



A detail from a recently discovered federal map of California prepared in 1913 by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. As the map indicates, the BIA recorded Indian *rancherías* throughout the state and attempted to count native populations at each settlement. Verona was described as having thirty residents. The map survives as a demographic document of the early twentieth-century. *Courtesy of the authors.*

vast amounts of artifacts and other key evidence of the socio-cultural achievements of the ancestral Muwekma. Legal regulation of the disposition and treatment of these sites did not exist before 1970. Archaeologists began to realize that some sort of protection of the sites, human remains, and artifacts was necessary, at least "in the interests of science."

Many Bay Area university archaeologists, like academic anthropologists, had accepted Kroeber's original pronouncement that the Costanoans were extinct. As a consequence, both academic and non-university-based researchers were relieved of any sense of responsibility to conduct their field work with an eye towards the views of the descendants, since presumably none existed. Even in other areas of the United States where descendants of ancient indigenous civilizations are clearly in evidence, archaeological research has historically discounted the notion of accountability to those

people whose ancestors archaeologists unearth. Bay Area archaeologists have been conducting excavations since the late nineteenth century, especially in the large earthwork mounds built along the bay by the ancestral Muwekma.<sup>18</sup> Archaeological research and its results and conclusions have remained within the confines of the academies, while the bones of the Muwekma ancestors, with their elaborate ornaments, have been analyzed, catalogued, and stored on the premises of major Bay Area universities.

As far as the descendants are and have always been concerned, one of the most important and deep-seated aspects of their identity is their overriding spiritual concern for their ancestors, the remains of whom they know lie buried beneath the soil and in mounds throughout their ancient homeland. The Ohlone belief system carries with it the responsibility for stewarding ancestral sites and safeguarding the peace of the ancestral dead. As the pace of development quickened in the Bay Area, the descendants became increasingly disturbed at the lack of sensitivity toward their ancestral dead on the part of the archaeological community. Archaeologists supported the passage of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in 1970, which classified archaeological sites as "non-renewable resources," setting up cultural resource management procedures for mitigating the impact of development upon these "resources."<sup>19</sup> Although CEQA provided an umbrella of protection for the sites under archaeologists' supervision, the descendants were, once again, left out of the process of decision-making over the disposition of their ancestors' remains.

Lacking any legislative process establishing a relationship between modern, living descendants and ancestral sites, the California state legislature created a statewide Native American Heritage Commission in 1976. The commission was charged with the responsibility of developing a "sacred lands file," based upon the traditional areas used by California Indians for spiritual purposes during pre-contact and historic times. Even with the establishment of the commission, Native Americans were still disenfranchised with respect to the "normative" archaeological research process, as well as the emerging cultural resource management (CRM) process.

By the mid-1970s, the increasing alarm of the Muwekma families concerning the archaeological community's lack of sensitivity had dovetailed with



a storm of Native American activism. Nationwide, the aftermath of the Alcatraz Island and BIA occupations (in 1969 and 1972, respectively), and the Wounded Knee affair (1973), unleashed the energies of both a young Native American leadership, as well as the traditional elders. Indians called out to America's conscience concerning the continued devastation of individual Indians, their families, tribes, religion, land, and cemeteries. Thousands of dispossessed Indians, many of whom had served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam, had been relocated to west-coast states by the federal government. Among these relocated Indians, many became members of the activist American Indian Movement (AIM).

In the early 1970s, another Native American organization, the Northwest Indian Cemetery Protection Association, emerged, specifically concerned with the issue of Indian cemeteries. California had possessed the largest aboriginal population of any area north of the valley of Mexico before Europeans arrived, and consequently, pre-contact cemeteries abound in the state.<sup>20</sup> All over California, Native Americans had become aware of the uncovering of human remains and the bulldozing of ancestral sites. Concerned relocated people joined forces with some of the California Indian descendants to make their presence known with respect to this issue.

