



Rancho Simi Trail Blazers



THE HISPANIC PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT IN SIMI VALLEY

While some members of the 1769 Portola Expedition, as well as others in subsequent decades, may have visited Simi Valley. The Hispanic period of settlement in the valley did not begin until 1795, when Rancho Simi was granted in the name of the King of Spain to Santiago Pico, a retired soldier. Santiago was not allowed to leave Los Angeles and occupy Rancho Simi for some years after the granting of the rancho, which was essentially a grazing permit for the more than 113,000 acre rancho.

His sons Patricio, Miguel, and Francisco may have occupied the valley prior to their father receiving permission to leave Los Angeles. An 1842 *diseno* references "Casa Vieja," or first house, which presumably preceded the Simi, or Pico, Adobe. The Simi Adobe was probably first constructed in 1801 or 1802. It is likely that Santiago's sons and one Louis Pena occupied the land sometime shortly after the land grant was made. There is no mention of Spanish residents in Father Vicente de Santa Maria very brief report on the valley from his 1795 visit, while scouting for a site for a new mission. (The San Fernando site was selected in 1797).

The Rancho period witnessed the death, primarily due to disease, of nearly all of the Chumash Indians and the nearly complete disappearance of their culture. Individual Chumash and their families remained on the land and were employed on the Rancho as domestic laborers and as sheep herders. Later, they also became vaqueros. Both the presumed site of *Casa Vieja* and the Simi Adobe include classic debitage from those Indi-

Cont. on page 2 Col. 1

Sierra Backpacking Trip

It's that time again! The Sierra trip this year will be from Sept 7 - 10, so keep those dates open. We haven't finalized the "where" yet... suggestions are welcome. For more info, call Arlene at 581-9735.

Arlene



WELCOME BACK MEMBER

Brian McKee

RSTB CLUB MEETING

**The monthly club meeting will be held at the Community Center
In the B-1 Room
1692 Sycamore Drive
At 7:00 PM
On
Wednesday, Aug. 15th.**

MALIBU

Chumash place names were recorded variously by various people throughout the historic period. Sometimes the names were recorded by people with linguistic training and "good ears," while most often those recording a place name had no training and a linguistic ear like my own - and that's bad. Many place names were repeated by Chumash informant, but often as much as 100 years after that "place" ceased to exist. The Chumash themselves had no written language.

As an example of the difficulty of trying to decide what the place name might originally have been is the name we know as "Malibu." My collection of the original Chumash rendition, as processed by the Spanish includes: *Jumaliguo, Malivo, Umalibo, Humalibo, Humaliu, Omaliu, Omaliu, Umaliu, Humaligo, Humaligo en la Playa, male-wu, Humaliwo, Hu-ma'-li-wu, and Maliwu.*

The meaning of Malibu is "the surf sounds loud all the time." The prefix "hu" means "over there."

You will also note another pattern that has come down to us from the Chumash via Spanish - we refer to "the Malibu," just as the Spanish and early Anglo-American settlers referred to "the Simi," "the Tripas," "the Hummingbird" and "the Tapo." In Simi, we have largely lost this pattern, except as a distant memory.

Mike Kuhn

ans, who carried on much of their traditional way of life while living around those adobes. They still used manos and metates, i.e., grinding stones and slabs, mortars and pestles, and stone tools.

My first visit to Strathearn Historic Park came shortly after a rain. The dirt parking area glistened with fused shale micro-flakes, the debitage from the manufacture of cutting tools by Chumash Indian laborers.

Up until 1819 sheep of both the San Fernando Mission and the Picos were run in the valley and the surrounding hill. (In 1816 Patricio notified the good fathers to remove their sheep. The last of the Mission sheep were removed by 1819.) The Picos also ran some cattle. However, during the first two decades of the 19th Century there wasn't much of a market for wool or mutton and there weren't enough cattle to contribute in a significant way to the hide and tallow trade. Irrigated gardens were planted around the adobes. Those gardens represented the first agricultural efforts in the area.

