinterred. Some of the necklaces may go to the people who show their sensitivity, who were part of the removal and re-interment. They are used as honoring gifts for drummers who may come in for the re-interment ceremony, for the people who carry the burials in the cloth to be placed back into the earth. I've never made too many. My primary job is to be there because by law they need a Native

American monitor to make sure that our ancestors are treated with dignity and sensitivity. For me personally, I need to see that these individuals are smudged so they understand that they will be reinterred ceremonially. Disturbing them, our apologies, but it will not be long before they are reinterred. Many Native Americans, including my mother, believe when a burial is disturbed, the spirit of that individual is wandering until that individual is reinterred ceremonially. It's extremely important to me. I feel as though it's the ancestral spirits that goes full circle.

There are a lot of positives for federal recognition. UC Berkeley has in excess of twelve thousand burials in lockers of the basement of the gymnasium. Because UC Berkeley receives federal funds, federal law kicks in: there is NAGPRA – Native American Graves Protection Act. If you are not federally recognized, you are considered “culturally unidentifiable”. The individuals who are definitely Ohlone, and you know exactly where they came from, and you have the opportunity of reintering them, it is impossible because you are not a federally recognized tribe. You deal with it the best way you can. With all the development that is taking place within the Ohlone Costanoan territory that extends from San Francisco down to Big Sur, there are a lot of burials, Native American cemeteries that are being disturbed. If you had a Memorandum of Understanding in place beforehand, it would be easy. If you do come across burials –preferably not to be disturbed at all, but if they have to be disturbed, they would be reinterred ceremonially close to where they were unearthed, placed in an easement on that property so they will never be disturbed again.

I have seen that take place in Santa Cruz. I was designated MLD – Most Likely Descendant at Branciforte Knoll. It was a very sacred place, on top of the most prime area. We came across a small child between five to seven years of age. There was a considerable amount of protest among the Santa Cruz residents. We formed a group of Ohlone elders and they asked that no development take place where that individual, and possibly three others which they found parts of, were unearthed. The developer, K.B. Homes, to their credit, said they would honor the Ohlone elders

circle request and that was not to develop the most prime part of the knoll. They had a product that they were selling and there was a considerable amount of protest. They didn't need negative publicity. Another reason, I believe were prayers said both here and outside that the right thing be done and that is to honor the space where Native people had been laid to rest. When K.B. Homes built their office in Pleasanton ten years ago, they removed three hundred and seventy burials! I think that everything goes full circle. Hopefully the easement is placed on that space for Ohlone descendants to go there for ceremony, for prayer, that K.B. Homes will get the right type of publicity so they can set an example for other developers that you can still continue to accommodate the people, but also respect the Native people's land you are on by not disturbing them.²

Dennis Sheehan represented us at Santa Cruz. That is when we formulated the Ohlone elders circle. I was absolutely amazed at the number of Ohlone elders. I am sixty-three years old and I'm a spring chicken compared to these Ohlone elders. I would venture to say they represent about forty-five hundred people of Ohlone descent and many different families. I did not have a clue that there were that many Ohlone descendants still alive today. It started when we had an honoring ceremony for Ohlone elder women in 2005. That is why K.B. Homes did not build on the most premium part of that area.

What did transpire at The Knoll at Santa Cruz is really quite a win, federally recognized or non-federally recognized. Because of the publicity of Branciforte Knoll, there were a couple of individuals who came forth: one had a cranium and said, "We know it came from right here." The dentist had been using it to show the teeth that had a disease; another was a necklace that was a burial item, with olivella shells cracked in half, hundreds of them – just absolutely beautiful. These will return to the earth to go back to spirit world. I'm seeing things that are going truly full circle.

²See Corrina Gould's interview for information regarding the struggle to preserve a sacred site at Glen Cove.

In 2004 I worked at Yerba Buena Island just before they were going to remove a pier on the island because they were building the new bridge. When that bridge was originally built in 1933, a pier went right into a Native American cemetery, and four burials were removed that UC Berkeley still has. The pier area is partly state-owned and also federal. When they pulled this pier out they were just going to trash everything. They removed all the burials which were close to five thousand years old. All the individuals on state property were reinterred. All the individuals who were on federal land are still sitting in boxes. I thought the possibility existed that the individuals on federal land could be reinterred, so I inquired at UC Berkeley. Perhaps we could reinter them where we reinterred the other individuals. Because we are not federally recognized, that was not the case at all. Because UC Berkeley receives federal funds, they have to follow federal law.

I'm working with PG&E at Moss Landing. They are replacing all their transmission towers and redoing their substation to bring it up to date. That entire site on Highway One and Dolan, just south of the Elkhorn Slough, is one huge site. The most sensitive area is where there is a reservoir and a lot of midden, so much shell. In order for PG&E to get all their permits, part of their negotiation was to put an easement on that area so it will never be disturbed. When I inquired what is the possibility that we may be able to have Ohlone descendants come here for ceremony, Dr. Christophe Descantes, a cultural and archaeological specialist, said, "Ann Marie, give me the verbiage and we will try to see if we can get it in." Do you see what started – honoring Ohlone women elders here at Indian Canyon, how it is really snowballing? Unbelievably fantastic. It is exciting. Today is the best time for a California Indian to be alive since Contact.

Role of Women in Cultural Revitalization ~

Ohlone women were matriarchal. Maybe not all anthropologists would agree with that, but that's their problem, not mine. Because the Ohlone people are not federally recognized tribally, there currently are seven groups that are seeking federal recognition of which four of them are headed by

women and three by men. Ohlone descendants, who come up here to the Canyon wanting to know more about their heritage, wanting to become actively involved, are extremely focused. They've done their homework, their genealogy. They've all been women. There are Ohlone men who are assertive and very involved in their ceremonies, and with tribal activities and with warrior-ism. That's very much the case, but more of the individuals who I am personally in contact with, and have participated in ceremonies with, have been Ohlone women. That's why I believe we are matriarchal. My grandmother married a man who was half Chumash and half Ohlone, but he identified himself as an Ohlone because he married an Ohlone woman.

FUTURE VISION

I would love to see all the Ohlone collectively come together and share the knowledge that we have with each other and partake in ceremony, and to do it in a good way so we truly do honor our ancestors. There are so many Ohlone descendants who want to, but don't know how to. We opened up Indian Canyon to all indigenous people so they know we are here and they have a lot of support.

There are many different groups of Costanoan/Ohlone descendants, some of whom identify greatly with their ancestors, some who have newly incorporated their Native heritage, some who know they are Native, but are totally unaware of the political aspect. The political aspect is in California fifty percent of California Indians are not federally recognized and that is primarily due to 'Missionization'. When the Spanish came up with Father Serra to convert the indigenous people to Christianity, and to create a labor force to build the missions that extended from Sonoma in the North to San Diego in the South, the cruelty and diseases were devastating to the local indigenous people. Many tribal people lost connection to their ancestral lands. Many of those who survived quickly learned that their survival, and the survival of their children and grandchildren, depended on

not being identified as Native American people. These grandchildren may not have even known they were Native American, or they knew only that they had to keep it secret.

The requirements for federal recognition are that tribal people must have always identified as tribal members and that the tribes have always lived in one place. Missions made this nearly impossible because they displaced people from their land and made it dangerous to identify as Native American. This displacement and dis-identification for the purpose of survival continued through the 19th and long into the 20th Century.

Because of the criteria that this government has placed on federal recognition for tribal people who were ignored in 1978 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs determined that there were five hundred and ten federally recognized tribes in this country, the Ohlone descendants are ignored. The people in Washington, D.C. who are a part of the agency, Branch of Acknowledge & Research (BAR) do not know the history of California Indians. They are under the impression that one size fits all. And that is not the reality with the genocidal practice that characterizes the history of California Native peoples.

It is almost impossible to meet the criteria that has been placed on Native peoples. The groups who are petitioning for federal recognition, and at this point I believe there are five different groups, one of them being Muwekma. They have been denied twice. Another being Amah Mutsun band and then another splinter group developed out of that. And then there is Indian Canyon Nation, the PajaroValley and there is Tony Cerda's group, the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe. Then there are a lot of descendants who are very knowledgeable about their Native heritage, but are completely unaware of all these political groups that are out there. It is very difficult to try to get everyone together and meet the criteria for federal recognition. One of the primary reasons is because part of the criteria is you have always been a tribe, and the tribal members and all the relevant agencies recognize you as the tribe of that area. But when there are other splinter groups, it

creates a lot of dissension, a lot of “this is my territory”. It is the Native American post-colonial psychology as to what happens to the psyche of the oppressed and then the oppressed are taking on the characteristics of the oppressor. I would love to see if a group of Ohlone elders, people from each one of these bands, could select a headman and have them come together collectively, and then we could move forward in a good way. Then we can be visible – not just for federal recognition. That is a possibility that may transpire.

Federal Recognition ~

One of the future goals that I see that is extraordinarily important, both for the good and the bad, but particularly for the good in acknowledging the birthright of the descendants of the original people, and that is federal recognition tribally. Fifty percent of California Indians are not federally recognized. It has become a very sought-after position to obtain for many Ohlone people and for many California native tribes. If you go along coastal California from the southern part of Sonoma County and all the way down to Santa Barbara County, not any native peoples are federally recognized. It is like they are non-existent, and so consequently when you have people who are carrying on ceremony and need feathers of different birds – turkey, vulture, eagle, red-tailed hawk -- many birds that are considered on the endangered species list, if they are found in their possession and they are not a card-holding member of a federally recognized tribe, they cannot use them for their regalia or for their ceremonies. It is a very unjust system that this government currently has in place.

A very good example also is NAGPRA, which is the Native American Graves Protection Act. Because of the continuous construction going on, particularly in the San Francisco Bay area, Santa Clara County, Silicon Valley, and here locally in San Benito County, there are a lot of burials that are being disturbed, unearthed, and relocated. Any company or university that receives federal funds has to abide by federal law. UC Berkeley is a good example. They have in excess of twelve

thousand burials in their possession that they cannot, even if they wanted to, repatriate to the most likely descendants, to the Ohlone peoples for re-internment, because we are not federally recognized.

There are many reasons for federal recognition. Another aspect that is coming into play is the gaming issue. We are in some of the most populated areas and gaming is such a tremendous money-maker. There are a lot of Native peoples who would like to be economically self-sufficient and that is one vehicle that certainly would put them in that position, but because they are not federally recognized, they cannot partake in that form of economic sufficiency.

I've experienced some horrendous situations. When I came back from Paris into Chicago's O'Hare Airport, because I had an earring on that was made out of a rib of a deer, the customs individual thought it was a walrus tusk. He interrogated me and asked if I had any feathers in my possession. I did have a turkey vulture feather in my suitcase. He didn't understand that when you have a prayer feather with you, regardless of what it is, there is a sacredness about it and that feather has to go full-circle where it protects you on your journey until you come back. It was confiscated at the O'Hare Airport because I do not have a card issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs saying that I was a member of a federally recognized tribe. You continually run up against these situations. It is getting better, primarily through the process of educating people. When the twenty-one Missions were built in the mid/late 1700's, extending from San Diego to Sonoma in the North, that did a job on the cultures of a lot of people. Then you go through the horrendous California Indian Genocide policy. For sheer survival to say you were Indian was suicidal.

There is a tremendous amount of intertribal differences that primarily were created due to the criteria of becoming a federally recognized tribe. What I personally would like to see happen is that realization take place. If there are differences we can work them out before we go before the public or any of the government agencies, county, state and federal. We need to go as a unit so our

voices can be heard, and with consensus, so our ancestors who were killed did not die for naught, so we can go forward in a good way and a very proud way, so that the people whose earth we walk upon will be proud. The government no longer divides and conquers; they just divide and ignore. It is working really quite effectively, unfortunately.

I think that all of the Ohlone descendants are going to have to work collectively if they are going to succeed. There were many different groups within the Ohlone territory, pre-contact, as there is now. If we can formulate some form of consortium and collectively go for what it is that we know is needed for seven generations in the future, it can work. It was in the early 1990's when I made an attempt at the request of the California Indian Legal Service. Jay Peterson suggested that I inquire to see if we might be able to formulate a consortium. At that point in time the response I got was Muwekma was on their way to be federally recognized and wanted no disruption whatsoever. The Amah Mutsun didn't want to lose all the work they put into this. For fear that if they go as a consortium, all the work and all the money and all the time they put in, they may lose. It is understandable too. I did talk to Val Lopez – that is the other Amah Mutsun group. He said, "I'll have to talk to my attorney." I didn't hear from him after that. At that time, Patrick Orozco and Tony Cerda said, "Certainly. Whatever is going to work." Perhaps the youth may come to that conclusion that if we want to make a difference, we will have to do it collectively.

What I hope to see is formulating a confederation that the individual groups/tribal people, who have petitioned for federal recognition, realize we can make it work and still hold on to our own identity and respect our ancestors in different locations. It is a pretty sizeable area from San Francisco down to Big Sur, from the Pacific Ocean over to the eastern part of the Mt. Diablo range. We need to maintain our independence, but agree to consensus so that we can work within our territories where we are located and still respect our ancestors. We are all related. We may have come from different areas within the Ohlone territory, but we need to work cooperatively as one

unit. I can see a confederation where each tribal group maintains their autonomy and their manner and way of doing things, but still come to a consensus so that we work collectively to go forward. I believe there are six different tribal groups within Ohlone territory that are petitioning for federal recognition, but there are many different tribal families who are totally unaware of this process, or who are aware and don't want to belong to any one of the different groups that are petitioning. There are some who are independent and want to be a part of, but cannot find their documented heritage, or haven't put the effort into obtaining their ancestor genealogies so that they know even what Mission their ancestors may have come from or the area where their village may have been. There are some individuals that identify with three and four and five different tribal groups too because of marriage and other factors. I would like to see a collective thought, a consensus with all the groups within the Costanoan Ohlone territory and eventually within all of California.

There are currently in excess of thirty-six different gaming casinos in California. They have collectively gone together and have become quite a political force because of the realization of what is going to work best for our people with the monies we have coming in. Gaming may not last forever so I'm seeing a lot of investments taking place outside of just the gaming, primarily in real estate, but in a number of very enterprising successful businesses.

Significance of a Land Base ~

A land base is extremely important. The first time Costanoan Indian Research was working with the National Park Service and the De Anza Trail became a federally recognized trail – and that is a twelve hundred mile trail that extends from Mexico all the way up to The Presidio in San Francisco, we wanted to get the Native perspective along the way. The Native peoples who were not land-based do not know what actually transpired in 1774 and 1775 when De Anza did come up. The Native peoples who are still on their land base were familiar with De Anza, and the tragedies that came when he came up to The Presidio with all his people. It was devastating. Having a land base,

and being able to identify where your ancestors have been, and in our case here in Indian Canyon since the beginning of time, the relationship that you have with all the life around you is real. There is a substantial difference for those who don't have a land base. Having a land base is very important because you can connect with your Mother. To have a space and place gives one a cultural identity.

Indian Canyon is the only traditional land still inhabited by the descendants of the original people in the Ohlone territory. There are many archaeologists and anthropologists who, depending on who you talk to, would say we've been here for the last ten, fourteen, or twenty thousand years. I say since the beginning of time.

Role of the Next Generation ~

The younger generation is not plagued with the restrictions their ancestors had. The importance of youth being involved in ceremonies, understanding sacredness and being responsible for the consequences of their decisions is so very important. We need to let them know that they are a part of determining where we go from here. I am very impressed with the young Ohlone descendants who are revitalizing the language and are very present in today's society.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

It is better now than what it has been. I'm really impressed with some of the charter schools. I have a lot of charter and private schools that come up to the Canyon. The students from York School come up when they are in eighth grade and then when they are seniors.

Last Saturday we had ninety-six students from San Francisco State University come up who are all taking Native American classes. Before coming to Indian Canyon they stop and visit Mission San Juan Bautista. Their professors ask them to observe how much is mentioned about the original people on whose land the Mission was built, and indeed whose labor built the Mission. When they get to the Canyon we welcome them and have ceremony honoring all four directions with positive

energy. We then have a feast and share the history of Indian Canyon and Ohlone people and California Indians. We then walk to the Healing Pole and my mother's Spirit Rock. The Healing Pole is an eight hundred year old Alaska Yellow Cedar, carved by an internationally known carver, Tonu Shane Eagleton. We then go to our traditional sweat lodge and share our place of prayer. This last Saturday we had some Ohlone elders who sang songs in our language. We then clean up and say safe journey. This is a typical university field trip.

I have a number of interns from UCSC, De Anza College, San Francisco State University, UCLA, JFK University – quite a number of universities and colleges. I would like to see more Native American education in the younger grades so they have a well-rounded background of the original people whose land they are on. We are doing a lot of outreach with the local youth: Hollister Youth Alliance, charter schools, Rebecca, Boy Scouts, etc.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

I have no doubt about it, particularly holding all life sacred. Understanding when you destroy something you really don't have to. When you take, you take only what you need, not necessarily what you want. When I am using mugwort, I offer tobacco. But I would never just take all the mugwort of this one bush. I would selectively take mugwort branches from many different bushes and thank each bush for its medicinal properties that it is providing. If there is very little, you never take more than 25% so it will continue to grow to provide for you. The ability to realize that you can go forward in a good way without allowing politics and governments to set you up is very important.

Eduardo Duran wrote about the psyche of the oppressed in his book, Native American Post-Colonial Psychology. When a people are oppressed a culture of victimization settles in. One of the results is that the oppressed begin trying to play the game according to the strategies of the ones holding the power. In a nation that is organized around competition and individualism, the

strategy is to try to get what you can get for yourself, your family, your community, and this runs counter to our traditional culture of taking only what we need and looking toward the long-term sustainability of the culture, the people, and the land. Tribal people can be splintered, with each splinter group working to get out of oppression, thinking that perhaps they have a better chance of being federally recognized or getting something else they feel they need. So we are in the process of working this out. What is different is that we have a cultural history that informs us that there is another way to do this, that we can work collectively for the good of all of us and that this will sustain all of us for the long run. We have thousands of years of cultural history to remember and to put into practice as we continue to respond to oppression. This knowing is something the larger culture, which is not connected to their indigenous roots, does not have. And while it is difficult, it is something we have to draw upon. This is an ongoing teaching, how people whose culture is based on the collective and on considering seven generations, go about working with a dominant culture that is individualistic and short-sighted. We are working to hang onto this knowing and work together. We may stumble, but there is also the remembering and re-creating. I think this is something we are learning – how to hold our ancestral knowing and vision in the contemporary world. I also think this is something the larger society can learn or can remember their own ancestral knowing – that in the long-run, working with works better than working against, whether it is with people or with the land. Then it becomes a dance, not a competition, and I think we would all rather be dancing.

After you understand that, you can truly be free because you can see where people are and see them go full circle and sometimes they are stuck here, myself included. It is a partnership where everyone benefits. It takes two to tango; you can have a beautiful dance, or you can get really tangled up.

This society is so absent of the sacred. – particularly not respecting life, let alone human life, for economic gain. That is what the Occupy Wall Street and other Occupy movements were all about. You cannot put human life behind economic gain and that is what is happening. The one percent doesn't have a clue how to hold life sacred. You can never purchase integrity or the truth. Allow the spoken word to be your truth. When you are in a position to make decisions that affect any life, ask yourself: how will this action affect seven generations in the future? When you answer this question you will know what your decision is supposed to be.

When I was in school everything I read about Native cultures was very, very brief and shallow and more negative than not. I would like to see the truth be told, not only of the injustices that took place, but also of the rich heritage including working with the environment with tremendous intelligence which has never been credited to the people that lived here for tens of thousands of years. Archaeologists may say sixteen thousand; as they become more informed, the number of years people have inhabited this state is becoming older and older. Just allowing the intelligence possessed by the original people that were here in such a good way and sharing that knowledge so that our Mother will continue to live is critical. When people try to control versus working with, there is a substantial difference and the end result does not always have the quality or the integrity that was here at one time. I believe it can come back again so that all life can exist and go forward in a good way. Everybody honoring the ancestors is so very important.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

When I am working at PG&E, I'm up at 3:30 AM and out there at 5:45 AM. We were working ten hours and then at 6:00 I'm at UCSC doing storytelling. I just went from my fire-resistant coveralls and hard-hat to a very elegant dress and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Who is Native American/Indian?

From my perspective a Native person is an individual who is truly connected with all the life that surrounds them. I'm a part of the moss that is growing on this coastal live oak tree. I'm a part of the wood ferns, a part of that Bay tree, a part of that Buckeye tree.

When I was going through an eighteen month litigation with my upstream neighbor, it was quite an education. There were four attorneys who worked on behalf of Harlan Creek for Indian Canyon. When I'd say something from oral history that my mother would share with me, the attorney would ask me to substantiate it. "What do you have to back that up?" I was going back and forth to San Bruno. I was going to Washington, D.C. to the National Archives. I was able to substantiate just about everything, but my hair was turning white. As a child, when I was on the pity pot -- nobody loves me -- I would go up to the waterfall and just listening to the water I would forget why I was on the pity pot. In 1991 I went up to the waterfall and said, "Why am I going through this?" There had to be a thousand gallons of water a minute coming down the waterfall when I asked that. Of course, water, that is why I'm doing this. '*Rumme*' is just not H2O; it is the movement of the water, the sound of the water, the creek that contains the water, the space that the water is in -- they are one and inseparable. There is that communication that continually takes place over and over and over again. I believe a Native person is one who can communicate with all the life that surrounds them.

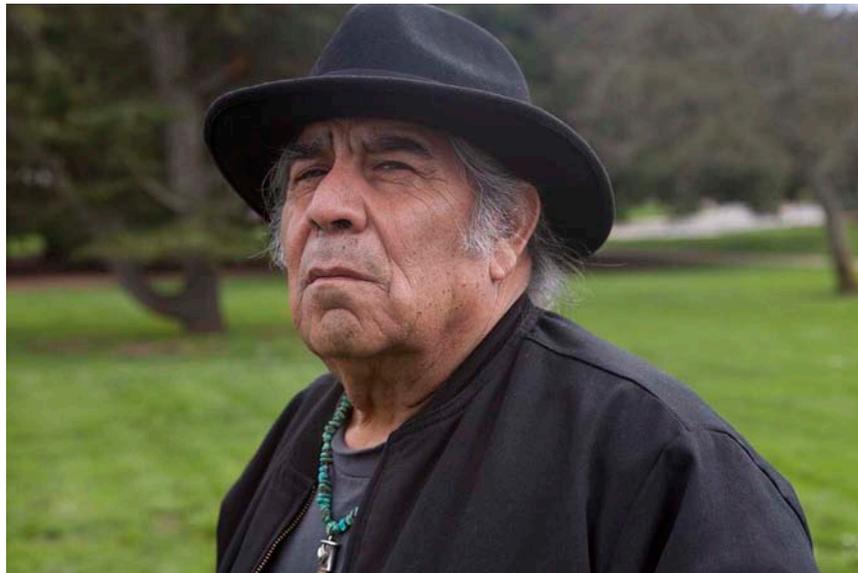
Reconciliation between the Oblone and the Larger Society ~

In reality there is just one earth, one people. We need to start informing people that **we are still here**. Events like the one we are participating in at the San Francisco Public Library which celebrates our heritage and experiences, can be the beginning of reconciliation.

Proud to be Oblone ~

I'm proud to be an Ohlone who lives in a canyon that has always been inhabited by my ancestors. I am able to make the connection with all of the life that surrounds me in the space and place and communicate with the natural elements.

TONY



CERDA

TONY CERDA
Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe
Chief

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I wouldn't say we were raised traditionally, because we were urban. We were in the neighborhoods so it wasn't like a traditional environment. We didn't have a reservation, but we always did ceremony. We were doing sunrise ceremonies and healing ceremonies. The person who taught me was Tony Miranda. It went way back to Simon Francisco from the village of Echilat in the Carmel Mountains, the village we are from. He was baptized by Father Serra in 1772. He was the last headman from that village, right there on the San Carlos Ranch. When I went there to a meeting and they asked me, "What are your ties to this village?" I told them my fourth generation great-grandmother, Magdalena Francisco was from the village of Echilat. The archaeologist was looking through the book and there was her name. Rosario was Simon's and Magdalena's great-granddaughter. She married Tiburicio who was from Mission Dolores. He went down to Carmel in 1834 and married Rosario. They had a child in 1835, Maria Josefa Delarosa, who married Juan Diego Silvas and their daughter, Ramona Silvas, met our great-grandfather who was from the Cahuilla Indians, on a cattle drive.

My great-grandmother was Cahuilla. There is not really a whole lot of stuff that I remember when I was young, because I really didn't feel like getting involved; I was too busy as an 'urban'

person. I wish I had learned more and gotten more involved in it and been more aware of what was going on. I guess that is a problem with a lot of people. You know what they say, “Youth is a wonderful thing. Too bad it is wasted on young people.”

What brought me back to this is when I quit working. It gave me more of a chance because I was always busy raising a family. I have five children. I trained fighters so I spent a lot of time in the gym every day.³ What brought me back was mostly getting involved in the ceremonies, because I think that is one of the most important things.

When I find more out about the ancestor, they inspire me to be more like they were. My father and I did a lot of things together, and he taught me a lot of things. When I was born, my dad was a cowboy at the Rolling Ridge Ranch. His father was one of the first cowboys who started the Diamond Bar Ranch. People learn more by what you do and see you do, than what they tell you. By watching my father, and trying to be like him, it was not so much what he told me, but what I saw – just the way he carried himself. My father wasn’t a drunkard. He dealt a lot with horses and tractors and trucks, but mostly he was an engineer operating heavy equipment. Later on that was what I did.

³In 1965 the priest at Sacred Heart Church, Father Beta, wanted to start a program to help with the gang kids. I volunteered to help. I had some boxing equipment at home – a speed bag and gloves. I started the boxing program there for the neighborhood kids. I like boxing because it’s not like baseball that you have to have nine guys or football that you have to have eleven guys. Boxing, if you can help one kid, fine. I didn’t know too much about it. I boxed as a kid, but never any formal training. My uncle used to be a professional fighter. I asked him if he could help me. He didn’t have time so he told me to just study the game. That is what I did. I think that is why I was successful, because I didn’t have a style to teach somebody. I would go the gyms, to different people, and bought a lot of films of famous fighters. I would take a kid and see more or less what his style would be, and then go to Joe Louis stuff or go to Kid Gavalan stuff, because that is what he reminded me of. We would look at and work with those movies. What made me successful is that people didn’t know what my kids fought like. Other trainers were fighters and they would teach them how to fight like they did. I had nineteen national champions as Golden Gloves AAU champions. Some became professional fighters. I had seven world champions. That wasn’t my intention. My intention was just to help some kids. My feeling was this – go as far as they could go and I’ll go with them, not I want to make them a professional fighter. If their career was just one amateur fight, I was happy. I trained one of the kids, Tony Garcia, when he was fifteen years old. I took him to Las Vegas and different places to fight. Now he is a judge in L.A. We had a lot of fun and did a lot of traveling – Atlantic City, Miami, Las Vegas, Monte Carlo, London, Moscow. Tony told me one day when I was ‘Winging’ the Bears, ‘I remember when we were little kids and you were helping us, and you’re still helping us.’ He is a Bear Dancer now. [During the Bear Dance ceremony the Wingman cleans (purifies) the Bears with an eagle wing and sage.]

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

To me the most important thing is to go on with the ceremonies. As long as those ceremonies are going on and the young people are getting involved in the ceremonies, then things will progress for us.

Who are we? What are we doing? What is our job? Every creature on this earth has a job, but people forget what our job is. The worms dig little holes in the soil and make the soil good. The eagle takes our prayers up to the Creator. The condor scavenges and keeps things clean so we don't get sick. The plants make medicine for us. The trees make oxygen for us and the plants. Everybody has a job. What is our job? To take care of this earth. The ceremonies bring us back to being more aware of what our job is. We need to find out what our job is so we can do it more efficiently, more effectively.

The Bear Dance Ceremony is very important to us. We've always had bear ceremonies and healing ceremonies. Bears are healers. There is a story about the woman who was cooking acorn and didn't leech it real well, and made her family all sick to their stomachs. The father didn't know what to do so he went into the woods by the river. He saw a bear so he got some of the acorns and left it there. The bear ate it and the bear got sick. After the bear got sick, he went to the bushes and grabbed some roots and started chewing on it. So the father knew what was good for a stomach ache and got the roots. He took the roots home, made a tea, and cured the family. Nature gives us the things that we need; all we have to do is look for them and take care of them and protect them. We are Bear people. For thousands of years the Ohlone people have been bear medicine people. The bears are our medicine.

I know of a bear that was shot in Colorado by my wife's uncle. He followed him into the woods. When he found him he had some leaves that he was trying to heal himself with. So those are the healers -- the bear medicine people. To us the Bear Ceremony is one of the most powerful.

Without getting too much into it, the people come for the healing. It's a holistic healing – for the body, for the mind, for the spirit. That is what the bears do. It really helps a lot of people. It is unbelievable some of the things that happen. We had a little girl who came about eight years ago to our bear ceremony. She had leukemia. She was from Arizona and in Arizona they don't do that. The tribal people in Arizona brought her to our gathering and we did a bear ceremony for her. The little girl healed. The next year she was all right. There are some real healing things that happen.

The Bear Dance was revived by Grandpa Raymond Stone, a Paiute by over in Big Pine in the late seventies. I became involved in the late eighties with Chemo Candelaria who was doing the Bear Dance at Pachas, up in the Carmel Mountains. Originally that is where we are from, the Carmel Mountains. Chemo was one of the people who Grandpa Raymos had as one of his students. For a long time the bear ceremonies were underground. This dominant society didn't want us doing our ceremonies. You won't find any pictures of it, because we don't advertise it. It is a healing ceremony. Howie Marufo, a Pomo from up north, is the one we worked with a lot in doing the Bear Ceremony in this area. He started the State Bear Society which provided bear healing ceremonies for the entire state of California.

To prepare for the ceremony you have to be cleansed. You go to purification ceremonies to get yourself clean so you are able to do those things. You can't just walk off the street and do it. There is a lot of preparation. What the songs do is build up for them to get the bear spirit, then when they are doing the healing ceremony they have the bear spirit. I can't get into it too much, but it is really important. Yesterday we had two young bears, one who is seventeen, the other fifteen, who did the ceremony last night. The young boys are very powerful and very strong. When we are gone, the young boys will keep it on.

People should know that we are still doing it and that it is something to help the people. With the Bear Dance, which is one of the most important things, we get more united. It's not just one group of people; it's a lot of different tribal people involved in it together. It shows us working together for the healing of the land and the people instead of fighting and arguing. It can't be so open for everybody. If people want to come, because they want healing, and healing for the land, they're welcome. It is important to know why you are doing it and why you are there. When we're dancing I tell all our dancers, "Remember why you are dancing. We're dancing for our ancestors, for the elders, for the healing of the land, for the healing of the trees, for the healing of everything." I'm not dancing because I want to look fancy or look good. They've got to know why they are dancing, the reason they're dancing, then it shows in their dance, because they're praying and really doing the ceremony, not just trying to do a presentation. That's not what we're doing. What we're doing is sharing our culture so that people know what we're doing. They are there because they want to participate and they want to be part of what we are doing.

The Bear Ceremony is a sacred, secret ceremony that is used for the healing. It's not a ceremony that is shared with a lot of people. The young men do their puberty rites and that's when they see their vision to be a bear and become a bear. If their vision is to be an eagle, then they become a wingman. That's why they are out there praying. A person is called by his inner feelings, his spirit, because it takes a lot to be a bear dancer. It's not just a person who is going to dance. He is a person who is going to dedicate his life to helping and healing people. That's why it's so important that they know what they are doing, and we know what they are doing. Everybody else doesn't have to know. It's a calling. It's a secret thing that people do and don't talk too much about. For a long time nobody even knew about it. I don't go to sun dances and other things. Our clan is bear clan and that's why we do bear ceremonies.

We have to keep these things alive and going so that people know that we're still here and we're still doing the ceremonies. The day that the ceremonies stop, to me that's the day that the world will end.

The spirits of the land are not feeling too good about what is going on so that's why we've got to do ceremony. We call them in to help us, and then they can go back. They are our spirit helpers. We thank them very much for helping us. They are the ones that are here on this land taking care of it. We've got to make sure that we honor them and take care of it.

We believe that everything has a spirit. A lot of people don't eat meat. Why? Because they're going to kill an animal. But what about the plants? The plants are alive too. You've got to remember, even if it's a violent death, something has to die so you can eat, if it's a plant or an animal. Our people would take a plant or animal to feed their families. They would pray to that spirit and ask that spirit, "Will you come with me and feed my family? And I promise that when I die I'll feed your family." Our ancestors were buried in the ground; the grass grew and the rabbits ate the grass; the eagle came down and ate the rabbit. When we wear our regalia we are wearing our ancestors. Before we start we do our prayer songs. The inside of our circle is the natural world; the outside of our circle is the spirit world. There are a lot of things going on when we are doing dancing that many people don't know. When we do an eagle dance, our eagles go in the eternal lifecycle carrying our prayers from the natural world to the spirit world. Everything has a spirit and everything is related to us. The rocks are related to us. Our ancestors have been here for thousands of years so they became part of those rocks. The rocks are our oldest ancestors. The trees are part of the land. Sometimes we forget about how important those trees are. They are the lungs of Mother Earth. We breathe out carbon dioxide and they breathe it in, so there is an exchange. That is why we honor and pray for the trees. You know a person with high blood pressure can sit and look at a tree and relax, and their blood pressure will go down. The trees communicate with each

other. If somebody does something to this tree, that tree knows and starts getting stronger to fight whatever is happening to this tree, because they communicate with each other. These things are alive, and have a spirit.

I caught my grandson the other day with a golf club hitting a tree. I said, “What are you doing? You can’t be doing things like that. Even though it can’t talk back, you’re still hurting it.” We’ve got to teach them so they learn to protect these things.

All those things are important to us. We sing a song to open up the spirit world. We do a song to call our ancestors to join us. We dance counter-clockwise when we come in because we are turning back time. When we come in we turn the life cycle and spiral like the universe. We set up the center of the universe so we can dance. We are dancing in the center of the universe and are praying in the life cycle. The East – that’s when we are babies, the newborn; the South is when we are adolescents and are making some of those important choices. The sun is a little closer to us. Things grow; people grow too. When we get to the West, now we are adults. As we get to the North, that’s a time when the elders rest. Winter time is a time of rest, the time of elder, and a time of kick-back. The earth is resting too, waiting for the rebirth.

When we are adults we pray to the Creator to help us to live right so that our children and our children’s children will look at us and learn from us, from our actions. If we live right that means we’re showing them how to live right. In life we have three choices. We have a good choice; we have a bad choice; and we have the right choice. Those are the things we have to help our children learn so they can make the right choices.

When we’re dancing we’re not just jumping up and down trying to scare everybody. We are really connecting the spirit world with the earth. We ask the spirits to come and join us. When we do our entrance song, we’re calling the spirits to come in with us. So that way we have the spirits of our ancestors who our dancing with us, and helping us do this healing.

Indians are always praying. Everything we do is a prayer. Somebody says, “Well what do you pray about?” There are only two prayers. Either you’re asking for something or you’re thanking for something. We’re always praying, trying to help things. We are thanking the Creator, thanking the Mother Earth, thanking the water spirit. And we pray for them.

Fire is very important to us. It cooks our food, keeps us warm, and sometimes it gets wild and does things. Why? Because people forget to pray for it. Fire has two sides. How would you eat if you couldn’t cook your food with the fire? Those are things that are so important that sometimes people don’t realize it. That same fire that burns in the sun, burns in the middle of the earth. That same fire burns within us. A dead person is cold; they’ve got no fire. It’s that fire of life that we’ve got in us. All of these things are so important – the water, the fire, the trees, the air. People forget to pray for these things. When we come in we pray for the healing of the people, the healing of the land, the healing for the trees, and we ask the spirits to come and join us.

We do ceremonies for the healing of the Mother Earth. There is a ceremony that we do for the trees, for the fire, and a sunrise ceremony that we do in the morning. We did a sunrise ceremony and planted a peace tree at The Presidio in San Francisco and planted another peace tree in downtown Pomona. There is a lot of healing that needs to be done. There are a lot of killings. We do the harmony keepers sunrise ceremony to get the runners together who are going to run to downtown Los Angeles to bring unity with the people. We did a memorial ceremony for our service people on Memorial Day in East L.A. at five o’clock in the morning.

It is important for the young people to be involved in dance and the ceremonies because when I’m gone, things will keep going. Without ceremonies, everything will finish. There has to be ceremonies going on all the time. Ceremonies for the trees, for the ocean, for the land, for the birds, for the whales. When we’re doing ceremony we put our medicine on for the protection because we are working with the spirits. The medicine is the paint on the face and body that we use for

protection. You've got to make sure that you are protected. In our way we believe the spirits are there to help us when we do our ceremonies. When you thank them, they go back. You forget to thank them, and they stay around.

Language Restoration ~

Language is very important; in fact it is one of the criteria for federal recognition. We have a tribal member who has a master's degree in Native American Studies. She is working on our language. She is putting together a book.

I speak very little. Our last speaker was Isabelle Meadows who died in 1929. We've tried to bring it back, but it is so hard. Now with my cousin working on it I think it is going to be a little bit easier to pick it up. We do use it at our meetings as much as we can. We have a language meeting an hour before our council meeting every Sunday.

The arrival of the Spaniards, the building of the missions, the Mexican takeover, and then the United States takeover -- all those things devastated our culture, our language, our ceremonies. People got together to bring back our ceremonies and our language. The Wintu, the Maidu, the Miwok, the Costanoan, and the Yokuts were all Penutian speakers. We're all in the same linguistic group. Sometimes we will take our words from one of the other Penutian speakers when we can't find the word that we are looking for. There are a lot of Costanoan dialects -- Rumsen, Mutsun, Karkin, Awaswas, Tamyen, Chochenyo, Ramaytush, and Chalon, but they are all tied in together; they are different, but some words are the same. The Costanoan languages come down from the Bay Area to Point Sur, but it doesn't take in Esselen. That's a whole different ballgame.

Sacred Site Protection ~

Burial Sites at Bayview Hunter's Point, San Francisco

To the City & County it is how much money they can get out of that land. Actually it is Navy land, government land. There is a law that says when the government owns land and they are not going

to use it any more, it has got to go back to the original people. It is going back to San Francisco; it is not going to the original people. They don't care and that is why they don't want to deal with it.

“Well, they aren't federally recognized anyway.”

We are establishing a cultural presence here in San Francisco. I think that is going to bring a lot of people together. We invited some tribes to join us the other day. Through song and dance I think we can get people together, and start working together instead of going with negativity.

The San Francisco Planning Commission has a big map that shows where some of the burial sites are. Somebody overlaid that on their new plan and one of the sites is right at the entrance of the new football stadium so you know they are going to do that. I'm against them destroying those sites. I told them, “Look, we've been here for thousands of years and those are our ancestors buried there and now you come in the last two hundred and fifty years and want to destroy everything.” That's not right. They don't respect our indigenous occupancy of this area. That has always been the trouble.

With federal recognition at least we would have the ability to go to Washington and complain straight out right to the head person and not to these little bureaucrats who are just trying to appease the powers that be. If you are a chairman of a federally recognized tribe, they will listen to you. We are recognized as Indian people. I've got certification from the Bureau of Indian Records saying that I am an Indian, as an individual person, but the tribe is not recognized as a Native American tribe. There is no Ohlone tribe that is recognized.

We did a monitoring job at Moss Landing for the Marine Lab. I asked them for those tests. They had a lot of those tests; some were forty-five feet deep, some were a hundred and forty feet deep. They were at different elevations. It showed a picture of the auger hole and what they found in it. When we did that job they sent an engineer to talk to me. They were able to make some changes to make it work. They protected the sites and they were still able to do it. Even though

they still hit six burials, they weren't concentrated. The main midden area they stayed away from; they covered it. There would have been a lot more remains bothered if they had gone into that area, but they worked around it. They redesigned their building to fit it.

Ceremony at Elgin Creek, The San Francisco Presidio

I had been there when they first started the restoration project. They invited me to go over there because I had been working at Crissy Field in 1997 as a Native American monitor. When I did a contract with them it was not with Tony and the National Park Service; it was with the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe. All the checks came to the Tribe from the National Treasury so it wasn't Tony Cerda; it was the Tribe. I didn't get involved in raising any personal funds for me doing that kind of work; it was more for the Tribe and that's the way it should be. Those were our ancestors who we are dealing with and we've got to be very respectful of that.

I think the Elgin Creek restoration project is important for the simple reason that on this earth there is so much water, but very little of it is fresh water that we can drink, cook with, clean ourselves with, and that is disappearing. They are trying to bring it back. That is a very good thing to do. I support it wholeheartedly. Anything I can do to help I will do. It is important for not only the wildlife, but for all life on earth to protect that fresh water. This is a water planet. Three-fourths of this earth is water, but less than one tenth of one percent is good enough to drink and that is disappearing real fast. People don't conserve it. People should water their grass in the evening and take shorter showers – whatever they can do to conserve water.

We did the ceremony at Elgin Creek in the San Francisco Presidio to acknowledge the spirits of the land that we know are there and for them to help us with the healing of that spring. We have to pray for all these things so that can happen.

Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe ~

We started organizing about 1990. We got our non-profit status in 1994. My involvement has been more since 1990, because I retired in 1993. There are a little over two thousand in the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe. We have our council meetings every month. We have drum practice every Thursday. I'm in the office every day. It's an important thing that we have elections. It's not like I appointed myself chairman, and I'm the only chairman that has ever been. Every three years we have an election, and every three years I've been elected since 1993. There are fifteen people in the tribal council. We have an advisory group of twelve people who don't belong to the tribe, a law professor, a guy who is running for governor right now, and a kid who graduated from Cal Poly who did his internship with me in the gym. They help me decide issues, then we put them to the council for a vote. It is really democratic.

As Chief it is my responsibility to keep our people together, working together, and helping each other. We're a tribe. We're not a paper tribe that just writes things down; we're doing them. We've been coming to Ann Marie's Indian Canyon for about fifteen years. We come up to San Francisco to do other things. We were in San Jose in March for the Aztec New Year, the real New Year for Mother Earth – springtime. We are always going someplace. We've got to let people know that we are still here, and it is not something they just read in a book. A lot of schools ask us to come. We do presentations and I tell the kids, "Don't let them tell you that we are all dead. You tell them that you saw us." There are a lot of universities around our area and they call me every once in a while to talk to a class. "Tony, can you come down and talk to the class for an hour on the eagle feather?" We have a three day gathering that we do every year. This year it is going to be at Tony Cerda Park in Pomona.

We dance at the Aquarium of the Pacific every year. Every year they give us an overnigher where we take the kids and camp out at the aquarium, right there by the fish. We dance right by a great big tank that goes up about 75 feet and about 20 feet wide where the fish are swimming. It

looks like a background for us when we are dancing. While we are dancing the people are looking at the fish going around in circles too. It is a gathering of the salt water people at the aquarium. When we did the last overnighter, we had fifty-eight kids and about twenty adults.

Traditional Role of an Elder ~

The most important thing that we can is to teach by our actions. If we talk one way and act another, what are we really doing? That is one thing that I always talk about in the sweat lodge: our actions speak louder than words. You can't just tell them, "Don't smoke!" and then be smoking. You see a father walking and the kid walking behind him is trying to imitate his father. His father is telling him what to do, what not to do, but he is looking at what he does and that is what he is going to do.

They have to know the right way to walk the **Red Road**. A lot of people forget that. I think that is so important. I see myself as trying to live a good, clean life, and be about healing and not hurting.

They have to learn from us because if we teach them wrong, they are going to keep doing wrong. When they come around I put them in the sweat lodge and talk to them. The young kids are looking at us. They don't know our history so I tell them our history. It makes them more proud of who they are. I tell them, "Do you realize how many people it took to get you here? You have a mother and a father, but go back to your great-great grandmother and grandfather; there are sixteen of those just in that one row. How about all those after and all those before? How many people does it take to get you here? It doubles up every generation. You really are an important person." It starts them thinking sometimes.

The young people know more than I did at their age. We can't be here forever. I notice the young kids really getting involved in what is going on, finding out what their job is. To me that is beautiful. The kids are our treasure. They are the ones that are going to keep things going.

Working for Veterans ~

We've done a lot of work with veterans. There was a resolution passed by the National Congress of American Indians that allows tribes to present the Medal of Valor to veterans. We've done that twice already. We've also been doing interviews with a camera. It is a way for the veterans coming back to get some healing. My brother was a Vietnam veteran. They were really treated badly so they had some bad emotional feelings. With this, they feel good. For me it feels good to be able to thank them and honor them. We've interviewed forty veterans now on film. Those people are our heroes and what we need is more heroes for our kids to look up to. We did some interviews of some who were silver medal winners. One of them was Julian Nava who was president of the school board in Los Angeles for twelve years. He was a sailor in the Second World War, and then ambassador to Mexico. He was the first indigenous person to be a doctor from Harvard. We are getting those tapes together so we can put them together and show them to the children.

It is a really important project, because there are so many veterans now who need help. Right now we are having meetings with the senator from our area, Norma Torres, to see if we can acquire the armory there in Pomona. It has been closed for five or six years. I think that would be a great facility for us to have a place for the homeless veterans. We have programs. We are working with body and fender men, with the electricians union and with the laborers union to try to rehabilitate the soldiers coming back so they can get jobs.

FUTURE VISION

I hope that in the future people know about us, and respect us. They came in here, stole our land and killed our people. They never honored our *right of indigenous occupancy*. We are certified as Costanoan Indians by the federal government. When we got our certification letters it says that I'm a California Indian, and our tribal operations number with the BIA is 3722, but they say we are not federally recognized. So how do they say we have a tribal number? They say they are trying to get it done, but what they are not trying is to have a government to government relationship. It would be

like them dealing with China or Mexico, and they don't want that. They fight it all the way. The guy who wrote the federal criteria, Shepherd, worked for the BIA for over thirty-fourty years. When he retired he said, "I'm going to help tribes get recognized." He found out those things are impossible to meet. Any tribe existing right now would not meet those criteria. It's too bad because our people, the Costanoan people, are from the most beautiful, richest lands in the world, and yet, we don't have *one* reservation. The delegation from California went to Washington to fight the ratification of those treaties in 1853 so that they wouldn't recognize us because the land was too valuable for the 'savages'. That's the way they put it. So that's why we end up without the recognition that the people out on the desert have. They didn't care about *that* land. The federal government recognized them out in the desert, because their land was worthless, but now they are finding that it is not worthless, and they are stealing their money. How do they keep track of us with our income tax, when they can't keep track of the money they take from the Indian lands? The royalties from that money that these companies pay goes to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and they lost three billion and didn't know what happened to it!

What have they been doing for five hundred years that is not stealing and killing? It's hypocritical. They don't recognize our rights as indigenous people. There should be some way for people to get behind it so we can get our status clarified, so we can have our ancestors bones repatriated to us. They will talk to us when they feel like talking to us.

We did a crossover ceremony in full regalia inside Mission Dolores in San Francisco in 2002 for the spirits of our ancestors who had died and were buried in a Christian way, but had never any indigenous ceremony done. We had state senators there. The pastor, Brother Gerrick, told me that there are five thousand Indians buried in the parking lot right there. We did a crossover ceremony in San Juan Bautista too, the year after. Other Missions won't even talk to us. They said we were

trying to take the Carmel Mission away from the Catholic Church. We didn't want to take the Mission, even though it is ours. How did they get it? They had our people build it. It's *our* land.

The United States has been here less than two hundred and fifty years. The village of Echilat, where we are from, is a two thousand year old village. The Moss Landing village is a seven thousand year old village. So what is two hundred and fifty years? Does that give them ownership over everything, even the bones of our ancestors?

I was at San Francisco State for a couple of meetings about repatriation. The University has something like sixty thousand boxes of human remains. We have meetings, but I don't see anybody doing any ceremonies and putting any bones back in the ground. They say that they are working with us and trying to get it done. Well why aren't we getting it done?

The vision is very bleak if you go by what is going on. I don't see too much going our way, partly because of federal recognition. Federal recognition didn't used to come up until about 1977. Now whenever something is happening, they want to know: "Are you a federally recognized tribe?" That is the first thing they throw in there just to block us out. Indian health services: we used to go the clinic at San Manuel until about two years ago. Now you've got to be a federally recognized tribe to go to the clinic. The law says that they have to accept any California Indian who had an ancestor living in California before 1850. My fourth generation great-grandmother, Maria Josefa Delarosa, was baptized at Santa Cruz Mission in 1835. Her father was Tiburcio, Indian; her mother was Rosario, Indian. That is what the papers said. We have all of our baptismal and birth certificates that tie us exactly to her.

I would like to see that everybody knows that we are still here, who we are, and that we are a part of preserving our environment. Right now there is so much devastation and people are so arrogant. I'm part of the problem, because I was a heavy equipment operator. I did a lot of changes on this earth. People are so arrogant that they can move a mountain if they want to. I think we

have to protect our environment more and save things that are important to us. Most of our prayers and dances are to protect our environment.

Federal Recognition ~

There are three ways to get federally recognized. One of them is through the BAR: Bureau of Acknowledgment and Research. The other way is through Congress by a congressional act. The last one is executive order. The President can recommend it.

The first letter of intent for federal recognition I took was in '92. Then I went back in '94 when we did the walk from Frisco and met with them. In '95 I took a petition to a White House meeting and turned that in. In 2002 I took a more complete petition because they said some things were missing. Since 2002 we have not heard any communication from them. They asked for certain things. They wanted certification on our enrollment, a proclamation from the tribal council. But it doesn't move. They don't have enough people in the BIA and they don't care. They probably turn down one tribe a year. There are one hundred and fifty tribes trying to get federally recognized and it is going to take one hundred and fifty years since they do about one a year. What it takes is more money and that is too bad. I feel that with Obama in there we have a better chance. When Clinton was in there I went to three White House meetings. He was willing to work with us. When Bush came in, nothing; everything just dropped dead. The Department of the Interior just wiped everything out that he had done. They over there trying to force the Israelis to recognize the Palestinians and they don't recognize us here.

We were working with a very prominent former Republican Senator out of Washington who was going to help us. He wanted twenty-five thousand a month for two years to get it done for us, plus a two hundred and fifty thousand bonus when he got it done. By the standard of things getting done, that would have been a cheap price to pay, if we had had the money, but we didn't. We are still working on it. We have a federal recognition committee set up. I'm just setting it up now to

give them each a part so they can go through each one of those criteria and do the best job that we can right now before Obama gets out. We don't have any money and that is our problem. We pay rent on our office which is seventeen hundred a month besides the utilities and the phone and our traveling. Pretty expensive.

With enough money you can get the right people with the right connections who can get it done. The coastal Miwok in San Francisco got recognized a couple of years ago. George Miller snuck it in on a congressional bill. They didn't even know what was in that bill. Since that happened, now they are more careful. That kind of hurt it for other people.

There are about seven groups of Ohlone. I wish we were all working together, because that is the way it would get done, but there is too much conflict. I tried because it doesn't make any difference if it is me or who it is, as long as we get it done. I hope it happens in my lifetime. I'm going to try to do everything I can. There is something that everybody can do, even if it is a little bit. If everyone has the same goal then eventually something is going to happen, but if everybody is pulling different ways, then you are going around in circles. A lot of times people say, "Well they are not going to recognize everybody." Wait a minute. My great-grandmother was Cahuilla from Southern California. The Cahuillans have about five reservations and about five casinos. One reservation has two casinos! Those are the same tribe. They make it hard for everybody else.

Federal recognition is not an easy process. The California Council on Indian Policy, a committee that was set up by Congress in 1992 or 93, went all up and down the state taking information from different Indian people about what the problems were. They had committees set up, one committee on education, and a federal recognition committee. The chairman of the federal recognition committee, Rosemary Cambra, was supposed to teach everybody else how to get federally recognized. She's been turned down three times. So it is not what you would say a 'slam/dunk'. There is a lot riding on federal recognition because of patrimony, where things have to

be given back to the Natives. They say if it is not a federally recognized tribe, then they can go through a federally recognized tribe to get them. That doesn't even work; otherwise it would have worked already.

The first reason people think we want federal recognition is to get a casino. I met with some people who offered to help us with money to get federally recognized. They asked me, "What is your goal?" I told them, "Our goal is to build a clinic, a diabetes center, an educational center and some housing for our seniors, and if it takes a casino to do that, then we'll do it!" Our goal is not to have a casino and spread the money out. I've seen too much of that and that doesn't work.

We're still working on federal recognition. It is a very important because, for instance, we are in a conversation with the directors of this development project at Bayview Hunter's Point in San Francisco. If we were a federally recognized tribe, they would have to deal with us as government to government. The developers and planners know there are nineteen archaeological sites there. I know what it takes to do the work they want to do. There has to be a lot of earth moving, a lot of pre-compaction. They say there was a little bit of archaeological work done there in 1911. You know there have been more studies done. Being a retired operating engineer, who was a foreman on the grading jobs, I know there are soil tests that are done. The soil tests tell them what the ground is like and what dirt they can move, where they can cut and where they can fill, and what they have to do to stabilize it. How can they do the job if they don't know what is there? Where are the reports? You know they found stuff. The way it sounds like right now they have already done it. They just left us out of it and we are right now trying to get back into it so they can do some consulting with us and maybe make some changes.

Significance of a Land Base ~

There are only three ways to own land: you buy it; they give it to you, or you steal it. They didn't pay us anything for this land, and we didn't give it to them. How did they get it? It is not welfare or

anything like that. It is what they owe us. They hurt us culturally, spiritually, and they don't even acknowledge us.

We are urban people now. We are talking right now about doing an Ohlone presence, but to me that is a band aid. It's all our land. It *was* anyway. Nobody ever paid us. I don't remember ever getting any money for it. [Laughs] I know we didn't *give* it to them. I told that to Robert Stanton, the Director of The National Park Service, when we were at Crissy Field in San Francisco. I asked him, "You know you got 88,000 acres. How did you get it?" He said, "I don't really know. I think it was the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo." "That had to do with the Mexicans. What did that have to do with us? The Mexicans gave our land away. I don't understand that. 88,000 acres in the Golden Gate Recreation Area. How many workers do you have?" He thought it was around four hundred. "How many are Ohlone?" Not a one. The shoreline project is a billion dollar project, and they are going to have low-cost housing. "All these houses you are going to build, how many will be allotted for Ohlone people?" He said, "Well, it's a lottery." They should let the Ohlone put their names in and have some allotted for them. It is not like a minority thing that you have to have so many of this and so many of that. It has to do with what they took from us. They took our language away, our culture away, our religion away. They really owe us something. They've got 88,000 acres here. What is to keep them from giving us 1,000? Then they've got 87,000 acres. That would be a presence – having a place where we belong. Things are a lot simpler than what people try to make them be.

There is not an Ohlone person who is federally recognized, and that is not right. The same thing happened in the Santa Barbara area, and the Los Angeles area. The main cities where the people were, the places that are worth a lot -- the Indians were sent to the deserts just to get rid of them, get them out of their sight. That is something they owe us. They want to 'heal' then clean it up the right way, not just with "Excuse me and I'm sorry".

What I'd like to see as an Ohlone presence: Ohlone people are working, and have a place to live. For some of our tribal people three or four families are living in one house. This isn't right because this was our place. I'd like to see a cultural center here in San Francisco where we could do ceremony and presentations, a library for people to come study about us, a ceremonial ground where we could do ceremonies where nobody could bother us.

Role of the Next Generation ~

I have five children. One of them passed away. My children and grandchildren have been involved since I retired and started doing this. Desiree was born in 1992 so all her life she's been involved. Henry has been involved all his life. I've got some of my grandchildren with me right now who are going to be dancing with us: Delilah, Samuel, Levi and Jasmine. They've been dancing all the time. Jasmine, when she was two years old, was already singing the women's dancing song. Carla has been involved since she was a youngster. She's a great singer and very artistic. She makes jewelry. Veronica, the oldest one, is on the tribal council. My son, Tony, just retired so he is going to get involved more now.

I don't think we have sufficient young people. The kids like to get involved, but a lot of times the parents don't want them support that. That doesn't make sense to me. The more they get involved with what we're doing, the more they get on this **Red Road**, the better people they will be. Some of the parents want them to be taught about hell and the devil instead of keeping them in line by showing them the way. I'm going to show them to do the right way. You don't have to scare anybody and tell them they are going to hell if you don't do this. There is a lot of this 'reborn' stuff. They say we're worshipping the devil without really knowing what is going on. That is one of the big problems. Once a person is with us and sees what we do, then they encourage their kids to come, because it would be better to have them dancing in a ceremony and doing healing ceremonies for the Mother Earth than be doing all that other stuff.

The young people are attracted to what we do. I don't worry about that. To me if they want to come, they are going to come. If the parents want them to come, then let them come; if they don't, then they don't. Just like when I was doing the boxing, you help one person, you did a lot by keeping one kid from going to jail for the rest of his life. We have a lot of tribal members, a lot of cousins, who are in prison. I have one grandson who is in prison right now in Arizona. Those are the things they get involved with in the outside world instead of staying here. Why? Because their parents wouldn't let them come and participate. It's just too bad, but that is the way it is.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

Are they doing a good job? No. Their main focus is the Missions. We were brought into the Missions. When my kids were studying about the Missions they said, "Can you give me something for my project?" I said, "Okay, I'm going to give you something to knock your teacher off her chair." I gave them the genealogy that goes back to Magdalena and Simon Francisco, our twelfth generation great-grandparents, who were baptized by Father Serra at Mission San Carlos. They were studying about Father Serra and the Missions and here is a kid whose ancestors were baptized by the priest. There is a lot of history that we have in the state. I would like to see the truth being told -- just like the myth that there are no Ohlones anymore.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

I don't think that we are the *first* people; we are the *original*. First means you came here just like everybody else. Original means that we are indigenous. I don't believe the Creator just put people in one place. Everybody has Creation stories. The Creator put us all with a job to do, and our job is to protect the earth. When the Europeans first came here and looked at this land, they said, "Oh what a beautiful, virgin land that has never been used." We had been exploiting it for thousands of years, but in the right way. When the Dow Jones goes up, who pays? The earth pays. We have to

protect our Mother Earth. Everything we need She gives us. Whatever sicknesses there are, She will give us a cure for it. That is where we get all our medicines. All we have to do is find them.

One day we did a ceremony at the cultural center right on the beach in Malibu to raise funds for the Yurok people who were fighting to keep the rivers open for the salmon. We were teaching the people how to cook acorns, how to leech, grind and cook them. This gentleman comes up to me and says, “You know what, did you ever think of making cookies and selling them?” I said, “That is the difference between you and me. I’ll do what I need to survive, not to see how much money I can make.” One other thing that we can teach people is not just going after money. I know it takes money to live, but it is more important to really do the things that need to be done, and take care of our culture, and forget about trying to make money all the time.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

I’m easy-going. The way I feel about it: we do what we do. If somebody wants to do stuff with us, I got no problem with it, but don’t come over here and tell us what to do. If you don’t like what we do, then don’t come. I do the same thing. If I go to your place and I like what is going on, I keep coming back. Once I don’t like what is going on, I just don’t come back. I don’t have any right to tell anybody what to do. The only right I have is to make my own decisions.

Who is Native American/Indian?

A Native American is anybody born in the United States. To me, we are indigenous people. That means our ancestors were buried on this ground for thousands of years, and became part of the rocks, the trees, and the grass. We are all the same people from Alaska down to South America; there are just political borders. This bird, this deer, this person is Mexican; *this* one is American? The borders went through some tribal lands; the people on that side, the Kumeyaay, speak

Kumeyaay and Spanish. The ones on this side speak Kumeyaay and English. When they get together they speak Kumeyaay.

One day we were getting some willows together to build a sweat lodge. I went to the Flood Control and asked them, just to be polite, if we could gather willows. They said, “Yes, except from here to over there. Don’t go in there, because there is a little brown bird mating and nesting right now so we don’t want to disturb them.” Here is a little bird that comes from Mexico right here in this wild area, and we can’t disturb him, but the people who come, are chased them down the freeway, causing accidents, and thrown in jail. It gets so complicated. It doesn’t make sense.

A plantation owner in Brazil wrote a letter telling how to control people. “You divide them in groups. You get the darkest ones against the lighter ones, the older ones against the younger ones. Then they are so busy fighting each other, they can’t worry about what you are doing.” That still goes on. If all Native Americans would work together as a block, then we would have more to say about everything.

Like sovereignty. *We are a sovereign nation.* What does that mean? It doesn’t mean that the United States gave us the power of sovereignty. That is something we had for thousands of years. We were sovereign nations. That is not something that somebody gave us; so that is not something that somebody can take away from us. We don’t need to be federally recognized. Yeah, we’ve got to go along with what is going on, but I don’t worry about it. If it happens, it happens. If it happens in my great-grandchildren’s time, fine.

We are a sovereign nation. Right now we are negotiating to buy 75 acres in Moss Landing. If that happens, there are going to be a lot of changes. We did our Bear Ceremony there in Moss Landing. Once people know about it, I think we will get some support.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

I’m not so sure it would be fair no matter what they did. A good resolution would be to give us some land, recognize us as a federally recognized tribe. That would solve a lot of problems, but they

don't want to do that. Too bad we can't get people to support that idea with their congressmen and senators -- whatever it takes to get that done. They are the ones that kept us out. In 1852 the Governor, and the all the state legislators went to Washington, D.C. and fought the ratification of the treaties. They didn't want us to keep any land because of its great value. Our land extended from the San Francisco Bay area to Pt. Sur, including the Salinas Valley. I've got a map in the office that shows where there are no recognized tribes. In the Monterey area, San Francisco area, and Los Angeles area, the most important parts of the state, there are no federally recognized tribes. Out in the desert there are **five** reservations.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

I feel good about knowing who I am, where I come from, being able to trace our ancestry back, knowing what they did, and knowing that we are still part of it. We are different now. We don't make regalia the way they used to. An archaeologist from the Monterey area and I did a presentation at Hartnell College in Salinas fifteen years ago. I was wearing a hat. He says, "You know what, Ohlones don't wear hats like that." I told him, "Gary, this Ohlone does! If my grandfather had had this hat, he would have worn it too. How traditional do you want us to get? You want us to go back to when we used to cover ourselves with mud?" Let's face it, this is a changing world. You see somebody does something that you feel better about, you incorporate it into what you do. Everybody does that. That's evolution.

Our family has a lot of history in the state of California, not only here in Northern California but also Southern California. My great-grandfather was with the first group of cowboys that started the Diamond Bar Ranch and his brother, Frank, was a blacksmith for the Ranch. Now it is a big city, Diamond Bar City. It is a proud feeling to pick up those history books and read their names in it.

GREGG CASTRO



GREGG CASTRO

t'rowt' raahl Salinan/rumsien Ohlone

CULTURAL IDENTITY

My dad grew up on a ranch out in the country. He did his service in World War II and when he came out there weren't any jobs in that part of Monterey County. He just gradually moved further North until he got to San Jose in 1949 and that is where he stayed. I was born and raised in San Jose, but most of our family is down in Monterey County.

He was never comfortable in San Jose completely. He always talked about having a place down in the homeland. He said, "I don't need a house. I just need a small plot of land with a nice tree so I can camp under it." He was very tied to place. We went hunting and camping and hiking all through Los Padres National Forest and parts of Hunter-Liggett. He would help his grandfather drive cattle. There were large ranches in the area. The ranchers would pay him to help manage their cattle too. He was well known for his rope making and he also broke horses for a lot of the ranches. My Dad remembers riding horses all through those hills -- very rugged country. It is hard even to get in with jeeps now. He passed away when he was sixty-seven; even at that age it was remarkable how much he remembered from sixty years before, the little details of really remote areas when we'd go out with his jeep. He'd say, "There is this canyon and if you go around here, there is a trail." We'd go over there and there it was. I feel fortunate that he gave that connection to me because that is the part I didn't get from my mom. She knew the background; she knew she was Native. She knew she was from a Carmel Valley village. We didn't even know the name until much later. It was a rumsien Ohlone village up river from the Carmel Mission in the Carmel Valley. Tecutnut. She knew those kinds of things, but she didn't have that direct connection like my dad did. That was pretty special. That is what motivates me, along with growing up in that era of Indian activism, wanting that acknowledgement that we are still alive.

There is also that connection I got from my dad: that love of the homeland. It is hard to relate to other people who don't have it. When I first met Malcolm Margolin he was contracted to do a publication on the fiftieth year anniversary of the military base, Ft. Hunter Liggett. The commander's headquarters used to be Hearst's old lodge log cabin. He and the archaeologist, Janet Eidsness, gathered a bunch of people who were old rancher families. I remember them saying, "Well, yes, our family has been here a long, long time. A hundred and fifty years now we've been here." What do you say to that? We know we've lived here at least twelve thousand years versus one hundred and fifty. These people obviously have a love for that land we call our homeland, so how much more is it for somebody who has been there twelve to fifteen thousand years? It is hard to grasp how other people feel; I just know how I feel about it -- having those roots is pretty special.

One of the things I'm hearing from people my age was that activism that happened in the 60's, the Civil Rights Movement spurred the revitalization efforts. Of course what got most of the attention was the Black people's movement, but there was a strong undercurrent, particularly in the Bay area, of the Native American people. Most of the Native American people who were involved were relocated people who came in the 50's. There were certain activisms that happened in the late 60's. AIM was involved and Native people indigenous to this area too including at Alcatraz. Alcatraz was very inspiring, very motivating to Native people staking their claim in the world that we are still here in a very real way. I think that is what motivates us still today. That is what you hear all the time in the storytelling. What powers Malcolm Margolin's magazine, *News from Native California*, is having a voice, making a statement that we are still here, we are still alive. So many of us grew up in elementary school hearing that we are all dead. There is that story that Ann Marie Sayers tells about Kanyon, her daughter, hearing that at school. That was only about fifteen years ago. That is what I and my brothers and cousins heard. I think my mom heard that too and yet, in that area of Santa Rita – North Salinas, where they lived, it was well known to have a large number of Ohlone

people. There is that theme that runs along, hearing it from both sides of my family, my mother and my dad, being told that we are dead, that the Indians are all gone.

During the late 1800's and the early 1900's the elders who were alive then remembered the time when it was dangerous to be Native. They had the laws in place for scalping that was paid by the federal government and enslavement laws that they called 'protection' laws. All of that was very much alive in the elders' minds so that carried over into the way they taught and raised their children. In my dad's case they said, "You are Indian. Be proud of that, just don't talk about it; be silent about it." Because it could be dangerous. That was the undercurrent. There was still prejudice when my dad was growing up in the 1930's in Monterey County. I was born in 1956 and I grew up knowing I was Native all my life, but not knowing a lot of the background, because they didn't. Part of the protection that was put in by the elders was not passing a lot of that on.ⁱ⁴

⁴ My dad told this story and I have to believe it is true because I've heard similar stories. During the 1920's and 30's they were doing an Indian count. It wasn't part of the census; it was separate from that. The Bureau of Indian Affairs was doing it. It was around the time that the 18 treaties [negotiated in a very threatening, rushed and unethical manner by the government in the mid-19th century; they were then implemented to deprive the Natives of their rights and possessions but never ratified, so they got none of the "benefits", such as they were...] came back and there was a push to do something about it. "Okay, who is left and what are their needs?" They were supposed to go out and talk to people. A lot of times that didn't happen. It was just too expensive, too inconvenient, whatever. So they listened to rumors, old reports, looked at old documents and said there is a bunch of Indians there or there is not. In our area they did do a count, however they did it, but we were vastly 'undercounted' and they said they are all taken care of because they are all ranch hands. Almost none of them had their own land, but they lived and worked on a ranch. So they weren't "landless, destitute Indians" in their terms. That was the basis for disenfranchising us, and that happened in Ohlone country and elsewhere too. "They don't need land. They are able to take care of their families." That constituted the elimination of recognition. It was never a formal thing of you are no longer recognized; it's like just forgotten, not counted, not put on a list. The story my dad told: there is a family tavern gathering place near Jolon where all the families used to come up on weekends. It was mostly local people, many of them Salinan. He said one time this guy came in and he was dressed as a city slicker (I interpreted it as a 'suit'.) He obviously wasn't from around there. He said, "I'm looking for the Indians. Do you know any Indians?" Everybody is going, "Do you know any Indians? I don't know any Indians." Almost all of them were Indians. And the guy walked out. Not knowing the impact of that, they just like said "What does that 'suit' need to know Indians for? I don't want to be a part of it." Of course the consequences of that were pretty devastating culturally. We are still living that same process in Indian country. I think there is now an understanding, at least among California Indians, that they have to stand up. Even if you are not doing anything culturally, if you are a member of a family that is Indian, mark off Indian (on the census). If that is all they do, it is a help.

My Mom's family has a long history of being known as Ohlone in the Salinas area, but it is a family group and we weren't doing the political stuff at all. When I became involved in the Salinan tribe on my Father's side, especially when I got to be vice-chair and chair, I didn't think it was appropriate to emphasize that part. I thought it would be too confusing, although I went to all the Ohlone gatherings at Coyote Hills since the beginning. When I decided not to be tribal chair anymore then I started to be more involved in Ohlone efforts.

Most of my lineage on the Salinan side is on the north part of our homeland, although I have lines all over the place. Great Grandpa Tony was a Harrington consultant. When he was real little he was out in the homeland for a while. He was raised by his grandmother who was Salinan. Her husband at the time was full-blood Salinan and all his uncles, who were all three-quarters Salinan; he was raised like their kid brother. My mom grew up knowing she was Indian and the family had knowledge and great pride in it in that little area north of Salinas where she grew up. There were actually lots of families, including my dad's side which was also in the same area. In this little community that is still referred to as Santa Rita, there were lots of relations; most of them were Ohlone, some Salinan. My maternal grandfather and his two brothers had split plots, about eight acres on the hillside. There were only five houses on this land when I was growing up. There were open fields and my cousin had his horse there for a while. My grandfather had a cow. We played in the fields. There was nothing but fields from my grandfather's house all the way over to Fremont Peak. That part of Salinas was all fields. Most of the fields are gone; there are houses there now.

A lot of Indian people went to the Santa Rita School which is still there. Their mascot is Indian, but when they did that, eighty years ago, it was because the neighborhood team of kids who were playing ball were nearly all Indian, and they referred to themselves as Indian so the school took on that mascot name. It is a little bit different connotation that you hear now which is done by non-Indians who think they are honoring Indians with their tomahawk chops. There are no absolutes. I

think there is room for something different because this was a honoring for the local people. A lot of the families are still there. My Aunt Lu's great grand kids are going there. Multiple generations have gone to that school. My dad's family is scattered and disconnected, but my mom's family was very connected and together. You don't see that that often.

My mom and my uncle started working on the genealogy on her side of the family, the Ohlone side. She was doing my dad's side too as well before genealogy was all that popular. It was easier to do it in the early 1960's. You could just walk into an archive and they would hand you the original books. You would never see that now. It is hard to even see the Xeroxed copies, let alone the original. I remember seeing the original book from San Antonio Mission when I was real little going with my mom and my aunt. They had it in a safe and pulled it right out and gave it to us to look at. Those days are long gone. It was just reaffirming what we already knew. My mom knew she was from Carmel Mission; she knew her family basics, but found the details in the old records. One of the Spanish soldiers, Manuel Butron, married one of the Native girls. He is buried on the inside of the Mission Church on the left side of the chapel as you walk in. He was only a corporal, but apparently he was favored by Father Serra. His wife, her baptized given name was Maria Margarita, an Ohlone woman from *Tecutnut* village, just up the river in Carmel Valley, is buried outside in an unmarked grave. That describes how that whole society grew up; that continued until the 1960's. Then activism brought it out; we were no longer afraid.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Those of us who grew up in that time and now have kids and grandkids, understand that we are at the cusp of either bringing it back or losing it. If we don't do something, it will be gone. The coastal Indians, particularly the Mission Indians, have lost their language. There were speakers in the early 60's who still knew the customs and the language. My great-grandfather, who was one of the last speakers, passed away in 1964.

A lot of it is preserved in archives. J. P. Harrington, the famous ethnographer, did so much. There are various stories about how he came to different groups and became part of their lives. Some of the stories were humorous because they thought he was an oddity. Well he was an oddity. He spent a half century of his life in obsessive documentation of these cultures on the edge of oblivion. He became close to some of the families. He managed to get so much information and write it down in such huge volume. Compared to other anthropologists, he was relatively untainted. It wasn't regurgitated as it was with other people.

That is one of the things that characterizes a lot of the work that I and others do regarding cultural protection. We have that disdain for the scientific view because they don't get it right. That whole European thought really heavily distorts the way Native people think, and yet we have to go to them as sources because sometimes they were the only ones who kept it. It is a love/hate relationship really. We value what they did in observation, but it is the interpretation that has caused a lot of damage and hurt feelings for Native people. We are using the energy we got from the late 60's as identifying ourselves: we are not dead. By bringing back this culture we are saying: see, it is *not* dead and we are *not* dead. By going in and understanding it in the original way that we believe our ancestors had knowledge, rather than this reinterpretation from anthropologists, we have more direct connection to that original, traditional knowledge that we need to survive.

I became involved in our tribe in an organized way in the early 1990's. This was on my dad's side, the Salinan side of my family. There were some cultural protection projects going on. Some of our elders had been consulted and involved in that. One big one that was happening was on Fort Hunter Liggett Military Base, an ex-Hearst ranch that surrounds what is now San Antonio Mission. It is mandated by federal law that they have to do cultural protection; they have about a quarter of a million acres. Part of it is supposed to be consultation with the Native people. We were lucky that the archaeologist who was running the project was very knowledgeable and understanding about

Native people based on earlier work that she had done in other parts of the state. She brought in a lot of the Native people.

We were already involved in other things. There was federal recognition going on and some other cultural protection things. In 1992-93 we used that as a catalyst to reform the tribal community and put together a modern tribal council. I was on that original council. I've been involved with non-profits in the Bay area prior to that so I wound up getting stuck with the administration, but I was always drawn to the cultural part. A lot of the people I know and the involvement I have in the California Indian Storytelling Association came from a lot of the conferences I went to for the tribe in the early 90's, events that none of the other tribal members would go to. Language conferences are where I met a lot of the people I know now: Malcolm Margolin, L. Frank Manriquez, Darryl Wilson, and Lanny Penola from Pomo country. Later on I met with Alex Ramirez, an Ohlone Elder who worked with Linda Yamane, my cousin. All these interconnections started to happen, the networking of people bringing back our cultures from doing archival research. I did the political part—federal recognition, administration, fund raising, all that mundane stuff that has to be done, and yet I was trying to keep my foot in the cultural part too. I'm pretty much over in that cultural part now. I was on the council for many years and wound up being Chair for four years, but understood its limitations. It is important work. I respect anybody who does that job. It is a pretty heavy job to have the responsibility for a tribal community where at one time we had well more than a thousand names on our rolls. A lot of their dreams are bound up in what we are doing. Not all these people have done the cultural work that some of us have, who brought back the knowledge and did the research, but they know they are Indian and they are connected to the land. Some of them never left.