Controversies caused by the threatened excavation of and construction upon two regionally known burial sites—Lee Road in Watsonville (1976) and the nationally known case at the Holiday Inn site in downtown San Jose (1977)—temporarily brought together an alliance between concerned archaeologists and activist Native Americans, both of whom were anxious to stop the wanton destruction of Native American human remains. Although the Holiday Inn site was not “saved” in the end, the efforts of those involved in the alliance produced two of the most important recent studies concerning Ohlone history and heritage. The publication of *Archaeological Excavations at Ca-SCL-128: The Holiday Inn Site* (1978) by Joseph Winter<sup>21</sup> is one of the best examples of contract archaeology under the worst of conditions. The other study, *Tamien: 6000 Years In An American City* (1978), also by Winter,<sup>22</sup> provides perhaps the best non-stereotypical and sensitive treatment that has been written about the lives of the Ohlone Indians and the historical sequence of ethnic populations who have ultimately come to live on Ohlone ancestral lands. Only one

hundred copies of this volume were printed and distributed throughout the Bay Area. Like Joseph Winter, other professional archaeologists have been sympathetic and open to the involvement of representatives from the Ohlone community. As early as 1971, individual Bay Area archaeologists contacted Ohlone people, such as Philip Galvan, to include them as part of a Bay-Area-wide archaeological program plan.<sup>23</sup>

In the aftermath of the incidents surrounding the Holiday Inn site, Native Americans pressed for more involvement in and presence at archaeological sites in the Bay Area. Through time, an informal working arrangement emerged between the archaeological and Indian communities. Under some circumstances, when Native American human remains were discovered during construction or excavation, certain identified Indian representatives were contacted to assuage the doubts of the Indian community. However, many of these Indian community representatives were not California Indians. Complicating matters further, many of the out-of-state Indians living in the Bay Area had read and believed the same statements about the “extinct” Ohlone as had the general public.

This situation changed in 1982, when the state legislature enacted SB 297, which protects Native American human burials and skeletal remains from vandalism and inadvertent destruction and provides a regular means by which Native American descendants can make known their concerns regarding the need for sensitive treatment and disposition of Native American burials, skeletal remains, and items associated with Native American burials.<sup>24</sup> The bill also empowers the Native American Heritage Commission to identify and contact those persons it believes to be the most likely descendants (MLDs) of the deceased Native Americans who are uncovered on lands being developed in the state of California. Under the terms of the bill, these most likely descendants have “twenty four hours to make recommendations to the owner, or representative [of the land], for the treatment or disposition, with proper dignity, of the remains and grave goods.”<sup>25</sup> These provisions resulted in the creation of a list of most likely descendants for particular regions in the state.

Meanwhile, the business of doing archaeology had become big business. The whole new archaeological trade of cultural resource management came into being in the mid- and late-1970s, stimulated by previously unheard-of lucrative contracts offered



Dolores Sanchez (left), her daughter Rosemary Cambra (right), and young David Leventhal, photographed in 1987, during a field project in Sunol Regional Wilderness. The photograph was taken at Geary Ranch, near the site of Sunol Rancheria, the birthplace of Dolores Sanchez. *Photograph by Alan Leventhal.*



Dolores Marine Galvan, eldest daughter of Alvelina and Rafael Marine. Mrs. Galvan handled the recording of her children and her three (deceased) sisters' children on the 1928–1933 California Jurisdictional Act/Census Application forms. Her younger sister Ramona is shown at the beginning of this article. *Courtesy H. Alvarez and D. Galvan Lameira.*

by public and private developers for the management and “mitigation” of archaeologically sensitive sites. These contracts, however, demanded very little in the way of scientific and socio-cultural analysis that could contribute to broad-based understanding of the pre-contact indigenous peoples of the Bay Area. Instead, the interpretive studies published by the CRM archaeologists tended to treat the analytic concepts and conclusions of early anthropologists, such as Kroeber, as icons that need not be re-examined critically in the light of new evidence and information. Such treatment of the ancestral remains did nothing to advance the reconstruction of how the ancestral Muwekma had lived for the scientific community or the general public, much less the descendants.<sup>26</sup>

