

The Native Peoples of Santa Cruz County

By Allan Lönnberg

Introduction

What follows is an attempt to synthesize what is known about the indigenous inhabitants of Santa Cruz County. It is an overview in both the figurative and literal senses: it will, I hope, provide the reader with a general picture of how the lives of the native people in our area have been interpreted. The paper, extrapolated from archaeological and historical sources, covers the past up to Spanish contact in 1769. Despite what some have thought, the story does not end there. Much more needs to be said about the lives of the indigenous residents of Santa Cruz from that fateful date to the present. In a future paper, I hope to continue the story. Thus far, the written sources of information about these people, initially the recollections of Spanish explorers, to the bureaucratic records of the Franciscan missions, to the anthropological and archaeological discussions in this century—all were from the perspective of dominance. They record ancient societies that had experienced total collapse and nearly complete depopulation within a decade of European contact. The concepts employed by these chroniclers to describe and make sense of these societies are Eurocentric: ideas such as “tribe,” “boundary,” “warfare,” “religion,” etc., are inextricably linked with the operation of these concepts within a European historical and cultural tradition. They may not have any meaningful reference to the people who were here long before Junipero Serra, Gaspar de Portolá, and anthropologist Alfred Kroeber. What is needed is a new language—or perhaps old languages no longer spoken. At the moment, however, my task is to present in this brief article a synthesis of what scholars have gleaned from the past, with the full recognition that this state of knowledge is imperfect, incomplete, and much simplified. What follows is a composite portrait, a patchwork stitched together from bits and pieces culled from the various people who lived in the general vicinity of Monterey Bay. As with most reconstructions, it masks a way a life which, I have no doubt, was far more complex, unfathomable—and interesting—than we have ever dreamed.

Archaeological Background

The area now encompassed by Santa Cruz County—its beaches, estuaries, and sloughs, its fresh water lakes and rivers, its open grasslands and forests, and the abundant natural resources contained within them—has been home to human beings for a long time. Just how long is open to debate. At least one archaeologist (Cartier 1993) believes he has evidence of “paleo-Indian” hunters from a site in Scotts Valley over eleven thousand years old, but that date has been met with skepticism. Certainly, by seven thousand years ago, small groups of hunters and gatherers began leaving their traces around the Monterey Bay area, but very little is known about them. One site on the coast just north of the city of Santa Cruz is 5380 years old, according to radiocarbon dating. Other archaeological sites around the bay give indications of similar antiquity. I should note here that this is matter of perspective: naïve people insist that they have been here “forever.” For most intents and purposes, they have.

But “forever” lacks the precision that most archaeologists seek. Faced with constructing prehistoric chronologies, understanding largely forgotten lifeways, and tackling the grand themes of cultural evolution from an ever dwindling body of perishable sites, archaeologists are

rarely at perfect agreement with their colleagues in the field. More often than not excavations produce more questions and contentions than resolutions. But with few exceptions (Patch and Jones 1984), the last decade of research has produced a general consensus among archaeologists concerning the overall picture of land-use change in the Monterey Bay area by prehistoric gatherer-hunters (Breschini 1983; Dietz and Jackson 1981; Hildebrandt and Jones 1988).

Archaeologists recognize two basic patterns. During what is loosely called the “early period” before around 2000 B.P. (before the present), the area appears to have been occupied by small, mobile groups of people who followed seasonally available plant and animal resources. These they would gather and hunt on an opportunistic encounter basis, usually no more than a day’s walk from a residential base. Food was not stored, so people had to continually renew their supply. During the annual cycle, a number of residential bases in different resource “patches” would be occupied, over time repeatedly. These “villages” (I hesitate to use the term, because they imply fixed residence and location) would be situated ideally at the ecotone, or edge of several natural zones containing a wide variety of resources. From them people would venture out daily on foraging expeditions until either key resources were exhausted and/or seasonally important resources necessitated a move elsewhere. “Locations,” a second type of site from this period, are places where specific resources were collected and processed before being brought back to the residential base.

