

# Aftermath of Violence: Linking San Francisco Bay-Area Native California's Past With a Structural Violence Model to Explore and Explain One Family's California Experience

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*Structural violence embedded in the colonial experience of Native Californians effectively changed the way Indigenous people thought about themselves. Still, it never changed their knowledge of their identity or their allegiance to each other through shared experiences. This study presents the effects of structural violence on one family using ethnographic tools and oral history. It is an example of preservation, endurance, and resilience to re-establish Indigenous agency and engage in public policy. At the same time, Indigenous people re-educated themselves and the public about their continued presence in the Bay Area and their connections to ancestral spaces.*

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THE BORDERLESS PLACE OF “AVAILABLE LIGHT” that Clifford Geertz (2001) evokes is a theoretical space, somewhere between philosophy and anthropology, where culture can be understood from multiple perspectives. This “land of light” is a non-judgmental place where we propose that one can illuminate the effects of violence that can impact people’s lives for generations. It is well known that Native Californians experienced many types of violence, starting with the arrival of the Spanish colonialists in 1542 C.E., intensifying through the Spanish/Mexican entrada and into Alta California (1775–1850 C.E.), the American period (1850 C.E. onwards), and lasting until U.S Congressional recognition of Native Americans as American citizens (circa 1924). Oppression and trauma took many forms between these years. The purpose of the research presented here is to investigate the potential consequences of long-term trauma embedded in descendant communities. Experiences shape opinions and choices through dynamic relationships between people and society (Bordieu 2013[1972]:78). Some of the choices focused on resistance and reaffirmation of Native identity that are now emerging in the San Francisco Bay

Area would not have occurred without early support, first from Native American organizations such as the American Indian Movement (AIM), and more recently from Confederated Villages of Lisjan, Oakland. Local public support then followed, involving Coyote Hills Regional Park, community colleges, San Jose and East Bay state universities, and the University of California at Berkeley. In this paper, the Native California experience is extracted from ethnographic narratives recorded by J. P. Harrington (1921–1937), which represent Chochenyo social memory during the 1920s and 1930s, as well as from Orta family memories.

Orta family history covers a little more than half of the years between 1775 and 1924, with the more recent data being the most reliable. However, the family is rooted in the historical and prehistoric past of the area now known as Sunol, Niles, Niles Canyon, Mission San Jose, Pleasanton, and the East Bay of the San Francisco area, as well as farther east toward the Sacramento Delta (Fig. 1). In order to understand how trauma experienced between 1775 and 1924 affected choices made by descendants, the Orta family story

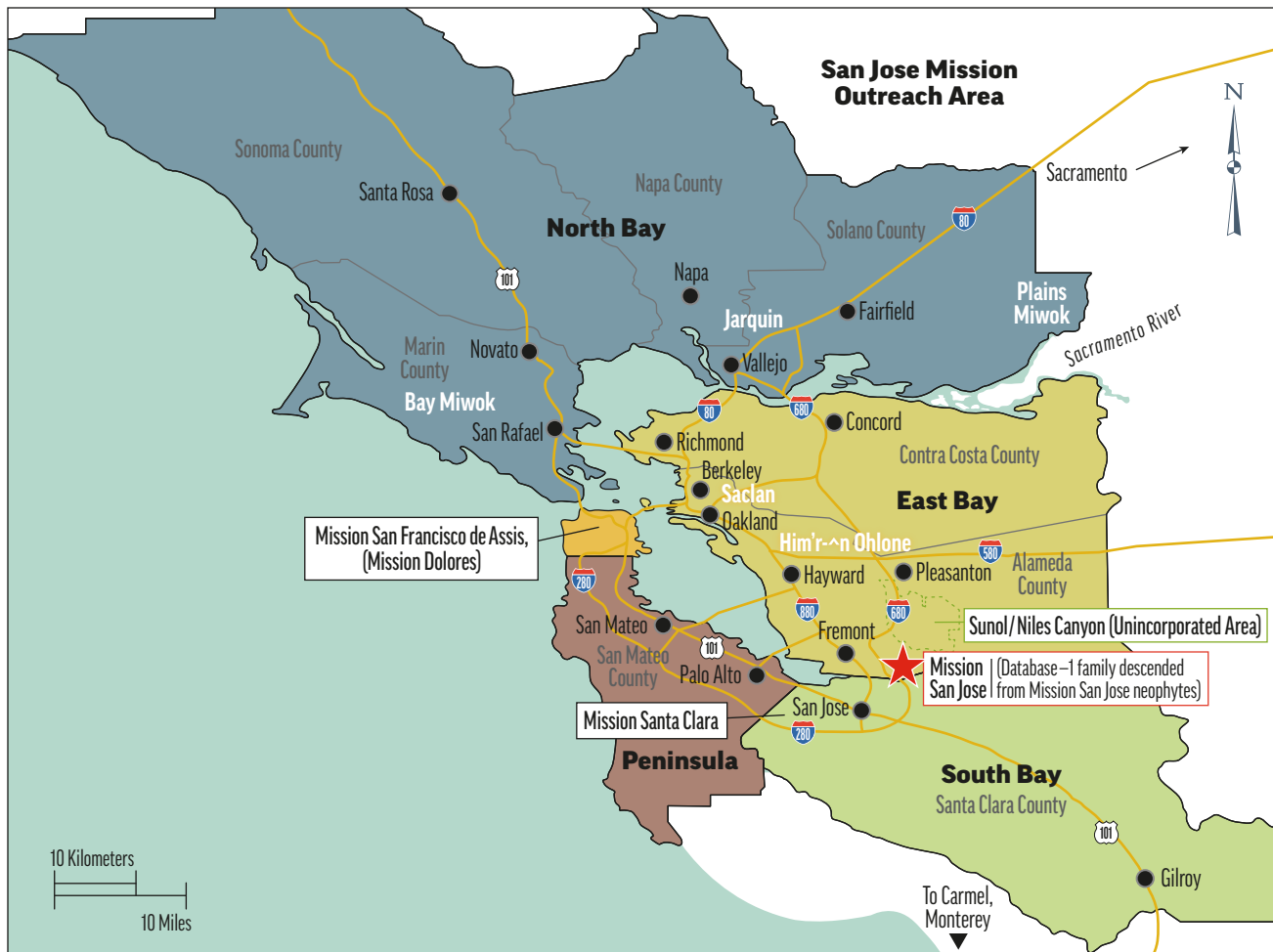


Figure 1. Map of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Locations of pre-colonial tribes are shown in white, Mission San Jose is designated by a red star, and towns of Pleasanton, Niles, and Niles Canyon are shown relative to Mission San Jose. City of San Jose is southwest of the Mission.

must be connected to the larger historical narrative of Native Californians. Gaps in information complicate the linkage. Gaps in scholarship between history and prehistory have been cited by Lightfoot (1995:200), Panich (2013:106), and Schneider (2015a:511, 2015b:696). Typically, historians did not investigate anything prior to the onset of written records, and archaeologists conversely rarely studied sites with historical content that pertained to Native communities. Lightfoot (1995) was one of the first scholars to look at the Indigenous presence in the context of historical archaeology. Subsequently, Silliman (2005:55) questioned the continuity from present to past, while elitist gaps in the ethnographic record created by Kroeber (1925), Gifford (1915), and others early in the twentieth century focused attention on tribal cultures outside of urban “contamination” (Bauer 2016:4;

Lightfoot 2005:33). Social gaps emerged as well. In Alta California, Spanish Mexican military personnel and Franciscan priests separated Indigenous people from their tribal lands and economic foundations beginning in 1775–1776. This separation from the ancestral lands that were their source of oral history, culture, religion, and economic subsistence relegated Natives to the economic bottom of Hispanic society’s “systema de castas” (Bauer 2016:55; Lightfoot 2005:188; Milliken 2008:165; Sandos 2004:2; Street 2004:xxii; Voss 2005:463). Currently, some Native California voices in the East Bay belong to tax-paying, baseball-loving, beach-going middle-class citizens, although this description does not characterize many Native Californians. How did recipients of such extreme structural violence emerge as proactive citizens two and a half centuries later? Milliken’s computerization

of mission records (1991) and the Huntington Library's Early California Population Project (ECP; Huntington Library 2006) provide seminal demographic information about cultural identities and the distribution of early neophyte groups prior to 1850. Nevertheless, gaps in data still exist when digitized post-1850 sources are searched for information on family members and/or relatives.