Between 1978 and 1982, the Muwekma families sought out allies within the archaeological and anthropological communities who could help the descendants educate themselves about proper archaeological methods and the analytic frameworks of these disciplines. Among other goals, the families sought to learn techniques and methods for tracing lineage and descent in genealogical records. This effort has served them well. Having educated themselves to meet the challenge of changing the practices involved in the archaeological excavation of their ancestors, the descendants organized Ohlone Families Consulting Services (OFCS), their own Native American cultural resource consulting firm, in 1984. This fledgling organization proceeded



to establish a wide range of positive, mutually respectful relationships with the city of San Jose, Santa Clara County, state agencies such as Caltrans, and private developers. As OFCS amassed an impressive résumé of experience in CRM, the firm was awarded an increasing number of consulting contracts. OFCS was also recognized by the Department of the Interior in 1987 as a Native American-owned and managed business enterprise (a "Buy Indian" firm), and this recognition established one of the Muwekma's first footholds on the ladder to federal acknowledgement.

Unfortunately, the reaction of part of the archaeological community to OFCS and the Muwekma tribal members, within some CRM firms and universities, amounted to outright hostility. Some archaeologists tried to discredit the descendants and imputed that their relationship to the ancestral sites and remains was contrived, or that the descendants were not even Native Americans. Such a reaction showed the descendants all too clearly that their intention to transform Bay Area archaeology by institutionalizing their role as MLDs, by demanding respect for and control over their ancestors, and by addressing the issue of final disposition of the remains, represented a serious threat to the established and exclusive procedures of some professional archaeologists. With modest operating budgets in comparison to the contracts secured by CRM firms, OFCS salvaged and reburied the remains uncovered at the sites they monitored, and published final reports on their work that were detailed and professional in their scope.<sup>27</sup>

In 1981, the descendants organized the Muwekma Indian Cultural Association (MICA), a non-profit organization focused on the educational and housing needs of the Ohlone, as well as the greater Native American community. Recognizing the need to fully document their ancestry, MICA and its professional allies in the archaeological community began a project to trace the genealogies of the descendants to the names of indigenous people baptized at Mission San Jose, and to use the mission records to establish the location of *rancherías*, ancestral villages, and lands. Such a project proved the legitimacy of the descendants, despite the attacks of certain archaeologists, and the Ohlones began seriously considering tribal recognition, as they realized the implications of documenting their ancestry for the acknowledgement process. MICA also set out to gather and collate the dispersed written records and descriptions of indigenous Bay

Area societies and cultures at the time of contact, and to begin the lengthy and complex process of ascertaining what examples of ancestral material culture, from excavations and from the collections of early explorers, exist in museums and university collections. As this work proceeded, the descendants fortified their relationships with interested and sympathetic members of the academic community, and they were permitted access, for the first time, to the storerooms and basements that house the archaeological and ethnographic collections.

The descendants were disturbed to see the bones of their ancestors in drawers, plastic bags, and boxes, and to see that much of the material had not been cataloged, analyzed, or described. They realized that, in many cases, these collections were simply assemblages of unearthened materials that had not been touched since the day they had been excavated. The descendants wondered whether many of the remains in these collections might be reburied without any loss to scientific research. This question suddenly became another challenge to archaeological research, as the Muwekma brought up the issues of responsibility and scientific accountability in archaeology. They asked what benefit the archaeological research conducted by major universities had brought to the general public regarding information about the lifeways and cultural achievements of the indigenous peoples who had lived in the Bay Area for the past ten thousand years. They asked archaeologists to prove that the excavation of particular sites would improve the base of knowledge about their ancestors, and insisted that, if such proof could not be furnished, the remains be returned to the descendants for reburial. The descendants asked to become an integral part of the decision-making process concerning the unearthing of remains, and they demanded that the special relationship between themselves and their ancestors become the pivot guiding archaeological research in the Bay Area.