Between 2000 and 1500 B.P., there is a change in the archaeological record. Either another population entered the Monterey Bay area, displacing and/or assimilating the original inhabitants (Breschini 1983), or the *in situ* population may simply have intensified resource exploitation because of new technology (Dietz, Hildebrandt, and Jones 1988). This technological advantage is presumed to be in the form of food (primarily acorns) storage technology, which enabled them to accumulate and redistribute surpluses. This had the effect of ensuring a regular supply of year-round food. We may presume that this innovation either fueled a larger population than before (Chartkoff 1984), or was itself necessitated by the pre-existent population growth of highly successful foragers who were beginning to outstrip the available food supplies. Instead of seasonally moving to the resources, these “collectors” moved the resources to their residential bases, which were the greatest amount of acorns, were to be found (Dietz and Jackson 1981). An increase in large, residential sites is noted both on the coast as well as in the interior and these sites generally yield evidence of permanent or semi-permanent occupation, or at least the use of a wider range of resources. From them, work parties would travel sometimes great distances to obtain particular resources: shellfish, marine mammals, and migratory waterfowl from the coast; deer, elk, rabbit, and other terrestrial mammals from other parts of the interior, and trade items such as obsidian.

More recent researchers, while agreeing with this overall picture, suggest that it might be too rigid:

A more flexible subsistence-settlement system is more likely. For example, during a particular time of the year (perhaps during fall and early winter), semi-permanent villages could have been established on the interior where stored resources such as acorns were consumed. Using a collector oriented strategy, task specific groups could have been sent to the coast to harvest shellfish, creating the specialized processing sites evidenced in the archaeological record. At other times of the year, interior populations could have been dispersed in to smaller, more mobile groups, creating the foragers

residential bases we see along the outer coast of the Monterey Bay. (Hildebrandt and Mikkelsen 1993: 40).

This “fission-fusion” pattern was once widespread throughout the pre-agricultural world: groups coalesced and fragmented as need dictated. Flexibility has always been a key characteristic of hunter-gatherers, and pre-European Santa Cruz County was no exception. Whether by moving people to resources or by transporting resources to people, survival was enhanced by responding to locally changing conditions. The considerable topographic and climatic diversity of Santa Cruz County meant that there was great variability in the types and abundance of food resources, which translated into a yearly round of traditional subsistence activities.

Subsistence

Until the time of European contact, the native people around the Monterey Bay area made their living by harvesting the plants and animals provided by nature. Although they probably had some indirect knowledge about the agricultural practices carried out far to the southeast, they themselves relied exclusively on gathering and hunting “wild” foods(1).

Let us begin a hypothetical but typical seasonal round in the early spring, that difficult time of the year of lingering cold and damp weather and depleted supplies of stored food. The early greens—clover, poppy, Indian lettuce (sometimes referred to as miner’s lettuce), mule ear shoots, etc.—were the first to be harvested, some for cooking and others eaten raw (see Margolin 1978 for an evocative treatment). Shortly thereafter, bulbs as soap plant root, wild onion, and *Brodiaea* were pried out of the ground by women using fire-hardened doffing sticks and roasted.

As spring progressed into summer, a great number of wild seeds were winnowed in baskets (2) and either parched over coals and made in to seed cakes (what the Spaniards called *pinole*), or ground on milling slabs (*manos* and *mutates*) and boiled into a porridge (*atole*): chia, tarweed, sage, red maids, clover, and buckwheat, among many others (3). One method of seed preparation was described by a woman from Mission Santa Cruz:

They would gather the *pil* [red maids seed—Milliken] and they would go piling it up at a certain place where the ground was very clean and level...they would pile it roots up, they did it when the pile was not very dry and the little seed would all come out and fall down. (Harrington 1921-1938)

As they ripened, thimbleberries, blackberries, strawberries, elderberries, hazelnuts, toyon, and Manzanita berries would be gathered. Berries were eaten immediately, or dried for later use. As is the case in most gatherer-hunter societies, women gathered the plant foods, which, if acorns are included, provided the bulk of the diet.