The year 1818 saw an influx of some refugees from Ventura due to fear of an attack by the French pirate Hipolyte de Bouchard. Bouchard sailed right past Ventura, stopping briefly at Santa Barbara, so Simi's refugee residents return to their homes.

In 1820 Indians from Baja California attacked the adobe and succeeded in burning the wattle and daub roof of the adobe. Evidence of that event is still present in the soil surrounding the Simi Adobe in the form of soil baked red - with willow branch impressions still present. We do know that the Indians were pursued and captured. After that event little is known about the ranching activities on the Simi until the Rancho was sold to Don Jose de la Guerra in the 1830s, at which time the ranch seems to have become more active. However, the cattle and sheep business produced a meager livelihood for the de la Guerras.

De la Guerra purchased Rancho Simi for

\$800 in cash, \$219 in goods and a promise to settle a debt of \$2,000 to Mission San Gabriel. (If my recollection is correct, the debt was paid in cattle.) The sale was not confirmed until the mid-1840s. De la Guerra also purchased a portion of Rancho el Conejo in 1822 and later the 26,000 acre Rancho Las Posas.

In 1858 a major portion of the adobe was again destroyed by fire. As a result, the de la Guerras moved their headquarters, which became known as Tapo Alta, to Tapo Canyon, where the Tapo Canyon Regional Park now stands at the site of the ruin of the 20th Century reconstruction of the adobe. The adobe in Tapo Canyon had been built some years prior to 1858. It was essentially of the same design as the Simi Adobe, a one storied building with an exterior stair case leading to sleeping quarters under the hip roof. Tapo Canyon is well watered by a cienega upstream from the adobe. The valley has a clay bottom, which keeps much of the water on the surface of the stream bed. The area around the adobe was planted in many fruit trees and vines. The rancho produce communion wine for Mexican California. Harrington recorded one story of an Indian who was sent from the Santa Barbara Mission to Tapo Alta for a barrel of wine. The barrel was broken in route back to the mission in the Rincon area, and the Indian was beaten by the priest.

Rancho Simi saw its first good economic times during the California gold rush, which produced a gigantic market for both cattle and sheep and their products. During the early 1850s the de la Guerra income varied from \$50,000 to \$100,000 annually. New herds were brought in and every bit of grazing land was fully utilized. Don Jose de la Guerra died in February 1858, leaving his estate to his nine children.

The severe drought of 1862-65 saw the end of prosperity for the ranchos. Ventura County was then part of Santa Barbara County, which saw a reduction in the number of cattle on the tax role from over 200,000 to about 10,000, mostly due to death. The cattle market was flooded

with unwanted animals. The de la Guerra family disposed of over 4,000 head. Soon after, Rancho Simi passed into the hands of Anglo-Americans.

(Most of the information contain herein has been summarize from: Crane Miller, "The Changing Agricultural Landscape of the Simi Valley from 1795 to 1960," *The Ventura County Historical Society Quarterly*, XIII, No. 4 (August 1963).

Mike Kuhn



TOBACCO

Tobacco was an American domesticated plant adopt by European for use for its narcotic effect. The genus of tobacco plants, both wild and domesticated, is *Nicotiana*. "Nicot" was the French ambassador to Portugal who introduced tobacco into France around 1560. For this he was honored ?

Mike Kuhn

JULY WORK PARTY

We had a nice turnout for the July work party on the Rock Ridge Trail East in Oak Park. With of a crew of ten workers (more than usual), I had visions of possibly finishing the clearing of the trail. It was not to be however as we ran into very heavy brush and progress was extremely slow. We worked from 7:00 AM to 10:45 PM in warm, humid weather and everyone was tired. Many thanks to the following workers:

Bob Altieri, Arlene Altshuler, Al Bandel, Tamara Combs, John Downey, Tom Frye, Mike Kuhn, Louise Pomes, John Sabol and Tom Siebert.

The next Trail Blazer work party will be held Saturday 18 August, again on the Rock Ridge Trail East in Oak Park. This effort will consist of clearing a 10-foot wide path through heavy brush with loppers and saws. Meet at the trailhead in Oak Park at 7:00 AM. Directions: Drive to the intersection of Doubletree Road and Kanan Road, which is 1 1/2 miles East of the intersection of Kanan and Lindero Canyon. Go north on Doubletree. The road will go uphill and then curve east and parallel Kanan. Trailhead is on the left, across from the Latter-Day Saints Church. We will work from 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Hope to see you there.

