



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



MISSION INDIAN DIET

[from Travis Hudson (ed.),
Breath of the Sun (1980), pp. 3-4]

Fernando Librado, a Chumash Indian who was extensively interviewed by Smithsonian anthropologist/linguist John P. Harrington between 1912 and 1915, reports the following diet for mission Indians: In the morning they were given a measure of *atole* (acorn gruel). For lunch they got *pozole*, which was hominy and wheat boiled with some bones which had meat on them. The evening meal was more *atole*. These meals were associated with harvest time. Meals at the ranchos were nearly identical. Anthropologist Zephyrin Engelhardt (1923) reported that the morning meal was about two pounds per Indian, the noon meal about four pounds and the evening meal another two pounds – that is eight pounds of food per male Indian each day during the harvest.

In that both breakfast and dinner were acorn gruel, it indicates that even at the missions, the acorn harvest was continued and remained a critical part of the mission Indian's diet.

At the Ventura mission, about a dozen cattle were slaughtered each week, with each family receiving a substantial portion of meat. During the time when the cattle were most numerous and at their fattest – late spring and early summer – cattle were slaughtered twice weekly – more meat for the Indians. The hides and tallow (for lighting) were saved to be sold or traded to Yankee traders.

Fernando reported that the priests also gave out a "half a ball" of *panocha*, a thick brown sugar, to some Indians. There was no coffee but some tea. There was also a dish called *champurrado*, which was *atole*, chocolate, and *panocha* mixed together. *Panocha* was traded in

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by the Yuroks, who made it from honeydew (here it is not clear whether this was from plants or insects) and a sweet cane. It was brought in, in small sacks made from grasses and iris leaves. When the Yuroks arrived on horseback, the priests immediately confiscated the horses on the assumption that they were stolen. Here we see that the Yuroks traded with the missions. (The Yuroks were "wild Indians".) The padres had things that the Yuroks wanted. Trade between the Yuroks and the Chumash had probably been going on since the beginning of time. Part of the Yurok trade was in tule elk hides. It is also interesting to note that the Yuroks had readily adopted the horse.

Mike Kuhn

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed in Corriganville, to take school children on docent hikes during the week. No prior training is necessary. We will train you.

Learn about the history of Corriganville and native plants and animals, and pass this knowledge on to others.

For more information or to become a volunteer, please contact Colleen Janssen at 805-584-4453.

RSTB CLUB MEETING

The monthly club meeting will be held at the
Community Center
Room B-1
1692 Sycamore Drive
At 7:00 PM
On
Wednesday, February 19, 2003

FEBRUARY WORK PARTY

The next Trail Blazers work party will be held on **Saturday, Feb. 15**, on the **Chumash Trail**. We will work on repair of the central portion of the trail.

Meet at the trailhead at the end of Flanagan Drive in Simi Valley at 8:00 AM. We will work from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair
John Sabol



JANUARY WORK PARTY

Due to other commitments, only three Rancho Simi Trail Blazers turned out to work on the Hummingbird Trail for the January work party. We drove up the Rocky Peak Fire Road to access the upper trailhead.

The first job was to replace a "Please Stay on Trail" sign at the top that had been vandalized. We then worked our way down the trail digging and/or cleaning out 14 rolling dips that will move water off the trail. Although we only had 3 people, we performed a lot of erosion prevention work.

Many thanks to the following workers:

Ursula Christie, Chuck Portoghesi, and John Sabol.

Work Parties Chair
John Sabol

FRANCIS DRAKE

The exploits of Sir Francis Drake are legendary in the English world. As an English "sea dog," or pirate, he was commissioned by Queen Elizabeth of England to prey on Spanish ships and ports. Drake circumnavigated the globe on a three year voyage begun in 1577 and completed in September of 1580. He wintered over in California in 1578-79. Drake's Bay near Point Reyes in northern California is generally accepted as his wintering place based upon his log entry referring to that latitude. (Latitude is easily measured with a sextant and published tables, or by direct measurement of the elevation of the North Star above the horizon.)

Because he was so laden with gold, silver and jewels plundered from the coast of South America, his ship was top heavy and needed to reduce weight before hazarding the voyage across the Pacific. Consequently, Drake's ship-log reports that he left one bronze and two iron cannon and an anchor behind. The cannons were his oldest and were obsolete by late-16th Century standards.

What is of interest to us is that one bronze and two cast iron cannons were found during the 1980s, a couple of hundred feet off of Coal Oil Point by the U.C. Santa Barbara campus, and a large anchor was found in the Goleta Slough near there during the late-19th Century. The cannon had been spiked, rendering them useless. It is likely, that they had been left on the cliff top and over the course of the next century or two, sea cliff erosion, primarily during southeasterly storms, toppled them into the sea. Eventually, further sea cliff erosion left them in shallow water beyond the cliffs. (There is really no other way to account for how they got into such shallow water given their great weight.)