Fall was when the most intensive food harvesting and preparing activities took place. Of paramount importance was the acorn harvest. Once leached of their tannins and ground into meal, the acorns of coast and interior live oaks and tanbark oak provided a predictable and stable source of high quality food. Specific oak groves were probably “owned” (4) by individual lineages, who took acorns from them year after year. All members of the family took part in the harvest. Trees were stuck by sticks to cause the acorns to fall, gathered up into burden baskets and carried home, where they were placed in large wicker storage granaries until they were used. Over the year, women spent a good deal of time grinding the acorns with stone mortars and pestles, leaching the flour with water to remove the tannic acids, and either cooking the

meal into a mush or baking it as a form of bread. It is fairly safe to say that the native people of Santa Cruz ate some form of acorns every day, unless the crops failed (5), became spoiled, or ran out in late winter or early spring.

Throughout the year, men hunted a variety of large and small animals. Black-tailed deer, tule elk, and marine mammals were hunted by men using chert or obsidian tipped arrows and sinew-backed bows. Small animals such as brush rabbits, ground squirrels, and quail were trapped or snared, and formed an important part of the diet. On the coast, men fished with nets or with lines and mussel or abalone shell hooks. Pedro Fages, who visited the Monterey Bay area in 1770 and again in 1772, noted men fishing near Point Año Nuevo:

They are very clever at going out to fish embarked on rafts of reeds, and they succeed, during good weather, in getting their provisions from the sea, especially since the land also provides them with an abundance of seeds and fruit. (Fages 1937: 70)

Also available throughout the year were shellfish: as many as eighty-two species have been recorded in Elkhorn Slough alone (MacGinitie 1935). The more important species to the native inhabitants were California mussels, abalones, chitons, barnacles, limpets, and turban snails from the rocky shores; bay mussels, moon snails, and various clams, cockles, and oysters from sandy beaches and estuarian mudflats.

Winter brought migratory waterfowl to the central coast area. Snow geese, ducks, grebes, as well as resident shore birds were ensnared in nets and roasted.

What I have noted above is by no means a complete inventory of the types of foods and food gathering activities available to the native peoples. Insects and grubs, reptiles, rodents, and mushrooms were all eaten regularly. But as in all other known societies, certain potentially edible species were avoided. At Mission San Carlos de Borromeo in Carmel it was:

reported that the people ate rats, squirrels, moles, shell-fish, and all living things except frogs, toads, owls, which are the only animals of which they entertain fear. (Heizer 1974:50) (6).

Material Culture

The dress and body ornamentation of the local people were similar to those across central California. Men pierced their ears and nasal septums, and filled the holes with pieces of bone, wood, or stone. Their hair was worn long, perhaps tied up in a net made of twisted milkweed fibers. They generally went naked, although Fages noted pointedly that:

a few men cover themselves with a small cloak of rabbit or hare skin, which does not fall below the waist. (Fages 1937:66)

Women tattooed their chins and commonly wore skirts of shredded fibers or deer skin:

The women wore a short apron of red and white cords twisted and worked as closely as possible, which extends to the knee. Others use a green and white tule interwoven, and complete their outfit with a deerskin half or entirely tanned. (ibid.)

During cold weather, rabbit skin or deerskin capes were worn. Both men and women wore ornaments and beads made from abalone, clams, and purple olive snails (*Olivella*).

Houses were dome-shaped or conical structures, approximately two meters in diameter, made from wickerwork of bent poles and thatched with bundles of tule (7) or grass. They would "house" perhaps four-to-six people, but I should note here that these structures functioned much more as storage areas and temporary shelters than as living spaces. Specialized menstrual huts were also noted by historical observers (Broadbent 1972). During their menses, women secluded themselves, observed prohibitions against eating certain foods, such as meat,

fish, and cold water, and were forbidden to touch their bodies (Margolin 1978:75). *Temescal*s, or earth-covered, semi- subterranean sweat houses for men were also noted in the larger villages of the Monterey area. (Broadbent 1972)