We did something that a lot of groups did at one time and then got over it- build on overall tribal community. Malcolm said it earlier, that anthropologists give us these categories and put us in

their little boxes, they give us these names and slap these labels us. We sort of adopted that as a convenience. As one of our leaders put it, "The government is comfortable seeing it this way." It is not how we operated or had our communities before. The Salinan Tribal Council tried to unify all the communities from our territory which goes from south of Big Sur all the way down to Morro Bay, all the way across to the mountains separating us from the central valley, on the interior part north of the Pinnacles over the hill toward the Carrizo Plains area -- a pretty large area. That's what we've always been taught. We understand that that has fluctuated over time. We have been there fifteen thousand years or more. Our stories told us that we've always been there. We know that other people came and we adjusted ourselves as they came in, but at one time we had a much larger area. Our ancestors are buried out there. By the time of the Europeans we were maybe not taking care of as large a place. Other people were taking care of it, but our ancestors are there. That is always a struggle working with other groups who say *this is ours*. In the old days there was another way of doing it. We are trying to go back to those old ways, because there are honorable and practical ways of dealing with it, just agreeing. It is not ours; it is none of ours, but we should all be caretakers of it. That is what I've been trying to do over the last fifteen or so years. I go back at least once, sometimes twice a month to the homeland and have community meetings and do work down there. It's calling to me.

Language Restoration ~

Language is the basis for everything. If you can learn that first that really can set you up. You can do it the other way around and that is what we are doing. But if you can tackle the hard one first which is language, that will build a solid foundation. Language to me is from the ground. That is what the original ancestors had to create to be able to interact with the world around them. They first created language to describe what they were dealing with, what they were doing, what they saw, what they felt. From that language and interacting with the environment and describing what they

saw around them, that is where the ceremonies and the songs and the stories came from. Then the entire rest of culture came from that beginning.

What our Salinan community does with language is use it in ceremony. It's not like we're conversational. I don't see it in my lifetime. It requires one or a few people to dedicate themselves to that. At least one person in every case has to cross the line into linguistics, into that world. I know it is not going to be me. I tried. Linguistics is not my bag. Language is the heart of it and it is the most difficult thing. Even those who have Native speakers still, even those who have substantial language programs – they struggle. Every culture is struggling and is threatened. The language is the most threatened of all the cultural expressions by far and it is the heart of things.

In some communities, those pockets never lost it; they are still connected. Elizabeth Case, talking about her Karuk people, said they were told by the first people, the animal people, at the beginning of them as a people, if they ever lost their language they would not be Karuk people anymore.

The real traditionalists, the real elders dreamed dreams in the original language. They thought and dreamed and believed in their cultural language. We are in that transition period, where we no longer dream in our native tongue. We are further along on the curve over here on the coast because of the Mission system. We've gone through that transition already. In the more remote areas they are going through that transition where the elders who really knew the language, who were on the land, are passing on. There are pockets of people who are still on their land, grew up with their language, but they also went to public schools, almost all of them, and know English. They are just now going through that transition in their homelands where the culture has never stopped, but it is being interrupted by time and the 'real' world; the outside world is catching up with them. There is that urgency and almost desperation to get our ducks lined up so we can survive as a people.

I have five grandchildren. The oldest grandchild, who is six, knows some words. She recognizes the songs. There is one particular song that came up on the Harrington tape. We call it the Gathering Song. That is one of the songs I sang to each one of them within an hour of their being born. I thought about it – they are the first Salinan and Ohlone kids that there won't be a time in their life that they haven't heard their language and songs. That hasn't happened in many, many generations. Hopefully we can set it up so they can learn a lot more.

I admire groups that have managed to do language classes, like the Amah Mutsun, the Ohlone group right south of San Jose – our northern Ohlone cousins. That is probably the most difficult thing to do: to marshal that kind of organization and forces and commitment on behalf of people to learn their language. One person started it and other people joined in; there is a core group. What happens in Indian country, like anywhere else, there are ebb and flow cycles. For several years they were going gangbusters. Quirina Geary is nearly conversational in it. It is hard to become conversational when there is nobody else to talk to, but she has done a decent job and is teaching her kids. She has that hunger to know and the determination and willpower to make it happen, and the blessing of skills to accomplish it. She is the one person that I look to in California that tells me we can come all the way back. To re-establish some integrity to a community that is culturally based, you have to have language, at least some.

The idea I got from her is that nobody told her that it is impossible to do that, so she went ahead and did it. I think the Amah Mutsun people are farther along than anybody else I know in the state, at least so far. No Native speakers left and they've brought it back. A lot of it has to do with Quirina and Lisa Carrier who founded the Mutsun Language Foundation. I have so much respect and pride in Quirina and what they've done. I don't think they understand yet how amazing that work is. They just know how hard it is and the amount of work involved. They rallied the

community around the Mutsun Language Foundation. Whenever somebody asks me about that question I point to them. They are the ones who are doing it right.

Language is the key, but it is by far the hardest thing to do, especially for coastal Natives who were part of the Mission system where so much of our culture was driven out of us. The language we know describes the homeland in such a unique way. It is a different paradigm, different thought process. The Native language is metaphorical, situational, and contextual – all those fancy words. It was just a different way of thinking and it is really hard to translate those concepts. It is hard for Native people who have grown up in the European way, and have been taught in the European schools, to shift gears. That is the crucial part, because a lot of people are acquiring knowledge and that is all it is. It is knowledge in the European sense; it is data; it is information. When you gather that data, when you go in the archives and look at the Harrington notes, the Miriam notes, the Henshaw notes, and the old padre notes – that is data. It is important information, but it is the tip of the iceberg. There is a whole world beyond that which is very nuanced, that comes from a tradition ten thousand years old and more. It is hard to grasp that, but it is crucial. If you can get below the surface, and at least touch that, I think that is really the important part of cultural revival. It is not data acquisition. I think you have to approach it that way.

Storytelling ~

I'm on the board of California Indian Storytelling Association (CISA). For one thing it is a lot easier than language restoration. One of the first storytelling events I went to there was a Karuk woman who was part of the AICLS (Advocates for Indigenous California Language Survival), the language organization. She was invited to tell a story at Ann Marie Sayers' place. This was years ago, the first storytelling event that I know of. The first thing she did was to start telling a story in her own language. I don't think anybody there knew her language, but it didn't matter. There was such a

lyrical, singing quality to the words. And then she said it in English. That was a high standard to hear the first time out. Storytelling is a real important component that I think can lead to healing for communities because so much of our ethical, moral, and social base is in those stories. We do need support when we don't know it in the original language, but we still get a lot by bringing those stories back and telling them. It is a relatively easy, but powerful way to get communities to capture part of their culture, particularly for kids.⁵

They are all bound together. That is what is good about CISA, they try to bring in the dance, the story, the song. All that comes together in the language. In the outside world, it is an artificial separation. The Storytelling Association, the Basket Weavers Association, and the Artistic Association: people might be members of all of them because they don't view it as separate. There is a Euro-American way of separating things into the smallest little components to understand it; the Natives do it the opposite way. They bring things together and see it as a whole: language as part of a song that you sing during a certain time of the year. Now the words have meaning and you can understand them. In this modern setting we have to have all these separations so we have the Storytelling Association over here. We have the basket weavers over here. One of these days we ought to have a basket weaving storytelling festival. We sing. We dance. We tell stories. And that's the way it should be.

⁵ I went to an event at DQ University that CISA was asked to help on. A young man, Calvin Hendricks, has been going around to tribal groups in the upper part of the state, right into the communities and doing workshops for kids to tell stories. One way he does that is bring elders in so the kids can hear it. Then the kids learn how to tell stories. He got them into this youth storytelling festival at DQ University. It was really neat to see these kids; some were very nervous; some told jokes and that was part of it. Everybody, kids included, has a story to tell. Because they are Native, it is a different kind of story. Some of them learned the old stories. There was a real powerful one from a young lady who was about eighteen or nineteen, who told about her grandmother and the horrible experience she had as a child growing up in an Indian community and having to suffer the prejudice and abuse from the non-Native community, and sadly from her own Native family, and struggling to survive so she, her granddaughter, could be standing there that day telling that story. It was a really powerful thing. Storytelling is relatively easy compared to some of the other things like singing and dancing.

Sense of Place ~

A lot of people are using the word, indigenous. It is describing a people in a place. You can't really separate a people from their place. My dad and I used to go down to our homeland in this old beat up 1950 Chevy pickup after he got off work on Friday, just throw stuff in the truck, jump in there and run down. It would be late at night and he would get off of Hwy. 101 south of King City on the old Jolon Road going over to the San Antonio Mission. On a clear day it is beautiful, but my favorite time is in the summer because of the fog. It can be one hundred degrees over in Jolon area where the Mission is, and it can be sixty degrees on the coast because it is fogged in. You go over that crest of the road and it is just like marshmallow. All you see is white. I can just imagine our ancestors doing that. In the old days it had this long, twisty grade, the Jolon Grade, to get up to the higher plateau where the San Antonio Valley is. When my dad got to the Jolon Grade, almost like a ritual, he would turn on the heater full blast for a minute and then he'd roll down the window and turn off the radio. It didn't matter what the weather was like, he had to roll down the window. It took me a long time to understand what he was doing, but I remember the experience, even when I was a little kid – the smell. I still smell it today. But the old twisty road isn't there; it is now a straightaway up this steep grade going up to the San Antonio Mission. I do the same thing. The smell is still there -- Manzanita, sage, all that smell combined together in that little canyon where the road goes up. That's what I remember my dad doing. It was like he was coming home. Okay, that is the outside world. Now we are going home. Turn off the radio, roll down the window, take a deep breath and he was home. So that is what I do. That memory really lives with me.

Site Protection ~

I have been involved with cultural and site protection since my early time on the Salinan Council. Lately, I've become more involved with Ohlone issues, helping my Ohlone cousins with issues

outside my family's area. I have been doing some of that with East Bay Regional Parks and East Bay Area, much less in San Francisco. We are working with a group of people from the East Bay Regional Parks which is one of the first urban parks of its kind. They are to be lauded for some of the things they have done in terms of biological, geological, and land preservation, but they, just like most government agencies and municipalities in California, leave culture and site protection as the absolute last priority. CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act), which is the state environmental law that covers all of this, includes culture, but culture almost always is last and often isn't paid attention to. That is the case with the East Bay Regional Parks; they give lip-service to it. With the state law you can have a clear violation and somebody has to have the money to take action. We've talked to all kinds of legal agencies including the State of California Historic Preservation Office. There is a section of the Department of Justice at the state level that does Indian affairs, and there is also the Heritage Commission. All these people say is, "Gee that is not right." Some of them have tried to influence it, but the next step to take actual action, to get them to do something, nobody is willing to do it. We are trying to form a coalition in the East Bay that will influence the East Bay Regional Parks, and then hopefully through that we will expand throughout the Bay area and more.⁶ There are other efforts like this all across the state. They have

⁶ There is a particular issue, Brushy Peak, which is right by Altamont Pass. That is a sacred site for the Ohlone people for that area. It is also sacred for the Miwok and Yokut people too. Miwoks are still doing ceremony at Brushy Peak. The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) acquired it from private hands a few years ago. They had these elaborate plans to do trails. The peak itself and the northeast side are owned by the city of Livermore. The rest of it is under the management of EBRPD. They wanted to get together with the Livermore people to do a trail up to the top of the sacred peak. We are trying to say at the very least there are some cultural issues that are going to be entangled with CEQA. You need to do certain things. There are sites in the area. Burials were found not that far from the peak. It is a sensitive area. They said they had it all under control and then proceeded to lose control. They got a bunch of volunteers who did the trail. There are lots of trail hiking groups that volunteer to build and maintain trails. None of them apparently had training in cultural issues, because they went through an obvious site. The Native people in the area were saying, "Don't do it. You need to change the plan and find an alternate." They said, "Okay, we are not going to build it now." The Indian people took them at their word. A couple of years later all of a sudden they rammed it through before the Indian people could really act. They went right through at least one site. It was so blatant. There was a mortar hole right in the middle of the trail and they went over it. There are mortar holes right on either side of the trail near the peak. They only had two or three Park personnel overseeing it. None of them had any cultural training. At the last minute they asked one of the Ohlone people to come out and talk about the importance of the area. Of course that person didn't do it because it would be like validating what they were doing. The ignorance and arrogance of it! At that point the call went out and I got involved. We've been trying to get them to close the trail and re-route it.

huge problems in the LA area. There are Native people there, but you wouldn't know it if you asked the City. They have been fighting to protect what few sacred sites are left. Among these groups almost all of them are unrecognized. They have no funding. You are doing it out of your own pocket. It is getting worse all the time. We are coming together for mutual support. We are doing it in a very traditional way so it takes a long time. If it gets established though, it will stay around as long as it stays traditional. It takes a long time to come up with a way that engages the regular public, but that feels traditionally appropriate. It will be through the electronic media to do it from the ground up.

The Santa Cruz site was a burial discovery. It wound up involving Ohlone politics. Somehow I get dragged into these things. In this case I was asked by Ann Marie Sayers to just advise. She just wanted different perspectives. She probably suspected that it was going to get politicized, and it did. She wanted extra forces and minds. I didn't get deeply involved because it is not my area, but the issues were important. Santa Cruz has been known for being supportive of the rights and interest of people of color and people from different economic backgrounds. That is gone up and down in the last couple of years. But they've never been well-known in terms of indigenous issues; they've never been pushed. Their cultural resource laws reflect that. There is really nothing that protects the cultural sites there. Obviously that place is loaded with cultural sites all over the place; many of them have been gone, destroyed, for a long, long time. There aren't that many left. It just turned out that this place was one, right off the freeway where Highway 1 meets Highway 17. It is a plot of about seven acres of land right along the Branciforte Creek. It has long been known as an archeologically documented cultural site going well back. They knew it and yet there was nothing in their laws and procedures and regulations that prevented it from being

They just said, "No, it's in. Too late. We're really sorry. We now know that we screwed up. It really wasn't that bad. We fixed it. We won't do it again and we are going to work with you in the future." They didn't. Now we have to be more proactive because we don't believe them.

developed. The state laws are pretty weak. They are written *about* and for Native culture, but not written *with* Natives. The other side uses the loop holes to get their position taken care of. Native people have to learn to do it on our side. It is a game we don't like to do. It is not part of our culture and our nature to not be straight-forward, but that is the game that we have to be involved in. I've been doing that for almost twenty years now. I'm in the game and learning how to use those laws. Every municipality has their own. There is state law, but the counties and cities are allowed to have their own. They do have to be connected to CEQA which is the state law. If it is not federal, then it is under CEQA. Even private property to a certain extent is under CEQA. The bottom line is there is nothing that really protects the site. If they really want it to go away, it will go away. Now the big weapon is really public pressure. That is why Ann Marie started calling people and asking for their input, because she knew she was going to need that support. She had some involvement with people who had been involved with Glen Cove, the occupation site on the San Francisco Bay, Vallejo, which was threatened with development, so was occupied by activists for over 100 days to try and save it. What made it a little more political in Indian Country is that the local Native group, which is mostly non-California Natives with non-Native activists, was being supportive. For the most part they were a help; they provided public pressure. From my perspective you have to choose where you are going to draw the line and what you are going to do if they cross it, because it takes a huge amount of energy to do this kind of thing. A lot of people get burned out. If you do this kind of work, you have to understand that you are going to lose ninety percent of the time or more. You are not going to win. The laws are against you. The force of economics is against you. History is against you. You really have to pick and choose which ones are important. For Ann Marie that was important so she decided to marshal the community resources to fight it and it worked.

Every time I go by the Emeryville Mall it is horrifying to me. Corrina Gould has that event every year to commemorate the shellmounds destroyed to build the Mall, but I can't go because I can't stand to be there. To me the biggest slap in the face is 'Shell Mound Street'. They *think* they did a good thing. It is just the mindset. It is almost like flaunting it.

I don't think anybody thought we were going to win in either place, Glen Cove or Santa Cruz. It was important enough to fight the fight. If Glen Cove hadn't happened, I don't think we would have won Santa Cruz either. Because it energized the people and they realized we lose ninety percent of the time, but we do win and that is what they focused on. It allowed them to jump in. People don't realize it is not over yet. The activism part has run its course, but construction is still happening. The protected area is pretty small. It wasn't like we had acres. They are protecting the burial site which is basically a home site – that is about it. I'm pretty sure they are going to stumble on more.

My biggest contribution was that I contacted some people I know who have a group called Institute for Canine Forensics. They've trained dogs to only search for old, old remains, hundreds and thousands of years. They are developing science around it that seems pretty reliable. They are local and wanted to work with the Ohlone people especially. As it turned out ground penetrating radar would not work on that soil. They brought the dogs in. The remains that were there were already removed and stored away, but they still spotted it. The scent is still there. Then they hit on three other places on other parts of the property. There is a commitment to not build on that site and it will be documented. One is under a tree and they don't want to take out the tree. Hopefully it will not be disturbed. They are still not finished constructing so I'm expecting more to come up.

We are working on little things. I am involved with a committee of the State Historic Resources Commission looking at archaeology. They developed five white papers on various aspects of archaeology and how it is done in California. To get the white papers approved is five to

six years. That is typical. These white papers are just position papers describing a little bit of the history, what the situation is now, and what we wish it would be. One of the people on the committee, Janet Eidsness, has been very supportive of Native people for decades and was pushing to go to the next step. I don't think they originally intended to go to the next step. They were just going to do the white papers. They were done and felt good. She wants to do some type of action. The obvious one would be legislation, but now we are dealing in areas of CEQA which is extremely political. The minute anybody says anything about CEQA, the building trades association goes nuts. They engage their political influence in the process. The legislature goes nuts. The last attempt started out as a good law and got thrown in a drawer. They brought it out again a couple of years later and it got so watered down that it is dramatically different from where it started. It needs to be changed and improved. I think the Native people in particular need to know how to use it. There hasn't been an SCA workshop in a long time, but the need is still there to train people on the laws. It became apparent both with Glen Cove, Santa Cruz, and in San Francisco. The SCA workshops developed a 'Sourcebook' which is basically resources for people to look at. It is mostly printouts of the laws. The current edition is a thousand pages. We are talking boring law. It is just hard to absorb all that information, but that is what you've got to do. That is the next big hurdle: getting people to really understand the law.

Glen Cove was going on for almost twelve years. The plan was in place a long time ago. It was lack of money that prevented it initially. I first heard about it six or seven years ago and that was when people were starting to look for lawyers to fight it. Up to the end they were looking for lawyers and they couldn't find anybody. Nobody wanted to take it on. It was too huge. The law is very specialized and you have to understand not only the law that applies, but the economics and the archaeology involved with whatever the place is. That usually involves boxes and boxes of material. You need a team of lawyers for that. Even California Indian Legal Services has gotten away from

that because it is too expensive. They basically have to have funding up front. It is so labor and resource intensive. Nobody will do it for free.

On public land, most of the sites and the issues are known. It is going to be private property or undeveloped land that they suddenly want to develop where they are going to have inadvertent discoveries, where they are going to stumble on stuff. That is where the hot spots are going to be. So really the work needs to be more focused on the local and other government reaction to it – their policies and regulations. CEQA is there, but a lot of counties don't have very good application of it. As we found with Santa Cruz, their process 'sucks,' to use a technical term. The grungy work is what needs to be done – working on these laws, getting appropriate processes in place that prevent this from happening in the first place, and get Native people engaged early on. That is really the work and I don't know how that is going to happen. I've been working on it for almost twenty years and so have a lot of other people. I'm not even necessarily a leader of it, but I've been involved with it and know a lot of people who have been doing that. They've all hit their head against the brick wall. Part of it is just natural inertia, especially of government; part of it is those who don't want the laws changed. They don't like them the way they are now. They want them to be looser. We are talking about growth and development interests. They don't want any restrictions at all. They would be perfectly happy with a total libertarian society where they could do whatever they want so they scream and cry every time you do anything. That is really the battleground and it is not the glamorous part that people really want to do. If we had a primer of cultural resource laws so people had an understanding that might be helpful. That is something I'm trying to figure out how to do and so are other people. I'm not sure how we can accomplish it.

As a Native person it is hard to articulate how connected we feel to our ancestors. I remember the first burial we did down at the Mission. This was a twelve year old girl that they found. It was an inadvertent discovery in Salinan country. The water had risen very high and

washed away part of the river bank. These remains were sticking out of the side. We were called in and got the remains back from the coroner. It was private property along the river. The family allowed us to bury her right there. We chose a place between these two huge oak trees about thirty feet back from the bank, thinking it hopefully will be another ten thousand years before the bank gets there. We did the burial. It was amazing how all of us, including myself, were so moved by this. She was probably four to five thousand years old and yet there was that intimate connection. I think part of that is what comes through our Native families even if it is not articulated – families that have any of that heritage, you get that in the way your family is structured and what you learn from your family is that every person is as valuable as your grandmother. That is another part connected to respect. That is the hard part for people to get nowadays, especially in this argument about burials. “They are five thousand years old; who cares?” *We* care. We care just like it was our sister or grandmother. There is no real respect for that value. They don’t respect it in their own situation. If it is not their great-grandmother who they might remember, then it doesn’t count. I don’t know how we will overcome that one, but that is the big hurdle for us as Native people in protecting burial sites in particular.

FUTURE VISION

What I see now is a lot of conflict with some cooperation. I think it stems from buying into a system from the newcomers that corrupted us in the first place. For those who choose to pursue federal recognition, that’s fine. That’s their choice. On my Salinan side we did that for a long time. I spent a lot of years working on federal recognition on that side. On my Ohlone side, my mom’s side, our family just wasn’t interested in joining any of the formal groups. We were interested in the cultural expressions, but we didn’t fit into the political part. The Elders of my Ohlone family, which are now my mom’s two younger sisters, have given their blessing to what I do. It’s not in the political realm; it might cross over only in the context of site protection and those kinds of things.

I was at the meetings that happened at San Francisco State where they convened Native people from across California to discuss their archaeological collections of Native artifacts, and a lot of them were Ohlone because a lot of the collection is Ohlone. The conflicts that started to happen at those meetings were around federal recognition and issues of economy and sovereignty. The issue I have, which has caused some discord between me and people whom I still respect, is sovereignty for the Ohlone group doesn't exclude anybody else's rights and privileges or connections, but that seems to be what people were saying: We are the people of this area and there is nobody else. That is simply not true. There are all kinds of issues in the modern context of conflicts claiming that person is an Indian or even the right Indian. I know who I am. I know where I came from. I know my genealogy. I know I represent a family group because my aunts say I do. That is all I need to hear. The tactics of the system that a lot of people talk about being so racist and prejudiced, they use those ways of doing things. They don't see that. They seem to get upset if I point that out. That is what I see. I know what I did on the Salinan side. I spent years on the tribal council, including a tour of duty as tribal chair. I was very active and supportive of the federal recognition process. But I do remember early on, thinking why I was supportive of it. It wasn't what a lot of other people thought. I don't think we will ever get federal recognition. I still believe that. The system is so corrupted that it is going to prevent a large swath of Native people, especially the Mission Indians, from getting recognized. I'll happily be wrong. It's not that I want that to happen; it's just my prediction after seventeen years of studying the system.

Federal Recognition ~

What is federal recognition going to do for us and what do we give in the process? I know what the Salinan people gave; some gave their soul. We've now split up into multiple groups, more like the Ohlone in that sense. What do you need to do to be an Ohlone person, a Salinan person? You

don't have to do anything; you already are. My Salinan community turned toward culture, and that is what defines us, not the federal government.

I remember very early on when I was on the Salinan Tribal Council; I was one of the youngest ones, so I kept my mouth shut. I also spent a lot of time looking at all the documentation, the criteria for federal recognition, and the background material behind the criteria. I studied petitions, those that were successful, unsuccessful ones, and those that were still pending. I studied the circumstances around them. I talked with people who were in the process. I spent more than a year and a half doing that. I came to the conclusion we were never going to get recognized. They said, "Well, why do you want to do it then?" I said, "It's not a waste." The first part of federal recognition is the documentation, gathering all the documents. Especially on my Ohlone side, but also true on my Salinan side, we were told it was all gone. "The cultural knowledge faded quite a while ago." No, it's not. People like Linda Yamane, a cousin and rumsien Ohlone culture bearer, proved that it is not gone. She brought it back. Inspired by her, we looked on my Salinan side and found the same thing. That is what is happening all over California. It is not sitting on the library shelves. You have to go dig and work at it. It's not even always in books. There are a lot of books. There is the Harrington material. There is ethnographic material that is hidden in dustbins in some basement of some university, but it is there. There is also a lot in our people.

We made the mistake that a lot of anthropologists did years ago of just asking the question, "You're an Indian; what do you know about being an Indian?" I did collaborate with non-Native people outside the community that had worked with Native people on how to frame the question differently. We found a treasure trove of information. The question I used to get, especially if I talked with young people: "What is it like to be Indian? What is it like to be Salinan or Ohlone?" I've never been anything else. It's hard to answer the question, because I've never not been Indian. What has it ever been like to not be in the Moose Lodge? You can answer that question. Being a

human being in the Ohlone or Salinan context has a very specific meaning. You are a person of this place, who is doing their responsibility. That is one way you could frame it. That responsibility encompasses a lot of things about the relationship with the land and the people and everything around it. When you learn to do that in the proper way, you become a human being. I'm not about to tell other people what it means to be Ohlone. They have to come to their own understanding what it means and whatever that entails. I've learned to look at myself and accept other people the way they are. There is certainly the possibility that there are some people who would claim to be Ohlone that are not Ohlone. It has happened in other areas. I think eventually they get smoked out. I just do what I think is right. I collaborate with those who I think are doing the right thing and if they say they are Ohlone, I'll take it. Because for me it is not a political issue, but I understand how it can become politicized if you are in the federal recognition process, because that is what that process is – very political. It is all about 'membership', not community.

We don't have the same kind of community in the Ohlone area as we do in my Salinan community, but acting in a culturally appropriate way -- one of the things is learning how to appreciate and acknowledge differences without allowing them to become conflicts. Doing that in a culturally appropriate way – that is what I hope for Ohlones. Everything else will follow. If federal recognition is part of it, that is fine too, but I don't believe that is going to happen in my lifetime, or at any time under this present system.

People want to do federal recognition – fine. There was an opportunity to address that issue – we've done that. We've sent letters to senators, BIA, and whatnot, addressing those issues of the inherent inequality and bias and bigotry of the system, but we are realistic about what that will do. It will be years, actually generations, but it is a matter of starting on that path.

Significance of a Land Base ~

I believe that any surviving California indigenous community would benefit from having their own “home” where they can be and act together. But I also think that much can be done without outright ownership and that, like federal recognition, if it becomes the overwhelming focus of the community to the exclusion of much else, can be detrimental to that community.

“Community” is about being together as a people, in ceremony, tradition, cultural expression, and as family. The location does have importance, but the togetherness is by far the most vital aspect of indigenous community. Being a “family” is what binds us as a people and makes us distinct and unique from the rest of society. That is the truer definition of “sovereignty”.

Role of the Next Generation ~

My children are interested, but they are not active. I think that is the hard part about modern times and living in an urban area – San Jose. Especially for them, it is such a struggle now just to survive. I think as they get older, and my oldest is getting close to the age I was when I started getting involved in tribal affairs, they might get more interested in this work. I was involved on the tribal council after one of our big splits. One of the things I took on was our annual tribal gathering which was logistically really difficult. I did it one year and then my eldest son said, “Why don’t you let me do it?” One of the elders came to me and said, “We would like you to let your son to do that.” I could see that this was a conspiracy, because they wanted to get it off my shoulders. It was very time-consuming. The elders said, “We’re going to help him.” I said, “I know that. I want to take the pressure off. Let him do the grunt work, but I’ll take the pressure.” He did most of the grunt work. He did a great job. For the next three years after that, he was the coordinator. He got a taste of it. Our gatherings were trying to be more culturally oriented so he got to meet a lot of new people. He went away from it and now he is starting to come back.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

My cousins and I got through the school system and knew we were Indian even though we were told in our classroom that we were dead. It is still happening. It is strange to hear that because there is so much in the news about casinos. Where do they think those Indian casinos are coming from? There are Indians running and owning those Indian casinos. Somehow there is a distinction in the public mind. “Those are the casino Indians, but the real Indians are dead.” That is still the paradigm that is reinforced in schools: the ‘real’ Indians. It would require such a huge expenditure of resources that we don’t have to change it. If we had them we would still have to decide how to distribute those resources.

Darryl Wilson and I were talking about anthropology, a form of Euro-American science, which I believe, has artificial constructs. They may have logical underpinnings that they thought of to justify what they are doing. There is validity there, but there is a danger there too because they make arbitrary choices; they take the data and manipulate it. They put it together and calculate it and come up with some conclusions and some are good, but the end point all along is describing us to ourselves. They feel free to do that because they think we are all dead. Part of it came from the anthropological concept of culturally we’re dead. The way it comes out in anthropology is those aren’t Ohlones; those are Ohlone descendants. We use it one way; they use it a very different way and context. It is the separation. People claimed the Ohlone culture became extinct in 1834 or 1838 or whatever they chose based on their construct. They might concede that they are descendants, but it doesn’t seem to count. I think what ultimately has to happen is not that forward ‘in your’ face way, but just by being who we are, we have to tell our own story. What has happened up until now have been collaborations. Our grandchildren are going to have to step up and write the story themselves on their own. That is the ultimate goal for all California Native people. That is what I’d like to see. That is my dream that Native people have to tell their own story. That might

involve some of them crossing over to the other side, to the dark side, and learning that system. The danger is becoming corrupted by it. If you buy into that system in any way, you become corrupted; that is my belief. I've seen it over the last twenty years.

It is a delicate area. Before Obama even started running, when the issue of race and gender came up, there was such a strong reaction just by the word that no conversation happened, and yet if you ask them: "We've over-talked that; we've talked it to death." No discussion happened at all, because of the blaring noise that happened in reaction to saying you wanted to talk about it. The same issues happened with indigenous history in this country, and certainly in California. Whenever you raise the issue, people either buy into it full force or they react violently against it so it is hard to get any headway. There is a teacher's guide written by Jack Norton, a former professor at Humboldt State University, who is a Karuk and Yurok Native person. Several years ago he wrote about what happened in California history and used the 'G' word: genocide. He used the 'H' word: holocaust. I thought it was a great book. It is marketed as a teaching guide both for high school and college level. He wasn't advocating putting this on fourth graders. In the forward he talks about in 1968 or 69, Deukmejian, the governor at the time, signed into law the Public Education Code that the history and issues of the holocaust in Europe during World War II had to be taught in school. Norton talked about that society is good at pointing to the splinter in other people's eyes, but not seeing the log in our own. We can't look in the mirror, that there is this effort to talk about what happened to the Jews in Europe, and should be taught, but not mention anything about the holocaust that happened here. Ninety percent, at least, of the Native people got wiped out. By any definition, that qualifies it as a genocidal holocaust. To the political structure, at least, it is such a horrifying thought even to talk about it at all. There is a way to do it, and that is what needs to happen. People need to learn the real truth. The other part that was so compelling to me about Jack's book, he used historical accounts of a particular massacre that happened up in the Humboldt

County area. He used the perpetrators' accounts. There were virtually no survivors of this massacre, with one possible exception, a baby. We are talking about horrific things happening to these people. In gruesome detail these people talked about it, literally what they did to elders, what they did to women, mutilating the bodies, taking babies by their feet and hitting their head against a rock. These are the perpetrators talking about it so you can't say the Indians are exaggerating again. That is the reality. This has to be a component. I don't think the healing of Native people is going to happen until that is addressed in some way. Somehow it has got to be valued. It doesn't have to be people renting their clothes and crying on either side; it just has to be talked about in an open way -- acknowledged, and that has *never* happened. People think it has happened; it has never happened. As a society we have not even come close.

The site is on public land now, where the massacre happened. It is part of a state park. Norton talked about going back there as an adult, and what he went through personally as he went through this site and experienced it, not as a detached, objective professor, but as a Yurok and Karuk man. Those were his people, his relatives.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

We are still here! We have to keep saying it, because it still hasn't gotten through. Embedded in the public mind is this fantastical, romanticized version of what they think the Ohlone should be. If they don't see that, then there is no Ohlone, in their minds. Some of the public efforts at documentation haven't been helpful. I'm thinking about park interpretations. They want to put up their painting of a village site with the ancestors running around mostly naked with basket hats and arrows and flint napping and basket weaving and all that kind of stuff. There is truth there, but it is not the only truth, the whole truth. The truth is also, they dress sometimes like me. They are modern people. We use computers. We are starting to use them fairly decently to network, changing that mindset that there are Ohlone people all over, here, right now.

I think it is important to document the history so people have an understanding of what happened and why it happened, even the bad parts even the uncomfortable truths of more modern times. It wasn't in a vacuum that people had problems and issues with each other. What is important for people in Indian Country, Ohlones themselves to learn, as well as non-Indians, is that we are human and have conflict. Conflict is part of the human condition. What is different about Native people is they had a way to handle it that was very harmonious, in the 'before time' before contact. They had social structures and processes to deal with conflict in a way that resolved it in a much better way than we are doing now, where it is basically winner take all, do or die, survival of the fittest kind of thing – scorched earth almost. As Native people, conquered by this society, we adopted some of that from the 'newcomers,' to a certain extent. There is an effort by some people to throw that off and go back to the old ways and understand what those old ways really meant, and not just have it as a cloak you throw over yourself when it is convenient. That is another level I see: people talk about being a 'traditionalist'. I'm not saying I'm a traditionalist by any means, but I think some people who say they are traditionalists, it is a nice buzz word for them to say. There is a lot more to understanding what the old ways really were about. In the old ways the respect concept was very complex and very broad. Nowadays it has been 'dumbed' down. Respect is the biggest term that I hear the elders talk about and what it really meant in the old days. I don't know whether I can articulate it. That is a whole book! I'm trying to get one of the elders to write a book about that.

The California Indian Storytelling Association had their festival down here in San Leandro several years ago. We brought some elders down who were well-known storytellers. They knew about each other, but I don't think they had ever met. They were in the Green Room in back. I missed most of the festival because I was hanging out with the Native people and the Elders in the back. These two elders were talking. They told each other their origin stories. "Now this is how my people started." He told this beautiful story about how his people came into the world. When

he was done, the other elder said, “That’s a beautiful story. Here is how my people started.” I realized at the end of it, the way it is in contemporary society, like in sports – my team is better than your team. Your team is horrible. There is that competitive part and the domination part. These Elders I witnessed illustrated for me that is not the Native way. That is the respect part. There isn’t a right way. There are many right ways. They all have equal value. That is one part of real respect that we don’t see often enough, to really mean that you value the other person’s viewpoint. There is a catch to that, because in the old time it was rare for somebody to get far out of bounds and there were social structures to deal with that if somebody was totally wacky. They got removed from the situation. Those who stayed within the social structure/village community, there was a lot of room to have differing points of view, and different ways of doing things, but still be within bounds. That is what is harder to do in Indian Country nowadays, because of the breadth of people and the contamination from outside society, and the dumbing down of those ideas of respect, responsibility, commitment, obligation. A lot of people have adopted that other society’s concepts of what is important: rights. Everybody talks about rights. Even in the Occupy Movement it is all about rights. People who are against the Occupy Movement talk about *their* rights and how they are being violated, not anything about responsibilities, obligations, commitments. Those are equally, if not more important in the old traditional way. Having that respect for and true regard for other people is what I think is the most important part, and what is missing. I spent twenty years working on this and I’m still a kid at it. I feel like a kid when I go with these special Elders.

I think it is wonderful that there are Native people who want to lead all people toward sustainability. I’ve done a little bit of it myself in my own little way. But saying we are obligated? The elders would say *everybody* is obligated. It is not that modern paradigm of we are teachers, they are followers or students. It is: “This is what we are doing. You can do it; you can do something else; you can choose not to do it at all. That is up to you – as long as the consequences are clear.” I

think what we know of the old ways is that it translates now into that strange idea of sovereignty which is a very screwed up concept nowadays, the way it has come out. Maybe autonomy is a better way of saying it. Each community is their own community. They do what they feel is appropriate. In most cases every community understands that every community is doing what they are supposed to do in their own place. Everybody understanding that, things get taken care of. We were not that heavenly Eden that some people claim it was. We know there were disputes and conflict. Things happened. They had ways of dealing with it that were based on a broad moral, ethical understanding of the world and what they were supposed to do in it. They prayed for it. Most of the other communities, if not all, had some understanding. There was confidence in that things were taken care of. Now the idea is that we're doing what we feel is right and that we somehow have to tell other people and show them or lecture them or scold them. Culturally that is a foreign idea. If we adopt the modern way of living, yeah, that is what people do all the time. They are always telling each other what to do, but it is not a culturally Native way. Yeah, we have a lot to share.

A side issue is that almost all the communities, even those who have kept culturally intact, are all in a struggle to maintain it. Nobody is safe. Nobody is comfortable. Nobody *should* be comfortable. It is constant vigilance because there are always outside influences. A lot of the communities I know of put most of their energy into maintaining their own integrity as a community. Most of them outside the coastal area and the Mission-influenced area that have maintained their cultures are up in the northwest and some areas of the Sierra. They've been heavily impacted like everybody else, but they have maintained their cultures. They have done their traditional ceremonies every year since time began. They certainly had to be careful during many years of the foreign intrusion, but they managed to keep doing it. That's amazing. That's a story that is untold. In a way that is the teaching we have; we teach by example, and it's not an obligation. We can teach them some horticultural things. We could teach them about burns, and that is

happening, but that's not what the core of being a Native person is. How do we teach them what that core is? We are bound up in the land we came from. I like this place, but my homeland is south of here. That is the place where I have real attachment. How do you teach that to somebody else who casually comes into our area and might even live in the area for thirty years, but that is still different than being a part of a place for fifteen thousand years, and being intimately bound with it. The words don't quite capture it. We don't have the language to do it with anyway, really. As a student of Native culture and having made relationships with lots of other communities, that is what I've come to understand. Putting the pieces together from what comes up through our families, what it means to be not Indian, not Native, but Salinan or Rumsen Ohlone. What's that mean? That is very different than talking about Native American concepts.

It's not a matter of going out teaching or lecturing, and if you decide to do that, that is fine, but understanding the context of that and what is likely to come from that. Those that do do it, you let it go out there, and whatever happens, happens. It is not a matter of being worried about the results.

I think the disconnectedness has risen to the level where people are starting to acknowledge on deeper levels what is going on. They got caught up in the economic matrix, and it's not doing anything for them, so what will? It's not economics obviously. The Euro-American paradigm is individualism. We are isolated from each other. We don't have to have anybody else, the old cowboy method. Go out, jump on a horse – you might relate to your horse a little bit, but you might have to eat it if it comes to that; other than that, you are on your own. Lone person living off the land, tough guy, and all that kind of stuff – that paradigm is all a part of that. It is such a nightmare and a fantasy as it is not true. We are all a social people. Native people just understand that, whereas it seems that most of the rest of society has forgotten that. But they know something is wrong and that is why, especially in Native gatherings, we get a lot of non-Native people who are

drawn to it. The environmental group, The Bioneers, wasn't really incorporating Native people in a very fundamental way. They would talk to Native people, interview, and sometimes ask them to speak, but now they are becoming more a part of the organization and their conference every year. They are getting slowly more incorporated.

People like Alex Ramirez, Lanny Penola and especially Darryl Wilson, mentored me, whether they knew it or not. I learned so much from Darryl about what it means to be a Native person and that difference in thought patterns that happens between a Native person and a non-Native, the European way of thinking. I gave a talk at the California Indian Conference and I'm going to give another one at the Society for California Archaeology Conference. I'm going to try to address that. Archaeologists don't hear it enough. They hear it but they don't get it. Individuality versus community. Collective vs. individual wisdom and knowledge. When we do something we think first of the community, what its impact is.

An example is a report that was done on behalf of a government agency by two archaeologists/anthropologists. Part of their work involved archival research. They made the choice to focus on Mission records to the exclusion, in our opinion, of other data like ethnographic material from Harrington and Henshaw, and even some of the other Mission records like interrogatories and letters which would give it a different flavor. They looked strictly at registers. That information needs to be tabulated and looked at. The objective acquisition of data is a good thing. But then they interpreted it in a very, very narrow way. They didn't look at societal systems like moieties. They didn't have a firm linguistic grasp. Linguistics is a very difficult science and you really need to have expertise.

What they are going to do with this report could have a wide impact on cultural protection. They used very limited knowledge in linguistics and made decisions about locations and cultural identifications for villages. The effect of that is going to be that government agencies might use that

report to say “This belongs to you and not to you”. The way they characterized it is “Well you just don’t like the way we drew the line”. Our response is, “There shouldn’t be a line!”

That is not the way Native people did it anyway. They didn’t own land that needed a line to be drawn around it. They had food source areas in which they fed their families. They protected those areas, but they also had relationships with neighboring communities that may or may not speak their language. We didn’t care because we didn’t call ourselves Ohlone or Salinan in those days. We were our own little village, and the village next to us was completely different people in our viewpoint. We didn’t use language as the way we were bound to each other. We were a village or a series of villages that were a community, and had its own unique government and society. Those people over there, they are fine people we’re sure, but they are a different community. They might speak a language like ours and they might not. It didn’t matter to us. That was pretty much irrelevant. But the way the European society is you got to have that line, those categories, those labels, so it makes it easy for us to deal with you. That European way of thinking is very divisive. When you adopt that way of thinking, you think you can keep it separate, and it doesn’t work. My experience is nobody has been able to do it successfully. You can use some of those tools, but you have to be really careful, that you don’t become the tool. The ‘line in the sand’ concept has so many issues, especially the ‘time freeze’: collapsing the entire history of a people – as much as fifteen thousand years – all to a near single moment in time. Usually it is 1769 or thereabouts – an arbitrary time point to us, a biased convenience for them, because that is when they believe history actually began. But the lands our ancestors occupied changed over time and can’t be condensed into a singularity to make it nice and tidy for the newcomers to understand.

When we did a tribal council for a whole area, it didn’t work. There were too many disputes. We had adopted that English concept of possession, among other ideas. A lot of our people were looking for the federal government to recognize us as a community, rather than we are a

community. We don't need anybody else to recognize us. That's their problem. So when you adopt those other ways, you get tainted and you wind up with conflict. That European way of thinking leads to conflict in my opinion. A lot of European history is conflict and America has adopted that European way of thinking. They then have drilled it into our Native communities through genocide, oppression and decisiveness. It is about possession, about individuality, about conflict to resolve issues, about dominance. You have to be higher than somebody, better than somebody, greater than somebody, richer than somebody. Those are all alien to the way I think our ancestors thought. That is a really crucial step: to transition away from that tainted-ness. Other people have done it. There are people like Darryl Wilson who grew up in the Native way in a Native community. He was taken out of it when he was a kid, but he remembered it and it stayed with him. When he came back to the community later on, the elders knew who he was and were able to give him more. It is possible. It is hard for me to say whether I've done it yet, but I'm heading in that direction.

What happened in our community: the tribal council doesn't exist anymore the way it did. We had two large splits and they were not pleasant. Looking back, they were necessary because that is not how our ancestors lived, that is not how they defined community. We tried to bring everybody together in some unified way. The ancestors had separate communities and relationships with each other. You have agreements, pacts, and deals; you trade with them. It doesn't mean they are you; it doesn't mean you are them. That is a 'Euro-American Fantasy.' It doesn't have to be that way. So now that we are our own Salinan community, we naturally coalesced on the same idea. We rejected the foreign way of organizing that we attempted before and failed miserably at. My understanding of the ancestors is that there was a family position that was handed down as far as a head person, but there were exceptions made, because that head person would train his son to be head person after him perhaps. That person had the advantage of skill training and years of apprenticeship, decades, before they assumed that position. But, if for some reason that person

didn't get it, they are gone. The people would just ignore them. So it wasn't automatic. People coalesced around someone they could follow or agree with or work with. True family in the way we live, true community. Now that we have a true community, the people who are around me in my community, we tend to agree. Since the last break six years ago, which was pretty traumatic, and involved legal action, we have not had a single problem within our own community. We haven't had a single fight. It doesn't mean that we always agree, but we know how to not agree and work it out so that everybody can be satisfied with the outcome. That is the Native way. We are much happier now that we are small. Whether it is because we are small, I'm not totally convinced. Being big for the sake of being big and not paying attention to the mix of people – why would you want to associate with people you can't agree with? It is just a matter of aligning yourself with people who are like you. There is another community down the road where you might fit in perfect. Maybe later on we can meet in the middle and trade and have a little barbeque. That's the way our ancestors did it, I think. If somebody was so far out of the thought process of the community, they weren't part of that community anymore. The cohesion of the community was what determined their survival.

Everybody had to work together and pitch in to have a good life. There were no slackers. They wouldn't tolerate people who were really disruptive. That is not the same as: they thought different or that they had a different point of view. That is the part where people struggle, even Native people. They think you become a robot. You give your soul to the community. Again, that's the European way of thinking because it focuses on the individual being champion, being king. The Native way to reach your fullest potential as an individual is within the context of community. That is a hard concept for people to grasp because even Ohlone and Salinan have their communities that are very Euro-American based. There is always controversy. There is always

tension. There is always conflict between them and other groups, and even within their group. There are always people leaving in a huff and splits happening.

That is the sad legacy of European visitors for Native people; even two hundred and fifty years down the road we are still dealing with “uninvited visitors.” That is why on my Mom’s side, our Ohlone family group has not joined any other political group; it is too divisive and difficult. So our rumsien family branch has continued on its own, with relations with others as in the old days. My Mom’s two remaining sisters have acknowledged my work in Ohlone and California Native country on behalf of our rumsien family.

When I was growing up my mother and my aunts were talking to me about that generation which came before my dad’s; they knew who they were, but were taught not to talk about it because it was dangerous. Some of it was shame because that was what came from the Mission, but a lot of it was just protection, at least what I see in my family. It was dangerous to be a Native. It certainly was counter-productive. You wouldn’t get jobs. You would be shunned at the supermarket. Just to maintain and protect yourself and what you have, you just don’t talk about it. The transition from my dad’s generation to my generation, I can’t tell you exactly what happened because there are so many things to it.

Alcatraz had a lot to do with my awareness. I woke up. My mother gave me the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* when I was eleven or twelve years old. That was an eye-opener, obviously. Then shortly after that I read *Custer Died for Your Sins*. Since then Vine Deloria has always been my hero. I see a lot of him and his wisdom in Darryl Wilson who writes incredible books. That is why I’ve latched onto him. He is my Vine Deloria. I’ve grown a lot because of it. It keeps me going. I didn’t buy into the rat race. I started to go there and for what reason, it didn’t happen and I feel almost grateful for it. My dad didn’t at all. He was never chasing the dollar. It was always about taking care of his family and doing what was right and that is all he needed. I never bought into that

system of going for the prize; I already have the prize. I just need to do something with it. It is just a different prize. It is never going to show up in the cars I have, except I bought my wife a nice one. You should see my pickup! It is a typical Indian truck. The door doesn't work. I had to open it from the inside for Darryl. The passenger side is all dented in. We're going down the road and he said, "What is that noise? Is there a bird in here?" The truck is squeaking as we are going down the road. That's an Indian truck. That is being an Indian. That's really what it is about. It's not about the material thing. I was having a great conversation with my mentor in that squeaky old beat-up Indian truck. That's what matters.

There are no more spiritual people than Native people. The ones who are really doing it live and breathe it every minute. That is something you don't see even in very devout non-Native people. People are 'starving' and it is not our nature to turn them down. Food is one thing, but imparting spiritual values to them, that is not what we do. We don't proselytize; we don't baptize; we don't even talk about it that much. It is a very individualistic thing. We obviously do community stuff to a great extent, but it is still intensely personal. We might have a leader conducting a ceremony, but it is not the same thing with Judeo-Christian where you have a priest doing the ceremony and have people help and observe you. That is not what happens in the Native community. Everybody is in the ceremony. Everybody dances. Everybody sings. Everybody is an equal part of it. It is just different roles, but you are all part of it. There are no spectators.

We are still in 'First Contact'. That is my theme lately. We are still going through that process. We are still dealing with it, especially if you are talking about Native history the last ten, fifteen thousand years, this little five hundred year stretch is nothing. Two hundred fifty years in California, we are still in the middle of First Contact and still figuring out how to deal with it and we're not doing a good job, still. That's why we have to deal with the destruction of cultural sites in San Francisco and the shell mounds in the East Bay.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

It is really one world, and it is the modern world, and it sucks. We have to bring what we can of that 'other world' into it, in the way we conduct ourselves. Of course that is going to mean conflict. I work for a multinational, huge, faceless conglomerate. My experience with this and working a little bit with government, is that when you have organizations that big, at least in modern society, the way they conduct business and life is too unwieldy so they have to impose processes that dehumanize people, to control them. Especially under the current economic situation where they are squeezing everybody for every dime they can, you wind up being a number. That is what I have to deal with. It is so computerized now, that they can really evaluate by the moment what we are doing and how we are doing it, whether it is efficient or productive in their terms. It is incredibly dehumanizing and it doesn't value people. It is almost a game for these guys up on 'Mt. Olympus' who create these policies and procedures. By the time it gets to my level, what it has come out to be are these really onerous, structured, diabolical rules of doing work and if you don't do them, you are going to get slapped on the hand or fired. That is the dehumanizing part and it is so fake. Nobody thinks they can do anything about it; it is too big. That is just a reflection of general life in this society – that is the way it is going. You saw part of that in the Occupy Movement and its reaction. There is a force within our society that is sucking the life and wealth out of everybody else, and they are doing whatever it takes to protect that position, because it is never enough. There is always more to be acquired. It is the same mechanism when they talk about California Native history: "Stop talking about it! I just want it to go away!" In Native country there is the same thing.

There are a lot of people who are coming to an understanding of their culture and heritage and who they are. Now that you *know*, go to the Ohlone gathering every year! What about between October of this year and October of next year, what are you doing? I don't put anybody down who

doesn't do this kind of work, because it is grueling. You wind up torturing your family with the stuff that you do. It is like breathing for me personally. I could *not* do it. I know so many people who got burned out and walked away. If you don't come in with a certain kind of attitude and mindset, it will tear you up. There are few victories. The first thing I learned is that is not how the elders talk about it. It has nothing to do with win/loss. If you do that, you are doomed right from the start. It is a matter of doing what is right. What are you supposed to be doing right now? You can't tell that other person what to do. You can't even tell your own family members what to do. What are *you* going to do? That is all that matters.

I was lucky enough to be brought up by parents, particularly my Mom, who in subtle ways taught me how to deal with the conflict. A lot of people haven't got the mechanism, the system to deal with it. That leads to a lot of schizophrenia in Native people – going back and forth or going too far on one side and feeling like they have to make a choice. In a sense you do.

My mother taught me in the old traditional way by doing, by example, and not explicitly. She lived a certain way. I was observant of that. She filled in the blanks when we did talk. She was an Ohlone elder who was a devout Catholic. I followed in her footsteps in that way too. I'm a practicing Catholic. It makes for interesting conversation in my community. It leads to very deep discussions. Again, it is a systemic issue. In the case of Native people in California, it is both the Catholic system and a lot of bad people in the system who brought us into that system. My mom explained to me about the Mission system. She said, "Our people died here." I made the distinction, and that is what I learned from my mom, between the systemic institution of the Church and its spiritual beliefs. I'm clinging to those spiritual beliefs, because there is some alignment between them and what I understand Native culture is. I'm struggling with the Catholic institution, especially nowadays. Up until now I have been able to manage the conflict in a way that I think is ethical.

In 2005 I was going to do a paper called *Brother Can You Spare a Paradigm?* focused on the two world views and just how contrasting they are. You hear about it, but it is almost in a mechanical way – yeah, we think differently. It is much more profound than that and that is the source of the conflict between anthropology and the people they are ‘anthropologizing’. That is the core: the two world views. One, is this fantasy of detachment versus connection, which is what we are about. We are about relationships. That is why we don’t talk to anthropologists – either you are our friend and then you get inside, or you are on the outside and we don’t want to talk to you at all. I started writing the paper and turned in my proposal and it was accepted. Five days before the conference started my mother had a brain hemorrhage. I never gave that paper. When I did this recent plenary, I pulled some of that material out. There was just a lot of anger dripping off of it. I realize I’m still angry because so little has changed.

The topic of this plenary is curation and we called it the ‘the curation crisis’, because now that outside profession is dealing with things they can’t handle. They are hoarding. They all know it. We talk about it in papers that they give at the SCA every year. How are we going to deal with all this stuff that we stole? At San Francisco State University, part of the archive there is in a warehouse that is leaking water on cardboard boxes and so it is getting slowly destroyed. I’m not even blaming. I’m just saying this is the situation. What are you going to do about it? You are not even following your own ethical standards. San Francisco State is struggling to do something; I give them that much. I haven’t totally given up, but I’m realistic.

If you look back forty or more years ago – Alcatraz time, California Native people were almost invisible. Even to other Native people, they were invisible. In the 1970’s I went down to the Indian Center where a Cheyenne elder was helping me with a scholarship. When he found out I was really from a California tribe, he said I was dead. This was a Native person! The ignorance is so pervasive. We’ve come a long way from that. I’m not looking at things so much in my lifetime, but

what can I do in my lifetime to keep it going. The end result is beyond me. I might be surprised and something wonderful may happen in the next ten years. I'm not holding my breath, but I'm not going to let it stop me either, the fact that it won't happen.

Who is Native American/Indian?

The very simplistic answer to that is whoever says they are. Obviously there are people going around faking it. For a long time if somebody said they were Native American, they probably were, because it was not a good thing to be Native American. It has only been lately that it has been romanticized. My dad certainly grew up in a time when it was not fun. He grew up being raised by elders and for them not only wasn't it fun, but it was dangerous. That sort of translated to nowadays. It has taken a long time for people to start acknowledging that "I'm Native." To me it has nothing to do with DNA or what you know. It is who you are and how you conduct yourself. It is almost a social, cultural, spiritual thing, not DNA. Although the government really pushes for blood quantum, my tribe didn't do that. Especially in the Mission areas, nobody is full-blood anyway. If you put in a blood quantum, the government's idea, you are going to procreate yourself out of existence eventually as a tribe. If you look at some of the tribes, they started out in the seventies and eighties, maybe a couple hundred; now they are down to forty or twenty. There is a recognized tribe that just got reinstated over in the Stockton area and a couple of years ago there were only three members. They actually had to bring some relatives in to fill out the gap. It was bizarre. Are they really a tribe? According to the government they are; they are 'recognized'.

I'm not a fan of recognition. I advised my tribe not to submit. Nothing I've seen or heard or discussed with anybody has changed my mind fundamentally that it is worth the process. I've only seen in my own tribe and other tribes the devastation caused by it. Even just saying you are going to go through the process, the turmoil and the crude that comes up in people because of it – the 'rats-on-a-sinking ship' mentality of desperate survival at all costs - is very much a reflection of

modern society as so-called 'individuals'. It has and continues to cause huge conflict within tribal communities. I, and others – like Darryl Wilson – believe the fed rec system was designed to create that very conflict, so that as few Native people are truly empowered as possible. It wouldn't happen like that in the old days. We started almost twenty years ago. We had people coming up saying, "I want to give you my address so you know where to send my check we are going to get for being Indian." That is all they cared about. Some of these were people who were vehemently denying they were Indian not long before. They were 'Mexican' until, all of the sudden, this happened. Part of it was some of the leadership at the time that allowed them to have the notion that it was like applying for a credit card. Fill out this application, send it in, a couple of months later you get a card and then you start getting checks. That is what people literally thought, because they are oblivious and some of the leaders at the time didn't dissuade them, not necessarily that they wanted to fool them, but they weren't focused on the people, but on the process and so they let people believe what they wanted. That way they got support. It was passive aggressive. But, as a few of us eventually learned, 'It is a cultural thing'. We *are* a tribe. I *am* Rumsen Ohlone and T'rowt'raahl Salinan.

That subject itself is controversial along the lines of urban vs. rural Indian; rez vs. non-rez Indian; recognized vs. non-recognized – all these compartmentalized processes that have happened and we have allowed to happen to us. We've incorporated them. We have done it to ourselves to a certain extent. What I am seeing now in California is an effort to get beyond that. The National Forest Service did consultations with tribal people on redoing their sacred sites policy, how to protect, keep, and manage sacred sites. What was different this time was they made an effort to include non-federally recognized tribes. This is a federal agency; they don't have to talk to us, but they had a policy of doing that, at least on the west coast, and somewhat nationally, and they incorporated us in the process this time. There were Native people as part of the agency who were

part of that. That gives them an edge to have Native people at least understand a little bit of the ideas and issues we bring. We had a meeting in Sacramento and it was really good to hear some of the recognized tribes be supportive of other people, and acknowledge that non-recognized communities have more knowledge. Sometimes the recognition process extracted the traditional ways and knowledge from those tribes. They had to be focused on survival in the context of a federal government that barely acknowledged them. They got shoved on reservations. They are in survival mode, too. My experience has been, that a lot of those tribes lost a lot of their culture so they are now turning to non-recognized tribes to bring it back in. I know a couple of people who work for recognized tribes who are members of the same cultural group, but they are not members of the recognized tribe. The tribe had to go outside to hire their cultural expert. What happened though is that brought the two groups together.

The National Historic Preservation laws dictate that every state has to have a state preservation officer. They oversee all the historic preservation in the state. Federal law also allows federally recognized tribes to have their own preservation officer, just like the state. California was a pioneer in that. The Yurok tribe was the first one to do it in the nation. California has the most with eighteen preservation officers, and they are the leaders of it. Some of those Tribal Historic Preservation Officers are not members of the tribes they work for, or even Native people. You have to have a certain level of expertise to be a THPO. A lot of tribes don't have members who have that knowledge and skill. Those THPOs are good people – Native or not, and they do a thankless job. They don't have enough resources.

They have invited non-federally recognized cultural groups to be involved. They see the value of uniting, of recognizing each other. At the National Forest Service meeting, one of the elders, Frank La Pena, who is Wintu, a professor emeritus at Sacramento State, an artist and a person who deals with cultural issues, was talking about the idea that we need to recognize each

other; that is the way we used to do in the 'before time'. We acknowledged and respected each other. We need to go back to recognizing each other, and then whatever the government does -- fine, and not make that artificial, foreign distinction between recognized and non-recognized, urban and rural. If you are doing this work, you've got to learn to work together and support each other. We certainly can't rely on the 'other side' to do that for us.

A lot of Native people have multiple heritages. My dad did. My mom did; she is also part Salinan. There was a lot of intermarriage in other areas. It tended to go in little pockets like that. Whether it was planned or not, I'm not sure how much that worked into it, but that happened often enough up and down California. You'd have these little pockets where these unions would live. That is what happened in Salinas and Santa Rita where you had the Ohlone on my mom's side and the Salinan on my dad's side. The ancient wisdom of our ancestors told us that that kind of diversity was needed. It is much different -- and worse, in my opinion - when the government is so focused on blood quantum and a lot of modern day Indians have acquired that same paradigm. It's not that I'm saying it's the old 1960's blood brother stuff that we used to see on TV growing up. Put your hands together, share blood drops - now you are an Indian; no, that is not what I'm talking about. It's not purely blood quantum either, because we know that especially down in San Miguel where there was a large interaction with the Yokuts. They had gatherings together, often big gatherings. They used to come to the ocean to do ceremony. They would come to our area and ask permission and the permission process was not five minutes, it was five days. They would get together and have a dance. They'd have ceremony together, rituals. They'd trade. There was intermarriage. I'm sure some Salinan people went over there and some of them to us. When they came into our communities, it's not that they forgot who they were, but they are now Salinan. It's a community, not DNA. It was not an issue then, but it is now. To me it is a continuing tradition all the way into the 20th Century.

For a lot of American Indians there is too much American. They've acquired that way of doing things. We still have to work our way out of that. I know in California there are very few pure bloods in terms of blood quantum DNA. Just like most Mission Indians, I have a mix of Hispanic and Native American that has all that history to go along with it.

What it means to be Native American nowadays is that going back to that older way of respecting each other. Going back to that story about the two elders really valuing each other, they didn't say, "Your story is a nice fantasy, but mine is real." They can each be equally true, and respected. We have a long road before we get there, but we have found the beginning of the road at least.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

It is possible for there to be a 'reconciliation' between the Ohlone and any other indigenous community that has suffered the physical and cultural genocide attempt by the invading Euro-American society. But I have doubts that it will actually occur because American society is so much in denial about issues of race, bigotry, prejudice, disparity, segregation, etc. – and their continued presence in our society on a daily, continually operating basis. The fundamental, foundational aspects of our American government and society are built with the 'bricks' of racism and 'Manifest Destiny'. It is likely true that many people today don't feel that way, but they are operating in a society that uses those old foundations and tools forged from them, so can't help but perpetuate the bigotry because they can't and won't talk about it and admit it.

I believe our indigenous communities are still in the thralls of "First Contact". If you think of the perhaps 15,000 plus year existence of our people in this world, 500 or so years is then 'recent memory'. The aftermath of this time still reverberates through all our communities. But more than that, it isn't 'historical' – it is still happening, TODAY! We are continually fighting the battle to save what is left of our culture and protect our ancestors from being dug up. Those same foundational

tools come into play here; the laws give Native people no power and authority (which very few people, even Indians, really understand) and only some opportunities to ‘advise and consult’, but then land owners are allowed to pretty much do what they want. And they do, to the detriment of our heritage, the vast majority of the time. The ‘archaeological, cultural preservation laws’ are mostly a joke, and the avenue for society to continue to ‘get rid of us’ and not deal with the uncomfortable reality of our existence in the lands they have snatched away from us.

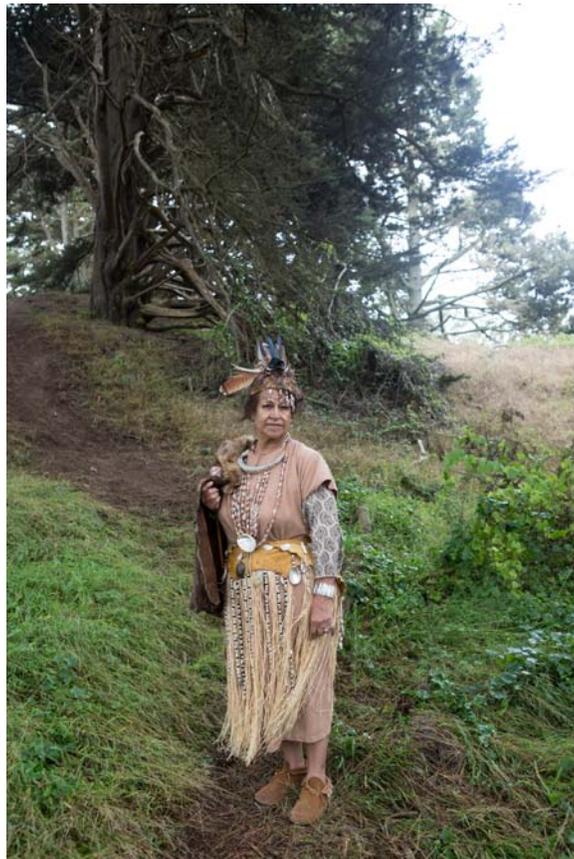
We have to find a way to get beyond ‘preaching to the choir’ (those who are sympathetic to our issues or those Natives willing to face their trauma) and find a way to discuss this widely without triggering the emotional protections that come up – sometimes dramatically and even violently, on both sides in order to avoid facing our pains. The wound is infected and the pus must be released. That is never a pleasant experience, but it is absolutely necessary for the entire ‘body’ (community) to not be poisoned by the infection. There is more than one effective medicine, but it has to be taken.

Proud to be Oblone ~

It took me more than twenty years to understand this part of it. A lot of it had to do with going outside my family, going outside my culture and looking at other cultures, and Elders who were still in touch with the old ways, and understanding a different way of life and a different way of thinking. It has nothing to do with things like computers and automobiles; those are material tools. It is a way of thinking and conducting yourself. That is what makes me proud as a Native person, that the old way was better, much more human than what we see nowadays, and much more respectful. It has a potential to be a much more happy way of life. It is part of the decolonizing movement of people really respecting other people’s cultures. We’ve had this issue in California of what happened in the sixties and seventies where people of New Age persuasion took bits of pieces of Native culture and Native spirituality and incorporated into their own and then they didn’t understand why Native

people didn't appreciate that. It is like taking a pair of scissors to the Mona Lisa. I'm not sure the Louvre would really appreciate you even though you think it is a beautiful piece, they might not like it. It is an integrated whole. It is a deeply spiritual, respectful way of life. Native people, the traditionalists that I have the fortune to know, are the most deeply spiritual people.

ROSA PARRA



ROSA PARRA
Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe
Medicine Woman

CULTURAL IDENTITY

My father was a Native of Mexico. One day my grandpa put my daddy and his little brothers, on the train that brought them to El Paso, Texas where he bought a wagon and a cow for his family and they walked from El Paso to Brawley then settled in Chino, California. They would sleep at night on the top of the wagon, and in the daytime they would eat and rest under the wagon. The cow was their milk, their food. They would stop at certain ranches and ask for work. That's how my father's family came to Chino where I was born in 1941.

My mother was a Native American born in Chino, CA. My grandparents didn't want my mother to get married because she was born with health problems, but my father fell in love with her and promised them that he would take care of her. They accepted my father and let them get married.

Life wasn't easy back then. We were very poor. My mother developed tuberculosis and suffered from seizures and was not allowed to breast feed us. We were raised on evaporated milk. My father couldn't take care of my mother and work. She had accidents and ended up with injuries. It was a burden on my father and my mother suffered. We suffered too as babies. But for some reason, Creator wanted me here, and here we are. I don't have an answer. I'm trying to understand my existence.

My father had two brothers who were in Germany, fighting in WWII. The army was taking the men to fight. My daddy couldn't even sleep worrying they would take him too. He worked in the orange groves and that's how he raised us. He worked so hard. He was a good father and would tell us stories when we were ready to go to sleep. I remember that there was a special day when he would say, "I have to go and buy you clothes, because you have to be in

school.” We were lucky, each one of us, to get two dresses and brand new shoes. It was us four girls and one boy. My daddy did his best.

My mother was Ohlone, but we didn’t talk much as a child about being Indian. My parents never said anything. Now I understand more about it, but when I was little I didn’t know. My ancestors had to be cautious because of how our people were treated. One day my mother’s relatives told us, “We’re going to get together, because everybody has to go sign in.” I didn’t want to, but I was a family member so I had to go. I took forever to get ready that day. But when I heard the drum and being with all my people, I understood how very important it is to be with my people.

My relatives on my mother’s side were very much involved with Native ways when I was a child. It was about family all getting together, and having dinner together. One time my father and all my relatives -- my uncles, and my aunt, the medicine woman, would go to Duarte from Chino in an old Model T. It was raining and that old car just stalled down deep in a wash and my Uncle Pete, who had a wooden leg, hooked up his horses to the old car, and pulled us out of there. I’ll always remember that like a dream.

At times we would spend the night. The grandpas and uncles enjoyed talking. They would have big fires and dance, clap, and sing. My aunt would fix big old pots of oatmeal, and I don’t know what else, but I remember that she would cook on a wood stove. Those are my beautiful memories of my mother’s family.

I got married real young and moved to Los Angeles. My husband knew I was Native and he introduced me to his family, telling his oldest brother, “She’s Indian.” When he said that, it left me stunned to hear the word, because that made me feel like I was very different. I didn’t feel good about it, because what was he saying that for? We never talked about that around my father and my mother. When my husband brought it up, that just gave me a strange feeling.

Significant Elder ~

My Uncle Pete Rodriguez' wife, Thomasa, was the medicine woman. I remember very well because she doctored my Uncle Pete's leg. I peeked through the curtain when she would do this. At that time they rode in wagons with horses. His horses took off wild and the wagon overturned; the wheel just went over his leg and cut it off. She also cared for my mother, who was always off and on sick with seizures, with herbs and worked on her stomach when she was pregnant.

My aunt was very well known in Duarte. She used medicine and herbs; she healed the whole town. My daddy would always take my mother to her while she was pregnant, and he learned a lot. He shared it with us, but at that time we were young and didn't pay much attention. He never did much healing, but if people came knocking on the door he could tell if they were good or bad. I inherited that from him. I don't know what it is. It is a natural thing. My sons, who are very good-hearted, have it too. They can walk in and study you and see if you are in good terms or bad terms.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Medicine is very important, because there will be times when we are going to have to depend on this way of healing. I practiced medicine with herbs many years before I got involved with my people. I was sick with bleeding ulcers and was losing blood. I started watching what I was eating and taking iron and vitamins. I got well and started researching and learning about certain herbs to help with certain illnesses. I learned a lot and used it with family members who were sick. Then this woman came to me, but she didn't show her face; her long hair hung down over it. I can't say she was an ancestor. I don't know who she was, but she would show me the medicine, and that is what I use now.

Now when one of my family members is very ill and wants this way of healing, the doors are open. The healing is all done in prayer in the sweat lodge, but then afterwards I continue the healing with herbal teas. My daughter got sick when she was fifteen years old and her illness was killing me.

I tried many ways of healing. When it finally happened, I was so thankful to our Creator. My daughter became a whole new person. I said then that I would be his helper, that I would help the ones who needed help.

Later when one of my family members became very sick with schizophrenia, I used all kinds of herbs. In this way of healing, and in our ceremonies, a miracle happened. I was so thankful to Creator. I said again, "I will be your worker and put my medicine to work." I've been doing it ever since and had good results because I think the Creator heard my appreciation, my gratitude for this way of healing. It's been a blessing. It's my commitment to my Creator. I don't get paid for it. Sometimes they give a little offering, but the good results are what keeps me going and happy.

I use certain trees, and each different tree is for certain parts of our body. Trees have healing that travels down into our bodies. I have a lot of faith in cedar. We carry it for protection and use it for healing. I use it in all disease to draw out the bad. Also I use eucalyptus and menthol for certain parts of the body and a burning root that penetrates deep down to the muscle, the nerve, the bone. Then I boost it up with a tea that a Native in Mexico told me about from a tree, chocolate that is known to heal; they use it on dogs that are bit by rattlesnakes. It kills cancer too. I have faith in it. It is a spirit stuff that just goes in there and stops the disease. It's a mixture to take the bad out.

One of my relatives, whose mother was like a sister of mine, is dying from the poisons in drugs. I will help as long as he wants my help, but he has to follow the recipe. I'm going to arrest everything happening inside of him, and then I'm going to give him a certain type of tea we make that will heal him and kill everything bad. I've used it before on a young man who had no money or insurance. When they operated on him in the hospital, they cut into his lung; we thought he was going to die. I gave him iron, a B complex vitamin to build up his appetite and energy, and vitamin C. Then I gave him the tea and told him, "This tea is going to heal you inside. You have to help

yourself if you want to get well. Drink two glasses a day.” In no time, that man got well. He got A-1 healthy!

Another person who had surgery had a damaged nerve to where he couldn't even get out of bed for three months. I worked on his cerebral cortex maybe twice. Just did what I do. And he got out of bed.

I help the ones that ask me to help them, but if they're in a doctor's care I don't like to interfere. Modern medicine helps in a way, yes, but also the medications can become very bad. I don't guarantee what I do. I don't do miracles. I'm just a helper. Only Creator does miracles. But to me what I do is good, because it is what our people used to be about. I get a thrill out of the good results. I work with my hands and certain roots and other things that go down to where the bad is. You have to be strong to do this work. I am so thankful to Creator.

We want to bring back these ways of our ancestors. There are going to be families who don't have any insurance or money. What way can they help themselves? We have to learn this way; we have to go back to the way our people would depend on herbs for healing. One of my cousins and my daughter are learning from me, and now my daughter can heal me when I'm not well.

Language and Ceremony ~

We're just learning about our people, because we weren't raised on the reservation. Our language was taken away from our great-grandfathers; that is who our ancestors were -- my own grandfather and great-grandfathers. We're bringing it back. I know just a little bit. Language is important and ceremony is important. There is so much involved with ceremony; it's a healing. I get the most beautiful feeling when we are dancing and singing, a feeling of peace and happiness.

FUTURE VISION

My people were left with nothing; we're lucky to be alive. It's hard to think about all that's taken place with my people, but I want it to be known that we have always been here, and we

deserve to be treated with respect. Creator put us here, and I ask my Creator to change this Earth, and make it good, because we appreciate and love being here. We want to bring back those ways of our ancestors. They respected everything on this earth and one another.

It is not all about being who we are. We have to show ourselves as how we *used* to be -- good-hearted people. I don't want to see any more suffering. My people are my world. I want my children to live their happiest life. That's all that matters on this earth -- being happy. But first of all, we thank Creator, even if we're poor, because we are happy people.

We're teaching the young people, and they are seeing this way is more beautiful when we're all together, and respect each other, and work together like a family. That's very important to our people.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Oblone Culture and History ~

In my time they didn't teach anything about Native people; it was very embarrassing even to take a burrito for lunch!

We have to let the world know that we need to take care of the land, and teach them the good use of it. Teach them how to grow herbs, how to grow their foods, and not to eat too much salt and too many sweets, because that's destroying our health.

Role of the Next Generation ~

I have four great-grandbabies. They're going to be dancing pretty soon. Three of them are great dancers already. They just have it in them. My little Nico, who is three years old, was singing away with us during the ceremony. I had to give him my rattle, because he wasn't shy at all. I said to his daddy, "He's ready." I have another one who is four, who sings the bear songs.

Learning from the Oblone Experience ~

People need to love and respect this Earth, and understand that our Creator is the most important one, and the reason why we're here.

REFLECTION

Proud to be Ohlone ~

I'm proud to be Ohlone. I'm happy and proud to really know about my Native heritage, because at my age I pay more attention to my ways. Before, I didn't really pay much attention. When I got more involved with my people our ceremonies made a lot of changes in my life. Our songs and dances just make me feel good. It gives me a beautiful feeling.

PATRICK OROZCO



PATRICK OROZCO
Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council
Tribal Chairman

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Before I was born, according to my mother, they did do gatherings up at the property, the Castro land grant off Highway 1 near Watsonville, where my grandmother, Rose Rios, was born.

When I was growing up at the age of seven or eight years old I always used to listen in on what the elders were talking about. I'd be hiding behind a wall or go under the table when they were drinking coffee and talking about all their adventures and journeys during their lifetime. I used to listen to all the languages – Spanish, English and Indian. That is how I learned a lot from my great-grandmother.

They talked about Carmel and about when they used to go to Morgan Hill and Gilroy during the harvest, and the hop yards here in Watsonville. I took part in harvesting hops when I was eight to ten years old. I remember the hop yards were twenty feet high. The hops were on these big old poles and they'd bring them down. My grandma, who was crippled most of her life, would be sitting in her wheelchair right in the middle with hops piled up all around her, and start picking them. Sometimes I'd hear her sing too. She was on crutches, then a wheelchair, and then she was bedridden. But she raised eleven kids!

She spoke a language other than English or Spanish. She didn't know how to read or write. When she was about fifteen years old she knew Maria Ascencion Solarsano, who was twice as old or even older. She told me, "That lady was very knowledgeable in the Indian ways." My grandmother would tell me stories which I never forgot. Until the day she died, I would go to her house every other day; at that time she was already bedridden. I asked her, "Grandma, do you want me to cook you some breakfast?" She'd say, "Yeah, get me a couple of eggs." I would cook them up for her.