Despite these gaps, it is important to explore how decades of trauma stemming from structural violence emerge now as *ethnogenesis*, persistence, or something else. We recognize that using the oral history of one family is limiting, especially given that other branches of the same family express their Indigenous heritage differently (Field et al. 1992; Galvan 1968; Leventhal et al. 1994).

Archaeological studies of colonialism tend to focus on archaeological sites dating to the Mission period (1769 through 1833), when Mexico secularized the missions in Alta California, and the Rancho period (1833 to 1850), when California acquired statehood (e.g., Arkush 2011; Cordero 2015; Huntington Library 2006; Milliken 1995, 2008; Peel 2010; Phillips 1993; Silliman 2001, 2005; Voss 2005, 2015). Few ethnohistoric sources exist for the colonized areas of the East Bay other than Kelsey (1906), Milliken (1995, 2008), and J. P. Harrington's collection of linguistic information from Alaska to Southern California recorded in the early decades of the twentieth century (1921–1937). Other authors who wrote about northern California (e.g., Akin and Bauer 2021; Bauer 2016; Lightfoot 2005; Schneider 2015a, 2015b; Voss 2015), or about labor issues covering large sections of time and space in California (Phillips 2010; Street 2004), mention events in and around Mission San Jose and provide a larger picture of how Mission San Jose fits into the social, political and economic climate of the times. This study in family history adds East Bay Native experiences to the larger ethnographic account.

Our research has four main objectives. First, we use the “available light” of anthropology to create an overview of California's historical past framed in a structural violence perspective, focusing on membership in the “bottom rung of society” (Farmer 2004:602). Second, we compare the histories of the Orta family and wider California to understand how their individual story fits into the whole narrative. To accomplish this, we combine contemporary data collected during interviews

with members of the Orta family with ethnographic information extracted from the notes of J. P. Harrington (1921–1937), notes that describe the experiences of Indigenous people living in the same community as Ruth's (co-author of this article) grandmother and grandfather in Niles, California. The recollections of Isabelle Meadows, who lived in Monterey, California, are added to give breadth to the social memory of Chochenyo speakers in the 1920s and 30s. Focusing on Bay Area history, especially around Mission San Jose, we present what is known about the Mission and Mexican Rancho periods (1769–1850) and early statehood in order to compare the consequences of structural violence in California history with manifestations in the lives of this one family. Through this comparison, links are created between the past and the present. Realizing that subsequent choices were made that shaped the lives of descendants provides additional insights on Indigenous agency and highlights the importance of further exploration of Native identity.

Third, life choices are also made in terms of the socio-economic contexts of the times, forming two vectors of change—industry/capitalism and social divisions. As members of the laboring class that continued to work on the farms and ranches that got food to market, Ruth's family was part of an evolving economy (the 1860s to 1914). Notions of labor as practice—“bodily experiences and thus particular outlooks on the world” (Silliman 2001:383)—make it feasible to include Gilded Age capitalism as an additional influence on choice. Ruth's grandmother, grandfather, mother, uncles, and aunts came of age between 1860 and 1914, when the Gilded Age economy set working conditions. Those conditions offered or limited choices made by family members; therefore, it is imperative that we examine labor contexts, which acted as the nexus in which the family worked, grew, and changed their circumstances.

Finally, understanding and describing how these data link trauma, labor, and continuing self-awareness of their Indigenous heritage—within the context of California's economic history—provides “available light” on the family's present interest in activism. These aspects of our research weave together the experiences of the Orta family in relationship to the Civil Rights movement. Specifically, we address whether current activism on the part of members of the family constitutes ethnogenesis, cultural persistence, or cultural maintenance. Similarly,

as members of a tribe lacking federal recognition, do the generational experiences of colonialism and neo-colonialism during statehood motivate descendant generations to organize politically and culturally and revitalize the language, ancestral skills, and traditional ecological knowledge using archaeological data? Through these investigations, we will be able to understand the source of the drive, desire, and need to be part of an Indigenous organization, and whether it stems from some deeper source stretching back into the past and tapping into an Indigenous spiritual community for solidarity to resist negative policies embedded in the national and local public consciousness.

### THE PARADIGM

This article applies Farmer's (2003, 2004) structural violence paradigm to frame the hardships and trauma Indigenous people of California experienced and address that trauma using Farmer's "triage" questions to organize facts from the past in a new "light."

Structural violence was first delineated by Galtung (1969), who—while researching paths toward peace—wrote that "[v]iolence is the cause of difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is. Violence is that which impedes the decrease of this distance" (1969:168). Galtung used the example of tuberculosis to explain his theory. If a person died of tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it was not because of violence, but was due to a lack of medical knowledge—it was a natural outcome. However, if a person dies of tuberculosis in the twenty-first century it is due to violence, because some form of neglect exists in the social structure, prohibiting a cure from being applied and causing death (Galtung 1969:168). The concept was adopted by Farmer (2003, 2004) as an explanation for a lack of health equity in Haiti and other countries, and why there are enormous gaps in wealth, health, and access to economic opportunity in these places. Farmer defines structural violence as "violence exerted systematically—that is indirectly—by everyone who belongs to a certain social order: hence the discomfort these ideas provoke in a moral economy still geared to pinning praise or blame on individual actors. In short, the concept of structural violence is intended to inform the study of the machinery of oppression" (Farmer 2004:307).

Poverty, he points out, is economic and is not accidental (Farmer 2003:849). Vulnerability to poverty lies in varied intersections of gender, class, and ethnic "axes" (Farmer 2003:778), depending on the mix of political and economic regimes in place in a region or country. Pursuing this notion further, Farmer states that [it is] "a kind of violence that enables the system to continue as set up with those (people) at the bottom picking up the pieces that were discarded by a stratified economic hierarchy" (Farmer 2003). When any economic system is disrupted, as was the case in colonial California, the disruption forces migration to other places where one must take conditions as one finds them, including "unfreedoms" (Deloria 2021; Resendez 2017).

Hegemony produces several "unfreedoms," such as poverty, tyranny, poor economic opportunities, systematic social deprivations, intolerance, and violations of civil rights (Deloria 2021). These "unfreedoms" would be conditions encountered by indigenous people dislocated by a mission system. Farmer specifies that consequences of "former abuses (i.e., violations of social and economic rights) continually permit civil and political rights to be violated" (Farmer 2003:308) or vanish. If this idea is applied to colonialized California, once Franciscans convinced local Indigenous people living in sedentary villages and following a hunting-gathering way of life to move to a mission, to be baptized, to help them build missions and learn to farm, indigenous dignity, culture, and agency were at risk of further manipulation by those in power.