Religion and World View

Very little is known about the religious practices and world view of the native people of Santa Cruz. The information we do have was either filtered through the early, often hostile observations of early Europeans or gleaned from bits of fragmentary knowledge in this century. Throughout central California, dancing and its associated ritual were “religious” in scope, and recognized as such by European observers:

They worship the devils offering them seeds and they fast and dance in their honor to placate them. (Catalá and Viader [1814] 1976, in Milliken *et al.* 1993:26)

Dances were more than acts of worship to some “gods,” but served to uphold, preserve, and renew the world. Belief in supernatural (8) beings and powers was universal, and influenced all aspects of daily life. People maintained their well-being by respectful and proper behavior, which ensured a harmonious relationship with the spirit world. Should sickness or other misfortune arise, a shaman might be consulted to put things aright:

Some gets the reputation of being a healer (9); a sick person calls him and permits him to suck the ailing part. Soon the healer brings forth a stone which he has hidden in his mouth, and says: ‘Look, this stone was within you.’ ...Others sing and dance before the sick person, and are paid for this. Some old women claim that they are the ones who cause the fruit and seeds to grow, and for this they receive gifts. (Heizer 1974:47. Cited in Dietz, Hildebrandt, and Jones 1988:79)

The death of a loved one was dealt with in a ritually prescribed manner, as was described in 1814 by Father Arroyo de la Cuesta at Mission San Juan Bautista:

In their pagan days the deceased were buried by their relatives in a deep hole after their spine had been broken and their bodies doubled up like a ball. As soon as a pagan died the wailing began with a most dismal chant. This was continued for the succeeding two nights. All the mourners were bedaubed. The nearest relatives would cut their hair with a sharp stone or a burning stick. They divested themselves of every kind of adornment about the neck, ears and nose and burned the wearing apparel of the deceased and scattered the ashes some distance from the village. At times, the survivors would invite their friends and present with shells those who had wailed for the deceased who then agreed to wail for the person a third time. (Arroyo de la Cuesta [1814] 1976:99, cited in Milliken *et al.* 1993:27)

Cremation of the dead was also noted at Mission Santa Cruz, but may have been restricted to members of wealthy families.

Languages

No native speakers of the languages spoken locally have survived. Documentation of the languages that were once spoken is scant, and their interpretation is contradictory. Father Arroyo de la Cuesta, who was at Mission San Juan Bautista from 1880 to 1832, learned the *Mutsun* dialect spoken around Monterey and compiled a lexicon of it. In his travels to other missions, he recognized the similarity of the *Mutsun* dialect to others spoken in west central California. In 1821, he wrote from Mission Dolores in San Francisco:

I marveled to hear at this place numbers like those of the *Mutsun* of San Juan Bautista and I noted that the same fundamental language exists at San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Clara, San Juan

Bautista, San Carlos, Soledad, as far as *Chalones* at this last. But it is so varied at each mission that it seems to be a distinct idiom at each. In reality this is not true, as anyone may see, and observe. This language embraces an area of one hundred and twenty miles or one hundred and thirty five miles from north to south. (Arroyo de la Cuesta: 1821-1837, cited in Milliken *et al.* 1993:22)

The language spoken in the region noted by de la Cuesta was termed *Costanoan* in the 19th century, a term derived from the Spanish *Costeño*, or coast dweller, and it was identified with the Penutian language group. In his *Handbook of the Indians of California*, Alfred Kroeber proposed seven distinct Costanoan dialect groups, one for each of the Franciscan missions established in Costanoan territory (Kroeber 1925:463). The name Costanoan was used to refer to both the language and its speakers up until the 1970s, when native people replaced it with *Ohlone* (Galvan 1968), the name of a tribal area on the San Mateo County coast (see *Oljon*, on Map)(10).