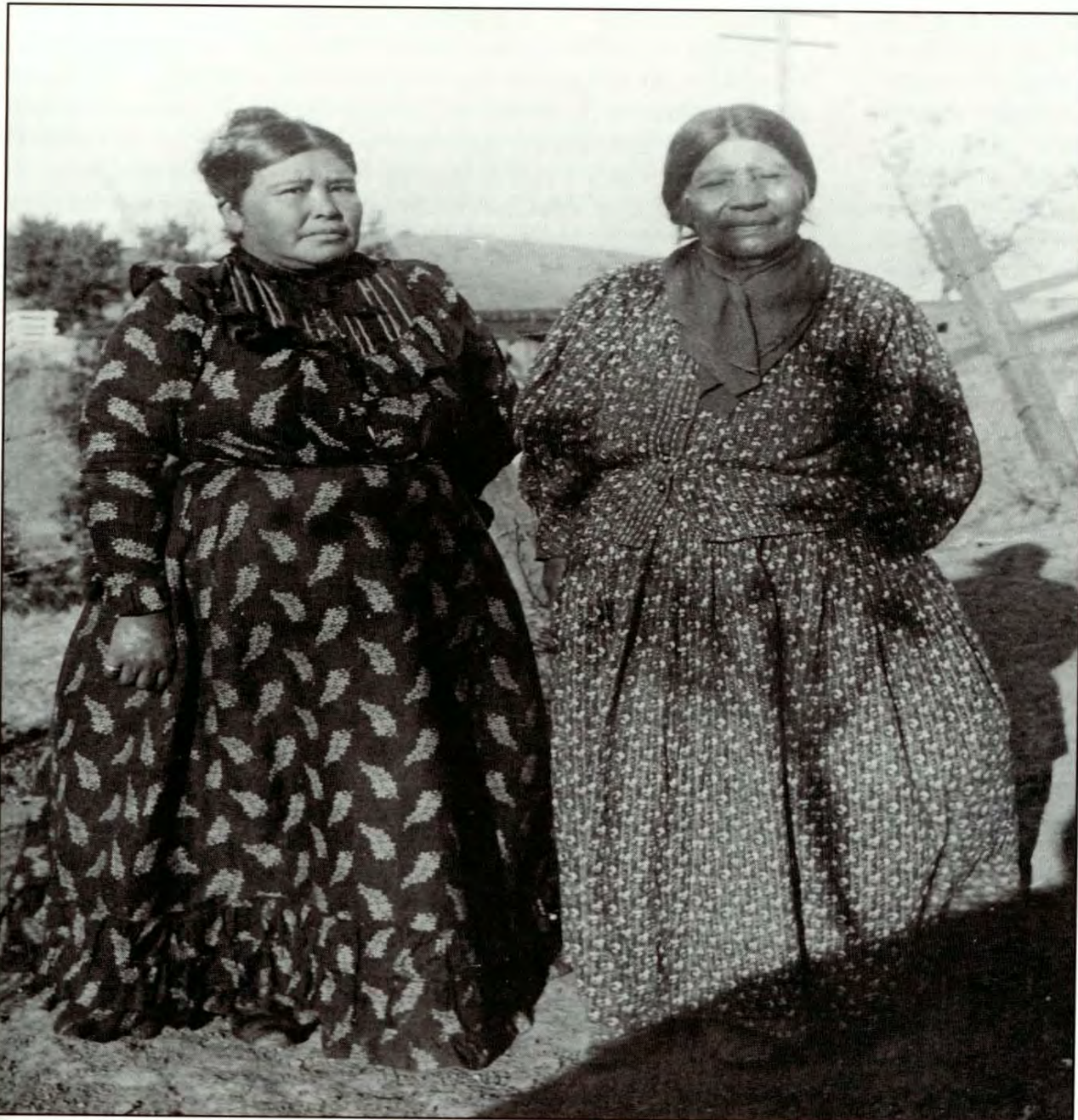
These new ideas, and the challenges they posed, reached another turning point between 1989 and 1990, when the Muwekma tribe requested that the archaeological collection at Stanford University be inspected, and that all of the artifacts and skeletal remains deemed extraneous for the purposes of scientific research by professional archaeologists be reburied. In 1990, Stanford agreed to this proposal, and during that year transferred much of its collection to the descendants, who reburied the remains in 1991.<sup>28</sup> The implications of these events