Farmer is writing in an era when civil rights or political rights are acknowledged to be of value by our courts of law (e.g., Civil Rights Act of 1968). Certainly, when Western European powers were sailing around the newly confirmed globe, accessing exotic goods to make lives in chilly, cloudy northern Europe easier, civil and social rights were recognized as extending from the top down. Social life in Europe was based on monarchies. By birth, those at the top of the hierarchy were permitted the greatest number of social and civil freedoms, while those at the bottom were granted the fewest. Those in between were slowly beginning to gain rights to own land and possessions based on an investment in physical labor (Locke 2016[1689]). We virtually impose the concept of structural violence onto a historical past that did not recognize the same values as we do today. However, it



is instructive to do so because it begins to throw light on aspects of a past that have been overlooked. By viewing the past from this new perspective, we gain robust answers about the present and discover that the effects of structural violence have been elided, and through elision, its consequences linger despite a new social consciousness.

The concept of structural violence is intended to inform the study of the social machinery of oppression. Oppression is a result of many conditions, not the least of which resides in consciousness...roles played by the erasure of historical memory and other forms of desocialization as enabling conditions of structures that are both “sinful” and ostensibly “nobody’s fault” [Farmer 2004:307].

Farmer wants to understand the social mechanisms that produce suffering; how policies at one level of society become sources of actual suffering at another level. Social mechanisms of peonage introduced into the lives of missionized Natives during Spanish Mexican (or *Californio*) times, for example, and continued under American capitalism, rest on a single economic foundation—labor, as opposed to work (Silliman 2001:380). Silliman, citing Marx’s definition of work as “energy expended by individuals or groups to acquire materials and convert them into tools, food, shelter, items that people require to live” (Marx in Silliman 2001:380), points to the difference between meanings of ‘work’ and ‘labor.’<sup>1</sup> “Labor, for the anthropology of power and social relations, is its ability to be appropriated and enforced” (Silliman 2001:380). Labor, done at someone else’s bidding, is an embedded mechanism in colonial relationships with Indigenous people (Lightfoot 2005; Resendez 2017; Sunseri 2020). This embedded mechanism carried all the conditions necessary for commodification to continue under capitalism when America assumed control of power (1846) and California gained statehood in 1850 (Street 2004:109, 121).

Colonial policies produced two significant social mechanisms: labor relative to houses and farms, and relationships between laborers and priests that divided neophytes by gender and age; each gender was subject to disciplinary measures regarding labor done.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary scholarship (e.g., Bauer 2016; Castillo 1978, 1994; Jackson 1994; Jackson and Castillo 1995; Lightfoot 2005; Madley 2016; Milliken 1995, 2008; Phillips 2010; Resendez 2017; Thornton 1987) has demonstrated that these two mechanisms were often sources of both physical

and mental suffering for neophytes to varying degrees, depending on gender and individual priest. To gain a clearer understanding of how suffering embedded in the structures of colonial society transitioned into similar Americanized conditions, we use Farmer’s six “triage” questions (listed below) as research themes:

- (1) Can we identify the worst assaults?
- (2) Who are those most at risk of great suffering?
- (3) Among the nonfatal, is it possible to identify those most at risk of sustaining permanent and disabling damage?
- (4) Are certain “event” assaults (e.g., torture, rape) more likely to lead to later sequels than sustained and insidious suffering (e.g., poverty or racism pain)?
- (5) Are certain forms of insidious discrimination demonstrably more noxious than others?
- (6) How are agencies constrained? How can individual experience and structural violence embedded in the larger social matrix be remedied? [Farmer 2003:576].

Working chronologically, we apply these questions first to colonialized California to understand the distribution and depth of suffering experienced by Native populations between the years 1775 and 1849, and then to Americanized California during the years 1850–1924. Second, beginning in 1863, we consider the earliest known members of the Orta family and compare their experiences against those of the larger Native population during these years in order to understand the family’s experiences within the larger context. In the next generation we include ethnographic information from Niles, California, where descendant members and remembered friends resided during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Social relationships with Chochenyo speakers in Monterey, California, provide additional social memories from these years. Third, the social cohesiveness that we find illuminates our investigation of Gilded Age policies regarding industrial labor, blatant discrimination, and the negotiations that Ruth’s mother Trina made with her circumstances that enabled the family to achieve middle-class status. By delineating the traumas, deaths, and upheavals in the sections above, we find a niche where family trauma reflects that of the larger Native population. The reader

can see how an individual response to difficult circumstances mirrors group sentiments regarding survival. Additionally, it is possible to see how the choices that one individual makes can change the social trajectory of future generations. The answer to our research question, “How did this family extract themselves from the mental and physical duress of the “unfreedoms” visited upon Native Californians and enter middle-class mainstream society?” becomes apparent. Finally, with data in hand, we explore the current family commitment to activism within public organizations to investigate ideas about ethnogenesis, persistence, maintenance, or other putatively significant aspects of Native agency that can now be asserted since the Civil Rights movement created a social space for that purpose.

### DATA COLLECTION: METHODS AND DILEMMAS

This is not the usual record of anthropological research because this project had no time constraints. The people involved did not all live in one geographic location nor at the same time, although everyone had emotional ties to family in Pleasanton, Niles, Niles Canyon, or Newark, Cal. Proprietary sentiments regarding family records held by Mission San Jose created ongoing challenges to accessing information. The collection of family information followed advice given to Olsen by Dr. Alfonso Ortiz at

the University of New Mexico, who suggested that while interviewing, “let it (the conversation) flow. If it goes off track, that’s ok. The topic is important to the person talking” (A. Ortiz, personal communication 1995). Like one long, flowing conversation, the authors talked and traveled to inspect both heritage and archaeological sites. Collecting information flowed around the authors’ lives while taking care of families and working either full-time (Orta) or part-time (Olsen). Despite obstacles, the authors have now amassed more memories than there is space in which to share them.

### Collecting Family Oral History

Ruth Orta and Nancy Olsen became acquainted in 1981, during the early days of the Muwekma organization (Olsen et al. 2021). Rosemary Cambra asked Olsen for help in researching Rosemary’s Indigenous family tree in 1981. Several trips to Mission San Jose uncovered baptismal, marriage, and death register information for the family, curated by archivist Rev. William N. Abeloe in the Mission offices. He copied the birth record of Ruth’s grandmother (Rosemary’s great-grandmother) and other records important to the Sanchez-Franco-Cambra family. All records of Ruth’s grandmother’s and grandfather’s offspring were found and copied. (Fig. 2). That search linked the Galvan, Orta, and the Sanchez-Franco-Cambra families together as descendants of one couple, Avelina Coronates and Raphael Marine.