De la Cuesta's observations suggest that traditional scholars of contact period California have overestimated differences in the speech of the native peoples of the central coast. Levy (1987:485) wrote that they were "separate languages (not dialects) as different from one another as Spanish is from French." But de la Cuesta warned that:

Though they appear to speak different languages this is only accidentally true; that is, some of the words are different only because of the manner of pronunciation, in some cases rough, in others agreeable, sweet, and strong. Hence it is that Indians living in a circumference of thirty or forty leagues [eighty to one hundred miles] understand one another. (Arroyo de la Cuesta [1814] 1976:20-21, cited in Milliken *et al.* 1993:23)

If de la Cuesta was correct, then people living from Point Piños to Point Año Nuevo would have had little difficulty understanding one another.

Complicating the issue of language affiliation is the tradition in California anthropology of identifying socio-political boundaries with dialect areas: people speaking the same language are thought of as living in the same tribe. Influential maps of California boundaries such as in Kroeber's (1925) *Handbook of the Indians of California* and the Smithsonian Institution's *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8 (1978) show hypothesized boundaries of the different Costanoan languages, but:

There is no factual basis for Costanoan language area boundaries as mapped by either Kroeber or Levy. Surviving vocabularies of the closely related Costanoan language, upon which those languages are based, do suggest strong differences between a northern group of dialects around San Francisco Bay and a southern group of dialects on the south side of Monterey Bay up to San Juan Bautista. However, the published Costanoan language area is not based upon knowledge of the specific home village areas of the individuals who provided the various vocabularies. Thus, there is no basis for any published language boundary locations. (Milliken *et al.* 1993:23)

Our image, then, of native life in California, particularly in the so-called "Mission Belt" where indigenous societies were quickly transformed and drastically reduced, has been influenced, perhaps excessively, by linguistic models. If Randal Milliken (11) is correct, our ideas of where people actually lived and what they called themselves, have been misled by the maps that such research has produced.

Political Geography and Organization

The people in west-central California were organized into a number of groups which thought of themselves as apart from their neighbors, whom they considered to be foreigners. These village-based communities apparently recognized territorial boundaries, (12) and collectively partook of ceremonials and group harvests. Given the lack of direct information in the mission records regarding tribal boundaries, it is very difficult to state the territorial size of the individual tribes (13) in the Santa Cruz area. Referring to the San Felipe Sink area near Gilroy, Milliken states that:

One problem that was encountered in the attempt to understand the local political geography was the lack of a standard yardstick for predicting tribal boundaries in the area. The vicinity seems to have been a transition zone between the San Francisco Peninsula to the northwest, where tribal territories were normally about 8-10 miles in diameter, and the Monterey Peninsula-Salinas Valley region to the south, where tribal territories seem to have been larger, 10-14 miles in diameter. (Milliken *et al.* 1993:29)

As can be seen from Milliken's map (with this article), the Santa Cruz area seems also to fall within the transition zone—tribal areas north of present-day Santa Cruz appear somewhat smaller than those to the south. This map is a product of Milliken's extensive research into records kept by the Spanish-period Franciscan missionaries. Baptismal registers recorded the names and home villages (and/or tribes) of most native converts, and death and marriage registers often recorded other pertinent information about marriage relations and kinship. These data are at best incomplete: Milliken extrapolated tribal boundaries indirectly by looking at patterns of inter-marriage and dates of baptism (the earlier the dates, the closer to the mission). To further complicate the picture, at Mission Santa Cruz,

...the Franciscans identified people by village of origin only, leaving doubt as to whether the area was broken into a landscape of independent villages or whether, on the other hand, the village named was merely the largest town of a multi-village tribe. (*ibid.*)

Another problem lay in the fact that missionaries at Santa Clara, San Juan Bautista, and Santa Cruz had overlapping spheres of influence, but recorded tribal homelands differently. Even within individual registers, different spellings were sometimes used. Furthermore, we cannot assume that the size of the mission Indian population from a given area was equivalent to the size of their respective territories. Finally, we cannot know if, or to what degree, the Spaniards, coming from centuries of nation-state consciousness, exaggerated the importance of indigenous "states" and their boundaries on the map are, at best, reasonable estimates.