There was a lot of drinking during that time. When I was only about six or seven years old we would go to these *hamicas* (Spanish festival), like barbeques – people playing guitars and drinking booze and all that kind of stuff. I grew up in an old Quonset hut. I used to love to play in the creeks, and mingle with the animals a lot. I built myself like a *ruc*, an Indian dwelling against a tree, and set all my things in there. There is a little bird called chickadee that come in little flocks. I'd see these little birds come in and they would be like chatting. What are they talking about over there? I'd talk to them a lot. They knew that I was not there to harm them.

The sad part of my life when I grew up is when my mother and father broke up. My dad took us to live in Hollister when I was ten years old. There used to be a campsite and cabins there right by the winery near Indian Canyon. I spent about three years there. That is the first time I saw Ann Marie Sayer's mother. I'll never forget her because she had big beautiful eyes.

She walked all the way down from Indian Canyon and through the camp. She was well known. I thought, "That lady there must be very important. She's going to visit every cabin." We left there three years later and came back to Watsonville. My grandmother had a little flea market stall across from the Pajaro area and I would go visit her there. She was in a wheelchair then. I saw her talking for a long time with Ann Marie's mother.

My grandmother would talk to me in her language sometimes. I learned some of the language from her. She told me about all the medicines. As she was crippled I'd go out and anything that smelled strong or good, I'd take it to her and say, "What's this, Grandma?" She'd say, "Yerba Buena, and this is '*pookatay*'; in Spanish it is Yerba Santa. This is good for your lungs." She told me her father, my great-grandfather, used to pick it about November, put it in water and then in the crotch of a tree where the sun could shine on it. You could see the oils drip. He said it was good for his heart too. My grandmother told me about coffee berry bark. She said if you cut down on it, it is for

constipation. Indian people ate starchy foods like the acorns. It caused constipation so they had to find a remedy for this. These were the kind of things she and my mother taught me.

Since I was a little boy my grandmother told us that we were Indians, and that one of our relatives on my grandfather's side of the family was enrolled. My grandmother passed along a lot of the ways to me as well as to my brothers, sisters, uncles and nieces. She knew how to speak a little bit of the language, but I don't know what dialect; there are so many of them. She didn't know how to read or write. At a later age I asked her, "Where did you learn the word *calentaruc*?" She said, "I've known that for a long time. [*An ancient village name.*] We lived on a piece of land taken over by the Joaquin Castro family when they arrived here. When the Conquistadores arrived in 1769 they saw that our people were kind, gentle, and easygoing, so they took advantage of us. We didn't understand. Being incarcerated in those Missions, we didn't know if it was a good thing or a bad thing." My grandmother told me all this. One of the things that the old people used to tell her, "If they come knocking on your door, don't tell them that you are Indian. They won't treat you as well."

My mother told me the story about Juan Jose "Sordo" Barnabe, an old Indian who would come up to visit her great-grandmother Mamita. She had fifty-two acres in Carmel-by-the-Sea, about three miles from the Mission. There were only three houses there at that time. Her uncle built this house for her. She said, "This old Indian man who lived down in Hatten Canyon in an old cabin was raised by the Onesimos, full-blooded Carmel Indians. He provided for himself by gathering and selling wood. My mother, Annie, told me she used to hear this man talk in Indian with Mamita. I didn't pay much attention, but I knew they were talking Indian." He used to come in the house and sit by the stove all the time. My mother said, "Once a year that old man used to gather all the Indian people to come to Mamita's. (She named all these people who are well-known Indians of that area.) He took them on a long walk into the mountains down Hatton Canyon." She

talked about all the wildflowers and streams that she crossed – everything that she saw. It was a long ways. She got so tired that the old Indian had to carry her piggyback. They walked up a chalk rock staircase and down the other side to this place. There was all kinds of Indian stuff on the ground. All the women kneeled down to the ground and pulled these bone whistles out of their deer bags, and then these things they clapped against their hands – clapper sticks. The men put on these outfits made of deer skin and decorated with abalone and all kinds of bird feathers. When my mother told me this I said, “Tell me exactly what the men were wearing.” She told me and that’s how I made my outfit. She said, “I was only six years old. They started to sing and dance. I think it was some kind of a bird song. I’ll never forget that experience when that old Indian man, ‘Sordo’, took us to this place.”

Going way back, the Indians had to do ceremony in hiding. We could not come out and dance or pray in our language like we do now. If they caught you talking ‘Indian’, they’d flog the hell out of you; that started in the Mission system. They wrote in their books that we worship the sun. They didn’t know what they were talking about. We don’t worship the sun; we hold all of God’s creation with respect by keeping His land in balance and not taking more then we need. It all belongs to the One who created them. We worship God and thank him for all He has given us. That is why we have songs and stories and dances about everything that He created: the bear, the coyote, the eagle.

I think a lot of the school kids today have been have been misinformed about who we were and our way of life. The books say the Mission system was so good, but it wasn’t all that good. Any time you take a language or anything like that away from the people who originally belonged to those lands, it is genocide. That is what the plan was. The King of Spain instructed that they had to conquer these lands and the Native people who lived here. They didn’t care about the humans here. They had intentions of introducing Christianity us, but it sure as heck was done in the wrong way by

force. A person should be able to accept, not be forced into anybody's religion. Even to this day, we are denied our ancient rights to protect our cemeteries and grave sites. The federal government says because you are not federally recognized, you can't decide to protect and preserve grave sites and ask for remains that are stored in universities and elsewhere.

At first we never knew who we really were. We called ourselves California Mission Indians or Carmel Mission Indians, even though my grandmother was baptized at Santa Cruz Mission in 1899. We didn't know what tribe we were from, but after a lot of research and DNA testing, we found out that we are Ventura Chumash. I am Chumash on my grandfather's side. To connect us to any specific village is very hard. We are in that process right now. My great-grandfather Rios was a Juaneno from San Juan Capistrano and his wife side was Kumeyaay from the San Diego area. I have never gone back to those lands, but I do understand that some of our relatives in San Juan Capistrano still live on the lands.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

I formed The Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council in 1985, and then decided to form a dance group. We called it *Amab-Ka-Tura*, People of the Land. We started the children at a very young age; these kids are all grown up and have families of their own now. By bringing songs, dance, and language back, it will never be lost again. Now we have something like forty-five dancers, and a membership of about four hundred members. We also have non-Indians as associate members who volunteer at our events, cooking or whatever we need. We pay dues to keep the organization going. We don't depend on grants. We just decided to hire our group out to others; that money is used to keep the organization going. We provide all the materials, which are very expensive, for those who want to become dancers. For shells and feathers we have collecting permits. We go to a place where our ancestors used to collect. When I was about six years old, my grandparents took me to a place where we fished which we called Saddle Mountain, between

Monterey and Big Sur. We caught fresh fish and had a feast right on location. My grandmother spent a lot of time in that area. It belonged to Francis Dowd. We had relatives who lived back in the mountains who worked for Francis Dowd. We didn't realize until years later that it was the same place.

Site Preservation ~ Lee Road

I started research in 1975 when we occupied our cemetery on a Road. My grandmother used to talk about the cemetery all the time when I was growing up. Her father, Francisco Rios, used to put all of his children on a buckboard when he came into town. In those days there were no blacktopped roads; it was all dirt roads. As they came down Lee Road she told me, "He'd stop there every time he came into town and leave us in the buckboard." He'd go in and she could hear him singing songs and waving his hands. He'd come back and say, "Always remember your people are there. Respect them and protect them." She passed this information to me when I was already an adult.

In 1975 I opened the newspaper and read, '*Archaeologists Find Ohlone Burial Site*'. I knew right away that they were in the cemetery. I picked up my uncle and said, "Hey, let's go down there and see what we can do." We found about eight archaeologists who had five graves exposed. We protested. "It's wrong what you are doing. You are desecrating a cemetery that has been known to us for years." I heard some of the archaeologists mocking and laughing. "Hah, there are no Ohlones left!" That is the first time I heard the word Ohlone. I said, "Frank, I like that word, Ohlone." I had already read about the Europeans when they arrived here. They described us as heathens with no souls, dirty 'diggers'. I didn't like that. I said, "Let's use the name Ohlone." We told the archaeologists, "You better get out of here now or we'll come back and drag you out." I had to go to work so I had my Uncle Frank gather up the people and force them out. We knew it was wrong to break the law, so we went through all the legal ways to protect that cemetery, to protest that what they were doing was wrong. They had high-class attorneys. We had nothing. We

had to turn to legal aid services. It was the first time here in this area that there was any kind of protest over a cemetery so we didn't know what to do. There were no laws protecting us except the health and safety laws and that just determines how many graves is a cemetery. All this got started because of that. They were going to bulldoze the resting places of our ancestors. I said, "It is a burial site! We have to take a stand to protect it." Lee Road happened in 1975 a little after Wounded Knee so they wrote an article in the paper and called it '*Wounded Lee*'.

"Our people's graveyard was being excavated by giant machines to lay a foundation for a warehouse. Human bones and skulls surfaced and were to be crushed. A judge issued a restraining order to the developer, then rescinded it, succumbing to commercial pressure. Our cemetery would now be bulldozed. We had to take a stand – and we did. With rifles and bows and arrows, we went into the cemetery at night. We would not shoot first, but if someone shot at us, we would return fire. We understood that we might lose our lives defending our religious rights, our culture, our people, but it had to stop now. When day break came, we faced a sea of law enforcement and weaponry. At the last minute, the bulldozers were made to stop further desecration, and the law enforcement personnel called off by local political leaders. These county leaders worked out an arrangement with the property owner who intended to construct his warehouses over our ancestors' bones. In the settlement, construction of warehouses was permitted on the half of the graveyard already bulldozed, while the remaining half of the burial ground was given to us Indians along with seven acres of adjacent slough land." *Quoted from an interview with Patrick in A Gathering of Voices: The Native Peoples of the Central California Coast, Linda Yamane, Editor.*

Significance of Language Restoration ~

One of the main things that we have to do is keep the language alive. It is very important to teach the young people what language we still have left. I can't say I'm fluent. Nobody can speak it fluently; all that language was slowly taken away by the mission system.

J.P. Harrington and the genealogists and archaeologists who saw what was going on – all the traditional ways, values and language slowly fading away, found it very important to collect all they could from the ones who still knew, who still had some of the information. At one time in California they said we didn't even exist, that we all had died off. A lot of school kids ask me, "Are you a real Indian?" I say, "Yes, but not full blood." Part of this federal recognition requires that you show you are an active tribe from the year 1900. We have to show the feds that we are still here and still practice our culture and speak our language. When I tell these stories in the schools, I don't want to just tell them all in English. It is good to blend some of the Indian language with the English language, or translate it.

The oldest story would be the story of creation. The creation stories differ in different areas. What you are doing now is like what Kroeber and Harrington did with our ancestors, recording their stories and music. Here we are now doing the same thing all over again, keeping it moving on so the children can learn these things and continue keeping it alive till the end of time.

FUTURE VISION

Federal Recognition ~

Most of us in our organization, Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council, have BIA roll numbers as Chumash, Juaneno, Costanoan, and also Salinan, Esselen, Comanche, Cherokee, Tarascos. This federal petition deal came out in 1995. *[Patrick went with a group of Ohlone leaders, including Ann Marie Sayers and Tony Cerda, to Washington, D.C. to submit federal recognition papers in 1995.]* We've slowed down on this petition. I think we have more of the documentation on the Juaneno side than we do on the

Chumash as far as the criteria they are asking for. You have to show that you are an active tribe. We were active, but we have no proof. We didn't document these things. When a lot of people were released from those missions, they couldn't read or write or speak their own language.

This is living proof right here. They sent my cousin, Ella Rodriguez, to this Federal Agency Indian school in Nevada. Before she passed away she told me the story of what happened when they put her in that school. They made her cut her hair, and wouldn't allow her to speak her language. This was still going on in the 1940's!

In the beginning instead of filing separate petitions, the Costanoan people, should have all come together and went under one petition. It could have happened, but it may be too late now, and maybe not too late. It is practically impossible for us to fulfill the requirements unless the legislators change all those criteria. The only way we're going to get federal recognition is if the whole Bay area unites as one to change the criteria. I said, "If we get federal recognition or not, we should unite as one." At the same time we are teaching the young people.

I've always believed that all the tribes in California were one people. Rupert Costno and his wife, Jeannette, put out a book called, *Natives of the Golden State and Missions of California* which tells in detail exactly what happened to the Indians of California. Our people used to come together during certain times of the year from all over California. People were relocated from their original lands and put on reservations because of the mineral rights -- gold. These miners wanted those lands and demanded the government do something about it. A lot of that didn't happen to us because we were living in the Missions, and the lands were already occupied by the Spaniards. What were we supposed to do? We were landless and homeless so we had to work for the rancheros.

Now we have this federal recognition where the government offers all of these services that we could really use. It's not really to build casinos like other tribes have done. There are more important things than a casino: educating our young people, and getting lands that we can use for

our ceremonial gatherings. People who have land have a much better chance to gain federal recognition than we do. The services are there and we have better access if we get federal recognition and bring all the people to the land and share with them what the federal government is offering.

Role of Next Generation ~

My grandchildren are involved. They sing the songs, make regalia and take part in ceremonies and presentations. In fact my grandsons put together music for the songs that we had no music for.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Oblone Culture and History ~

I received an invitation to the Alianza School which was the first school where I did a presentation. They told me there would only be twenty people there. I was a little nervous. My grandma said, “Go out and cut yourself a piece of willow, sharpen the end and tie a feather to it, then tie it onto the end of a staff and take it wherever you go. The staff will bring words to speak from your heart.” I went to the Alianza school gym and there must have been four hundred people! Wow, what am I going to say? Then I held the staff like my grandmother said, and just started talking. I got a standing ovation. It all started from there. They heard about me and then I got calls from all schools from all counties.

I don't know if they have really been teaching the children everything in detail. I'm not comfortable with some of what they are teaching them. I bring a headdress with me and say, “This is what we wore.” I tell them a story of how that regalia came about. “My mother was one of the last ones to attend an actual ceremony in hiding in the Carmel Mountains. We were aliens in our own lands. We were not declared citizens until 1924.” The reason the schools call me to do those programs because they don't have all the information. Every year I do at least fifteen presentations, besides state and federal parks. In my program I counter what they read in the textbooks, coming from the Indian's perspective, about the history of the Europeans when they arrived here. Gasper

Portola named that river Pajaro when he crossed it. That is pretty well written in the Spanish missionaries' diaries. We have our own story about this. After Portola crossed that river, of course the people were scared; they ran screaming. They saw these strange people with pale skins, funny clothes, long beards, funny hats, and the animals they called horses that obeyed them. We didn't have horses here. We were astonished and wondered, who are these people? Where did they come from? What do they want? We saw that they were human. They had hands and arms like us.

The reason Portola named it the Pajaro River was he scared an abundance of '*winged people*'. Pajaro means bird. There were so many that it blocked out the sun, an abundance that we will never see again: *Wasaka*, the condor, *Seri*, the eagle, *Kaknu*, the hawk, *Koohooetoo* the owl, *Paratu*, the woodpecker. These names are mostly Mutsun. They are all endangered. This was a place where there were many grizzly bears. They are gone now. Very seldom do you see a bear come down from the mountains. All that happened because of man's selfishness. They began to kill these animals for their skins. But our people relied on them to stay alive. We always had that respect for them. The Creator taught us to respect, and not take more than we could use. That is why we have songs and dances for just about everything else here.

Learning from the Oblone Experience ~

We are a forgiving people. We can't dwell on the past about what happened to our people but it did happen and it hurts to know the truth. We are the survivors. The Spanish had a lot to do with it, and then the Americans when they discovered gold on these lands. Our people were relocated because of that. The Dawes Act was put together to move our people off lands. A lot of people don't realize that; they don't know the whole history of what happened to our people. We are a people who are willing to share. But they got greedy. They thought they saw a people who were real simple and just took advantage of us. They left us landless. They took everything because of gold and minerals. It is pretty well recorded in the books how our people were killed. They had bounties

on our scalps .We stood in their way on lands that had gold on them. These miners just went in there and killed them off. There is no reason to kill people. These things are really hard to deal with. There were thousands of Indians in the state of California at one time. Then it went down to something like a few thousand. Slowly we were vanishing. But the people are still here.

If they would look into the way we lived before Europeans arrived here – everything was free. We had no problems with rents or utilities. We ate natural foods then; there were no toxic chemicals that are killing people. The water was pure and clean. Now we have to buy water. Everything costs. Everything is money, money, money. We never had that problem. You can't change it entirely because we are living in the modern world with all these luxuries. I don't know if they can learn it in a way to more or less minimize the expense of the way we live now.

REFLECTION

Proud to be California Native ~

I am proud because we were the *first* inhabitants of these lands. The anthropologists have this theory that we came from Siberia and crossed the Bering Strait to Alaska, and then to Canada. That is just a theory, but the fact is we were the first inhabitants of these lands. Whether we came from Siberia or not, doesn't matter. It has been recorded that our oldest village site was ten thousand years or more. That is a long time. Everything was here, a land of plenty, an Eden. I read that our people were starving. Come on, ten thousand years and we're still here and we're starving? The land was filled with all kinds of animal life; probably we will never see that abundance again.

I'm proud because I took a big part in 1975 in protecting our burial site on Lee Road. I realized that the disturbance and destruction of our sites, the resting places of our ancestors, had to stop. My uncle and I were the ones who got the ball rolling. It was not only an awakening for our people, but for a lot of people in the whole Bay area. The other reason I'm proud is bringing all

these songs and stories back to life. That makes me feel good knowing that not just our children, but even the non-Indian children, are learning the songs.

I've always felt we are all the same people, all over California. We all have the same cultural ways. We've just got to stick together, and not only California Indians. That's why we have the Mt. Madonna Elders Gathering the first weekend in June every year. To bring all people from all walks of life together as one, because we are all God's creation. Camping is free; the food is free. We invite you to come and share your culture and your songs with us. We've just got to come together in love and understanding.

Reconciliation between California Native Peoples and the Larger Society ~

Mend the deep wound that was done to us. Give back some lands that were taken from us where we can gather and come together as one people to dance and share and learn together and worship Him who teaches love and understanding.

CORINNA GOULD



CORINNA GOULD
Chochenyo/Karkin Ohlone
Community Organizer, Indian People Organizing for Change

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I was born and raised in Oakland. My mom was Ohlone and always told us when we were growing up that we were Ohlone. My dad is Mexican from New Mexico.

When my mom was first born they took her away from my grandmother and placed her in foster care with a Portuguese family. She went to St. Anthony's Catholic school until she was about eight or nine. I don't know what the laws were back then, but they allowed her to go home with her birth mom. She knew nothing about her family and she kept running away; then the authorities decided they were going to put her in boarding school. She ended up in San Jose at an orphanage or a girl's home. I'm thinking it was a Catholic school. There were a lot of Indian girls there as well. She went to that school until she was about eighteen. She had huge scars on her hands and parts of her legs. When I was old enough to ask her what they were she told me these stories. She went on a weekend pass and she and her friends got drunk and got tattoos. When they got back, they cut the tattoos out. Then they forced them to wash the floors with lye soap and she had no finger prints. She had two sons before she met my father. She had married a man in Modesto who was very abusive. He kept one of the sons and she got to keep the youngest one because he didn't want anything to do with her. She ended up living in Oakland with her sister. She was a bartender in Oakland right across from Athens Bakery where my dad worked. He came over for a beer after work, and eventually they got married and created a larger family. I had two younger brothers. My older brother lived with us until he was around fourteen or fifteen, then he ran away from home. As it turns out, he went to live at the AIM House. My good friend, Johnella, knew him. A very, very small world. We think he passed away and we didn't know about it. The last time I saw him was in 1978 when my mom passed away.

My mom knew that her grandfather was Jose Guzman. My grandmother, Flora Munoz, lived here in Oakland. We just didn't get to see them; for whatever reason there was hostility between the families. I was too young to know what that was about. My mom had a lot of brothers and sisters; I think there were seven of them. A lot of them grew up together and I don't know why she was the one who got pulled out. I later found out that the oldest of the siblings were put into foster care. When I was younger I started doing research about Jose Guzman and it led me to Mission San Jose. I started to try to figure out where that went. Where was I supposed to take that kind of information? Then I just decided when something needed to come up, it would come up. I didn't start making connections for a long time. When I was growing up I knew I was Indian and didn't fit anywhere else. I kept that identity with me.

I went to DQ University for a little while where I met my husband. We moved back to Oakland when I was pregnant with our first child and that is when I started working at Indian agencies. I worked as a medical assistant in San Francisco clinic and in an Oakland clinic. I worked as an intake worker at the drug and alcohol program for women and children in Oakland. I taught cradle board parenting classes for a foster care family. I was an on-site case manager for American Indian women and children in early recovery or escaping from domestic violence. Now I'm the Title 7 coordinator for the Office of Indian Education in Oakland. I've always wanted to work with Indian people. I've come about it in really a weird kind of a way. It was the shell mound work that really put me in touch. Even when the kids were little I took them to the Ohlone gatherings. I started to talk to Bev Ortiz and ask her questions. It has just been really over the last fifteen years that I've started to try to figure this whole piece out about the Ohlone. I've always been American Indian as far as I'm concerned.

Significant Ancestor ~

I think it is my mom's life that I relate to. She was taken away when she was so young. She was put into foster care almost as soon as she was born and then she was sent to boarding school and then ended up at this other girls' school. Although she always knew who she was, she really had a hard time in life and died really young of cirrhosis. I was twelve years old. How much cooler would it have been for her to actually have been able to do the stuff that she could have done?

Traditional Role of an Elder ~

The traditional role of an Ohlone elder within the Ohlone communities today means different things than it did in the past with my ancestors and also has some of the same responsibilities. I think that elder does not necessarily mean by age. As society and the world around us has changed, so does the roles we fill. Just because someone has years on this planet doesn't necessarily mean that they have knowledge/wisdom. I think it is important to acknowledge those who have survived colonization so that they can be on this earth for a long time, but colonization has changed what an elder has become. Many of the young people are finding the songs/languages and ways of working with one another in ways that past generations have not succeeded. I think it is because the elders/olders have prayed for this to happen. Our ancestors prayed for us before we were thought of so we can now be here to take up the responsibilities of holding onto and finding the knowledge that they left for us to find. In our communities I believe that those who take the work of cultural keepers alive and pass on the information for all are elders. It comes with taking care of the next generations. We honor all of those who come before us and the struggles they have endured so that we could be here today. I think that in this time and space it is truly the youth and the elders/olders who are coming together and learning with each other and from each other. The Elders also are the ones who hold onto the family genealogy and the stories of what happened before the younger are

born, so in that way we can hear first-hand what our lands looked like before the magnitude of the development in the Bay Area.

Traditional Spiritual Practice ~

I believe in praying as a way of life – not like going to church, but participating in ceremony, having the knowledge that my ancestors are present with me on this journey, and help me in the work I do.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

In 1999 we started an organization called Indian People Organizing for Change. United Indians Nations received a grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development to do some community organizing around the base closures at the Oakland Army Base and the Naval Air Station. My friend Johnella La Rose was hired on as a community organizer to talk to people about what Indian people in the community would like to see happen if we were able to have a piece of that property. There were a bunch of Native American organizations that came together to decide what that was going to look like. She began to do these house calls and after she started doing the community organizing work in the Indian community, she was hired on to be an organizer for the Carpenters Union and needed to pull out of the base closure work. She brought me into doing the house calls with her in the evening. We had hundreds of addresses of American Indian families just in the Oakland Bay area. We were all over the place.

It is not an organized community because of the whole Relocation Act⁷ of the forties and fifties. Many, many American Indian people came to the Bay area because they were offered jobs and training and housing to leave the reservations and come to urban areas. There are over three hundred tribes that exist in the Bay area; Alameda County is one of the largest groupings of American Indians in the country. When we started talking to people at their homes, it wasn't so much that they were looking for a training center, which was what the United Indian Nations

⁷ The Indian Relocation Act of 1956 was designed to terminate subsidies to Indians living on reservations by 'encouraging' them to move to urban areas and assimilate into the general population.

wanted to do; it was about having basic needs met. Some people were hungry and didn't know about the organizations that actually existed for American Indians in the community, because they had just been estranged, and others, because they worked for PG&E or something, didn't have to use the non-profits that were set up for American Indians in the seventies. We spent a lot of time talking with people about the resources that were available and about getting re-involved.

The American Indian people were the first who moved onto the base once they decided to do this transitional housing project out there. I became a live-in case manager on the base, working with American Indian women who were coming out of early recovery or who were coming from domestic violence situations. We had a great little community out there. We began to bring people together for potluck meals on the weekends to talk about what it is that people would like to be involved in. People wanted to have a voice.

During the seventies there was money that came into different communities of color. All of the agencies exist now because of that. There is a training center that the United Indian Nations runs clinics both in San Francisco and Oakland and foster care agencies. Thinking they were meeting the needs of the community, they weren't actually giving a voice to the community. People began to say, "I want to see this happen." They really didn't have a place to have a voice in the agencies, so we created a platform for them to do that. We began to bring in city council people to talk to American Indians about what their concerns were. We had a group of homeless American Indian people who had lived on the streets together for a long time. Some of them were related, some just stayed together because they shared being American Indian. The group of them were getting ticketed by the police all the time. Now how do you ticket homeless people and expect them to pay this? It is harassment. We began to have those kinds of conversations, and always building community.

Protection of Sacred Sites ~

The Shell Mound Walks

The protection and preservation of our sacred sites is important in the cultural revitalization of Ohlone peoples, because it reminds us of who we are and once we are solid in who we are as a people, and recognize our ancestors and where we come from, then the ancestors will recognize us and help us on these journeys. I believe that it comes with work, both physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual. Ohlone people were colonized many times by the Spanish, Mexico, and America. Our ancestors learned to survive and adapt, but the original teachings are in us, in the land that we are from and in our historical memories.

One day while I was living on the Alameda Naval Air Station Base, I got a phone call from the Alameda Housing Authority; they said we found something and we don't know quite what to do. They found one of our grandmas. She was over thirty-five hundred years old. They were excavating underneath a house because a pipe had broken. They hit her knee. They asked for me to come over. This is the first time I had ever done anything like this. We moved her and put her in a place on property that is not going to be disturbed ever again.

Rosemary Cambra, Tribal Chair for Muwekma, and I had conversations because of the body that was found. The archaeologist who was at that particular burial was the one she hit over the head with the shovel some years ago and then did some jail time behind it. She couldn't go to this re-burial so she asked me to do it. When we connected she invited me to bring my kids to this summer camp that Ohlone families were doing. I sent my kids there and they ended up coming home early with pink eye, but they were really saddened by the whole situation. Folks were still trying to find what that culture is, and not knowing, created a lot of questions in my children's mind.

It was soon after that that we began to get a lot of phone calls. My friend, Johnella, had friends who were in the carpenters union. They didn't know where else to call. We had an office in

a big, red VW van. We got together after work and created all of these different trainings for the community. We did trainings in the community about our original teachings -- what are we supposed to do as Indian people? Who are we now? Being brought up in urban communities, what are we supposed to do in order for us to survive? What is community? How do we take care of the water? How do we plant food? How do we teach our kids what it is to be Indian when you are growing up in an urban area? We brought people in from all over the place. We got Six Nation people and people from the Pomo area. We got people who had done work in the Middle East to talk about water stuff. We began to train the kids about what their responsibility was to pick up trash and to make sure the earth was clean.

Emeryville

The phone calls began to come in around the shell mounds. Thirteen bodies were being removed because they wanted to do a development in San Jose. The developers were putting in a swimming pool. Had they redesigned it a little bit, they could have left them where they were. The biggest desecration was the Emeryville site. We were doing the organizing. Nobody knew what was going on really. It was so hush-hush. Because Ohlone people are so invisible and it is so entrenched in the Bay area that we don't exist anymore, nobody knows what to do about it. It was horrifying. We met a white man, Randy Grandin, who did a one man protest out there because he knew what it was. He stood out there with a sign. Then we began to meet these other folks. Stephanie Manning was already putting out a newsletter called *Shell Moulder News*. She lived really close to Fourth Street in Berkeley. The oldest shell mound in the area is West Berkeley Shell Mound in Spenger's parking lot. We met a friend, Perry Matlock, who had worked with Patrick Orozco and David Schooley. They stopped the development at San Bruno. These people all of a sudden began to come into our lives when Emeryville was becoming an issue in 1999. We went to city council meetings and talked about why it was important for them to leave this place alone. Even though all this money was coming in

from the federal government, because the property was a brown field, they knew it was a huge burial site/shell mound, before development was going to happen. Could they not just clean it up and leave it as a place to memorialize our ancestors and have a place for us to pray? That is what we asked them to do. They had these people who were dressed up like Barbie and Ken, not one piece of hair was out of line, their teeth were all whitened, who were just so charming -- very interesting folks. They said, 'What would you like to have?' -- trying to calm us down before we went into the city council meeting. I talked to Katherine Perez, the Most Likely Descendant and Native monitor for the site, who said wouldn't it be great if we could get a scholarship program out of here or something like that. At that point I couldn't do anything like that. For me, all along doing this work, there is no compromise. Not one more body needs to be taken up; not one more shell mound needs to be disturbed. They are cemeteries.

My friend, Johnella, went on this Y2 walk from Tennessee to New York. She is the one with the great ideas. When she came back she said, "Let's walk the shell mounds." I said, "What does that mean?" We did four altogether. Among these other guys who were doing this shell mound work before we got involved in it, the only thing we had was this 1909 map from Nels Nelson. I don't know if he knew they were sacred places, but for me it felt like he did this for me so in this time we can begin to do the preservation. In 1909 he found four hundred and twenty-five shell mounds that ring the Bay area. These are all cemeteries of my ancestors.

Johnella, Perry, Stephanie and I sat outside a coffee shop and pulled out all these city maps. First we had our Bay area map and looked at it and saw where these things were -- all along the water area. We drove it and tried to figure out walking paths and how we could do it. Then she called her friends who had been on the walk with her. We had the Japanese Buddhist monks, people from the Cape Verde islands and Australia, then all over this country, and then all over the world. They came and supported us and walked every day. We walked twelve to eighteen miles a day. We

walked for three weeks, two hundred and eighty miles. It took us from Vallejo down to San Jose and up the other side. The day after Thanksgiving we ended up at the Bay Street Mall in Emeryville where we do an annual protest, educating people about what is really there. It started in 2005. We did it a little bit different each year. We stayed in churches. We stayed at Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont. Once time we stayed in the Native American program at Stanford. Ann Marie Sayers drove in to talk to our group. It was great. As we walked we were able to talk to people about other kinds of issues that were coming up. We stayed at the Seik Temple and talked to folks up there. It was an amazing thing that this happened. It was a crazy phenomenon. We did four years. Four is a sacred number. What are we going to do next? We're continuing the education stuff.

What the Buddhists believe is that every step we took is a prayer. We stopped at each place where we knew there was a shell mound. There is a shell mound in Belmont under a senior center. There was a place in Palo Alto where we stopped. For years they had been trying to get people to come out and bless the place. It was a school for severely emotionally disturbed children. Had they just flipped the school around they would not have put the elevator right through the cemetery --- just flip the piece of paper around and change the development that way. That way you don't have to do it. One of the craziest things that happened was on our third year of walking; we were at Pt. Reyes. When we circled up by the roundhouse one of the walkers had this article that their son had sent them about Brentwood. A developer was putting up million dollar homes for people who were going to retire. Had the developer moved the street over three feet, they would have missed this huge shell mound from which I was told they pulled out three hundred and fifty bodies, I later found out that there were over 700 artifacts and remains unearthed. There is a creek that goes right through there; on the other side of the creek is Los Positas College and the rest of the shell mound sits there where it will stay intact forever. What makes my heart hurt so much, what really bothers

me is that other Native people can sit there and watch this happen and not protest it all. In the article it said that this woman had no idea about her history and let them go ahead and do this and it was interesting because she was learning so much. That was very, very difficult for me to hear knowing who that person is and who her mom is. People often make it a part of the way they make their living, by sitting there and watching our ancestors being dug up. It is horrifying to me that they could do that. I later found out that it wasn't three hundred and fifty bodies; it was over seven hundred bodies that they pulled out of there. Nobody wanted to say that number.

San Francisco State has about as many bodies as UC Berkeley has, but none of the universities are taking these anymore. What has happened is these archaeologists who work for the universities have their own private business. What they will do for developers is bring out their students to dig up these archaeological sites and then they store the remains at the schools, but they are not a part of the school's collection. The school really has nothing to say about it. So there is a loophole. There are archaeologists who have made it a niche to pull up the ancestors here in the Bay area.

Shell mounds are not only from the Bay area; they are all over the world. It is just that many cultures have figured out a way to build around them, because they actually revere and honor their ancestors. Here in this country, they don't. Because we were here before anybody else, it is very difficult for them to say those are ancient graves and nobody really owns those people anymore.

The shell mound walk was only about a week long this year. We walked from Alviso to Vallejo. We had a core group of about eleven or twelve people. One of my Australian friends, who was coming off a six month walk, walked with us for the entire time. Jun San, who came in from New York, walked with us the entire time. It was really good. We walked twelve to fifteen miles a day for a little bit over a hundred miles. We stopped at different places. It was a celebration walk this year, because the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act changed to incorporate non-

federally recognized tribes being able to get the remains back from universities and museums. We should celebrate that the ancestors are coming home. It had always been a part of the NAGPRA law that went into effect in 1990, but that piece of the law didn't go into effect until the spring. Even though we've been doing all these shell mound walks, we didn't know about that piece of the law. We found out about it in the springtime when it happened. It is called 'culturally unidentifiable remains' and many of the remains that are on lists from universities and museums are culturally unidentifiable because we are not federally recognized. East Bay MUD has returned hundreds of artifacts and remains to my group and we reburied them.

Glen Cove ~ Sogorea Te

We have been working with the Vallejo Intertribal Council and Wounded Knee DeOcampo for ten years on the Glen Cove site in Vallejo. The Greater Vallejo Recreation District wanted to develop this site. There is a huge shell mound there. Some of it is intact still. They pulled a lot of ancestors out of there before they were even going to do this because the shell mound sits underneath the front of this house. They pulled people out of the other side where they graded the area before. We do know that most of the shell mound is intact and they wanted to put parking up there and a bathroom. This place has just sat there for years and years, even with that house being empty. All we were saying was just leave it alone. There is nothing else there. It is craziness that they were going to develop this area.

Glen Cove has been one of my biggest learning experiences. For twelve years Wounded Knee was working on trying to stop the desecration of the Glen Cove site. This was around the same time we were doing stuff around preservation of the sacred sites in this part of the Bay area. We went to many meetings. We met with the Greater Vallejo Recreation District and the City of Vallejo. We went with some of our walkers and talked with the Glen Cove Recreation District. We begged them not to desecrate our ancestor sites. What I didn't understand when you went to these

public hearings and you talked from your heart, they didn't hear you. They put all that in an environmental impact report – a huge thing that talks about the development and what is going to happen. When we got the EIR back, it said, "Corrina Gould, an Ohlone person, said this, this and this. Does not apply to EIR. No comment required." Pages and pages of people saying, "Don't desecrate this site. Leave the site alone." People from all over the world wrote asking the same thing. "Does not apply to the EIR. No comment required."

They wanted to put these pillars in there saying this was once an Ohlone blah. "What kind of signage would we like?" I said, "I learned a hard lesson. You don't understand me asking you to leave it alone because my ancestors are buried there. I have to ask are you going to disturb them and how much are you going to disturb them, because that is the only thing that you guys understand. What's the grade/how far are you going to go/do you know that you are going to hit the shell mound/do you have the perimeters of the shell mound? Those are the kind of questions I have to ask because you don't understand anything else. I don't agree with anything that you do here." It is just crazy – the politics that people play. Regular folks walking down the street don't understand that that is how our government works. We found out that many of these cities don't amend or change their plans for ten years. So what good does the law do? There is no money behind the law so as people change in city government, whose job is it then to tell them that they have to follow this law? It is all up to us to continue to do the work for free just to protect our ancestors, just so we know there is another law.

Wounded Knee, who is Bay Miwok and the lead organizer, had a gathering at the Glen Cove site on September 24, 2010. There were over three hundred people who came to show support and to pray and to try to stop the desecration of this site.

There is a lawyer in Alaska who was working with us. He asked us to get letters from tribes saying that they recognize this as Ohlone land and that this land is not to be used or worked on, and

that the person who gave them permission to do it does not have jurisdiction. He got a lot of tribes to actually pass tribal resolutions saying that they agree with the work that Vallejo Intertribal has done.

Always Wounded was trying to get a hold of the tribes in the nearby areas to get them involved to step up to the plate because it is one of the sacred sites, the shell mound that is on Nels Nelson's map, Solano County 236. It sits along the Carquiniz Straits – fifteen acres of land, open space that has gone through a whole number of different kinds of changes over the last hundred and fifty years. There are known shell mounds there. They desecrated one of the shell mounds when they were putting up the condominiums that are adjacent to the land. There are other shell mounds on the land as it stands. There are still burials that are there. They actually did a reburial in 1989. The shore started to wear away because the shell mound was along the water. They moved those ancestors and reburied them in the same area. The City and GVRD always knew this place existed. As it became closer and closer to when they were supposed to start construction, we began to try to have more and more conversations with them.

We got it down to three main things that we didn't want them to do: no putting bathrooms on the sacred site; no putting a parking lot directly on top of our ancestors burial sites; no grading of that hill (the land that was moved when they did the condominiums that had shell matter in it and other artifacts). Each time we met with them there was just this arrogance and audacity. "We have this person who was the Most Likely Descendant who said they would sign off on this, so we don't have to listen to you. No, we are not going to do what you want us to do. In good faith we are meeting with you people and we don't really have to."

When we realized that the permits were in place and they were going to start the desecration on April 14, 2011 we called out for people to set up this spiritual vigil twenty-four hours a day. Amazingly we had people from all walks of life who came out to help us do that. We set up a sacred

fire that we watched. Many prayers went into that fire from people all over the world. We were there on site and that fire stayed lit for a hundred and nine days. We thought the Greater Vallejo Recreation District and the City of Vallejo were immediately going to come in and arrest us. The Lawyers Guild said they would support us if we got arrested for trespassing. The first four days nothing happened. We had prayer there. People set up tents. Folks were generous and brought in camp stoves. All of those things began to happen on their own because people believed in what we were doing.

We did the education and the work for the last twelve years, not only in Vallejo, but through the walks and the different things that happened in the greater Bay area. Why would they desecrate in order to put up a park? It's not like they were putting a building on there, but really it was a park. How do you begin to desecrate somebody's ancestral burial sites in order to do that? People really got that. It crossed the line -- that is asinine. We put the call out. Four days later GVRD and the Justice Department called. They wanted to set up a mediation. We were ready to go in and mediate about no bathrooms, no parking lot, no grading of this hill. They didn't want to mediate about that. What they wanted to mediate was us leaving the grounds. We didn't have a permit. There was not supposed to be camping. There was an illegal fire. They said, 'Take the fire outside of the gate when the sun goes down; bring it back inside the gate when the sun goes back up.' Only one person could watch the fire during the night. Everybody else had to be out in their cars. All of these weird things that they wanted. We talked to them about how it is not like when the sun goes down the Catholic Church moves their altar. They said it is not the same thing. They asked us to take down the tents. We obliged them by taking down the tents. Ten to fourteen days went by and they refused to sign the agreement that we came up with. We had women and children out there and it was cold. We stood up to our side of the agreement and when they wouldn't sign it, I told people to put their tents back up. We were constantly barraged by police coming down there, doing drive bys with canine

units. We put in a civil rights action complaint against GVRD and the City of Vallejo and amended that once they hyped it up again. Luckily we had the ear of the state listening. They didn't want to overstep their bounds because of the Native American Heritage Commission. NAHC throughout the entire time never contacted us about what was going on there. During the time we occupied the land, April 14 –July 31, the whole thing down in LA picked up with the Catholic Church. They dug up a burial site and the Native American Heritage Commission was trying to clean that up as well.

There were a bunch of different things that were going on at the same time when we were at Sogorea Te. A development corporation dug up over five hundred ancestral remains in Pleasanton at the Safeway. We weren't able to protect that site. The other thing that happened that was interesting was on my behalf the International Indian Treaty Council wrote a special action at the UN Declaration of Indigenous Peoples' Rights meeting in NYC. They took it before the General Assembly and talked to three special rapporteurs about what was happening at the desecration of Glen Cove. They actually wrote something that they will probably never keep, but the fact of the matter is it went before the General Assembly so indigenous people from all over the world understood that desecration was happening to a sacred site here in the United States.

We launched this wonderful website that talked about the history of the place and what people could do and who came through. We were so glad to be supported by people from all over the world. We had at least four or five other sacred fires that were set up in different parts of the world that would burn as long as ours did in solidarity with the work that we were doing. Folks brought us firewood, not just handfuls, but trailer loads of firewood because they believed in what we were doing. They brought food and donated all kinds of things so that people could be comfortable while they were staying there. Monetary donations came in because we needed Porta-potties in order for people to be a little more comfortable. The wonderful thing was that we came to a place and created a community, a community that people had not seen in a long time.

Everybody had a place. Everybody had a job and they belonged. Even if you came in there with the weirdest kind of configuration somewhere along the line you found your space there; everybody was accepted. I think that was really important for the young people who came in as our warriors, who stood guard by that fire, who insured the safety of the families. These young men and women who have no place in this society outside had a place there where they could be honored. We do such a bad job of doing that with people these days. I think that was one of the hardest parts of leaving Segorea Te was that we knew that we had to leave a community that we created, that we knew was much better and much healthier than what we had left. For a lot of us we still have a difficult time conforming to 'regular life'. It is very difficult coming back into this world and trying to live with the intentions this society has for us. We know there is so much more that human beings can be.

At the very end we had to try to get federally recognized tribes in Northern California to be involved. We got resolutions from many of the tribes, federally and non-federally recognized, supporting the work we were doing. After all these years working towards the protection of this site, a band of Wintu finally stepped up and said it was their land base. I have issues with that. I know that it is *not* their land base, because it is Karkin and I am Karkin Ohlone as well. It was very difficult. It was a humbling experience as well. What I came to know was that if this site was truly going to be saved and preserved, I would not put my intentions in front of that. The reason we went there to protect this site was to *protect* it and that is why all these people came. It wasn't to prove whose land it was, but for the protection of the ancestors.

Finally the GVRD, the City of Vallejo, the Cache Creek band of Wintu sat down and created a cultural easement which would allow the tribe forever to have a say in the sacred site of that land, so there would never be development on that land, or fiber optics or piping going through there or buildings on top of it, and that anytime anything was going to happen, all three of them had to come

together at the table. If the tribe for any reason thought that there could be disturbance of ancestral burial sites, they could halt the work themselves. This has never been done in the state of California. It has never been done between a city, a recreation district and a tribe within city boundaries. It set precedence for this kind of work. Amazingly enough it was the people who were not tribally identified, were unrecognized tribes, were people from different backgrounds who had that land for so long and were really disrespected by the tribal people in a lot of ways. They wouldn't come and talk with us. They finally thanked us for doing it. It wasn't their intention to actually do this. It was because the people at grass-roots level pushed them to do what is right, to stand up for this land and these ancestors. It was a huge celebration. Folks will be using this precedent to do work throughout California, and hopefully in other part of the country.

Immediately after we won Santa Cruz happened. We know that the work we did was right. Now it is the follow up. There were so many people who were ... 'Do we trust the tribe to sign this agreement? How do we know they are going to really do it?' What the agreement also said was no bathrooms. The parking lot was moved from fifteen spaces on top of the sacred site to one handicapped space not on top of the burial site and the grading was supposed to not happen.

When we went back to Sogorea Te on the 6th of October what met our eyes was something that was horrifying. We knew when we went back to the land that the land was never going to be the same. They were going to take the invasive plants out and put California native plants in, the Bay trails were still going to go through there. They had this master plan and they were going to continue to do the plan with these slight things that they decided to change according to the cultural easement. We got there and saw the devastation of the land and what they had done. The week prior to that Marshall McKay, the tribal chairperson of Yocha De He, said that he had a phone call and he had to stop desecration to the land. He could do that because of the cultural easement. What we then knew was that the tribes weren't monitoring the site the way they were supposed to.

All of these alder trees were taken down. There is nothing covering the whole creek. There is no greenery, but the palm trees and eucalyptus trees still sit there. We had an ethno-biologist walk through there with us and show us all of these different plants that were supposed to be there, that don't grow anywhere else. There was a Pipe vine that was over two hundred years old in that creek bed that is gone. They hired people who just massacred the place. Some of us walked through with the cultural liaison and showed him exactly where we knew the shell mound was. There is one side of the hill that is left un-retained now and without any trees. It is very scary what can happen there.

At this point we are trying to set up a meeting with the cultural liaison to ask for accountability not only to us as a committee, but to the larger public who supported this effort to save and protect this site and find out what happened and why did it happen and why weren't there monitors there. What is going to happen going forward, or is it something we are going to have to do in order to make this right? People lost jobs. They gave up school in order to be there to protect this site. People really sacrificed a lot in order to make this work and there needs to be some accountability to those folks who did that and believed what we were asking them to do – pressure the city and GVRD to sign this cultural easement, that we actually did the right thing. That is where it stands.

GVRD employees were so pissed off at us for what we had done. While we were at Sogorea Te we learned a lot about men and their pride and egos. In a lot of ways they thought that we were dumb Indians or stupid hippies and they didn't have to listen to us. When it finally came down to it, they did and it emasculated them in some kind of way. For them to be able to go in there and desecrate the site once we had left ... oh sorry, for once it's done, it's done. They had to eat a lot of crow and they didn't like that because a lot of the stuff they did cost their organization money in legal fees. The City didn't have that kind of money either.

This is a country that was built on racism and marginalizing people and folks are still doing that. We live in a bubble in the Bay area. When we were in Vallejo we went to their Maritime Museum. They had all the articles of all the newspapers from when the City of Vallejo started. We were looking for articles that said there was a shell mound here. Up until 1970 something they were still having Klan rallies in the City of Vallejo. It is not that long ago. Just because they don't have it out there in public anymore does not mean that it doesn't still exist in the politics and the way the City runs. We found out a lot of stuff while we were living there, our second home.

That particular occupation of that land was a spiritual occupation. There was prayer at all times from all different people who offered prayers and brought songs to that fire. There were codes of conduct. People could not curse around that fire; there was not a lot of loud talking. That was a spiritual thing that happened there. When you look at the occupations that are happening now, there is a little bit of twist, but that is not something folks focus on. There was definitely a focus around spirituality at Sogorea Te and having a connection to that land and remembering why we were there and remembering our original teachings. We did it in that kind of way. We didn't bring arms; we didn't try to fight the police, and we were successful in that kind of way. The ancestors heard that we were working in an honorable way. We wanted to make change in a good way. Those walks that we did for those five years prior to this happening was our test to see if we were actually going to do the work. If we hadn't done that work beforehand and prepared ourselves with all the shell mound walks bring, we wouldn't have been ready to do that. Like many other people who come from places of pain, we would have been able to say let's use violence. It was the women in the camp who held the guys to we are not going to have violence here. We are not going to bring that in. When you look around it is so easy – that land is right on the water – they could have dropped a helicopter in there anytime. There are so many things that could have happened. We know that the Coast Guard was out there blatantly some nights watching us and seeing what we

were doing. Because we kept to the prayer and we kept the spirituality, and we continuously said there was not going to be violence there, I think that was really instrumental in us winning this fight. We are still focusing on Glen Cove and Sogorea Te right now. We still need to make sure that is a real win. I think people are feeling a little bruised and beat up about it right now because they've seen the land the way it is. People are so invested in the work that was done by everybody to make sure that the desecration didn't happen. A friend of mine and I were looking at pictures of the beach. There was all this greenery and we were sitting on the rocks down by the beach. That is all gone; there is nothing there. There were these particular flat rocks and I took a couple of naps on them and slept the best I've ever slept in my life right there. They are moved. They left agave plants there. Why? It is horrifying the way people don't have connection to the land. How could they just go in there and start chopping it up? You could really see the devastation, the raping of the land. It was what it looked like – seriously violent.

Update on Sogorea Te

We showed up in force at the grand opening of the park on June 12, 2012 with our allies and we had people who did ceremony. We had a gathering there for most of the day and had people bring food – just as a reminder to the people in Vallejo that it was part of our struggle and also to the Greater Vallejo Recreation District and the City of Vallejo that we are still there and we are not going anywhere and we still claim this as an area that we feel is sacred, even though the land is desecrated in a way. There are so many people who have come through Sogorea Te and have changed the landscape and brought different kinds of vegetation in there and different pieces of themselves and left it there, but it still remains sacred and so even though when we walked away from there it will never look the same as when we lived there, those 109 days that we built a community that was encompassing of all human beings. That is the way we are supposed to live. Nobody can take that away from us. That is an important thing that we need to remember about this struggle.

I know that today that there are people like Marshall McKay and Mark Anquoe and Carmen Andrea who work with the treaty council and other people who are working for Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation who are trying to claim that this is a victory for them because they were able to get a cultural easement between the City and the Park District which is the first time that has ever happened. Had we not been there for 109 days holding that down that would have never happened. We have to take credit for that. The bad thing about it though is that by taking credit for them getting that, the council allowed a federally recognized tribe to desecrate a site. That wasn't really theirs to claim to begin with. I think it was because we were naïve and going into it didn't know exactly what to expect. We had families we had to worry about their safety, but what kept us together was prayer. This tribe didn't believe in any kind of cultural acknowledgement or any kind of spirituality. They went in as a business venture. They paid thirty thousand dollars to buy into this and what they thought was saving it. We thought that was what they were going to do, but in fact they allowed them to do so much of what they wanted to do to desecrate that land. When we went back there the first couple of times it was like a kick in the gut. There was a realization that this tribal government was really just that – a government; it wasn't a traditional tribal people. Now they go across the country claiming they did this wonderful thing using the UN Declaration on Indigenous People's Rights. That letter was written on my behalf so it is frustrating that people like Yocha Dehe and Treaty Council tried to steal our work. Since I've been organizing there have been many people over the years that have stolen the work that we've done. We are trying to figure out how it is that we can claim the work, not with ego, but to let people see that we are just human beings doing this stance and it is from all races – people from different tribes who came to support it because it was real, not because Yocha Dehe got behind it. It was on the 99th day that they decided to make contact with the City of Vallejo and come up with this contract between them. And all along they sent out press releases that they were against what we were doing. It is unfortunate that

Yocha Dehe has chosen this way to boost their own egos so that they did something, when in fact they did nothing but desecrate this land. Marshall McKay is from the Wintun band, but Wintun people are up in Sacramento area, Delta area. They don't come down that far. I'm a direct descendent of a Karkin Ohlone woman. That is the Carquin straits – I'm sorry. The word Sogorea Te is Karkin language, not Wintun. We don't know what it means. There are only a few words left in that language. It was the last holdout until 1810 for Ohlone people – one of the last places we stood our ground. We have those ties to that land and we understand that. It is bad form for another tribe to come in. We never thought about whose land it was; it was about protecting those ancestors and that sacredness of the land. I've never gone to the Native American Heritage Commission and opposed it and I think that is something I might want to do. I think as long as we continue to go back to that land and use it in the way it is supposed to be used that we still have strength and the ancestors continue to watch over us.

The City of Vallejo, GVRD, and Yocha Dehe tribe all have an equal partnership in this land. The City of Vallejo owns it, GVRD manages, and Yocha Dehe has the cultural easement. They all have to be in agreement about what happens to that land before anything happens to it. They are all equally accountable for the desecration of that land. When I went out there I walked around out there with Reno Franklin who is the cultural liaison for Yocha Dehe. He's of the Kaishia Pomo Band. He is also the national chair for either the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers or the State Preservation Officers. They took me on a walkabout out there because they are grading the hill. I was so disrespected by the two people who were the monitors on site. "This is our land and how dare you say anything about what we're doing here." I held my tongue. I walked around with him and he said, "We didn't find anything. This is all fill." I said, "But this land had been moved before and had cremations in it. How could you tell with bulldozers ploughing through it that cremations weren't there?" One of the things we talked to him about when we did the first walkabout was

where all the sacred sites that we knew of were, and told him we had this forensic dogs that would actually work the land and tell where there were burials/remains. These people were willing to come out there. The tribe had even said at the beginning that they were willing to pay for them to bring these dogs out there. These dogs find ancient burial sites all over the place. They didn't do that; they just went ahead with the project. They bulldozed the land. They pulled the trees and all the vegetation out of the creek. I said, "Why are you doing that? What happened? There was a two-hundred year old pipe vine that was indigenous to this land and you guys allowed them to take it down. Why did you take out Native vegetation and leave this palm trees and the Century plants? They are not native to here." He didn't have an answer because they didn't have a plan going in. They went through there and just ripped up the stuff. They knew nothing about the ecology of the place or the ethno botany of the place. My true belief is that Yocha Dehe used that as a way to do business in Solano County. Now they can claim that as their area because they have a cultural easement so now they have the ability to step in as a tribe and do business. They are a recognized tribe. They are the Cache Creek Casino. I think that part of it is also, "We are going to do what they hell we want to do and we don't care about you bunch of crazy Indians and crazy hippie people you had up here who aren't from here. This isn't your land." That is truly how the cultural people on this land treated us. They were supposed to take that house on the property apart by hand, but they used heavy machinery. Marshall McKay was on the Native American Heritage Commission when they designated it as Yocha Dehe land. I think there was a conflict of interest when that happened. It was never about whose land it was; it was about the protection of it. People were willing to fight that. I said, "No, that's not what we originally came up here for." I really need to look into going to the Native American Heritage Commission and objecting to that as being designated as their land. Randall Milliken even says that it is Karquin land, not Yocha Dehe's land.

They used Alfred Kroeber's handbook to say that was their land base. We know that that stuff is outdated.

Of course we are going to do the day after Thanksgiving at Emeryville which has been going on like ten years. People are like genuinely, "Wow, this is something that happened in our lifetime that we can see, taste, touch and feel." I am just so happy that the ancestors felt me worthy enough to be a part of that. It has been an amazing experience. We are getting asked to talk at a bunch of different places. Johnella, Wounded Knee and Mark talked to a conference in San Francisco, people from around the world who are doing Native American studies, about the spirituality that happened at the encampment, how it worked, and what does it mean. They asked them, "Well, what did you call that piece of organizing?" They want labels to these things. Johnella said, "Common sense." They want all this academia. That is not the place we come from.

We know that people all over the place were watching us to see what happened. It just feels good that something good happened.

We have local people who are monitoring the site. There haven't been any more of the heavy equipment moving yet. One of the other Committee members is making contact with the Tribal Liaison to see if we can set up a meeting to have a conversation. What I'm hoping out of that conversation is that it will become a collaboration between grass roots people and their tribal governments to make sure that this works and that we work together side by side. It is preservation of our ancestors and our culture. It is important that we continue to work that way and we don't work as adversaries. That is the first step. We also have to make sure that people are accountable. It doesn't matter whether they are tribal people or not; there has to be accountability. I think that is what we are looking at right now with the Occupy Movements – that there hasn't been accountability in our government for so long that people are looking for that. We have to be

vigilant of our tribal governments as well. The ancestors are really strong in our voices. I think it will work out.

After we left Sogorea Te we had this gentleman, Leroy Cisneros, who has worked with us on shell mound walks for years. He spent most of the one hundred and nine days with us. He is a retired roofer and just an amazing worker. He would haul the water every day and haul trash out. He kept himself busy doing physical stuff. We received a phone call from him a week or two after Sogorea Te ended. He was on a picket line in Pleasanton. He said, "Hey, there are eight Indians out here and they are smudging. After they were smudging, there was a U-Haul truck and they backed it up and started unloading stuff. They just kept taking stuff out and putting it in the ground.' Afterward he talked to a couple of the guys. He said, "They reburied five hundred bodies there. They were unloading all of those bodies and reburying them there.' This was happening after we were at Sogorea Te. K.B. Homes has a development right across the street from where they did this. Ten years ago they took out a thousand bodies when they did that development. They didn't do an environmental impact report. This is directly across the street from the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton. They were putting a Safeway in. I thought it was just a Safeway. I went there and smudged the land down on a weekend when I could get away from Sogorea Te for a couple of hours. I didn't know it was such an immense site. It took them three months to excavate all of those remains and then they put them in a mass grave site underneath a road in this new shopping center.

The whole thing we talk about is the desecration of sites. So now what does that mean? There is nothing that says this was an Ohlone burial and village site. It is cultural genocide. It wipes us out. By creating these places where they do these mass burials and don't talk about the culture and don't let everyone know where they are, they are erasing us systematically by doing development on our sacred grounds. Just like on the shell mound Walks where we stopped at all of these places,

here is yet another place that is desecrated. The City should have done an environmental impact report. They didn't follow the law they should have followed. We saved Sogorea Te, but we lost this other one. We saved The Knoll in Santa Cruz in some parts, but still we have five hundred remains that are there that have no voice anymore. People will never know that there was this nation that was here. It is horrifying.

Santa Cruz

One of our organizers actually was from Santa Cruz so he went down and set up their website. He was the website master for us. He really worked on getting people together to do participate in the demonstration and really connected the two in such a good way. He got people like Wounded Knee and me, and a lot of the young people to walk to the site and offer prayers. He did those kinds of things that allowed people to have that connection. It was the ancestors doing their work to make that happen.

Our young people were looking for something else to do and they needed something to create that community that was lost. In a lot of ways Sogorea Te created a group of young people who were dedicated to preserving our cultures in a different kind of a way, who really created that whole 'peaceful warrior' that we haven't had in a long time and gave people a sense of pride in knowing what they wanted to do. It opened up doors for many of the young people to go to different events and talk about what they have done, to offer songs and prayers, to legitimize some of the stuff they've done. The Knoll at Santa Cruz did that because it continued to have that same kind of thing. Ohlone people who would not step foot at Glen Cove were now coming together as a community in Santa Cruz to try to figure out how can we really make this work. We didn't have the support of the southern Ohlone in Glen Cove. I went down there immediately and supported them because it has to be about the work and about the ancestors and it has to leave all the personality stuff aside. I think people are now beginning to get that. It is so much better now.

I've been working on a campaign about East Bay Regional Parks. They own thousands of acres of land both in Contra Costa and Alameda counties, and much of it is Ohlone territory. For at least nine years they are working on putting this loop trail up to Brushy Peak. Brushy Peak is the place of our creation story. The top of Brushy Peak is actually owned by Livermore Park District. It only allows people to go up there with a guided tour. I went on the guided tour last year. Beautiful place. Where they tell the creation story is nowhere close to where it actually happened. Even though we went to many meetings with EBRP and asked them not to put a loop trail up there, they went ahead and did that. The mitigation happened because there was a waste management company that had ruined a pond for the red-legged frog and so part of the mitigation is that they were going to put another pond in. EBRP knew the entire site up there is a sacred place and actually only our medicine people were allowed to go up there a few time a year in order to do ceremony for the healing of the land. That is another reason we don't want a bunch of people up there. While they were doing the mitigation for the pond, they only pinpointed places that they wanted to save as sacred. When they did the pond they actually unearthed burials. We know that since it was such a sacred place and only medicine people were allowed to go up there, that those were probably medicine people who were buried up there. EBRP holds our ancestral remains and artifacts and they continue to desecrate things. When they put the loop trail in, they crushed a mortar that was thousands of years old. The Native American Heritage Commission and the tribal people went up there and said move the trail to go around it. They said it was impossible so they just covered it up. It is the arrogance that they own this land; it is the five million dollars that they paid – and actually all of us paid for that. They treat us as a special interest group. They say there are a lot of different ideas on how the land should be used. Of the five hundred people or more who they employ as staff, they don't have a fulltime archaeologist or museum curator or one Native American person on their staff.

Right now they are putting together their master plan that is supposed to say what things they are going to do around cultural resource management. We have been asking the public to help us tell EBRP to use stronger language and include Native voices in their master plan. Senate Bill 18 in 2005 stated that any county or city that was going to amend or adopt a new general plan had to contact the Native people of that land whether they were federally recognized or not so they could mitigate anything that might happen. Because EBRP is a special district and encompasses two different counties, it falls between the cracks and they don't have to follow that. We have a movie that my friend did on Brushy Peak called Buried Voices. It got accepted into the Native American Film Festival in San Francisco and the Skin Film Festival in LA. We are trying to get out information to the public to get involved. They had six public meetings that you would think people could talk. They had everybody sitting in the audience and they showed this five minute video about what EBRP is and then they set up stations in the six areas of the master plan. If you wanted to say anything about that, then you go talk to one person and that person scribed it. They read everything over and dismissed everybody. They did that six times. The last one was in Richmond. We got tons of allies to show up with signs and talked about throughout all six of the things how Native voices needed to be heard in this master plan. That was the only time they had the police presence there. They actually had a police officer read off some of the things which we thought was very strange.

Language Restoration ~

I know how to say good day and to say my name is Corrina. Finally after ten years of not having the money or time to do it, I took vacation to go to the Breath of Life Conference at UC Berkeley where they help you revitalize your language. They taught us how to go to microfiche and how to actually pronounce words.

Lee Ann Hinton is the language person. She gave me her book and introduced me to a UC Berkeley student, John Schmidt, who wanted to work with us to try to pull stuff together. A student in the eighties had put together this dictionary of a lot of the words of the Chochenyo language. I was so ecstatic about this. I was the only one who was studying Chochenyo. It was really kind of cool because we worked one on one. Each day people went to different libraries. We didn't have anywhere else to look because that was the only document that was available at the time. I got a copy of it. I hope my life slows down in the New Year so I will be able to actually study it and put stuff up all over the walls so the kids can learn it.

It is a horrifying thing what happened to our culture, but it is an amazing place where we sit today. My great-grandfather's voice is actually on wax cylinder at the Smithsonian. I have it on tape. He died in 1936 before my mom was born. The first time I heard it was one of the first times I met Rosemary Cambra. I was living out on the base in Alameda as an on-site case manager. She came out to talk to me and handed me the tape. It was really emotional. What a crazy guy this J.P. Harrington was -- that he had the forethought to run around and record many languages and take notes. He was a madman. Nels Nelson went around and did those dots all over a map, identifying the shell mounds. I think that somebody or something was saying you need to do this -- this is your life work so that we can now be able to take it back. For whatever reason I sit where I am today because those people did that crazy work. It is amazing.

Food Source ~

One thing that I've wanted to dabble in is working with acorns. I always think that food is amazing, that people figured out how to do stuff. There are still oaks here. We have this construction going on in front of my house right now. When Habitat for Humanity put in the structures, the drainage wasn't quite right. They wanted to figure out what we wanted to do with this one little piece of land. They are going to put two oak trees right in front of my house. I had nothing to do with it. Maybe

I'm supposed to do something finally. Everybody talks about acorn mush and how bland it is, but we had seaweed, deer meat and all of this food that was available to us. Why would people eat bland food? Why wouldn't they put other stuff in it? We still have the technology of what we did with that and why we did it. Food is going to be scarce. Acorns are sometimes in abundance and people can eat that. How can we figure out how to do that in order to help us survive into the next generation?

FUTURE VISION

I think what is most important is that Ohlone people are recognized as the first people who were here. If we get federal recognition, we are able to create the governments that we need to create in order to survive, culturally as well as monetarily. It is really important that people are able to share that. By Ohlone people getting recognition, it would insure that people get a better historical view of what is going on in the world and that we have a better voice in what happens in our own land base and a stronger voice in the educational system. It gives us clout in order to make decisions. It would be really instrumental in the Bay area for Ohlone people to get recognized because then it would also insure that we had a real voice at the table as federally recognized tribes, not just because, "Oh yeah, there are these people that we should talk to." It is really like that around construction. Even though SB 18 went through, there is no money behind it so there is never anything that enforces this. Most of the cities just went through elections. These are folks that maybe want to do something right, but they have no idea about the history of the land, the people who are here and what they are supposed to do, and that SB 18 ever even existed.

My hope is when Ohlone people get federally recognized that it would help to regulate how and who the people are who decide what happens to the burials that are found. Kaiser is putting up a new building in San Leandro and they hit a burial site. When we were doing the walk this year, we

asked the people who they were working with; who is in charge of this? They got really freaked out because these Indians showed up.

There are a few people who have made it part of their life work to dig up our ancestors. I think that needs to stop. I'm hoping with federal recognition that that would happen. We would figure out a way to work within the Bay area to begin to think with foresight that there is this ancient civilization that was here and we need to learn how to take care of what is left of that.

Three summers ago I got a phone call from Congresswoman's Barbara Lee office. 'Tell us that Bay Street Mall is not on a cemetery.' I said, 'No, I can't tell you that the Bay Street Mall is not on a cemetery because it is on a cemetery. It is one of our oldest and largest cemeteries.' She said, 'Barbara is supposed to do a speech about it being one of the greenest places in this part of the country.' I said, 'That's nice, but I wish Barbara wouldn't do that though, because we go over there and protest every year. I think it is horrible the way they desecrated my ancestors and we have fought this from the time it started so I don't know what you want me to tell you, but it is true.' I invited them to my office and we laid out the 1909 map. Andreas Cidel, a UC Berkeley student, created this film about the Emeryville shell mound, Shell Mound the Movie. We showed the film and then they took all this information with them. We have printed material all over the place that we give to people about the history. They called me back and said, "What can we do to bring the two sides together to make this okay?" I said, "There is nothing you can do. We asked them not to put the mall there. We asked the city of Emeryville to let this place be an open green space for people to enjoy and for us to honor our ancestors and that is not what they did. You can ask them to take down the mall." They said, "Is there anything else? Maybe we could figure something out." I said, "No, there is no compromise here. Tell Barbara not to do it there." At the time, interesting enough, I got accepted to get a Habitat for Humanity home in Oakland. "They are building green there. Have her do it there. What a wonderful place to do it!" Then they started almost yelling.

They got very angry as this conversation went back and forth. I never had a conversation with Barbara. They finally came to the conclusion that I wasn't budging. She didn't speak there. They knew I had lots of people who would probably come out, although I never said that. Actually the thought never crossed my mind until they got up their own fears about it happening. They said, "Can you promise that you guys won't show up?" I said, "No, I can't promise that. Why would I promise to do something like that? It is our right in this country to protest." It's not like I never voted for her or haven't voted for her since, but this is my experience. Then they called to tell me that Barbara decided to move it to the City Hall steps. I can't be a politician. I can't compromise my morals, ethics, and values.

Now, according to NAGPRA, all the culturally unidentifiable people are supposed to come back home. That means that all of those bones at UC Berkeley and SFSU and museums now have to come back. We are celebrating this because this is what we've asked for. We just want them to come back home. It is amazing. I think it has to do with what we are doing. Now the work is going to start about who is actually going to be able to take them.

Hunters Point in San Francisco is about to get developed. There are seven burial sites. We walked there a couple of years. We prayed and drummed and put tobacco down there. We did that when we went to each shell mound. We honored and acknowledged that there were folks there. I think that is what the ancestors want. Even though we got in on it late, I read the Environmental Impact Report; there is a piece of the EIR that says that they would consider building around it. I tried to explain that to folks who were really up in a huff about it. Okay, let's hold them to this. According to this Senate Bill 18 that passed in 2005, cities and counties are supposed to have meaningful conversations with American Indians if they adopt or amend their general plan and this would be amending their general plan. As it turns out we did try to work it that way in San Francisco so they could say we did have meaningful conversation with the original people of this

land, because now it is whether they are federally recognized or not. Their lawyer found out that it doesn't apply to charter cities. Not only is San Francisco a charter city, about sixty percent of cities in California are charter cities. They create their own laws and can adopt the laws of the state or choose not to. In humoring us they considered having a conversation, but they closed the whole public comment time. They are supposed to contact the tribal people from the land first and they have sixty days to reply, yes, we want to have a conversation with you. Then they say, here is the development plan. Are there places in this development where we may hit sacred sites that you know of and what would you recommend that we do in order for us not to do that? That is how it is supposed to work. But because they are a charter city they don't really have to follow that. What we would have to do then is ask them to adopt SB 18 as a part of their charter so they would then have to follow that. Why would anybody want to have to go through an extra step? The Fort Laramie Treaty states that any surplus military federal land gets turned back to the Native people of that area, but because we are not federally recognized, we don't exist. They get to play nice if they want to play nice or not. When they began to do this, the group of folks who worked on this were Ohlone and non-Native people. They created this whole thing about wanting an Ohlone cultural center and then I backed away from the project, because for me it is saying we are going to sell out our ancestors in order for you to get your development. We are going to sell out thousands of years of culture and identity for a cultural center now. I can't do that. My ethics and values and morals would be compromised if I participated in that project.

I went to a conference in Long Beach in 2010. There were a whole bunch of people talking about sacred site issues. There was somebody from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. I asked what about the Senate Bill 18? Is that covered? Because they did amend their City & County plan. There was a lawyer who did some sacred site work; she felt like the city of San Francisco was not being completely honest about being a charter city and not having to follow SB 18. I talked with the man

who did the trainings on SB 18 and he seemed to think that it might be true. There is still some unclarity about what is going on. Because of the walk we recently did there were some people who wanted to set up a meeting with some of the county supervisors to talk about that. That may happen still. That would be good if we could actually have a voice in it.

Federal Recognition ~

One of the good things about federal recognition is the federal government then recognizes what they did to us as people and that there are responsibilities to us according to treaties, that they have to stand up and acknowledge that, and that they have to provide certain things -- housing, education, medical care which are basic human rights anyway. People should all have that. We should be recognized as human beings because now who are we except who we say we are? It's not just *who* are we in terms of the federal government, but *who* are we in terms of other sovereign nations. We can't sit at the table with them the same way as other sovereign nations do. For me that is really difficult because then we have people who come into our territory and put up casinos because 'we don't exist'. Those resources are not coming to our families; they are going somewhere else. If it wasn't a casino, it would be something else. I have issues with casinos too, but I think people should be able to make their money the way they want to make it. We don't tell France how to make their money. It is another sovereign nation. Nobody should be able to do that. Sovereign Nations should be able to determine the economic plan for their own people. The voters in California clearly agreed with this idea in terms of Indian casinos being built. It seems like some of the voters don't like the idea of sovereign nations actually creating a revenue that allows them to take care of their tribal members and are upset that only Indians can use this kind of enterprise to move their people forward. The United States does a poor job in the education of Americans in terms of the responsibility of America to Native people and the understanding of nation within nation sovereignty. It is very convoluted.

Federal recognition helps us in a lot of ways. It would help us get our ancestors back already. It would have given us a leg up on stopping a lot of the development because there are sacred sites that they are disturbing. For that reason, yes, federal recognition is important. I don't really see a downside to recognition. I think it gives people a place to stand, if they have nothing else to hold onto. I've always said, "You don't want to recognize me, that's okay, because I know who I am as a human being. I know my ancestors stand behind me. I don't need that piece of paper to prove who I am to anybody." But at some point if my children or my grandchildren wanted that, they should be able to have that, because we are who we say we are. It is a form of genocide to not be able to stand up and do that.

There are other people who are talking about uniting. I don't know. As I've been doing more and more work with the sacred sites, even Hunters Point, we know that we all come from different areas, have different languages, even though we intermarried. Brushy Peak is where our Adam and Eve story was. Each of the different tribes has a creation story. They lumped us all together as Ohlone, but I really believe that we are different people who worked together in the same kind of area – just like the Pomos. They are not just one big lump sum of Pomos. They have different bands, different ceremonies, different creation stories and the same is true for Ohlone people. I don't know if banding together would be good. In terms of working on sacred sites it is really difficult for me to say that I should go down south and tell them what they should do with their burial sites. I don't think the people from down south should come up this way and tell us what we should do with our burial sites. It is convenient for people who are in construction and in development to say any Ohlone will do. I don't believe that. We separately have certain ties to the land that we were put on and we should make those decisions. Those people from those places ought to be able to take care of their ancestors. That is my belief. Part of what I hope Ohlones can do is figure that out. We don't all speak for each other. Our ancestors should go home to wherever

they came from. Those archaeologists who took those people out, have enough knowledge to know where they took them from. They should give us that information so we can deal with them the way we are supposed to.

There is nothing that was ever done that says that Muwekma was unrecognized. Our land base goes from Vallejo down to San Jose and out to Highway 5. Rosemary Cambra is working on getting Muwekma recognized. We are broken up by language bases, like Mutsun and Rumsen. All those different groups go basically by their language base. We speak the Chochenyo language. Muwekma means the people in the Chochenyo language. Our family is a part of the group that makes up Muwekma.

There are a lot of people who still stay with Costanoan. I think it wasn't until the 1970's that folks picked up the word 'Ohlone'. It is a village site on the East Bay. There are some people who call themselves Ohlone; some don't. Everybody blames Alfred Kroeber but it wasn't really Kroeber when it comes to us, but in the Hand Book of California Indians he also stated that we didn't exist. L.A. Dorrington was in charge of the BIA during the twenties. They kept asking him to send a letter regarding how much land was needed for the homeless Indian population in this area. He said for all intents and purposes they don't exist anymore. That is when the government to government relationship stopped. Congress never unrecognized us, never said we were extinct – nothing. It was this guy, who was a drunk, who said that there is no land needed. That is how we 'disappeared'.

Muwekma has regular meetings. I go to them when I can, but I haven't gone to them in a while. There are some other groups that do more stuff like ceremonies, like Tony Cerda's group and Patrick Orozco's group. I don't know that there is anybody in Muwekma who has come forward and is revitalizing ceremony, it is my hope that in my lifetime we will once again have a round house and dance together with our ancestors.

My work isn't doing the federal recognition process; it has always been about the sacred sites and protecting the ancestors and bringing them home. I have had conversations with other Ohlone people who are not from this part of the Bay area.

The federal recognition process is ridiculous. Our group wasn't recognized only because the guy from BIA said for all intents and purposes nobody exists anymore, so they stopped having the conversations. I don't know if it was the same for the Mutsun and with the other groups. With Muwekma trying to get recognition, it is about saying, "Hey, we never lost recognition." It was this drunk, Dorrington, up in Sacramento in the 1920's who said we didn't exist! There is nothing in Congress that says that.

Muwekma has gone through the process two or three times and been rejected for various reasons. There are seven things that you are supposed to be able to prove. There are a couple of places that are not so clean-cut, like you are running your own government between this year and that year. It is ridiculous. It's like you are running your own government without any assistance, without any land base, without anything and to prove that you are still following cultural ways. Rosemary Cambra and Alan Leventhal have worked really hard on getting all of that documentation together to prove that. I don't know how we would get all the groups together to do the same thing.

Significance of a Land Base ~

It is important for Ohlones to have a land base as a way of reconciling the past. It is a way that we can again be in connection with the earth, our ancestors, of bringing back the songs/ceremonies, and a way for us to bring our ancestors home so they can be reinterred. It is also a way we can begin to bring about healing in the Bay Area, not only for the Ohlone, but for all those who have settled upon our land.

Role of the Next Generation ~

I have two daughters and a son, who are all young adults. They grew up going to this place called Hintil Kuu Cawhich is a child development center in Oakland that started in the seventies as a result of American Indian people who came together, after the Alcatraz Occupation. American Indian people wanting to have a place for their children to and grow up learning about their histories and culture. It eventually got pulled into the Oakland Unified School System. Many of the Indian kids in Oakland went there. They realized that Indian kids learned better when they were together. There are Indian kids all over the place in Oakland. But when I was growing up, I would be the only Indian kid in a class. Hintill had a whole group of families that came together. In Oakland all of these people know each other because of the kids. Then they start intermarrying. They started pre-school together, then to Carl B. Munck Elementary School, then tracked to Montera Middle School and then on to Skyline. This is how it has gone on for many, many years. All of these kids tracked together so it created this close-knit community of kids who did stuff together all the time. Kids always bring kids home. My house is one of those houses that always has extra kids in it. Oakland has decided to change its policies.