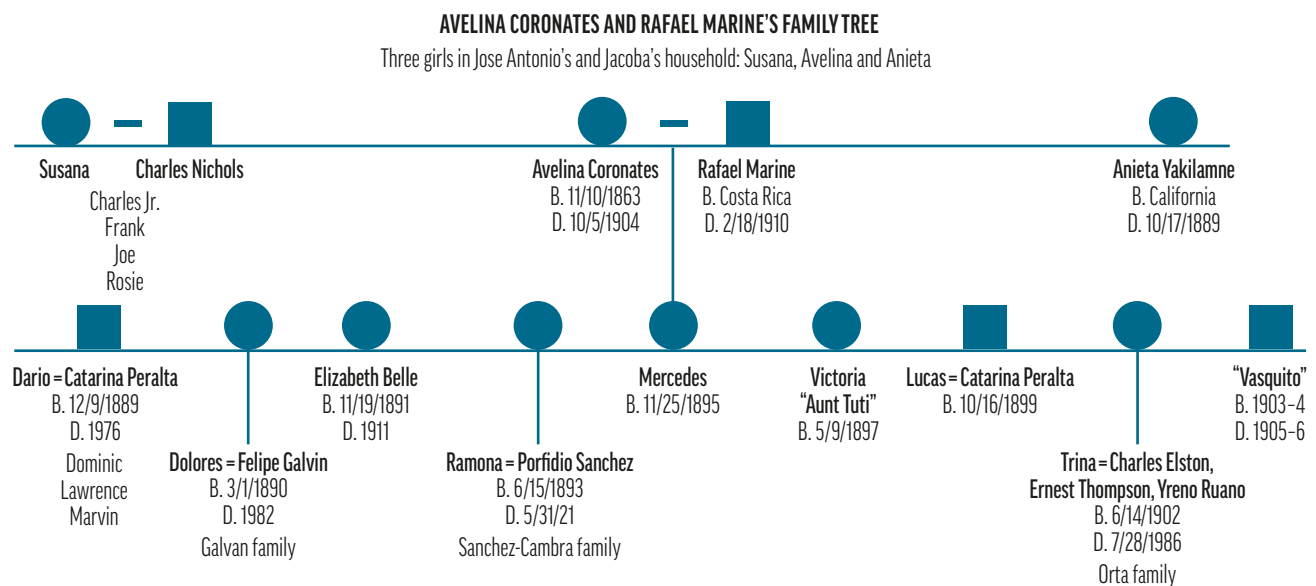


Figure 2. Avelina Coronates and Raphael Marine Family Tree.

Ruth came to organizational meetings held at San Jose State University, where Alan Leventhal (at that time an archaeological lab technician) provided an empty classroom on weekends to plan a “tribal council” (Personal communication, Rosemary Cambra 1981). About a year later Ruth organized a family gathering at her mother’s (Trina Marine Ruano) house in Newark that Cambra and Olsen attended. Over time, organizational meetings became difficult due to conflicting opinions held by attending family and Monterey representatives about organizational priorities. Olsen began research at the Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley, finding more microfilm of Mission Dolores and Mission San Jose baptismal, marriage, and death registers. Those records provided information on the Sanchez-Franco family, as well as some interesting links with early Mission Dolores neophytes. Randall Milliken assisted the record research by sharing translations of Spanish and Latin phrases he had accumulated in his own work with mission records. U.S. Census records in San Bruno produced more evidence of family members or people remembered by the Orta family as living in Niles. Stanford University Library has a Pacific Slope Collection of early California local history. In 1890, Stanford historian Mary S. Barnes interviewed remaining Spanish colonial descendants as well as a Native descendant from Mission Dolores, Pedro Evencio, whom she photographed with his two sons in Redwood City (Barnes 1894). He was probably the uncle of José Avencho (also Evencio; Harrington Reel 36:20, Fr.4), who became known as José Guzman (Merriam 1967:368) and was featured in Harrington’s notes and other ethnographic records. Family interviews were conducted with Lawrence and Virginia Nichols (Nichols and Nichols 1986), with Enos Sanchez (Sanchez 1985), Dolores Sanchez-Franco (in April 1983), and with Ruth Orta and her mother Trina and husband Joe Ruano (Sanchez 1985 in February 1986; Ruano 1984). Trina died in May 1986, and Ruth delayed further family research while the family mourned her passing.

We resumed research in 1998. Ruth applied to the Bureau of Indian Affairs for copies of her family’s applications to the California Indian Rolls from 1928. From 2002 to 2010, we worked on building the family tree and traveled to Pleasanton, Sunol, and Niles, mentally noting the locations of the old rancheria, the roundhouse, and the spot where the Orta family picnicked in Niles Canyon as

children to honor their Indigenous heritage (Fig. 3). We visited St. Mary of the Palms Convent for Trina’s records, as well as mortuaries and graveyards to locate places where Ruth’s mother had lived as a child and where she was buried. Our research has been supported by funding received from the California Council for the Humanities.<sup>3</sup>

Covid-19 restrictions presented a unique opportunity for Olsen to access J. P. Harrington’s Chochenyo notes (1921–1937), which are digitized and available online from the Smithsonian’s National Anthropological Archives. Harrington’s Chochenyo notes stemmed from his efforts to collect information about dialects spoken by Ohlone descendants living in the Bay Area in 1921. While answering questions regarding how certain phrases should be said in Chochenyo, respondents spontaneously digressed to tell Harrington about their lives in Niles, Livermore Valley, and Monterey-Carmel, California. Harrington recorded everything that was said in writing, in half-Spanish, half-English texts. The number of times that respondents spontaneously recalled accidents, violent incidents, personal tragedies, and difficult relationships, inspired our focus on structural violence.

#### *Mission Registers*

Native voices, first heard in any numbers by Franciscan padres, were filtered through the cultural lens of the Spanish language; what Natives said was spelled out using the Roman alphabet. Although baptismal, marriage, and death records were consistently kept by all priests at all missions, no consistency existed within the missions or between priests regarding the spelling of people’s names or the places where they lived. Each priest adhered to his own system of spelling whenever sounds in Miwok, Chochenyo, Mutsun, Rumsen, Esselen, or Yokuts were heard (see Milliken 1995:Appendix 1). Natives’ Indigenous names were replaced by Roman Catholic names in the registers of baptism, while place names attached to individual names became the only documented specific ethnic identity for many.<sup>4</sup> However, general ethnic identity was distinguished consistently in baptismal, marriage, and death records within and between missions according to the established *castos*, thus fixing *Indios* in a separate, permanent social category. It should be noted, however, that under Mexican law, Natives were considered citizens and human beings, eligible to receive sacraments from the Church.





**Figure 3. Picnic in Niles Canyon, 1957–58.**

**Back Row:** Irene Ruano, Lola's friend Alice Ayala, Ydie's wife Sue Walker Ruano.

**Middle row:** Lola Thompson, Trina Marine Elston Thompson Ruano, Ruth Thompson Orta.

**Front row:** Raymond Orta Jr., Roberta Orta (Lacey), Ramona Orta (Garibay).

**Framing the picture overhead is the bridge over Niles Creek on Highway 84.**

For research purposes, the *Indios* designation is helpful at present since everyone listed in church records had, or were given, Spanish names. However, priests recycled Spanish baptismal names among the neophytes, making positive identification of a specific individual difficult (see Sandos and Sandos 2014:597–98). Franciscan priests added the marital status of the parents to baptismal records—whether it was legitimate (recognized by the Church) or not. For Church members, this notation could be legal documentation for the inheritance of parents' estates. For Natives, who had their own marriage customs and adhered to them, the lack of formal marriage in the church was a constant frustration.<sup>5</sup> Our research identified few family marriages in the registers, while baptisms abounded.

Other notations made by priests identify Native social statuses; *alcaldes* (captains/mayors) and *regidores*

(councilmen) are particularly significant in terms of secular interaction, witnesses, and godparents identified in religious contexts (Milliken 1995). Early in the religious logs, witnesses and godparents were chosen by the priests (Sandos 2004:42); by the 1880s and 1890s, when Avelina and Rafael Marine baptized their offspring, godparents were from the immediate family.