Population estimates from mission records suggest a regional population density of 2.5 persons per square mile, but actual pre-contact populations must have been higher, and the coastal population density probably higher still. Each community would then have had an approximate population of between 100 to over 300 people.

In the area encompassed by Santa Cruz County were six distinct groups. Milliken (*ibid.*:47) places them all close to Mission Santa Cruz on the basis of baptismal dates and on marriage ties with each other and more distant groups. From the coastal Davenport area were the *Cotoni* people, sometimes referred to by missionaries as *Santiago*; the *Uypi* (aka *San Daniel*) lived in the area around Santa Cruz; the *Achistaca* or *Partacsi*, from the upper San Lorenzo River area, alias *San Dionisio*; the *Sayante*, from the Sayante Creek area (aka *San Juan Capistrano*); the *Chalotaca*, sometimes referred to as *Jesus*, from the high valleys of the Santa Cruz

mountains around Loma Prieta; the *Aptos* or *Cajastac* (14), alias *San Lucas*, lived in the area from roughly between Aptos Creek and Corralitos.

At the southern edge of the county, by the mouth of the Pájaro River, lived the *Tiuvta* people, whose territory extended at least to Elkhorn Slough. The *Tiuvta* and their neighbors to the south, the *Locuyusta* people of Castroville and Salinas, were sometimes both referred to as *Calendaruc*, meaning “bay shore houses” (cf. Milliken, in Dietz, Hildebrandt, and Jones 1988:64-70). Neighbors to the east included the *Chitactac* and *Uñijaimas* people (15) in southern Santa Clara County to the Pájaro River; the *Matalan* people of the Guadalupe and Alamitos Creek drainages around New Almadén; and the *Partacsi* community in the Los Gatos area. To the north lived the *Quiroste*, who lived along the coast adjacent to Point Año Nuevo, and the *Olpen*, in the Monte Bello Ridge area above Cupertino.

There is conflicting information about the nature of political authority in the Monterey Bay area. This is an area in which the observations of early Europeans were often particularly biased: it was inconceivable that societies could exist without identified “rulers,” who were called *capitanes* by the Spaniards (16). Thus, *capitane Sokel* (17) and his wife were among the first to be baptized at Mission Santa Cruz (Milliken, personal communication). Here is a typical perspective:

The prominent Indians are the captains or kings. There is one for each tribe. They command obedience and respect during their lifetime. This office is hereditary, or, in default of an heir of direct descent, it goes to the nearest relative...The entire tribe rendered service to him in the days when they were pagans, as well as now that they are Christians. (Heizer 1974:48)

Yet, Father Arroyo de la Cuesta at Mission San Juan Bautista wrote that:

In their pagan state when an individual was guilty of some affront the injured party took justice into his own hands. Sometimes he enlisted his relatives to aid in punishing the malefactor. They neither had nor recognized any captain or superior. (Arroyo de la Cuesta [1814] 1976:115)

Regional Interaction

It what ways did these groups interact? Researchers of California Indian societies have long commented on the territoriality of native people remarking, for example, how such and such a person refused to go past a certain landmark which marked a boundary. It may be that the majority of the people in the Monterey Bay area spent most of the year inside their respective community homelands. But they crossed into neighboring areas to participate in rituals, to trade with their neighbors, and to gather specific resources. Milliken notes that:

there is evidence in various places in California for free movement by groups into the territories of their neighbors for specific gathering purposes. Father Serra of Mission San Carlos Borromeo noted that hundreds of people from interior tribes came to the beach at Carmel in the summer of 1775 to gather spawning fish. Tribes of the San Felipe Sink may have had institutionalized access to beach resources greater than the amount of access they would have had merely through specific family relationships with *Calendaruc* or *Aptos* people to the west. (Milliken *et al.* 1993:27)

Neighbors also carried out feuds. In contrast to the contemporary image of California Indians as being gentle and peaceful, Fages, the soldier, wrote in 1775 (18):

They are warlike, as are Indians everywhere else... The land provides them with an abundance of seeds and fruits...although the harvesting of them and their enjoyment is disputed with bow and arrow

among these natives and their neighbors, who live almost constantly at war with one another. (Pages 1937:69-70)