Now they want people to go back to their neighborhood schools. It has been real difficult for our community. Everything got really red-taped and weird over the last four years. I also work at American Indian Child Resource Center which is a foster care agency that also started in the seventies. One of my good friends in New York was one of the first people who started it. They started it then because there were a lot of American Indian kids being pulled out of their homes in the urban area and put into foster care homes. There were no laws in place to preserve families. They created this place for families to go for help, as American People all over the country were also dealing with the issues of Indian children being taken out of their homes, a national campaign was born and so was the Indian Child Welfare Act.

About twenty years ago AICRC also brought into their services the Indian Education Center. We are one of the only Indian Education Centers that provide services for middle and high school age kids in California. My Job is to track all the kids in Oakland Unified School District from the time they are three years old until they graduate from high school, through the Title VII program. We pick up kids from about eight or nine different schools all over Oakland and bring them to our center four days a week. We do cultural and sports activities and tutoring. I'm actually going to be teaching a program for young women called Daughters of Tradition, bringing together all of these different traditions from different places to remind young women that they have a place in their community and it is not doing some of the crazy stuff that is happening out there in the world. It is bringing people back to their original teachings, but also giving young people who fell through the cracks a place to belong, whether they finished high school or not. What do you want to do now with your life and how do we support you? My oldest daughter used to work with me at my job. She was a tutor. My youngest daughter Cheyenne is really involved in the community. A couple of years ago she became a jingle dress dancer. It started out as an Ojibwa medicine dance. We were able to get a grant to provide young people a way to get out of being on the streets. Girls from the age of five all the way to twenty were able to pick their colors and do their dresses together. We had this big ceremony for them. We've been able to do grass dancing for boys. We did another one for girls' fancy shawl dancing. We are trying to keep the kids involved in something positive.

Role of Public Schools Regarding Teaching Ohlone History and Culture ~

It has been an ongoing struggle to get a balanced education. Since we started going into the schools, the teachers are more apt to teach about it. When we go into some of the schools they do a whole extensive thing about Ohlone history – where we lived, and how we lived before and what our favorite foods were and all this other third grade stuff which is cool because you can see all

these pictures up and the kids know about our culture. It is really nice to go in there and then you know that there are so many kids who are not getting that information. The curriculum in California hasn't changed very much since I was in school. They might add a couple of more sentences, but it is not something that we hold as an important piece of the history of this land. Once you've done it in third grade, it is done. You are not going to learn about it anymore. I like going into high schools because you can have conversations with kids. They are beginning to do analytical thinking and questioning.

I do this other program with a friend of mine. She had a friend that worked for Golden Gate Audubon Society. She said, "We need to get the information out about the Ohlones still being alive." The Golden Gate Audubon Society had this program where they were going into elementary schools in the flatlands of Oakland and on the west side of Alameda. How do you get the Golden Gate Audubon Society to buy into this? Because it is birds. But Amiko said, "People are part of nature so let's just go that way." We created this curriculum where we go into the schools and talk to third graders about Ohlone cultural history and we play games with the kids. At the end we do this whole story about who Ohlone people are and how things are the same and different. We talk about the Mission system because in fourth grade they get that whole '*The Missions are so wonderful! Let's make that sugar cube mission.*' At the end of the presentation we talk about how it wasn't such a great place to be and that a lot of our people died inside there. We also talk about slavery. I think kids understand it. If they don't, they ask questions because kids ask questions about whatever. It amazed a lot of the teachers that this was really the history. A couple of teachers argued with us about it, because that is not what they learned. At the end we play old gambling games with them and they loved it. We end on a high note, but it is good to talk about the history. I ask the kids how many of them speak a language different than English. Many kids speak different languages. I like to reinforce that they should continue to always know what their language is because they can

communicate with so many more people if they do. We folded it into the curriculum. We talked about how people came from different places and how people are the same and different in different ways, but we can communicate with each other.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

It is the building of community and allowing people to fit someplace. If we had an inclusive community where everybody had a place, that everybody was valued as a human being, homelessness wouldn't tend to exist the way it exists. We've been throwing people away for so many years in this society. It doesn't matter where your ancestors come from, whether they were Ohlone people or people from Europe or Africa. At some point in our Original Teachings, when we came together as humans, we had community that accepted everybody, and that everybody relied on each other in order to survive. We have come so far away from that humanity that it is time for us to look at that again. If we don't, we are going to be in even more serious trouble than we are now. As it is the world's resources are depleting. We are not going to have enough water, enough anything because of people's greed. It is this small percentage of people who can buy up all of those resources that we are going to have to rely on unless we do something to say that we exist as humans and that we have the right to be here as well as anyone else. I think that is what Sogorea Te taught us: everyone has value and we can't throw away everybody. We asked four people to leave Sogorea Te in the entire time we were there. It wasn't something that we shot from the hip, but really it was about the greater good of the entire encampment. It was a danger that they were bringing to everyone. We asked them numerous times to stop the behavior and it didn't happen. It wasn't until after that when we came to some very hard places that we had to say that you have to go. Sometimes in society there is a place where people have to go and grow by themselves. I'm not saying we have to have prison systems the way we have them. But even in our old ways, and our old societies that we came from, there were people who had behaviors where they had to leave. When

they chose to come back in a better way, then they were welcomed back, but not until then. We had to learn those hard lessons over again too. For many of us who come from that painful side where we don't want to throw away even our relatives who are the most pitiful, we have to realize that they are in a place where they can't change at this time and we have to look at the bigger picture. For the most part we came close to a hundred percent of us knowing what we wanted to do and how we were supposed to take care of each other. I think that is the essence of true religion. It doesn't matter where you come from or what your religious background is, it all teaches us the same thing: to love one another and take care of one another and to pray. That is the essence of all religion – to be grateful. We just need to take care of one another.

I'm really looking at a different way of doing this work because of all the thousands of ancestors and artifacts that are at UC Berkeley, San Francisco State University, and many of the smaller museums around the area. One of the plans for me is to create a Native land trust in the Bay area so we can have equal say at the table. It gives us a little bit more power as a group to say we'd like cultural easement onto your land in order to do ceremony. It gives us a place to have those ties again culturally, that we can bring back the medicines and the ceremonies and the songs and the dances to those places. I'm in the midst of trying to do fund raising to get a grant to do a 501© (3) and working with other people. There are four or five Native land trusts around the country. I find it interesting that they are all run by men. A friend of mine, Dune, a Native Alaskan man who saved 186,000 acres of land after the Valdez oil spill, is working on that. There are a couple of other people who already have Native land trusts; they are the mentors I'm looking toward. I'm finding that a lot of it is legal stuff. Dune has also been really successful in that, but he is also really successful in creating jobs for his people and creating a way to be self-sustaining using the salmon that people have always used, doing some commercial fishing and canning. It is a beautiful story to know that this one guy – even his own people fought against him to do this stuff, and that he won.

He has done so many amazing things. I believe if I could work toward getting a Native land trust we can have these types of easements that we can bring the culture back where it needs to be. We can work with organizations cleaning up the Bay and bringing the salmon and the trout back up the streams. Hopefully, before I die, I'd like to have our ancestors put back in the ground. That is my goal, to figure out how to do that. I'm working with Beth Rose, a professor at UC Davis, who wrote a book called Native Land Trust. She wants to work with us and figure this out. I'm just trying to figure out how to put it together. I'm really looking at people who are lawyers, who have done Indian law and ecology and land-based stuff. I think that the ancestors, because of the work that we have done all of these years, are lining this stuff up for us so it could be a reality.

One of the other great things that is happening is Oakland Museum is putting together an exhibit that will open next Labor Day. They are working with this group called Civic Arc. They are actually going to create a shell mound that is going to be fourteen feet high and they are going to project it on a wall. They want to have this video – an aerial view going into the Bay and you see the Bay Street Mall and then it melds what it looked like a long time ago. They are actually able to recreate where the shell mounds were in that area. Absolutely amazing work! Then there will be a panel of the protests we did around Emeryville.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

Living in two worlds is always problematic. We have to struggle with keeping our culture, revitalizing our language, protecting our sacred sites and speaking on behalf of our ancestors while on our own land. This land has been changed and morphed into something that isn't the same as when our ancestors were first created in these places, and we have ties so deep that it is impossible to walk away from our responsibilities. We have to be ever cognizant of our original teachings as well as teaching everyone else about our real histories and explaining why these things are important

and why they should care. We have to rely both on the new and the ancient to live in this world.

Growing up was difficult in an urban area, but being a mother gave me a new perspective. Now it was my responsibility to pass all of this information on to my children and to ensure that they knew who they were and how they were to relate to the land. It is always a dance of balance...

Ceremony/Raiders games, Nature/school, Natural Laws/Man-made laws, Traditional conversation/social media. Always for me it comes down to being able to look myself in the mirror and knowing that I made the right decisions, not only for me and my family, but for my ancestors and the next seven generations to come.

Who is Native American/Indian?

This is a big question. For all intents and purposes, we are the Indigenous Peoples of this land, those who were placed here by our Creator. We were given 'Original Teachings' on how we are supposed to relate to the land and all things around us. We are the keepers of the traditions. Our DNA is in the land of our ancestors. We are the ones who are the descendants of those that fought, were enslaved, were murdered, raped, sold, placed in boarding schools and hid. We are the remnants of the past, standing in the present, bridging the future.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone Peoples and the Larger Society ~

I don't know what reconciliation would look like, because it would be bigger than me. It would take the entire Ohlone community to decide this.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

Who else can say that they came from right here? My creation comes from right here. We were created just to take care of this particular piece of land. That is like the most amazing thing. I know folks from all over the world, but when we come here, this is my land. It is a wonderful thing to wake up every day to know you are home.

One of the interesting things that happened is this whole thing that is going on at Pt. Richmond where they are thinking about putting this casino. No casinos are going to be built in Pt. Richmond as far as I know. I made a really good connection with the Mayor of Richmond during the occupation at Sogorea Te and explained to her the history of Pt Richmond -- the shell mound sites being present there as well as the land being in Ohlone territory and not Pomo land. At least a month before I went to the Breath of Life conference my brother had a conversation about it with some guys in the Bay area who are Pomo. They got into a really heated argument about it. They basically said that there weren't any more of us and so who cares. It just makes me sick. Now we have to have the conversation because, if for some reason Pt. Richmond casino happens, they are definitely going to hit our shell mounds and our burial sites and what does that mean in terms of protection? That nation is not from this area and so it causes a whole different kind of problem. There are a bunch of groups who want to protest, but I just decided that our group was not going to protest until we had a conversation with them to find out what their plan is. Lytton Pomo isn't from this area either and they have a casino in San Pablo. I think it is between the nations and the governor and what land is available. People don't know the history of the land and are just willing to make those deals. It really causes a whole bunch of different problems. It is going to create a domino effect if we continue to allow that to happen. I don't have anything against them having a casino. They have the right to make money for their nation any way they want to, but I think we need to protect the land base that we have.

I'm proud to be Ohlone because we come from a strong group of people who has always had a tie to this land. My ancestors figured out a way to survive in probably some of the most hostile environments when other people got here. For whatever reasons they left clues for me to figure out how to get the word out that we exist. It is my life work. It is so enjoyable to share that information with people, to tell them that we exist and that we had this whole culture here, and

wouldn't it be nice for us to figure out how to work together to remember that. We miss, that as the United States -- that there are these native people who are tied to this land. There is so much that doesn't exist around that. We don't have those monuments other countries that are old have, and to have those things be in place to remind us. You go to Greece and those monuments to their past are all over the place. They might be fenced off, but they are right there and you can see where their heritage came from. People forget where the heritage comes from and who the land belonged to, and who were the caretakers of this place. My ancestors are here. Every day I can walk out and say this is where I belong. It just feels really good to be able to pass that on.

I hope people would know that I was passionate about the work that I do, and that I don't speak for myself, but I speak for those ancestors who came before me who have a story to tell. I'm hoping that I can tell their story in a good way.

KANYON SAYERS-ROODS



KANYON SAYERS-ROODS

Coyote Woman

Costanoan Ohlone Mutsun & Chumash, Indian Canyon Nation

CULTURAL IDENTITY

When I was younger I always knew I was Native because my mother made it clear about our heritage and kept me included in ceremonies, going to sweat lodges, community gatherings, big meals, pow-wows, because that is the Native circuit. Always learning and always being able to observe it, I was very included in my Native upbringing. A Native living on the land in a log cabin with a wood-burning stove, I was deprived of all the social norms that everyone else learned to deal with – like TV or anything of that nature. I was always behind when it came to my peers when I was growing up. I was always stricken with slight jealousy, but at the same time, I had a huge knowledge of everything else around me. My baby sitter was a pocket knife, my dog, and a hike all day and I would come home before dark. I learned about the world really young. I learned how to breed red-legged frogs and tree frogs before I even knew what the term ‘breed’ meant. I knew their whole life-cycle. I didn’t even know that the Monarch is our state butterfly, but I got to hold a Monarch butterfly coming out of its cocoon. It crawled on my hand. I got to pet his wings before the first layer turned into fine powder. The wings were soft as silk. I waited for its wings to dry and he flew off. I got to see amazing things in my youth. I surpassed kids in 4H or Boy Scouts. Maybe they were great at tying knots, but I sure could survive out in the wilderness better than they could. Also, just connecting with nature – understanding animals’ body language, understanding the weather, trees – everything around me. You mess with something there is a karmic or even domino effect that happens.

When I was about six or seven I was going to school and having a conversation with another child, now a friend, but I was just barely getting to know him when I was younger. I shared with him that I was Native American and he said, ‘If you’re Indian, you’re dead, because all Indians are

dead!' I came home crying. Mom tickled me and said, 'Well, you're laughing. You're not dead. I'm not dead. I know who I am. You know who you are.' Later on she had a conversation with that kid's parents. He denied me my own heritage just because he thought that. I've always accepted myself being Native American. Also, I'm a mutt. My dad is a Euro-mutt. He is predominately Irish. I said, 'Oh great, I'm a quadruple-suppressed minority!' (Being a Native, Irish, Woman, and Two-Spirited individual.) I've always shared with other individuals about my Native pride.

I have respect for my grandmother because I've always heard stories about her. She was a strong woman. I hear from my mom's friends that I look like her. She held this land. Even though Grandma may have gone to a boarding school and assimilated into a lot of forced mannerisms and a Eurocentric perspective doing her daily routine, she still knew who she was. She was a Native of this land, and always ever reminding my mother that she was a Native and affirming everything that she was able to do. My Mom lived her life and came home and took care of Indian Canyon. My Grandma always took care of Indian Canyon. What I'm planning to do is take care of Indian Canyon and continue the education.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Oral traditions are definitely important because not a lot of what we have is written down. We have bits of information that has been documented, but sometimes it hasn't been documented accurately. In the past translators may have stumbled. We need to constantly educate our youth about what has been done in the past, because the youth are the future. Languages and ceremonies are also areas that keep our culture alive. If we have all the elders talking and just being enriched in culture, and not sharing it with the youth, when the elders pass, where did it go? I just say focus on youth and on the oral traditions that need to be shared with more youth – songs and ceremonies and the language. There have been many songs I've heard, as well as a few that I have actually created and sang. They came to me, so to speak. When they came to me, I shared them with everyone else

around me, because it was done in a good way and with the fundamentals of what language I was able to understand and speak.

Our language is not fully intact. We don't have any solid Native speakers living today. We have dictionaries. We have pieces. We have some pieces of ceremonies that can be translated. We can translate an enormous amount of words, but just keeping the dialect strong with the sentence structure, I'm not familiar with. The oral tradition of songs and sharing more of the language keeps a realization that your family was from here, the people of the land were established here. My family, all of my ancestors already had means of communicating. Just because you are colonized and English is the dominant tongue, doesn't mean that you are any less an entity because you may still be here, but what is really here that is you? With the dominant language overcoming not just the way we speak, but the way we interpret and represent things, we tend to allow that to be the norm.

I recently read an article, 'How to Tame a Wild Tongue', by Gloria Anzaldua, where she discussed oppressing a language suppresses the being. She said something along the lines of a language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves - a language with terms that are neither one language or the other, but both.

I have observed a few people I know who are Native, but they are not sure what kind of Native, or they are not sure of their language. Being denied that, or just not having access actually causes a little bit of conflict within someone's esteem. That connection is definitely important. Oral tradition helps that, because that is how we learn. We share stories. Oral tradition is what keeps the community together.

I know some words and quite a few songs. I intend to learn more. In one of my classes I took on an assignment where I had to be altruistic and needed to share something with the larger community. I wanted to share our language. With my skills being strong in art, I've been working

on a little art book that we could sell at the Storytelling which would have our Ohlone words to share with other people. It developed into a little coloring book that had my artwork and another young Ohlone dancer's artwork. She has been adopted into the Ohlone clan, Amah Ka Tura a dance group for the Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council. She always announces that she has been adopted into the Ohlone clan. She dances with that group and helps the youth with their regalia. By presenting her artwork and mine in a coloring book, I'm sharing little pieces of our language, just individual words. Now I have an Indian Canyon coloring book, which shares the Native plants and animals that are in the area. I've been working on this project for a while now. I presented this coloring book at our July 2014 Storytelling Gathering. This is a grassroots effort, so when family and friends want a copy, the straight-forward method of contacting me and exchanging information can get them a copy – either in person or via email: www.indiancanyonlife.org/ksr.

I stress the importance of elders sharing with the youth. If we weren't colonized and forced into Missions, discouraged to practice our song/dances/traditions, killed just for being indigenous in the 1800's and 1900's, we would have more elders available sharing the culture and history with the youth. Had the youth not been assimilated and forced to not speak their language and forced to cut ties, we would have more Native speakers. I most definitely want to learn the language as it opens the doors for more songs, for more ceremonies to be understood, for more prayers, and just a better, deeper understanding of what is going on around me as well as how my elders and my ancestors interpreted everything around them. I'm ever striving to continue my education and then also continue to teach individuals.

I need to learn more to keep our ceremonies and songs intact. My grandmother says, 'Honor the past to shape the future.' By honoring the past, continuing my education, always respecting my elders and learning from them, I can gain more knowledge and then be able to share that knowledge with our youth -- sharing life experiences, Native songs, Native ceremonies, always

partaking in Native events and ceremonies and just being with other individuals who are proud and know that we are all still here. As my mother and grandmother say, 'When ceremony and dancing stop, so does the earth.' I do believe that. By just continuing on and doing everything in a good way and always sharing what I know, as well as learning more, is my goal.

I'm always educating myself so I can wear many hats to fit into numerous scenarios, but I'm also seeing myself as a mediator to help convey messages. I'm always communicating with different parties who can't seem to hear the message between themselves. Putting me right in the middle, I know the gist of what one party is saying to another between the worlds that I walk in. My mom lives traditionally on the land, off the grid. I have many friends that have been urbanized. Some things are a matter of perspective that even in conversations are lost in translation. On a simple note, we leave our keys in our car for emergencies. Some people have been so urbanized, and for a good reason living in the city, they can't do that. But the concept of them being so insecure to not want to do that in a place that we have assured is safe, that they cannot let go of that, is where they may get lost in translation. Something so obvious to my mom isn't clear to them. Or, maybe due to their experiences, it's very clear to them that they will never make that mistake again. It's not clear to my mom that their experience has led them to need to walk that path, and it's not clear to them the path she's walking. As a mediator, a middle person, I can convey messages.

As an artist I'm learning all forms of art -- from fine arts to traditional Native craft to contemporary art to computer media. Art is a powerful message. If you actually look at the spelling of "Earth", you take the E and you take the H, what is left? Art. I see myself as someone who helps convey a message, be it a message of what needs to happen, or a message of what I've experienced, to just ever learning my role, and to help take care of Indian Canyon, which has been a role expected of me, and my choice of being dedicated to.

There are so many things I want to do because I need to make Indian Canyon self-sustainable and by doing that, I then could open the doors for more students to visit and learn about the land, and to house other Natives to visit or share their culture. Not taking a tourist route, but making it know that Indian Canyon is here. Maybe by having horses where people could go on a nature ride and learn Native plants of the area, having them come to a family meal, including them in the dance. So many people have shared that a pow-wow was their first experience learning about Natives. What I love is when people visit Bear Dances because Bear Dances are more inclusive and more intimate when it comes to everyone partaking in it. Pow-wows are great because you get to observe amazing cultures, observe amazing dances and songs, but it is still presented in a manner that is almost like a circus. You get to see their talents and then they are gone. When someone is included in a smaller ceremony or a more intimate group and they actually get to dance in front of the fire or sing with everybody, they partake in something that they've never experienced. At the end they feel this sense of connection and being part of something that is phenomenal. By me continuing my education and hopefully ever striving to help Indian Canyon, I will be able facilitate opening doors to ways the community can come together, and be exposed to another perspective. They could learn positive things. They may have a connection who can help us to grow. They may know somebody who knows somebody who may have a bulldozer, or someone who wants to invest in a green self-sustainable building off the grid! You influence someone's life in a good way and you could always move forward in a good way.

I became a volunteer staff member of the *San Juan Star*, the free newspaper from San Juan Bautista. They are extraordinarily excited and grateful that they have a local who is also willing to share the Native perspective. They know that their amazing little historically rich town is lacking in cultural and historical accuracy when it comes to local Natives. They have a ton of history on what happened in the mission -- when the mission was built, the people who came, the amazing history,

the historical landmarks that have fallen, the historical figures who have visited, the occurrences and developments, but they don't have that much history from the viewpoint of the people who were there before, and the people who are still there after. Sometimes a new perspective is great, a new lens, and a new way of seeing things. Their town is beautiful. They know what they know, and they would like to know more, because it's something that fascinates them. I'm very happy to be in a position to help them. I get to write a Native Voice column. I have so many ideas for it. I get to comment on occurrences, everything that pertains to San Juan Bautista, for the locals, by the locals, for that reason. Everything is focused on San Juan, but Indian Canyon is not even 18 miles away, and the Natives who were there, traveled to Indian Canyon, because they came here for a safe haven. I get to share my perspectives on things that maybe they don't see in a certain fashion. I can share with them that something they're putting on display could be seen as offensive to some Natives. They will be curious as to why, and I'll be able to explain. If it was an object that was sacred to us, then why that's offensive to us. I'm not saying what needs or is supposed to happen. I'm just sharing my perspective. I'm not trying to take any action. Of course I'm always trying to encourage people to support Indian Canyon; I'll always do that, but in it, I can share the Native perspective.

Also in the column, like maybe every couple of months, I'll have a portion saying, 'Ask a Native'. If I get repetitive questions from readers, I'm definitely going to answer that. I will constantly do my research to make sure I give a valid answer. They will be educated about a question either someone was scared to ask a Native, or felt too shy to. They have the anonymity of not having their name there.

I've written two articles in a very fast fashion. One is about the Peace and Dignity runners, running through Indian Canyon through San Juan to Watsonville. I shared it from the local standpoint. Then I wrote an introductory article to my column, 'Native Voice'. That is a huge

introduction about everything: about Ohlone territory, about my experiences, and then about me as a person becoming a member of the *San Juan Star* – not being a journalist for the position.

I try to do everything in a good way. Going about things in a way that causes the least amount of ripples. Everything I do has certain thoughts behind it, that are of my personality. My personality is the coyote. Coyote is known to be a trickster, is known to be a wily individual.

I participate in ceremonies. I enjoy singing our traditional songs, be it in ceremony, with friends, without friends or alone, in any way or context, because it's what I know. Sometimes it's just soothing. Respecting nature is just an innate part of general actions that I've always known, more of a second nature rather than a protocol to live by. By doing that, I have a ritualistic sense when I do things in my life. When I see road kill, I may not be able to stop and honor it with tobacco, but a positive thought goes out, a painful thought initially, for the loss of a life that would have occurred so suddenly and so painfully, but also just a saddened feeling that another life has passed. Things that I watch, things that I observe, things that I feel, the way I make my choices, are all in a sense everything that I've learned in my life. It may not be ritualistic; it may not be something of ceremony. Well, what is ceremony? Anything is ceremony; the way one lives could be ceremony. Just how my mother explained, things that she naturally did, that weren't exactly officially ceremony, *were* ceremony.

An elder that I know wakes up every morning and offers tobacco to the day, thanking to be here, to have another day, and for the occurrences of the day to be something of value, be it desirable or undesirable. He could be glad for whatever occurrence that one must observe in life; it happens the way it's meant to happen. To honor the day, to thank Creator, to thank Mother Earth, to thank oneself that you're here another day, that in itself is a ceremony, but it's not like I am going to conduct a ceremony, and this is the way it must be conducted, and for everybody around me I am doing a ceremony. It's not official like what a lot of the public has observed ceremony to be. A lot of

people have seen ceremony being conducted as we go back in the past, dress in our regalia, speak the language our ancestors have spoken, do things in that manner. But not all ceremonies are like that. Everyday occurrences can be ceremonies that are treated as such. That's how I live, and that's how I do things in life, not fully ceremonial, but *very* ceremonial.

FUTURE VISION

I would like to see a stronger development of sustainability for Indian Canyon, a means of survival without needing to constantly pull out of my own pocket, or rely on other things. We're always developing. We are way better off today than we were ten years ago, and in ten years we'll be so much better. Self-sustainability. If we want to host indigenous people, in two days, we have the means to. We have more solar. We have maybe another pump, a water resource to provide showers. We have a kitchen and a community-gathering center so we can host indigenous people nights. We may be able to conduct workshops to do this, or grants, or just continue educating people. Opening up for ceremony, opening up for education so when we have field trips, we can host them in a nice fashion, showing that we're living our traditional ways, showing that we can live off the grid comfortably in a contemporary fashion, and we are succeeding. Self-sustainability is a focal point of mine. Just because we are honoring our ancestors and revitalizing our culture doesn't mean we have to stay stuck in the past. Everyone always focuses on how it was, how it's meant to be, and how it's supposed to be.

Today we're honoring our ancestors and doing things the way they used to. But today we need to be making our own contemporary rituals and ceremonies so 50 years, 100 years in the future, they don't look back and say, 'What were they doing then besides trying to copy their elders?' Because our elders were just doing things in normal fashion. It was their everyday life. Their ceremonies were honoring the experience of life. They were thankful for the weather, for the blessings of life, and the blessings of death, and the songs honoring those occurrences, honoring

what happens with us as human beings. We're always trying to look at the past to honor that. We are honoring our ancestors, but we also have to shape our future so we have to stay present. That also ties into the statement my grandmother said, 'Honor the past to shape the future.'

We need to come together and stop struggling over areas that we perceive separate us. We need to realize we are all related; we are all of the tribe; we are all of the territory; we are all family. We shouldn't fight amongst each other. We should fight stronger organizations that are denying us our truth or our reality. We are recognizing ourselves. We don't need anybody else to say, 'You *are*' or 'You are *not*'. We need to come together as a family, and stop being frustrated because we are trying to deny each other.

That's one little frustration that I know the youth have: 'Why does my dad or my grandpa not like this person?' or 'Why don't these elders get along?' That's always a question amongst the youth. It's a conversation that desperately needs to happen among the youth, and among the youth and the family.

Another way we could move forward: the media that surround us today is so much better. I can understand how certain elders, due to experiences, may have had a negative interpretation of video or film, because maybe the wrong people were behind the camera, and manipulated words, statements, quotes without context to not portray us the way we are. Many elders are jaded by that. But with today's media, we have more control. We don't have to work with somebody who has an agenda. Media is now at our fingertips. I am a strong advocate of social media. I am always online, doing either work related projects or leisure time, or promoting events, promoting Indian Canyon. Youth are always learning new things, and we can do more. We can promote who we are, share that we are still here, share our rich cultural history, our heritage, our footprint, and share with the world that we are always revitalizing.

We are culturally revitalizing everything. We are not just in history books. We still live our way. We know where we came from, and honor our ancestors. We need to share that with more people, because so many people think most Indians live in teepees, and fit into certain stereotypes. With today's media, we can take charge of that and say, 'Hey! That's not true.' We can debunk the myths. We can recreate our songs and dances and documents. Some elders are against that; some are for it. I see youth coming together. We can all have conversations on how to go about that in a good way, how to go about that in a way that will not disrespect our elders, in a way that will not disrespect the way that we have always known, because we are strong and dedicated to our heritage of being active in oral history. We learn more communicating with each other. We learn more from our elders, telling stories, sharing experiences. There is a large detachment when it is recorded or videotaped, but it still can reach and educate so many. Conversations need to occur on how to do it the right way. Maybe the recordings never leave the tribe. I'm fine with that. If an elder dies, it would have been amazing to have quite a few interviews and for him to share all the songs he knows, but he may not want that information to be shared with the general population. But he definitely would want that to be shared with his grandkids, and his great- grandkids, and his great- great- great grandkids. Some youth choose to walk another path from their family, and so they're physically not there to share that with their kids, but their kids will want to know. Maybe their elders passed. To have documentation is definitely important, but we have to have a conversation about how to go about that so we can go forward. The youth are coming together, and still need to come together in other areas to find out about our ancestors. We already know it's meant for us to honor our ancestors, to do things in a good way, and continue what we already know. We can always evolve with current time to do that, and still stay honorable to our roots.

My vision for the future is coming together, uniting together, not allowing politics of certain matters to separate us, to realize that we are all family and we are all still here. When we are

together, we are listened to. We come together and realize that we have a larger family. We come together and share our family history. We share our current ceremonies. We share our past knowledge so then learn more. 'There is a saying, 'It takes a tribe to raise a child.' All of us learn together and thrive together, continuing going forward knowing we are still here and honoring our past to shape our futures is the most beneficial thing we can do. Coinciding with Mother Earth rather than against her. We need to come back together and realize that we were better off in the past and what colonization and assimilation have done to us.

Federal Recognition ~

To be federally recognized is a daunting task. The Ohlone should pursue it as one giant family. I understand that there are a few groups that are seeking federal recognition. An individual within that group wants to be in charge – that is when splinter groups happen. Someone is denying someone else's history that something happened, or someone wants to be in charge. But if we were to approach it as a huge family, we would all be able to have recognition. My frustration is why do we need to do this? Why do we need to go to some entity to get the OK in their eyes that we are real, that we are legitimate, that we were the people of the land, and we're the next generation of the ancestors who were inevitably slaughtered and pushed under the rug? Why do we need to go to them to gain recognition in their eyes? I know I'm Native. I know so many family and friends are Native. I know Native-at-heart individuals who don't have the genetics to follow up on that. I see Natives who have been assimilated and don't have that much pride within them. I'm not saying they are not Native, but Native-at-heart they seem to lack.

I don't like the concept of needing to seek recognition, but at the same time I'd like to have that recognition because there are burials that are sitting in steel boxes at UC Berkeley and other colleges and in government facilities, burials that were dug up before they were established. There wasn't any protocol about those burials. Some of them could have been just tossed and allowed to

decompose in a different rude manner, like digging up someone's grandparents. Some of them are sitting in boxes because no one is there to claim them and re-inter them into the ground ceremonially. By gaining that federal recognition a few things are open to us: to re-inter burials that have been unearthed, to share our history and to just be seen. That is the terrible part. I don't like that concept, but it opens doors too.

Significance of a Land Base ~

Being people of this land, communing with nature, living off the land, understanding the cycle of our Mother is key to our survival as peoples. Every aspect of our ceremonies, gatherings, songs is focused around the earth and our relation to our Mother and everything around us. Songs honoring the animals, the plants, the relations we share with one another – our thankfulness to how they provide for us. I find it important that Ohlone people have land that we could call ours. The government, society and people need to see us as a living, surviving people, and it is a bit more recognizable in 'others' eyes as substantial or official, when they see indigenous people with their own land. As if we need others' approval to just be us! With a land base we can gather and have ceremony. We can share with the community by having community gatherings. We can be educators for the public about current indigenous issues, about truth in history – writing history in a better way than the recent track record.

Role of the Next Generation ~

I'm always focusing on new and traditional ways that I can interest my and younger generations to become more involved with our culture, traditions, communal gatherings. With today's mainstream society shaping our youth, some aspects of our culture seem plain or boring to them. What is beautiful though, some of our youth become interested and passionate when they have a true moment to observe the larger picture, like that 'Ah-hah! Moment', where they realize that being indigenous to their local territory and that their families are active in community is truly a unique

occurrence. Sometimes when I observe other cultures and mainstream Americans, they seem detached from their roots, and seeking something to fill that void. As to the youth and interacting with community, I don't believe there is a cure-all answer. We are all different beings with similarities or overlapping commonalities. To find a way to get, let's say, my female middle school cousin versus my maturing high school nephew to get more involved with our cultural community would be different. Sometimes it takes their peers from other perspectives to generate interest or curiosity. Or sometimes the sense of community, where family and relations can relate on another level and understand certain feelings/emotions/reactions at any given point – such as an overwhelming sense of warmth on a cold evening during a special ceremony when everyone comes together. I always focus on encouraging these younger generations to participate in these gatherings because I know it's important to continue the songs, the traditions, the passion. This next generation is the future.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

I've been blessed to have the mother I have because had I just relied on the public education that I've been given, I probably wouldn't know anything about Native Americans, besides that there were Natives that the Spaniards took over. They used bows and arrows, and these local Natives lived in tule huts and hunted deer. Natives on the Plains lived in teepees and hunted buffalo. Maybe a little bit about the Missions. San Juan Bautista Mission doesn't present much information about the local Natives. They have a tiny, tiny, tiny dark room that has a few baskets that someone told me weren't even from this area. I have no doubt that there are thousands of Natives who are buried along the Mission who are not being acknowledged. They weren't even given credit that they helped build the Mission. They didn't want to help build it; they were *told* to build it.

Truth in history is very important. To incorporate it into the classroom would be almost an entire course, and to assimilate it into the history books as young as possible, like applied knowledge

similar to how children are encouraged to build missions in 4th grade. Let them learn hands on, not just theorize and recite history from the books. To the younger, younger generation you share with them that there were Natives on this land, and not all of them had that headband and rainbow war bonnet and wore the Pocahontas brown dress. Just always starting the honesty young. The history of this land didn't start with Columbus. When they are younger, you just share some basics. They lived with the land and nature; they didn't over-populate. When they get older tell them how they were enslaved in the Missions, how they were denied their culture, how they had to go to boarding schools, and how they couldn't even communicate with their families. They were taken to boarding schools, told to speak English. Parents couldn't understand English so they had a family member speaking an entirely different language, so how can oral traditions be shared? The older you get, the more can be shared and the more history you will learn. Truth in history. No sugar-coating it. No saying, 'There were Natives here, then we took over and now we have cell phones and TV and cities!' As if Natives were myths like dragons or an extinct entity.

Learning from the Oblone Experience ~

In the past our ancestors always lived off the land. It seems like this giant thing that is happening that everyone is going green. It is really sad that people have barely come to realize this now. In the past they could have nipped it in the bud before industrialization and consumerism took over everything. Grandmothers used to tell their kids only take what is needed. Everyone seems to take more than what is needed, because they are so scared that they might not have it at the end. So you take a few more handfuls. Like at a buffet only take what you need because you are only going to eat so much, but people always add on a bit more. The same happens when it comes to producing cattle. More cattle are produced in a small area to provide for all these people, but you are damaging the land; you are damaging the cattle who are trying to live because you are producing them in an unnatural environment, therefore more get sick. We don't need to take as much as we are really

taking. Looking back in history Natives lived off the land and respected the earth they were on and respected their environment and actually coincided with Mother Earth. We thank every life entity. We thank the plants for providing a vegetable or a beautiful flower or a ceremonial or healing herb. It is not there to be taken for granted. Do not damage Mother Earth. That is how they lived off the land because they knew that they were borrowing it from their kids. They wanted to leave it beautiful and pristine and share their knowledge with their kids so their kids could do the same exact thing. It may seem long in our own little view, but in the concept of this entire planet, we live a very short life. Our ancestors knew how to live with it. They accepted the births and the deaths that came, that our bodies were meant to go back into this earth when complete. They accepted how they lived on this earth in a good way because life is short.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

Only now and then it is a challenge being comfortable sharing means of communication from one world to the next. The norms are different. The way you share yourself is different because in every day society, you act a certain way, but when it comes to a gathering for a ceremony or with family there is an expected way to act out of respect, or just being yourself rather than in everyday society fitting into what society wants you to be. The only wall I ever feel, jumping over that fence, is the communication. Being in both worlds is a wonderful thing, because I am getting numerous perspectives so I'm able to observe things in many ways and learn to understand more about what is going on around me.

There is definitely a communication barrier when it comes to different worlds, different perspectives. For example, whenever a gathering of Natives has a meal planned, everyone is partaking and helping in some way or another. Also, elders are always respected. Elders are meant to have the food first. After a meal has been prepared usually an elder, who is either honored,

respected or a medicine individual or someone who may even speak the language, would be requested to take the lead. After the food is prepared and everyone is seated at the table a plate goes around and pieces of every bit of the meal are put onto that plate because we are sharing it with the spirits who will partake of the meal with us. We make that plate first. Any individual ceremony they know would be shared into that spirit plate, given to the spirits. After the plate is full an elder will speak over the food and give thanks for the food being here, the individuals who process and cook the food, all the people who made it here to this table, and all those who did not get a chance to make it to the table. After the ceremony is done, a youth or an individual at the table will take the spirit plate out into usually a nature area or even the ceremonial fire. If in town, it would be by a tree, and then given to the spirits. Sometimes the spirits may be crossed to another world, or sometimes the spirit animals that are here every day that we see, get to share this with us because they are a part of Mother Earth and we are sharing it back. They get to eat and then we come in and the elders get their plates first, and then we all enjoy a meal as a group. Conversation, laughter, stories – everything happens at a meal – good times.

In everyday society, maybe there is Grace spoken, but there isn't a set norm that elders eat first, that it is a slow and respected process of just enjoying each other; it isn't just grabbing the food and go in front of the TV. It is a family event so everyone is helping everyone. Everything is communal.

Who is Native American/Indian?

If you were born in the Americas, you could be considered Native American, but in the history books it is America because of Columbus. The way I see Native: you are true to where it is you are standing on Mother Earth. The way you connect with Mother Earth is what helps someone be a true Native -- coinciding with Mother Earth and the life force around you. Native Americans have this understanding with the earth. I'm not saying we're better than anyone; I'm just trying to

compare observations. I've observed Natives living with Earth and communicating with animals and just knowing that every life on this earth is important and has a spirit and is an entity we can always learn from, and by respecting it we are living in this world in a good way. Being Native could be genetic, that you come from someone who has been on this particular piece of land for a super-long time or like some people say 'going Native'. If someone is 'going Native', that definition of that little bit of stereotype would be that they were assimilating into where they are at. They are going into that environment and becoming part of it and understanding and communicating with it. 'Going Native' is actually probably doing the right thing. It was meant to be a racial slur – an individual getting assimilated into the Natives. I know a few Cherokees who were adopted and lived that life. They were adopted but they are still considered Cherokee. I truly love that idea, that even though your genetics don't say you are Native American of the Americas before colonization, doesn't mean you are not Native. I do believe it is just how one connects with their environment; ideally it would be Mother Earth, not an urban environment.

Earth is the body; fire is the spirit; air is the breath and water is the blood. To realize that you are related to that, to realize that that is another entity that is fully living and thriving around us gives you a perspective that you are tiny and insignificant, but you still have meaning because everything that has life has meaning. Knowing that Mother Earth is alive, knowing that the plant out there seems to ever grow, change colors, produce amazing flowers or beautiful leaves, to realize that it is alive, gives another perspective that everything around you is thriving. To actually identify with that would be Native in my eyes. Those who take it for granted, and those who don't identify it as alive, that it is something that is there *for* them, or something that they can take advantage of, or something that doesn't mean anything to them, have a skewed perspective in life that I don't appreciate.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

Reconciliation is always a 'hopeful', and there are instances that I believe I've seen it: true compassion for other people, listening and learning from our Ohlone bands, walking on sharing the truth they've learned, and encouraging others they come in contact with to do the same. On a larger scale, reconciliation toward Ohlone peoples feels like a slow process, be it with the government, mainstream education, or the society's 'cultural norm' – by that I mean people of the Bay Area don't seem interested in knowing the roots of their home. When I interact with people of other nations/countries, they are more interested in learning about the roots of different territories, especially the areas they visit. They conduct themselves with what I call 'Indigenous Protocol', by being respectful and requesting permission to share songs, visit sacred sites, or be welcomed to the land by the indigenous peoples. This is something that seems so bizarre to today's mainstream culture.

I am hopeful and upset. Reconciliation is a process that is at the core of our actions, and until we all know ourselves, our community, and the truth in history, this reconciliation between the Ohlone and society will be slow.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

I am proud because I'm lucky enough to live on the land where my ancestors lived. I know a few Natives who have been relocated. I understand connecting with one's home site, knowing that our grandparents or great-great grandparents once lived off this land, hiked this same land, ate the same vegetation or the same animals -- just to be familiar with what we know our family has always shared is an amazing thing. I'm proud to be Native here right now on this land. I appreciate this chance I've been given: to realize I'm Ohlone; to realize that I'm on the land that my great-great grandparents survived off of and to be who I am today at this opportunity because there are so many things that I have the potential to do, that this world has made available to me because

technology is ever-booming. I can always utilize different means of art to present my story, different means of sharing with other youth because technology will allow me to talk to somebody across the globe. I'm just proud because of who I am, where I am.

VINCENT MEDINA



VINCENT MEDINA
Muwekma Ohlone Tribal Member

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Growing up we always knew that we are Ohlone. We always knew the core of who we are as people. I was raised to be aware, to be conscious of my Ohlone identity, to be proud to tell people, to recognize it in myself. Something that really shaped me is my family -- my great-grandmother, Mary Archuleta, my grandfather, my grandmother, my mother and father, pushing us that if you are Ohlone, this is something that you should be proud of. I went to cultural classes for children by Muwekma, the political entity of much of the East Bay, the South Bay, and San Francisco. We had campouts reinforcing a lot of ways of what it meant to be Ohlone. I didn't grow up necessarily speaking the language or learning a lot of the specifics like our basketry and all of that. The one thing that we never did let go in our family was the core of being Ohlone, the core of being Indian people, and what that meant to us, and the fact that we would not give that up. Now what we are doing is successfully revitalizing all of the things that were taken away from us.

Role of the Elders ~

We wouldn't know anything if it weren't for our elders. They are our libraries, our culture keepers. We wouldn't know we were Ohlone. We wouldn't physically be born into this world. We wouldn't know that world that stretched for thousands of years if it weren't for the elders. Elders are the ones who continue everything for us. I don't always go into this whole Hollywood Indian elder talk, but there is a significance there.

Not every old person is an elder. There are elders and there are grouchy old people. You treat a grouchy older person with respect, because they earned that respect and place in society, but that doesn't mean that they have wisdom or common sense. I think of my grandparents when I think of elders -- people who know the answers when you don't. Even if you think you know better

than they do, they know it their way. They kept their culture alive even when it's not the most popular thing to do. They went against the odds. They fought to keep the stories alive. They remembered what their elders taught them and kept those old ways going. One of the easiest signs of an elder is that they adapt to different things. That doesn't make you less Indian; it doesn't make you less Ohlone. It just means that you're a survivor. So there are elders, and there are older people.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Most Ohlone people are not just working on one front. We're trying to accomplish a lot of different things at once. My main focus in the last few years has been on revitalizing the Chochenyo Ohlone language. I'm serving on the board of the advocates of the California Indian Language Survival and also working with my own community to bring it back. Another thing that I work on is museum interpretation, especially with the missions in changing the perspective of focusing on the Spanish and the Catholic roots, to really focusing on the fact that Indian people built these places and that our ancestors, in a lot of cases, were enslaved here. Despite those horrible conditions and cultural upheaval, they somehow fought to continue on. Because they did so successfully, we are still here today to tell our story. That story, that tale of cultural resistance is something that needs to be focused on at the missions instead of just focusing on the Spanish and what they did here. I have a big say and a big role in doing that and that's why I work at Mission Dolores with my cousin, Andrew Galvan. I also work with activists like my cousin, Corrina Gould, to protect our sacred sites around the Bay area that are significant to us. Family is a big part of what I'm doing.

Writing is another thing that I do quite a lot of. I became really frustrated growing up trying to look for resources, a written material body of knowledge of Ohlone people, but often only finding things that painted us in a really unflattering way, or were written by anthropologists who didn't know much about our culture. What I try to do, as much as I can, is write about my own experience. It helps me contribute to a body of knowledge that is out there, but also do so in a way

I think is fair and honest. It is first-person and written by a native person so it is going to show a lot more of the complexities than just painting us as this minimalist hunter/ gatherer culture that doesn't match with what I see at home.

Language Restoration ~

Language is the core, because what language does is give us a view into everything. There are people who say archaeology is the way to learn about the past, which in some cases is true. You can learn about material culture through the past using archaeology – pestles and mortars, abalone necklaces and beads, and all of that, but what you can't see is into the soul of a people using archaeology, just studying material artifacts. With language you peer into the soul. You peer into how people saw themselves, how they would interact with one another. Language can be one of the most empowering things for all of us, because what it does is speak testaments to the complexity of the intelligence of our ancestors. The Chochenyo language is so beautiful, so complex. It is full of all these nuances that have no translations into English. There is one phrase when we say 'thank you', and it means my heart is good, but *kis horse ek-binnan*, the word that we use in that phrase, *binnan*, means something bigger; it means spirit, life force, breath, voice, and heart all in one word. There is no direct translation into English. We also have a physical word for the organ of the heart: *linnan* and *minyix*. The fact that Chochenyo wasn't a written language and these nuances and complexities were passed on for thousands and thousands and thousands of years, and for us since the beginning of time, shows intelligence, complexity, and defies all the stereotypes. Also language can bring people together and communities together, especially in our family. No matter what our affiliations or political beliefs, one thing that we can all agree upon, is that all of our ancestors spoke the Chochenyo language. It's something that we all have a right to, that we all have an ability to learn, that we all can connect with. No matter where we stand, we know that this is a truth. Chochenyo is something that links us together, so it can be community building, something that is

shared based on mutual understanding. I think it's the right thing to do, and just why I care so much about language is because the Spanish, then the Mexicans, then the Americans all attempted to silence our ancestors for way too long. Those were the worst times when they intentionally tried to take away our languages, but somehow our ancestors kept speaking them so fluently that they continued to be our first languages until the 1930s. I have some family members who say up to the 1960s they remember hearing it spoken.

There's a reason why Ohlone people were recording the language back then with white men who they probably were not that comfortable with, because of all the distrust between whites and Indians. They recorded thousands of pages of notes, of songs, of vocabulary, in their own voices. They did this, I'm sure, so that one day modern Ohlone people, future Ohlone people, would relearn it and speak it again. They weren't just wasting their time. If we don't take action their work would be in vain so we won't let that happen. The other thing it gives us is cultural pride when we speak our language. This is the oldest language that this land knows. This land has been hearing Chochenyo, if you want to go by the anthropological sense, for 14,000 years. It has been hearing English and Spanish for 230 years. It heals the land. For 14,000 years this is the only language that this land ever heard. We need to speak it to understand ourselves.

Learning to speak it was a long process. I always wondered what the language would sound like if it were spoken just in a casual context. If I were to hear people gossip in the language, how would it sound, or if I were to hear conversations, essentially human things, how would it sound? When I started to do research I couldn't find much, and I wasn't sure exactly where to start, and then family members started to give me little handouts. Usually they were one page super-miniscule lists of animals or numbers that really didn't help in the sense that I couldn't make a sentence or anything like that, but what it did is put in my mind that it was out there somewhere. At first I had a

hard time pronouncing the words, kind of being scared sometimes to pronounce them, but then I started to do that and worked with these short lists.

That led to me to finding out about the John P. Harrington notes, which is our biggest body of information we have available. It was recorded in the village where my great-grandmother was born. After the missions were secularized Indian people were forced out and regrouped in a village in what we call Sunol/Pleasanton area today. It was on the land that was owned by one of the members of the Hearst family, Phoebe Hearst. There were old stories of people calling her ‘Aunt Phoebe’. They were working for her in the daytime and at nighttime there was a traditional village that was on the land where she let the Indian people stay called Verona Band Rancheria. In that village traditions continued; the roundhouse was there. They held dances there. They spoke the language. The political structure continued on. This is as recent as the early 1900’s. So in that village the language was recorded. When I found access and information to those notes, I started to go through them, sometimes until two or three in the morning. There were a lot of things that were really confusing. Harrington used a lot of different symbols. I didn’t know how to pronounce some things and I wasn’t sure, but what just looking at the notes did was show me how this body of information is the foundation of true revitalization. To revitalize the language those notes are essential, because that’s all that we really have with our documentation of the language. I started to go through the notes and connect with them.

I got a scholarship to a program at UC Berkeley called the Breath of Life which is documenting California Indian people who don’t have Native speakers left to reconnect with their languages. I’ve connected with a linguist, Justin Spence. He didn’t speak Chochenyo, but he was able to help me understand Chochenyo sentence formulation, and how to pronounce letters, as well as the proper way to form sentences, the proper way to express something in the past, present, and future tenses. I also discovered how to go around road blocks, how to make new words if I can’t

find a word, how to change it to give it Chochenyo attributes from other neighboring Ohlone languages. What I was able to do, for example, the word for eagle in the Harrington notes is *'rupajwa'* and for a long time I pronounced the 'J' like a hard 'H' sound of speech, and then he told me that the J would be pronounced as a Y, so it actually would be *'rupaywa'*. Just learning those different things is important.

I listened to the songs at home, before bed a lot of the time. It gives us a link to the past. That led to me doing more with language and trying to incorporate family. We had our very first on-going Chochenyo language lesson at the Ohlone Cemetery in Fremont next to Mission San Jose. I'm very excited. This is a big deal for us right now.

The interesting thing is I tried to study several different languages – Spanish, French, and even Japanese, and with all these languages I actually didn't do exceedingly well. I did the minimum, but with Chochenyo, it picks up, because literally it's in our blood.

Before 2003 there were no speakers; the last speaker passed in 1934. Now there are 25 conversationalists – a new generation of speakers.

FUTURE VISION

One time somebody asked me, "What do you see when you imagine going to the peak of your favorite mountain and looking down and seeing your ideal version of an Ohlone world right now?" What I was expecting to imagine was pre-Contact life, tule houses, traditional culture. What I instead imagined as some sort of perfect Ohlone society was the current Bay Area, but with a heavy dose of Ohlone identity added to it. There were still cars, houses, computers -- all of these things that I care about in the 21st Century, but there were also roundhouses all throughout the East Bay Hills. All the street signs were in Chochenyo instead of in English and Spanish. You see Ohlone people walking down the street. There is culture that's vibrant. You have Chochenyo coffee shops. My ultimate goal is to see that actually happen, to see the presence come to life, and the vibrancy that I see at

home be spread to modern life for other people as well who aren't part of this community. The reality is that there are 7 million people in the Bay Area; there are I could guess there are thousands of Ohlone people. That means we are a very, very, very small minority. But in that community of several thousands, it means we are able to express ourselves, but we can't necessarily kick everybody else out. That's not the reality right now. But what we can do is have allies, people who want to teach others about our culture. We can add a layer of our identity so that people see the visibility of it whenever they go around, and that they know that Ohlone people are here, that this is our traditional area, that this is our homeland.

Adding that layer of visibility would be the biggest thing I would like to see come out of the future. To see Chochenyo not be threatened as a language, to see the stories being strengthened, to see the round house religion be strengthened so that other people not only see it physically, but they know that it exists.

Protection of sacred sites is the key to it all. If we don't have the protection of our sacred sites, the shell mounds, the village sites, this is our homeland... and we lose valuable, tangible spots of our people and history. If you go to anybody else's country, you don't go destroy the sites that are most important to those people. First of all, it's not human decency. Second, it's rude and disgusting and vile. A whole bunch of adjectives come out with that. Protection of sacred sites is linked inexplicably to our religion. It is also linked to understanding our place in our part of the world, because if we don't have our sites left, our identity and our history here are erased. We need the sites to remain and for them to be protected.

Federal Recognition ~

In our case we have a difficult situation with federal recognition. My great-grandmother was part of a federally recognized Ohlone tribe, the Verona Band over in Sunol/Pleasanton. In the early 1900s there were Indian agents going up and down the state who saw that because of the missions being

secularized, and the other effects of colonization, there were huge groups of what he called 'homeless Indians' That was the term the agent used. So what he did was grant recognition to all of these bands throughout the state. Some of them remained and some of them were terminated of federal status, but not ethnically. My family was part of a group that was recognized, but then the government just took it away. A lot of the reason why it was taken away was because of Alfred Kroeber⁸ who wrote a book called The Handbook of California Indians in which he stated for all practical purposes the Ohlone were extinct. Washington caught ahold of that and the BIA just took the Ohlone off the list, even though what Kroeber meant, which he would clarify in later years, was that the Ohlone people living in the village back then couldn't remember a time before contact with Europeans. That made Ohlone culture impure and extinct in his eyes. It is true that Ohlone people who were living there were living in a world that was already impacted for about hundred and twenty years by the European colonization. This connects because my family politically regrouped in the 1980s to form Muwekma which is a political entity, a tribal government that fights for federal recognition in the courts. It's a little bit more confusing, because it's not necessarily about federal recognition, but more about reinstatement of our previous status, because we were already recognized.

I support my tribal government having recognition. I would love to see it, because it would give us a lot more power and influence in this area politically. For example, eleven thousand of our ancestors' bones are at the Hearst Museum and we can't get them back, because we are not a federally recognized tribe. They won't repatriate them. These are things that we learned about as kids when we had cultural classes. This sticks in your mind. At UC Berkeley they see the bones as

⁸ Alfred Kroeber [b. 1876; d. 1960] was a pioneer in American anthropology. He taught at University of California at Berkeley and became the Director of Anthropology Museum at UCB. He taught 'cultural relativism: actions/individual choices must be understood in relation to one's own culture. When Ishi, the last surviving Yahi Indian, came out of hiding many years after his entire tribe was slaughtered by ranchers, Kroeber became his 'caretaker'. Kroeber's wife, Theodora, wrote Ishi in Two Worlds.

being part of their collections, and theirs to study for research, and they won't repatriate them or return them for re-burial. If we had federal recognition we could get our ancestors back and re-bury them in a proper way. We would also have more funding needed for housing, for homes for the elders. There are only thousands of us in an area that has seven million people. It would help us wield more of a powerful voice and we need that in this area. We would have more influence when people want to build on our sacred sites and places we don't want them to. We could stop things. A lot of people talk about casinos which is always a mix about how people feel about that. At the very least when people ask me about that I say, every group has the right, if they are sovereign, to build ten casinos; it's their place. That issue always comes up, but that's not the reason why federal recognition is being fought for.

I know that in my heart, and I'm not speaking on behalf of the tribal government, but on behalf of my family, that the issues of recognition are more based on culture and on doing the right thing than what people see in the media. While federal recognition would be helpful, we don't need the government to confirm that we exist if we know that we do as a people. In the process do we stop studying our language and stop reconnecting with our basketry? Do we stop learning our dances? Do we stop doing all these things that we've done for thousands of years? No, of course not. We do it and defy the odds, because it's the right thing to do it, and because it's expected of us. So even if the government doesn't grant us recognition, that doesn't mean that we stop and give up. We've been fighting for two hundred and thirty-seven years. It's not going to turn around tomorrow. There's a phrase in Chochenyo, *'tiitu Iuuxi bayya `at ne tuuxi `akwe aruukus'* and that means, "Every day we fight, we struggle, and today is no different." That summarizes a lot. It is expected of us to fight. It is expected by our family in present times, expected of us by our ancestors, expected of us by the future generation. If they ever look back at my generation and say, "What were you thinking just sitting there?" Of course we want them to say, "My grandfather, my

great-grandfather fought to make sure our culture would survive.” Just like the way I know my great-grandfather and my great-grandmother fought. You don’t just turn over and give it up because it’s easier to do.

Significance of a Land Base ~

Especially here in the Bay Area, a land base is very important. There's no rancheria, no formal land base that we have, at least in my community. I know down in Indian Canyon they have a land trust. But for East Bay Ohlone people, Chochenyo people, we have no land base. What this has done is isolate us in our own land. What that means is we see our most sacred sites, these places that we know our ancestors went to and prayed to, and we still pray to even to this day, but then often there are restrictions on what time we can go there, what time parks close, whether or not it's private property, what we can do when we're there. If we had a land base one thing we would like in our community is to have a roundhouse re-established. But we can't have it on park property, because the park closes at certain times and we couldn't be there when we wanted to. If it was on private property, there are things like zoning regulations; you don't even think those things come into play, but they do. People think of casinos, but it doesn't have to do with that; it has to do with having a place for our sacred sites, and to be together, and to have more of a community base that gets emboldened and strengthened by us coming together. We've fared pretty well for not having a land base, but we would do better if we did have one.

Roundhouses are our traditional dance halls. They are partially underground circular halls, where California Indian dances are practiced, which is part of the religion. So we're talking religious centers, like temples, some people might say, akin to mosques or Catholic churches, or synagogues. We've traditionally had roundhouses in the East Bay. There was one established in Sunol after the Missions were secularized. We know that up until the early 1900s our family members were using it. So that's not that long ago in the big spectrum of things. But for about 100 years the roundhouse

hasn't been back here in the East Bay. There's a move to bring one back. If we do it would be on a family level, because roundhouses are family oriented places that are started by families. So it would be a very localized, smaller roundhouse. Right now private land is our only option.

People are working on different fronts to acquire land. One front is through the basis of federal recognition. My tribal government, Muwekma, which is the East Bay Chochenyo, are applying for federal recognition, because after federal recognition is granted there could be land that's placed in trust. My cousin, Corrina Gould, is working on the idea of having a land trust also that is not part of the whole federal recognition system. Some people think private property is the way to go. In the end it's all going to come out to our advantage, because when you have different ways of people thinking, eventually something has to happen.

Role of the Next Generation ~

Right now we're fortunate. A lot of Native youth, especially those I see in my own community, in my own family, see the survival of culture, language, and religion, as being linked to who they are as people, and it boosts their self-esteem and self-confidence. I know that 100 years ago, and 50 years ago, and even today sometimes people will try to shame Native people to not want to be Indians and to not be proud of their culture. But the exciting thing for me to see is just how much people are proud to be Ohlone, to have that identity. It's something that makes them know that they're special, and it raises their confidence.

My little brother, who is ten, and I were talking about language. He speaks Chochenyo pretty well. It's exciting because he's so young. I asked him a few times, "What's your favorite thing about speaking Chochenyo?" You're expecting these large philosophical reasons like I always think of, like "We're doing it to awaken the language of our ancestor", or something like that. For him it wasn't like that. He just said, "I like it because I can speak the language and can talk about people right in front of their faces, and they don't know what I'm saying." So I called Linda Yamane and said, "Is

there something wrong with him? He doesn't understand the deeper connection that's there.” She said, “He doesn't have to understand the deeper connection, because he's a kid.” The coolest thing with his generation, the language just *is*. It's not an issue of can it be brought back, when should it be brought back, how can it be brought back, because with him, he grew up with it. It's just a reality. With kids, growing up as Ohlone people now, it's just the culture. They grew up seeing how strong the culture is, how vibrant things are. When I was a kid, it was similar because my family wouldn't give up their identity. Even if the technicalities maybe stopped being practiced for a while, like language, or basketry, or songs, that root of identity was never given up. Nobody ever denied who they were. As long as that root is still alive, then all of those complexities and the special things like baskets and songs and language, can all come back and be intact again. The root was never dissolved. With kids, they see more than ever that reality that we're here, that we're strong, that there's vibrancy and complexity.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone History and Culture ~

I went to a California public school and the California history was horrible. This is one reason why I work at Mission Dolores, because what I remember hearing as a kid was just horrible on so many different fronts. I remember when I heard about California Indian people we were always talked about in the past tense, as if we were once here, and then the Spanish came, and then we just kind of disappeared. One time I remember I had to do *'the mission project'*. I went to Mission San Jose which is one of the missions where my ancestors were. When I was there the tour guide, and I still remember her words exactly, said, “The friendly, faithful, and peaceful Indians were happy to accept Spanish culture and the Catholic faith.” She also said the Spanish built the missions. I went home and told my father what the tour guide said. He could tell that I was a little shaken up. Then he said, “If somebody were to come into our house and try to take everything that you cared about, everything that was special to you, and then try to take your house, and then on top of that, try to

change who you are as a person, do you think you'd be happy about that?" Our ancestors weren't happy that the Spanish came here. They would rather have done without them. They weren't happy to come to the missions, but they came because one way they survived was that they adapted. They adapted to the change in culture and to the changing times. It doesn't mean they gave up their culture or their religion, or their beliefs, or their language – none of that. It just means they blended new things coming from a different part of the world and that's how we survived." I was fortunate to have a bit of home education and a strong family structure that fought against the misconceptions. My family has always been supportive of supplementing my education to make sure that I was learning that the California Indian voice is present.

The struggle still goes on. My little brother, who is ten years old, did his mission project this year. When they first started the missions, he raises his hand in class and said, "I'm Indian. I'm Ohlone." The teacher said, "You can't be Ohlone. I know a real Indian that lives on a reservation and he doesn't look anything like you." He came home in tears. My mom went to the school the next day. She told the teacher. "Every culture over time adapts new things. Are you wearing the same clothes your ancestors wore thousands of years ago?" The teacher apologized, but in some ways the damage was done, because when that happens it de-legitimizes kids' self-esteem and takes away from their cultural pride. Fortunately, Gabriel, my little brother, like I did, has a strong family setting and a strong cultural awareness. In so many ways we're always fighting on different fronts; if it's not one thing, it's another. For his mission project, which was pretty exciting, instead of just doing the sugar-cube mission, we made the mission being under attack by the Ohlone revolutionaries. There were some priests who were being held hostage. We got military figures and painted them Ohlone colors. We put cellophane on the side of the mission so it looks like fire is coming out at different angles. We painted toothpicks to make them look like bows and arrows. All the cattle were rounded up. There was a priest being held hostage in one of the bell towers. I asked

my brother, “What do you want to title your mission?” He said, “I’m going to title it, ‘Sometimes you got to do what you got to do.’” I think his teacher was so shook up by what happened before that she gave him an ‘A’. I wrote an article about it for [News from Native California](#).

The main thing I would like to see change in the school curriculum is to show cultural continuity, to show how even under extreme odds, Ohlone people and other California Indians, fought to keep their cultures and are still present even to this day. I talk about cultural pride and cultural continuity and also cultural resistance throughout difficult times, because it is incredibly important to remember that it would have been easier just to assimilate, and just to become American or Spanish or Mexican, but people inherently and consciously chose to not do that, and instead keep the culture, keep being Indian, and keep being Ohlone. That is something that needs to be discussed more when we are teaching kids.

At Mission Dolores when I give tours it is from my perspective which is going to be a lot different than a lot of other people might have. I notice that often when California Indian kids are on the tour, they usually listen for the first fifteen minutes. This has happened maybe ten times. Then they usually raise their hand and say something like, “I’m Indian too”, or “My grandma is a basket weaver”, or “My auntie is Pomo and makes beautiful abalone necklaces”, or “My dad is Chumash”. It’s really cool, because when they say these things, they are coming from a place of pride, of “This is me”. The reason why they even admit it on the tours is because they are proud of what they are seeing. They are being taught that their ancestors weren’t merely these hunter/gatherer Stone Age people, but instead were people of incredible complexity, who were intelligent, and brave, and strong, and who overcame huge adversities. That’s a testament to human strength and perseverance. It’s something that people understand when they are on that tour. If we could do this on a statewide level with the school curriculums, it would be of service for everybody, because then the public would be informed and California Indian kids’ self-esteem would be raised.

I've done a lot of work with the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center up in Santa Rosa where we made a supplement focused on California Indian history for the state-wide school curriculum. There will be an additional website for teachers to learn more about California Indian resistance and continuity. It wouldn't be required, but a supplement the teachers could turn to for resources. In the future I would love to see it required. It's really exciting. There is a link where you click on each Mission and see an Indian perspective from that Mission: the rebellions that happened. For example, if you click on Mission San Jose, you see the modern tribal communities that exist. If you click on Mission Santa Barbara, you see modern Chumash people and hear their voices. It's geared toward understanding the diversity of the cultures involved, versus just these black and white images of the Indians and the Spanish, which often don't include any complexity. There is still a ways to go, but it's a really good foundation to go forward. It is primarily geared for fourth graders and teachers, but anybody can visit it. The website doesn't really talk a huge amount about what people did before Contact. It mostly concerns the misinformation that is out there about the Missions. What it does discuss is how people survived and resisted the Missions, but from a Native perspective. That's the really exciting part.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

I think learning about Ohlone culture benefits everybody, because it connects people more to the land that they are living on and helps them understand more about the place they are living in. Also it helps people heal themselves. What I see a lot, and it frustrates me, is many people in the Bay Area are so helpful and care so much about issues that often are happening thousands of miles away. That's a great thing. I care about things happening far away also. One time I was at Mission Dolores and saw graffiti across the gate that said, 'Free Palestine'. I support Palestine, but the only thing that is depressing about that is that people are so willing to fight for an occupation thousands of miles away from here, but can't come to terms with the fact that our homeland was also occupied.

Aren't we also an occupied people? We've been occupied for 237 years, if anybody is counting, but it's a different reality and it almost de-legitimizes what we are fighting for.

One of the reasons why a lot of people might not know us is that they don't know about Ohlone culture and don't know that we are still here. After they learn, they become more understanding, and more prone to help us fight for what we are struggling for. Then there are people who just don't want to learn, who don't want to know what we are going through. For a long time I struggled and wondered why anyone would be against what we are fighting for, because it involves basic human rights. Then I realized Ohlone people being just present today, de-legitimizes a fake claim that the American government and other European governments have claim to this place that we call California today. So a lot of times people will turn a blind eye just because it's easier in some ways not see us. It's easier to not have to deal with the heartbreak and the pain and struggles that come with cultural imperialism and genocide, and people taking our culture away from us. If you are living in somebody's homeland, you need to cope with the fact that this occurred here. We learn so much about the Holocaust and about the Armenian genocide. We listen to the news about Syria and all the bloodshed that is happening. We *should* learn about those things, but we also need to understand that genocide occurred here in what we call California today. It was a genocide that occurred on so many different levels that it affected 90% of the population. There's no word in Chochenyo for it, but what I call it is '*murut*' which means "the darkness". That's the closest I can come in terms of entirely understanding something that is way bigger than most people can start to comprehend. It's a genocide that I feel has lingering effects; it attempted to strip an entire group away from their identity, and from their connection to the land. It failed, but that's why it's so important for us tell our story, because if we don't, then the genocide succeeded. We can't let that happen.

There is nothing radical about what we are fighting for. We are fighting for very basic human rights, for our ancestors whose bones are in the ground. Everybody deserves to have the right to an eternal resting space. We are fighting for our sacred sites, to make sure that our creation places which are like our temples or churches are protected. We are fighting for our next generation to make sure that they can grow up as Ohlone people, and speak their language, and be able to have an identity. We are fighting for the elders to make sure that all the work that they did wasn't in vain. Sometimes people say, "You are an extremist." There is nothing extreme about what I'm doing. I remain unflinching in my views and will never understand how people might be against our struggles, but I also understand that there are going to be people out there who exist with that mindset, and that trying to change their minds to understand our challenges and to fight for us and with us is important.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

There is always complexity involving living in two worlds and that's why I started a blog. I've updated it frequently for the last three or four years. It's just titled 'Being Ohlone in the 21st Century'. It is just one Ohlone perspective; I'm not speaking for everybody, just my own experience. There are a lot of things that are confusing and complex, and having my foot in both worlds can sometimes feel like a daunting task, because you want so much to be respectful, to carry on, to fight for things, but we are a modern people of the 21st Century as well. I wrote a long paper for my blog which tackles a lot of those things. It's an odd feeling to be in your traditional area that you are meant to be in, that you have been living in from the beginning of time, but then to be one of the smallest minority groups imaginable, to have several thousand of us and seven million other people living within this traditional area. It often does cause a lot of confusion. We are going into a lot of unknowns. We know that our ancestors had a strong foundation of how they lived, but

there's a lot of things in the 21st century that they didn't have back then so coming to terms of understanding how these things connect with one another is in some ways confusing, but another way to look at it is that it's perfectly normal, because every culture over time takes on new things, adapts new things, creates new words, creates new songs, creates new dances, and that's living culture, and that's how it should be. Generally with most cultures it's a gradual thing that builds up, but we had the world cave in, so it's a bit different. So how do I come to terms with that? In a lot of ways. While listening to the old wax cylinder recordings on my iPhone on BART I passed Mt. Diablo. Here I was with my iPhone listening to these ancient songs on a modern train, but seeing this ancient mountain. So many things overlap with one another. When I go out with friends to dinner we're actually right next to one of our shell mounds.

One day I was driving around the Bay Area. I had to go from my house in San Lorenzo all the way down to Mission San Jose, across the Dumbarton Bridge, up the Peninsula to Mission Dolores. I started off in my traditional village, and drove down to Mission San Jose where my ancestors lived, and then passed by one of our most sacred mountains, Mission Peak, where our families are buried at the Ohlone Cemetery. As I crossed Dumbarton Bridge I thought, "Okay back then they would've done this with tule boats, and now we can cross a bridge in our air-conditioned cars!" I passed through village after village after village after village, and then to Mission Dolores where my ancestors also are buried. Something that hit me when I was doing this is that the world around us changes, but who we are and our roots don't really change that much, because of our connection to this place. Even if the world gets paved over, if everything is paved, or if seven million more people moved here, as long as I feel like that knowledge is embedded in Ohlone people and passed down, it never really dies, or goes away. Pavement comes and goes; you can totally undo it.

One of the cores of modern Ohlone identity is knowing your sense of place, and once you know that sense of place, nobody could ever take that away from you. They will have to kill you; that's only way. Even if they kill you, then somebody else in your family knows it, and they continue it on. Modern Ohlone identity is understanding where you come from, your sense of place, where you belong. The rest of it is we fight for these places. They matter to us. We keep fighting. As long as it's there, then it's always alive in way or another. For thousands of years that's how it's always worked for us, always passing things down, and each generation being aware and conscious of passing it down to the next generation.

They started to build a subway to connect the ballpark to Chinatown and discovered a part of a shell mound in downtown San Francisco right in the middle of Fourth Street by Moscone Center; there were artifacts, tools, weapons, and jewelry right there. I told my cousin that it bothered me that part of it was being taken out. He said, "As long as it's in your memory, then it's always there in one way or another. As long as you remember exactly where that place is at and pass that on, then the village, the shell mound never really goes away. It's always right there and the stories that are connected with these places continue on as well." Modern Ohlone identity is very confusing; these are some of the complexities. I could go on forever about it.

Who is Native American/Indian?

I don't really go with the blood quota thing. If you have a drop of Ohlone blood, then you're Ohlone. I don't really like the whole idea of this person is half, or this person is three quarters, or three-eighths, because it's one way the government historically has tried to take us away from our land. You really aren't connected, because you only have this much blood or that much blood. Also, there are a lot of people in our family who aren't Ohlone, who are intermarried with our family. Sometimes they know just as much about the family history as people who are Ohlone. I think of my mom, who is Spanish, for example. When it comes to family history she knows a huge amount.

She can trace down the genealogy. She knows how to make acorns. I would joke, “You’re not Ohlone by blood, but you are pretty close.” It’s interesting. Who would I count as being Indian? I guess it would be people with Ohlone blood, but how could we exclude my parents married for twenty-five years? How could I ever have a family gathering and say, “Mom, you can’t come”?

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

Reconciliation can be a bit of a loaded word. What happened with Amah Mutsun and the Catholic Church in San Juan Bautista was very symbolic. Even though I'm not part of that tribal group, I saw the mass on TV, and it was very moving. There was a lot of heavy symbolism that's connected with it. On a larger level, reconciliation has to come with more than just words; it has to have some sort of meaning. If reconciliation is going to happen, questions have to start coming into people's minds. Does that mean that the land that was taken is going to be paid for? Does that mean we're going to provide recognition for Ohlone people? Does that mean that we're going to give back your access to sacred sites?

Everybody wants these feel-good ceremonies, but if there's nothing that really comes out of it, then what's the point? Then people are just left in the same situation they were in before. And if anything, what we've seen happen on a community basis is that we've somehow come together as Ohlone people in modern times and have successfully fought for the things that are in our interest. Most of these times we've won these battles, but there still is a long way ahead. Reconciliation, if there is going to be some sort of general coming together, really does need to be more than just words. If there were actions attached to those words that would bring healing.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

There are a lot of reasons I'm proud to be Ohlone. I could go on forever. I'm proud to feel that I'm part of a group of people who are fighters, people who don't give up, people who keep their culture, who keep their identity, who keep their presence alive. It shows a certain permanence that

goes beyond expectations and boundaries and what a lot of people have in their imagination about Indians, especially Indian people in modern society. We didn't just give it all up, and we never will.

People talk about excellence. There is Greek excellence -- the ruins of the Acropolis, and Egyptian excellence with the pyramids. I feel like every culture has people who are inherently proud of things that their ancestors have done, and that's human nature. I don't think it makes one group better than another; we all deserve a right to feel proud of those before us. People ask me, "What did the Ohlone people do?" I can respond to that based on two things, anthropological, and also oral tradition, which at least in my family got mixed in a lot together. In California and the Bay Area what we know existed here, and we can document this through the shell mounds, archaeological records, oral traditions, and stories, is one of the longest periods of sustained peace in human history. We're talking thousands of years of sustained peace, because of the virtues and values of Ohlone culture, but also because of the geography and nature of California. Here we see all of these different '*centers of the world*'. "My creation story started on Mt. Diablo." "My creation story started north of it." "My creation story started south of it." But somehow all of these stories, all of these '*centers of the world*', don't contrast and fight and destroy one another. What they do is overlap, and that's fine. There are so many of these different beliefs, and languages and '*centers of the world*,' and religions, and basketry patterns, but somehow we all co-exist, and they made it somehow. They were fine with that and that was expected. One thing that makes me really proud is just to know that I'm part of this long, long, long lineage of people going back who compromised, who were compassionate, who had peace, who had happiness, who had prosperity, and somehow made a world, and lived in a world where they actually saw these values being used in daily life and practices. That's not to say that people didn't have war, or fight, or didn't cheat on one another, or didn't gossip about one another, because that is going to happen regardless of any culture. But on a bigger

scale is the story of coexisting and getting along despite differences. That is something I feel especially proud of.

When Ohlone people had a choice between Ohlone civilization and European civilization, they chose Ohlone civilization. They chose to stick with what they knew, and they did it intentionally. Some people say, 'Why do you use that word civilization?' Because we have a word for civilization. Our word is '*ruwwakma*', people living together. We chose that instead of what was being brought here, even though when people came here, they thought they were helping us; they weren't. What our ancestors fought for show the permanence of something that is much bigger than any of us will understand, because it is still here. It is going to live forever, because my grandkids and great-grandkids, and their great-grandkids will know these things as well. So it continues.