#### **FRAMING CALIFORNIA HISTORY THROUGH THE LENS OF COLONIALISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM**

Farmer's first three questions are easy to answer for the Mission and Mexican Rancho periods (1769–1850), as well as for the period of early American statehood (1850–1924), because not only were those years well documented by the “Do-ers,” but they were also well researched by



historians, ethnohistorians, and more recently historical archaeologists. In light of present records (Akin and Bauer 2021; Arkush 2011; Arrigoni 2021; Bauer 2016; Bean 1994; Bean and Blackburn 1976; Castillo 1994; Cordero 2015; Hull and Douglass 2018; Hurtado 1988; Jackson 1994; Jackson and Castillo 1995; Lightfoot 2005; Lightfoot et al. 2013; Milliken 1995, 2008; Nelson 2021; Peelo et al. 2018; Phillips 1993, 2010; Sandos 2004; Sandos and Sandos 2014; Schneider 2015a, 2015b; Silliman 2001, 2005, 2009; Skowronek 1998; Sunseri 2020; Voss 2005, 2012, 2015), it is apparent that although Indigenous peoples were attempting to maintain their customary social and religious practices while they were living at missions, albeit among individuals from mixed cultures (Lightfoot 2005:27), all Indigenous people were expected to conform to an alien, demanding culture where privileges of social, political, and human rights were extended only sparingly (i.e., the “unfreedoms”—Deloria 2021; Lightfoot 2005:25). Based on the priests’ communications with their superiors in their reports and in the *Interrogatorio* of 1811 (Kroeber 1908)—which consisted of a series of questions that were sent by the *Viceregal* of the Mexican government to missions in Alta California regarding the customs and wellbeing of their Native neophytes—it is clear that the priests were aware that they were engaged in types of violence, locally as well as system-wide, but that they were able to resolve this conundrum of Franciscan beliefs vs. Native reality through Church doctrine (Street 2004:47)—an elision in itself.

#### *Question 1. Can we identify the worst assaults?*

Western European perceptions of entitlement and superiority set in motion the worst assaults targeting Native Californians. Control of the population through missionization was the ultimate goal locally (Madley 2016:29); control of the western edge of North America was Spain/Mexico’s goal internationally (Jackson and Castillo 1995:107; Lightfoot 2005:19; Street 2004:6). Massing people together in order to have a workforce may have been grounded in a feudal notion of lord-peasant relationship in which the peasant contributes work that supports the lord and his own family, in return for protection—in this case, theoretically, spiritual protection, in a situation where only one side understood or was familiar with the notion. Instead, California missionization functioned as a form of ethnocide (Akins and Bauer

2021:138; Bauer 2016:56; see Phillips 2010:18–19), since the Spanish needed people to do the physical work while they completely devalued Native systems they then adapted to benefit inhabitants of a Mediterranean environment (Voss 2015:111). Egalitarian notions of cooperation and stewardship of the earth might seem to be compatible with Franciscan views, but in Hispanic California cultural ideas of superiority and a hierarchical system of communication that the missions adhered to resulted in misunderstandings on both sides. For Natives, the loss of life was only half of the issue. According to Native scholars (Akins and Bauer 2021; Bauer 2016), loss of religious knowledge also changed Indigenous belief systems permanently, since all of the knowledge and practices engaged in by the elders existed orally and were normally passed on in person. The death of many elders created unbridgeable gaps in oral traditions, and new resistant beliefs and neovitalistic practices—such as the *Kuksui* (a form of the Ghost Dance) and *Bole Maru* (involving dreamers who prophesied the future)—replaced older religious forms (Bauer 2016:54). Separation from ancestral spaces created generations of Native descendants born in mission environments who were unfamiliar with the sacred places associated with their oral traditions (Akins and Bauer 2021:67). The Americans who followed were predisposed to undervalue Indigenous people, since Spanish Mexican colonialization had already assigned California Natives to the social and economic bottom of their society, creating a ready workforce for American industry. In addition, Natives killed cattle, stole horses, and were thought to be less than civilized (Farquhar 1966; Fremont 2019[1887]). To counter this perceived wrongdoing, California’s first Governor Burnett advocated vigilantism. During early American occupation, vigilantism evolved into full-blown genocide (Bauer 2021:138; Madley 2016). Some examples are listed below.

During the early contact period, when exposure to European diseases severely tested Native survival, hundreds of deaths of neophytes and their children were recorded, and Native population plummeted (Bauer 2016:3; Cook 1976; Jackson and Castillo 1995; Madley 2016; Milliken 1995, 2008; Phillips 1993). The scholars who have analyzed these records have shown that the frequency of epidemics and endemic diseases made birth rates unable to overtake death rates, causing population collapse.

In addition, the entire Indigenous population was permanently assigned to a socio-economic level of servitude that justified physical punishments for mission infractions (Lightfoot 2005:19; Phillips 1993:157; Street 2004:41). The harshness of punishments seemed to increase as priests' frustrations increased over time in concert with Native noncompliance with mission goals and way of life. Secular punishment for cattle raiding and horse stealing involved military retaliations inland (Phillips 1993:116), in which massacres of whole villages occurred (Madley 2016). Arkush (2011:83) suggests that resistance to mission work was ever present among Indigenous laborers as a means of controlling some part of their lives. Jackson and Castillo (1995) have elaborated on mission-wide resistances by all Indigenous people who encountered Spanish intrusions.

Native labor, scholars now agree, enabled Franciscan and secular projects to succeed (Akins and Bauer 2021; Hurtado 1988; Lightfoot 2005, 2018; Phillips 1993; Resendez 2017; Thornton 1987) but at an enormous cost to Native physical and mental health. If Milliken (1995:112) and Jackson and Castillo (1995:51) are correct in their summations of the psychological effects of living a mission life, trauma—derived from a strict daily schedule marked by bells and the constant threat of punishment—produced monotony (Street 2004:42). We do not suggest that Natives lost all traditional knowledge, since current archaeology demonstrates clearly that many aspects of local culture continued (Curry 2022; Hull and Douglas 2018; Schneider 2015b; Voss 2015). Missions brought together people from different cultures, which set in motion a mixing of cultural knowledge as well the domination of one language over another (e.g., Plains Miwok over Yokuts at Mission San Jose in 1826; Milliken 2008:65).

Second-class citizenship devolved during the period of early American statehood into stereotyped stigmas of “wild” or “tame” Indians (Farquhar 1966). “Wild” Indians were Natives from the interior, while “tame” Indians were missionized Natives that were therefore tolerable as domestic servants and field laborers.

The elision of violence by the Franciscans created a Church-centric style of communicating about mission life—the conflicts, punishments, and loss of life—among Church officials in their correspondence with each other and with the Mexican government that created another mental gap in thinking about the past (see Beebe and

Senkewicz 2001). The Church's custom of elision migrated into academic circles in history and anthropology and lasted until civil rights movements in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s initiated new paradigms, and Natives began speaking for themselves about their experiences (Akins and Bauer 2021; Alonzo 2009; Arkush 2011; Bauer 2016; Crozier-Hogle and Wilson 1997; Nelson 2021; Schneider 2015a, 2015b; Wilson 1998, 2007). Few historians addressed the issue of trauma until historical archaeology re-addressed colonialism in the new millennium.

Conversion of the Bay Area environment to support agriculture gradually destroyed the Indigenous economy and the sociopolitical networks that relied on it (Bauer 2016:57; Lightfoot 2005:44; Thornton 1987:51; Voss 2015:128), exposing Native Californians to the permanent risk of hunger. For example, if the argument made by Lightfoot and Parish is correct (2009:136), the fire management practices of California Natives helped to sustain a rich and diverse environment prior to the arrival of Europeans, and forcing the Native population into the missions severed them from their stewardship of the environment. Domesticated animals (e.g., pigs) uprooted caches of food stored by Natives (Bauer 2016:57). However, hunting, fishing, and the gathering of plants/herbs/quail eggs, and grubs in Niles Canyon continued right into the 1930s, according to Harrington respondents (Harrington 1921–1936:Reels 36, 37, 51, 71–80), as a supplement to daily wage work. Akins and Bauer (2021:123) note that the Nisenan lived on “mixed wage labor and traditional subsistence,” as did many others around the state. To combat the risk of hunger, Native men raided the mission and rancho herds for meat, preferring horses to other animals because they could be used as transportation until they were needed for food (Lightfoot 2005; Madley 2016:184; Milliken 1995; Phillips 1993:104–105). Fremont (2019[1887]) noted in 1846 that missionized Natives were known as “horse-thieving tribes” in the ranchos in the Bay Area. The poaching of livestock by one or two men, however, put entire Native villages at risk of retaliation by the Spanish and Mexican military, by American vigilantes, and ultimately by the American military (Madley 2016).