Had Drake wintered over in the Goleta Slough, which was navigable by large sailing vessel until the late 19th Century, it would have made perfect sense to move cannon to Coal Oil Point to protect his ship. The cannon would have been a good three quarters of a mile closer to any enemy vessel and possessed a small elevation advantage. This advantage

would have forced an enemy vessel to stand off enough to be out of range of the Golden Hind. It is logical that the cannons so moved would have been those that he could most afford to abandon if he had to make a nighttime run for the open sea to escape an enemy vessel.

Drake recorded leaving a bronze plaque with a silver coin in it as part of an English claim to the land. Perhaps those artifacts will one day be unearthed.

If the cannon were placed there by the Spanish, there is the question of why fortify Coal Oil Point? Without a vessel to protect, there simply wasn't anything in the immediate area that the Spanish would have been concerned about. Santa Barbara was eventually protected simply by locating the mission and presidio sufficiently inland to be out of range of ship borne cannon.

If Drake did winter over in the Goleta Slough, rather than at Drake's Bay, the Chumash Indians of the area would have had a prolonged exposure to their English visitors.

No cannon, anchors or other evidence of Drake's presence has been found in Drake's Bay. Yet, they may still be there. No ship's captain would have had a reason to misreport his position in his ship's log. Perhaps he discarded the cannon and anchor before voyaging further north. That seems unlikely because he had no way of knowing that higher seas and winds faced him beyond Point Conception.

And still there was the possibility of encountering a Spanish war ship. The Golden Hind was the first English ship to round the Horn of South America, so Drake had no way of knowing what presence the Spanish had along the coast of California. Yes, another mystery.

Mike Kuhn

THE TAPO CANYON ROAD
FLOOD CONTROL CHANNEL

Two or three years after the incorporation of the City of Simi Valley, the Ventura County Flood Control District proposed to construct an open box flood control channel between Cochran Street and Los Angeles Avenue where Tapo Canyon Road is now.

Around 1900, when the Southern Pacific Railroad came into Simi Valley from the west, a "wye" track was built north from the railroad to what is now Cochran Street to permit trains to turn around. They would come in from the west, go as far as Tapo Street and then back up onto the wye track. In that way they could then return to the west. (The railroad tunnel was not completed until 1904.) The broad curve of the property lines on the eastern side of Tapo Canyon Road just north of the railroad reflects that original curve on the tracks. Later the wye track was extended north to the Tapo Citrus Packing Plant so that the citrus production of the valley could be shipped out by rail. The railroad right of way remained and the City reserved additional right of way for the future road from the developer of the subdivision on the west side.

The City's first City Engineer and Public Works Director was Byron Johnson. Mr. Johnson was concerned that once an open box flood control channel was constructed, it could never be covered without greatly reducing the capacity of the channel. The cost at a later date to replace the open channel with a larger covered channel would have been millions of dollars. With great foresight, Mr. Johnson convinced the City Council to pay the difference to build a larger channel with a top on it. That investment, relatively modest in today's dollars, allowed Tapo Canyon Road to be extended during the early 1990s south to Los Angeles Avenue. The broad enriched parkway on the east side of the road is there because of the presence of the buried flood control channel. Sometimes government does plan ahead.

Mike Kuhn

CHAPARRAL CURRANT

Chaparral Currant, *Ribes malvaceum*, is an erect shrub, 3 to 6 feet high and is a member of the Gooseberry family.

The leaves are alternate, more or less circular, resembling a maple leaf with round points, thick, wrinkled and rough. The plant puts out buds in October or November usually after the first rains.

The flowers are rose colored and borne in drooping racemes of 10-25 blossoms. The fruit produced are purple-black berries, 1/4 inch in diameter, and usually covered with a whitish bloom.

The shrub is drought deciduous and drops its leaves during the summer months.

The berries are edible, sweet and high in vitamin C, phosphorus and iron. They can be eaten fresh or dried for use at a later time. The fruit is also an important food for songbirds, ground squirrels, and other animals.

Chaparral Currant is one of 3 currants found in our area. The others are White Chaparral Currant, *Ribes indecorum* and Golden Currant *Ribes aureum*.

John Sabol



Chaparral Currant—Photo by John Sabol



Los Robles Trail, left to right: Gary Cremeans, Carol Tucker, Phil Pratt, Arlene Altshuler, Martin DeGoey, John Sabol, and Chuck Portoghesi.

CHUMASH CURES

The Chumash had many treatments and cures for illnesses. Here are a few.

Toloache (*Datura wrightii*) was used with extreme caution, because the plant is highly toxic, with many deaths among the Chumash reported as well as during modern times. When a sick person was given toloache, relatives would gather around to sing and dance and shout to keep the person who was ill from falling asleep (they apparently recognized the danger of a person falling asleep and lapsing into a coma and death). Fernando Librado said that in measuring how much to give a sick person, you should use a person who has a short last joint on the fourth finger. In that way, they give a short measure. When the person who has been given the toloache awakens (apparently many did fall asleep), they must not drink water. The person who has administered the toloache may provide the ill person some little bit of warm water so that the ill person can wash out their mouth. After that they must abstain from all water for two days, eat only a light acorn gruel with clam or cotton-tail or some other light meat and abstain from sleeping with their spouse for 21 days. Great credence was given to dreams while under in effects of toloache.