for collections throughout the country have by no means been lost on archaeologists, museum curators, and others, many of whom have organized themselves to oppose vehemently any such transfers to Indian tribes or accessions to tribal sovereignty. For the Muwekma, who in 1989 revitalized their tribal organization as the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe,<sup>29</sup> the Stanford reburial issue was the final hinge upon which turned the years of slowly coming to terms with their identity and the need to assume a civic role within the wider community.

With the recent discovery of 125 ancestral Ohlone remains at the Tamien Station site in San Jose, Caltrans archaeologists and Muwekma tribal members

worked cooperatively side-by-side to “mitigate” the negative impact that construction of the station could have upon this important pre-contact site. This joint project allowed the Muwekma to participate in the overall archaeological process and analysis of their ancestral heritage, from the commencement of the field work to the reburial of their ancestral dead and the completion of the final report. Therefore, the final archaeological report on the Tamien Station Site represents a culmination of the Muwekma emergence into the contemporary period, because it embodies the mutual partnership between a public agency and OFCS, the cultural resource arm of the Muwekma tribe.



Alisal Rancheria elders É-non-nat-too-yá (Paula) (right) and probably her daughter Maria Reyes, photographed in Pleasanton by C.H. Merriam in 1905. *Authors' collection.*



Realizing that the original Ohlone ethnohistory section of the final report spanned only the years from 1769 to 1860, and that the tribe's contribution to this would be reduced to a footnote in the acknowledgements, the Muwekmas decided to document a post-1860 account for inclusion in the final report. This final report, in cooperation with Caltrans, demonstrates how the entry of the descendants into the process of public archaeology has and will continue to contribute to the course of research about Bay Area prehistory and ethnohistory.

By confronting the deeper issues of control over archaeological research, by documenting their identity, and by re-establishing their connections to their material culture and the socio-cultural complexity it implies, the descendants have collected all of the prerequisites necessary for submitting a petition for federal recognition as an Indian tribe. The Muwekma Ohlone tribe maintains that it is the vehicle for the revitalization of tribal identity because the people never lost their identity. Having established how the contemporary revitalization of the families occurred, we now review how the Muwekma families survived during the years after the missions were secularized and after California statehood. We divide this period into two parts: the *ranchería* period, beginning after 1860 and ending after 1914, and the families period, from 1914 to 1964.

### *The Ranchería Period (1860-1914)*

In the last decades of Mission San Jose's existence between 1800 and the 1830s, the population of Costanoan peoples from the east and south bay had endured such steep demographic declines that the mission's padres were obliged to seek further afield for native people for conversion and to provide the labor to maintain the mission's farms and ranches. Many Plains Miwok, Bay Miwok, and Coast Miwok, to the north and east of the mission, and Yokuts and Patwin as well, were converted at Mission San Jose.<sup>30</sup> As we have noted, marriage exchanges between these tribal peoples followed extremely old and established kinship traditions in central California; inter-marriage and strong relations of kinship continued in the setting of the mission, albeit under circumstances Indian peoples found harsh and alien.

Notwithstanding the enormously destructive changes missionization wreaked upon indigenous culture and society, the missions themselves were

vulnerable to the winds of political change. Situated at the very northern edge of the Spanish empire, central California was really a part of larger Latin America until the late 1840s. The Spanish crown had determined to secularize the missions as early as 1813, but the struggle for Mexican independence intervened. Between 1834 and 1836, the Mexican Republic enacted legislation that closed the missions and appeared to divide mission properties among the missionized indigenous peoples. Yet this did not occur in the east and south bay regions. Instead, the local families of Spanish-Mexican descent, known as *californios*, proceeded to swallow up most of the property owned by missions San Jose and Santa Clara. Large cattle ranches were created and the *californios* established themselves as neo-feudal lords.<sup>31</sup>