### *Question 2. Who was most at risk of suffering?*

The entire Indigenous population was at risk, but for a variety of reasons. Although disease does not distin-

guish and took the lives of people of all ages and genders, children and babies were most at risk during the mission period because they were closely confined in unhealthy conditions (Jackson 1983:53; Jackson and Castillo 1995:48). Jackson (1983:53) cites the custom of locking Natives (especially women and girls) inside their accommodations at night to protect them from “assaults.” Jackson states that the custom, intended to secure women and children from harm, actually exposed them to not only a variety of endemic diseases such as dysentery, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and influenza, but also to the unsavory advances of priests (Jackson 1983:38, 102–104). Among adults in mission populations, the daily fare changed from a broad, rich, nourishing diet to a narrow one of *atole* (wheat/corn mush; Beebe and Senkewicz 2001:485) and *posole* (cornmeal, beans, hominy, marrow bones and scraps; Beebe and Senkewicz 2001:487) that occasionally contained meat (Jackson 1983:39). Jackson suggests that this steady diet did not supply enough nutrients to sustain health, making neophytes more susceptible to disease (Jackson and Castillo 1995:45).

Close contact with Europeans and crowded living conditions in mission villages acted like a petri dish for European contagious diseases. Milliken (1995:79, 173–200) lists epidemics that occurred in 1777, 1785, 1802, 1806 (measles), and 1810–1811 (smallpox); during these years hundreds of neophytes died from infectious diseases such as measles, smallpox, pneumonia, syphilis, and malaria. Infections such as diphtheria, typhus, or scarlet fever stemming from inadequate sanitation caused healthy neophytes to flee the threat of sickness or death (Jackson 1983:38; Lightfoot 2005:78; Thornton 1987:85). A passage written by Fr. Francis McCarthy (1958:187), historian of Mission San Jose, quotes Father Nicasio Duran as lamenting that “400 neophytes left Mission San Jose all at once May 15, 1827, making [Fr. Duran] disconsolate.” Neither Father Duran nor Father McCarthy, writing 131 years apart, made the connection between an ongoing measles epidemic at Mission San Jose that began in January 1827 and killed over 100 adults and children by mid-April (Valle 1973), and the mission’s abandonment in May 1827.

Women of childbearing age were particularly at risk; they often did not live for long after delivery, thereby reducing the reproductive health of the whole population (Brady et al. 1984:142; Castillo 1994; Jackson 1983:41;

Jackson and Castillo 1995:57; Thornton 1987:84). As populations diminished, missionaries sent out raiding parties to replenish them with additional Indigenous people to replace the earlier workforce (Lightfoot 2005; Milliken 1995, 2008).<sup>6</sup> Missions became plural settlements with several subcultures (Peelo et al. 2018:184). Women used marriage outside of their home subculture as a way to create networks through which they could maneuver (Peelo, et al. 2018:227). Life expectancy, however, was low in mission communities in comparison with Hispanic communities living away from the missions (Jackson and Castillo 1995:58). Jackson has argued that going to a mission was a death sentence for many members of the Native population (1983:53).

Men were also at risk defending their villages and families. During the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s, official reports written by Hispanic military and civilian personnel describe raids carried out on native villages, and bluntly enumerate how many people were killed or taken prisoner, how many horses were retrieved, and how few Indigenous souls got away (see Beebe and Senkewicz 2001; Milliken 1995). Indigenous men were the defenders of their home villages and were always at risk of death in these raids, carried out first by the Spanish/Mexican military (Milliken 1995) and then by American vigilantes and military (Madley 2016). The Hispanic military was the legal arm of the colonial system and was granted authority even over the missions (Sandos 2004). Missionaries used the military to search out neophytes who had gone home but not returned to their mission. The legal system brought from Mexico by the colonizers seems to have been countered to some extent, according to Phillips (1993) and Thornton (1987), by Natives trying to survive this unfamiliar system and asserting agency. While Hispanic officers assumed that the taking of prisoners and/or the killing of Indigenous men, women, and children was a necessary and deserved outcome (e.g., Beebe and Senkewicz 2001:367), Native Californians—who had no commitment to that legal system—were learning (Milliken 1995:72–4, 279–80, 2008:37, 67), and retaliated heavily starting in the mid-1840s and into the 1860s (Phillips 1993:135).

Madley (2016:50) has pointed out that although raids and deaths occurred, the number of Indigenous people killed during the Mission and Mexican Rancho periods was fairly limited, because Indigenous people were also

the laborers who supported the economy. After American statehood, the number of both direct and indirect forms of killing increased (Madley 2016:11). Madley describes the development of a policy of punishment involving Native Californians that included the kidnapping of children to be sold into unwritten bondage and the massacre of whole villages by first vigilantes, then the California militia, and finally the U. S. Army. The covert motive was the acquisition of land (e.g., Madley 2016:184). Is it possible that the addition of new sources of labor (i.e., immigrants from Meso- and South America, Asia, and Europe) may have relaxed constraints on killing?

*Question 3: Among the non-fatal is it possible to identify those most at risk of sustaining permanent and disabling damage?*

Native women were always at risk of being assaulted by soldiers and priests (e.g., Jayme 2001), and they sustained a variety of permanent, disabling damages such as venereal diseases that Indigenous remedies could not cure. Assaults by soldiers and priests also carried the potential of an unwanted pregnancy, which Native women dealt with through abortion or infanticide (Castillo 1978:102–04 in Thornton 1987:85). Castillo notes that “white babies were not welcome in missions at all” (Thornton 1987:85). The “permanent damage” that resulted from these attacks, however, was not necessarily lives ruined for decades, but rather lives shortened through infection during childbirth, abortion, or infanticide. Others adapted their lives to immediate contingencies, learning to be “invisible” (Brady et al. 1984). Assaults of every kind affirmed stories passed through word of mouth and created and reinforced a determination to resist at all costs (Brady et al. 1984:141).

### **INDIGENOUS EXPERIENCES IN THE “LIGHT” OF ANGLO CULTURE, 1850–1940**

After California achieved statehood, violence initiated by the priests as punishment and the Hispanic military as retaliation for stealing was replaced by blatant racism on the part of Anglo-Americans, based on a federal policy that expected Native Californians to either die or be annihilated (Madley 2016:185; Resendez 2017:262–63; Sunseri 2020:xix). At the same time, the Civil War was still eleven years in the future and people of color—

both African Americans and Native Americans—were socially constricted by general assumptions about racial inferiority, and by public forms of bondage and unfreedoms in the South and West (Resendez 2017). The last three “triage” questions are best answered by addressing the social and political changes taking place in California, due to changes in political power and increasing population diversity associated with the gold rush.