CHARLENE SUL-VASQUEZ



CHARLENE SUL-VASQUEZ
Descendant of the People of Chitactac
Council Woman, Confederation of Ohlone People

CULTURAL IDENTITY

When I grew up, Ohlone ways were a subtle part of life. There were no labels or categories to distinguish ‘Ohlone-ness’ from mainstream American ways. We didn’t know any Ohlone songs or dances, we did not know what it meant to be in ceremony. The grandkids went to church with Grandma and Grandpa. Church was simply a time to visit family, at least that is what I thought. Today, when I look back I can see that culture and tradition were simply integrated into our daily lives. Beyond church, I remember the rhythmic humming that was generally heard when parents or grandparents were playing with children, or when an adult is patting a child on the back to lull them to sleep. It wasn’t until what I consider the Ohlone cultural revival that I suddenly connected the origin of these rhythmic patterns to Ohlone prayer songs. To be specific, I was sitting in ceremony half way in dream world and half way in the physical world when the rhythms of my childhood, the humming of my grandmothers woke me; all this time they were mimicking the hypnotic ceremonial songs of the Ohlone.

One day I asked my Grandma about Ohlone songs, dances, and sacred places. She just grinned. She did not distinguish Ohlone life from everyday life. Everything she taught me was simply what her mother taught her, and what her mother before her was taught. Today I know that many of these teachings were distinctly Ohlone, but as a result of the process of near cultural genocide and assimilation, the distinctions had either become blurred, or were simply not acknowledged. I do not think elders realized they had subconsciously carried Ohlone tradition and culture forward for a new generation.

Grandma was born just south of San Jose in a place that was once called Madrone, situated near Morgan Hill and has since been annexed. She told me many stories of the cruel world she grew

up in. For her it became so unbearable that at the age of 12 she begged my great-grandmother not to send her to school anymore. My great-grandma agreed, and so, grandma traded school for cooking, cleaning and childcare, while the other members of her family worked in the nearby fields. While she did not consider herself to be Mexican, she spoke a little Spanish and her generation certainly adopted Mexican ways during the early 1900's. I came to learn that this assimilation into Mexican culture was a matter of survival. Apparently it was easier to be Mexican than it was to be Indian.

Today it is important that young people understand why the Ohlone and other Native people could not practice their traditional ways. With this understanding, the hope is that they better appreciate what those before them had to go through to survive cultural genocide and make the current revival of Ohlone-ness even possible. One day the youth will be able to share the struggles of the past with future generations. It will be essential to emphasize the need to protect the sacredness of the teachings and pass them along with reverence. For me it has been an honor and privilege to be part of a generation that is relatively free to identify with one's blood line; our ancestors deserve to be recognized and respected for their struggles. Wearing regalia, leading prayer, becoming a public figure is a privilege that must be earned, not a right simply because one is part of the bloodline.

The process of creating art can be a way to connect or reconnect with one's culture. If one is really true to their work this connection may happen. In other words, if a person is able to block external influencers and create what they see and feel, the Spirit of the past, the Spirit of the future will be reflected in one's work. I began creating work as a child by teaching myself to sketch. I used any writing utensil available. I did not have art supplies, but I loved a nice sharp pencil. Grandpa was a professional photographer and while he had his own portrait studio in downtown San Jose, he also had a small darkroom in his garage. There he kept a few art supplies that included various charcoal pencils for sketching. During my visits, he would often sharpen a few of his "special"

pencils with a carving knife and bring out scratch paper so I could draw. I am sure my sketches weren't anything more than doodles, but I never gave up and he never criticized.

Eventually, I would find myself drawing during times of trouble in order to travel outside of my environment into an infinite wonderland. Other times drawing was a way for me to release my frustration or pain by sketching interpretations of my own reality. By the time I was 10 years old, my father had 10 children; by the time I was 20 years old he would have a total of 12 children from California to Mexico. This, along with a dysfunctional home environment, essentially forced me to retreat to find my greatest joy in art forms of all types. My mother knew I was lost and understood my sadness and frustration. For that reason, she helped me find time and space to draw and protected those breaks away from chaos. I must have been around 15 years old when my drawings began to transform. My parents were separated by then and while work and school took up most of my time, I finally felt safe so my drawings reflected a much deeper sense of wonder. Simultaneously, I had been paying attention to my elders, and was piecing together our family history. I began to document some of this in my work in my drawings by sketching some of the places they referenced in their stories. I would say that for me this was the beginning of what would eventually transform into the work I share in art shows and galleries.⁹

⁹ For the past 25 years art has been one of the primary tools I have used to teach others about culture and history. Because teaching, and creating talking circles has become one of my callings, today I put much more intention in to every piece I create. When I begin the process of conceptualization, I actually call on the past through a very specific process in order to connect with Spirit. My hope is that I am always working within the realm of Spirit and that my work reflects this connection for others. At the very least, I hope my work, and the work of my students inspire others to use art as a form of communication.

In terms of the technical process for a particular project, I begin by turning to the environment for inspiration. If I am creating a piece specifically for an individual, it is also important that I understand the natural environments that inspire that person. With this foundation, I then conduct preliminary research to uncover the ancestral history of the intended recipient. Finally, I take the time needed to process everything. At this point I wait for inspiration and internal guidance before beginning the physical process of creation. This practice may seem drawn-out or obscure, but the end product is almost always a broad interpretation of the past present and future for a particular individual or an intricate discussion topic. Without a strong connection to the past, my work would definitely carry a different vibe and project a different message. That being said, there is a certainly space for work that better reflects the future, and I admire those artists that can take us there.

After decades of following this personal process, and years of feedback, I began to share the concept of art as a way to explain culture and history to college students in my Ethnic Studies classes. I wondered if the process of integrating research and art would inspire students to engage. For the past four years, taught students in Central

My grandfather, Mac Hernandez, was definitely my primary inspiration and the protector of my Spirit. When I was born I was very sick. I was in the hospital for the first four years of life, only occasionally able to leave for a few hours at a time. My grandfather did not like hospitals, but he would send me books and small gifts. I learned to read sometime before I was four years old, so he would send me books. Eventually, I underwent heart surgery and I was able to go home. From that time on we were really close and I spent a lot of time just observing him. People seemed to respect him and he seemed to have friends everywhere we went. As mentioned before, my own home was truly dysfunctional. My grandparents' home was certainly a safe haven for me. I enjoyed the company of my grandfather. He was always encouraging and he never judged others. I was a dreamer and an artist. He was a hard worker, a successful entrepreneur, a problem solver and a photographer. In many ways we were alike I suppose.

When I was really young we did not do any traveling. Our lives and everything we knew was pretty much confined to the boundaries of the city of San Jose. My grandfather would be the first person to take my sister and me on short car trips where we would go visit local dams like Calero and Lexington. Sometimes he drove us to the gates of Mt. Umunhum where we would look out over the valley. During each car trip he might share a story about one of his brothers or sisters. We drove to his favorite places in Santa Clara County. Once in a while, we would drive to Morgan Hill to visit the burial site of my great-grandmother, Francis Herman. He was sincerely dedicated to

Minnesota. Most students were college students, with less than 2% of my overall student population representing students of color. Other students came from an adult school for new immigrants. While some students came from places like China, Korea, and Latin America, the majority of students came from Somalia and neighboring countries. Art was an essential component no matter what group I was working with.

In the college classes, before discussing Ethnic Studies, or race relations, I required students to create a final group project. First they wrote an academic level research paper comparing the migration and history of their family to that of one of the racial groups we would be studying. Once the research was complete, they had to interpret their findings in the form of a creative work of art or non-traditional presentation. Finally, colleagues offered anonymous critiques of the creative interpretations. With few parameters, and unlimited access to multiple historical resource materials the students documented the immigration and migration of their ancestors, which culminated into works of art that they could share with their own families. Each work of art was a way for them to connect with their generational past and bring it forward for future generations. As an Ohlone teacher, I felt like I had passed along a new process for thinking about the way one might connect with the past and further internalize their experience.

keeping her site clean, and those surrounding her. He often brought a few garden tools, just in case there was work to be done. I use to wonder about his dedication. Today I can only guess that since my grandmother was sick and rarely traveled, he had promised her to tend to the gravesite. Perhaps on the other hand, since some of his family members passed while traveling between farms for work, the care of one individual was a tribute to his entire family. The lesson learned was the protection of gravesites. Sadly, the protection of Ohlone descendants is a huge occupation for many Ohlone today. Those car trips encouraged us to explore, taught us about family history, the integrity of our ancestors, and the responsibility we have towards protecting the past. My grandfather's life in general, and learning about his journey as a child migrant farm-worker turned successful entrepreneur, made me believe I could do anything, go anywhere for the sake of bettering society.

When I was a teenager in the late 1970's, and showed interest, Uncle Butch (Kenneth Hernandez) began to share what he knew of Ohlone culture and Native Americans. Prior to that, I had a feeling we were Native, but no one would confirm it. My uncle and my grandmother definitely held different positions when it came to identity. My grandmother still believed, and had no reason not to believe, that our heritage should remain unspoken. She did not want her children or grandchildren to experience the harsh discrimination she felt. Both she and my grandfather believed that assimilation would protect us. Uncle Butch, on the other hand, was very proud of his identity. After all, it was a different time; he was born in the early 50's. He was one of the youngest in my mother's family. During the 1970's he was a thick skinned biker, and a rebel in many ways, including his insistence in claiming his heritage. He really did not care about those who might try to shut him down when he spoke of being Native. He was pretty outspoken. Unfortunately, he was alone in his cultural pride and I know that created family tension as well as societal conflict. Growing up, no one spoke of our blood-line, not my mother, my aunts, my uncles, or my older cousins. It certainly was not a matter of shame or blame; it was the result of generational

assimilation and systematic racism that many people a generation or two later did not really understand.

Things began to change when one day Uncle Butch left a book with my grandmother. She was to deliver it to me, but of course, as an avid reader, she read it first! This book was *The Ohlone Way*. While she could not confirm or deny the contents, apparently she was able to make enough of a connection that she allowed Uncle Butch to share what he knew. He was the one who made me my first necklace and a few other things. Every now and then I would run into him at Grandma's and my first assignment was to braid his hair. By now, Grandma seemed to be okay with the identity he wore on his shirtsleeve. He passed around 1996 and Grandma was the one who asked me to arrange for his ceremonial memorial. The journey of that task was what opened the door to the Ohlone contemporary community for my family and myself.

In addition to Uncle Butch, Grandpa Mac and his whole family came to the United States as a migrant worker during the time of the Bracero Program. More than anyone else, he knew the importance of documentation and the need to prove one's identity. Eventually, the discussion I had been having would light a fire in my Grandpa and he helped me begin my journey to confirm our place in the Ohlone world.

When we began our genealogy research in the mid 1980's we did not know a single person tracing their heritage, so we started from almost scratch. It turns out that before Uncle Butch passed, Grandpa helped him collect evidence to prove his Ohlone heritage. Uncle Butch was trying to qualify for a specific program for Native Americans and my grandparents had a short letter written by my great-great aunt that traced our lineage to Spanish missionaries. This letter was enough at the time to demonstrate our Ohlone heritage. Pre-internet, with a few tattered hand-written documents, we began our journey.

Grandpa and I went to the main library in downtown San Jose which has a section dedicated to California history. I was already in love with libraries, but this to me was amazing! The librarian was so helpful. If you have never visited the “California Room” you can find rare maps, articles, and historical documentation. Most important, and unlike the internet, the librarians are incredibly knowledgeable. During our visit, the librarian referred us to specific historical societies that might help provide information. We were pretty lucky. Not many people were interested in genealogy at the time so librarians and historians were happy to help.

I would say that the most helpful organization was a group called “Los Californios.” Based upon the information we had, we knew that in the 1700’s a Spaniard by the name of Manuel Butron had married an Ohlone woman and that during the time they were married their family owned a ranch. We were given more details, but the point was that we were led to documents to substantiate the tattered letter scribed by my great-great aunt.

As it turns out, we were direct descendants of Ohlone families that originally lived in what is now Carmel. My understanding was that our family moved north in an attempt to escape the mission system. We have mission records that take us to Monterrey, San Juan Bautista and then Santa Clara. I never checked for records at Mission Dolores, but I never felt the need. My mother and some of her siblings were born in San Francisco, and my grandparents met in Oakland; that was enough for me.

I actually became involved in the cultural revitalization process at a really young age. There were so many things in my family that were not talked about in terms of culture. I was confused because I grew up at towards the end of the Civil Rights Movement. I learned to read before I was 4 years old, and we did not have many children’s books. Instead I read newspapers, dictionaries and encyclopedias. I did not understand everything I read, but I knew people were trying to make a difference and some of this activity was organized by race. I wanted to know where I belonged. No

one in my family was a political activist and no one would answer my questions regarding the political actions taking place. I simply had to educate myself.

By the time I was 12 years old, I had had the opportunity to see Cesar Chavez speak on a few occasions. We lived in the Santa Teresa area of San Jose at the time, and a neighbor hosted weekly bible study meetings at a neighbor's house. We did not even read the bible. Instead, a pretty cool guy, Father Mateo, facilitated what I would now call a talking circle. Everyone in attendance was under 16 years old. Some came because they enjoyed the company, some came because they were high and simply wanted a warm place to chill. I think the organizers knew all of this and wanted a safe place for brown skinned kids who might be wandering the streets of this mostly white neighborhood. Now that I think about it, duh!!! These were the first community activists I ever really knew. I went to the meetings for no other reason except that this is where my friends liked to hang out and yes, Father Mateo was sort of an Uncle figure. On a few occasions he took us to Most Holy Trinity Church in East San Jose where I first saw Cesar Chavez speak. The evening was incredible! I remember the outpouring of those in attendance. People had walked, biked and carpooled to the church. There were speakers outside to allow everyone nearby hear the messages to be shared. During those visits the parking lot was not for cars because it was used for the standing audience waiting to hear what he had to say. At that point I came to realize the need to understand one's identity. I began to understand oppression, and that no matter what my home and community environment might seem to be, I needed to find a way to rise beyond any set expectations. I never imagined myself as a leader; in fact the teachings were of humility, of service to others. We had a chance to hear other speakers, whether they came to our bible studies class, or we went to see them. Clearly if our parents were not instilling the need to be politically active, this circle of church leaders tried. At the end, I learned that if I ever wanted to help others make a difference, I first needed to know who I was.

In my family the focus was simply to be a good person. This meant going to school and finding a way to contribute and to pay your own way, if you were old enough. I had my first real job, where I kept my earnings when I was 12. Prior to that my grandmother took me and my aunts to the nearby fields to pick prunes during the summer. Work and school were a priority. None of the adults in our family spoke of our family history or heritage. I didn't ask because I didn't need to; it was almost an unspoken rule not to pry. Grandma sometimes asked me, "Why are you so nosey?" I would generally smile and she would ignore my questions.

After hearing Cesar Chavez, I asked my mother how my grandfather came to the United States. I knew he was born in Mexico because he often spoke of one day returning. My mother's response was to tell me that life was hard for Grandpa when he was young and since he was not one to complain and he did not want pity, he simply did not share family history. The fact was that he had overcome many obstacles and had become a successful businessman. She emphasized that my only concern should be whether or not we were being provided for. Needless to say, her response did not satisfy my curiosity. At that point, I took it upon myself to read anything I could about Native Americans, Chicanas and the places I knew best: Santa Clara Valley, the San Francisco Bay Area and the Santa Cruz coast.

By the time I was 15 years old, I felt pretty confident about the general history of people and migration, but I still did not know about my family and that fire would not go out. As time passed I began to ask ANY family member who would give me an answer to short simple questions. I often sat quietly at the large family gatherings just trying to absorb what I could. It was an attempt to begin to piece together a story of heritage. Through this process I became more acquainted with South San Jose, Almaden Valley, San Martin, Morgan Hill, Gilroy and Madrone. I learned about the place where my grandmother and great-grandmother were born and the places they enjoyed as

children. I knew our family lived within this small region for generations, but the various stories I collected created a richer, multi-generational timeline.

By my early twenties Grandma understood my sincere interest in our family and regularly shared pictures, documents and family information. I remember holding one of the first old authentic family documents. To me it was amazing! The document Grandma shared was a handwritten journal entry written in what appeared to be an accounting ledger. The paper was frail, the ink faded and the penmanship exquisite. This single page which had been removed from a ledger listed family members, including dates of births and deaths going back to the late 1800's. More important it was penned by family members generations before me. I never saw the book it came from, but seeing this one page made my dedication to research worthwhile. The next natural step was to figure out how this information might help fill in gaps. I wondered about those on the list who I had never heard of. Why did some of the spellings of names change? Why is it that some people were on this list and some were not?

Grandma never drove and eventually I would often become her designated driver. She rarely left home and as she became older it seemed that I was the one who chaperoned her and my grandfather to family funerals. It may sound strange, but I am guessing her plan was to connect me to distant relatives. Grandma had a big family with hundreds of nieces and nephews. During this string of funeral/family reunion attendance, I had a chance to hear so many stories. Some of the stories created biographical sketches, and some helped me imagine what the environment was like prior to the influx of major corporations. So I did not mind being the chaperone. Before she passed, Grandma gave me this document for safe-keeping. At least that is what she said. I think she gave it to me to remind me of my commitment to the ancestors.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

To me cultural revitalization is about land and access to land so that future generations have the space to practice and share cultural ways. Right now we have over half a dozen projects dealing with the protection or access to Ohlone land. Ohlone people and other California Native people who understand Spirit and ancestral responsibility know the importance of this issue. While development projects will continue to take place, there must be open spaces available for prayer, healing, the gathering of medicine, and then passing these ways on to the future generation.

One of the places currently in jeopardy of destruction is within the Altamont Pass. The Altamont Pass is an incredibly busy thorough way; while thousands of commuters drive through these hills, imagine that just beyond eye sight is a State Park of documented Ohlone cultural importance. Further, imagine that not only is this park restricted from public access, but Ohlone people who have asked for permission to visit the sacred site, are also prohibited from visiting the park, and that the intent for the land is off-road vehicle trails, known to destroy the surface of the land, as demonstrated by the off-road vehicle trails just adjacent to this government property. This is one example of poor land use planning that brings the Ohlone frustration and sadness.

Mt. Umunhum is another place on Ohlone radar. It was forever occupied by the Air Force which has long since left that area, and now it is considered open space and funding has been allocated for environmental clean-up and eventually recreational development. Both Mt. Umunhum and Altamont Pass/Patterson Pass are two peaks that surround the valley where Ohlone lived prior to the migration of non-Natives. Indeed these places are revered.

Little Basin in the Santa Cruz Mountains is a great example of the reclamation of important outdoor space. Little Basin is acreage in the middle of pristine redwood forest. This serene parcel was once owned and managed by Hewlett Packard as an outdoor corporate retreat facility. During that time, it was manicured and converted into a contemporary campsite with all of the finest

amenities including: a tennis court, baseball field, outdoor kitchen with a meat locker, an indoor as well as outdoor food prep areas, showers and amphitheaters! Due to a number of economic downturns, the facility was abandoned and eventually taken over by the State of California.

In 2011 the 1,000 Hummingbirds, a women's council I helped to create, held their annual gathering at this location. As it turns out, Little Basin had a new caretaker, an organization that ran youth and family outdoor educational activities. The Hummingbirds would be the first group to camp on the land in decades, and likely the first group to lay a whole week of prayers on the land for generations. While there we witnessed Earth in all of her glory. She was literally reclaiming the once manicured space in the most elegant ways. The roads were cracking and the tennis court was disintegrating, allowing grass to coming through. Trees which were meticulously trimmed were growing back to their natural state. According to the Naturalist and the Facility Manager they assured us that the long-term plan was focused on land rehabilitation. It is hard to explain, but over 100 women attended this particular retreat and each one testified that they felt and appreciated the new strong energy.

We must not forget the importance of song and dance. I don't know how many people realize it, but this is documented and is evident in many cultures. It just lifts your spirit and engages communities. Song and dance does not have to be "ancient" or "traditional" to be Ohlone or Native. The fact is that today's creators of Spirit are alive; dances and songs are meant to reflect contemporary environments. People like to argue about authenticity, but the fact is that if culture is to remain intact, it must be alive. Allowing youth to create new songs, dances, art forms, and means of communicating their identity will only keep the Ohlone spirit alive. Spiritual singers and dancers may agree that when one is truly expressing one's self and encouraging community engagement through song and dance, the Spirit cannot help but soar; there is no pretense for the energy I am referring to. It is so incredibly important for children to get that feeling.

The dancers represent the flow of energy that surrounds them. When you're dancing, and your heart is in the dance, you actually become part of that energy that's flowing. This energy will change, depending upon the dedication for a particular dance. If you were in the Bear Ceremony, for example, and are part of that dance, then you feel the energy carried by the bear dancers. It is easy to become consumed by the experience of dance; it is said to be healing. It cannot be healing, however, unless the dancers' intentions are good.

Singers also are important to the dance. The role of the singer is to bring life to the circle, and to the instruments they might be incorporating (clappers, rattles, drums, etc.) It's not just the dancing and singing, but the musical instruments can be used to control the flow of energy. The goal is not that any one person stands out, instead if everyone works in sync, the community will feel like they too fit in. Before they begin, dancers and singers are expected to pray for good things to happen for others. It is important to remain centered so that the group is working together to manage the energy each community member might need. Sometimes when you finish dancing you are absolutely drained; you know you gave all of your best energy for the people who need it most.

When we talk about protecting ceremony, part of it is to protect the integrity and intent of the ceremony so the foundation does not change. It is a demonstration of respect for the ancestors, and specifically an honoring for those who survived the impact of the Catholic mission system. Good things happen with every ceremony. It's absolutely true when people say they saw or felt something special during a ceremony, and that ceremony can heal and guide. When people new to ceremony go out into modern society and share their experience, sometimes others do not understand or create doubt, essentially discrediting ceremony.

I believe we all have the ability to communicate on different levels in this world, but it's easy to get distracted by others and doubt your own experience. For example, one might experience a dream where an "actor" in the dream shares a strong message. You wake up and tell somebody and

are told, “It’s just a dream.” What if it wasn’t really *just* a dream? What if that message was really important? What if that message was meant for you to pass on to another person and that exchange never took place? When somebody tells me about their dream experience, I don’t say much. I don’t judge or question others.

I have had a chance to teach others about ceremony and the respect that goes along with creating and bringing ceremonial elements to life. For example, while a child may be able to create a shell necklace, there is so much more to the creation of something for ceremony. It is important to teach young people how to create items in a ceremonial way, and then to protect them in a similar fashion. If proper protocol is met, prayer experiences are sure to be incredible. To this extent, my hope is that not only have I been able to connect with the past personally, but I have also begun to teach others to do the same.

Over the last fifteen years I have been talking to people from other tribes regarding their work about the preservation of culture and language. I am always happy to learn, happy to share. Perhaps it is through these exchanges that Native youth across the country will gain the internal strength needed in order to surpass society’s expectations for them. Over time, I have had a chance to see some of my ideas implemented. Successful projects have taken a holistic approach to family exploration and identity. Through photography and drawing, youth have been asked to first document their families and then share their work with grandparents. The real goal is simply to strike a conversation between the two generations about their environment, and perhaps family history. While youth have been asked to record voices, due to lack of equipment that component has not been as successful. At the end of these assignments general feedback was usually pretty positive, being a learning experience and a bonding experience at the same time.

Eventually I attended San Jose State University and earned a Master's Degree studying holistic educational practices. Indigenous based teachings can be useful in many settings.¹⁰

Bridge-building seems to be my role. When I was younger, people spoke of “giving away the medicine” in terms of how we shared culture and tradition. I truly understood that this idea had been tied to the near cultural genocide from the past. But I would submit that we live in a world that is sometimes more understanding. While it is still imperative to protect sacred ways, I have witnessed the coming together of diverse communities for the purpose of protecting the sacred. The sacred being land, water and the Spirit of all ancestors.

I can offer many examples of the meeting of the minds. For example, I met a naturalist several years ago at one of my favorite prayer places. He was about to retire and I was new to this space. Upon first meeting, he stated, “You are Ohlone. I knew it!” I had been looking for a particular place which had been shared with me only through story. I knew I was close, and I had a feeling he might be my guide. He asked me a number of questions. I didn't know it at the time, but they were essentially test questions to see if I knew who I was and what I was truly seeking. I must have passed the test because then he started telling me about the elders who had passed through during his tenure. He shared how they had passed on some stories about the land and Ohlone

¹⁰ For example, when I first arrived in Minnesota where I currently live, I volunteered to take on an assignment for a non-profit called Hands Across the World. Initially, I was asked to teach art to refugee students. Essentially, I turned this class into an English language and cultural immersion experience for students. A new life in America was more complicated than they had planned. Most students were from Somalia and Sudan. In addition, there were students from Asia and other students from Latin America. I knew the concept of “art” was useless to some of the students, but sewing would be helpful. Students were truly interested in learning English and understanding their new community, so I used art as the vehicle to create discussion and invite exploration.

Around this same time I heard stories about incidents based on of racial prejudice around the state of Minnesota. In response Minnesota mandated that college students should complete a course addressing racial issues. This requirement effected all college students earning a two year degree or higher. The course could be offered through a number of areas of study, but the goal was to provide forums for discussions. In learning about this opportunity to offer students a new perspective on American history I submitted a few applications and was given the opportunity to teach Ethnic Studies at St. Cloud State University. In accepting this opportunity, I would go from hearing the stories of new immigrants being impacted by racial intolerance, to working with traditional students who often grew up witnessing and sometimes perpetrating prejudice. Today my role in the area of cultural revitalization has truly changed. While I will always be an advocate for Ohlone, my hope is to teach truth and understanding to young people from all walks of life; the long-term impact will be a more thoughtful society, or at the least, honest discussions about race, historical migrations and injustices will provide an alternative perspective in regards to what students have been taught about American history.

culture. At the end of our conversation he talked about the weight he carried. He was about to retire, leaving the place he had protected for decades. He was waiting to find the right person to share these stories with. He directly stated that he knew the information he carried belonged to Ohlone people. I believe that some people are caretakers of the stories, and whether they know it or not, they walk in Spirit. While he was not Native, he was definitely a caretaker of the stories. He knew it wasn't time to release the stories he had heard, but the elders never would have shared the stories with him if had not earned their trust. I have come across this type of experience again and again. I am truly grateful to those who understand and truly respect the dissemination of information. Being a caretaker of knowledge, respecting the wishes of others to hold information sacred is not always truly understood. Bridges between generations can be created with a strong understanding for the responsibility of being a caretaker and keeper of knowledge.

One Thousand Hummingbirds ~

The idea of a women's council focused on water issues was conceived over 10 years ago at an Ohlone gathering in Indian Canyon which is an Ohlone place of prayer near Hollister, California. The first conversation was spurred by a small group of Ohlone women concerned about issues surrounding the availability of water and access to clean water in particular. In Indian Canyon alone, where there was once a thriving waterfall, dropping into a babbling creek, over a short period of time the water had all but disappeared. As discussions continued over the next few years, the circle grew to include women from other nations, from all walks of life, everyone with a water story and genuine concern. Nearly two years after the first conversations, Catherine Herrera, brought up the idea of a council of women who would gather to hold prayers for water. It was agreed that the name of the council would be the One Thousand Hummingbirds. From the time of the initial gathering, I would become the first Council leader and a constantly evolving group of women took turns as council and committee members committed to the success of the first four years of the 4-

day gatherings. During the first four years, the idea of environmental preservation, water purity and prayer ways took on a natural progression. Each year was guided by an international, multi-generational Hummingbird community of women with basic common understandings. We knew, for example, that prayers must be accompanied by spiritual teachings, leadership teachings, and most important, a call to action. We quickly began to hear more stories of women having similar discussions and gatherings around water and environment issues throughout the state and word spread across the country.

Hearing the need for action, our first move was to create an invitational that would allow women to share the concerns as a representative of their respective communities. More than addressing regional concerns, my personal hope was that participants would share their own involvement in terms of political or social action that seemed to be making a difference. By facilitating discussions, perhaps solutions to common problems would be revealed. In the meantime, I knew we needed to take it upon ourselves to create awareness and promote possible solutions. As miracles happen, for the first gathering we were welcomed by the naturalists at Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont, California thanks to Bev Ortiz, a long-time advocate of Native people and the Ohlone in particular. The support we received from the park staff was incredible. They provided us with all of the things that we needed to convert a dry, remote park location into a temporary village site for a 4-day gathering. When the park staff asked us how many women would be in attendance, we estimated that perhaps 50 women could commit for the entire four days. At the end of the first year there were over a hundred women who camped out for the duration of the gathering. A dozen or more came early to build our temporary village space; a few women stayed afterwards to help return the space back to its original state. It was truly a beautiful experience of teaching, learning and praying. The second year we moved to a different location and we estimated two hundred women. Instead, over three hundred committed to the 4-day camp out. Today women

still ask about the gathering and look forward to the gathering to be hosted by a new council of women. While mission statements evolve, today the One Thousand Hummingbird mission reads as follows:

Hummingbird Women are inspired to lift their hearts, lift their voices and lift their energy. Hummingbird Women have stepped forward and with absolute purpose, finding ways to heal and protect Earth using the skills already within each one of us. *“Through every action there is a reaction.”* Our actions move others to reflect upon their own actions. Hummingbird Women live with the certain knowing that: *The time is now!*

The One Thousand Hummingbird council is now in its sixth year. New leadership will carry the mission forward. The council was never intended to stay with the Ohlone. From its inception, our hope was that others would be moved to take on the task of leadership and sharing the hummingbird message in their community. The founding council members are pleased that the One Thousand Hummingbird circle will continue to thrive with new energy.

Language Restoration ~

I have studied the language, but I can't hold a conversation. I speak a few words. I'm always practicing. A lodge leader by the name of Grey Fox, or Uncle Gordon, told me that songs, dances, cultures, medicine ways, traditional practices for living and being never disappear. They will all come back to you in dreams, through Spirits who will reveal the way. That being said, one needs to be open minded and unafraid. If you do not understand your dreams, if you are afraid of your own visions, it is likely that you will miss an opportunity to bring something from the past back to life. Day dreaming, night dreaming is the doorway to an unspoken world. Language is sometimes the connection to that other world. While I do not speak the language, the elder I relied on told me not to worry, it was likely my children or grandchildren would learn. My path would take me in a different direction. These discussions were taking place during the 90's. That became my mantra to those wanting to learn. "It will come back to you in your dreams, in songs." I was told that one day I

would be standing next to somebody who will speak to me in Ohlone language. At the time I was told that for me it was not whether I learned the language, but to focus on *living* the language.

My son, Anthony, is an incredible Ohlone singer doing everything he can to bring the language back through song. Anthony is surrounded by young adults; each of them use the language to pray and offer short dialogue. My grandchildren are learning from Anthony. I sometimes find myself standing next to Ohlone speakers and it is almost 100 years after they say the last Ohlone speaker passed.

Today is an incredible time. It's a time of melding the Ohlone language with contemporary times. Speakers of all ancient languages must use traditional words to describe a modern society. It is truly inspiring to know that the language lives and evolves at a time when it is once again "okay to be Indian" as Grandma Edna once said.

Role of the Elders in the Revitalization Process ~

Certainly there are a handful of Elders visible at Ohlone gatherings, but they are truly such an incredibly small proportion of the larger population of Ohlone Elders. Outside of those who have made their way to the "circle," most Elders are not present in the circle because they truly do not have a conscious understanding for Ohlone people. They often do not know about the revitalization of culture. It is difficult when our ways have sometimes not been sustained over generations. Sometimes Ohlone my age are teaching those 20 years our elder. That being said, what I've learned is that the Elders are becoming more interested and supportive as the younger adults demonstrate their dedication to Ohlone-ness. Even without a clear understanding for Ohlone ways and history, Elders have been known to "catch the Spirit" and become inspirational and a motivating factor for those who are younger.

For example, my grandmother did not talk about her youth for many reasons. I think a lot of it has to do with embarrassment and shame. I remember Uncle Butch often claiming, "I'm

Indian.” Grandma would quickly correct him saying, “No you’re not. Stop talking about that.” She had childhood lessons of privacy and protection ingrained in her memory. While she taught her children not to be ashamed or embarrassed about who they were, at the same time not one of her children knew for sure if they were Native. It was more of a family rumor. The only thing I could figure was the concept of “If you don’t talk about identity, you’re not lying.” If you don’t say anything bad, then you’re not hurting anybody. Today, however, things have changed and the Elders I know are excited to see people searching for information and trying to get it right for once.

History and truth can be healing. Here is a short example: my granddaughter, Boots, got really, really sick and ended up in the hospital. On my first visit to her I brought some spearmint from our yard. I used to take this same plant to Grandma when she was in the hospital. She loved the aroma. She said spearmint reminded her of home and her childhood. Every visit I brought her a fresh batch, and she would share stories of her childhood. Grandma would hold the bunch and rub it on her face. It seemed as if the aroma helped to wake her memory as she was able to describe things so vividly. When I took Grandma’s medicine to my granddaughter when she was in the hospital, I knew it would help her. She was having respiratory problems and I knew the spearmint would bring Grandma’s Spirit back. My daughter, Justina, and I put the spearmint in my Boots’ little hospital bed and offered prayers. The nurses were a bit concerned. They began to ask questions. “Oh, what’s that in her bed? Is that mint? Do you use it for tea? Do you make something with it? I know my grandmother does.” At some point, I suppose they figured our doings were beyond their comprehension, so they let us have our way. To me that was a blessing in itself. I brought the spearmint for Boots, but this process helped the nurses realize that yes, indeed, people still use fresh herbs for healing. Our way, the Ohlone way, peaked their curiosity.

Significance of the Women Elder Ceremony at Indian Canyon ~ 2005

As people get older they start to really think about their lives and where they've been. Many elders end up secluded, whether they are in their home or their local neighborhood. For many reasons, travel simply becomes less frequent. I saw that with a lot of those ladies who came to the first Women Elders Ceremony at Indian Canyon. In these cases, it is important to convince elders that they are appreciated and have a place in the community. The really, really exciting thing was that the Elder women had a chance to talk amongst themselves and share the similarities in their histories. Even though some of them had never met each other, it was as if they lived in parallel universes. When they had a chance to share, it felt like a gap in their cultural identity began to make sense. When they spoke it was as if they could finally release their true identity to those beyond their family circle. I did not know any of the ladies prior to the Elders circle because they had never been to the Ohlone ceremonies. Most of them did not even know Ohlone ceremony was alive. However, once we were connected we hugged and all I remember were the tears that came as they said "thank you, thank you" over and over again. It was an honor and transformative experience to recognize them and bring their Spirit back to the Ohlone circle after generations of disconnect. To me the most important part of the honoring of elders, is bringing in new elders. Such a gathering creates an opportunity for individuals to reclaim their Native identity, not for themselves, but for their entire family, for generations to come.

The women who came together at Indian Canyon are a part of a generation who had never been connected to their Ohlone-ism. Ohlone culture and ceremony had not been a part of their lives. Even those who knew they carried Ohlone blood, generally did not practice the ways. The great thing is that when you see elders in ceremony today, you often see them transform before your eyes. Ceremony is intended to be a "homecoming" of sorts. It can be healing and rejuvenating; it is intended to be welcoming. Some of the ladies who came to the first honoring were a little

confused and overwhelmed. First, the gathering was entirely women, and that was awesome. Some had simply never seen people in regalia, and had never been before the sacred fire. They were being honored as individuals by a community they did not even know existed.

So what might be the role of an Elder separated from her indigenous history? Perhaps their role is simply to be present. That alone can be spiritually and mentally healing for them, but also encouraging for those working so hard to revitalize Ohlone-ism. While the Elders who consistently show up to gatherings understand their lineage, a majority of elders do not know Ohlone ways. Families might have been assimilated into the Mexican lifestyle or adopted mainstream American culture. In this case, THEIR presence and encouragement is truly needed and appreciated. While some Ohlone may not be able to speak in terms of traditional Ohlone culture, young ones still need to appreciate what those before them went through. The young ones need to appreciate their role as the new carriers of Spirit. The role of Elders in any community is sometimes the task of reminding the younger generations about the need to walk with dignity, be respectful to themselves and others and be thoughtful with their words. What I am speaking of is not specific to being Ohlone, it is about guiding others to be stronger in a chaotic society. It is about talking to the next generation about living thoughtfully and purposefully from sunrise to sunset. These are the things elders can speak to.

There are other honoring of the Elders gatherings that take place on a regular basis. I went to my first Honoring of Ohlone Elders over 25 years ago at Mount Madonna. While the Mount Madonna gathering has changed, the first gatherings were dedicated to the Ohlone. Each honoring ceremony focuses on the special medicine elders carry. Facilitating a gathering in order to give elders an opportunity to share this medicine and encourage future generations serves to provide healing and strength to the community.

While I can speak of the influence my own grandfather had on my life, I can point to a few elders from the first honoring circles who were incredible influences. They gave me my marching orders and while these elders have now passed, I still hear their voices guiding the way. For this reason, I would like to see Ohlone gatherings in general grow. I am not speaking of inviting the general population; I am talking about family members encouraging their Ohlone family members to attend. This is how the culture, tradition, language and Ohlone Spirit will survive.

FUTURE VISION ~

I think it would start with personal wellness and then community wellness. In 1992 I created the Ohlone Wellness Project. The intent was to encourage those who had been disconnected generationally from their heritage to simply return to their place of creation and reconnect with their indigenous surroundings. We organized small gatherings at the ocean or other sacred places for prayer and reconnection. Eventually, we showed up at larger Ohlone gatherings with materials to teach pine needle basket making or shell necklace creation. The success of this project is that today there are others continuing exactly what we started. It is wonderful to see people using ceremony gathering time to teach others to create, or simply host a place for artists to work on regalia or gifts. In addition, I have seen some of those who sat in our circles now showing off their skills in art shows. Indeed, it is an example of the rejuvenation of Ohlone-ism.

The next natural step was to try and create an objective forum to engage those who had a grasp of their cultural identity and history with those who were coming alive with their roots. As a result, the Confederation of Ohlone People was created. The original intent was not to focus on tribal recognition or even associate with any particular tribe. Instead, the primary function was to allow anyone to join, whether they were connected to a group seeking federal recognition or not. While tribes tend to function as a closed membership, we wanted to create an inviting space in

society for Ohlone descendants wanting to learn their history, and also to serve as a resource for community members needing to connect with the Ohlone people.

Interestingly the second goal, to serve as a community liaison, seems to have surpassed the first goal. Today, we serve more as a source for referrals or voice for the Ohlone. People interested in educational resources will contact us in search of classroom ideas and we have been called to make classroom visits. When international visitors come to Ohlone territory we might be called in order to arrange for a proper welcoming. When Ohlone remains are unearthed we have been contacted to share our voice, or attend a meeting. When good news comes related to the protection of land or healing projects, we are happy to be contacted in an effort to collaborate or provide advice. Because the focus of the organization is on inclusion, building bridges, and welcoming allies, the network that surrounds and supports the Confederation of Ohlone People is a demonstration of the emergence of insightful community members. Sometimes the visibility of the Ohlone people along the California coast has increased because of new allies. Those who created the Confederation of Ohlone People can only be pleased by the natural evolution of the concept.

Federal Recognition ~

I have been working on an academic paper regarding the legal pitfalls of federal recognition for tribes like the Ohlone. I make reference to the idea that federal recognition is more than access to land, scholarship opportunities, and self-governance. Federal recognition acknowledges that a people *exist*. In a few recent court decisions, the court actually states in their written opinion that the tribe in question was denied federal recognition because they no longer existed and were, in fact, extinct. I KNOW the tribal chairs of these tribes! Such a broad, bold statement is incredibly disingenuous. It is no wonder that there is such tension. A complete denial of federal recognition with no option for future revitalization is the current state of affairs.

Role of Next Generation ~

Young people are becoming active in the revitalization process. By young people I am referring to those 30 years old and younger, essentially young adults, the generation following my generation. You can see their participation on multiple levels. First, one of the priorities for Ohlone people is the protection of village sites and cultural remains. Evidence of engagement is well documented in photos taken during social activist demonstrations. Not only do you see Ohlone youth represented, but you also see the community support they have been able to generate in the name of the ancestors. Often the call to organize may not always come from the young adults, but when called upon they have the capacity through technology to organize others quickly.

Today's young adults are sharing music and art more openly than ever before. I would like to think that those before them opened the doors to new venues, and the result is that the request for Ohlone artists continues to grow. Through technology like online music and video sharing, the youth have access to cutting edge technology and have been successful in promoting Ohlone issues. Finally, there is an increase in the participation of children at Ohlone gatherings. It is truly inspiring to see the participation growth of those under ten years old in regalia dancing, singing Ohlone songs, or sitting in a circle at home, without the prompting of adults. This change is due to either the exposure their young parents had as children, or grandparents encouraging the participation of children. While the young adults help create the space for a new wave of Ohlone-ness, it will be some of today's children who will finally be able to claim that they were born into a living Ohlone culture, a culture not simply preserved and experienced during ceremony or at community gatherings, but in their own home, amongst their own family members.

It really has to be a family approach and parents must take the lead. Grandparents, aunties, and uncles can help, but parents must be responsible. Imagine if Native parents really understood that culture and tradition and health and wellness and everything related to Native life was more

important that football or sleepovers with friends. Being Native, or part of any other race, is not an extra-curricular activity; it is part of one's bloodline, and one's being. Unfortunately, when you go to Native gatherings, the adult representation always far outnumbers the children. This is especially sad when you think of the fact that there are far more children in society than adults. A hand full of children at a Native gathering simply is not enough. So where are the children? How do we expect them to learn, to lead, to be spiritually and physically well?

I see Ohlone gatherings accompanied by a day to day Ohlone life equivalent to walking in Spirit shoes. Those who are involved and walk this way know the direct relationship between prayer, self-empowerment, self-respect, gratitude, humility and Ohlone culture. What I am referring to does not allow for one to walk in and out of character. To be Ohlone means sharing breath with one's ancestors and honoring their struggle and in some cases their suffering. I cannot speak to the past, but bringing children into the Ohlone way today helps to build essential foundational skills that can only be experienced when present. The holistic skills I am referring to will simultaneously sustain individuals and the Ohlone Nation.

So, how does this begin? First, those adults who seem to have a grasp for their Ohlone identity must be welcoming. It is essential to bring family members into the circle. Exclusion has been a long drawn out history for many Native people. Unfortunately, this leads to cultural and traditional genocide. When family members, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters are introduced to Ohlone specific gatherings the healing, learning and bonding will explode! Eventually, the youth will find their natural place in the circle where they must not be smothered by the voices and actions of adults. While I know adults feel that it is natural to take charge and correct youth, my belief is that the adults need to nurture and facilitate youth growth. Let them be the organizers, let them lead and finally honor them by paying attention when they call for the support of adults.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

I have five children. Justina graduated from high school in 2001 and Cassandra in 2011. All of the children went to school in Ohlone territory. From the youngest to the oldest, indeed the mission system was covered and they were taught about the role of Native Californians of the past. To the best of my knowledge, the lessons were void of contemporary California Native culture. To speak of the past is fine. I do not think any of the older children recognized the void, and I assumed teachers made mention of populations, like the Ohlone who lived within the communities. My assumption proved wrong when Anthony, my youngest son, came home angered that his teacher declared that the Ohlone were now extinct. This was in or about 1998 when Anthony was eight years old. Being pretty outspoken at times, he said, "No they're not. I am right here!" Suddenly I was asked to a meeting and eventually asked to review their curriculum. Since then I have had a chance to review curriculum for the State of California, as well as curriculum for middle school science camps hosted within Ohlone territory. In addition, the Confederation of Ohlone People has been contacted numerous times by teachers and school districts requesting cultural presentations. The problem is that requesters are looking for volunteers and finding individuals who can provide such a service without any compensation or transportation reimbursement is difficult to impossible. Truly the best solution at this time is the ability to influence state-wide and local curriculum, and to develop independent curriculum including support materials and perhaps provide teachers with regular announcements regarding public cultural activities hosted by regional parks.

Most important however, is the sharing of information with and among tribal members. As in many traditional Native cultures, the best lessons are those shared face to face over a long period of time. For Ohlone, these sharings generally take place in and around ceremonial camps. The best way to teach children is through experience and interactive opportunities. Overnight Native gatherings serve this purpose. These gatherings tend to mimic outdoor schools. Through these

family gatherings, young and old alike have the opportunity to discover the truths for themselves. The wonderful thing is that when young people are aware, they will always see the truth for what it is and question that which does not make sense.

Imagine those who had been cut off from the truth about their own history. Elders analyze their own family experience and realize they ARE Ohlone and have the power to help guide their family towards discovery. As one can imagine, this process is not easy. Essentially it means that your parents, grandparents and others kept you from your true identity. As an elder, I wonder how many felt a bit confused or deceived when their identity is confirmed. Perhaps instead knowing is a relief! Looking forward, however, things can be different for young Ohlone adults and children.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

Sharing what has been archived and documented regarding contemporary thought is key. Today, with the ease of self-publishing, and the availability of recording audio and video, people from all cultures have the opportunity to portray themselves as they choose. In a sense, we can each write our own history in a manner that is truthful and respectful. I mention this because publications available regarding the Ohlone can be inaccurate or deceptive if they were not created by the Ohlone or trusted allies. Since this is purportedly the information age, the Ohlone have certainly learned the importance of participating in the dissemination of information being shared on their behalf. In essence, when you do not like the message, change the message. I would encourage others to write, photograph, and record their own stories and life experiences that can be referenced by future generations.

Recently I was online looking at ABC news clips; all I saw were highlights of war and tragedy. Our nation is so much more. What if these types of clips were all we had to represent society in 2014? What the Ohlone have learned, what many are focused on today is taking charge of the discussion, sharing authentic stories, facilitating deeper interpersonal connections to the world.

It is critical to acknowledge that what has been taught to school children in the past simply is not true. The Ohlone people never disappeared. As mentioned before, the Ohlone assimilated into mainstream society, and in a sense became invisible for the sake of preservation. The need to linger in the shadows may have been critical in generations past, but today is different. As society struggles with the impact of environmental and political chaos, it is clear that there are those who understand the value of indigenous culture and tradition. Ohlone priorities are most often guided by the past, as it should be. It is our connection with the ancestors that draws us to protect sacred sites, open spaces and spiritual ways. This path, this ideology is part of what I call 'Ohlone-ness'. It is one thing to have Ohlone blood, and it is another to live in and with Ohlone-ness.

While social-political protest is one way to bringing visibility to the things Ohlone value, visibility also takes place through art, education and prayer ways. I am convinced that if more people better understood the power of the connection Native people have with the past, and offered a greater respect for sacred places and sacred ways, society in general would benefit on a level that can only be experienced. I have seen the transformation of individuals who first came to understand the Ohlone reverence for the past and then used that understanding to explore the possibility of a reconnecting with their own familial history. It is truly beautiful. I have witnessed this transformation take place when we access public sites for prayer. Those who see the connection we have to the land understand the seriousness of the matter. For the Ohlone, we are related to land, water, plants, and animals. When others learn this, sometimes they come to strengthen their relationship with "all that is" and become our advocates. This is essential for progress. While some agencies and local organizations attempt to include Ohlone perspectives in decision-making processes, the need for greater genuine conversations around land and education must become common practice. This can only take place when all parties, society in general, understand that we often come from a place of higher level common goals and speak from a place of respect and truth.

I was watching a documentary in Minnesota on public television called Saving the Bay, about the San Francisco Bay. They talked about the history of the Bay Area -- literally the water, the plants, the animals, the marshes and what used to be, and the Ohlone people and how they lived in that environment and how much it changed and why it changed. When one considers those fighting for the environment, this is taking place because activists realize what the world used to be like, how safe it was, how healthy it was, and how much damage has been done between a time at point A to a time at point B. I wonder, if one were to share traditional ways with the general population, would people see the correlation between the physical and spiritual health today as compared to some point in time, pre-mission invasion?

Some think a connection with ceremony, an understanding for natural healing, and a holistic perspective for life, is only available to a few, or possible for those with 'time' on their hands. Neither of these assumptions is true. If this way of life is a priority, material things and competing activities become less significant, making way for a new lifestyle. Walking in two worlds is a frame of reference, but it does not need to be a challenge. Almost all of us walk in two worlds, but we just don't think about it.

In 2000, I had the opportunity to study law in Austria for a summer. While I was there I met with some attorneys and thought it was really, interesting that they talked about Native people and how much they admired them. It turns out that this particular group of attorneys were civil rights revolutionaries, but their work was very much underground because of the country's political climate. They had to figure out how to create change and support people without the visibility we enjoy in the United States. Between 1989 and 1990 the Berlin Wall had fallen and there were so many people coming to these attorneys asking for help in terms of reestablishing themselves in a new world. The attorneys were looking toward Native people in the United States to see how they had survived a changing nation. They had a great respect for the way Native people had integrated

and preserved a sense of identity. I was blown away by their interest! They were looking at indigenous populations in terms of how to make people stronger and keep their culture intact. It made me think, so how do we keep our families together? How do we preserve the ideas that we have, and at the same time, how do we bust out of the oppression we sometimes feel and make something out of ourselves?

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

At one point living in two worlds was a bit of a challenge and going back and forth was exhausting! One of the things that happened in the last couple of years came as the result of people losing their jobs. I was one of the many people who lost their job due to departmental outsourcing. The timing was perfect. My little consulting firm had just received a nice long-term opportunity to provide research and evaluation for university projects. This work could easily carry me over for a few years while allowing me to build the firm and create incredible flexibility in my life. In addition, the firm could sub-contract assignments creating flexible lifestyles for others. When I found out that I was going to lose my job, it was horrible for a split second until Creator shook me and I quickly realized that there was a reason for such a drastic change.

What I can say is that living in two worlds can be incredibly challenging, but with faith, it can be incredibly satisfying. I left that job and the contract work went well. While it can sometimes be a challenge to manage a business, seek new and retain old business, the reward of independence is undeniable. I have been able to set my own schedule and choose my own projects. I am able to live in a way that is more authentic and better aligned with my values, and to step away from my home office when needed to advocate for the Ohlone, help plan projects, teach classes, and delve into ceremony.

The contracts that I choose are totally in line with my Spirit and my purpose.¹¹ I contend that after many years of compartmentalization comprised of 12-hour work days, caring for 5 children, spending off hours as a grassroots organizer and dedicating regular time to Ohlone ways, all of these efforts are finally either merging or evolving! At this point the children are grown. I am proud of who they have become and I believe that they each have a well-rounded appreciation for who they are and their potential. When they were young, I did my best to immerse them in Ohlone ways. I remember taking them to gatherings all by myself. We would drive for two or three hours one way to attend a four-day ceremony, and we would do the same to attend a half-day ceremony. About every two weeks I woke before dawn, packed our car with sleepy, cranky children, and gathered supplies. I could always count on them falling back to sleep while I enjoyed a cup of coffee along the way. Upon arriving the kids were always greeted by their young friends and playmates as well as their community teachers. At the end of each trip they each came away with stories to tell, new songs to sing, and a new commitment. At the end of every trip I knew that not only my efforts, but the community effort at a particular gathering, would provide the children with a sense of belonging and a foundation for Spirit. Today I take comfort in witnessing the children and grandchildren carrying on the Ohlone culture. As they take on the responsibility of keeping the Ohlone culture alive, I have the opportunity to realign my energy, hoping to live life with purpose and in Spirit.

Today I am completing what I believe will be my final major academic accomplishment. I am in the pursuit of a law degree. It is something I began nearly 15 years ago, and I feel called to

¹¹ Some examples of the way Spirit has guided my work decisions can be found in the types of assignments that have crossed my path. Over the past few years I have taken on assignments working with statewide arts councils to collect data that will help verify the value of government funding towards improving community relations. I have had the opportunity to work with health departments and social service agencies that provide indigenous based treatments. My assignment is to identify gaps or provide evidence that their alternative forms of treatment are really working. Consulting has allowed my firm to work on evaluation programs for universities running programs geared towards communities of color. I have worked with refugees and migrant education programs. The point is that I have a chance to choose each assignment, based upon an alignment with purpose.

come back and tie up this loose end. I would not consider such an endeavor for someone nearing 50 years of age, but like other things in my life it aligns with the larger calling. Working towards this goal has really forced me to think strategically and become a better writer. The school has supported opportunities to promote new social justice discussions. I believe this academic break will have been well worth it when I return to the university to teach, or when I am able to continue political or social advocacy work that will benefit not only Ohlone, but society at large.

To me, living within the natural flow of community-centered service is in line with old traditional ways of supporting the circle. Finding a way to put my education to use, while maintaining a schedule that allows me to attend ceremony, teach, be of service, and provide advocacy, is the merging of two worlds.

Who is Native American/Indian?

I am a person open to inclusiveness. The term Native American cannot be limited to those who the census might 'recognize.' In fact, according to the census the Ohlone people are invisible, deceased, and as a result excluded, since we are not 'federally recognized.' When I think of Native Americans, I include any one who identifies themselves as Native and indigenous to the Americas. To me it makes sense since indigenous nations of the Americas have so much in common. The term can be one that unifies people with similar political, cultural and economic histories. Just to be clear, this is my perspective and my personal definition. Definitions I have come across are often exclusive and sometimes seem to divide nations, creating animosity amongst people. Native Americans need to continue to define themselves. In this way, the unification of progressive, spiritual people may continue.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

I believe reconciliation is possible. I think, however, it will only happen with federal recognition. Not federal recognition in its current state, but a reformed version that incorporates elements of restorative justice.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

The Ohlone have assimilated into the various waves of immigrants who now call California their home. This assimilation has provided a certain amount of insulation as they walked in the shadows of their ancestors, but lived amongst the newcomers. That is not to say that the Ohlone have not felt the impact of colonialism and sometimes this has resulted in oppression and depression. Some have found themselves dependent upon drugs and alcohol. Other outcomes are demonstrated in mental health stresses. One might argue that the Mission system created havoc for the Ohlone people. I would argue that it also forced the Ohlone to survive. Unlike other tribes, many Ohlone stayed within their traditional territory and stayed connected with their traditional homeland. While access to sacred places has been severely limited, the Ohlone have always been able to find sanctuary near the ocean, in the valleys, near creeks, and on mountain peaks in and near San Francisco, Oakland, Livermore, Fremont, San Jose, San Juan Bautista, Santa Cruz, Monterrey, and Carmel. Because of this we have consciously and subconsciously been able to maintain a connection to home and Spirit. This connection is powerful, in fact I would argue that a traumatic disconnection from “home” can create chaos between generations of any particular population.

In general, the Ohlone have figured out the path to self-sufficiency. Right now is a time of traditional cultural revival, a time of nation building. This period could never have come to fruition if the Ohlone were in personal survival mode. Today adults, young and old, are stable enough to vigorously assert their right for national recognition and a healthy, holistic life. In addition, when one considers the incidents of young people who have turned to drugs and alcohol, overall, the

numbers for Native people are disproportionate to the general population. This is simply not the case for the Ohlone. The suicide rate for Native people today is raging, Native people represent over 3 times the national average and on some reservations, the rate is 10 times the national average. Again, these numbers simply do not hold true for the Ohlone. As a college instructor I have seen the data over and over. Studies demonstrate that these travesties can be a result of multi-generational oppression and external dependencies. I teach about some of these realities, and then in contrast offer students another perspective. Students need to know that there are incredible Native nations making a difference in this country. I am proud that the Ohlone are amongst them. The Ohlone represent scientists, environmentalists, writers, artists, and social activists in the Bay Area. Their successes are not simply measured amongst other Native groups, but amongst the best in the nation. The Ohlone are not segregated in any way; this means we must compete with the general population. I am proud to see my Ohlone brothers, sisters and young ones strive to do incredible things that will make society a better place.

In terms of economic stability, because the Ohlone are not federally recognized like other tribes, we have never been able to fall back on the same subsidies as other tribes. This may seem like a disadvantage to some, but in our case I consider it to be character building when one is forced to figure out how to be self-sustaining. What I have learned is that while it is important to provide for one's family and future financially, it is just as important to practice sustainability in terms of natural health and wellness. This means retreating to the land for peace of mind and physical healing. An elder once told me that you can go out in the world and work, shop and keep a bank account, but how will that help you if there is a natural disaster? If you lose a loved one? If you need to heal a relationship? How will you survive? You will survive because you know how to heal yourself, and know how to live off of the land, because you've been put through ceremonies that require endurance. Ceremonies require you to forgive yourself and others; one is forced to put

everything aside. No matter how difficult a ceremony might seem, or life might seem, you will be fine because you have learned how to manage. Some people may panic, but you will be fine. I hope I don't have to experience the extremes he referred to, but he is right. The sense of survival can be incredible.

When the mission system attempted to perpetrate cultural genocide, all that was not lost. All we knew, all we needed simply went dormant for a few generations. I was told that when you start to dream and start to pay attention to those dreams everything will come back when the time was right. In essence, our identity has always been in a safe place. That is what is happening right now. I am proud to be part of the revival of Ohlone-ness!

LINDA YAMANE



LINDA YAMANE
Rumsien Ohlone
Ohlone Artist, Singer & Basketweaver

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Growing up in San José I always knew of my Ohlone ancestry, although we didn't use the term Ohlone back then. My grandmother knew and practiced the uses of medicinal plants, but I didn't grow up with any other traditions. Basketry, language, and those kinds of things weren't practiced in my family anymore.

I really felt that I didn't count as Indian, because it seemed to me we were like other average Americans. As a child my definition of a Native person was shaped by what I saw on TV. Indian people were different; they wore different things; they talked different. In my family, we didn't wear feathers and didn't have paint on our faces. We were not the stereotype that I saw and there was no place else to learn about it. The stuff we learned in school wasn't much better. They just talked about "diggers" and picking nuts and berries and vague things like that.

Mostly I just knew that my Indian ancestors had been baptized at the Carmel Mission. When I was older and went to the Mission thinking I was going to learn something, I felt emptier than when I arrived, because there was nothing substantial there. It was a sad and shabby place that seemed to be trying to leave the Indian people out of the story altogether.

When I attended San José State University I remember having to fill out the ethnicity bubble each year. In those days we were only allowed to fill out one, as if we're all supposed to be just one thing. I went back and forth in my mind, because I am Hispanic and Indian on my dad's side, and Caucasian on my mom's. Which thing was I? Each year I would debate which one to choose, but in those days I had a hard time feeling justified to check the Native American box, because I still didn't know where I fit.

Regarding my cultural identity today, I've never pretended that I'm just this one thing, or that I'm all knowing. I don't pretend that I learned the culture from my grandmother or my great-grandmother. It would be great if I could say that, but I can't because it's not true. History changed everything and made it impossible for us to have that continuity of culture, so this is the way it is for us. It's not our fault; it's nothing to be ashamed of. It just is. But of course it's taken many years to have some retrospect on of all this and be able to look back on it and see it for what it is.

In my lifetime, my family was never ashamed of being Indian. I know some families were uncomfortable, hush-hush. Some even hid the fact from their children and grandchildren. My family, including my extended family, was proud of it, but they didn't know exactly what it meant either, because they didn't do anything special; they just were who they were. They were just people; they weren't trying to be something, which I think is interesting. Sometimes I think of that now. Can't we just be people living our lives? Our ancestors were just people, living their way. They weren't trying to fit into someone else's expectation or trying to live up to something or trying to dress a certain way. Why can't we do that?

I was very close to my grandmother, Beatrice Barcelone Reno, my father's mother, who was an important influence throughout my life. She lived with us several times during my growing up years, but even when she wasn't staying with us, we were together a lot. She and I were really close throughout my entire childhood and into my adulthood, until the day she died. She was a storyteller. She was a talker. As a joke her brothers and sisters referred to her as "a woman of few words," because in fact she was the opposite. She was funny and fun. All the family was, in spite of their many hardships. Even when I was in my 20s, I enjoyed hanging out with the older generations. They called me the family historian, because I really cared about our family's history. My grandma used to tell me stories of her childhood and the things they did. My great aunties and my great uncle would tell me stories, too, because I visited them regularly.

All those years of hearing the stories was what gave me a sense of my extended family, of belonging to something larger, and really made me feel connected to the broader central coast area, even though my Ohlone ancestors are specifically from Carmel Valley. Somewhere along the line, my family moved. After Junipero Serra¹² died, I don't find my ancestors in any Monterey baptism or marriage records, as godparents or witnesses or anything. For whatever reason, after that they seemed to have moved to San José and were affiliated with Mission Santa Clara. When my great-grandmother Alta Gracia Soto married my great-grandfather, who was from Hollister/Tres Pinos area and baptized at Mission San Juan Bautista, they moved to Hollister and became affiliated with Mission San Juan Bautista. My dad and my grandmother's family were all raised around the Hollister/Tres Pinos/San Juan Bautista area.

When I was in my twenties I interviewed my older relatives. For a long time I had hoped to find out more, because nobody seemed to know anything specific about our tribe. We knew our ancestor's name because of a land claims case for California Indians. It was in the United States government court system and was meant to offer some sort of restitution for lands taken from California Indians when California became a state. I don't know the legal background, but all of our families knew about the "Indian money" they hoped one day they would get. I grew up hearing my older relatives say, "When I get my Indian money I'm going to do this, or when I get my Indian money I'm going to do that." *Pobrecitos*, they had always been so poor and it was a wonderful dream to them that someday they were going to get a little money from the government.

In 1928 the BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] officially started applications, but it wasn't until about 1930 that they seem to have gotten out into the communities to take applications from people in this region. Our families had to show that they had California Indian ancestors who were living in California in 1852. That's when the state took its first census, so I assume that's what the BIA was

¹² Junipero Serra, a Spanish Franciscan missionary, was in charge of establishing the Missions and became a leading figure in the conquest and colonization of what is now California.

using as their criteria for documentation. My dad was registered as part of his mother's application with her children. Later they allowed families to register younger family members and so my father enrolled me around 1950. Because of this land claims case, someone assembled a family genealogy and gave each family a direct line going back to our Rumsien ancestor Margarita. Over the years, and in the most unexpected and random of situations, I've met a number of people having one of these same documents, but leading to a slightly different branch of the family tree. We knew the names going back to this baptism, but that's all we knew. It took us back to Mission San Carlos at Carmel. I tried to find out more, but it was very difficult in those days to trace this kind of information.

It wasn't until I started doing genealogy work, and used the mission baptism and marriage records, that I actually found the baptism record of my ancestor Margarita. And in it I found the name of her native village, Tucutnut. That was amazing to me! Junipero Serra had gone to Mexico City and so wasn't present when she was baptized. She was in danger of death and it was Father Crespí who went to her village, baptizing her there. A couple of months later, when she had recovered, she was baptized a second time at the church. I assume it was to be sure she was doing it "willingly," since the first time she was so ill. Surely she could not have known what these baptisms meant. Her baptism record states that she was approximately 15 or 16 years of age. Before long, she was married to a Spanish soldier who was about 40 years old. I hate to think of that, but at least he wasn't one of the 'leather jacket' soldiers, who had come to California in order to avoid serving a sentence in a Mexican penitentiary. Manuel Butrón was a Catalonian volunteer soldier from Spain. I assume he was a decent man, because Junipero Serra seems to have been fond of him. This and the fact that he was trained in horticulture in Spain gives me hope that he wasn't a rough, abusive, super-macho man. He died at the end of 1792 and is buried inside the Mission San Carlos Chapel. Margarita lived another 23 years and is buried at the Royal Presidio Chapel cemetery in Monterey.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Finding our culture centered very much on learning exactly where our village of Tucutnut was. Until you know something specific, how can you proceed? That was the real beginning for me, because it meant learning how to get into archival materials, which later led me to the John Peabody Harrington field notes and other archival resources.

Interestingly, this whole journey has been both left- and right-brained, using both heart and mind. The heart has to do with heritage and spiritual connections; it provides the reason. At the same time your head finds the pieces to the puzzle, and later you put it together and make it a part of your life in a way that is really heartfelt. A pure academic, without the heart and heritage connection, might do something very different, like write a paper with fancy words that the average person can't understand. But someone like me takes the information and tries to create something of life and beauty from it.

As I've been learning I've tried to think of others, and of future generations. It would be a shame for someone to spend years doing what I've already done. That's why I put some of our stories into two books. The first was *When the World Ended, How Hummingbird Got Fire, and How People Were Made*. The second was *The Snake That Lived in the Santa Cruz Mountains & Other Ohlone Stories*. Both were published by Oyate, and are now out of print, but I think they can still be located online. Now, whether young or old, other Ohlone people can grow with our stories. All along the way I've tried to package things in some way so there's a product that can hopefully be shared, so that someone in the future won't have to start from square one again.

My dad had prostate cancer and died when he was only seventy-three years old. He's been gone for a long time now and didn't get to see my later work, but I know he would be proud. Sometimes, when I feel afraid to speak in public or do something else that scares me, I imagine that my dad is there, my grandma is there, and my far-back ancestors are there. Then I try to make them

proud. I try not to be afraid, and know that I'm trying to honor them by bringing them the respect, recognition and acknowledgment they deserve.

I'm a person who makes things, and my contribution is that I'm able to take information and translate it into tangible, three-dimensional things that can be seen and held. This helps to bring it alive, whether for the public or for our own community. We don't have much in the way of material objects that survived the circumstances of history. We don't have these things to learn from, to admire, to copy; so it's sometimes hard to imagine what life was like for our ancestors. Most of the stuff you read is vague, like "they lived with nature," or "collected nuts and berries," or "hunted deer." Okay, sure, but *how* did they do those things? "They made baskets." Okay, what did the baskets look like? What were they made of? How were they used? We have our own language, but who gets to hear it? When we get to hear it, it motivates us to learn it and unites us with our past.

I was talking to a Rumsien friend who's a poet. He read me a poem he had just written about Hummingbird. I asked to hear it again, then said, "I'm wondering if you know the name for Hummingbird in our language. It is Ummun." He was so happy when I told him. I sent him a copy of the Rumsien dictionary I'm working on, and now he can incorporate some of our language into his poetry. Little things like that can inform and become part of people's lives, if they have a chance to know what it is.

Basketry ~

I had been a basket weaver when in my 20s, but not with traditional materials. I was making so-called contemporary baskets. But as so often happens in life, somewhere along the line things come full-circle. I already knew the weaving techniques of coiling and twining. I knew the techniques but had been weaving with other materials. Now I needed to learn what our baskets were made of.

At that time I didn't know that any of our baskets still existed, because Alfred Kroeber had written that all Ohlone baskets had "perished." But at Coyote Hills Regional Park I happened to see

a poster with drawings of several baskets. The poster announced a lecture on “baskets of the local Native Americans,” hosted by the Santa Cruz Archaeological Society in Santa Cruz some years past. There were perhaps a dozen baskets illustrated on that poster. Each was numbered, with a legend in the corner identifying the collection where it could be found. When I realized that “local” meant “Ohlone” I was amazed. I wrote to those museums and most responded, sending me whatever accession or catalog information they had

I wanted to visit the baskets, but could only afford to visit the ones that were relatively close. I couldn’t travel to Paris or London. I couldn’t even afford to go to Washington, DC or New York City. Eventually I was able to visit these distant places and have seen most of those baskets in person, but at that time I could only visit a few in California. I was able to examine these baskets up close, but didn’t know the plant materials. One day Bev Ortiz and Pegg Mathewson, who had both studied basketry from well-known Pomo weaver, Mabel McKay, introduced me to whiteroot sedge, one of our primary basket materials. We met alongside a road in the Delta, and they showed me how to harvest the sedge, then split and peel it. There was also some willow growing nearby, so I was given a quick tutorial as to what kind of sticks to look for.

After that, I was basically on my own and searched for these plants around the Monterey area. I was always scouting. It took me years and years to find sedge in places where it makes good roots and is accessible. It was a long process over many, many years, but eventually things came together. Access is the big issue because without the materials, there are no baskets. I’m a person who does things with my hands and figures things out, so after that it was just a matter of jumping in and doing it. You keep trying and you get better.

Now, after about twenty-five years of working at this, I’ve made baskets not only for myself but also for the Oakland Museum of California and the San Francisco Presidio Officers’ Club. When I finished my first *walabeen* (seed roaster and winnow) in 1996, it was the first to be made in

about 150 years. In 2012 I completed my first two ceremonial feathered baskets, patterned with olivella shell beads. These were the first to be made in about 250 years.

As of this writing, I'm working on two twined work baskets, neither of which has been made in about 150 years. One is a bottomless basket, called a hopper basket in English. It is placed on top of a shallow stone mortar. As you pound acorns, the pieces of acorn fly upward and outward, hitting the sides of the basket and dropping back down onto the mortar. It is lightweight and portable so you could take this with you and use it on a bedrock mortar surface or with a very shallow portable mortar. In my Rumsien language, it is called a *pechump tipprin*, which translates "stuck-on basket," because it was often secured to the rim of a mortar with a ring of asphaltum (naturally occurring asphalt). What motivated me to make this basket was a mortar given to me several years ago. It came out of the ground in an agricultural field near my ancestral village in Carmel Valley. I was really excited by the broad, black ring of asphaltum still noticeable around the rim. I knew immediately what kind of a mortar this was, and though there are no known Ohlone baskets of this type still in existence, I vowed that one day I would make a basket to sit on the rim of this mortar again.

The second twined work basket I'm making is a *xaapsb*, a small personal water storage basket. Luckily, I have an old one available to use as a model. It's quite a challenge, but very exciting to figure things out and to see it slowly growing and taking shape. When these baskets are completed, I will let them work as they did in the past. The *pechump tipprin* will sit on the mortar and catch the flying acorn pieces as I pound them. I will fill the *xaapsb* with water and see what happens!

In truth, to live this modern American life we do not need baskets. In the past our ancestors had to have baskets, as everyday life was not possible without them. Today we have all kinds of modern equivalents with our backpacks, plates and bowls, pots and pans, baby carriers, bags, plastic containers, etc. Likewise, we don't need to use our ancestral languages for communication, since we

all speak English. But it all goes back to connecting with the past, to the value that we place in maintaining our identity and our relationship with our past and with this place. Baskets are very iconic. They are symbolic of the utility and lifestyle of the past, but they also embody something more. They embody beauty, creativity, resourcefulness, and ingenuity — human traits that people of diverse interests or backgrounds can relate to in some way.

Language Restoration ~

I probably got started with language as a result of beginning to work with the unpublished field notes of John P. Harrington. Harrington was a linguist by training and worked for the American Bureau of Ethnology, which later became the Smithsonian. In the 1920s and 30s he was finding elders in the Ohlone area and other parts of California, interviewing them and hand writing thousands and thousands of pages of linguistic and ethnographic notes. In the early 30s he began a serious and long-term working relationship with elder Isabel Meadows, who shared her extensive knowledge of the Rumsien language and stories of the history of Indian families in Carmel Valley, including her own.

I've been working on the Rumsien language for quite a number of years. Besides Harrington, there are several vocabularies that were collected and eventually published. I started out with very simple words, for regardless of our age, when we begin learning a new language, we have to learn like a child. I began studying the language on my own, and still am, but I have also attended several of the biannual "Breath of Life" language revitalization workshops at UC Berkeley, and have picked up some linguistic knowledge over the years. In the beginning, I would sit in bed late at night, practicing the words, because that was the only time I had the courage to say them out loud. I felt very shy because I wasn't sure of pronunciation back then, but luckily I spoke quite a bit of Spanish and it turns out that, with a few exceptions, the pronunciations are very similar. Through my work with the Harrington field notes I learned the symbols, or orthography, used to represent particular

sounds. I was very careful, because I didn't want to start out with bad habits. It's very hard to undo something. It's better to learn it correctly from the start!

Likewise, when I first started learning our songs from old recordings, I was very shy about singing them in the presence of other people. In the beginning, I felt like they were just sitting on my surface. They really weren't part of me yet. They weren't part of my life, because I didn't grow up with them. I was consciously acquiring those things. This is why I feel so strongly that we must be patient. Don't try to do things too fast. It's not instant, and if you try to force-fit things so you can have something quickly, who knows what you're going to start that can't be undone? We don't need more made-up things. Where's the beauty in that? How does that truly honor our ancestors? We should take our time and do it right.

Over time, I could feel that the songs were coming from the inside. The language and songs now come from within because they've had a chance to permeate, and now they are truly a natural part of my life. That's not to say that I'm not still learning. Oh yes, I often have reasons to delve into the language further, and I continue to learn new things. But now it comes from my core, and is expanding as part of my being.

I've been creating my own dictionary in Excel, because almost everyone has Excel on a home computer, so it will be easy to share. My goal is to enter Rumsien language information from all the existing vocabulary sources. It's great that we can use modern technology to help us preserve and pass on ancient traditions.

There's a lot to be learned besides words from our language. We learn about the way the world was viewed in those times. For example, today we have a word for sun and a word for moon. Through science, we know that the sun is one celestial body and the moon is another. But in our Rumsien language moon is a compound word, made up of the word for sun *ishmen* and the word

for night *orpeto*. Suddenly you are startled to learn that our word for moon *orpeto isbmen* translates “night sun.”

The same thing goes for our stories. In one of our stories, we learn that Golden Eagle was once the captain of the world and that Hummingbird was his nephew. All these interrelationships become apparent; Eagle, Hummingbird, Crow, Raven and Hawk were all friends trying to figure out what to do when the world flooded. These things make us see the world differently, because when we see the moon, we now see it with fresh eyes. When we see Hummingbird, it is not just a hummingbird from a field guide. It is *Ummun*, Hummingbird with a capital H, who was Eagle’s nephew, and got fire from the Badger people. It adds depth and history and gives insight into the richness and dimension of our ancestors’ world.

Obviously we don’t have to learn our language or our stories, or make baskets, in order to get by in modern times. But it’s a meaningful way of connecting to our ancestors and undoubtedly enriches the way we relate to the world around us. It all has to do with deepening and creating connections, which I think is what all people are hungry for.

Ceremony ~

I’m not overtly involved in ceremony. I do things that are ceremonial, but it’s more built in. For me, ceremony is more private than public. I’m not much for announcing that’s what I’m doing. There are things that I do that I would consider ceremonial connected with my basketry in terms of approaching the land when I gather materials and giving my thank you after gathering. I give particular attention to showing respect for the land and don’t just come and take without saying thank you or without repairing it afterward. I don’t just dig it up and then walk away. I think of the plants literally as friends. And I show my respect. I wouldn’t come to your house, make a big mess and then leave your house that way. That’s not good manners. What kind of a person would do that? And who would want them to come back? When I gather my basket plants I’m not going to

leave their home a mess either. I know it's going to look a little different, because I've turned the ground, but at the same time turning the ground is doing something positive for the plants, for the roots, because now the ground is soft and aerated. I've removed the rocks and sticks and now the plants can send out long runners without having to fight to do it. I need to close the earth because those roots are going to get dry; it's the same as being considerate of other people. You have to think of them as people and you treat them with the same manners that you would treat other people.

Sometimes when I sing out on the land, in my homeland, I feel it is significant, and magical, that our songs and our language are floating in the air, out over the land, through the trees and over the water – just as they used to in the time of our ancestors. I know that their words, their voices, their laughter, their songs are still moving about the land, floating on the breezes or resting on the branches overhead, and maybe mixing with my words. Sometimes the old songs must surely blend with the river's song and are carried down the valley to the ocean. I know I need to slow down and quiet my mind so that maybe, just maybe, I'll hear them one day, when I least expect it.