Disputes may have been over the illicit harvesting of traditionally owned resources, but also over the abduction of women. Wife stealing was one of the more commonly documented reasons for feuding. Neighboring tribes were intermarried, but it is difficult to know to what degree. According to Milliken (1983, 1987), on the San Francisco Peninsula and in the Carmel Valley, ten to twenty percent of the adults living in a given village were born in neighboring villages or tribes. In-marrying partners probably came from neighboring or adjacent groups no more than ten miles from their border. Given Milliken's figures, which included both males and females, post-marital residence seems to have been ambilocal, that is, the couple might end up living with either—or both, through time—the family of the man or the woman. According to some mission records, the marriage of one man to two or more women was quite common among the *Calendaruc* people (Dietz *et al.* 1988:79). Other reports indicate that polygyny was restricted to headmen, and otherwise rare (Broadbent 1972). Among the *Rumisen* of Monterey, the marriage of a man to sisters was reported (*ibid.*). Despite the incidence of feuding, these ties of marriage and residence would have created a “web” of ties which facilitated movement across boundaries for harvests, ceremonials, and trade with neighboring relatives. Conversely, the *lack* of such ties may be seen as evidence of particularly hostile relations between groups:

The relative paucity of intermarriage or other ties between Santa Cruz mission converts and those from *Calendaruc* at either Carmel or San Juan Bautista suggests that there may have been especially heavy feuding between the *Tiuvta* and *Aptos* people at the contact period. (Milliken, in Dietz *et al.* 1988:76)

People regularly met with their neighbors to trade, dance, and meet eligible marriage partners on one hand, and to steal and feud on the other. These actions probably occurred at the extended family level, without the involvement of other, unrelated (19) families.

What emerges is a complex, shifting mosaic of human life—of movement and exchange that, I believe, truly defies our ability to describe it. For centuries, people took advantage of the abundance that was here by doing whatever they needed to do to survive. They harvested the land and burned it. They built villages, and abandoned them, sometimes forever. They created territories that seem to have been both rigid and permeable. They spoke and sang with words and meanings that we have never heard, about a world which has almost completely vanished. Fragments of that world remain. Some of the native animals and plants may be seen today where they have not been scraped off the earth by “development.” The bones of the people still rest in some undisturbed place, accompanied by objects familiar to them. But most important, there are living descendants, in whom reside memories—tattered, perhaps, and faded, but there. With their grace, it is to them that we must now turn.

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Map

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Endnotes

1. What is "wild" depends on perspective: Europeans saw "wild" people existing in the "wilderness" wherever they went in the Americas. Needless to say, this is a one-sided picture. Moreover, native peoples in California employed a variety of land/resource management techniques, especially using fire, which enhanced plant and animal growth. It appears, then, that Santa Cruz County has not truly been wild since before the advent of these practices, which were probably thousands of years old at the time of European contact.
2. The local inhabitants shared with other native Californians a very sophisticated basketry technology. Beautifully made baskets were used for storage, transporting goods, carrying babies, winnowing and parching seeds. Baskets served as hoppers for grinding acorns; others were so tightly coiled that *atole* could be boiled by immersing red hot rocks from the fire into them. Only twenty to thirty "Ohlone" baskets have survived. One is in a collection at the Santa Cruz City Museum of Natural History. It is illustrated in a poster for Santa Cruz Archaeological Society, and is available through the museum.
3. Seed production was enhanced by annual burning off of the land, which not only stimulated the growth of desirable plant species, but resulted in the open "parklands" noted by early travelers. After decades of severe forest fires, the

managers of our public lands are once again learning the benefits of periodic burnings.