Work Parties Chair

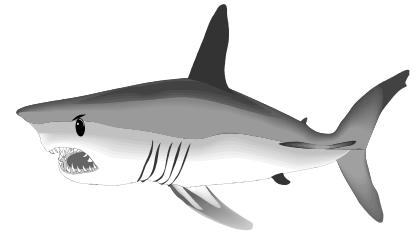
John Sabol

THE LOS ANGELES-SANTA BARBARA ROAD

In 1858 the federal government surveyed the area along the present day U.S. Highway 101 corridor in order to establish the Township and Range system of land demarcation. The 1858 survey map is located in the Simi Adobe - mounted on the wall of the northern-most room of the adobe. The route is labeled as the road between Santa Barbara and Los Angeles. The significance of the focus on that route is that it implies that by 1858 the old El Camino Real, which was established during the "mission period" and was located through Simi Valley, was no longer the main route up and down California, as the most direct route between Mission San Fernando and Mission San Buenaventura. What happened was that once the missions were secularized in 1834 and the missions were abandon in favor of Mexican land grants and settlements (most of the Indians were dead by then, so the missions were no longer needed except where they could serve as parish churches), the shortest route between the Pueblo de Los Angeles and the settlement of Santa Barbara, with its presidio, was what we now call the "101" corridor. That route became the main route up and down California during the Mexican period and remains so today.

This shift in the focus of transportation renders the later decision, during this century, to call the "101" "the El Camino Real" more reasonable than it may at first appear. The route over Santa Susana Pass through Simi Valley remained as a route between San Fernando and Ventura, but it never again was prominent.

Mike Kuhn



A TRIP TO SAN NICOLAS ISLAND

Fernando Librado, John Peabody Harrington's Chumash informant, recalled a time when three tomols (plank canoes) let out from someplace and headed for San Nicolas Island. Two of the canoes and their crews were lost.

This event probably occurred before 1836, when all of the Indians, with one exception, were removed from the island. The southern shore of Santa Cruz Island was the normal jumping off point for trips to San Nicolas Island, and the distance was 42 mile.

Mike Kuhn



August

2001



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 pm Read schedule Happy Birthday Elfriede Cespedes	3	4 La Jolla Val- ley Loop Hike meet at 7 am Read Schedule
5 Rocky Peak 5 pm Hike Read schedule	6	7	8	9 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 pm Read schedule	10 Happy Birthday Bob Altieri	11 Escondido Canyon Hike Meet at 7 am Read schedule
12 Rocky Peak 5 pm Hike Read schedule	13	14	15 RSTB Club Monthly Meeting See page 1	16 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 pm Read schedule	17	18 Oak Park Work Party Meet at 7 am Read schedule
19 Rocky Peak 5 pm Hike Read schedule	20 Happy Birthday Tom Frye	21 Happy Birthday Al Richards	22	23 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 pm Read schedule	24	25 Ferndale Falls Hike Meet at 7 am
26 Rocky Peak 5 pm Hike Read schedule Happy Birthday Laura Altieri	27	28	29	30 Chumash Trail Hike Meet at 6 pm Read schedule	31 Happy Birthday Catherine Verga & Jack Archibald	

RANCHO SIMI TRAIL BLAZERS

EXECUTIVE CHAIR:	MIKE KUHN	HM (805) 583-2345 WK (805)583-6776
TREASURER:	PETER ELY	HM (805) 523-1409
PARK DISTRICT LIAISON:	COLLEEN JANSSEN	OFFICE (805) 523-1409
WORK PARTIES CHAIR:	JOHN SABOL	HM (805) 583-2541
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-----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)_____ Address _____
_____ Birth Mo. _____ Day _____ Phone wk/hm _____

How did you find out about the RSTB _____

Please make out tax deductible member dues check for the year Sept.-2000/Sept.-2001 to:

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

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