FUTURE VISION

Our community is quite fractured into small groups. My greatest wish would be for the Ohlone community to come together and work together toward our common goals so that we could truly be a community again. We could accomplish a lot together, but sometimes we're our own worst enemies.

Federal Recognition ~

I wanted to be supportive, and in the beginning I was, but in the end I've become disillusioned because of the years of nasty politics and people saying, "We're a tribe, but since you're not a member, then you are not valid." There's so much exclusion. Beyond that, the whole federal recognition thing is a complicated situation. I don't know if anything coherent can come of it. I

understand that federal recognition can empower a group to be able to accomplish certain things. However, my observation is that a lot of serious problems can result from the federal recognition process, and then with federal recognition itself there is often greed that splits up communities, even families. People are removed from tribal rolls. I think it could have the potential to bring communities together and empower them, because they could have an economic base, a physical land base. It's difficult when people live distant from each other. It's expensive and logistically difficult for us to get together in order to do things as a community. But I'm not sure that you can turn everything around and try to re-create that again, because I'm not seeing it pan out that well. We are very factionalized. The one thing I do see is that some recognized California tribes are able to use their economic base from income generated by casinos and other economic ventures to create cultural centers, health centers, language committees, language classes and things like that. Potentially there's a lot that could be done, but if people don't have the ability to work together in a positive way, I don't see how federal recognition is going to do that much for us. It doesn't seem viable to me, but some people want to try for it. For me, life is too short to spend on negativity, politics, anger and distrust; so my choice has been to follow my heart and focus on the cultural work.

Significance of a Land Base ~

You ask about us having a land base, but I don't know exactly what that means. It doesn't mean that we will suddenly all be living together as a community, does it? I mean, poof! I'm not going to sell my house and move from where I live. I can't afford to build another house on a "land base" and no one else I know has the money to do it either. It's not a very practical idea that we would all just go live together on a reservation. I already live in my homeland. I may not live exactly where my ancestral village was, but I can be there in fifteen minutes.

I do see a land base as having the potential to be a gathering place for us. But even at that, there are logistical realities. People have to work and earn a living. When you start combining everyone's circumstances, I wonder how practical it would be for us to get together. Some are still raising children who have activities and school. And travel is expensive, so that would be a deterrent for some. It makes it really hard for us to get together, though in theory having a place to gather together would be a plus.

If land were made available for Ohlone people to get together for ceremony, I can't predict what the outcome would be, whether it would be utilized or not. I don't really see all these smaller groups coming together in one larger body. Most likely it would result in what we already have—various groups doing their own separate thing.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

It's important for people to know that we are still here, that it's not just a culture of the past, but at the same time it has to do with being able to identify with our Ohlone ancestors as truly human. I don't think it's been communicated very well in interpretive materials. They talk about how they "subsisted." I hate that word. They didn't just scrape by. People need to understand the richness of the culture. They didn't just survive; they thrived. They weren't just wandering around picking up nuts and berries. It wasn't just living hand to mouth. And, sure, they had conflicts just like people do today. But they also had fun just like people do today. They were family people. They loved their families and at times hated their enemies. They laughed at jokes and cried when their loved ones died or someone was hurt. All of those things go into the category of shared humanity. That's why we need to do beautiful and exciting things, because it's beauty (which comes in many forms) that people most easily relate to. This is what brings it alive. That is what was missing in the past when my generation was growing up and learning about the Native peoples of the area. We were here but the story that was being told had no life. Some of us have spent decades breathing new life into our

culture and communities. I think that for all of us who are active today, it's about continuing to bring back our cultural traditions and keeping them alive for the future.

Our baskets were essentially gone, but now someone can hold my baskets, or see them up close, and recognize that this is something of beauty. You can see the tiny stitches, and start relating to the process involved. You can think about the ones who originated it, and realize what resourceful, creative, intelligent human beings they were. People are always using their intelligence to figure out what to do with what they've got, and California's first peoples were no different. I also feel that by making baskets, regalia and other things, people can see that there is a richness, beauty and complexity to our culture; that it wasn't just hand to mouth, and that it's still alive.

I want people to remember our ancestors as people with families, as people having fun, as people creating things of beauty, as people being excited when they made or did things, using the skills they had learned over their lifetime, and sometimes being innovative. It is the humanity that is most important.

The other thing I would like for people to know is that the technologies of our Ohlone ancestors were not simplistic. For example, everybody who knows just a little bit about California Indian culture knows about the importance of acorns for food. And yet, if you've never prepared acorn you have no idea of the complexities involved in the process. It always seems simple on the surface until you learn the intricacies of it, and believe me everything is intricate in terms of the steps and technologies involved. Using acorns as an example, it's not as simple as just picking some up off the ground, pulverizing them, and cooking them. You need to know, every year, that there may not be an ample supply, so people had to think ahead. They had to store acorns when they were plentiful. They had to get them before the animals and birds got them. It also takes skill and strategy to keep the animals from getting them after you've gathered them. You have to have an effective and secure storage system. And then preparing them for food takes knowledge and skill. You can't

just gather acorns today and prepare them tomorrow or next week, because they usually take a good six months before they're dry enough to reduce to flour. Then there's a process for leaching out the tannic acid, not to mention cooking them in a basket with hot rocks. Everything is much more complex than it would seem on the surface. There's always more than meets the eye! But until you really learn and get involved in the processes, you don't realize how complex and clever almost every technology is. It's really exciting to discover these things; it's a great experience.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

This is really complicated because we can't go back; we can't undo who we are, how we've grown up and how we live today. The fact is that we have not grown up together. We have not been born and raised in the same towns. We didn't grow up as a unified community; we're here and there and everywhere. We're all over the place, not just geographically, but in terms of our backgrounds, and the kind of family lives we've had. We have common heritage, but we don't have a common experience. In the past, we would have been a community with the same belief system. We all would have had the same aunts and uncles, if not literally at least figuratively. We all would have been immersed in the same kinds of cultural activities. Our worldview would have been the same and would have been in sync with our times. Now we're not. We are modern people. We've been raised with science, with different religions, with different life experiences. All of us, in one way or another, are reaching back and trying to do something to bring it forward, trying to find a way to integrate our past and present.

In my opinion, some people seem not to have reached back, but have reached to stereotypes of how they think we're supposed to look, or act, or believe, as Native people. For me, this is a problem. I don't feel drawn to participate and be part of it, because it's not my truth or my comfort zone.

Who is a Native American/American Indian?

From my perspective, being a Native American person goes to heritage. It is not a matter of how much blood you have or whether you're from a federally recognized tribe or a non-federally recognized tribe, or if you're part of any organized tribal entity whatsoever, because really it's bloodline and heritage. I remember an experience I had with an Ohlone group many years ago who said, "That person isn't very much Indian" or, "They are not as much Indian as I am." At the same time, they talked about their children, their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren to come, looking to the future. I asked myself, are they going to think that their great and great-great grandchildren down the line are less valid than they themselves are, because of the passage of generations, because their Ohlone blood quantum has diminished? For me it doesn't make sense. Why are we working to keep our culture alive for future generations if you think they will be unworthy because their Ohlone blood is less?

It doesn't seem right for people to be discredited and for other people to say they aren't who they say they are, or that they don't count because they don't belong to some group or another. This world is big enough for us all and it would be nice if we could peacefully coexist. We could accomplish a lot if we worked together.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

This is a complex one. It's hard to know where to begin. For the most part, the history hasn't really been honestly told and that goes for both sides. There's the side that wants to gloss over the undeniable agony of what happened to Indian people as a result of the Catholic Church and later American incursions into California. The other extreme wants to paint everything about the early Spanish as intentionally evil. I find that to be just as offensive because it's not truly what happened in history. There are many opinions and ways to look at our history, but I would like to see us interpret our history without so many agendas. I don't think we need to use history and manipulate

the telling of it so that we can feel more entitled or more victimized or more anything. The honest telling of it is the most powerful.

It's hard to be reconciled with the events of history because surely the results of that history have affected all of us. Many of the problems we experience today in terms of community and the fracturing of our community has to do with that history. I believe it has a lot to do with the reality of people not feeling respected or appreciated or treated as equal. Through the generations, this treatment resulted in anger, resentment or self-hatred, which was often passed on by people who were treated by the dominant culture as less important, less valued, even less than human. This has got to shape your identity and self-esteem. But we as modern people need to be careful. I don't want to have a sense of entitlement because something happened to my ancestors five, six, seven or eight generations ago. I want to acknowledge the history; I want to learn about it and try to rectify it, and make the world a better place, but I don't feel like someone owes me something because of what happened to past generations.

The reconciliation ceremony at Mission San Juan Bautista was very important to some people. I have differing ways of thinking about it because on the one hand it's an important symbolic gesture, and so for that reason it had value, though it was very politicized. The fact that one priest or one diocese can decide to apologize is very small-scale compared to the magnitude of what happened to our people, but at least it opens dialogue, sets an example and becomes part of the historic record. The reconciliation mass at San Juan Bautista was an attempt to acknowledge the events and attitudes of our history, and shows that, at least symbolically, we have come a long way. Let's hope that we will continue the dialogue, move forward, and find a way to heal the wounds of our history.

CATHERINE HERRERA



CATHERINE HERRERA
Amah Mutsun/Coastal Ohlone
Artist, Filmmaker, Writer

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I am still learning about my Costanoan heritage; it is a life-long process. Along the way, I have experienced several transformative moments that have led me back to the Bay Area, and into becoming part of the Costanoan revitalization process for the last 15 years.

Just this year I learned my first Mutsun words, and spoke my first phrase. I felt like a child communicating for the first time. I am healed by the confirmation from family, local elders, and by DNA of the connection to the long line of my ancestors who have been on this coast for over 11,000 years.

Learning my ancestral native language represents a returning home at the cellular level.

Watinika ru kat a ka – I am home. To return home, I traveled a long road.

I did not grow up learning an ‘Ohlone way.’ Yes, I heard we were indigenous, but not many people wanted to talk. My grandfather’s generation was at a different juncture in the Costanoan revitalization and healing process.

Like many generations before them, my dad and grandfather showed us the richness of their heritage – without words – driving back and forth over the mountains, returning from another coastal trip, whizzing down roads under towering redwoods that have witnessing generations of Costanoans passing the same spots.

What I did learn from my grandfather growing up – as if etched into my being and spirit – the contours of the San Francisco Bay and Coastal landscape. My grandparents took us year after year to the same places, infusing our spirits with the sights, smells and sounds unique to this bay region. Each year they showed us how to make the most of the natural bounty of the region, how to

live and respect the environment and abundant life sustained here. We were taught right from wrong, and how to stick to one's word and value elders.

Twenty years after my grandfather's passing I returned to his home. Standing in his work garage, there on the wooden shelves that had stored jars of fruit, smoked salmon and smelt, and the sweet treats my grandparents prepared each fall into Christmas, I also saw his worktable where he crafted copper jewelry for us when we were kids. Sitting on the top shelf was a large glass container, filled with olivella shells, next to a carved wooden statue of a Bear with a Salmon slung over its back. At the bottom of the glass were two smooth abalone pieces.

My grandfather did not live long enough beyond the family reunion he organized back in the 1980's to be able to share in this entire journey, although, many times, I feel his presence along my walk today. I wish we had been able to talk in life, so that I would know more from him and so I could tell him how much I understand now.

By way of my father, my grandfather, my great-grandma, and great-great-grandparents, my being is tattooed with what most holds me here even today: the land. The presence of our ancestors' spirits, the connection beyond the physical world.

My grandfather was born only a few years before California repealed its first law on the books ever, which came into effect around 1849, an order that paid bounty for the death and capture of Indian women, children and men. I know my grandfather learned from his mother before him that being Mexican was 'better' than being an Indian. Still, some family members never accepted this, correcting any claims to being Mexican saying, "We are Indians."

Many Ohlone did grow up knowing their heritage and retained cultural knowledge. I was not one of those people. Like many Costanoans, I did not learn the truth until much later in life.

In 2005, I participated in a year-long preparation for a ceremony to honor Ohlone Elder women. That day of the ceremony, I learned that my experience of recovering memory was not just

my own, but common among even the eldest women there, many of whom had never publicly acknowledged their Costanoan ancestry until that day.

There were several transformative experiences in my life that shaped the journey to learn more about my heritage. I have an early memory of being asked the first time what my ‘background’ or ‘family heritage’ was, and being confused by the question. In 2006, after reconnecting with cousins, I learned that other family members knew and heard, long before I started my search, that our family heritage was Ohlone/Costanoan.

I am sure it was painful to my parents who raised me with the spirit of ‘you-can-do-anything-you-set-your mind,’ regardless of race or gender, that I was facing the same generational challenges. Over time, I came to realize our family was colored by the previous generations, or should I say history weighted us all down. Having met at college, my parents came from two different backgrounds, and as much as they looked beyond culture to embrace their love, society, and even their own families, had different views. After all, the Civil Rights Voting Act was passed only a year before my birth.

In 1995 I wrote a short play set in a sweat lodge. I set up a discussion between my grandfathers that reflected the tug and pull I felt in my own family, the constant conflict, how the two views on life clashed in my own family, but also as a metaphor for the larger cultural clash that our continent has been dealing with for so long. Really the world has been dealing with this difference in world views. Since my heritage involves the first people, and the first colonists, I felt my own experience as expressed through my films, ‘*Witness the Healing*,’ ‘*Bridge Walkers*,’ ‘*Open Doors*,’ and the films I made in Mexico, ‘*From the Same Family: An Intimate View of Globalization*,’ and ‘*Transition*,’ as well as my photography and writing, have really been very much about the process of reconciling the feelings that arose for me growing up in California and being of Native American/Latino and Anglo descent.

I was coming to terms with the forces that made it very difficult for my grandfather to share with me the truth in words. I look back on his presence and influence in my life, the values he taught me, the way he made sure that I learned the Bay, learned the contours of the traditional lands, grew up under the same redwoods he did, swam the same ocean waters his ancestors did, and viewed from Bernal Hill the beauty that is the Bay on a clear day.

What little was shared with me was general, that we were indigenous, that one of our grandmas was known for healing work, but my questions were met with more questions. There were claims about being Mexican, but no one knew from where, nor did anyone have any contact with relatives in Mexico. Not until I was 28 did I learn that our relatives had instead been on the California coast for thousands of years, and my father's dad's parents were both 100% Native. Another part of the family came from Enid, Oklahoma in the 1830-1840's.

In the years of living between cultures, I have found the word Chicana to reflect my experience of growing up Mexican-American, *Mestizo*, as my dad told me.

Only later in life did I learn my mom's family had boycotted my parents wedding, which naturally hurt my dad's family. There was never much communication between the two families, especially after my parent's divorce.

In fact, the first time I ever heard the saying "the races shouldn't mix" was from my mom's grandma. I said, "But Grandma, I am mixed." My great-grandma evolved over the years from when I was a teenager, and as her views changed, we grew closer; eventually race was forgotten between us. I loved her and I know she loved me.

It would take many years before I could eventually reconcile the reality of racism that existed within my own family, and its impact on my spirit, my being, and I see now how that experience led me as a filmmaker and artist to work to bridge the gap – first within me, my family, and hopefully, if my experience can help others in their healing process, then I will be grateful.

I know now how hard it must have been for my grandfather – my dad’s dad to hold inside his own history spelled out in history. I value him even more for all he taught me without words and for making sure I did know both sides of my heritage. I know now the fears he must have held to find such a quiet and subtle way to share the seeds that would took root and grow so strong within me.

Another transforming moment was prompted by an experience I had in college, when one day someone needing help in Spanish turned to me, and by my appearance alone, assumed I spoke Spanish. I felt badly that I did not, and I wondered, why didn’t I?

My dad had not spoken Spanish growing up, but learned later in life, traveling to study just outside Mexico City. In the summer of my second year of law school, I studied Spanish at the same school, and traveled around Mexico.

I ended up visiting San Cristobal de las Casas, and staying in the guest cottages at Na-Balom, a Mayan cultural center, where I met Gertrudes Blom, and learned about her work with the Lacadon. For the first time in my life, I was surrounded by indigenous people – *alive* indigenous people –in traditional dress, living their daily lives, performing ancient routines on the land where their ancestors lived for thousands of years, speaking their native languages, still interconnected. That experience changed my life forever. It sparked my interest in the work of Na-Balom, and the environmental protection efforts of the Lacadon Maya, and led to a fellowship proposal that made it possible to work with Na-Balom during law school.

I admire very much those people who always knew they were Costanoan, and had the honor to learn the culture from the beginning of life. My road was longer, and had more curves, but I am very grateful to be part of the last 15 years of Costanoan cultural revitalization. I treasure our connections.

When I was in Mexico and started learning things, I felt my grandfather came to me, and over time, I understood that it was important I return to California; he wanted me to bring the family back together again. I returned to the places my grandfather had taken me, San Francisco, Martin's Beach, Santa Cruz, Almaden. I felt his presence even stronger, and in the process, as the genealogical research continued, I came to feel a greater closeness to my ancestors who have crossed-over.

Of my living relatives, apart from my son, I feel my dad and I have had a very connected relationship. He has taught me the most about my heritage, the first one to ever even mention that we were Costanoan. My father has told me how proud he is of me, and how he feels I have honored our family. I am deeply grateful for his support, for attending all my exhibits and screenings. He has made a priority of participating in his grandson's life, passing along our family history and creating new traditions. It means so much to me to participate alongside my dad, and my son, in the Costanoan revitalization process.

At this point in my life, I feel the love and protection and guidance of all my ancestors. On this side, I feel love and closeness to my family, many of whom I only met and got to know in the last 15 years, and that includes people who are family by our Costanoan heritage, family with whom I travel the circle of life before and after.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

I started participating in the revitalization process when I returned to the Bay Area in 2001 as a community member, as an artist, and filmmaker, and in any capacity asked of me by an elder wanting me to take on more responsibility for the process. I completed a trilogy of short films and installations, including *Witness the Healing*, *Bridge Walkers*, and *Open Doors*, exploring notions of 'home', 'identity' and 'cultural heritage'.

I am happiest when I am participating by honoring my father, grandfather, family, and relatives. I feel happiest making necklaces, sitting around a table with the women, and sharing our lives as we prepare and meet with the others at a ceremony or gathering. I feel honored when our family's younger generations ask me to help them connect with our family history and culture.

In 2002, I was invited to the last year of a ceremony at Crissy Fields in The Presidio in San Francisco. I met Teresa Alderete, Charlene Sul, and Linda Lopez, whose families had lived in the same area at the same time as my family. Years later, we'd learn just how our families were connected by history and intermarriage. I went in the sweat lodge with the others. Only when I was inside did I realize that there were no women in the lodge with me. I was embarrassed. I had been in Mexico for seven years, and learned a different protocol. I was grateful that Tony Cerda and his nephew, Steve, who was head dancer, made the space for me in that moment. Later that night, dancing around the fire, again looking around I saw I was the only woman dancing. After all of us became friends, we laughed looking back and remembering that night -- me the only woman dancing or to go into the lodge -- and how I had not known the protocol of my own land. Linda told me then, "When you danced, I could see into the past, and I remembered you dancing in another time. I could see our ancestors dancing together." This idea my grandfather had for me, about bringing the family together again, I soon realized wasn't only about our immediate family.

It was also when I began to accept that even though I did not 'know' all the details about our history, there was an 'intuition' involved. Now science tells us that our DNA material carries the whole of our ancestors' experiences too. I believe that is true.

That weekend I started participating as an artist in the revitalization process. Tony Cerda held the reconciliation ceremony at Mission Dolores. Mike Oliva asked me why I wasn't filming since I had a camera. I began valuing my creative skills in a whole new way, documenting important moments in our present cultural history, and later making films about sacred sites, our family, and

trying to broaden and foster greater education. The education process, like the healing process, must be done for oneself first. Learning later in life meant I had a lot of history to catch-up on.

Yes, I knew history, and I knew how it applied to our family, but it is one thing to know history from books, and quite another to know where your relatives were and what they experienced specifically, the generations who were unable, for fear of punishment by death or loss of one's children, let alone culture, to share their experiences, their traumas.

Genealogical research in itself is traumatic when it becomes quite clear how records, archives reflect the experiences of only one side of history and leave so many out. I also learned how that genealogical difficulty was made more challenging as part of the same dominant culture policy to 'erase' Native peoples in the U.S.

At times I have felt vulnerable about asserting myself in the process of revitalization because I respect everybody who does has their history documented all the way, and for many years I did not. That experience of being undocumented gave me a chance to better understand how post-colonial trauma can infect one's sense of self, and how the idea of blood quantum and separation from one's culture carries self-destructive challenges to overcome.

I am grateful to have been invited in so many ways into the process, and been encouraged by Ann Marie Sayers, Charlene Sul, Corrina Gould, and Teresa Alderete. They have shown me ways forward. Their support has helped me overcome a lot of the trauma. Tribal leaders Rosemary Cambria, Val Lopez, and Tribal Historian, Ed Ketchum have added so much to our understanding of our genealogy and documented Ohlone family history. I am also grateful to Native friends of other Nations who pulled me aside, or gave me advice and guidance, and helped me as I worked through the 'undocumented' phase, and let me know my experiences were common to others outside the Costanoan community.

As an artist, I believe my role in revitalization has been documenting the revitalization process in photos and video, among many people who have done, to foster greater understanding of Costanoan culture and history. As an artist, I have shared my personal experience to connect Native and non-Native peoples to the history and policy towards Native Americans and Costanoans.

The *Bridge Walkers* installation title is based on something a Mutsun elder, who crossed over before I was even born said. She described ‘bridge walkers’ as those people who bridge time and history to share Costanoan traditions and knowledge and ensure our culture’s survival for the next generations. People, who in their time, faced fear –in many cases the clear threat of death – to ensure traditional knowledge was passed down through the generations. As Ann Marie Sayers says in *Bridge Walkers*, when talking about the need to preserve sacred sites, “The Ohlone have such precious little left. What remains must be respected and preserved.”

I respect and owe so much to those people who have carried the revitalization work before me. I am grateful to them because without them we would really be gone completely. At the end of my life if all my actions combined have bridged time for another generation, then I will feel I have honored my ancestors.

I felt very charged with that responsibility in making the *Bridge Walkers* installation, and, more so, when an elder shared a traditional song in it. It is a mission song sung by Costanoan and other tribal children. L. Frank Manriquez, who shared that song, did so as a bridge walker; she was entrusted with that song, to be held until bringing it back in service to the people. The song reflects the life of the children in the Missions, and describes their wish to leave and return home. *Watinika ru kat a ka.*

When I learned the song’s meaning, I had just finished reading a book describing how the children, our relatives, were treated at Mission San Juan Bautista, the excruciating cultural schism

that they experienced. I was brought to tears listening to the song, and in feeling the responsibility to carry forward their words.

Bridge Walkers was invited to be part of the *Courty Art of the Maya* exhibit at the de Young Museum's Friday Nights Cultural Encounters, alongside ancient Mayan pieces. It felt especially meaningful having spent such a transformative time in San Cristobal de las Casas and at Na-Balom, the Mayan Cultural Research Center, and to learn in 2012 of the confirmation that the Costanoan and Mayan share a common root language.

I'm honored to be part of the revitalization process. I want to thank those relations and elders who saw in me the potential to give back, to add something to the well-being of the Ohlone people by documenting our cultural history shared by elders, and creating media and art that enlightens, informs, and educates a broader audience about Costanoan history, to shed light on present day revitalization efforts.

My participation in the revitalization process has grown with time. I have been asked to represent the community in person for blessings and at public events and meetings. I have been asked to defend sites and rights in person and in writing. Such a situation arose in the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood with development construction planned on top of a ten thousand year-old documented Costanoan site, last studied in 1909. I was not new to what was going on in the Bayview. In 2007, without knowing the City's development plans at the time, I was asked and created a community art project in collaboration with Indian Canyon and the Bayview called *The Healing Pole Project*, a two-site installation designed to create a field of healing between the carved pole installed at Indian Canyon and an identical pole in the Bayview. Both of these poles had come out of the Port Chicago tragedy that set off a civil rights effort to integrate the armed forces. I wanted to join our communities in an artistic collaboration and facilitate a creative healing field for

the Ohlone and Bayview communities. Little did I know, the site of the Bayview Pole was considered part of the development plan.

The City did eventually invite the Costanoan to a meeting, after everything was planned. The City found a loophole to avoid laws protecting ancient sites, and requiring partnership with the Costanoan. I sent a letter to the United Nations regarding the development site, and lack of consultation as required under Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the significance of the United Nations Charter being signed and honored here in San Francisco on Ohlone land.

I am on the land of my ancestors and their guidance is accessible. With that in mind, I understand better the importance of sacred sites as places to connect with the ancestors' prayer and guidance that travels forward and back seven generations.

I participate in the revitalization process as both an artist and advocate, even today. As one of my Rumsen relatives reminds me, "This road is very long, and it's a complex journey." I hope my art and films can bring well-being to the Costanoan community. My films and photography come from that place of inquiry, that place of connection to family, to land, and to contribute to the well-being of the Ohlone people. I am working on expanding the *Open Doors* project, an installation designed to foster communication, to create a temporary 'safe' space for dialogue about 'displacement' as San Francisco is wracked with a growing housing and social crisis. *Open Doors* is designed to create a dialogue between Ohlone and non-native peoples of the Bay region and add to the revitalization process.

Collaboration has been key to this process. Recently, I presented the idea of an art exhibit that would draw from all the local archives and holders of Ohlone culture – UC Berkeley, San Francisco State, Cabrillo College, Stanford, the History Museum of San Jose – to show our own community and the larger general population what the Ohlone created and lived with in daily life. Having Ohlone community members collaborate in that process will offer important training and

connection to our culture in a new way, and broaden the scholarship regarding our culture, history and art. Research and exhibition of Ohlone art, culture and history has been on a very long hiatus, if ever really done.

The need for greater collaboration in the archives was the point that *Open Doors* brought to light at its showing in the 2012 Audio Observatory exhibit for the National Anthropology Association's Annual Conference in San Francisco. The installation projected historical and contemporary audio and video of Ohlone, and with a rigged-up recorder, invited anthropologists to record their impressions and messages to Ohlone by contributing to a Costanoan Modern Day Archive created by Ohlone.

I'd really like to see a collaborative process that makes these archives available to our community within the bounds of preservation practices, so that research, genealogical efforts, and art exhibit projects designed by Ohlone can be carried out. I know these improvements are happening now, and local archives are granting broader access to tribal members.

The larger Ohlone community is often unable to gather all at the same time due to distance, and the cost of travel often proving prohibitive. We miss out on important connections that come from our four-day gatherings and other community events. These events are where we make necklaces, prepare food and eat together, catch up on social matters, pray, and honor our culture.

In 2004/2005 the Seventh Generation Fund made possible the gathering and preparation for the Elder Women's Ceremony. It was just one of the most transformative experiences of my life. We all gathered at Indian Canyon for over a year, the hours rushing by, talking, working, eating together. I learned to make necklaces and my regalia through that process. We started reconnecting our history, finding common ground where our families took us, bringing together the little pieces, sewing together the past to the present.

I think that this type of connecting over time is very important, re-establishing the support for each other, and bringing our culture to life.

I have been promoting the idea of an Honoring Dinner to be hosted by my generation for the elders, to recognize their contributions, and the intertwining among the Costanoan, Esselen, Chumash, and many other tribes who support us. Regardless of the region or family from which the elder came, I believe that intertwined history makes it important to honor our elders, to let them know we appreciate them. Since we are all still learning about our culture in many ways, I hope that the elders will feel confident that we will continue the recovery process, retrieving traditions, speaking honestly about what we do not know, and taking the steps to support rediscovery. I feel it is very important to honor the generation before us, those people who have been carrying the torch for the last forty or fifty years: Rosemary Cambra, who walked that path for us, Patrick Orozco for the protection of grave and sacred sites, Ann Marie Sayers, Tony Cerda, Ruth Orta, Andrew Galvan, Diane Castro, and Linda Yamane. We need that healing.

I was telling Rosemary Cambra that when I first went to the Almaden Mine and asked them where the information about the Ohlone people was, they said, “There is so much in-fighting among all of the Ohlones is the reason they were not included in the Almaden Mine Museum.” I hope one day that doesn’t happen anymore, that we develop methods for processing our internal reconciliation, making it possible for collaborators to associate with us and know that they are not caught in the middle of an internal battle.

Language Restoration ~

Language revitalization has been one of the most meaningful activities going on right now. I pray I have the chance to learn completely my language so that I can speak to my ancestors. Already it has been such a joyous process. I want to sing to them in our language. I take it as a responsibility. I

owe it to them. Each person will carry these cultural gifts in the way they feel comfortable and pass them down. It is really amazing that we are able to relearn the language.

FUTURE VISION

I feel our ancestors left us a blue-print, a map back to each other. Inter-marriage was a vital cultural tradition of the Costanoan. Those marriages are the paths back to our ancient connection. When I am with members of the Costanoan community, knowing that our families go so far back together, I feel a strength that goes beyond any disagreement we may have when facing challenges, so that, as a larger community, we can embrace the opportunities.

I have continued to speak to Rosemary Cambria and other leaders about the need for an internal Costanoan reconciliation process. A lot of what we do as a community, often because of limited resources as an unrecognized tribe, is in collaboration with other organizations. These collaborations are very positive. At the same time, over the last 15 years, the younger generations, including my own, have been asking for a Costanoan Council that will allow for an internal reconciliation and healing processes, and create a private space to address issues that come up within the community.

Genealogy is vital for many reasons: for individual people recovering their heritage, and, for the larger community, for reasons of external relations, including the federal recognition process. One of our biggest challenges over the years has been accessing records and archives. This issue is shifting as more archives and institutions support digitizing and making more Costanoan records available. Teresa Alderete and I, and other members, want to conduct a multi-year process of visiting all the local archives that hold our family histories, to access our records and combine them with research Costanoan members have completed over the last 30 years, so that we can create a Costanoan tribal archive. I'd like to see a day when, like many tribes with longer histories of tribal governance, and a more central tribal governing structure, Costanoans can access our own records

and provide documentation and confirmation for our members so that the process of *watinika ru kat a ka*, coming home, is one of acceptance, understanding, and embracing returning members that replaces the contention, division and painful exclusion that replicates the post-colonial trauma all over again. In the end I think the entire community loses energy that can be better spent on other aspects of revitalization and recovery, on healing and developing sustainability and sovereignty.

I think it is important that the leadership now put aside the past, and what they needed to do to survive. I can't blame anybody. Everyone had their own way to survive, including my own family, but now maybe some of those skills and abilities or ways are not helping us. I just feel very strongly, and I think my generation has felt for many years now, the desire that we come together and develop positive and more collaborative communication. Better communication is increasing, thanks to the hard work and dedication of the tribal leaders, the elders, and the young people.

Federal Recognition ~

Costanoans are state-recognized which has fostered numerous partnerships, and long-standing collaborations with state agencies and non-profit groups that have proven beneficial to the community and the general public. These partnerships have proven important in relation to sensitive matters, such as the return of remains and cultural items, and access to permits to gather materials. For example, when human remains are discovered on state land, there is a collaborative process for return and reburial that is not available on the federal level due to the lack of recognition.

I do believe it's appropriate the federal government restore recognition to the Ohlone/Costanoan people. I don't think you can be picking up the bones underneath everything you build here and put them in UC Berkeley, then not recognize the Ohlone, and say we do not exist. I think there are direct and indirect consequences of federal recognition. Naturally, without

recognition, the Ohlone/Costanoan people do not have Nation-to-Nation status and we are left out of many processes that other Nations use for their people.

Having the Ohlone/Costanoan people match federal recognition requirements that are modeled on tribes in the East and the middle of the country who have long-established central councils is just unfair. Building a case against recognition by standing on the same painful and unfair policies of the past is not very productive for anyone. The procedure can go on for decades and is extremely frustrating and painful because inherent in the process are the past negative actions that led to termination in the first place. It is not easy recovering from post-colonial trauma when forced to undergo decades of a process that is a reminder and inflames the same scars. The recognition process is broken. After so long, one asks, is it meant to be broken? Is it meant to divide people?

An important element of recognition is having the land and resource base to rebuild and create sustainable structures to support multi-generational healing. Recognition represents on a larger cultural level what it has meant on a personal level to have our Costanoan family heritage confirmed, documented and proven.

Significance of a Land Base ~

Since I was born, my dad and grandfather shared this Bay Area landscape with me. The coast and bay held special significance throughout my life: trips to Half Moon Bay, Martin's Beach, Santa Cruz, fishing in the San Francisco Bay, driving between San Juan Bautista and San Jose, and the coast, up into the foggy City. We know this land. The land is everything.

I do believe it's important for the future of the Costanoan to have land in each region of the traditional territory. In San Francisco ideally that land base will be in The Presidio, where we have many years of recent and ancient ceremonial connection. Land will offer a lasting foundation for our revitalization activities.

As we see with many Native nations in the country, over time a land base makes possible economic sustainability and community stewardship across generations. There are many uses to be made of our land base, including community meeting space, developing food systems, traditional ecology, alternative energy, developing elder housing, and supporting community objectives.

When we lost our land base, we lost portions of the fabric that held us together for so long. If California, the federal government, and the Ohlone people can come together on this issue, a lot of healing will follow. When I go back in the history books, and in my own genealogical work, I see how the disintegration of families and communities, and the signs of post-colonial trauma on individuals in the past and right up to today, resulted from the loss of a land base. When the Ohlone people have land in each part of the traditional land base: San Francisco, the Coast, San Jose, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and Fremont, it will be a good day. We need to have land for ceremony, for burying our relatives, for connecting and collaborating as Ohlone. Our strength as people is evident too: the ways we learned to adapt and survive and still remain here on the land base, to continue the connection to this land that underlies everything.

When I trace my family history in the mission, state, and city archives, I can see when the family structure broke down, and how people became separated even while living on the same block! For my generation that is the painful part: to realize that cousins lived down the street from grandparents, but no one bothered to introduce us, and that connection and knowledge is gone forever. My family lived together for thousands of years, and then over mere decades, that fabric was torn. I really pray that we reverse that separation in my family. As a member of the community, I think having a place for people to come back to is another step in the healing process.

Corrina Gould organized the Shellmound Walks and worked to bring ancestor remains home. By law, there is a way to have Costanoan remains returned, but there remains practical

challenges, like where do we rebury our ancestors? The Ohlone don't currently have land, not even where to place our ancestors' remains to rest in peace.

Thanks to Ann Marie and Kanyon Sayers and the larger community's efforts, Indian Canyon, in the southern edge of the Coastanoan territory, is available as a place for gatherings, and most important for ceremony to foster the coming home process. I am deeply grateful to the Canyon, Ann Marie and Kanyon.

These matters are complex. There is a lot of positive collaborations with non-Costanoan organizations, and still there are limits that can be frustrating. Mount **Umunhum** just above Almaden, has changed hands many times since Contact, and last, Mt. **Umunhum** it was a military installation with a large communication tower. Today, the land has been preserved as open space for the public's enjoyment. The group in charge is very inviting and inclusive, and working in collaboration with the Ohlone community. Yet still, during the Hummingbird ceremony years, we were unable to access the land. Mt. **Umunhum** means resting place of the Hummingbird and plays an important part of the Ohlone creation story, and presented a very meaningful land base for our ceremonial activities. Often now we have to pay for land on which to have the Hummingbird or other ceremonies and gatherings.

I'll share the story of the Hummingbird and its presence in my life. Even before I knew of Hummingbird's importance, Mt. **Umunhum** was where my family lived in Almaden for many years.

Hummingbird has been around me for a while, even in Mexico, starting to visit when my son was born. That Hummingbird found us; no matter what side of the house we were in. Hummingbird always came to the window near my son, Pablo. I was struck by how Hummingbird showed up every day.

Many years later in 2006, I was in the thick of my genealogy research when I lived in the Bernal Hill neighborhood of San Francisco, a natural area at the top of a large hill, and the former

location of the medicinal garden of the Ohlone in San Francisco. Hummingbird began visiting this new house, singing from a branch near my window in the mornings while I worked.

Hummingbird's tune was strong and clear.

I began to feel the beat and see the steps of a dance to go with the Hummingbird song. I heard the sound of shells as I saw feet dancing, and suddenly noticed lines of women dancing to Hummingbird's song. The sound of the dancers and Hummingbird grew into one chorus and in strength. I envisioned one thousand women dancing to Hummingbird's song, their stomping feet and the song and dance rippling across the globe.

A few days later, a Mayan elder, Maria Tojin, called me. She wanted to drive down and meet Ann Marie Sayers. She had a dream she wanted to share with her. In the sharing of her dream, and in the song and dance, the 1000 Hummingbirds Ceremony began to form. In the early morning of the first 1000 Hummingbird meeting, I drew the design that still represents today the 1000 Hummingbird ceremony all these years later.

Having a land base is important for each generation to connect with their ancestors, a place to gather their own visions and dreams for the community.

Role of the Next Generation ~

I am very grateful to the young people, down to the little dancers. It is quite an honor to be alive to see young people who were just so little ten years ago, growing up and carrying on even better and stronger. It's heart-mending! It is the responsibility of each generation to continue mending hearts and bridging time to bring the traditions down for seven generations.

I have been fortunate in life to experience going to college, then to law school, to travel and have the rare opportunity to make films and media. I feel blessed and I want the younger generation to have the same opportunities. I dream of starting a Costanoan Education and Scholarship fund for students from each of the Costanoan regions to support them as they learn about and embrace

their talents, to give them a chance to contribute in the ways they are called so they can live their dreams.

We need to create the infrastructure and support network to rebuild the intergenerational life that was before. There is an emphasis in the dominant culture to focus on youth. I very much believe in the vital role young people play in intergenerational life. At times, I am in awe of the younger generation's spark, their love, and if I find myself stuck in old ways, I remember their smile, their kindness, and how honored I feel in their presence in ceremony. The intergenerational life means respecting each person's contribution, respecting the cycle of life. I wish I had done more already for the younger generations and I hope still to be a strong link in the process during my life.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone History and Culture ~

There has been a great deal of progress since my son came home from a field trip to Mission Dolores in first grade in 2003, and had questions. He knew the word Ohlone even at his young age. Yet he did not know the Ohlone/Costanoan people described that day at the Mission. It was the first time he had seen our community in the light of history. I had to explain. I was guided by Linda Yamane's words. I let him know that those times were tough for everyone, and yet Costanoans (he and I) are still here, living our culture and honoring our ancestors by learning and regaining cultural knowledge and language.

Today Muwekma members, Vincent Medina and Andrew Galvan, offer tours at Mission Dolores, tours now led by an Ohlone person speaking Chochenyo. Students have a chance to meet and learn from an Ohlone person who has been learning his own language and culture. More of these advances can help better inform and lead to greater understanding and inclusiveness. Just this year I participated and donated photos for a California State Parks educational manual created with the participation of Ohlone/Costanoan people.

I think educational materials developed with Costanoan participation and inclusion will serve the healing process by acknowledging our presence and impact in the past, and today serve to foster greater knowledge and understanding of Costanoan history and culture. Our lives are interwoven into the success of this country without anyone even knowing.

People might have criticized our relatives, mission Indians who survived the Contact period, first as slaves and later in servitude on ranchos and haciendas. New skills and trades gave families economic stability and a chance to adapt. They survived so that we could be here today. We are survivors.

The other thing I'd like more people to know is that the Costanoan are healing. Witness it.

Learning from the Oblone Experience ~

I believe Costanoans have the wisdom of living on this land for thousands of years, a deep understanding of the cycles of life, of the ecology and sustainability possible here. I think our traditional values focused on land, family, community and culture are known, and now, confirmed by science, to lead to positive life experiences and health.

What I can share from my experience, growing up with my dad and grandfather, are the values that develop out of a close connection to the land and Spirit of place, and to treat the land and the earth as our relatives, our family.

Therein lies the moral challenge of our times: how does one even aspire to conquer one's own Mother? I see this lack of connection as I watch rich agricultural land paved over, replaced with unsustainable and inefficient developments. Who paves over their own food sources? Who delays or avoids implementing energy sources that are clean and sustainable? One thing that we offer as indigenous people is knowledge and information of place and weather patterns gathered over thousands of years. Perhaps that is why you notice indigenous peoples are more in tune with the dramatic need to take action; climate change is already here. As a society, we have wasted a lot of time over this climate denial fiasco. We are not talking 'revolution'. Nature has the cures

available; there are many ways to recover that do not require drastic change that are doable and workable, but we can't even take those steps. The knowledge of place is one thing we offer. Already many traditional values are gaining favor and popularity, and good partnerships in collaboration are gaining traction with the larger community. We may save this planet yet!

Our experience with genocide has a lot to teach the non-indigenous world. Ironically, I believe this learning can be deepest when recognizing the genocide that impacted earth-understanding and sustainable cultures of so-called non-Native cultures.

Our connection to land is really a circle of connection to food, to culture, to sustainability, to survival. I believe many non-Native people find common ground with us in a mutual love, respect and sense of protection for the environment. The common bond bridges difference and division, to work together to the benefit of mankind.

The real threat of environmental degradation might even be something I am concerned about on a cellular level. Costanoans have faced real threats to food sovereignty, after Contact and through the mission periods, as a result of environmental practices of settlers.

The Costanoans are considered to have been overwhelmed by disease as the reason for the high mortality rate. Some fifty or more years of environmental degradation and loss of Native food sources wore down immune systems. There was a great deal of death by hunger. We know from the experience of the Plains tribes that loss of the buffalo was instrumental in defeating and obtaining land from those Nations. In San Jose cattle and other livestock grazing trampled Native grasses and other sources of food staples in the Costanoan diet. Indians were prevented from owning livestock themselves, and eventually were banned from even riding horses. The destruction of sustainable food production and the fabric of the diet, apart from the emotional challenges of such social upheaval, made the spread of disease far easier many decades later when sailors and travelers from Europe arrived on these shores.

When I hear elders speak about how our community is one of inclusion and respect for all peoples, that we should respect our differences while valuing and expecting common bonds of collaboration and agreement, I hear the words of my own family, of how I was raised. I feel this spirit of love for all peoples and creatures is the energy that infuses our land that has received people from around the world. The United Nations Charter was signed on Ohlone land, home of the Yelamu, now known as San Francisco, as an instrument reflecting common bonds among all humanity.

Individually, and community-wide, post-colonial trauma exists and presents a very serious challenge to the well-being and traditional values of living. I am no exception, and still to this day, consciously work at processing the challenges to reach my greatest potential. By valuing and honoring the gifts each person brings to the circle, the health and social benefits of living a community-focused life is wisdom that benefits everyone.

I believe the wisdom of women was one ancient value that should be restored. Respect for women and recognition of their equal role in humanity is a struggle in our times both in and outside the Native community, because so many have forgotten. Our roles may be different, but disparaging, keeping down, or limiting contributions from one-half the population harms the whole.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

My experience is very shaped by the fact that I never knew the truth for sure about things until my thirties. Learning to live in both worlds was a process, and I can't say I've mastered it. It's a lesson in balance.

My grandfather taught me to look within if there is a problem. We were taught values that often placed me in situations I did not know how to navigate within the dominate world. I believe

that is why culture and ceremony – my need to find the source – is so important to me. I believe it's the balance one needs to walk both worlds.

For so long, our ways of viewing the world has been at odds, and it has had a huge and traumatic price for all involved. I am able to see that there is a 'Great Forgetting' within the dominant culture that has been built on mobility and moving away from one's land base. European peoples also come from a land-connected and earth-based life. I see both sides and wish there was a reconciliation that benefited humanity. Is that a wish that comes from wanting the two sides of my own family to overcome their differences?

Living in both worlds is not easy, but it was a lot harder for our relatives. Ann Marie Sayer's words guide me here, to always remember how things have changed, what positive progress has been made, rather than focus on what was lost or what pain we suffer today. I love that the dominant expression among Ohlone/Costanoan elders is to view the positive and continue moving forward in ways connected to our ancient, internal knowledge.

When our Ohlone heritage was confirmed, by family, then, local elders, and finally, by DNA, I felt a new balance and healing I had never experienced and it has been fantastic, grounding, and feeds my wellness.

As an undocumented Costanoan for so long, I was unprepared for the shock of coming to terms with the full history of what my relatives experienced. I felt shame that I had been shielded when others were introduced from their first breath. I felt anger for losing the chance to speak openly with my elders, and my grandfather in particular. That was before. I have been able to connect with the history, with my ancestors in ceremony. Ceremony helps me balance the walk between both worlds. Learning my language and strengthening my cultural ties have helped strengthen my balance.

I also understand that facing both worlds is acknowledging within ourselves the truth about what it takes to bring light to bear on the darkness -- in ourselves, in our cultures, in our nations. It's that place where judgment is laid aside for the healing. It's the place where we understand the common challenges that face all peoples regardless of race. We have a long tradition of accepting all peoples, and that is how I was raised. It's recognizing now that things can be better simply by focusing on the 99% we are the same, instead of the 1% we are different.

My healing and balance grows stronger now that our family heritage has been confirmed, and I understand the unique experience and path that led to my life experience and place at this time in the world.

Who is Native American/Indian?

When I was younger, Indians were one thing quite distinct from what I believe today. My understanding of that very question has changed too with time.

When I lived and studied in Mexico, a Mayan elder told me that my instinct to search for my family history came from a very ancient place, and should be respected. He said I should follow that intuition and that I would know what to do. That was 15 years ago.

It wasn't until I learned that many other Costanoans were like me, that they had only learned the full truth later in life, and that like me, most were mixed with other cultures, and were also recovering the traditional knowledge that I finally stopped feeling so apart, and began to understand better our collective experience.

There are so many 'levels' of being Indian. Start with the full blood, fluent language speaker, to the 'half-breed' who only learned later in life, even if she had clues from the beginning. I am really grateful to the many Native leaders and visionaries who have spoken on the topic of blood-quantum, and those who have shared their own experiences. From this journey, I have finally settled into my heritage. From the connection between my first trip to San Cristobal de las Casas when my

journey first began, and learning in 2012, that the Costanoan share a root language with the Quiche Mayan of the Highlands of Chiapas and Guatemala, to returning to the places on the Pacific coast that my father and grandfather had taken me. They passed down to me shared cultural values, and the deep responsibility to walk the path till the end.

I think being indigenous is hard enough. Contests among Indians about who is ‘more Indian’ suck. Respecting full retaining cultures while supporting revitalization of those that lost nearly all will bring greater unity to all Indigenous.

Who is an Indian? From what my elders and advisors have taught me, an Indian is someone with direct and evidenced Indian ancestors, who is moved to pass down traditional values and culture, acknowledging their cultural history, committed to advancing their people in the way they feel most called by their ancestors.

I believe the amnesia of the ‘Great Forgetting’ might hold a key to better understanding genocide, particularly in the United States. By forgetting the similar experience of all indigenous ancestors, it is easier to see Native people today and always as ‘other’, which is the first element of genocide.

Who is Native to Turtle Island? The people whose ancestors, like the Costanoan, have lived for thousands of years on these lands, whose understanding of place is etched into their beings, Bay waters running in their veins, their lives woven into the landscape, a love and knowledge of place passed down generation after generation.

All peoples have that place, are rich in that tradition, and have land inherited from their ancestors, the land they are obliged to treat right, to sustain seven generations forward.

Respecting Costanoan history and connection to San Francisco down the coast to Monterey, and up through the East Bay, is positive and can have the effect of helping all peoples to reconnect again with that love of place, wherever they may be today.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

My feeling of joy in being Ohlone comes from honoring my ancestors, and derives from the roots of my being. I know the cost my relatives paid simply for being who they were, and I know that their efforts to bring forward the seventh generation were heroic acts hidden behind everyday actions. I feel whole when I dance and sing in ceremony. I am connected when I speak words my ancestors would have understood before the time that changed everything, and I feel an eternal connection to our coast and bay, to the land and living beings that my grandfather made sure I knew so well. I feel proud of the contributions my family made and continues to make to San Francisco, to California, and the Nation. I feel restored to be part of the larger Ohlone community and cultural revitalization process, and most healing of all, as the generations in my own family come home. I feel a commitment and an honor to serve as a Bridge Walker.

QUIRINA LUNA GEARY



QUIRINA LUNA GEARY
Mutsun Ohlone
Villages of pahShin & tamaroh
Co-founder, Mutsun Language Foundation

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I didn't really have anybody who would sit down and teach me how to be Indian. We just lived. My parents, grandmother and Auntie Susie were a significant influence in my life growing up. My family migrated to Madera in the early 1900's, but we always traveled back to San Benito County for seasonal work. It was a family affair. My grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, would travel together for work. During these times, my dad and his uncles would go out and hunt deer to feed our families living at the camp. I remember going to these sites as a young girl, but we stopped by the time I was 9 years old or so. My father would also hunt small game and fish. I remember eating rabbit as a child, but I never ate the fish. I didn't like it and still don't. My father makes fun of me and says I'm not a real Indian because I don't like fish. He's funny like that. He knows how to make light of things. We also used herbal remedies for ailments like stomachaches, headaches, and other things. We would pick mushrooms during certain times. One time I remember trespassing onto private property to gather mushrooms. Well, I didn't know it at the time, but I do remember having the feeling that we were doing something sneaky. We were with my father's sister, my Auntie Susie, and her family. My mom was teaching me how to pick mushrooms when someone yelled, "Run!" My mom picked me up and started running for the fence. When we got safely to the other side, everyone started laughing. A bull was chasing us. I will never forget that day.

As far as values, I get my strength, and having a strong identity, and respect for myself from my mom. I learned patience and kindness from my dad. He kind of spoiled me. Indian people spoil their kids. They teach discipline, but they give them a lot of love too. My dad's mom, my grandmother Susana, was a good person and did a lot for many people. She never had a job where

she went to work from nine to five, but she worked hard. She was the type of woman that if you needed something, she would give you the shirt off her back. It didn't matter who it was. She was kind to everyone, and just a good, plain woman. She was happy with what she had, never complained, and was always very positive. She was strong and knew who she was. I never heard her gossip or talk bad about anyone. With all the negativity in the world, it is a hard and difficult thing to try to be good when people are doing bad things. She somehow managed to always look on the brighter side. She is someone I always looked up to and admired. I try to be like her every day.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

My role changes all the time. For me, there are a lot of things that I learned along the way, and my job is basically to live by those things and those rules. In terms of language it is my job to use it and teach my family and also my community. In the past I had big dreams and ideas of Mutsun being revitalized and starting a language immersion class. However, our community is so spread out. We don't have a reservation, so I don't see that happening in the near future, unless our tribe became recognized, and we had a reservation, a central place where people lived. It's just too difficult.

Language Restoration ~

I've always been interested in the language. It has a lot to do with identity -- who you are and where you come from. Growing up people asked me why I don't speak Spanish. My mom is part Mexican, but never spoke Spanish at home. We knew we were Indian. People would say, "Well, if you're Indian, then speak Indian." It was in the back of mind all the time. As I got older my sister wanted to go to college. We have always heard that you can get scholarships if you were Indian. But we soon found out those opportunities are not available to "non-recognized tribes." The government won't give you any type of assistance. This is what a tribe is, according to the government. In the 1990's some Mutsuns began organizing and getting paperwork together to petition for federal recognition. We contacted them and found a connection. Our family decided to

join this tribe called the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band. Mutsun is actually the real name of our tribe. Amah just means people in our language. The tribal band is a band, because they are not sure that everybody in the tribe is Mutsun or not. A lot of people, who are actually a part of the Indian community, were not necessarily from Mutsun villages. Many were brought to the Mission by Spanish soldiers and became part of our community. According to our traditional values, we accepted one another and became one. That's why they attached 'band' to it.

I joined the tribal council when I was about twenty-three. Our tribal chair at the time, knew I was interested in language and gave me a flyer about a language conference at Wonder Valley Ranch. I went to the conference; it was a good experience. I found some good contacts and got some titles of a couple of books. One was Arroyo De la Cuesta, padre of Mission San Juan Bautista, who learned our language and jotted down phrases. After his passing in the early eighteen hundreds, his manuscript was published.

Later that year, I attended another workshop called "Breath of Life: Silent No More." It was a workshop for native California Indians people who have no living native speakers. I applied and was accepted. It was a week-long workshop at UC Berkeley. We stayed in the dorm. There were maybe twenty participants the first year. It was a crash course in linguistics. They gave us tours of the archives on campus, and showed where and how to research. The librarians and the archivists were very helpful. A lot of us Indian people had never set foot on a university campus before. It was very intimidating; we didn't know what to expect, but the archivists made us feel at home. It was a great experience. My sister went with me the first year. All we had were two little books that we took with us. Participants were finding materials about their grandparents and great-grandparents and language. We were looking and looking for something -- anything. They archivists didn't find any Mutsun material on campus, but on the last day of the workshop, Leanne Hinton found Marc Okrand's dissertation on Mutsun grammar. Okrand is the gentleman who

created the Klingon language for Star Trek. It is funny to see how a couple of grammatical features of Mutsun are also in Klingon. I think I've only missed one workshop since the first one in 1996. I've taken several relatives with me throughout the years. In 2002, we created a Mutsun language committee to make major decisions of how our language was going to evolve. We had to decide what the language looks like. Linguists, depending on their writing system, would write it a certain way. We would have maybe four or five different writing systems, so we developed our own. We've actually changed it maybe three times. We decided on an orthography that looks simple, not a lot of weird symbols, where we can actually email each other, use a regular keyboard and write back and forth to each other at ease. At one point there was about eight of us; then it dwindled down to six, then four, then, just me again.

Our last fluent speaker died in 1930. J.P. Harrington, linguist, documented the native languages of California. He stopped to speak with my grandmother, Josefa Velasquez, in Watsonville in 1922. He writes about her in a letter to Clinton Hart Merriam. He said that he was at Grandma's deathbed. After she passed, he asked around the community for other Mutsun speakers and someone gave him Ascension Solorsano's information who was the daughter of his former informant, Barbara Solorsano. He then began interviewing her. He stayed with Ascension for a short while and then he went on about his other work, and came back in 1929-1930. He actually moved into her home and tried to document as much as possible before she passed. All of Harrington's notes on Mutsun are unpublished. His handwriting is terrible. It's just like looking at another language when you first look at it. It takes some time to train your eyes to read it, but once you begin to understand his handwriting, it's the key to a true treasure. I don't know what we would do without it. Ascension left us very valuable information, not just language, but a sense of how we viewed the world. The only audio recordings that we have are waxed cylinders of a mix of Chochoyeno and Mutsun songs, but those are things we keep to ourselves because they are

ceremonial songs. Those are things we haven't shared with anybody because we are not sure how they need to be used yet.

Harrington's notes are being transcribed right now. We got a grant through the National Endowment for the Humanities. Our tribal linguist, Dr. Natasha Warner, who was actually my student mentor at Berkeley through the Breath of Life workshop, wrote the grant through the University of Arizona. I got her hooked on Mutsun. I've been working with her ever since. With that grant, she was able to hire a few students to transcribe the Harrington notes. The notes are being entered into a database and will be analyzed.

When learning our language, our culture is also coming back, and in every aspect. When one sleeps, the other will soon follow. It is important for our people's social, spiritual, and physical health to bring it back and to keep it going. Words have power. In Indian country, you need to be careful about what you say, how you say it, and who you say it to. Words can heal you or make you sick. So we always need to be conscious of how we speak to one another. Our language tells us about our environment, our beliefs, our connections and where we come from; it is part of us. There are words we have in our language that you can't translate in English. You might have to say two sentences in order to translate the meaning of one Indian word. It has a lot to do with the culture.

Craig Bates has worked with and studied many California Indian tribes. We went to his house to talk with him about differences in regalia. He threw a tape in his cassette player and I kept hearing this word. I was telling my friend, Linda Yamane, it sounds like the word '*tura*', which means thunder in our language. Linda asked him, "What is that?" He said, "They are saying '*tula*'." Some Ohlone people came to the southern Maidu area and introduced Ohlone songs and dances. They still dance them." I said, "You've got to be kidding me! We thought everything was gone. We had no idea that any of our dances were left." Because of language, because of what I had learned, I

was able to understand that one word. So that created a connection. My cousin Nora and I actually contacted a dancer from the Southern Maidu area and they've been teaching us to dance. Last year was the first time our tribe has danced since about 1920. We don't have singers yet, so when we dance, Maidu singers come and help us out. Singers are not just someone who knows the words or has a nice voice; there is a lot of responsibility that come with it. There is no one in our community yet who is ready to take on that responsibility. Someday we will be dancing to our own songs.

Our tribe doesn't use that term, Ohlone, because there is really no such Ohlone tribe. Alfred Kroeber (early twentieth century UC Berkeley anthropologist) is the one who gave us that name. A couple of thousand years ago we were probably all one tribe. If you go back far enough we are probably all related. For whatever reasons, our people separated. The language changed. We all come from one parent language, an ancient language that isn't spoken anymore. Some of the root words are the same. There were new travel boundaries that we respected. When Linda Yamane speaks Rumsun, I can pick out words here and there, but some sounds will totally throw me off. I can pick out the root words and figure out the basic meaning. Our tribal linguist can speak and I can understand her pretty well. We can have a semi-fluent conversation with each other – fairly simple. We're not talking about feelings or anything too dramatic. Simple, straightforward things. The people north of us, the Chochoeny people, are starting to bring back some of their language. Our language and Rumsun are probably more closely related than say the Karkin language. From Monterey Bay all the way up to San Francisco, there are eight different languages, and ours is the most documented. From what I know, the neighboring languages could understand each other, but the further apart, the harder it is.

We've made CD's and are working on a phrase book. As soon as I came back from the first workshop I was making language material, whether it was just words, different handouts to give at tribal gatherings. It takes money and the tribe doesn't have money. Those things were coming out

of my pocket. In 1999 I talked to my cousin Lisa Carrier and said, "I just can't do this anymore. I can't afford it. I want to start a non-profit to help fund it." So we started a non-profit. We became official in 2000. We fund-raise and have applied for a few small grants to help pay for materials. It's helped us put on a couple of workshops.

I don't know whether I'll be around when the majority of Mutsun people speak the language, but I hope so. The only way to learn a language is to actually use it. You have to be functional in it. The only way to do that is to have a speaker. We have to have a least one speaker who can start speaking it. AICLS has this program called the Master Apprentice Program. They place one master speaker with an apprentice and they work together twenty hours a week and do nothing but talk in the language. They're turning out fluent speakers. This program is literally saving languages. This program was created by Leanne Hinton and others in the California Indian community. The Master Apprentice Program is something that I hope to be able to utilize at some point. I have to really buckle down though. I'm all over the place right now. There's so much work to be done.

A lot of places assume that Mutsun is already dead. They are concentrating on saving other languages. There are five of us on the Mutsun Language Foundation Board of Directors, and probably two of us who do any work. We've been doing it since 2000 and we're burnt out. I've started writing an ANA (Administration of Native Americans) grant. If we can get other people to come in and help us out, I would like to do that. I need to take responsibility for it. I'm learning and try to teach what I can, but in order for them to grasp it, they have to have a passion for it. I had it for a really long time, but I didn't have the materials that I need. But now I have almost everything that I need, but I'm just burned out. If I can get that passion back, I know I can do it. There's no doubt in my mind. It's a labor of love. I've never gotten paid a dime for what I've done. If I could find funding, that would be my dream job. Most of it is just buckling down and studying.

How do you envision the young people learning the language?

Immersion school.

I continue working on language every day. It is not so much classes; it is more self-growth – just basically learning by talking to my kids. I talk to my little ones more often, and it is weird because I don't understand why, but when they get to be a certain age, we sit back a little bit as far as being disciplined enough to speak to them in a language. With my three year-old there a lot of words in English he doesn't understand. If you were to ask, "What is your name?" he would look at you like he has no idea what you are saying. In my language he will understand almost everything I'm saying, but to respond back, it is hard as he is still trying to sort out language. Sometimes I can't understand if he is speaking Mutsun or Pomo or English. He gets really frustrated. In time he will be able to sort that out. My goal now is keeping up, making sure that he is growing, that I can keep up with him and tell him anything I need to say in the Mutsun language. I'm learning by doing that. If I don't know how to say something, I can look it up and figure out how to say it. I am at a point now where I can pretty much figure it all out and if there is something I am not too sure about, our linguist is just an email away. I was planning on applying for a grant as we want to go back to teaching classes to my tribe, but politics got involved. I started a non-profit in order to help fund the work and since 1996-97 we really didn't do too much after that. I was going through a divorce. Lisa Carter, my right –hand person, moved to Atlanta. I reorganized and actually brought in the community, which is not only just Ohlone. We can help other California Indians. I also can help my people in the community we live in.

When I tried to apply for a grant to teach Mutsun to my community, I asked out tribal council for a letter of support, which I've gotten in the past. They said that the council owned the name Mutsun and that they would not support the grant unless they controlled it. Other words were involved, and they basically wanted to take over the non-profit. I said, "I'm sorry, but I am not

going to allow politics to play a role in this.” It has been a struggle and it is hard enough when you are fighting with your own government, even if it’s for the betterment of your own people. I hate to say it, but a lot of tribes go through this, where they feel they own it, and they are going to pick and choose who gets to learn and who teaches it. For a lot of people their traditional cultural values are not like they used to be a long time ago. Our great-great grandparents would have never, ever allowed this to happen. We have different values now. We have this thing about ownership. My husband told me, “You don’t own the land. You don’t own the language. It owns us. We belong to it.” That is the way we need to start looking at things. Unfortunately, it just got really ugly. Every time I tried to do a project, our tribal chair throws a wrench in it. I’m just a tribal member trying teaching my own people their language.

I got to the point where I resigned as a tribal member. I revoked my membership from the tribe so maybe they would just leave me alone. I’m still going to teach my language to my people. Just because I’m not part of a political tribe which the government has given us the label -- ‘This is what you have to do in order to be Indian’. I was born Indian. No one can take that away from me. This is who I am every day. It’s how I live every day. No one is going to stop me from teaching people who want to learn. This is where I am right now. After I resigned people called me saying, “What is going on?” I told them a little bit. They said, “We want to learn and we have all these people who want to learn.” My cousin and I had a workshop and twenty-seven people showed up. The kids had fun and can’t wait until the next one. We just had a really good time. It was almost like this had to happen in order to spark an interest with some people. “Maybe it will get so bad where she just won’t want to teach anymore.” “We’re behind you. We want to learn. We don’t want to let it go.” Now they are coming out of the woodwork. So in a way, it worked. Someone told me, “Continue with the good and the bad will fade away.”

I have a history of doing this for sixteen years. We've accomplished a lot. We've gone from not having anything to having the dictionary, textbook, and CD's. We have a website and we're starting to put things online. There is so much that can be done. I can still apply for a grant. What is good now is that organizations can apply; the tribes aren't the ones who apply anymore. As long as I have community support, I don't need a letter from the Council to teach in the community. I have really strong community support. In the meanwhile I am going to continue to go to Madera to teach kids and adults where the majority of our tribe actually lives. There was a big migration in the 1880's when a lot of families went down to the valley to work. I am going to do that on my own and apply for this grant that is mostly to put information online and to allow us to finish the textbook and do things that are fun, and continue with all the loose ends we are starting to create. I want to make sure every household has one, whether they are a tribal member or not, especially if you are Mutsun, but even if you are Rumsen or Chochenyo, you need it. Our languages have some similarities. We can use the other languages to help figure out our own grammar.

You learn a lot from language. Language is not just for communicating; it gives you glimpses of how people are, how they live, what their values are. For instance, '*ana*' is mother in Mutsun, and '*anakenish*' is little mother, meaning auntie. In Indian communities your aunt is like your second mother. They love you just as much and take care of you just like your own mom would. They can discipline you too. The same thing with your father. Your uncle is the same as your father. My sister's kids and my kids would be brothers and sisters, not cousins. In modern culture now, you are kind of out for yourself. In the Indian communities that is not how it is; you are a community, and you help take care of each other. If someone needs something you give your last dollar if that is all you have and you help take care of their kids and you do for each other. It is just a whole different dynamic.

The language heals people. Doctors would use language for prayer and for song. If someone was ill and you had to go to somebody to take care of that sickness, they would sing to you. You need language to do that, to take those bad things away. You need it to communicate, to stay healthy, for everything. You need it to talk to God, to make sure we are spiritually in a better place. When you lose language, everything goes with it. It's hard because little by little you start losing your values, who you are as a people. When you bring language back, other things start falling into place; other things come back.

For example, when I was in the car with my husband, who is Pomo, he was playing some old recording and there was a man singing. I could translate what he was singing. I asked him, "What is he saying?" He didn't know what the words meant. "It's funny, in *my* language this is what it means." So I explained it. I said, "What kind of song is this?" He said, "This is a Gilak song." I said, "We have an old dance that we call Kilaki." We started talking about different ceremonies. We started noticing the similarities so there had to be some kind of connection. When we got home we started looking at some old manuscripts, old things that we both had collected over time. It turns out that a lot of dances back where I came from traveled to different places. After the missions there was a big settlement in Pleasanton. They had a roundhouse there, and people came from all over for dance ceremonies. People from up in Pomo country sent people down south to learn and to bring back these dances to their community. Also there is evidence to show that people from the Pleasanton area, who were part of that community, went out to different places and took these dances with them. It ended up traveling all the way up here to Pomo territory, which is really surprising to hear that it traveled so far. There are several ceremonies that came up this way. I have heard songs sung at Point Arena and Kashaya that are in our language. Language played a big part in these things coming back. It really is amazing.

Other Significant Aspects of Culture ~

I think making sure that our kids are learning good values, and as they are learning the ceremonies, that they understand and respect rules that go with it. There are a lot of rules. It's really strict, but they are there for a reason. When you let those rules go, then the meaning of everything changes, and it just becomes something to do. In the new roundhouse up here at Elem, they have strict rules. You see and feel the difference when you go to a ceremony here as compared to somewhere else where the rules are relaxed. For example, when a woman is menstruating, she can't work on anything. You are not supposed to cook. You can't go to ceremonies. There are all these different things you can't do. You are supposed to stay away from others. You don't go into the water. It is because a woman is really powerful during this time. These are things that we teach our kids. The rules of the roundhouse, the rules of the ceremonies, the rules of life – it is just how it is.

I grew up knowing who I was. We always would travel back to where we are from. We would go to Hollister or wherever to work in the fields. But when we were there, the men would hunt for food. There were certain things that traditionally we kept even though we didn't have ceremonies anymore or speak the language.

When someone was sick my aunt and my grandmother would know what kind of plants to use. They all knew what to use if your kids had colic or a cold sore or something – just little things. My mom is Mexican, but she is Indian from Mexico. My grandmother was really superstitious. There were certain things that she did. Every night she would light candles and pray. I saw her with a bandana on her head with something underneath it, like a slice of potato to draw out pain or fever. She used herbs or different teas when she wasn't feeling good. Even though she learned those things from the Indians in Mexico, to me it is just a line in the dirt. They are Indians too. They live traditional still. They don't like outsiders coming in and trying to bring their modern things in. When someone was sick in our family, or had really bad nightmares, my mom took them to a

Mexican Indian lady. She told me what they did to him, and it is kind of how the California Indian doctors do now. It is interesting to see the similarities. Even though I didn't know the language or the ceremonies, I grew up with a belief. I understood the importance of it and I believed in it. It is a part of who I am.

The most important values that I'm passing down to my children are to be good people, to have pride in who you are, to respect yourself and others, and to be a leader, not a follower. Just because somebody is doing something, don't do what they are doing; do the right thing, regardless if you have to stand alone. Follow your gut and follow your heart. Be proud of who you are and learn these Indian traditions in order to pass them on.

Even tribes who have reservations, don't always live the old ways. So, living here on the Elem Reservation with my husband doesn't automatically give our children everything that they need. There is still a lot to learn from the place and people here, but they lost a lot too. We are trying to bring back these old way so our kids don't have to do what we are doing. They don't have to go to archives and do all these readings to relearn. They just get to live it. As we're learning we basically incorporate it into our everyday life and live it with these kids who are growing up without thinking about it. It is who they are. What we wanted to do for them is to provide something that I didn't have growing up. We want to make sure that there is a less of a struggle for them as far as their identity, of knowing who they are. Because, for me, I didn't fit in anywhere. I wasn't American. I wasn't really Mexican. I knew I was Indian, but we didn't know ceremonies or anything else, so for me it was an identity thing. I knew who I was; I knew where my heart was. My dad and my grandmother and everyone else were really proud of who they were. But we sometimes were judged by other Indians. If you didn't grow up on a reservation, you are less of an Indian. It is funny because there is prejudice everywhere. They don't always accept their own people either, especially if they are mixed. I don't want my kids to grow up that way. I want them to have a strong

identity. I want them to know the way and to pass it on. Hopefully this will continue and eventually grow into a really strong community.

FUTURE VISION

It would be nice if the different tribes could get along. For my own tribe I think we should be more active. There are very few active people within our community and the ones who are active, don't carry agreeable values. In the modern world, the way we grew up, people are power-hungry. People are greedy, and unfortunately, when power comes into play, people lose sight of what is in the best interest of the people. I think people have a good vision in the beginning, but over time, something changes. I think our people need to understand that the key to knowing who you are isn't found in a "casino". Unfortunately, there are a lot of people, even in my own family, who are enrolled in the tribe because they think there is a casino in the future, and not because they are proud of who they are, and where they come from. Being Indian is a conversation piece and nothing more. That is sad to me. This is just not in my community, but in most Indian communities. I was explaining to somebody that I've been learning language, but also learning to live within it. I have the belief, because I believe in what I learn. But my hope is that in a couple of generations our children won't have to think about it so much, but will just know. They will live that life every day without thinking about it. Our religion and way of life will continue to grow and evolve. It's a living thing. When this happens, there will be more ceremonies and even language. I already see it happening.

We believe that dreams come into play. You listen to your dreams. It is telling you to do something, and you do it, or it could be warning you. These are things that come from the Spirits. When you do things for the right reason, things will come to you and it will play out how it is supposed to play out. We also believe in *déjà vu*, meaning you are at the right place at the right time, that you are supposed to be there. You are on the right path. Our life is already played out. We've

already lived our life. We're just going through the motions. When you have *déjà vu* you are where you are supposed to be.

With the Ohlone in general, if everybody got along and somehow our people can lose the whole thing about ownership: I own this. This is our language. This is my land. It doesn't belong to us; we belong to it. We *are* of the land; we belong to the land, and the land owns us. It is a different concept when you grow up in this kind of society, but when you get it, you get it. You look at the world different. You look at the trees, the water and everything in a different way. But for me it starts with my family. I'll try to teach language, but family is my focus, getting them to live this life, and be able to understand how important it is, and then let it grow from there. That is where I'm at now. I'm still doing language and helping anyone who needs it. But I'm making sure my kids are strong.

Federal Recognition ~

I think it is great if the tribe is able to do it and I think it would help. I am not against casinos if that is a way to create income to be able to buy lands back or to be able to fund community projects. I think that is a good tool to help, but that doesn't stop you from being who you are. You don't *become* Indian only after recognition. That is what a lot of tribes have a hard time understanding. You are Indian every day. You are born Indian, and you don't wait for federal recognition to start acting like one. But that is what it seems like to me that a lot of tribes do, even my own. Even if we were all together and everybody was getting along, I don't see it happening, because what they are asking for is impossible. Due to the things that have happened to us, the history that has happened, we don't qualify. The only way to get recognized is through an act of Congress, and our tribal government is not actively pursuing that route.

At one time we were all one tribe – this is thousands of years ago, but for whatever reason, people split and did their own thing, where even languages changed. My grandmother, Josefa

Velasquez, was interviewed by John Alden Mason, and she told him we were the Mutsun Nation. So our people may have lived in different villages, but we were considered one tribe. I'm not too sure about Chochenyo or Rumsen, but I think it is the same dynamic as far as they are concerned.

I would like to see the Mutsun people be together, the Chochenyo people be together, the Rumsen people be together, but everyone wants to be chief. You want to do for the betterment of the people together, and again that has to do with values. Politics and culture don't mix. When politics comes into play, it spoils everything. That is the reason why I won't allow the language non-profit to be taken over by my tribe. They actually have their own non-profit. The tribe purposely developed different non-profits for this same purpose. Unfortunately when you get new people in office, sometimes the direction changes.

Recognition is a good. I've seen tribes like the Rumsey tribe doing good things. They are buying back their land. They have a language immersion school. I think when tribes can do that, it is great. When tribes with the money and power find that other tribes might get recognized next door, sometimes they fight them because they don't want them to build a casino and take away their profits. It is sad.

Significance of a Land Base ~

A land base for any tribe is crucial. It gives the people the opportunity to live as a true community, giving them the opportunity to transfer and sustain their traditional cultural values, language, and ways of life. Without a land base, it is almost impossible.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Native History and Culture ~

They do little things, but I think it is more at the elementary level. I've heard that at the high school they have an Indian club where somebody comes and talks to the students.

I think there is more awareness of Indian people up here than in other places I've seen. I've lived in Lake, Stanislaus, Madera and San Benito Counties; it is more prominent up here in Lake

County. They know if it is ceremony time they excuse absence from school so they can participate and do what they have to do. Sometimes students are out of school for two days because the ceremony might go four days into the weekend. I've never been to a place where they've done that, but they are very understanding about it. I think they are better up here than a lot of places. There are a lot of different tribes around Clear Lake.

I would like the history books to not use the word extinct. We are still here. We have always been here. And, we are not going anywhere.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

The Ohlone tribes are not really Ohlone or Costanoan, but rather we are Mutsun, Chochenyo, Rumsen, etc. Also, we are not a people to only be read about or studied. We are living people with living cultures and languages.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

It's very difficult. Right now, I am going to school full-time and trying to juggle family life and my obligations to the roundhouse. I love being back at school, as my major is in linguistics. I began to love the science of language in general, by working with my own. But I also firmly believe that it is vital for Indian communities to have their own linguists in order to accurately analyze their individual languages, as culture always plays a part. At times it is chaotic, but I have a lot of support from my husband and children.

Who is Indian/Native American?

For myself and my husband, who was born and grew up on a reservation, we use the word Indian. Actually, I don't think I've heard anyone that I know ever called themselves Native American. It's always Indian.

Also, another issue concerning identity is how we judge one another. At a language conference I attended a lot of people had blond-hair and blue eyes, but they are Indian. That's who they are; that's who they identify themselves with; that's who they grew up knowing who they were, even though they are mixed blood and it changed the way they look -- it's who they are. They probably know more language than I do. It's who you identify yourself with, and what you know in your heart. There are a lot of people who didn't even know that they were Indian, but maybe later on found out -- that's up to them, where their heart is. We are all born with a job to do -- our destiny. Who we are and what we are in this world is given to us at birth. You are born to be who you are supposed to be. Everybody is born to make a contribution. *Everybody*. When you know what your job is, that's what you're here for and you are obligated to do what you are supposed to do. Whether you follow that or not is up to you. But when you know what you're supposed to be doing and you don't do it, bad things can happen to you and your family. You don't have a choice; you weren't given a choice. There are certain things that I need to be doing. Even with the ceremonies, I have a job to do -- making outfits and bringing out this Thunder Dance, being able to understand it now for the community that I live in. Bringing back this ceremony is not a choice. It's been handed to me. I would much rather have someone else chosen to get it going and I just came to dance or even just watch. Anyone who wants this responsibility is just plain foolish. I am truly terrified, but my belief in the consequence if I do not do my job, keeps reeling me back in.