4. Ownership here means usufruct: the use of the fruits of the land. There was no concept of ownership in the European sense of having exclusive title to the land itself.
5. Four species of oaks in the Santa Cruz area were sought after for their acorns: the coast and interior live oaks, tanbark oaks, and, more rarely, black oaks. In the event of low acorn yields, California buckeye could be used as a substitute, although it was even more difficult and time consuming to prepare than acorns, and less desirable to eat.
6. This “fear” may in fact be reverence for animal beings who figured in local creation myths.
7. Tule or bulrushes (*Scirpus californicus*) had many uses: it was woven into clothing and mats, tied into tight bundles and used in rafts or balsas; young shoots were eaten. Once very common throughout Central California, local residents may now see it along the banks of the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz, and in the margins of the lakes and reservoirs in the county. The museum at Coyote Hills Regional Park near Fremont has on display an example of a tule boat or “balsa.”
8. We westerners make the distinction between natural and supernatural worlds, between the sacred and profane. This dualism is rare in traditional societies and certainly absent among the pre-contact people of the Monterey Bay area.
9. We don’t know the process by which persons, both male and female, became shamans.
10. Scholars of California anthropology have long conflated languages, the people who spoke them, and their culture. One, noting a change in the local archaeological record, has suggested that it represents the entry of “proto-Costanoan speakers” into the area who replaced or assimilated the Hokan speakers (Breschini 1983). (The Hokan language group was represented in part by the Pomo north of San Francisco Bay and the Esselen, Salinan, and Chumash south of Monterey.) Others (Dietz and Jackson 1981, Dietz, Hildebrandt, and Jones 1988, Milliken *et al.* 1993, among others) have argued persuasively that there is no necessary correlation between them.
11. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Milliken for most of the following discussion on political organization and ethnohistory. Without his extensive research, particularly of the written archives left by the Franciscan missionaries, we would have very little to say about the social and political geography of native Santa Cruz County, let alone much of central California.
12. With exceptions. Milliken (personal communication) believes the Esselen of the Santa Lucia Mountains were quite mobile, and without clearly fixed territorial boundaries.
13. Kroeber (1932) advanced the term “tribelet” as the basic autonomous political unit in California. Each tribelet was a homogeneous unit in terms of language, culture, shared identity, and land ownership, and consisted of people living in one or more principal villages and secondary locations within their territory. Milliken (1993:24), however, notes that these groups are clearly “tribes,” that is, they are multi-family

political units with territorial autonomy and with some mechanism(s) of tribal integration. To my mind, however, the apparent movement of people between these polities created a more fluid political landscape in the pre-contact Monterey Bay area than can be comprehended by either of these terms. Until I am convinced otherwise, or another configuration seems more plausible, I shall refer to the political units as “village communities.”

14. The *Cajastac* were possibly a sub-group of the *Aptos*. *Cajastac* may have been a village of the *Aptos* group, located somewhere north of the Pájaro River, between Aromas and Corralitos. (cf. Milliken *et al.* 1993:47 and 49). All told, the *Aptos* probably numbered fewer than 100 people. (Milliken, in Dietz, *et al.* 1988:80).
15. Milliken is ambivalent as to whether the *Uñijiamas* people and the *Pitac* people were the same. In his most recent work (1993), he includes two alternative maps, one showing the *Pitac* joined with the *Uñijiamas*, the other showing the *Pitac* joined with the *Chitactac* to the north. For this paper, I have arbitrarily chosen the former.
16. Identifying leaders of indigenous peoples was widespread among the colonial powers. In their minds, it conferred legitimacy to agreements and treaties made between them and the anointed “leader,” regardless of whether his (invariably males were designated) leadership was recognized by the rest of the people.
17. From which the name Soquel is derived. Given his place in the roster of baptisms, however, it seems likely that he came from a village closer to the mission at Santa Cruz.
18. It should be remembered that Fages was writing from memory of his experiences in *Alta California*, where he travelled to fortify the missions against expected Indian aggression. As a soldier, he may have been prone to exaggerate his foe; as a Spaniard, he may have mistaken small-scale feuding between individual families for “war.”
19. By “unrelated,” I don’t mean that there were no marriage ties between individual families within a core area; in fact, marriage within the village appears to be the most common pattern. But there is no evidence of corporate descent groups claiming membership through known genealogical links to a common ancestor.