Many of the missionized Indians, who had previously labored in the mission's fields and cared for the livestock, were hired on as *vaqueros* (cowboys) by the new estate owners, who continued the tradition of controlling indigenous peoples on and near the old mission sites. Yet, many of the formerly missionized Indians who worked on the ranches opted to move to the most remote areas of the back-country in their old homelands. At least a thousand former mission Indians lived in the vicinity of Mission San Jose in the early 1840s, and it is likely that more Indians came to the area from the Mission Santa Clara region.<sup>32</sup> During this early period, the part of the east bay extending north of Mission San Jose up to San Leandro became a region of refuge, to which the missionized Indian peoples of the east and south bay migrated and in which communities of mission survivors coalesced. At least one of these early communities was located north of Mission San Jose on the road to Alameda Creek; the chief, or *capitán*, of this community was named Buenaventura.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Nicholas Gray's map of the area, drawn in 1855, depicts Indian cornfields located between San Leandro and San Lorenzo.<sup>34</sup>

The small steps that these Indians, the ancestors of the contemporary Muwekma, had taken to revitalize their communities and culture suffered a series of severe blows in the late 1840s. The military invasion of California by the United States in 1846 and the subsequent Gold Rush, followed by statehood in 1850, ushered in a new period of genocide against indigenous Californians. A war of extermination was launched against indigenous peoples by the first governor of the state. Laws