We are bringing the Thunder Dance forward. It is the dance of the thunders. We started dancing a different version in 2003 with help from Miwok and Maidu friends, but not too many of our people took it serious. And in time, I discovered that we did it much differently than what we were learning. I called a meeting and explained my concerns and that I thought it was OK to put things away until we were ready to fully commit and knew more about our way. But the

majority of the crew, decided to keep it going. I guess it's natural to want something so bad that you are not willing to let it go. But for me, I've always believed that when you do things, you do it right and you don't mess with this kind of stuff, because you could get hurt. I didn't want to be responsible for anyone else getting hurt.

It's been at least five years since that meeting. A lot of people say once it's gone, it's gone. We don't bring these old things back. It was gone for a reason. It was found again for a reason, and these things were meant to come back or else these elders wouldn't have left it for us. Especially back then, late 1800's, early 1900's, how hard would it have been for a Native person to talk to a stranger and tell them about Indian things? They knew what was going to happen; they knew how things were dying, and that things were going to get lost. I believe that they left it for a reason. They left it for the next person who was chosen to bring it back. I'm being told that it's time. Right now the outfits will take time to make. There are certain things you have to gather; it takes time to accumulate everything -- so maybe by next year.

Reconciliation between Oblone Peoples and the Larger Society ~

There is still an obvious presence of racism and stereotyping when it comes to native peoples (unfortunately my family and I have experienced our fair share); however our great-grandparents, and great-great grandparents, etc. lived in a completely different world. A world of extreme abuse and violence and as a result, the historic trauma has continued across generations. In my experience, I have notice that many of our elders (my father's generation) have a hard time with the "whites taking our land." There is still a great deal of anger, which causes them, at times, to be "stuck." And yet, many Indians within my generation realize that there is nothing that we can do about the past, but we can come to a resolution, within ourselves, to work toward restoring our future. We are already reclaiming our languages, ceremonies, and other cultural traditions. So, I do not believe that reconciliation within the larger society is necessary these days, whereas the U.S. Government still has

unresolved business with our tribes. In order for a reconciliation, the Federal Government first has to acknowledge that we exist. And that will take Federal Recognition.

Proud to be Oblone ~

I am happy with who I am, who I was born to be. It's just who I am. For me being Indian is more than just living your life every day. It's realizing the connection that you have with everything around you -- the animals, the plants, everything, and knowing how we affect one another. If I'm in a bad mood you are going to feel that negativity and it's going to affect your day and how you feel when you are next to me. I think being Indian we realize that. I'm glad that I come from a place where they recognize that. I didn't always feel that way, but you grow as a person and you start to realize what is important in life.

VERA BOCANEGRA POWERS



VERA BOCANEGRA POWERS
Ohlone Mutsun, Chumash & Salinan
Ohlone Singer & Dancer

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I was raised by my dad who taught me what he learned of his Mexican heritage -- values, morals, and traditions of my Mexican side. He was a good role model. He was a hard worker. He showed love and respect for the elders in our family. He took care of his mom, my grandmother, very well and I saw that. To this day I truly respect the elders because of what my dad modeled early on in my life. Not until later on did I find out that I had any Native American blood. But as a youth, I've always knew. I felt it.

When I was in school teachers had a library day so I knew that the first book that I would go to was about Native Americans. I used to check out the same book just to look at the pictures. I was very interested in it, because in our backyard we found arrowheads all the time as kids. We traded our brothers and sisters for other things, but I thought it was just something that was common place in Hollister. I knew that I had an interest when I went to the library to check out the same book over and over and then in my adult life I heard about a powwow in San Juan Bautista. My husband and I used to go and watch them dance. I enjoyed watching them sing the songs of the ancestors and be together as a dance group. Since then I have attended many pow-wows. My family and I go to as many Native American cultural events as we can.

I wasn't taught the true stories about the Missions until I started reading more books in my adult life. I turned on the computer and researched and became more and more interested. One day I was outside talking to a neighbor who was telling me how her mom was interested in her Native side. We realized we were talking about the same people. She talked about her family having a reunion. I told her, 'I think my mom mentioned your mom before. I think we're related, but I'm not sure how.' We both went into our houses and within 10 minutes she came over and said, 'My

mom wants your number. She wants to ask you something about your family. She called and said, “We have some of the same relatives. Do I have permission to give your number to a relative in Guerneville?” I met Patrick Orozco at the reunion. We talked for a long time. I talked with Richard Martinez who is a family genealogist. He said, “We are related. Did you know that you are Salinan from Mission San Antonio, right by Fort Hunter Liggett? Our grandparents’ names are written on a mural on one of the walls. One day you should go see it.” I met more relatives like Mary Gonzales, who lives here in this town and is my neighbor’s mom. She said, ‘I think you’re related to this person and this person.’ As she started saying names, I remembered my mom telling me, when I was high school age, to never go out with anybody with the name of Cota, Lopez, Cortez, and the list went on and on, because they could be related to me. When Mary Gonzales, started rattling off names, they happened to be the same names that my mom mentioned. I didn’t realize how important my mom’s list of names was going to be in finding my family. I knew what lines to go down because she just verbally told us of these people. As I found more family member, they would tell me, “We’re related to this person and this person...”

My cousin Michael, Richard Martinez’ brother, was in Patrick Orozco’s dance group. Michael would told me, “We’re going to be dancing here.” So we started going to those places, and then I was gifted a clapper stick. I felt like I wanted to play it when they were dancing. Patrick told me, “I belong to an organization, Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council. We can help with your genealogy. We also have this dance group if you want to be a part of it, let me know. You can join us.” He told me that he needed my genealogy. What I didn’t have, they could help me find. That’s how it started; from then on one thing led to another. We don’t only go to gatherings for the Ohlone people; we would go to all different ones. At first I felt good being there. I knew I belonged there, but I was still embarrassed that I didn’t know a lot for my age. Everybody seemed like they were so knowledgeable. Everybody knew the dances and the songs. They knew about

their families. I started so late in life that I felt scared that I would say the wrong thing or not know enough, but that didn't keep me from seeking out what I needed to know.

I started out on the sidelines in the dance group with maybe playing a clapper stick. At one of the gatherings I was sitting down. I was approached by Patrick Orozco weeks after who said, "If you want to be in the dance group, you could stand on the side lines, but it's not good to sit down when you are playing the clapper stick because you need to be heard. You need to stand up." I apologized that it was disrespecting anyone, because there's a lot that you have to know about certain cultures, what respect and disrespect is. I didn't know that I would be disrespecting by sitting down with the clapper stick; from then on I started singing at the sidelines, not really dancing, but moving, but I always observed. I knew that one day I would do that. I had a necklace or the clapper stick, and maybe the next time I went, I borrowed a regalia top. I thought to myself, I can do my own. I just need to ask people how I can do this. I knew that it meant a lot to me so I wanted to keep it.

One day when we went to perform in King City, I talked my sister into going. I put one of the furs over her, and said, "Come on, you're going to go with me to play the clapper stick and we are going to be on the sidelines. We can stand way back so you don't have to worry." She and I were playing in the back. In the middle of the performance Patrick started announcing the names of the people in the dance group, and then he said, "This is Emily Villalon and Vera Powers. Come, dance with us!" So of course I wasn't going to say no. From that day on, I knew that I had to get my regalia ready and that was the first step of participating in the dance group.

I started collecting things to be able to teach my grandkids about their Native American heritage. I need to stay involved; I can't sit back and wait for this information to come to me, because no one is promised tomorrow so I need to do what has to be done now. I can't pass on information to my grandchildren without knowing it and as their grandmother it is my responsibility

to teach them. I can't leave that responsibility to somebody else. First of all, I wanted to be a role model to them by being involved with the dance group. I wanted them to be interested in that, but also I made stuff in front of them. I started making clapper sticks. I started working on my regalia. I saw that the interest was there. Then I started collecting things at my house that were related to Native American history, culture, and tradition. I wanted them to look at them and be interested. I know that there's a lot to learn. I want them to have a strong foundation when they go to school. I want them to be proud of where they came from. I want them to have that knowledge. It is my responsibility to pass that on. Being a role model, I can't expect them to do it if I'm not living that life. It is not a life that I live only on the powwow circuit or the gatherings; it's something that I have to live by. It is modeling how to treat people, regardless of who they are, and how to respect their elders. It is something I hope they follow through with the rest of their lives. My granddaughter, Carly Mia Felice, before she was four years old, when she visited, noticed that I was working on a Native American craft, or my regalia, and at that time she already had seen me dancing. One day she came to visit and saw that I had a regalia on a mannequin that I have in the living room, but that regalia was for my other granddaughter. She was excited that I finally made her one so she could dance with me. I looked at my husband and hadn't the heart to tell her that it wasn't hers. That's when she mentioned that if she didn't have a regalia, how was she going to dance with me? I wasn't expecting her to get involved that early on in life.

I've met people like Linda Yamane, who has been a big part of my life right now because she's taught me a lot. Before I met her I did a lot of research on the internet and it seemed always to come back to her. I learned as much as I could about what she was doing in the Native American community, and I knew that that's someone that I wanted my granddaughter to know. We shouldn't be afraid to talk to people. I would say 99.9% of people want to be approached, because everybody's important, everybody has story. I did approach her and told her that it was a pleasure

meeting her and asked her if she sold any music CDs. She said she had this little CD that teaches children how to say, “Hello, how are you? I am fine”, and then it ends with the song. I bought one from her and heard it over and over and over. I thought it would be a good one for my granddaughter to learn. I played it and said, “One day you are going to see Linda. She said that if you learn these, that she would sing with you.” So she heard it over and over and over until we did go to a gathering in Felton for Ohlone Days. She knew Linda’s voice, because she heard that CD so many times. When we got to the gathering she heard Linda singing and said, “Linda Yamane is here! Hurry! We need to get dressed to go see her.” She knew that when she saw her she would be able to say, “Hello, how are you?” It was the beginning of Carli learning Native American songs. That day was the very first time she performed. So that’s the way you get kids involved. We don’t expect them to know everything, but yet they follow along with you and then they catch on. That’s what Carli did. She knows how to use an iPad, iPhone, and she knows how to get on it to listen to people sing and talk. One of her favorites is of Linda Yamane when she is talking about basket weaving. She always starts off by singing and she likes it because she can follow along with the song. At that same gathering Linda had a booth there with Jakki Kehl. They had a beautiful display. There wasn’t anybody at the table at that time as it had just started. Carli says, “There is Linda Yamane. I have to sing with her.” We go to the table and she says, “Hi Linda Yamane, *Mishish tuux*.” Linda then started to sing with Carli after exchanging greetings. This was the beginning of the friendship that Carli and Linda have to this day.

What I hope is that I instill in my grandchildren to ask questions. I hope that I have given them enough foundation to give them the courage to tell people who they are, to be proud of where they came from, and to know about their Native American heritage, traditions and culture. She knows enough to participate in class discussion about Native Americans. I hope I’ve instilled in her

to speak out, to ask questions, to take the knowledge and pass it on. If somebody doesn't know and she does, then share it.

I go into nature or to powwows, and ask my ancestors questions, and usually get an answer. I'll be led to something that I've been looking for. I feel that they are just there waiting to be asked, and I'm here to receive. If I'm looking for a certain topic that has to do with our culture, I'm usually led right to it. I was looking for information on my grandmother who was in San Juan Bautista. It led me to a lot of different people who did know a lot about the area. I met a Mutsun man about a year ago who sent me a lot of genealogy from San Juan Bautista he knew I was looking for. It was a gift, because I was able to go back to generations I did not think I would find in my lifetime. I continued asking for guidance to lead me, and was led to San Juan Bautista. Never did I think that this one person had that information I was looking for. Now when I see him, I am so grateful. I try to do that for people too, because I know that it's a good feeling.

I continue to work on my genealogy because it's important to me where I came from. Who were my ancestors? Where did they live? What did they do?

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

There is just so much to mention, to pass on down. I would say to teach the young to ask the elders questions while they can. For instance, I collect things, so my grandchildren ask: "What is this? What did this have to do with our family? What did this have to do with this area?" I want them to be able to ask. I hear a lot of people, even myself, say, "Gosh, if I'd only asked my Dad or Mom, or other relatives this question." What I would like to pass on to them is to ask all elders and whoever they can, and to really take in the spirit, the kindness, the generosity, when people gather. I want them to feel that, because that's going away. You see that every day. I want the youth to know that. Our life is important, and knowing where you came from is something that you should highly respect.

Ceremony is very important to me, because it is taking the time out to not only honor our ancestors, but to be present with now, and truly feel who we are, and where we came from.

Language Restoration ~

I'm learning. My friend, Linda Yamane, shows me words and some of them are in the songs. Some of the words to the songs don't really mean anything, but some of them do. When I'm talking with Linda sometimes she will answer back and show me a word or two. She'll put the word right next to it, what it means, and how it is said. I have other people who I talk with, and basically at all the gatherings too there are people who pray in the language. I recently went to a museum in Morgan Hill, CA where they carry flash cards with a lot of the Mutsun words in it, because they just opened up a Mutsun room. They allow the Mutsun tribe to sell crafts there. I purchased a child's coloring book that has Mutsun words for my granddaughter, and the flash cards also. I thought it was good that the museum even offered that. That should be at San Juan Bautista.

I think language is very important. The Mutsun woman, Ascension, who was at the San Juan Bautista Mission, left a lot of the Mutsun language when she was interviewed. If she had not done that, we wouldn't know anything about it, and that part of our culture would have died out. If people don't continue learning it, and pass it on, it is going to die out; it's going to be a thing of the past. I don't want to see that happen. Whether I am able to say a whole prayer, or a few words, I will pass on those few words. It's not going to die out. There are a lot of people who are learning, and they are passing it on. The internet has helped with research. The language contains information. There are different languages in different tribes. It defined their universe. Language is what everything is all about.

Role in the Cultural Revitalization Process ~

I would say not just talk about it, but to do it, to get them involved whether it is basket weaving or singing or dancing, and for them to stay involved with it. I worked at the school for so many years.

I've heard kids say, "I'm so bored." I didn't grow up bored. We always had something to do; there was a time for work and a time for play. I worked hard as a young child and that taught me to be a hard worker. I want to teach Carli and my other grandchildren to work hard; it's not good to be idle. There's just too much to learn whether it is in your house or your backyard. I hope that I instill in them the strength to let your voice be heard and not be afraid to stand up and be proud of who you are.

I'm not an Ohlone scholar, but I am an Ohlone woman who is open to knowing at my age right now. It's never too late. Because I found out about my Ohlone heritage later on in my life, I'm making it a goal to be a role model for the youth in our family, for my grandchildren, to teach them what I would have wanted to be taught. I like to share what I've learned. I didn't know that my elders wanted to talk about it. I tell my grandchildren stories all the time. I tell them the way it was, what we did, what our ancestors did. All I'm doing for them is what I wish I would have had in my childhood.

What we like to teach our grandchildren is to make Native American crafts themselves that have to do with our culture. When we go to a powwow, or to a gathering, we offer gifts to people. Possibly we'll see these same people in another gathering, and they will remember that day they experienced our dancing, or whatever we did that day. Gift giving is very important. We don't go to a powwow without preparing that. That's just something our family does. I've been told by an elder in the past that exchanging gifts was one of the big things they've done for generations. I'd like to continue that, and really not expecting anything back, just the feeling of the person accepting the gift with a lot of joy. People have taken the time off in their day to come to see us dance, and I think that offering them a gift is very nice. I know when I receive a gift from somebody, when it comes from their heart and their own creativity, it means a lot to me that they took the time out to do this for me. I've been told by elders that it's something you do, and you usually do it for someone you

would like to get to know. It's like breaking the ice. That person will probably come up to talk to you again, or they'll remember you the next time they see you. That's really important to me.

Linda Yamane has been such a giving, loving mentor. She's empowered me to do things I never thought I could do. She's given me such a positive example of a woman. She made me proud to be a woman, to know that a woman could get that far along in life and just continue empowering people, making them feel that yes, you can do it. You're worth something. She's given that to me and I want to pass it on. It all started by me approaching her at gatherings and asking her questions. We go to the same places where we were bound to do something together. One day she mentioned that she wanted to teach me how to weave baskets. She saw in me when I didn't see. What an honor that was coming from her.

On Thanksgiving Day when my husband and I were at the river honoring our ancestors, I texted her to have a nice day. She texted me back asking what we were doing, and I told her we were honoring our ancestors at the San Benito River. She said, "Do you have access to get to the riverbed? I've passed that river going out of town and have seen a lot of willow. Willow is basket weaving material. We need to go there if you can show me where it's at." When we went she showed us where the willow was, what it looked like, and how to cut it. My husband and I have been going there for years. I never knew there was basket weaving material right under our nose in our own town, and she brought that to my attention. Then she began showing me how to make them, how to tend, clean and scrape them. She said, "I'm going to take you to one of the sedge beds and show you how to get the sedge." Was I surprised when she taught me that, because it was underground and we had to dig for it. (Sedge is another basket weaving material.) With Linda it's always an on-going process, ongoing teaching; no matter where we're at, she's showing me things. One thing leads to another. We could be making a basket, and next thing you know she's talking about another project she'd like to teach me. I just enjoyed seeing her at gatherings, being at

presentations. I saw the way she did presentations and that empowered me to want to do the same thing.

I'm working with her on a grant to carry on traditional arts. It's called ACTA: Alliance for California Traditional Arts. A master artist teaches an apprentice. She's going to teach me how to identify certain Ohlone herbs and plants, and what they're used for. We are also going to do small projects such as making cordage. There will be some things she's going to teach me, that we will then share with the public. We will probably show them the process of making acorn meal and making soap root brushes, and how to identify herbs from photographs and talk about their uses at Ohlone Days in Felton, just like I did last year with manzanita cider. She'll teach me the process from beginning to end. We have this whole year to complete this project.

I met Linda because I approached her and gave her a gift. The next time I saw her I continued talking to her, and here we are working together. What an honor.

I'm teaching my grandchildren to do the same thing, to ask people questions. Otherwise, I wouldn't have found a guide; I truly believe I was guided to Linda. She is a master at everything she does. I know I can't possibly do half the stuff, but if I could learn some things from her ... that's what I'm looking forward to, and then to pass that on to the community, to people that attend the gatherings, to my own family, and other Ohlone.

FUTURE VISION

I would like to see all Ohlone peoples come together more, not only to gather, but to teach each other things. We do have two Ohlone Days where we celebrate, but it's not enough. I think it needs to happen more. There needs to be a place where education happens. I see that's not going to happen unless they get federally or state recognized. This way you have that relationship with the government and you can get that help to start something.

I am also Chumash, and my relative, Tom Lopez, talks about the learning that's going on at the Chumash reservation. They have a casino so they're able to fund all this educational stuff for the tribal members. I'm not sure if they are state or federally recognized. I know that they do have a casino and that's what helps them to be able to continue on the cultural things. I think he is part of teaching the language and he's also a Chumash dancer. I met him at one of the gatherings; that was an amazing encounter. I don't think he was there five or ten minutes in the area where he was going to camp, and he introduced himself as I happen to be walking by right at that time. I said "I'm Chumash also." What I did learn years ago that you always go back to the oldest ancestor that you remember, and that is what connects people. He said, "Who does your lineage go back to?" I said, "Irene and Julian Rios." He said, "We're cousins." This is a small world and that's how we meet people. If I didn't stay involved with the gatherings, I would have never met him, never known that we were related.

Federal Recognition ~

That is real complicated for me; a lot of that I don't understand. I am more on the side of knowing about my lineage, traditions and culture. I don't want to say that I just leave that up to certain people, because I try to stay updated on it, but I'm not the one who is involved in that process. What I see with other tribes when they have that relationship with the government, they are acknowledged as a tribe. Right now it seems like people know the Ohlones are here, but it is almost like we are invisible, because we don't have that title.

Significance of a Land Base ~

The Chumash have land. They have a main place where they go and can teach a lot. It's hard for everyone to meet, and do ceremonies and cultural things, and just to feel the connection and love that everyone has to share with each other without a land base. Everybody has a meeting place, and some people have a church to go to.

Role of the Next Generation ~

I think we need to do that, and it needs to start first at home. Other young people need to see young participants. For instance, in singing, like my granddaughter did, to know that it's not just adults that are out doing that. It's okay for kids to come out and join and be a part of it. We need to have more gatherings like we did today at Indian Canyon, and let people know what's happening in our area. We need to attract more people in our area, even where my family is from, to let them know that this is happening here. I would say more participation and more gatherings, maybe closer to town. A lot of people don't know this area (Indian Canyon) is here. Maybe just be visible at schools, at other gatherings that are nearby. For instance, we have a farmer's market in our town, and people don't have to drive there. They can just walk to it. They don't have to worry about their parents taking them, as opposed to a place like Indian Canyon. That's where parents need to be a part of bringing their children to a place like this because it's so far away. Have something in your hometown where teenagers could come, and they don't have to drive there. Make it to where anybody can come and see that young people are there doing stuff with their culture.

I do go to the schools when I'm asked. Regardless of if it's close to town, or a few towns away, I don't mind going, and then I have my granddaughter come, and let other kids see that she's interested in her own culture.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

The local history I don't remember any of that at all, but what I do remember is just the mission projects. They talk about these missions that were built for the Indians to teach them. Not until my adult life did I realize or was told of all the suffering that went on. My ancestors built a lot of these missions and that never even crossed my mind when I was when I was young, because I was never told that. I wish that would change, because it continues on now. What they teach, except for the mission project, is very minimal. They don't want to bring up the ugly part about the mission

system to the fourth graders, but if that's the case then continue it on in high school when they can understand. If they don't teach it, how are they going to learn about forgiveness? How are they going to learn about what happened to us? This happened to us, but how are we going to change this now? How do we move forward? If they are not taught that in school, then they are just going to remember the stories they've been told in the past, which is hardly nothing.

What I would like to see taught in the schools here is first of all the curriculum would have to be changed. Somebody would have to talk with the Board and that should involve the Mutsun tribe. I did not know about the Mutsun tribe here until later on in my adult life. I knew if I didn't know, then a lot of people didn't know. There are a lot of guest speakers from all over who go to the high school where I work. I don't see why they can't have local Mutsun speakers speak about this area and let the people from here know not to speak of Mutsuns in the past, because we are *still* here. Think of us as still here, not past tense, as if we were gone.

We just went to the San Juan Bautista Mission. Going to the Mission in the past and now, I knew there was an Indian cemetery there. I know there are thousands of Indians buried there. It was something that was open to the public. I'm not sure of the circumstances, but it is locked now. The only way to get to it is to go through a gift shop where you have to pay a donation. I'm not sure if the donation is for the upkeep of the Mission itself, but what I do know is that it doesn't involve the cemetery. I was disappointed to see how overgrown it was with weeds. The Native Americans are the ones who built that mission, and a lot of them are probably buried right there. That should be respected. I don't know where that donation is going, but what I do know, that the cemetery needs to be included. I used to go there and say a prayer for them. It was something I wanted to do, but now it costs me every time to go through there to pay my respects. It doesn't keep me from being there, but I think if you have ancestors there, you should be allowed to go in

and pay your respects. I can't see going to our Catholic cemetery and having to pay a fee every time I visit my father's burial site.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

The larger society could learn the truth of the Ohlone people. I can give an example of what I experienced at Carmel Mission. I was looking at some artifacts and standing right next to me was a woman and her husband who were looking at the artifacts. The woman said to her husband that it was amazing that the padres built the missions for the Indians to teach them, and for them to have a place to live. When I heard that, I thought to myself, "What she wasn't taught? And what did she teach her kids?" I think the missions need to tell the ugly part of the missions, to educate the community. The mission are visited by thousands and thousands of people. But they don't express that part, even though they had a reconciliation ceremony.

You could go to the San Juan Bautista Mission just to look around in the church itself, and would never know the Indian graveyard existed, because it is fenced off, blocked off, and closed. You could hardly see the word cemetery on the closed door. The lights were turned on in the rest of the church, but that area was very dark, very dim, and unless you know that there was something out there, you were going to miss that there is a mass grave of Native Americans. The way that cemetery looks is so sad. It is sad to know that mass went on there at the same location where a wall divides that cemetery from where that mass happened, and to know that in December they were saying "sorry" on this side, but our ancestors are right on the other side still being disrespected.

Reconciliation Mass at San Juan Bautista Mission ~

I was excited that that mass happened in 2012. It was a historical event. I knew it was something I wanted to witness. There was prayer. There were gift offerings at the altar. They had a full mass. The priest talked about all the suffering that went on there at the mission. I never heard out in public anyone talk about the mistreatment the Native Americans endured. For me to hear that, to

be there and witness that meant a lot, because you don't hear that said out loud from people of authority. There will be another one coming up soon for the Mission at Santa Cruz, and I want to be there also. Not all of my grandchildren were able to be there. Three of them are living in another state, but I did take my youngest granddaughter there, and I will take her to the next one also. When I explain to her later on in life what that mass was about, she will understand that she was a part of that, and why I thought it was important for her to be there.

I would like to think that they did follow-up after the ceremony, but visiting today brings a lot of questions that I need to have answered. I will be talking with people and ask, after having that mass, why is that the cemetery the way it is? If they want forgiveness, what happened to the respect? While walking through the gift shop, I did notice also that there were no Native American crafts sold in that mission. I think they need to be acknowledged in there also.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

If people see me dancing or see me involved in anything, they question me: 'So all of a sudden you are Native American?' I just respond by saying, 'I didn't know I was and now I do.' It is something I'm very proud of. I've always known I was. I have seen the mission records, been to the missions, and read books that mention my ancestors. I want people to know that we are still here. I think we honor our ancestors by learning about them and passing down their traditions and culture. As a grandmother I will teach my grandchildren everything I know about our heritage. I want my grandchildren to get involved in keeping our traditions and culture alive and to let them know they should be proud of their Native American family roots.

Who is Native American/Indian?

I've always felt that I was Native American. I couldn't prove it, but I knew deep down inside. I always was interested in it. I knew that if my family was from this area, they might have Native

American blood. But I wasn't raised by my mom, and she is the one where my Native blood comes from. In doing research, starting off with genealogy, it led me to find out that I was Ohlone. I am also Chumash and Salinan. It's interesting to me to know that people traveled way back then.

I know that when you belong to a tribe, and you're wanting to get your BIA number, they do ask for quite a bit of information. I think that's what usually turns people away, because it's not something that's cheap. You have to get certified copies of everything they're asking for. At times it seems like it's almost impossible. But nobody can really take away when you know what you really are, because that's what's running through your veins. I don't have a roll number, but it does not make me not Native American, because I am Native American inside. I don't have to see it on a piece of paper. I just know. It doesn't keep me from wanting to know more about it. I continue to attend cultural things, and don't wait for the government to say now you can go do that. I know what blood runs through my veins. The government doesn't decide where my roots started.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

They're going to have another reconciliation ceremony in Santa Cruz, but I haven't heard any more about that. I'm not sure what they're waiting for, but maybe they have to go through a certain process to be able to do that.

I would like to say reconciliation would happen, but the reality is what the students learn in school is very minimal. That's why it's very important to me to know that education begins at home so when they do go to school they're not afraid to raise their hand and say, "My ancestor did this. My ancestor came from here. We are from here. My ancestor helped build the mission that was here." They have something to share with the rest of the classroom. We shouldn't leave it just with the school; we should do it wherever we're at. I make it a point that I do that. I would really wish that would happen in my lifetime, but working in the school system and seeing a lot, I can see little changes, but not dramatic changes.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

I'm proud to be Ohlone because I know that my family was around for so long, and with having to deny who they were, I must have had some very strong-willed ancestors to be here right now. They survived through hard times. They had a will to live and to want to continue living here. I am proof because I can trace my roots back to the 1600's. I'm proud of my culture because it feels right. We're this big family -- no matter where you go, no matter what you attend, no matter who you meet in the Native community, you are just another family member. They treat you like that. Although I know they live everywhere, we all have the same story. We may have little different ones, but we all mainly have the love of wanting to know and keeping our traditions and cultures alive, and that makes me feel real good that there are so many of us everywhere. The more gatherings I attend, I see that the family gets bigger every time. It makes me proud to be part of that big family.

STEVEN RODRIGUEZ



STEVEN RODRIGUEZ, JR.
Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe
Humaya Dancer

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I didn't know about the culture until I was around ten or eleven when Tony Cerda and the older relatives started to get the tribe together. My grandma, Rosa Parra, got me and my little brother Jessie, and two of my other cousins to start dancing. She said, "We need dancers. They have a tribal council, and they have what we need to make our regalia, but we don't have any dancers, singers or drummers." Even though we were all between nine and eleven years of age we made our own regalia. She started taking us to the meetings and traveling a lot up and down California. She showed us, "This is who you are." It made you feel like you were somebody. I took to it really well. Now I had a Tribal Card and I wanted to learn more about our tribe, and about other tribes. When I danced, I felt like I was really a part of something; that's what made me want to do it even more.

Jessie and I have been around for a long time, probably longer than the majority of the Bear Dancers who are within our little Rumsen group. We've always been asked to be Bear Dancers, but we always said no. It's not that we didn't feel ready, but we didn't want that commitment. We were comfortable where we were at as Hummingbird Dancers/ Humaya Dancers. Could I have been a Bear Dancer? Yes, but I chose not to do it, because it's a life changing event. It's pretty much like when you become a priest; the attention is on you now. Everybody's going to expect you to always do well, no matter what. It doesn't matter if you're at ceremony, at someone's house, or at a party, you're still expected to conduct yourself as a Bear Dancer, a person who should be looked up to. I don't want to do a lot of things all at once. I've drummed before, but I didn't feel comfortable; that wasn't me. I didn't feel right. It's like knowing how to ride a bike and then on jumping on a unicycle thinking, 'Well, yeah, I can probably do this. It has a wheel and a pedal... it's kind of like a

bike?' I tried the drumming, but I always went back to the (Hummingbird) dancing. I just like it better.

There are certain things that I probably do on a daily basis, and don't notice that I do them, like smudging. Sometimes you get an object from somebody, and you feel the energy come off of it. You can feel whether it's bad or good... or something's not right with it. So you'll smudge it. You should smudge it anyway. Smudging for us would be like holy water to a Christian. It becomes a habit. When I moved into my new house, which was the same house that I grew up in, my wife said, 'We should really smudge the house.' It just becomes a habit to do it.¹³

Traditional Role of the Elder ~

The traditional role would be to educate and guide the younger people within their social circle into the right path, or like how we say, onto the Red Road, which is the right road. It's a little bit different with our tribe, because a lot of elders didn't get involved until their later years. Those that have been around from the beginning and did all this stuff when they were younger contribute a little bit more to the other people of the tribe because they have that knowledge and experience. The other elders who came in a little bit later on in life bring more life experiences. They are real humble and don't try to come in and act like they know everything.

I don't have a specific one as a guide. I see them all as one. A pack of wolves are one; it's not one specific wolf. That's the same way I feel about the ancestors. They all feed off each other's energy, and they're all one people.

I have two mentors, because I have to keep it equal, one male and one female. The male role model can only give so much, then the female one can kind of kick in. My grandmother, Rosie, obviously would be the female one, and our chief, Tony, would be the male one. Both give me different advice and information on both ends. If I have a question that I know Tony probably

¹³ Smudging is a purification rite. Sage is burned and the smoke wafted over a person, object, or place.

won't be able to answer, I ask my grandma the question. If it's something I know my grandma probably won't know, I'll ask Tony. They were there when I first started dancing. Tony was the chief then. I looked up to him. A month before I got out of CYA (California Youth Authority) I called the tribal office, which used to be up on top of the Cerda's family restaurant. I asked Tony, "I'm wondering if I could work at the restaurant for a little bit, just to get myself on my feet?" I got released on parole, went straight there and started working that weekend. I was twenty years old at the time. Their helping me get that job with the restaurant gave me the taste of --"Wow, I'm working for the money! I have money now." That steered me. I couldn't really go to parties because I'm at work. It was like a double plus, because not only was I working, but working at the same place where my tribal office was, so I also had that spiritual guidance at the same time, which was really super cool. There was no way I was going to get away with not going to work!

A third plus, was that being Native, I was able to get technical college training for free. Tony told me: "We can send you to school for free through a program called the California Indian Manpower Consortium in Moreno Valley." I started going to college and had a substance abuse counselor for free, also because I was Native, so that helped out again. I kept on going on the right track. After that it just came natural. I got into the routine of working hard, going to school, doing homework, driving to school all the way from Chino to Riverside, and still doing ceremonies, dancing, and singing.

I've talked to a lot of kids about my experience. I don't know if they changed because of me, but I have tried to guide kids in the right direction by talking to them, and answering their questions. As far as the actual helpful result, I don't know... I hope so. Whoever I talked to, I planted a seed in their brain, and it's always going to be there. As someone who was part of Tony's first dance group, I help out the younger guys who are trying to learn some of the songs, the dances, and the ways of how it was back then and to continue the same theme going forward -- I guess like a

mentor. I know that I'm a role model in my commitment to the military*, and to the tribe. I hope they see me as someone they can trust and can come to if they have questions.

Sense of Place ~

This is somewhere where I want my ashes to be thrown. Plant my ashes with a tree or something. If it were allowed, I'd rather my body put on a boat and pushed out to sea. That's how they our ancestors did it. They put you in a little tule boat and push you out there, because the ocean was the after-world.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

People don't have to know songs or dances or speak the language, as long as they know the basics: this is my tribe; this is where we are from and what we have done. Just basic stuff like respecting your elders, what tobacco means, what sage means, what the fire means, how to walk in a circle and how to walk out... things you can't read in a book, that you have to be here to learn – like you always go clockwise in the circle. Why do we use the abalone shell? We are ocean people and abalones were a large part of our sustenance that we ate every day. The abalone shell, you see how big they are... that is a lot of meat! Obviously we use the shells afterward to burn sage in or as scraping tools by sharpening the edges, or to pluck hairs, or to make ornaments. They would use every part of the abalone shell. You don't just throw it away. You keep it and use it for everything. When we go to certain places and you see us burning sage in an abalone shell, it represents that we are a coastal tribe. Tribes from other places use other things from their indigenous area. You don't have to be a singer or a dancer you just need to know the bottom stuff like this before you can move forward.

Language Restoration ~

I don't speak it, but I really want to. They have a language class every week at the tribal office. Now that I'm back I'm trying to get into the rhythm. Eventually I do want to have that in my brain.

Language is very important. Again, it goes back to not having a home. Like a homeless person, if you can't speak your own language, it's like you are mute and deaf too. Everything has to tie in. You have to know the dances, the songs, the ceremonies, the stories; the language is part of it. You want to learn everything. Now I feel like I'm settled in. I'm stronger. I know the songs, the dances, the ceremonies. I know how to set up the sweat lodge. It is just like I'm an employee, who works at a company, and you are another employee and you know more than I do. I want to learn just as much as you. I want to know my job. That is the same thing with this.

FUTURE VISION

If you go on Google or Wikipedia, under population it will say the Ohlone are extinct. We are not extinct! We just moved somewhere that wasn't tribal land, so when they were giving out reservations, we weren't there. They claimed that there was nobody here in San Francisco so there was nothing to give out to the people. People in California don't know that there are still Indians here. They see the casinos; they don't see the people. For me, it would be more cultural awareness that will help my tribe move forward.

There are some tribes who don't do ceremony, and we still do. Let's say you've grown up poor and appreciated everything, and then you get older and become rich; you can go one of two ways. You can remember where you came from and still appreciate small things you had as a child, and humble yourself, or you can allow the money to take over and consume you, and make you forget who you really were in the beginning. It is the same thing with the casino tribes. They obtained all this money and stopped doing ceremony. "What for?" They don't have time for it. I think it is really important, but a lot of tribes don't want to do it, because they don't feel that way. The tribe has been put into the mainstream. They're too into money. This is from my personal experience. Here in Southern California if you look at a lot of the casino tribes, you hardly ever,

ever, ever see them or hear of them doing ceremony or participating in dances, or anything like that. They might do their usual annual powwow, but that's about it. But that's just a powwow.

Our tribe actually does traditional ceremonies, like the Bear Ceremony, and we have our Hummingbird Dancers and singers, because that's all we have. We don't have a casino. We don't have land. We don't have a cultural center. We hold on to what we have left, which is our songs, our dances, our stories, and our elders.

Sometimes I say to myself the first thing I would do is build a two million dollar building for my tribe. Tony would have his own office and the tribal members would have their own computers and offices. We would have a big area where the kids could play. I would want to put so much money into it: to have our own place, to not have to struggle to come up with money to pay for gas to travel.

Federal Recognition ~

Any tribe which is not federally recognized I would say get that federal recognition to receive the benefits and things that are owed to us. There are programs to help people get homes with no down payment, to help people get jobs, for college benefits, but we can't tap into those benefits through the BIA, because we are not a federally recognized tribe. I used some of the school benefits through an organization called California Indian Manpower Consortium, but it was only for trade schools; that only took me so far. If you're federally recognized, then you are able to go to a regular college or university. Federal recognition opens the doors to all these other benefits.

Significance of a Land Base ~

We are a homeless tribe. We're like refugees. We don't have a home. We had to go down south and that's not our territory. That's another tribe's. I know if someone were to go into your home and roll their sleeping bag out, you would say, "What is going on here?" That's the way I see it. It is important to have land. If you want to put rocks or grass or plants in your front yard, you can do it

because it is your home. If we had our own land, we could do our own thing without breaking any laws, or getting permits, or asking other people. But our land belongs to someone else, and we have to ask them, “Hey is it okay if we do this on our land?”

About ten years ago we came up here and danced at Henry Cowell Redwood Forest. On the way back down we stopped at Mission Carmel to visit our Indian burial site. The mission was built in the late 1770’s by hands of the people who are buried there. The lady at the front told me, “You have to pay to get in.” I said, “I’m not here to sight-see. I just want to see where my people are buried, and what the burial site looks like.” She said, “Well you still have to pay.” I said, “Let me ask you this, when you go see your family at the cemetery, do you have to pay?” I’m not trying to be a smart-ass, but really think about it; it is the exact same situation. The priest said, “Don’t worry about it. You don’t ever have to ask if you want to come in. You are welcome anytime.” Again, we had to go on someone else’s property to ask if I could go on a burial site to look at something that was part of me. I needed to see that. It just felt weird to be there. It’s the same stone; these hands, these people are buried there.

Role of the Next Generation ~

I have a ten year old son and a seven year old daughter. They’ve been a little bit. I don’t want to shove it at them. That’s why I just brought my son for now to show him little by little. If he wants to continue, if he wants to be a dancer or singer, then he can. I think it is important to involve them. My wife, who is Mexican, teaches them the traditional Mexican culture from her part of Mexico. They do the Day of the Dead every year, and then she joins us for our Native stuff at our pow-wow. I think it is really good, especially for kids who are half Mexican and half Native which a lot of them are. In the Southwest and California we are so mixed in together. I think it is real important that they learn both, because when they get older people sometimes will ask them, “What are you?” or “Where did you grow up?” It makes them a more interesting person, and gives them personality. It

will shape them into an adult who will feel that they have something, that they are somebody. It is like an extended family at the same time.

There definitely needs to be more youth involved. However you can't push it on them. They have to want it. All we can do is expose it to them and educate them on it. Their hearts and minds will tell them what is right. If it comes to them, if it calls them, if the songs and the drumming call them to it, then they'll go to it on their own. I really wanted my son to be a dancer, but he wants to be a singer. I can't say "No, you're not going to do that!" because singing is better than not participating at all. It's like those dads that want their kids to be football players, and make them play football, and the kids don't want to play football. They want to do baseball or something. It's the same thing. The kid has to want it. You can show them, "This is what it looks like -- touch it, feel it, hear it, see it. If you like it, we'll go to the next step, and you'll learn it." That's my view on it.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

The schools didn't teach too much, other than, "This is what an Indian looks like: one feather going up on the back of the head." I knew as a kid that that wasn't right. The first thing I learned to do was to tell other kids that those are *Plains Indians*. I always tried to correct them and tell them, "California Indians look like this; the ones from Arizona look like that; the ones from New York look like this..."

There is a lot of stuff that the schools could take out. Kids think Natives are dead. What they read in the history books is they were wiped out; there is no more buffalo; the missions just destroyed the cultures and they died of smallpox. They could cover more current events: this is where Natives are at now; this is what they do now. It only takes a minute for a teacher to say, "Be aware that not all Native Americans look, talk, and act the same!"

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

Society can learn that the Ohlones, joining together as a small group of people rich in culture, can impact those without any culture or traditions. Even though we were almost extinct, like the Condor, we came back. People know this. They hear, see, and talk about us. We were influenced by the Spaniards, Mexicans, and Americans. We still survived. Now we influence those who want to learn and know about us.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

I'm a person who can adapt to any environment and situation. If I need to do something, then I'll get the job done. You got to understand the person's point of view first before you start pushing yours on them. You have to be able to put yourself in that person's shoes. Then there really isn't any conflict. That's how I'm able to jump between both worlds and not have real conflict.

Who is Native American/Indian?

It depends on who is asking it and who believes it. Some type of Native lineage, blood line along the way would be the first thing. After that everything falls into place. There are some Natives who do have the blood, but don't want to acknowledge it. That's their choice. Again, it is that acknowledgement. Yes, I'm Native American. Yes, I have the blood.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

A day late, and a dollar short. That's the honest truth coming from a Native. Obama can get on TV and say, "We're sorry." Don't even bother. It's too freakin' late. The crime has been done. Hey, you know what? I'm here. I'm alive. My kids are alive. Let's move forward. I don't care about an apology or anything like that. It's over and done with. We can't change it. Let's just move on.

What would be nice, which I don't think will ever happen, is if the government said to all the tribes that are not federally recognized, "Obviously you guys are still around and not extinct. Let's

get you recognized.” That would be something I would actually appreciate, as would probably hundreds of thousands of tribal members throughout the United States. That would be an awesome idea. Will it ever happen? I don't know. To me it's just a stroke of a pen, boom, boom, boom, done! That's the only thing I could say that would reconcile things for those who are not federally recognized, who were displaced so badly, who were forced to move hundreds of miles from Native land. To be forced to go somewhere else, and then be considered extinct? That's an embarrassment. That's like me saying, “There are no Irish in the continental United States. The only real Irish are the ones who have land in Ireland, the rest of them are extinct. You guys aren't real.” How do you think those of Irish descent would feel? Probably like us. They'd say, “What are you *talking about?* We're *here!*” That's the way that the Natives who are not federally recognized feel when we hear, “The only *real* Indians are the ones who have reservations. Only the *real* Indians get federal benefits, because they are federally recognized. Recognition would be the only way they could make up for it and make everything good again; I guess you could say whole. There is a piece of us that's missing. It's like one of those things that can't come out of you because it's coming from way down, so deep down in the heart, there are no words for it, only frustration.

Proud to be Oblone ~

I'm proud because I see peoples' faces that have never been to traditional ceremonies. They are used to seeing the stuff on TV with the bells and whistles and all that crazy stuff. When they see a real one, it hits home more for them. Now you've split their head open to the world, and they take it in like a sponge. That makes me happy, but most of all I'm happy belonging to a tribe that was once nearly wiped off this earth and stripped of any individuality, and came back from the brink of extinction.

JAKKI KEHL
Mutsun Ohlone
Basketweaver & Ohlone Cultural Resource Preservation Activist

My Mutsun ancestors came from the villages of Ausaima, Ochentac, and Orestac in the Gilroy area. I have been learning Ohlone traditional ways for many years, and have shared them through public displays and demonstrations. I also serve as a Most Likely Descendant with the State of California's Native American Heritage Commission.

I'm especially drawn to protecting our ancestral graves and ancient Ohlone places. Working through the Federal 106 process¹⁴, I've been able to get village sites in San Francisco made eligible as a district for the National Register.

We can't stop development, but there are ways to get involved early in a project so if an opportunity arises, that we can switch locations, tweak it a little bit about a known site, write the paperwork so that the archeologists are not making all of the decisions, and that they are coming back to consider our viewpoint, and our cultural significance. Unfortunately, most of what we find these days are burials. What we first started thinking about this and doing this our first thoughts were six feet under, but they didn't bury six feet under; they had shells and sticks to bury with.

In Redwood City, I advocated to protect a burial site through the same process, and as a result the plans were revised, a major water pipeline was rerouted by boring beneath the area, and the site was left undisturbed rather than digging through it. It takes persistence to work with these agencies, but understanding the laws enables us to enter a process early and is our best chance to protect and respect the sites that represent the presence of our Ohlone ancestors in the past.

¹⁴ Section 106 of the NHPA requires consideration of historic preservation in projects with federal involvement. This process ensures that preservation values are factored into the federal agency's planning and decisions.

OLGA TINKER GOMEZ



OLGA TINKER GOMEZ
Ohlone Rumsen
Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe
Humaya Singer

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I really wasn't in tune with my heritage. I came through to being Native maybe in my late teens. We were kind of lost to that for the longest time. A lot of us who are Natives only knew to be Mexican/Spanish. Through the years there was a lot of research and that was how we began knowing the history of our ancestors – our grandmothers, our grandfathers, how they existed here, and how we came to the areas where we're at now.

I probably wouldn't have known the way of our people without our elders. Our elders are the ones who carry all that knowledge of the history. It is very important to learn, and open our ears to their knowledge. My mother and Uncle Tony are the ones who know a lot of the history, and did a lot of the research. My mother has always shared the history of our ancestors. Deep down inside my mother always knew she was Indian because her father always told her that her mother's families were wild Indians.

Growing up I did a lot of rebellious things in the world of drugs and alcohol. No self-respect. Gradually through the years, I got myself in a bad area of darkness. That is what I call 'world of darkness' – addiction, substance abuse, whatever abuse you have. It was making me ill. The darkness leads to a delusional world. My father was completely blind and epileptic, so I inherited some of that, because I suffer from seizures. Living in what I call 'darkness', the world of drugs and delusions, you think you are okay, but you are not. My mom and I were always fighting. I never wanted to be home. I just wanted to be with my friends being out there doing what they were doing – getting high, being rebellious. It was really bad. It was really to the point where I became psychotic. I am blessed to be here right now. I could have left a long time ago. I have

friends to this day who are really in that world. I try to talk with them, but they are just into a party scene and think that is life. It is really sad. It's okay to enjoy yourself, but you've got to learn to balance. When I came about, my mother, my nieces and nephews were the ones involved with the singing and dancing.

My mother introduced me to medicine. She took me to her friend, a medicine man, who did a great healing for my mind. This healing is what helped me be with my people, and start to watch everything. I learned the power of that healing through the songs and dances. I had wanted that medicine, that healing for some time. It is truly a blessing.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

My mother has been my teacher and role model. I've been watching and learning medicine from her. I know many of the herbs and what they are good for. I've learned a lot from meeting elders, just listening to the stories of their childhood. I've been learning and understanding the medicine ways that most of our elders carry. I believe I will follow in my mother's footsteps. It is a commitment one must make with oneself and with Great Spirit who will use us to do that healing. For now I am still learning and keeping an open mind.

I love to pray and that is a good way of medicine also. I pray for those who are sick. I can't really say 'heal', because I believe Great Spirit works through us to do the healing. We are conduits. We believe that all of our good energy can create healing also. That is how shamans work. I've seen my mother do much work. I love to sing with my rattle and pray. That's my way of medicine.

Many years ago I walked into churches, but over time meeting with medicine people and elders, I've learned to pray outside. When you are in the open your voice carries with the wind, Mother Earth's breath; Great Spirit and the ancestors hear you. It is a beautiful thing, especially here in San Francisco, when it is misty or the fog is coming in through the trees; it feels like the ancestors are slowly coming.

We are all one with Mother Earth, our spiritual Mother. We all have a physical mother, but once we're gone, we return to Mother Earth. I believe everything has a spirit – tree spirit, water spirit. When I sing, I am praying. Whether I am dancing and singing at the same time, it is a prayer, giving thanks to our Mother Earth. It is something a lot of us have in us from our ancestors. Mother Earth nurtures us. She gives us food. That is her life; that is how we live. We learn to respect that and give back by offering Her prayer. Many of us are gifted, yet sometimes we don't realize it.

It is important to pass down their dances, their medicine, their healing, the way they prayed and honored Mother Earth -- the ways of our ancestors. Ceremony is important, because it keeps us on that journey to continue, to teach those who come to our ceremonies to see and learn for themselves how important it is to keep themselves grounded. The Bear Dance is the sacred dance of our ancestors. The bear has always been sacred to our people. Bears are medicine, strength.

My cousin, Steve, who was a head dancer, a head bear and sweat leader, always told me, "Nothing is given to you. You can't just show up with a bear skin; you have to earn it." You have to really know how sacred it is to wear that bear skin. As a singer I have to have good energy, and be clear-minded. It is a medicine thing. We should respect the sacredness and not play with it. It is showing our ancestors' ways, and singing and dancing for our ancestors, and honoring them. To honor our ancestors, you have to honor and respect that sacredness. The youth need to understand that.

We're sharing a little bit of history of our people with others, and at the same time we're doing prayer with song and dance and ceremony in a medicinal way. It's important for the Earth, for ourselves and for the children.

To keep the culture active and alive we need a cultural center or a museum tracing the history of our people. There has already been a lot of books out there. It would be nice to really see

that someday. That's the only way we're going to really keep our history going, and keep ourselves active, because we're always hit with the same thing: our elders are getting older. They're not going to be here forever. We're the ones that have to accept that responsibility to continue.

Language Restoration ~

Our language was lost years and years ago. It's hardly even around much. Most of the language we hear today is in our songs. We need to bring it all back. I'm learning. The younger ones need to learn too, their history, their bloodlines, who they are. Learning the language is learning what your people are all about, learning the culture. Culture and language combine together.

FUTURE VISION

It would be really nice to have that unity with all the Ohlone tribes, to come together and have respect for one another. I've come to understand that we need to have that unity. It shouldn't have to be about territory. We are all descendants of the same people. We should all come together, and not just our tribe and our sister tribes, but other people out there. We need to understand that right now in this time-frame we are in, the land, the people, the tribes, and Mother Earth need prayer and healing. This is our ancestors' way. They respected and loved one another. They loved Mother Earth and knew that She was giving them life every day. If we can truly see the ancestors' ways, I think we can come together and have no more of this territorial, political nonsense.

Federal Recognition ~

It would be really good to be federally recognized, to be standing with the other federally recognized tribes. It would be really nice to have the funding to travel to different areas to do ceremony with other tribes, other cultures.

Significance of a Land Base ~

It is very important. I believe it would give peace to our ancestors, having our land back, even just a portion of it, to be able to continue the ceremonies, to continue showing their ways, and bringing

youth together to learn. It is really sad that a lot of people don't know the true history of San Francisco and the surrounding areas. Sometimes I would like to ask the people in San Francisco where they would like to see us, the descendants of the original people in the Bay Area. Would they like to see us continue the ways of our people?

Role of Next Generation ~

To be honest, I see some who are involved, but not really too many. They have to want to be active within themselves. You can't push someone to come in and say, "Hey, this is who you are; this is your bloodline; you should be doing this." They also have to know about it too. Many of the parents tell them it's something they should know about themselves, know their history, and be involved in their culture, but a lot of the teenagers are just so into their society of friends. Some of the young ones are still dancing and singing, and some are just astray. A lot of them who know the history come back. We have some who have been dancing with us for many years, ever since they were little kids, and now that they're adults, some of them aren't dancing any more, but they know. I believe the drum will call them back.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

The only thing we were taught was Columbus. There was nothing taught about the local Native people when I was in school. The truth should be told. If that happened we would have more respect and more understanding for our people. I believe it could happen if people wanted to know the true history of the past, whether it's Native culture, or cultures throughout the world. Right now, as a tribe, we are sharing the ways of our ancestors -- the way they danced, sang, and prayed. We're trying to bring it into the educational field. It's difficult. It's not just a single person that could do it; it's going to take all of us together. That doesn't go just for our tribe -- for all tribes. It would be nice to see our history taught throughout the education system.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

The Ohlone and other tribal cultures have great teaching. People can learn many things: the way of natural healing – medicine through the natural plants, and how to survive off the land.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

The only conflict I have is when I'm around friends who aren't a part of what we do, who don't really get involved in coming to ceremonies. Sometimes I forget to do my prayer and offering in the mornings which is something I've always done.

Who is Native American/Indian?

We're all Native. We all have ancestors who date from way back when. Being Indian is not all about beads and feathers. We all have our physical mother and father. But we also have our spiritual mother: Earth. We all have that connection. Being Native is being in prayer, having that connection with Father Sky and Mother Earth, knowing She gives us life each and every day, and having that respect and love for Her, and for each other. We all have something that our ancestors left with us to know and to learn. We are one with Mother Earth. Knowing this is what makes us Natives of the land.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

I believe they need to give recognition to the past, what the past did to our people, and be honest about it, and give back the respect that we deserve. They took without permission. They just took, took, took! Land belongs to no one. We actually all belong to the land, when you really think about it. But our people were the very first people who were on that land. For them to have done things like punish our people and force them to be slaves to build missions and the pueblos at the time, that was wrong. Innocent children and others suffered for all their greed. To reconcile they should

give back that respect that our people deserve, whether it's giving back part of what they took, or perhaps we could build something in the future -- a museum or a cultural center.

There is a big conflict with other sister tribes. It's a very sad thing, because I believe that our people deserve to have that history known. *Our* people really need to know the truth of what really happened to our people. We're talking about things that date back from thousands of years ago. A lot of people don't even know their own history, their own blood.

Proud to be Oblone ~

I'm just proud and happy to be involved with what I'm doing, because it takes me away from that whole society of negativity, just knowing the history of the way our ancestors were, about their dances, songs, prayers, medicine, and learning for the first time that I'm one with Mother Earth, and that's how it's always been with our people. They are a very respectful people. I'm proud just knowing we're part of a marking of history and also of our people being the original people of the Bay Area.

DESIREE MUNOZ



DESIREE MUNOZ
Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe
Humaya Ohlone Dancer
Voice of the People

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I've been involved with the tribe for a while. My grandpa is the one who motivated me and encouraged me. I was always stuck to him when we came up North. I was just excited to know about who I am and where I come from. The very first trip I was three months old when we went to the Carmel Mission. I've been coming since I was three months! The first pow-wow was when I was one year old. I did go away for three years because we moved to Florida, but then when we came back, I got right back into it. It's always been part of my life.

My brother and I are the only two Native Americans at our school. We're known for our necklaces and then sometimes I'll go to school with moccasins. The other students wish they knew who they were and where they came from. I had to do a senior project on economics and a non-profit organization so I did it on our tribe. They were all excited to learn more, not just about the culture, but that we are not federally recognized. They thought that all Native Americans had casinos. I told them not everyone is like that. They say we are all extinct and we're not.

We danced at the school last when I was in the eleventh grade, and a lot of the tribal members came.

My grandpa and I have been to a lot of meetings, ceremonies, and gatherings together so we have a special bond. He taught me everything I know. My grandpa and Tia Rosa said that I'm an old spirit, like I'm somebody from the past. People who are not even in my tribe tell me, "You have an old spirit, because you are beyond your years, and you know a lot. When you are in your regalia, you're connected in a different way; it is like you have been here before." Sometimes I do feel like I've been here before. I believe when you are born, that is the day you start dying, because you are only here for a short time, and you are on a mission to do something. Then when you die you are going to go on to the next mission. You come back down once they call you in to do that mission.

Isabelle Meadow, who was our last fluent speaker, died in 1939. Sometimes I will hear her. There are a lot of people who come in ceremony; I don't know their names, but I will see them a lot. They said there is a burial ground here. When we were at Rob Hill Campground in the San Francisco Presidio something touched me, but it wasn't scary; it felt good – like you are welcome here, glad to have you guys back. Rob Hill is the area of our ancestors' village site, but I'm not sure of the village. I do feel connected to the Carmel area, because that is where some of my people are from.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Right now I'm just a member of the youth council. I get the kids together and we do fundraisers to give the tribe money for gas and rooms for coming up here to the Bay area. That is my role now, and to dance. To dance is the most important thing. You need to always respect your regalia, and dance in it to let everyone know that you are still here. 'She is an Ohlone and is in regalia and is dancing. She knows what she is talking about.' Dancing is so important, because that was something we did when we lived back in the old days. We were always dancing, and it was always a celebration. When we dance we are praying. We always are praying for everything, because we believe that everything has a spirit. We are always praying and dancing for that being, or that special moment, or birthdays, or weddings, or even deaths.

Everything on our regalia has meaning. To make your own regalia is actually really important. Everyone makes their own; that is why everyone's is a little bit different. They put their own medicine and prayers in their regalia. Before you even dance, as you're making it, you have to be strong in your mind, and positive in what you are doing, because you are putting all that good medicine in your regalia. If you think bad, you'd better stop. You're putting bad medicine in there, and you don't want that. It's very important to do your regalia because you are making it yourself, and how you want to be presented to everybody.

I was at Indian Canyon when I first started dancing. I didn't have anything on my hat except some pheasant feathers. I really needed to know what to put on my hat. Ann Marie said, "You need to go pray on it." I was sitting down with my hat in my hand. I took some tobacco and just started praying. All of a sudden I heard something loud, and it was getting closer and closer. I turned around, and there was a blue jay right there. That's cool – I like the way you look. You've got your blue and your black stripes on your sides. I took that as a sign. He landed on a tree and a feather fell from him right down by my feet. I put it on my hat. I said, "You're loud like me. You got my attention by being loud. And now you gave me one of your feathers." I told Kanyon and Ann Marie, "I really like these feathers." They said, "We've got buckets and buckets of them!" All of my feathers for my hat are from Indian Canyon.

What I want to be known for later on is letting everyone else know that we are still here. That is why I am going to school to further my education. I want to be a teacher, and teach the right way. I'm always going to be in the tribe no matter what, and my kids are too, and their kids, and even my cousins who have kids; I'm going to always make sure that they know. When I'm older I have to pass it on to the next generation and keep them involved.

I want to go back to school after I get my teaching degree. When they find burials sites I want to know the terminology, and what the right way is, and what to do with them. Every time we come up North there are different burial sites, and they always want to build on top of it, or dig them up. The ancestors are out of rest. When I'm older I want to keep our ancestors safe, and then pass it on to the next generation of what to do and how to stay active in the tribe.

Language Restoration ~

We are reclaiming it right now. I know good morning, good day, and good night. Good morning is *mis:lx carwaj*. Good afternoon is *mis:ix ?ujkan*. Goodnight is *mis:ix orpetewx*. I think it is important to learn the language because it is something that is very powerful to your people. People

ask me, “Oh you speak English and Spanish?” I say, “I speak both European languages that were brought over here, but I speak my language too.” It is important to know your native tongue and where you came from. I know where I come from and now the next step is the language which is coming along very slowly, but it is happening.

FUTURE VISION

I would like to see all the tribes in the United States come together as one and work together, and not be in it for themselves. If we do all come together, we will be more powerful. We did a pipeline for college and had people from all the tribes down south, even Navajos and people from Nebraska, all come together. A pipeline is like a summer camp for Native kids. We stayed on a college campus for two weeks. I thought it was so cool to have teenage people from different tribes, and they were all there for a purpose. We got a lot of things done. We were able to build relationships with other Native people and learn to work together. It was like a mini- United Indian Nations. I would like to be part of that again if it does happen. Later on, what I would hope for in the future is that it would happen with different tribes. Also, I would like for all Ohlone bands to join together as one.

The boys have fasting, and I want to know if girls have fasting. That would be something to find out. What the boys do is something really, really powerful. I just know girls, when they had their menstrual cycle, were not allowed to be by the fire or be in ceremony. The ancestors – all the women who were on the menstrual cycle used to go to another camp site, and come back when they were done. I think that is important. The boys have their ceremony when they are becoming men. They are on their vision quest, because that foretells the future of what they are going to be in the tribe, what they are designated to be. I want to know what women are destined to be, not just in the kitchen all the time. I want to talk to elders to see if they can remember anything, because they were the closest ones to the ones who passed on. Maybe they can remember something, or have a

flashback, because it wasn't that many generations ago. We just forgot, but now we are coming back to it. It is cool to reclaim it.

Federal Recognition ~

It is not just showing people that we are still here, but showing the federal government that we are still here. Federal recognition to me means a government to government relationship. With that relationship, they'll know that we exist. It definitely has benefits. If we need schools built to teach our culture to our future generations, then we'll have that. You have to have a piece of land to be federally recognized. That is what we don't have. An elder woman from the Miwok tribe talking yesterday at the ceremony was saying that it was very devastating to her and her people because the pine nut trees were cut down. She understood how the struggle was for us and our people because we had a lot more devastation than just a few of her gathering trees which is very important to her. She can only imagine us being stripped of our land, our culture, our regalia, our songs, our ceremonies. To have land, to be teaching and all of us to be together would be great. Federal recognition is awesome to me.

Significance of a Land Base ~

It is very hard to do ceremony in some places, because we don't have a land base. We don't have somewhere to go to and call home, and to do our ceremonies. We're lucky that we still have our ceremonies; we still get a chance to do them, but we could lose them by not having land, and somewhere to call home. We have a struggle going to different places, and getting different permits. Sometimes we can't do certain things. For example, the most important thing in the ceremony is having a fire. Some places we're not even allowed to have fire. Sometimes we're not even allowed to burn sage in different places where we go. That's why I think it is important to have land. We could pretty much do whatever we want. Not that we are going to be wild, heathen Indians, we're just going to have a spiritual land base to perform our ceremonies.

Role of Next Generation ~

Those kids who are starting when they are three and four years old, just know that when they get older that that is the routine and will continue. The world is different from when our ancestors once lived. For me to be twenty-one in this millennium I wouldn't want to lose my way out of ceremony. You get caught up in school and work, and people are starting to get married and have kids. It's hard, but I think nobody can ever lose their way of ceremony. I've grown up with it. Talking with the younger generation, they've grown up with it. There's no way they are going to have a problem when they are older.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

When I was in high school, I didn't learn anything about Native people. In the fourth grade the kids learn about the Missions, but they don't really know what happened. My cousins told me when they took it they were told that the Missions were built and the Indians just died off. They never really talk about it. What I want to see happen, not only in California, but in other states, is talk about what happened in the western hemisphere. That is always the last thing you learn in high school. It's never really the western hemisphere; it's western *theme*, like cowboys and Indian battles. I just want to see, not just my tribe, but every tribe from Southern California all the way to Northern California, identified in the book. California has the most Native American groups. I want everybody to know who they are, and what happened to them. Our story is big. There was a genocide in California. It doesn't take that long to read about it. When you get into college, you have to read four books for one class!

When I went to that two-week program for college, they took us to San Gabriel Mission. The Gabrielino people whose ancestors died there were with us. We wanted the real story so we got it from the actual Natives whose ancestors were there. When he was telling us the story, the Father came out and told us to stop talking about that because that was not the real story. We told him,

“You’re not the real story. This is the *real* story.” They were showing us, “This is where the Indians used to smash the grapes.” But really that is where they used to keep them hidden in the dungeon and tied up. Like my grandpa says, “You are listening to HIS-STORY.” My little cousins, who are in the fourth grade, didn’t get the right story. That is what made me want to become a teacher. Even now we go to my cousins’ classes to show them we were from the Missions.

Learning from the Oblone Experience ~

My people can teach people to appreciate their surroundings, appreciate the weather, even the small things, because one day what if somebody comes and takes it from you, and this is your natural habitat. This is *our* natural habitat. We’ve lived here for so many thousands of years, and now that we don’t have it, we appreciate it even more. Maybe ‘they’ don’t appreciate it, but they should. I’m happy to see all the environmentalists, because they do appreciate it. They learn from us and we learn from them.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

When we go to school they say, “So you are Native American. Why are you dressed like that? Why aren’t you in costume? Why aren’t you speaking the language? Why don’t you know it?” It is tough because I am a modern-day Native living in today’s society. It is hard to say, “I am Native American, but it is not a weekend job; it is a way of life while working and getting a higher education.” Another important thing they would ask, “Why don’t you have your language? How come you are just reclaiming it?” But what they don’t understand is we were forced to not speak our language and lost it when we were going through the missions. One good thing about the missions as they are the ones who showed us our bloodline and kept documents of our language.

I was talking with an elder who told me, “Tell them you are a super-hero. A super-hero has two identities.” I was talking to him in normal clothes and was supposed to do a presentation in my

regalia, so I changed and came back. He said, “See, now you are a super-hero, right? You’re not in your regular clothes; you are in a disguise.” Wow! It took me nineteen years to realize I’m a super-hero! It’s true – we have two different identities, and we are the same person. He also said, “You are cool to be a super-hero, but don’t forget who you are, because, remember, a bird can walk on its feet, but it can also fly. A frog can be in water, but it can also walk on land.” It’s just about keeping balance.

Who is Native American/Indian?

Native American means a person who is from this land. Native means an indigenous person, an aboriginal from a certain part of this land that they originally came from. They are connected to that land so they can tell you about it. This is where our people were from for thousands of years. My people were buried in these grounds so we became part of the land.

My grandpa says, “You can’t say you’re Native American, because there is no America. You can say you’re Indian, but people identify Indians now as ‘dots’, not ‘feathers’. You can say you are indigenous.” Indigenous are the aboriginal people of the land. The ancestors who are buried in these grounds connect us to who we are – that is what makes us indigenous to this land, to this hemisphere, to this place.

I took a Native American cultural studies class. There were people from different tribes and also just [non-native] people taking the course. The kids asked: “What’s a ‘rez’ native? What is the difference between them and a non-rez? What’s the difference between a Native American and an Indian? What is the difference between a full-blood, half-blood, and quarter blood?” I just think there is no pure race now. It’s up to you to define who you are.

I am Ohlone and Cheyenne from my mother’s side and Apache/Comanche and Mexican on my father’s side, but I only claim Ohlone because that is all I know and what I grew up in. So even me, I’m not full-blood. That’s why no one can claim in blood quantum just from lineage.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

I'm proud to be Ohlone, because it is just cool to be Native American, to be Ohlone -- how we are, and who we once were, and how far we came. They tried to take us out, but we are still here so I'm proud of being Ohlone. They – outsiders, historians, and some people in the Bay Area, tell me there are no more Ohlones because of all the atrocities that went on, but hey I'm still here!

MARCUS RODRIGUEZ



MARCUS RODRIGUEZ
Chumash/Juaneno/Ohlone
Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council
Dancer & Singer

CULTURAL IDENTITY

I'm Ohlone and Chumash. I've been involved with my tribe since I can remember. I was going to ceremonies and gatherings every weekend. All the time we were going to different places to dance or sing or to other tribes for ceremonies. At the beginning I always had to go; I did not have an option. But as I got more involved, I got more interested in it and it became a way of life really, just knowing I was living where my ancestors used to live and our people were the first ones here. We've always been here. It's not like we're coming from somewhere else, like foreigners. This is home to me.

I started dancing about fifteen years ago when I was about four. In the beginning I just had a very simple regalia. My mom made my headdress with a lot of hawk feathers on it, and then she got a coyote headdress for me. I didn't make my own dance regalia until I knew how to do it right, and put my own energy into it, just knowing what I wanted, and adding stuff on my own. It has more aspects to it now than it had in the beginning when there were just a few shells and feathers. Now I have about eight feathers on the bottom of my regalia that I wear with a red-tailed hawk tail piece and my MIA/POW bandana. My regalia isn't done yet. Every single thing that is put into it is a prayer. Each item added, whether it's a gift or something I find, has a story and a prayer.

There are a few people who have inspired me a lot, my mom being the main one. She has been supportive when I wanted to go to ceremonies. Teaching-wise Uncle Patrick Orozco, our dance leader, was the first one I danced with and I grew up with the Pajaro Valley Ohlone Indian Council. That's where I learned most of our songs, and met people from different tribes through dance invitations. I started getting involved with my Uncle Tony Cerda and the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe. They offered me and my friend, Ryan, to dance with them. I was shy at first as I

always admired the way they danced and I really didn't know how to dance the way that they did, but I kept on hanging out with them. Then one day I just started dancing with them at a gathering at Mt. Madonna, and now I've been with them for about eight years. Uncle Tony is another big part of my inspiration. He is very knowledgeable, and always has something to teach us about our people, the way we lived or about different things our tribe has done and changed over time. Another one would be Steve Cesena, our tribal head dancer. He got a lot of knowledge from Uncle Tony too. He crossed over two years ago but he is still a big part of my life. He was the head Bear Dancer of our group. I really enjoyed dancing with him and getting together and the knowledge he had to share. He really took care of us. It meant a lot knowing him. It showed the teamwork in our tribe, sharing the responsibility of passing the knowledge down; I learned a lot of songs from him that were passed down. He was always ready to help us whenever we needed it.

I've been a Bear Dancer for about six years. It is a big responsibility and challenge. It's one of those things that went from not being a part of my life, to being my everyday life. In the tribe being a Bear Dancer means you always have to be there to help someone if they are sick, to be in the right mindset to be able to help them with the prayers, and to help with the Creator's healing work. You have to know that you're a Bear. I was always hanging around with the Bear Dancers, and going to ceremony since I was small. I was very glad when I was asked to become a Bear dancer by an elder. Knowing that Native people always listen to Elders, it was something I had to do. For two years I was going to drum practice, learning bear songs, going to bear sweats and before I started dancing I went on a fast. It was a two-day fast the first time, and that's when I got my bear skin. Each time you are supposed to do one more day of fasting until the fourth year, and then you do four days and four nights. (It is a four year commitment.) Before you start your fast, you do two rounds in the prayer lodge and on the fifth morning when you come out, you do two more rounds

to complete the fast. After that you keep praying until the Bear Dance happens and even while the Bear Dance is happening.

The Bears are responsible for cleaning up all of the bad medicine that is there on the land where we dance. Then there is a healing dance where people are brought into the circle and we pray with them. We take the sickness and offer it to the fire to give to the Creator. You always have to be there when you get the call to do a ceremony.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Mainly the language and the songs are important for without the language or songs there is really no ceremony. There can be a ceremony, but it is not as powerful as with the language and songs.

Knowing our traditional way is important as well. For example, just the things we do to get ready for a ceremony: going into the sweat lodge, how we conduct ourselves as traditional people in the sweat lodge and during the dances.

I do not speak the language. We do have access to the language, but for me right now being in the military, I don't have too much time to really do anything. In the future I want to get more involved than I am now, just because of how I've lived my whole life.

I think right now we can work on our dance routine. I've noticed that in the past we've been very disciplined, but now we're not, because some of the elders who kept us disciplined have crossed over. We're slowly losing that as our elders are passing away. Our dances need to be worked on.

I believe my gift is just being a dancer and a singer as well. That is what I mainly do when we go to ceremonies.

FUTURE VISION

Honestly, coming from the heart, I would like to see all of our Ohlone peoples come together as one. That would really mean a lot. There are people who want to do things this way, that way. If we all come together and focus on the main mission, it would be a better place for all of us. We

could get a lot more accomplished if we work together as one instead of bickering and fighting about who belongs or doesn't belong here or there. We all belong here. If we all come together and focus on the same thing, we can all have a place to go for our people now instead of knowing that there *was* a village here, there could be a place where there *is* a village here now for us to go to for ceremonies and cultural events. A lot of our lodges were demolished and built over – now there are buildings and freeways and schools. Also, having land shows other people that we *are* still here, and we're not extinct. Just because we don't have land doesn't mean that we're not here.

Federal Recognition ~

We could get the help that we need, that we aren't able to get now without being federally recognized. The main thing I would say would be medical benefits. I know there are a lot of young people and elders who need medical benefits, and even financial benefits too. What I've seen with other tribes, they tend to become greedy and want all of the benefits that come with federal recognition. If we do work as a team, work as one, it can be a good thing too.

Significance of a Land Base ~

If we had land we would be able to show our youth how our ancestors used to live, and even the older ones too who don't really know. They would have a place to go and have ceremony, and a place to call home. I do know there's going to be a lot of hard work involved, especially fighting with the politicians, because of where our ancestors lived on the coast. It's prime real estate land, people don't want to give it up and I don't blame them. Our people enjoyed it there. It was our home.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History ~

In the fourth grade we learned about Native Americans and the Ohlone history was in there, but it was just basic stuff about each tribe. From what I can remember, it was accurate. There are books

and teachings out there about our people, but it is very shallow. I would like to see an event to show people how we lived in our local area.

Learning from the Oblone Experience ~

We can share teamwork and show love. We're a very caring tribe. We love to help others. We're still here. We're not extinct. Our tribes were almost taken out, but we fought and came back.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

Sometimes I do and sometimes I don't find it hard living in two worlds. Being in the military is hard, mainly because I'm not here to be involved in all of the gatherings and dances and ceremonies, but also being Native American in the military shows that there are Native Americans still here, and we are still fighting.

Right now I'm dealing with an issue within the military. Native American men wear long hair, and in the military you have to have a certain look: short hair, under three inches on top, no facial hair. I'm trying to get a waiver to grow my hair out. The military has a big thing about equal opportunity, but it also has regulations. I don't know why you can't have long hair. That is one of the things that is conflicting.

Native American people in the military are highly respected and it shows other natives and civilians that we are still fighting for our country even though it's the same country that took our land, took our people, and took everything we had to offer them. The reason I'm in the military is because my grandpa was in Korea from 1950 to 1952 and some of my uncles and cousins on my dad's side were in the military. Then on my mom's side my grandpa was in the National Guard. I felt it was my obligation to be in the military to keep that going, so I joined two years ago.

When I was growing up it was kind of hard being Native American. When I was younger I got picked on for having long hair. Also, you wanted to be the cool person in school, versus being

involved with your culture. It was kind of hard growing up in that sense. My friends in school wanted to go to parties and go hang out, and I was getting ready to go a ceremony or dance or a sweat on the weekends. I never really had too many friends to hang out with at all, because of the two lifestyles -- one goes against the other. There were other people who acknowledged that they were Native American, but they weren't involved like I was. My best friend, Ryan, who I grew up with, is Chippewa/Cree. He actually lives next door. We dance in the same group. Because he was around our family so much and was Native American we adopted him into our tribe.

Who is Native American/Indian?

Even if you're not Native at all, blood-wise, if you're raised around a tribe, or people that are indigenous, or practice the ways, that makes you Native just like that, because you're practicing the ways of our (or their) people. As long as you get involved and understand how the ceremonies work, how the medicine works, and the protocols, then you can consider yourself being Native. That's how I see it.

Reconciliation between the Ohlone and the Larger Society ~

I would like to see people respect our ways and respect that we're still here. Our burial grounds are still being disturbed to this day. A few weeks ago there was a blue whale in the San Francisco Bay and they legally created a 300 foot buffer for the ships that were coming into the Bay. But my ancestors who are here in the Bay Area are getting disturbed, and have no buffer at all. They are just getting removed, put in boxes, and into locker rooms. I think if people would show us respect in this way, it would help a lot.

Proud to be Ohlone/Chumash/Juaneno ~

I'm proud to know that I'm living in the area where my ancestors lived. It just connected with me from the very beginning. It is important for me to keep that going. It is awesome knowing that you live where your ancestors used to live because it wasn't that long ago that our people were taken from their villages.