Red ants (probably the California harvester ant) were also used. When taken internally, an ant doctor, usually an old woman, would administer the treatment. The sick person would be given a mixture of hundreds of live ants mixed with down. In other cases, the patient would lie or stand naked on a red ant hill, which had been broken into. This resulted in the ants biting the patient hun-

dreds of time. The effects of the bites, which contain formic acid, were said to render cures. The victim, who often fainted during the ordeal, would be rubbed all over with green sycamore leaves and then with freshly chewed tobacco. Doctors were paid only if the patient got well.

When people became seriously ill, it was often assumed that they were being poisoned by someone. Great efforts were made to determine who the poisoning party was. During the early mission period, as the Indians died in great numbers, many Chumash medicine men were killed by their own people, for it was assumed that they were the cause of so many deaths.

Sea water was probably used most often to effect cures. Several quarts of water were given to the ill person. This normally resulted in vomiting, which the Chumash believed expelled whatever was causing the person to be sick.

Two cures for epilepsy are recorded. One was to drink some deer blood. This, of course, had to be done as soon as a deer had been killed, so the patient had to follow a deer hunter around in order to be there when the kill occurred. The other cure was to eat the throbbing heart of a crow. For this latter cure to work, one had to abstain from sex for 21 days.

Rheumatism was sometimes cured by wrapping the rheumatic part with a dead rattlesnake. People with rheumatism sometimes carried dead rattlesnakes around with them in their pockets.

Mike Kuhn

		<h1>February</h1>					
2003							
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
						1 Sam Merrill Trail See Schedule	
2 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	3	4	5	6 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	7	8 China Flat Trail See Schedule	
9 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	10	11	12	13 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	14	15 Chumash Trail Work Party See Schedule	
16 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	17	18	19 RSTB Meeting See Page 1	20 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	21	22 Upper Las Virgenes Cyn See Schedule	
23 Rocky Peak 4pm hike See Schedule	24	25	26	27 Chumash Trail 6pm hike See Schedule	28		



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers Hiking Schedule



- February 1 Sam Merrill Trail to Echo Mountain**
Moderate 5 MRT with 1400' elevation gain/loss. This trail was originally built in the 30's, and takes you on a tour of the ruins of "The White City" at the top of the mountain. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Wear boots, bring bug juice, lunch, and 2 - 3 quarts of water.
- February 2 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 6 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- February 8 China Flat to Simi Peak**
Strenuous, approx. 6 MRT with 1000' elevation gain. Bring two quarts of water and a snack, wear boots. Directions: take 101 Fwy to Lindero Canyon. Follow Lindero Canyon to King James Court. Park on one of the side streets near the arroyo, just east of King James Court. Do not park in the bike lane on Lindero Canyon. Meet at 8:30am near the arroyo/trailhead.
- February 9 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 13 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- February 15 Chumash Trail Work Party**
Help maintain one of the most traversed trails in Simi Valley. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan. We will be working from 8am - noon. Tools will be provided. Bring 2 - 3 quarts of water, hat, sunscreen, and gloves to work on the trail.
- February 16 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 20 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)
- February 22 Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Trail**
8 - 10 MRT hike on a recently opened trail. This hike is not within the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. Meet 8am near Donut Delite at the corner of Madera and Royal. Wear boots, bring bug juice, lunch, and 2 - 3 quarts of water.
- February 23 Sunday Evening Hike**
Meet 4pm at Rocky Peak trailhead at the end of Rocky Peak Rd off Santa Susana Pass. (Strenuous, 5 MRT)
- February 27 Thursday Evening Hike**
Meet at 6pm at Chumash trailhead. Directions - take 118 Fwy to Yosemite exit. Go north on Yosemite, turn right on Flanagan Dr. Trailhead is at the end of Flanagan Dr. (moderate, 5 MRT)

For more information on hikes/work parties, contact the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District at 805-584-4400.

Special Note: - On all hikes and work parties, bring water and wear lug-soled boots. Hikes will be cancelled if it rains.

<http://rstb.homestead.com>

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345, WK (805)583-6776
TREASURER:	PETER ELY	HM (805) 523-1409
SECRETARY:	STEFANI HOWARD	HM (818) 885-0407
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	WK (805) 584-4453
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COMMUNICATION / PUB.CHAIR:	ARLENE ALTSHULER	HM (805) 581-9735

-----cut out and return with your payment-----

MEMBERSHIP

Please enroll me as a New () or Renewing () member of the Rancho Simi Trail Blazers for the annual donation fee of:

Single.....\$10 Family..... \$15

Name(s) _____ Birth Mo. ____ Day ____

Address _____

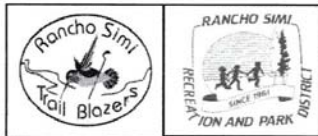
Email Address _____ Phone wk/hm _____

How did you find out about the RSTB _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year to:

“Rancho Simi Foundation” mail it to “RSTB, P.O. Box 630399, Simi Valley, Ca 93063-0399

Please list any extra names and birthdays of more than one member (Month & Day Only)



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