*Question 4. Are certain “event” assaults (e.g., torture/rape) more likely to lead to later sequels than sustained and insidious suffering (e.g., poverty pain or racism pain?)*

While the rape of Native women by both priests and soldiers, or torture in the form of punishment of neophytes for their perceived misbehavior by priests during the Mission period, could be counted as “event assaults,” scholars of California history find types of assaults and torture increasing after statehood due to the rapidly expanding immigration of Americans seeking wealth in the gold fields or immigrants from Europe and Asia seeking work, freedom, and wealth. Immediately after statehood was ratified, Congress passed the “Vagabond Act,” which made it possible to acquire Native Californians as laborers without rights (Hurtado 1988:5; Madley 2016:157; Resendez 2017:564–65). The Act was used as an excuse to kidnap Native children and transport them to farming communities to be raised as servants in a household (Brady et al. 1984:144; Madley 2016:162; Resendez 2017:265; also see Harrington 1929:Reel 36:45). According to Heizer (1993[1974]), the California State Legislature passed the Act “for the Government and Protection of Indians” during its first legislative session in 1850. The overt intent was to prevent harm coming to Indigenous people, but covertly the purpose was to gain workers at little cost. The Act was repealed in 1863 when federal emancipation laws were enacted. Heizer noted that between 1850 and 1863 about 10,000 Indigenous children were indentured or sold (1974:219).

Considering that the law was repealed in 1863, it is alarming to note that Brewer could write in the same year that “It has for years been a regular business to steal Indian children and bring them down to the civilized parts of the state, even to San Francisco, and sell them—not as slaves, but as servants to be kept as long as



possible” (Farquar 1966:493)—as though there was no end in sight for the practice. From various accounts, we learn that children were sold to families as servants, and that John Sutter, M. G. Vallejo, and other prominent rancho families in the Bay Area were active in promoting these arrangements (Madley 2016:175, 293). Madley maintains that raids and killings which began as random acts of violence (or event assaults) between local whites and Natives evolved into systematized massacres of whole groups of Native people by official federal and state troopers; i.e., genocidal acts of violence. Ishi's account, as reported to Alfred Kroeber, provides an insider's experience (Kroeber 1961; see Madley 2016). The Native response to these assaults was to pass as a member of a different culture or to hide (Bradey et al. 1984; R. Orta, personal communication 2021) as forms of resistance.

Indigenous women were always at risk of ‘event assaults’ on the part of Euromerican men, no matter what period is studied. Hiding, running away, or remaining invisible were the paths to self-preservation. Brady et al. (1984), in discussing Native women's difficulties with American policy, noted that “The years of indiscriminate massacres and rounding up had produced an intense Indian distrust of whites. Women learned that their personal survival and the survival of their family and their community depended, in part, on their ability to keep a low profile and to teach their children to hide” (1984:146). Marrying outside of one's Indigenous culture provided women with kinship links to groups with public agency and civic participation, as well as being “safe cover” for one's Native identity (Castillo 1978; Lightfoot 2005:89; Thornton:1987:85). Madley (2016:162) points out that through all these incidents, since California Indians were not officially considered citizens of the United States, they had no recourse to justice in the court system, thus negating the Native agency of individuals and groups.

*Question 5. Are certain forms of insidious discrimination demonstrably more noxious than others?*

The Native loss of autonomy with respect to life and land because of widespread discrimination towards a hunting-gathering way of life (Bauer 2016; Lightfoot 2005) affected generations of Native Californians. They were originally perceived by the dominant Spanish/Mexican culture as unintelligent, and were treated like children (Bauer 2016:55–6). John C. Fremont, writing

in 1846 from the San Jose area, noted that “in this region the condition of the Indians is nearly akin to that of the lower animals. Here they are really wild men” (2019[1887]). People dependent on domesticated plants and animals found it difficult to comprehend an absence of agriculture, especially in such a rich environment as the Bay Area. This perception by Anglo Americans was reinforced by using the term “Digger Indian” (e.g., Farquhar 1966), which became a stigmatic label applied to any California Native by outsiders. Blurred or mixed cultural identities made it more difficult to demonstrate Native identity or sovereignty in the land claims lawsuit brought against the U. S. government in 1927 (Bauer 2016:25). Lacking formal citizenship until 1924 (Bauer 2016:105), Indigenous people remained in political limbo, without recourse to courts or a system of justice to remedy the many wrongs done to them both individually and culturally. Lacking sovereignty, Natives had approximately the same status in the U.S. as new immigrants (Sunseri 2020:xix).

Due to the Franciscan/*Californio* legacy of economic and social peonage, California Natives, as an ethnic group, remained at the bottom of the economic system of labor that industry exploited. Poverty, for Indigenous people, was constant right through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and for some still exists. Farmers expected Natives to continue supplying labor since one of the “unfreedoms” was that Native labor was transferred by word of mouth with the sale of the property to a new owner (see Cherrington 1920). However, the land Natives lived on was not secure. For example, the Pleasanton rancheria between Sunol and Pleasanton was part of a tract of land purchased in 1874 by the Spring Valley Water Company as a water source for San Francisco. Occupants of the rancheria may have lived in that location since prehistoric times, since a Native presence was documented in 1868 by an official survey of Rancho Arroyo de la Alameda.<sup>7</sup> The Bernal brothers, Augustin and Juan Pablo, as well as Antonio Maria Pico and Antonio Sunol, acquired pastureland from Mission San Jose after secularization (Rancho Valle de San Jose; Hoover et al. 1966:18–19). Archaeology has demonstrated that the Orta family is linked to this area through DNA matches with remains from a large local site near I-680<sup>8</sup> (Brown 2022; Curry 2022; Estes et al. 2016; Price et al. 2002; Sanchez 1985).

The occupants of the Pleasanton rancheria were forced to abandon their homes when the Spring Valley Water Company began building a reservoir (Calaveras Reservoir) in 1911 (Sanchez 1985). Where did they go? Some were able to homestead on farms where they worked (e.g., the Parks' ranch on Calaveras Road) but others just lived under the trees and in the farm fields (Sanchez 1985). Others moved to Niles, where J. P. Harrington interviewed them between 1921 and 1937. Native sovereignty was never an issue during all of these legal transactions.

The loss of cultural identity and sovereignty was one goal of a federal plan begun during the Grant administration (1862) to resolve "the Indian Problem." Popularly termed "Grant's Peace Pact," it was actually an active ethnic cleansing project (Federis and Kim 2021). One objective of the Indian schools that were established by the federal government was to eliminate Native culture and replace it with American culture, while simultaneously preparing growing children for a life of service (Federis and Kim 2021). Native California parents told their children throughout the 1950s to "say you're Mexican" to avoid being sold for labor or inducted into Indian Schools (R. Orta, personal communication 2021). One noxious effect that Indian schools had on children who survived the experience and graduated was a lack of self-identity (Federis and Kim 2021; Madley 2016:176). Haalan, the new Secretary of the Interior, has recently reopened an investigation into the Indian School experience (Federis and Kim 2021).

*Question 6. How are agencies constrained?*

*How can individual experience and structural violence embedded in the larger social matrix be remedied?*

"When you are poor, nobody listens to you, not even the (local) school board!" (R. Orta, personal communication 2020). Poverty, according to Farmer (2003), is not accidental—rather it is the outcome of embedded mechanisms of oppression operating through generations. Phillips (2010:164) noted that in 1834 "...the secularization of the missions did not free the neophytes but placed them under different management. They were denied title to land. True ownership of the animals and equipment placed in their care was also denied. In effect, the property was to be collectively, not individually, transferred." This reflects the way that Natives were perceived by rancho

society—as a group, not as individuals. The Hispanics and then the Anglo-Americans coerced an entire ethnic group of people into conditions of servitude, and held them there through social and economic hegemony, because the labor pool was convenient, particularly for California's emerging agricultural industry (Street 2004:135). The social distance between the landowners, who were predominantly of Anglo or Western European descent, and the laborers who at first were primarily Native American (Phillips 2010:290), expanded into a stigmatization of field workers as "the lowest of the low, a segregated nonunion labor force composed of immigrants, social misfits, Native Americans, and other dispossessed people" (Street 2004:xviii). Asians and Mexicans added complexity to the field workforce as industry expanded, and willing hands were needed for building such things as railroads, flour mills, and lumber camps. Agency for field workers during the last half of the nineteenth century, the Gilded Age, was more negotiable through forms of resistance to discrimination (Sunseri 2020:7). Natives, women as well as men, applied their agency to manipulating their immediate situation to advantageous ends to survive (Brady et al. 1984:149).