ANTHONY SUL



ANTHONY SUL
Rumsen Ohlone
Spiritual Warrior, Artist, Activist

CULTURAL INDENTITY

My brothers and sisters were learning the culture at the same time. I just happened to come at the right time, I guess. I've had people throughout my life that have helped me, but it's never been one single person that I've been under their wing. There have been many people I've got different advice from and learned things from that changed my life. It's not always elders; sometimes it's younger people. I learn from all over the place. I'm very open, and hear what people say. I see how they live, and how they walk, and understand what's going on. It's more or less like paying attention to things, and just relearning, and not for myself so I could fill an ego, but so I could learn and re-teach my nephews, my nieces, and my kids eventually when I have kids. That way they've got somebody to give them something, so they can take it even further. The more I go into ceremony, the more and more I have confidence in living life. Every person has their own spiritual experiences that lead them to the path they are on. My teachers come from those who are showing me the path. I have people who have been helping me since I was a baby. Some people think that there has to be that one person that needs to show us this. When we put that limitation on it, then when the ancestors or the spirits actually do come, then we're not listening or paying attention, because we feel we need to get this direction from a person. It is not necessarily from a human being because humans are humans and they make mistakes. The ancestors know; they've already got it. That is where my path is coming from.

My sister was going to an alternative Native American high school in San Jose which was run by Native American people. We got an introduction to culture through that, but it wasn't strictly Ohlone; it was Plains based. A teacher at the school said he knew someone who was Ohlone that

he could hook us up with so we could learn about our culture and that is how we met Chemo Candelaria and his family.

My mom told me that our relatives' last name is Butron and that is on the mission documents. We reach from Monterey up to the Pleasanton area. To think that they are all one people is crazy. At the time, you couldn't even go down the block without people speaking another language. That's why it's kind of confusing to me, to put everything all under one.

CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

Since I was little I've always gone to the Bear Ceremony. It just felt natural – everything around it and about it. I've been doing it longer than I've been here, if you can understand that. It is something that helped me stay focused. It gave me a sense of more than being just a person who had to go to work every day and pay bills. It gave me more of an other worldly sense that I can put into what I do daily, another perspective so I'm not stressing out and do what I need to do. I understand the medicine that is working. From that I can see signs that the Creator is giving me to tell me which doors to go through and to keep me going. It helps me to stay spiritual and stay focused in general. It is really important to keep the bear dances, sweat lodges and stuff like that going. The bear dance is a cleansing ceremony for me. Whenever I get to the ceremony all the issues I've had before just get cleared at the ceremony. I can just let everything that I have go out and put it into what I'm doing. All my energy goes into that. It does different things for different people.

I've been helping to keep the fire for different ceremonies since I was seven or eight. Whenever I go to a ceremony I go toward that area just because I've been doing that since I was little.

I guess I would say I'm a teacher myself. A lot of youth just hear mainstream music; they are not really focused in on what they need to do. For example, I'm an artist. I knew I was going to be

an artist since I was little so that was my focus. Not that you have to be an artist, just that you find that one thing you have to focus on that will bring you out to the rest of your life in a positive way. Just to give a presence to be respectful and show respect to people, and understand where the other person is coming from -- a lot of people don't take the time to think about that. They say, "Well why is this person yelling at me for not stacking the wood right?" It is important for me to not only keep myself on track, but by showing that I'm keeping myself on track, leading by example. People ask me, "How do you do the things you do?" I get into galleries. I do a lot of art work. I get busy with tattooing or art work or photography or traveling playing shows doing radio work. I have to keep my mind focused. Know what the big goal is instead of what your short-term plan is -- the big picture. I try to stress that. You can't just think of yourself and little things, because it is a big world out there. What can you do to contribute to your community?

A lot of people are ignorant about my tribe or just Native people in general. Whenever I tell people I'm Native they always say, "Don't you get tribal money? Don't you get scholarships?" We are not federally recognized so we don't get this and that. At the same time a lot of the tribes I've seen who have gotten that, there is a lot of greed in there that I don't really want to be involved with.

I'd rather speak with my art than with words. I think my art can speak way more than I can say. I get a lot of reactions from different people about my art. I've been doing a lot of portraits. I think eventually I'm going to have a voice that will depict what I want to be saying for my people with my work. Right now, I'm still learning. I don't know how to voice that into a work. Right now, I just get images in my head and I paint them. It will take some time for me to be able to explain my work and understand why I do what I do. Once I do that, I will be able to come up with something that is unique that will speak to the issues I believe are important for my tribe and my people. There are a lot of issues that I see in society in general, not just with my tribe, that I wish I

could put on a canvas. My artwork is different. I'll just put some marks on a canvas and start creating things. Other people might need to sketch it out, and plan it, and do color studies. It goes back to my culture and the spirituality sense of things. Because we're taught, as long as you're in a prayerful mindset, and you're doing things in a good way, then you're going to be taken care of and everything will fall into order. When I'm painting, I'll start marks and just keep building and know that it's going to come up with something. If I didn't have that confidence in my own skill and my own art, I would be sketching things out. My art might be different, and it might impact people in a different way. A lot of times it's just out of my head. Sometimes I will have picture references, but it won't even look like the picture reference, because I just changed it up so much. Being able to use your mind and put it out there like that is powerful for people to see. Even though everybody can do that, we're trained to think that we can't.

We're easy to control, because this is the power, this is a tool right here. One of the first things oppressive forces (at whatever time and place) did was burn the artwork, the books, burn everything, because there is power in that. When we know how to utilize it, not just as a hobby, but as a tool, then that's when you can create change, not just with the art, but with the music, photography, film, and everything else. It's all tools, and it's all used for revolution and change, really. Any time there was a social change it was through artists, musicians, and poets, or all three collected. There's power in this stuff. A lot of people don't want to talk about that stuff in art classes. They just want to tell you about how to draw a line, and how to do this, but they don't want to tell you the actual realness of this art. Why is it created? Why is it there? Why were our ancestors drawing on walls with little lines? It leaves stuff behind for people to see what was going on. I was fortunate enough to be in classes where they were offering people to come in and talk about real issues. But unfortunately, that's a lot of times they only do that in colleges and universities, hardly

ever in high schools or elementary schools. I have been fortunate enough to speak in elementary schools and other schools including colleges and universities.

It is really important to keep the culture alive. You get a lot of marketing from TV. You start to lose a sense of what your culture is like. You just get the American culture and get really brainwashed. “Oh, what did he say on Facebook?” That is not important at all. Just do what you’ve got to do. All you’ve got to worry about is you. The only thing you have is your word – that is the way I see it.

When I was younger I was lucky enough to be brought up around the circle. That is all I really knew. When I was in elementary school and we had to learn about the Mission system. One of the students said, “The Ohlone people used to live here. They are extinct now.” I’ve got to raise my hand. “I’m right here. I’m still breathing. I’m not extinct. I don’t look like a fossil.” I’ve had that a couple of times going to school. If it weren’t for my cultural background, I wouldn’t have known that either. I wouldn’t have even known I was Ohlone. My family thought they were just Mexican. Just that knowledge of who I was, I could stand up to what they were saying and correct them. I’ve been doing that since I was little --- just correcting people where they were wrong and not really getting mad, because a lot of people don’t understand where other people are coming from. That is what they were taught in their school system, so you can’t really blame it on them.

Language Restoration ~

Language is important. I know a few words. It is hard because it has been lost here and there, but I think a revitalization of language is going on.

FUTURE VISION

I see a lot of in-fighting among different sections of Ohlone people. I would just like to see everybody find what their differences are and work on something and get it all fixed up, because we shouldn’t be fighting with each other. Nothing happens when we’re fighting with each other. It is

only worse for us and the people who come after us. It just makes things look bad. I'd rather have it so we can all work together to get everything that we need accomplished. I think it is more powerful when you have the whole of Ohlone people coming at you going united than as little sections of Ohlone people. I understand there are years of things that were going back and forth since before I was here. I can't speak on that. I'm here now. This is what I see now. In order for people to move forward you got to unite as one people. You can't get stuff done by yourself. You got to work with people. For me it is just to try and unite everybody.

I believe that is something that needs to happen, but I don't think that it's something that needs to happen unnaturally. When we unify, we need to be able to heal together and do things together, so that way we're stronger. There is just a lot of stuff going on, a lot of bickering and disagreeing, but that's with any tribe, really. That's all part of the plan of divide to conquer.

It's up to the younger people now to try and bridge that gap, to piece things together. We respect the elders, and understand that they had disagreements in the past, but we understand that it's our time now. I'm saying that because I've had multiple, multiple, multiple elders tell me that. "It's your time. You need to step up and do it." That's where my head is at. Unifying needs to happen. We need to come together and heal, and do everything together as a people before we do things publicly. There is a lot of public stuff that goes on, but when behind the scenes there's nothing stable to back that, then what's that really going to do for us? Nothing. We need to have something concrete behind us in order to get help publicly. We have to have concrete backing from our people, and understand how we're going to interact with each other, and lay these laws down with each other, and talk about things again. We need to have these talks, not just with the community outside, but with ourselves.

My thing is to try and keep it as good as I remember. Even though I haven't been around a long time, but I know, even the time I've been alive, until today, that it's changed. I see that in that

short period of time, and I'm ready, like no, uh uh. I believe when we unify and do things in a proper way, we'll be able to heal ourselves. That's when we'll really start to change things. But until then, we're going to always have the issue of who's going to say what. That's the big issue with a lot of people. They say, "I want to say this, or I want to do that, but so and so is going to do this, or so and so is going to say this." Blah blah blah. People are worried about other people, and that shouldn't be the issue. It makes things difficult, until we can come together as our own people, and individually heal ourselves, then we can go out to the public and do what we need to do.

I'm a spiritual warrior. I got that term from Wounded Knee DeOcampo, who says, "I'm not a medicine man. I'm not anybody special. I'm just a spiritual warrior fighting for the spirits and the ancestors." That's what I do. That's my focus. When people are bickering and fighting, my job is to pray for those people, being in that room and helping out wherever I can. Whatever it is that people ask of me to do, that's what I'm doing. That's just the way I was raised around ceremony, just to be that kind of a person. There are not a lot of people who can afford to be like that, because people have families, and this and that. I don't have any of that; it's just me. I live that way on purpose, because this is my role. This is what I need to be doing -- to be making this art, to be singing these songs and doing these prayers for the people who ask for it. This is where my journey is taking me. I've been all over the place, and I've done everything to avoid this. But in the end, I had to come back home and do this. I was in Minnesota for a while. A lot of times I was out there just because I knew that if I were being at home I'd have to do this work.

People who really understand ceremony can understand more or less what I'm saying. When the Creator says it's time to go over here, move here, you can go. That's where my life has always been. My role is to just listen to that and follow my path, because the path will help other people in the end.

Federal Recognition ~

Right now I'm still getting along fine without it. I don't know exactly what that would do for me if I had federal recognition. I would still be doing everything I'm doing now. I don't think it would make me a different person if I had it. It's not really a big concern of mine right now. I don't know all the politics behind it, but I know it definitely has divided a lot of people. I've heard stories from a lot of different people about federal recognition.

I honestly don't see any positive aspects of federal recognition. The things that are positive about federal recognition I feel are just an illusion. They are not really things that are going to help us or heal us. What we need to do as a people is heal from this post-colonial stress disorder, this colonization that is going on. In order to heal from it we can't take in colonization and think that that is going to help us.

We are working with people who are creating land grants to do things in alternative ways because otherwise we are faced with paperwork and paperwork for years and years, and guess what? No land. I see that as a rat race that is not really going to come to a conclusion. We are trying to figure out how to work within this system to work outside of the system. That is where we are at right now. I feel that is more empowering for the people than to get federal recognition. This is just us strictly doing it out of passion for the people. When you water that down with federal recognition, the people no longer have to fight for their identity because now they have that enrollment number and a card and all this stuff. Once that comes into play, people lose their culture because now they don't need to use their culture to prove who they are. Now they have a card and a number. There it is all right there on that plastic card. That is really what I've seen on different reservations and different areas where there is federal recognition, and they have casinos. Most of the people are lost and there is nothing but sickness because of this greed that has become part of us. It may seem good, but when you get to it, you see that it is an illusion, and it disappears. Again,

my focus is on creating land grants, land trusts with different people, and also working with the youth.

Significance of a Land Base ~

I think it's important for us to have a land base, because right now, we have very little. We need places to be able to go to, both with the public and without it, where we can focus on our own healing, as well as healing of the land. Without more than one place to go to, we're always moving around, so things go crazy like in a whirlwind. If we got more solid areas where we'd know we could be there, then it calms things down, and we'd be able to focus.

I think it's important to do ceremonies in as many places as we can, not necessarily in one specific place. Because of how badly the land has been treated and is being treated, any one place is no more important than another place other than sacred sites.

Role of the Next Generation ~

There are people who go to pow-wows and do all that kind of stuff, but I haven't seen a lot of youth go up to city halls and speak. I've spoken in City Hall in San Francisco and in Fremont on land issues where they are building on sites. Most of the time I was the only youth there. It is hard to get a lot of youth to go out and do that.

To get youth there is on the parents and the uncles and aunties and grandparents to just drag them kicking and screaming even if they don't want to come. That is what my mom did. I remember when I was little I didn't like going to sweats in the morning and none of that kind of stuff, but she said, "You know what, it doesn't matter. We're going." If you bring your kids and you have somebody who can put their foot down like that, the kids will eventually see why this is so important. Their eyes will start opening up eventually. A lot of parents don't want to get into that argument, don't want to have that battle with their kids. They'd rather be their friend than teach

them. That is the issue we have now with today's youth. A lot of the parents forget that they have this role that they have to do.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Oblone Culture and History ~

No Native history is really being taught. Besides learning about the Plains Indians and General Custer in U.S. history, there was no specific class. It was brushed over real quick -- basically a couple of chapters in the history book and that was about it. Out of all the races, you don't really hear a lot about us or the Mexican Americans and what is going on out here. The Mexican Revolution was in our history book, but only for a couple of paragraphs.

I was reading a book called Lies My Teachers Told Me. People aren't listening because they know they're not telling the truth. "Why am I going to sit here and listen to you all day, if you ain't even saying what's real?" They've got to question whether the information is real or not. They're spending their time questioning things instead of actually learning. Get people and information in there that are real. We know what it is, because we're the people you're teaching about.

Whether it's Indian people from India, Asian people, Native people, Jewish people, if you don't ever get the history correct, then what are you going to do? A lot of the stuff is all based off Euro-centric ideas, and those ideas, although they're nice to hear, have no effect in this land over here, because they didn't know how to take care of their land over there. They depleted everything; they had no resources. They talk about Columbus, that he came over here because he was looking for India, but the fact is, India didn't exist at that time. He came here and said '*gente en Dios*', these people were of God, '*en Dios*'. That's where Indian came from. But they don't want to tell you that, because if they tell you we're people of God, then why did you have to come here with the Bible, if we were already people of God? There are a lot of different things that needs to be broken down here. Until we can talk about these things, and break down the actual history, then we are always going to be struggling on that issue.

I guess my answer is that we need people that know and are of that area to teach about the history. Also, we need education where it's more hands on, and in the life, where we can bring people to different events and tell them to talk to so and so instead of reading a book that some European doctor wrote who said, "This is how so and so would act, and when they did this they might be like this." Well, why don't you go ask that person, instead of listening to somebody else's opinion?

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

The Ohlone people have been here for thousands of years. When settlers first came in they couldn't believe how well we could hunt and gather. They had all these big guns and were having problems hunting. Even now, Ohlone people have a certain presence to them that makes people look at them and say there is something special about them. We're a special people. We're really generous, helpful people. We think that the more that we do, the more we will get out of stuff. It goes back to staying 'ceremonial mindful' and keeping this way of life going at the same time. Also, for me, seeing everything positive. You got to figure if you are doing everything in the right way, then the Creator is going to protect you no matter what. That doesn't necessarily mean protect you like give you the fancy car that you want or whatever it is; it means He or She will protect you as you will have food every day, somewhere to live – the basic things that you need, not things that you want. As long as you have faith in that, then that is all you really need. That goes with any religion. Anything that you do, you will be taken care of as long as you are doing it in the right way, and doing it for the right people, and the right causes. That is just the way I always think. I think that could be taken from us too.

Ceremonial mindful is you have to be more respectful about different things when they are more sacred. If you are going to a camping fire you could just roast marshmallows or hot dogs, but if it is a ceremonial fire, then nothing can touch the fire. You can't throw garbage in there. It is

keeping it nice and pure. It is just keeping that awareness that these things you are doing over here at the ceremony are sacred so you need to pay attention to what you are doing, because everything that you do affects the ceremony, whether that is cutting watermelon for kids or starting the fire or building the sweat lodge or even anything that seems really small. Any kind of energy that you put into what you are doing for a ceremony is going to affect the outcome of the ceremony, not just for you, but everybody else. Keep your mind pure because you want to heal people; you don't want to get people sick. If you are there just for yourself and for your own little reasons, then it is not only going to affect you, it is going to affect everybody else there. You don't want to carry that with you.

REFLECTION

Living in Two Worlds ~

It just comes natural to me as I was brought up with it since I was really young, about the age when you start learning stuff that will get you going. That was when I was brought on to the Red Road.

It is natural to me. I guess if I were to explain it, I have different spots in my head where I can separate myself. If I'm in a ceremonial spot then I know how my mind is supposed to be thinking at that certain moment, but if I'm at work, then I know I need to focus on work related issues. I'm Mexican and Native. For me, the Mexican culture is really close to the culture out here in California so it's not really too far behind that I get really confused or lost. Everyday life compared to traditional things – it is like using my traditional values when I need to. It's just being able to use what you need to at certain times.

It is all about respect. I'm a person who will give you all the respect I can. That is what I was taught really young. You have to give people respect, the elders respect, and whoever else because that is just how it goes. You don't go in there and be cocky and demand respect and don't give it back. Nothing is going to work that way if you are just demanding things from people and

don't do anything in return. What I still get out of traditional values is just being respectful and generous and staying humble. Respect for the environment, respect for other people.

Living in two worlds has definitely brought my maturity level up more than that of people my age. I'm twenty-one. People my age are just trying to go the clubs and talk to girls and do all that other crazy stuff. Since I've been raised this way, I have respect for people; I can't just go out and do that. Not that I don't do anything negative and I'm all positive, but just for me having that in my head, knowing ceremony and stuff like that, it keeps me thinking about things more than actually doing things. It gives me more of a thought process. I'm young and trying to stay just like everybody else, but at the same time still knowing spiritually what is good. If I ever get to a point where I'm really stressed out in my life, I can go back to ceremony and just refocus myself and keep going. Other people don't have that so they go to drugs or alcohol or women or whatever it is to fill that void so they can keep going. I don't need to use all those negative things. Some people just want to use women and make babies and do all this other stuff just so they feel like they are grown. They don't realize what it takes to have responsibilities like that.

Who is Native American/Indian?

People who are native to this continent, whether they are in Alaska or all the way down to South America. Not only am I Ohlone, but I'm Mexican too which pertains to Native America.

Everybody is native to somewhere. You look at your blood and you see where you come from. For instance, someone wants to be Ohlone or honorary Ohlone, but that doesn't necessarily make sense, because you're not going to get the healing and the stuff that you think you're looking for because it doesn't relate to your DNA, your blood. Spiritually things work coherently for us because our DNA is tied to the soil. If you have a little piece of something, but you are almost totally European, then you need to research your European side. Of course it's good to know about that little tiny smidgen of Native American, but you also need to honor and respect the whole other European or Asian or

whatever side; that is really where your DNA is at. You can check it out on YouTube, go to a powwow, get a dream-catcher and you're cool. For example, why don't you check out what is going on in France? What is their original language, their thoughts, their dances? And then tell me about that and maybe I'll feel like you feel when you are coming to my Native stuff. When there is confusion the people are lost and you can't get anything done. We've got to start by speaking the truth and getting it out there. We can't lie to people and say, "Oh, you're just a little bit Cherokee; you're the full thing. You can go out there and run lodges." No, that is not how it works. For me, I'm part Mexican from Mexico. At the same time I'm here in California so I have to represent the part here where I grew up, where my blood is at. If I were in Mexico then I would be honoring that whole part of my life over there. Maybe later on I would have found out the Ohlone side.

It's a touchy subject when you are talking about blood quantum, because that is also another thing that divides people. There are a lot of people being taken out of their reservations and dis-enrolled because of their supposed blood quantum. I've seen families where they started up that whole reservation area where they are living and now they are getting dis-enrolled because they don't want to be compatible with the system and the money that is being pushed around to the side.

There is a difference between a Native person who is mixed with Lakota and Apache and Ohlone and whatever else. They might have a little quarter Ohlone, and that's cool, you should know about your cultures that are here, but again if you are European or Asian or anything else, you need to study what that is over there. That is really what is going to bring people into knowing themselves. It's not about knowing the little piece; it's about knowing your whole self. When you just focus on that little piece, just because you are here in America, "Oh, I'm Native American now" -- that is very contradictory.

Reconciliation between the Oblone and the Larger Society ~

For any kind of reconciliation, there needs to be a systematic change. Because what will happen now is they'll say, "Okay, yeah, we're sorry", and then that's it, and nothing will really come of it. But if there's a systematic change, then that means that we'll get something out of it, because the land where we're from is really valuable. But if we change that system, then it changes the value of things. Honestly, all I see are just smiles and handshakes and then that's about it, if there is anything. Because they're not going to give us any land; they're not going to give us any money. They're not going to give us anything. Even if they do give us the land and the money, they say, "How do you turn an Indian into a white guy? You give him a casino." Right?

The system isn't set up to work for us. It doesn't matter what you give us, or how you say this or that; it's never going to work. There needs to be a systematic change in how we go about things. Until that happens, we're not really going to see anything. We're going to keep doing this activist work until there is change.

First, we have to realize that this is a genocide going on, and so we need these forums where we talk about these things, like talking circles. Without even bringing them up, we're never going to heal from anything. The things that happened in the past snowball up into today. The things today don't happen just *because* -- there are things that happened in the past. You see those movies where people will time travel in the past and they'll say, "Don't touch anything. Don't touch a butterfly. Nothing." Because it will change the future, right? It's the same thing. Every little thing that they did made a big effect on what's going on today. In order to really heal things you've got to go back to the core, go back to what really sparked it, and then go build out and see what's really going on. But until you go back, they say, "Oh, well, that was just the past; get over it." That's not going to heal anything. That's just going to keep the cycle of confusion going. For example, one of the popular things that people bring up is blankets with measles and smallpox. They gave us these

blankets to warm us, but they had diseases on them. Now look at today. They have these liquor stores with all these GMO foods in there that give us cancer. These are all the people have to survive off of. They can't go to Nob Hill because it's expensive. There are different things that are still going on today that they were doing back then, but they are doing them in different ways, because they have different technology now.

We need talks, and community gardens, and going back to the seeds, and communities where we take care of each other. I mean communities where you have to survive with each other, where you use each other's skills, not a community where maybe you have time for so and so once in a while. You're not relying on the money. If you know how to chop wood, well then that's your job. If you know how to harvest meat, that's what you're going to do. They don't want us to feel that way in society today, because they feel like you have to do this and that, and go through this and that. That only keeps us running in circles. You're never going to get the change that you want, because you are chasing stuff. The 'governmentals' have been mining our minds like John Trudel puts it. There is a lot of programming to our minds that set up walls in our head that make us stop pushing for human rights all over the board as well as program us into running a rat race. When people are relying on just really being comfortable, then nothing's really going to happen. You can say, "Thank you", "Sorry", all you want, but nothing is going to happen.

Proud to be Ohlone ~

I'm proud to be Ohlone. I've been across the nation, and everybody says, "You are from California. Why would you leave California? Why are you out here?" "Yeah, man, I'm from the Bay Area like thousands of years back." Everybody loves California, even back then. They saw something different. There were fruits and animals everywhere. Now it isn't fruits and animals and vegetation; we've got Silicon Valley out here. For me to say that I'm originally from the Bay Area from thousands of years is an honor.

BEVERLY R. ORTIZ



BEVERLY R. ORTIZ
Cultural Services Coordinator
East Bay Regional Park District

Before this interview starts, I'd like to say that, as a non-Indian, I was deeply humbled and touched to be asked to be part of this project by its conveners, Ann Marie Sayers (Mutsun Ohlone), Janet Clinger, and Ruth Morgan. I also feel a certain sense of trepidation, knowing that my collaborations and work with Ohlones would not have been possible without the generous mentoring, help, support, guidance, advice, critique, and encouragement of dozens of people, Ohlone and non-Ohlone, Indian and non-Indian. Although I would like to recognize and honor each and every one of you by name and contribution, given the constraints of the interview format, I cannot do so here. I hope you will forgive this lapse, knowing that I hold each and every one of you deep within my heart.

My work with Ohlones was the outcome of more than a decade of previous work with Native Californians that began in 1976 when I was an undergrad at UC Davis, studying Environmental Interpretation—park naturalist work. That spring I received a summer “District Historian” internship in the Plumas National Forest, conducting interviews with men and women in their seventies and eighties who had first-hand knowledge of the forest’s history, including two Mountain Maidu women. That summer I not only learned about long-term and enduring relationships with the land, but I was also exposed to a terrible history of injustice about which I had previously been unaware.

The following five summers, I worked in Yosemite National Park’s Wawona District, conducting “living history” and other interpretive programs. While there, I was able to continue learning about enduring relationships with place through a Yosemite Field Seminar in ethno botany with Bob Frye, where I met Craig Bates, the Curator of Ethnography at Yosemite, who shared

traditional Miwok/Paiute skills, and, once more, I found myself completely captivated by a thousands-of-years-old relationship between people and place. In subsequent years, I continued taking seminars with Craig, eventually serving as an assistant, and, when he retired from teaching seminars, began, at his suggestion, to teach some of my own in varied locales for several years.

In November of 1979, the year I graduated from UCD, I was hired by the East Bay Regional Park District to interpret the history and ecology of Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve. In the early 1980s, I had the privilege and joy of beginning what would become several years of basketry studies with Long Valley Cache Creek Pomo basketweaver Mabel McKay, whose classes I learned about from Arlene Anderson, a long-term student of Mabel's, during a seminar taught by Miwok Archaeological Preserve of Marin co-founders Don Theiler and Sylvia Thalman.

In the 1980s, I also began conducting field research, interviews, and oral histories with Native Californian cultural consultants, including Julia F. Parker, Milton "Bun" Lucas, and Lanny Pinola, all Kashaya Pomo and Coast Miwok. It was also in the '80s that I first met Randall Milliken, an ethno-historian who had been studying the history and cultures of the first peoples of the place now known as the Bay Area, and Catherine Callaghan, a linguist specializing in Miwok languages. Randy and Catherine helped me access obscure information about Ohlone, Bay Miwok, and Delta Yokuts (formerly Northern Valley Yokuts) history and cultures. In 1986 Catherine presented me with a copy of J.P. Harrington's 1920s and '30s "Choch" field notes, the only detailed ethnographic field work conducted with individuals who spoke Chochenyo, an Ohlone language, which I, in turn, gave copies of to others, including Ohlones.

In the mid-1980s, Heyday founder and publisher Malcolm Margolin invited me to write a column for *News from Native California* that focused on the practice of Native California traditional/contemporary cultural skills. As I travelled across the state to conduct my interview for "News," I began to meet some Ohlones. But my direct work with Ohlones really began in 1990,

when I started working with Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont, the locale of four more than 2,000-year-old Tuibun Ohlone village sites. Prior to my arrival, the Coyote Hills staff had consulted with five Ohlones, four from the Galvan and Sanchez families, and created a collaborative park exhibit still in place based on that work.

In the coming months and years, I would have many much appreciated, sometimes serendipitous, relational opportunities to meet and work with other Ohlones. For instance, in 1992 CSU Hayward (now East Bay) professor Lowell John Bean coordinated an Ohlone scholar's conference, "The Ohlone Indians of the Bay Area: A Continuing Tradition," that brought increased awareness of Ohlone presence to a broader audience. As part of the lead up to that conference, I travelled with Lowell, Rick Orta (Jalquin/Saclan Ohlone/Bay Miwok), and others to see an Ohlone basket and other objects housed in the collections of the State Indian Museum in Sacramento. Rick subsequently told his mother Ruth Orta about me. Ruth, in turn, would later join a program at Coyote Hills through which Ohlones share their history and cultures with the public. That program began to take root prior to my arrival at Coyote Hills, when one-time East Bay Regional Park District Assistant General Manager of Operations Jerry Kent and the local interpretive staff began to look into the possibility that Ohlones might begin sharing their cultures with the public as Interpretive Student Aides, a part-time, seasonal position that sunsets after three or four years. When it became apparent that the duties and parameters of that position weren't a good fit, staff began to look at other options.

In the meantime, based on my expanded contacts with Ohlones, and with the support of then Supervising Naturalist Norm Kidder, I proposed that the District consider the establishment of an annual Gathering of Ohlone Peoples at Coyote Hills, through which interested Ohlones of varied tribal backgrounds would share their history, cultures, and contemporary cultural involvements with the public. Based on the success of the first gathering, and with the support and encouragement of

Ohlones, in particular Linda Yamane (Rumsien Ohlone), who introduced me to several other Ohlones, I began coordinating a year-round series of Ohlone lectures, programs, cultural workshops, and village site open houses, including the Gathering on the first Sunday of October. Whether cultural workshops and programs by Ohlones or myself, I tried to let it be known as broadly as possible that if Ohlones wanted to participate in any of these programs, they were always welcome, and that if a fee was involved, that fee would be waived.

To achieve the goal of creating a part-time staff position that would enable Ohlones to share their history and cultures with the public on an on-going basis, the District's Human Resources Department suggested the use of an existing Student Intern/Departmental Technician job category. Norm Kidder entrusted me with heading up the initial efforts to recruit, hire, train, and schedule the first interns, a coordination role I continued to have until 2014, when I left Coyote Hills to become the Park District's first-ever Cultural Services Coordinator.

The program became known internally as the "Ohlone Intern Program," since everyone in it was and is Ohlone, although some were also Bay Miwok and Delta Yokuts. Currently there are five individuals in the program: Ruth Orta and her daughter Ramona Garibay, who have served in the program since its inception; T. Michael Bonillas (Rumsien/Mutsun Ohlone), who joined in the second year, and Sabrina Garibay and Rita Rodriguez, Ruth's granddaughters (Mona's daughters). The program is designed as an opportunity for Ohlones, Bay Miwoks, and Delta Yokuts to share family history and stories that were passed down to them, and to give specialized presentations and cultural demonstrations that would not overlap with full-time Naturalist job duties. The goal has always been for one or more Ohlones, Bay Miwoks, or Delta Yokuts to become full-time Naturalists, since these are the three tribal groups with ancestral ties to East Bay Regional Park District parklands in Alameda and Contra Costa County.

When the “Local Native Peoples Intern Program,” as I now refer to it, was established in 1996, I put the word out as broadly as possible through all of my contacts in the communities about the duties and constraints of the job. One great outcome has been that some of the people involved started using the things they learned through the program to do presentations in other venues.

For example, Ramona Garibay got involved in soaproot brush making. There was documentation that Ohlones made soaproot brushes, but no details about the specific methodologies used, so I was able to share how I learned to make them from Craig Bates, Dorothy Stanley (Northern Miwok), Margaret Baty (Auberry Mono), and other Native people in Central California, the broader subcultural area of which the 58 or so Ohlone tribes are part.

I taught only when I had the permission of my teachers to do so. My responsibility for the great gift of what was shared with me, was to accurately represent its full context, including not only the tangibles, but the intangibles. So, when I taught cultural skills, whether to the interns, other Native people, or to the general public, I always told them exactly who I learned from, and shared the specific cultural proscriptions and methodologies used by my teachers, so the cultural context was clear. I’ve always felt that, as a non-Indian, it isn’t my place to change anything. Change should originate with Native people. So, when my teachers used modern implements, I taught with those same modern implements.

Since we knew Ohlones cooked with specific acorn species, but not the specific methods they used, I arranged for Julia Parker, who learned to gather, process, and cook with black oak acorns from her Miwok/Paiute grandmother-in-law, to come to Coyote Hills and teach acorn processing to the interns, something Ruth Orta went on to specialize in. I taught the Interns and the general public other cultural skills, such as dogbane cordage making, abalone pendant making, clamshell disk bead making, and basketry within the culturally-specific contexts I was taught about these things.

Craig Bates and the late Larry Dawson, a curator at the Hearst Museum of Anthropology (then the Lowie Museum) assisted with Ohlone-specific basket making techniques, because they had researched specific details of Ohlone baskets in several museum collections. I learned from Larry how to weave a *walabeen*, an Ohlone-style winnowing basket, and, since I already knew how to gather and process the plant materials used, began to demonstrate *walabeen* weaving at Coyote Hills. Linda Yamane, who is Rumsien Ohlone, got involved in researching and restoring ancestral basketry techniques close to that time. She became the first Ohlone person in decades to weave using those traditions.

I was privileged and blessed to know and learn from an older generation of Central California Indian elders immersed in older ways. Through my work with Mabel McKay, and, in subsequent decades, hundreds of other Native California artisans, my appreciation for the complexity of the traditional/contemporary skills they learned and mastered continually deepened. Today, I view all of these things within the context of relationships and mutual obligations that connect people to sacred time (creation); people to the spiritual world that animates everything, plant, animal, stone, or mineral; people to place; people to the wellbeing, health, and/or numbers of the plants, animals, stones, and minerals from which they create their remarkable objects; people to their teachers, their families, and their broader tribal community; people to their ancestors and the sacrifices they made to ensure the future of their families, people, and cultures; and so much more. The object, once made, is certainly important, blending, as it does, beauty with something suitable for everyday use, but, through an understanding of process and levels of relationship and mutual obligation, it attains an even greater significance. Through my work doing interviews and oral histories, I was interested in whatever the cultural consultants I worked with chose and wanted to share with me. Hopefully, through my writings, I have conveyed to readers the utter humanity of the lives, experiences, and insights of particular Native people that takes those readers beyond their

stereotyped, frozen-in-time, and idealized notions of Native peoples, and enables them to see whole human beings who not only have a past, but a dynamic and vibrant present and future, as well.

That said, the Ohlone Gathering and other Ohlone cultural programs at Coyote Hills would not be possible without the open heartedness and bigheartedness of the many Ohlones who have advised, cheered, assisted with, raised money for, and participated in them, and the commitment of East Bay Regional Park District to serve as host. These program are based on on-going collaborations. Many Ohlones who have formally participated, have also volunteered their time to help these programs thrive. I could not be more moved by and grateful for their utter generosity.

From my perspective, all of these program have been a great gift. For them to thrive into the future, there needs to be codified leadership and continued funding. Vivien Hailstone, Karuk/Yurok, and a member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe, who passed away at the age of eight-eight, used to say, “You’re paid what you’re worth.” It’s not about a *quid pro quo*, but about showing respect not only for Ohlone participant knowledge, but for their taking time out of their lives to share what they know beyond their immediate families and cultural communities.

Just as there was no single group of Ohlones in the past, there is no single Ohlone tribe, tribal organization, or perspective today. My role, working for the East Bay Regional Park District, has been to do my utmost to learn about and represent all perspectives. A lot of people think of culture as equivalent to cultural objects, but cultures are about so much more. The way Ohlones interact with the world includes many intangible elements of culture that were clearly transmitted across time, for instance the values of extended family, generosity, patience, and a strong sense of fair play. Culture involves many things not easily put into words, such as the way a person carries her or his self, or the way a person thinks and talks about things. The broader world sometimes presumes that if Native people don’t make certain objects, or don’t make them in certain frozen-in-time ways, they somehow don’t have a culture. One of the goals of the Gathering of Ohlone

Peoples and other cultural programs at Coyote Hills, is to help people move beyond those stereotypes.

Ohlone Days at Coyote Hills ~

The Gathering of Ohlone Peoples flowed from a desire to provide opportunities for Ohlones to present their cultures and perspectives to the public. Coyote Hills Regional Park has four partially preserved Ohlone village sites. It seemed to me that instead of solely having non-Indians, like myself, interpret Ohlone cultures to the public, that Ohlone people of varied tribal backgrounds should be presenting their history and cultures in a manner and context of their own choosing. When I came to Coyote Hills, the staff had already been doing some work with specific Ohlones. I had opportunities to begin meeting other Ohlones in the course of working with Native people all across the state. By 1994, the year of the first Gathering, I had enough contacts to propose that the Park District host an event featuring Ohlones of varied heritage sharing their history, cultures, and cultural involvements and concerns, past and present, with the public. After the District agreed to fund the event, I contacted all of the Ohlone tribal groups and culturally-knowledgeable individuals that I knew at the time. I told them about the goals, philosophy, and logistics of the event, and offered them an equal opportunity to participate, equal pay for that participation, and the opportunity to recommend other Ohlones who might wish to participate.

Over the years, the Ohlone Gathering has expanded in scope, as well as in the number of Ohlone participants, as have the cultural involvements of contemporary Ohlones. There were six individual presenters and two dance groups at the first gathering. Over the twenty years I had the privilege and joy to coordinate the gathering (1994-2013), more than 80 individual Ohlones presented, including representatives of every contemporary Ohlone tribe and tribal organization, and four dance groups with Ohlone members. It has been deeply moving to see how many Ohlones have come forward to share their cultures and perspectives through the various cultural programs

and projects at Coyote Hills. If there are any Ohlones, Bay Miwoks, or Delta Yokuts with whom I have not already worked, who would like to participate on any level in these programs and projects, if only to be added to the Ohlone Gathering or cultural programs mailing list, they are welcome to contact me or the Coyote Hills staff.

One of the goals of the Ohlone-specific programming at Coyote Hills has been to communicate to people that there is no one way that Ohlones, California Indians, or American Indians do things. While it's nice to know, for instance, that a given native plant can be used for a particular purpose, through these programs we try to communicate that there are differences in how particular people from particular tribes used the same plant, even for the same purposes, and that these uses changed across time.

For instance, I worked with the late Alex Ramirez (Rumsien Ohlone), who grew up knowing Old California Spanish, on the translation of the sacred narratives and other old-time stories in J.P. Harrington's 1920s and '30s Chochenyo field notes with Ascención Solórzano and Jose Guzman. The originals of these field notes did not end up at the Smithsonian Institution, as most of Harrington's other field notes did. There was a cache of original notes at UC Berkeley that linguist Catherine Callaghan found and worked with. Thermofax rather than Xerox photocopying technology existed then. Catherine made a Thermofax of the originals. Later, when Catherine went back to Xerox the pages, one third of the originals were missing, so thanks to Catherine's Thermofax, these survived. Thanks to Alex, I was able to publish English translations of a part of these notes in the book *The Ohlone Past and Present*. And thanks to Alex, I also have a heavily footnoted manuscript of the same material that details every insight Alex had about the meaning of particular Old California Spanish words and phrases, as understood by his relatives who spoke that language in the Monterey area, where Alex was raised. Alex later wrote me a letter in which he said that when he worked on the translations, he felt like he could hear his grandfather and other elders

speaking again, since Harrington recorded his notes in the same mixture of Old California Spanish and English, with some Native words, that Alex's older relatives used. I should add that this is not the only translation of these stories. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe later published its own translations, based on its own work on the stories with some of that tribe's elders.

I have conducted interviews and oral histories with many Ohlones over the years. In the mid-2000s, I collaborated on a project with Randall Milliken and Laurence Shoup sponsored by Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) to research and document Ohlone cultural affiliations across time with GGNRA parklands. That project included taped interviews. I wrote the 1924 to present portion of the resultant publication, *Ohlone/Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Peninsula and Their Neighbors, Yesterday and Today*, available on-line at www.nps.gov/historyculture. More recently, I collaborated with Ohlones on an *Ohlone Curriculum with Bay Miwok Content and Introduction to Delta Yokuts* published by the East Bay Regional Park District. That publication is available free of charge at www.ebparks.org/activities/educators/Ohlone_Curriculum.

Cultural Background ~

I grew up in Southern California. My mother is part English, Scottish, Irish, and German. When she was young, she lived in Chicago, Denver, Santa Fe, and Los Angeles. My father is Spanish. Family lore says that at least one of my ancestors travelled from Spain to Mexico with Cortez. Whenever they got to so-called New Spain (Mexico), they settled in places that would later become part of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Today, there is a small, former sheep-herding community near Alamosa, Colorado called Ortiz, named for my paternal grandfather's family, where my grandfather had an adobe store, and eventually the only brick house, before he moved in the 1920s to Southern California with my grandmother. I grew up in North Hollywood, then Woodland Hills. I came north in 1974 to attend UC Davis, where I majored in Environmental Interpretation.

Area of Support for Ohlone Peoples ~

Right now [in 2011], it would be the cultural programs and workshops here at Coyote Hills, and assisting Ohlones who want to host events at Coyote Hills to do so. For instance, I worked with Tony Cerda, Chair of the Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe, to help with the administrative end of a four-year, week-long “Healing of the Land Ceremony” at Coyote Hills. I worked with Charlene Sul of the Confederation of Ohlone Peoples to facilitate a “1,000 Hummingbirds” event at the same site for Native and non-Native women working on environmental initiatives in Native contexts.

Prior to and after my arrival at Coyote Hills, when the California Indian Storytellers Association wanted to host people there, or when Ohlone tribes, tribal organizations, or local Indian education programs wanted to host gatherings or meetings, the site was made available. The primary Coyote Hills village site, has also been made available to Ohlones for private gatherings and prayer.

The other support service I can provide is to connect interested Ohlones and the general public, as appropriate, with culturally-specific publications, archival materials, and documents; with Ohlones and non-Ohlones who specialize in cultural presentations around particular topics; and/or Ohlones and non-Ohlones who demonstrate and teach specific cultural skills, such as soaproot brush making, acorn making, or flint knapping, in culturally-specific ways and contexts. I see myself as a person who was blessed to have certain experiences that put me in a place where I can be that type of resource person. It’s all about collaboration and relationship. It’s about a meaningful exchange.

Currently [2014], as East Bay Regional Park District Cultural Services Coordinator, I still do some of the same. But my primary duties now revolve around the protection and stewardship of cultural resources, Native and historic, tangible and intangible, in District parklands. Collaboration with Ohlones in these areas is an integral part of the position.

Efforts Toward Keeping the Ohlone Cultures Vital ~

I can give you several, including the ever-expanding efforts by individual Ohlones, Ohlone tribes, and Ohlone tribal organizations to use websites, blogs, non-profits, events, publications, and any and all other venues available to them, to share their history, cultural knowledge, and perspectives, and to work on issues of concern, such as cultural preservation and language restoration, federal recognition, and the preservation and protection of ancestral burial, village, sacred, and other cultural sites. Ohlones are bringing ancient cultural skills forward in old and new contexts, working with UC Davis to computerize the Harrington documents, serving as Most Likely Descendants and site monitors, and undertaking environmental advocacy and the restoration of ancestral land management techniques (traditional ecological knowledge). All of this is having an impact, as are the many collaborative projects and initiatives that Ohlones have undertaken with local, state, regional, and federal agency staff, non-profits and other organizations, and educational and other institutions.

In terms of the cultural programs at Coyote Hills, the idea has always been to take things that were documented about Ohlone history, languages, and cultures past to present, whether tangible or intangible, and present them to the public. There is a lot of information out there in the world, ostensibly about Ohlone peoples, that is complete fabrication, based on presumption and assumption, or based on genericized cultural content.

As the years have passed, and more and more Ohlones have taken what is inspiring to them about their cultures, and made it their own, they are bringing their cultures forward in very moving and vibrant ways.

One of the most significant outcomes of public programs and projects like the Gathering of Ohlone Peoples, Local Native Peoples Intern Program, and so many other events, programs, projects, and publications initiated by or involving Ohlones, has been the ever-increasing visibility of Ohlones in the public sphere, including among non-Indians and the broader intertribal community

locally, statewide, nationally, and even internationally. Based on Census 2010, California has more American Indians living in it than any other state in the United States. Most are not indigenous to California. Now there is an ever-expanding awareness, knowledge, and understanding among the broader American Indian “community,” and non-Indians, of Ohlone history and cultures past to present, and contemporary cultural involvements. There is also ever-increasing involvement by members of the broader intertribal community and non-Indians in support capacities during these programs and projects.

The Gathering of Ohlone Peoples, Local Native Peoples Intern Program, and other public programs and projects have been very empowering to some Ohlones, Ohlone/Bay Miwoks, and Ohlone/Delta Yokuts. I’ve watched some young people grow up learning about their culture through these programs and projects, because their parents, grandparents, and other family members were presenters and participants. Not only are these events educational, but they’re also enjoyable for those who participate. Akin to Central California Big Times of old, they are an opportunity for Ohlones from several tribes to visit and share with each other.

From the public’s standpoint, I think Ohlone gatherings, programs, presentations, workshops, and projects have helped dispel some of the stereotypes some of them had about Ohlones. The Gathering of Ohlone Peoples has certainly been very helpful for third and fourth grade teachers who are obligated to teach about local Native and California Indian peoples, respectively. Not only do educators come and bring their families to the Gathering, but they let their students know about it, and the students, in turn, come with their families and friends. Once here, hopefully they all realize that Ohlones don’t just have a past, but a very vibrant present and future as well. They also hopefully realize that Ohlone cultures exist on a continuum, that cultures have always changed, and that today’s Ohlone cultural expressions are important and meaningful in their own right. When they think of Native people, most non-Indians, for better or worse, think of

music, song, dance, and story. While these things are certainly culturally important, and present at the Gathering, one goal is that after seeing a dance, or hearing a story, the public feels compelled to stay and find out more about other aspects of Ohlone cultures, as well as Ohlone history and contemporary cultural involvements and concerns.

Culture isn't just about the tangible. It's about history, about family, about how you interact with others. The fullness of most cultural skills can only be taught in specific, very set circumstances. Basketry is one example. Mastering all aspects of ancestral Ohlone basketry requires a huge, long-term commitment, and very few people will ever make, or be able to make, the necessary commitment to master it. There are some Ohlones who I consider renaissance people. Linda Yamane would certainly be one, an amazing example of someone who has done her own research, but also collaborated with knowledgeable Native and non-Native people. She got actively involved in the California Indian Basketweavers Association, restored ancestral cultural traditions, studied the J.P. Harrington notes, and has created art and published widely about her culture. At one time she was the only person of Ohlone heritage in decades weaving baskets. Now, in large part because of Linda, there are others, although none yet as practiced and proficient.

I think this is a time of unforeseen and remarkable opportunity. The elders of the 1920s and '30s, who were so committed, visionary, brave, generous, and open-hearted that they shared their knowledge with non-Indian anthropologists at a time when the pressures to turn away from their Indianness were magnified, they are the reason that three Ohlone languages could be and have been restored, the reason that we know, on a very personal level, how events of history impacted individual Ohlones, and why we know as much as we do about Ohlone cultures of the past, and how they were thought about and expressed in the early 1900s.

Language Restoration ~

Language is certainly a vital and basic cultural expression. It's also something that takes a lot of time and dedication to restore and bring to life. The language restoration work that has been undertaken by Ohlones within tribal, organizational, and individual frameworks is truly remarkable and inspiring.

Nearly all, if not all, Ohlone language restoration projects, emanate from collaborative language restoration programs initiated by Leanne Hinton, Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at U.C. Berkeley, with the support and advice of California Indians, including Ohlones, and so many others working behind the scenes.

Defining 'Culture' ~

I have a very open-ended definition of culture. Culture is something that is learned, shared and transmitted. Culture involves those aspects of heritage around which people feel pride and empowerment, and have a desire to express and keep alive, however they choose to do that. For some Ohlones the path to cultural expression has been through broader American Indian cultural expressions, such as participation in powwows. For them, that becomes a meaningful cultural expression, given the history they lived through. For others, culture involves the mastery of old-time knowledge, activities, and skills in older contexts, and everything in between.

Some people get caught up in the issue of blood quantum. If you think about culture as something that is learned, shared, and transmitted, it's not about how much "blood" you do or do not have, it's the path and trajectory you take that leads you to a place where you can express your culture and carry it on.

Respect for Ohlone Cultures ~

There's so much I respect about Ohlone cultures past to present, it's difficult to point to just a few, but here are some that stand out. I feel awe about the ability of Ohlones to live for thousands of years in the same place, generation after generation after generation, without destroying or

overwhelming that place. It's a way of living *with* the land, not *on* the land that we need to relearn and practice, given the changes since non-Indians invaded—since that terrible time of severe cultural disruption, dislocation and upheaval, and suffering, and all of the human and environmental devastation that entailed. Living with the land encompasses a way of life that centers on relationships and mutual obligations that not only bind people together, but bind them to everyone and everything else in the world. It involves deep and abiding understanding of and respect for everything in the natural world. It involves recognition of something greater than oneself. It also involves restraint in terms of human interaction with other humans and with everything in the so-called natural world, or home from a traditionalist Native perspective.

I have tremendous respect for the many contemporary Ohlone who are bringing their cultures, including their languages, forward into the future; Ohlones who are working on behalf of their people through advocacy work in the public sphere; and Ohlones who work quietly, one-on-one, in private spheres, learning, sharing, and transmitting culture.

I have tremendous awe and respect and admiration for the elders who, despite what their ancestors had to live through after non-Indians intruded, chose to share their cultures, including their languages, with non-Indians, so that their cultures could be written down and their songs be recorded on wax cylinders, enabling their direct descendants and other Ohlones to one day restore those languages, restore their cultures, and know the truths of late 1800s and early 1900s history from those who lived through it.

Learning from the Ohlone Experience ~

As a non-Indian, I don't think Ohlones have an obligation to teach the larger society anything, although I'm grateful that there are so many Ohlones who *are* choosing to teach the broader world about their cultures. They have an incredible legacy of stewardship and caring and interacting with the land, including managing the land through specialized, interrelated burning, digging (cultivation),

and pruning and coppicing techniques, methods that ensured the health and wellbeing of the plants and animals on which they relied, and increased the numbers of these same plants and animals. The restoration of ancestral land management or stewardship techniques, or traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)—however one wishes to frame it—is certainly key to restoration of the earth. It’s also key to the restoration of such ancestral skills as basketry, which relies on the use of TEK to cause the growth of the type of straight, vigorous, healthy plant materials needed to make a shapely basket.

One of the most important things that non-Indians need to know, and by being so public Ohlones can teach them, directly or indirectly, is that they *still exist*, that they are as “human” as everyone else, that they are as American as everyone else who is a citizen of the United States today, and that they are keeping their cultures alive and bringing them forward into the future, not in a frozen-in-time way, but in meaningful ways that reflect the whole of their history. What a great gift that is.

So it’s those two things: a different way of seeing, and thinking about, and being with, and perhaps, most importantly, being a part of the natural world; and that they are still here, living as modern Americans, while bringing their cultures forward in vibrant and beautiful and meaningful ways.

Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Cultures and History ~

I can’t speak to the job all public schools in Ohlone homelands are doing, but based on my knowledge of the state standards in the primary grades, and work as a Park District Naturalist with third and fourth grade classes on field trips to Coyote Hills, I think most schools could be doing a much better job of bridging common humanity, as could other institutions, and the publishers and producers of media about Ohlones and other American Indians. For instance, one Ohlone friend’s

granddaughter, at a very young age, did not want to accept that she was beautiful, because she did not fit the Pocahontas stereotype. So it's not just the school system; it's all of the mass media. The stereotypes that Ohlone and other American Indian cultures are simple and primitive is, I believe, one of the primary, if unconscious, drivers in causing the educational system to focus on local tribal and California Indians cultures at the third and fourth grade levels, respectively, rather than teach these cultures in age-appropriate contexts at all grade levels. The third and fourth grade social science standards don't include specific mention of toys or games, but are primarily built around adult-level cultural expressions. There is a subtle racism to all of this. Some Native people, especially when they are young, absorb the stereotypes, and absorb those implications about themselves.

That said, the school system can always do a better job and *should* do a better job. One of the primary ways that schools located in "Ohlone country" could do a better job is to discontinue limiting the teaching of Ohlone cultures to the third grade, and California Indian cultures to the fourth grade, and American Indian cultures to fifth grade. I think that the school system needs to have an Ohlone curriculum that starts at these young ages, and is personalized for those ages. In the third and fourth grades, for instance, the curriculum should include quotes from Ohlone third and fourth graders, with photos. Age-appropriate games and toys should be emphasized, especially at the younger ages. Teach cultural awareness to the youngest children, then build on that as they mature cognitively. And teach them about Ohlone peoples past to present at every grade level in a manner that makes that teaching relevant to current lives. That is one of the biggest changes I would recommend.

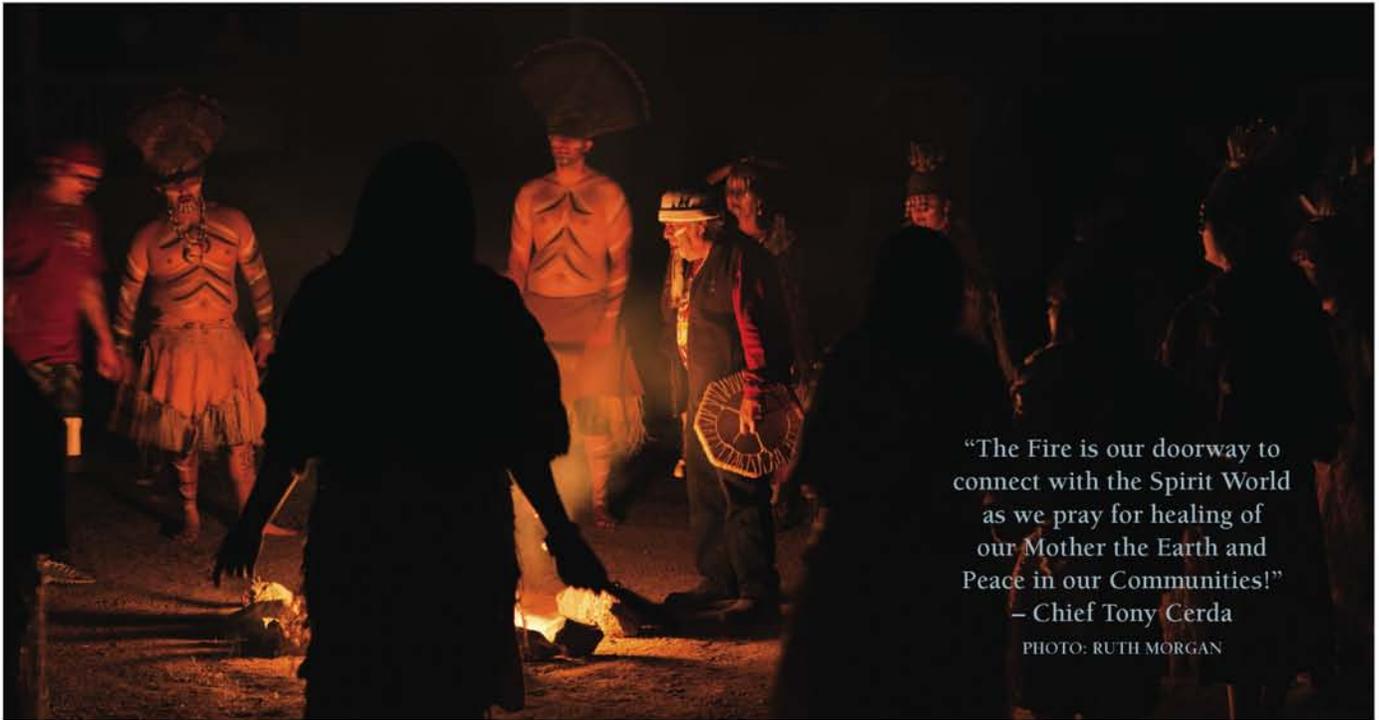
We're starting to see more and more efforts by Ohlones to provide age-appropriate and compelling lessons that meet state standards, like those of Linda Yamane (Rumsien Ohlone), who created curriculum focused on Rumsien Ohlone culture for her local school system. More recently,

as previously mentioned, I worked with Ohlones to create an *Ohlone Curriculum with Bay Miwok Content and Introduction to Delta Yokuts* for third grade teachers and their students, sponsored by the East Bay Regional Park District, that includes photos, quotes, and other content designed to help bridge the common humanity of Ohlone and non-Ohlone children.

Future Vision for the Ohlone ~

First I would say that since Ohlones are not a single people, I have no one answer. I certainly look forward to seeing all the amazing things that Ohlones of varied tribal backgrounds do in order to bring their cultures and their people forward into the future. So, in general, it's my wish that Ohlones, as individuals, and as members of organized tribal groups, are able to achieve the goals that *they* would like to achieve.

Appendix



“The Fire is our doorway to connect with the Spirit World as we pray for healing of our Mother the Earth and Peace in our Communities!”
– Chief Tony Cerda

PHOTO: RUTH MORGAN

OHLONE *Timeline*

History did not start in the San Francisco Bay Region with the arrival of Europeans. Ohlone peoples have thrived in the region extending from present-day San Francisco and Richmond, south to the place now known as the Monterey Bay region, and inland to the place now known as the San Luis Reservoir region since the world began and “everything, everywhere so people could live” was created. This timeline summarizes some of the events that have unfolded in Ohlone “country” since non-Indians intruded. After reviewing its content, we hope you will be inspired by the remarkable and creative ways that present day Ohlones are continuing to thrive, and to bring their cultures forward into the future in deeply meaningful ways, despite the sorrows and suffering that non-Indian settlement since 1770 portended. While there has been loss and change, this timeline is, at its core, a story of survival, or as Gregg Castro (t’rowt’raahl Salinan / rumsien Ohlone) has put it, a story of “deep and abiding respect and love for the gifts of knowledge that the ancestors sacrificed so much for, so that it might come alive again in us, their descendants.”

A local note: The place now known as San Francisco is located within the homeland of the Yelamu tribe of Ohlone-speaking people. Local village names included Petlunac, Siltintac, Chutchu, and Amatac.

Please also note: There never was a single Ohlone tribe in the past, and there is no single Ohlone tribe nor single Ohlone tribal organization today. This reality is reflected in this timeline.

Ohlone Elders & Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy

RUTH MORGAN: PHOTOGRAPHS

JANET CLINGER: ORAL HISTORIES

EXHIBITION

September 27, 2014 - January 4, 2015
Jewett Gallery, Main Library, Lower Level

Ohlone sacred narratives tell how the world and people were created here at the dawn of time (according to archaeologists some 12,900-13,500 years ago).

1492-1601

Ohlones unaware that Columbus (1492), Cabrillo (1542), Drake (1579) and others claim parts of the so-called Americas on behalf of foreign nations.

1602

Vizcaino lands in the place now known as the southern Monterey Bay, describing the area as “thickly populated with numberless Indians.”

November 4, 1769

The de Portola expedition names present-day San Francisco after Saint Francis of Assisi (San Francisco). Ohlones are unaware of this.

August 5, 1775

The first ship to enter present-day San Francisco Bay arrives by night at the place now known as the intersection of Beach and Larkin Streets in San Francisco. Local Yelamu villagers awaken to the sight of this foreign vessel.

March 27-April 2, 1776

The de Anza expedition brings a multi-ethnic group of some 240 non-Indian colonizers, including soldiers, north from Sonora, Mexico, to Monterey. During this week, a few members of the group, including de Anza, continue on to reconnoiter the present-day East Bay and Delta. The Native residents of the lands they cross react to their presence with hospitality, surprise, and fear.

September 17, 1776

San Francisco's Presidio established at the Yelamu village of Petlunac, built with Ohlone and Miwok labor

October 9, 1776

Mission San Francisco de Asis, also known as Mission Dolores, established and constructed at the Ohlone village of Chutchui by an Ohlone and Miwok workforce.

January 11, 1777

Mission Santa Clara de Asis established at the Ohlone village of Tamien on the southern tip of San Francisco Bay, constructed by Ohlone labor.

June 11, 1797

Mission San Jose established at Ohlone village of Oroysom, located on eastern shores of San Francisco Bay, constructed by Ohlone labor.

Summer of 1795 & beyond

At least 280 Indian residents fled Mission Dolores due, in part, to “food shortage, overwork, and punishment...” Opposition to the missions continues to occur through 1810, including armed conflict, especially among the Saclan (Bay Miwok) of the hill lands between present-day Walnut Creek and Oakland, the Huchiun (Ohlone) of the present-day Richmond area, the Volvon (Bay Miwok) of the hill lands along the Marsh Creek drainage on and east of Mount Diablo, and the Luecha (Delta Yokuts) located southeast of the present-day Livermore Valley. Epidemics continue to decimate Native populations.

April 23-25 1806

A mission-wide measles epidemic reaches Mission San Dolores, where a third of the population, some 300 Natives, perish, because they had no immunity to this infectious disease.

September 27, 1821

The Mexican Revolution marks the end of Spanish rule in California. Ohlone people continue to have no choice but to live at the Missions.

1824

Pomponio, (Gualen Coast Miwok), who was baptized at Mission Dolores in 1803, leads a successful rebellion against Mexican authorities and the Mission system throughout the greater Bay Area.

July 25, 1826

Mexican Alta California governor Jose Maria de Echeandia issues a “Proclamation of Emancipation” for Ohlones and other Natives in the California Missions, granting them Mexican citizenship, although they aren't freed.

1828

Estanislao Cucunuchi (Lacquisemne Delta Yokuts), baptized at Mission San Jose in Fremont in 1821, begins to lead a successful rebellion against that Mission, eventually recruiting hundreds of Mission Indian “neophytes” frustrated by the abuses of Catholic missionaries, to join a Native militia.

1830

San Lorenzo Rancheria established in the East Bay, in the present-day San Lorenzo/San Leandro, California area.

1831

Yoscolo (Delta Yokuts), an alcalde from Mission Santa Clara, joins Estanislao's Native militia against the Missions, bringing with him several hundred Indians from Mission Santa Clara.

August 17, 1833

The Mexican congress passes “An Act for the Secularization of the Missions of California,” in essence privatizing the mission system.

August 9, 1834

Mexican governor Jose Figueroa issues a “Decree of Confiscation,” which confiscated the property of the California Missions, evicting Ohlones and other Native Californians from a system they had become dependent on. With no remaining intact Ohlone villages, Ohlone peoples are essentially left landless on their own land.

1834-1846

The number of Mexican land grants increases greatly, with Ohlone land claims seldom recognized. Ohlones are left with little choice but to become serf-like laborers for the non-Indian owners of these huge tracts of lands. On these ranchos, they lived in multi-tribal rancherias.

1839-present

As an example of the land grant system, in 1839 the 48,436-acre Rancho Valle de San Jose was granted to four Mexican citizens at Pleasanton, California. Later owned by the Hearst family, one of the owner's multi-tribal Native workforce lived together on the “Alisal Rancheria,” where they were able to keep their languages and aspects of their cultures alive.

1846

The American invasion of California begins. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo with Mexico, Ohlone and other California Indians are denied United States citizenship.

1849

Pedro Alcantara (Yelamu), a Mission Dolores survivor, expresses the outcome of colonization on his life this way, "I am all that is left of my people. I am alone."

January 24, 1848

Gold discovered by a non-Indian in Coloma, California. The San Francisco Bay Area, the traditional homeland of multiple Ohlone tribes, swells with Euro-Americans searching for gold. San Francisco becomes a boomtown overnight.

1850

The first State Legislature passed An Act for the Government and Protection of Indians, setting the stage for the buying, selling, and slavery of Indian people throughout California, including, for instance, the kidnapping of children in Napa County to become workers for land owners in Contra Costa County.

1851 and 1852

Eighteen treaties are signed between California Native people and the federal government, but are never ratified. The California Legislature authorizes payment of \$1,100,000 for the "suppression of Indian hostilities." In 1857, the Legislature issues another bond for \$410,000 for the same purpose. While ostensibly aimed at resolving-Euro-American/Indian conflicts, these payments encouraged Euro-Americans to form volunteer militias to try to eliminate all California Indians.

January 7, 1852

The first American Governor of California initiates a genocide against California Indian peoples, when he signs an order sanctioning their murder. He proclaims, "That a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the races, until the Indian race becomes extinct, must be expected. While we cannot anticipate this result but with painful regret, the inevitable destiny of the race is beyond the power or wisdom of man to avert."

1854

The California Supreme Court rules that Natives cannot testify in court against non-Natives, allowing Ohlones and other California Indians to be continue to be legally enslaved and murdered by non-Natives.

1872

The California Constitution amended to allow Indians to testify in court.

1880's

Indian Canyon, near Hollister, California, served as a safe haven for local tribal people who did not accept the restrictions at Mission San Juan Bautista.

June 12, 1911

Land Trust Patent number 203411 was issued to Sebastian Garcia by President Taft for Indian Canyon, near Hollister, California. His heirs continue to live on this land to this day.

Early to mid-1900s

U.S., state, and local laws and policies continue to impact Ohlones and other California Indians. Despite these impacts, many Ohlones continue to maintain cultural communities, practice their cultures, and begin to reassert their rights. Following are a few examples of both the impacts and survivance.

1920s-1930s

John Peabody Harrington extensively records on wax cylinders Chochenyo, Mutsun and Rumsien language, songs, and cultural material from the last fluent speakers of the languages. Today the Chochenyo, Rumsen and Mutsun languages are being restored and spoken by the tribal people among whom they originated.

June 2, 1924

American Indians, including Ohlones, become the last group of people in this country to be granted citizenship.

1927

About 135 California Indian tribes lose their federally-recognized status when Bureau of Indian Affairs agent Lafayette A. Dorrington administratively terminates them without notification, including the Verona Band of Alameda County (Alisal), as well as Mutsun and Rumsien Ohlones.

1927

In his Handbook of California Indians, anthropologist Alfred Kroeber mistakenly writes, "The Costanoan [Ohlone] group is [culturally] extinct so far as all practical purposes are concerned..."

1954-1955

Alfred Kroeber* sides with California Indians during unratified treaty land claims hearings held in San Francisco and Berkeley. He identifies the Mission San Jose Indians as an example of survival.

1960s and 1970s

Throughout the civil rights era, Ohlones and other California Indians reassert their presence and rights, leading to the establishment of many new organizations, institutions, laws, and agencies, including the Ohlone Chapter of the American Indian Historical Society (1964), the California Indian Education Association (1969), and the California Native American Heritage Commission (1976). Following are a few more examples.

1965-1971

California Indians, including Ohlones, successfully fight for protection of the Native burial grounds associated with Mission San Jose against its proposed destruction by the building of Highway 680. The Ohlone Indian Tribe, Inc. receives the deed to the property.

1975

Patrick Orozco, other family members, and supporters take a stand at a cemetery on Lee Road in Watsonville, California, to stop the destruction through development of a Native burial site located there. After lengthy negotiations, the owner deeds the cemetery site to the Parajo Valley Indian Council.

August 11, 1978

The federal American Indian Religious Freedom Act is signed into law, providing limited legal protections for the practice of Native religions by American Indians.

1980s-present

Mutsun, Rumsien, and Chochenyo Ohlones revitalize their languages through language restoration projects, programs,

and initiatives. One example of an early organizational effort to restore an Ohlone language is the co-founding of the Mutsun Language Foundation in 2008 by Quirina Luna-Geary and Lisa Carrier, both Mutsun. By studying the work of J.P. Harrington and attending the Breath of Life Conferences at University of California, Berkeley which focuses on California Indian language restoration, they were able to make considerable progress toward the restoration of the Mutsun language.

1988-1999

Nine Ohlone tribal groups file petitions for federal acknowledgment with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Four of the petitioners are continuing to seek federal restoration/acknowledgment. Listed here in the order in which they filed their petitions, they are the: (1) Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area; (2) Amah Mutsun Band of Ohlone/Costanoan Indians; (3) Esselen/Costanoan Tribe of Monterey County; and (4) Costanoan Rumsen Carmel Tribe.

1987

First traditional sweat lodge in Ohlone "country" in more than a century established at Indian Canyon.

November 16, 1990

The federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act is signed into law, giving federally recognized tribes a greater level of protection for archaeological sites, ancestral remains, and sacred burial objects. While the law gives Ohlone peoples a stronger voice, countless burials and cultural objects are held in institutions such as universities as a result of the lack of federal recognition.

1994

The first Gathering of Ohlone Peoples is held at Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont, California, coordinated during its first 20 years by naturalist Beverly Ortiz, with guidance and support of more than 80 Ohlones, and the assistance and support of East Bay Regional Park District staff and volunteers.

August 19, 1998

Trust Patent number 04-88-0047 was issued to Ann Marie Sayers, who used the Indian Allotment Act of 1887 to reclaim ancestral land at Indian Canyon that was under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior. She then opened up Indian Canyon to all indigenous people in need of traditional land for ceremony.

1998

Concurring Native American Parties (CNAP) was formed to develop a memorandum of agreement among Moss Landing Marine Lab, FEMA, and Ohlone people (CNAP) to protect an ancestral burial site.

1999

The West Berkeley Shellmound was placed on the California Register of Historic Places.

2001 - 2005

Indian People Organizing for Change, IPOC, creates Shellmound Peace Walks. They walk from Vallejo, CA to San Jose and up to San Francisco, CA, totaling 280+ miles in three weeks. Walkers from all over the world came to pray and stop at many of the shellmounds/burial sites of Ohlone ancestors. This walk was done for four years with many allies.

200

Indian Canyon hosts its first annual Storytelling Festival.

June 2003

Andrew Galvan (Chochenyo Ohlone) named the first-ever Ohlone curator at Mission Dolores. Andrew, along with his cousin Vincent Medina, interpret the site to school children and others.

April 14, 2011

Wounded Knee DeOcampo (Mewuk), Johnella LaRose (Shoshone/Bannock/Ute), Corrina Gould (Chochenyo/Karkin Ohlone), Momingstar Gali I (Pit River), and Native and non-Native allies, occupied the sacred site of Sogorea Te, a Karquin village at present-day Glen Cove in Vallejo, California for 109 days in a spiritual encampment that eventually led to the first cultural easement between a federally recognized tribe, a city and a local park district.

2011

KB Homes, a large development corporation, agreed with Ohlone elders and the City of Santa Cruz to preserve an Ohlone burial site from development. This is but one of numerous examples of advocacy on the part of Ohlones and their supporters to protect and preserve ancestral sites.

August 2012

Rumsien Ohlone basketweaver, author, and artist Linda Yamane completes the first full-sized Ohlone feather basket made in some 200 years. The basket, with over 25,000 stitches, took four years to complete.

2012

Indian Canyon hosts its first Two Spirit gathering and ceremony.

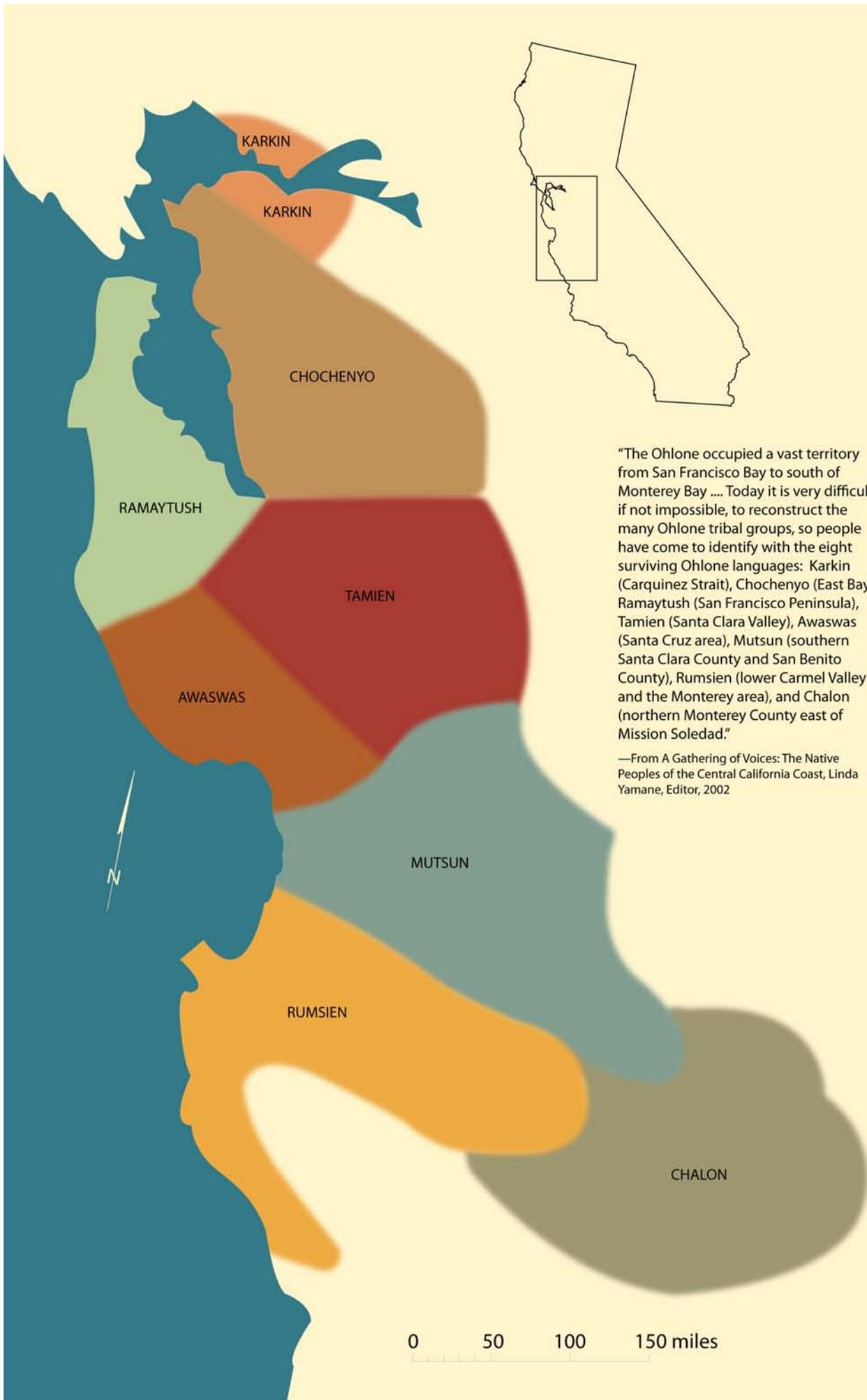
Postscript: This timeline represents but a fraction of the cultural and political involvements of Ohlones from several tribes since the turn of the last century. You can find out more about the remarkable achievements of Ohlones, Ohlone tribes, and Ohlone tribal organizations through this exhibit, by attending other public events with Ohlone participation, on the net, and through numerous publications.

*Alfred Kroeber, was one of the earliest American anthropologists. He served as the head of University of California's Museum of Anthropology and was the leading authority on California Indians in the early 1900s.

Ohlone Timeline created by Vincent Medina with input by Beverly R. Ortiz

The exhibition Ohlone Elders & Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy is presented by Costanoan Indian Research Inc. 1887, Community Works West, The San Francisco Public Library, the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, The Christensen Fund

The exhibit is on display at the Jewett Gallery at the San Francisco Public Library September 27, 2014 – January 4, 2015



“The Ohlone occupied a vast territory from San Francisco Bay to south of Monterey Bay Today it is very difficult, if not impossible, to reconstruct the many Ohlone tribal groups, so people have come to identify with the eight surviving Ohlone languages: Karkin (Carquinez Strait), Chochenyo (East Bay), Ramaytush (San Francisco Peninsula), Tamien (Santa Clara Valley), Awaswas (Santa Cruz area), Mutsun (southern Santa Clara County and San Benito County), Rumsien (lower Carmel Valley and the Monterey area), and Chalon (northern Monterey County east of Mission Soledad.”

—From A Gathering of Voices: The Native Peoples of the Central California Coast, Linda Yamane, Editor, 2002