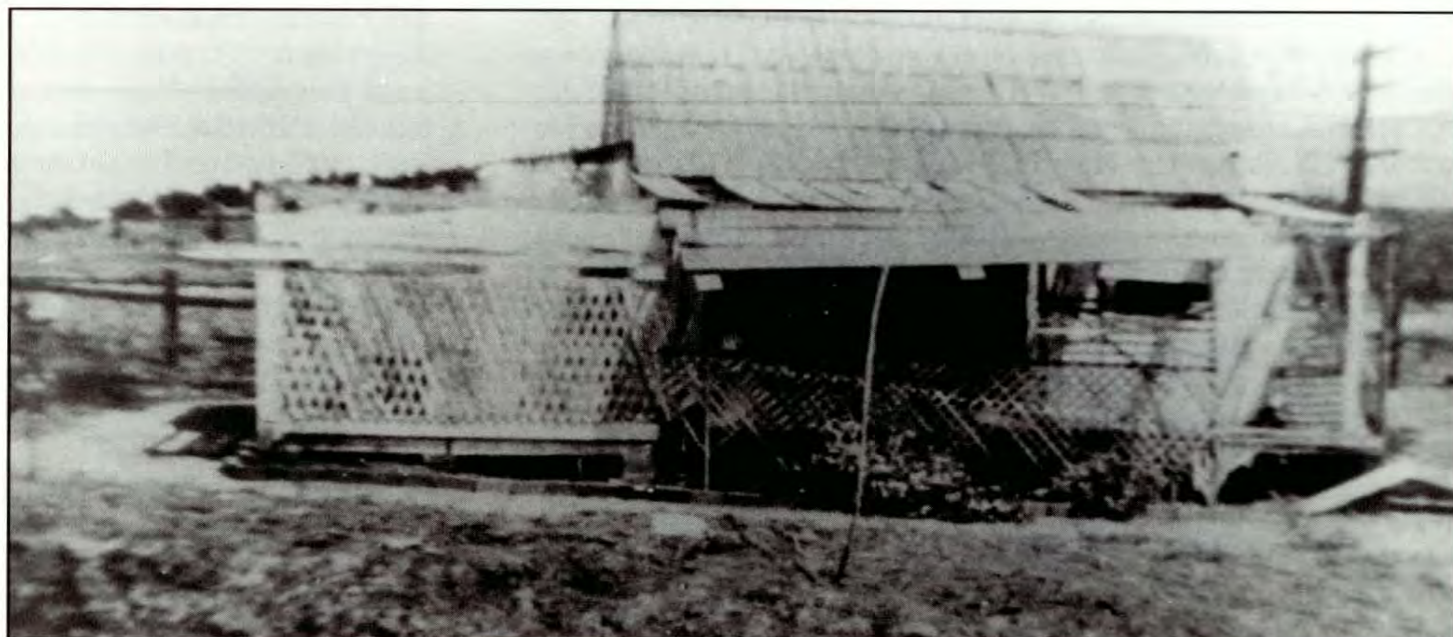


barred Indians from voting, from giving testimony in court, or from bringing law suits. At the same time, American laws in most cases refused to recognize the validity of the land titles for the *californios'* ranches. Coupled with a crippling drought afflicting central California in the 1860s, most of the *californios* were driven off their east bay estates.<sup>35</sup> New American owners probably expelled the Indian *vaqueros* from the land.<sup>36</sup>

By the early 1860s, for reasons that are still not completely clear, many, if not most, of the remaining Indian people from Mission San Jose, perhaps many from Mission Santa Clara, and others, gathered at a new refuge called Alisal, i.e., Alder Grove, *ranchería*. Located just south of the town of Pleasanton on the ranch of *californio* Agostin Bernal, Alisal appears to have been located in the vicinity of a large pre-contact Costanoan village, now underneath or near the Castlewood Country Club.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps the Bernals, who, unlike most of their neighbors, were able to hold onto their ranch, were pleased to gain such a dependable supply of cheap Indian labor, which they were, at any rate, accustomed to having. Perhaps enough Indians had married Bernals that the family was willing to allot a portion of the ranch to an Indian community. Small groups of formerly missionized Indians also settled at other, less ample *rancherías* in nearby Niles (formerly El Molino) and Sunol. All of these *rancherías* maintained close ties with their Plains, Bay, and Coast Miwok relatives, and with North Valley Yokuts groups as well.<sup>38</sup>

The Alisal *ranchería* was unquestionably the most prominent and important community of Costanoan descendants from the 1860s onward and well into the twentieth century, and constitutes the first post-conquest Indian revitalization in the Bay Area. Anthropologists describe revitalization movements as "deliberate, organized, conscious efforts by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture."<sup>39</sup> The people of Alisal revived many dance rituals in the 1870s, which strongly implies that other arts and kinds of knowledge, about ceremonial regalia, songs, sacred language, and crafts also experienced a resurgence. But more than revival took place at Alisal. The available evidence depicts a constant ebb and flow of people, of surviving Indians from all over the Bay Area and central California moving into and out of Alisal.<sup>40</sup> Thus, many surviving fragments of knowledge and ritual were brought together in this one place, from the many Costanoan peoples, each with its own varying customs and ways of thinking, as well as from the Miwok, Yokuts, and others. Inevitably, a blending of older forms took place, a fusion of traditions and philosophies that together generated a new cultural vitality.

During the 1870s, a messianic cult called the Ghost Dance spread to central California. The Ghost Dance originated in Nevada, where a Paiute prophet named Wodziwob taught that by dancing certain dances Indian people could end the domination of the land by the whites, and usher in a new golden age for all Indian peoples. At Alisal, the ancestors



One of the eleven houses that stood at Alisal Rancheria between ca. 1860 and 1910. Courtesy Amador-Livermore Valley Historical Society, Pleasanton.



of the contemporary Muwekma combined the Ghost Dance with the ancient and important Kuksu Dance, the World Renewal Ceremonies, and other rites known throughout central and northern California.<sup>41</sup> So potent was the syncretic combination derived by the people of Alisal that missionaries were sent out from there to preach the new religious doctrine to other indigenous peoples to the east, south, and north of the *ranchería*. Ethnographer Edward Gifford wrote movingly about this phenomenon, relating that on Miwok *rancherías* "there appeared . . . teachers of dances who came from the west."<sup>42</sup> We know of three such missionaries: Yoktco, who preached among the Southern Maidu; Sigelizu, himself a Plains Miwok, who came to the Central Sierra Miwok; and Tciplitcu, a Costanoan man who taught the dances to the Plains Miwok.<sup>43</sup> All of these men's names are in indigenous languages, whereas after missionization, Costanoans, Miwoks, Yokuts, and their descendants took either baptized Hispanic or Anglo names. A more generalized revival of indigenous names may have taken place at Alisal. Although the Ghost Dance did not achieve its full objectives, its florescence at Alisal demonstrates the depth and conviction of indigenous identity and culture in the East Bay near the end of the nineteenth century.

A number of available documents record the lifeways and linguistic complexity at Alisal *ranchería*, or as it also came to be known after the construction of Verona Station nearby, the Verona Band. In 1880, French linguist Alphonse Pinart recorded a detailed Yokuts vocabulary at Alisal.<sup>44</sup> Other languages were also spoken, particularly the Plains Miwok Ki'k language, the Costanoan Chochenyo tongue, and bits of other Costanoan idioms.<sup>45</sup> In the 1880s, the George Hearst family bought a large parcel of land in the area formerly owned by Agostin Bernal that included Alisal, and allowed the Indians to maintain their community on the land through an informal agreement recognizing the Indians' claim to the *ranchería*.<sup>46</sup> A slow decline in the community in the late nineteenth century, however, is apparent in light of later events. Pressures of assimilation, an increasingly large number of white Americans settling in surrounding towns and farmlands and taking over the old *californio* ranchos, the precarious economics of seasonal ranch work, and some out-migration, all contributed to the waning of the indigenous revival at Alisal.<sup>47</sup>

In 1897, according to several documents, the last

Kuksu dances were held at Alisal.<sup>48</sup> Three years later, the last recognized *capitán* of the *ranchería*, José Antonio, died. His name was Hu'ská in the Chochenyo language,<sup>49</sup> and he was the great-great-granduncle of the current generation of Muwekma leaders. After his death, his wife Jacoba, a *mayen*, or chief's wife, the daughter of a Costanoan *capitán* named Chaurino, directed that the ceremonial sweat-lodge (*tupentak* in Costanoan, but more frequently referred to by the Mexican word *temescal*) be torn down, in keeping with tradition.<sup>50</sup> A new *temescal* was not constructed, as it would have been in previous times, because the community did not select a new *capitán*. Apparently, the political power was inherited by Jacoba. During the next fifteen years, a series of fires and economic hardships led most of the people to leave Alisal *ranchería*, although they were not expelled, nor did they lease or sell the land that they informally controlled. The various families still stayed in the east bay, residing in Niles, Newark, Centerville, Milpitas, Pleasanton, Livermore, and elsewhere.

In the early 1900s, several sources provided fragments of information about Ohlone life at the turn of the century. In 1904, the Northern California Indian Association petitioned the 58th Congress on behalf of the landless Indians of northern and central California. An attachment to their document listed the number of Indians, their linguistic stock, and county of residence. For the east bay, they listed seventy people living at Pleasanton, eight at Niles, five at Danville, and twenty at Byron.<sup>51</sup> The 1905-1906 Special Indian Census not only recorded the Indian villages at Pleasanton and Niles, but also listed some of the families living there.<sup>52</sup> Alfred Kroeber visited Alisal in 1909 and was able to record vocabularies and grammar for San Jose Costanoan (Chochenyo), a Yokuts dialect, and the Miwok Ki'k language.<sup>53</sup> One of his informants was Jacoba, who still lived at Alisal at that time. C. Hart Merriam, another linguist, worked with people who spoke Chochenyo at Alisal in 1910, and he began using the term "Ohlonean," rather than "Costanoan," to describe the languages of the indigenous peoples of the Bay Area.<sup>54</sup> As late as 1914, Gifford secured two additional vocabularies in the Chochenyo and Plains Miwok dialects.<sup>55</sup> Yet the existing documentation and Muwekma family oral tradition agree that, by 1914, the community at Alisal had been dislocated due to a fire accidentally caused by the Southern Pacific Railroad near the Verona Station. Almost all of the eleven structures