Blatant racism in nineteenth century "Gilded Age" industry constrained Indigenous agency by segregating housing and jobs of different ethnic groups (Sunseri 2020:6). Parts of a new industrial town became sectioned off in places where Natives lived, and jobs were allocated by skill. Natives were assumed to be unskilled and lacking in education, and thus continued as farm laborers. Additionally, violence associated with vigilante massacres and military attacks on Natives drove Indigenous agency "underground" until the advent of the Civil Rights movement. This situation was a direct result of a history of event assaults on California Natives. The need to survive meant remaining "below the radar" of public officials, socially "passing" as Mexican, and intentionally blending with the Latino communities of San Jose and the East Bay and establishing social alliances through kinship and work. This was the immediate response to the violence that many Ohlone women adopted (R. Orta, personal communication 2021). A large majority of Natives preferred to hide or remain invisible and *not* be counted by U.S. Census takers (Brady 1984:146; R. Orta, personal communication 2020). By not attracting public attention, one could survive. This "secretive mode" of

living far below the radar of public notice or participation was a strategy for cultural survival that also led not only to isolation from civic life but also engendered very little power, outside of traditional Native skills, that might help local members when accidents and calamities had life-threatening consequences (Harrington 1921–1937).

It follows that “invisibility” evolved into public ignorance that California Natives continued to live in places holding heritage memories in the East Bay area. That ignorance constrained Indigenous agency. In the 1970s, city managers were reluctant to give contracts for land development to people they considered ethnically Mexican but who claimed to be Native. Archaeologists were more understanding and hired descendants as monitors after a 1974 state law was passed (Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act) that required developers to salvage all cultural information from an area under development before building could take place (Archaeological and Historical Preservation Act of 1974).

To date, the most positive strategy has involved the education of the public. For example, activist Native organizations such as The Confederated Villages of Lisjan led by Tribal Chair Corina E. Gould have sponsored Shell Mound Walks to educate the public about remaining shell mounds around San Francisco Bay that were once occupied by Ohlone ancestors. East Bay Regional Park, Coyote Hills sponsored a yearly Ohlone Gathering event where many Ohlone descendants came together to dance, renew old connections, and demonstrate Indigenous skills for the education of the public. Ramona Garibay, Ruth Orta's oldest daughter, and her family are active in local archaeology, representing the closest descendants of ancestral sites in the East Bay. They monitor developmental sites for local CRM archaeologists.

Members of the Orta family are learning about their ancestral past, gaining knowledge about environmental resources and skills that ancestral Ohlone developed to turn materials into tools or household items, and relearning the Chochenyo language. Ruth Orta and other Ohlone activists consult with local museums and colleges to educate the public (Yamane and Kehl 2012). Ohlone efforts to enlighten the public have become increasingly successful, in part due to the cooperation between CRM archaeologists and Native people, compliance laws

and regulations such as NEPA and CEQA [AB52], and outreach efforts undertaken by California Natives at conferences, with local historical societies, and with their sponsored museums, community colleges, and self-sponsored interpretation projects (e.g., Sayers 2005, 2020).

A review of the answers to Farmer's “triage” questions regarding structural violence in California's past leaves no doubt about why it has been so difficult for local Native Californians to regain social power and agency. For example, an application for federal recognition of tribal status was turned down as recently as 2018 because the people “no longer existed” (Eigen-Vasquez 2018:11). If one considers the multiple ways in which dominant cultures have tried to assimilate or eradicate Indigenous cultures, is it any wonder that the Federal decision was made, based as it was on assumed or very outdated information? Strategic invisibility enabled “disappearing” Natives to survive many forms of discrimination, but they risked the possibility of quickly being replaced in the workforce by immigrants anxious to make a living (Street 2004:157). Racist policies initiated first by the Franciscans, the Spanish Mexican military, and the *Californios* were continued and expanded in the American industrial economy. Ranchers, farmers, and vineyards, all of whom required land, removed Indigenous villages and expropriated hunting/collecting spaces by force or by attrition. Natives endured around the edges or by fading into the landscape.

Harrington's notes contain information obtained from Natives living in Niles that corroborates more recent investigations carried out by historical archaeologists (Bauer 2016; Cordero 2015; Lightfoot 2005; Peelo 2010; Schneider 2015b; Voss 2008, 2015), who have shown that Indigenous cultures continued to function within the mission and post-mission society. Trauma and sizeable death counts appear to have blotted out specific cultural details, but knowledge of Native identity is secure. Ruth and her family have always known they are part of the Indigenous landscape through Trina Marine Ruano, Ruth's mother, who never tired of telling her family that “you are Indian, be proud of it!” The fact that Natives continued to maintain their own identity, knowledge, and beliefs is a monumental tribute to tenacity. Despite population reduction, Natives became the backbone of labor in California.

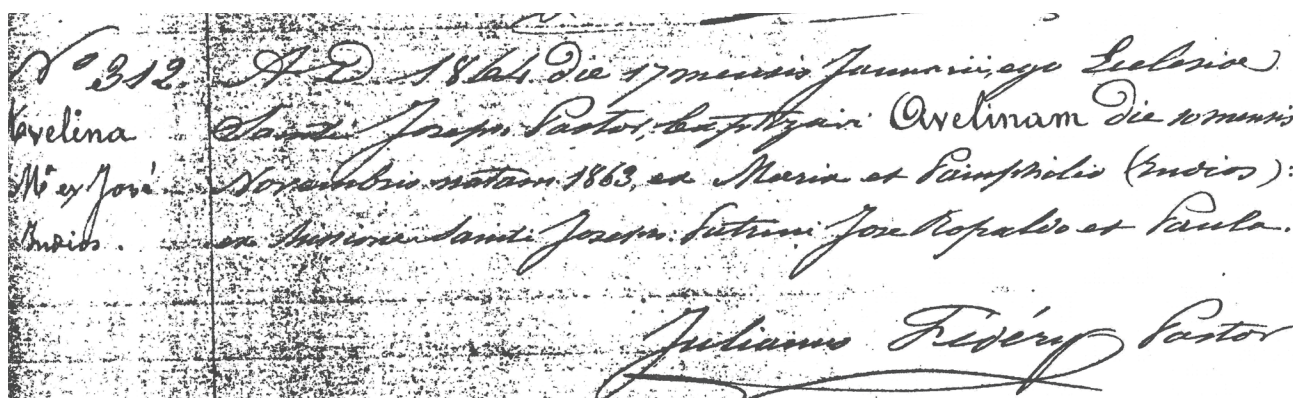


Figure 4. Avelina's baptismal record from San Jose Mission Register, Book 3, No. 3122.

Written in Church Latin: "Anno Domino 1864 on the 7th day of January, I, the Pastor of St. Joseph, baptized Avelinam, who was born on the 1th day of November, 1863, from Maria and Pamphilo (Indians) from Mission San Jose. Godparents are Jose Ropelio and Paula." Signed Jiulianus Federiz, Pastor.

#### ORTA FAMILY LINKS TO CALIFORNIA HISTORY AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Initial contact with CRM development projects in a rapidly changing Bay Area gave Orta family members an opportunity to learn about their ancestral past by not only monitoring the removal of human remains from development sites but also by learning about the artifacts retrieved. Impressive methods of manufacturing baskets, shell beads, and projectile points refuted biased beliefs that Native Californians were not intelligent. Seeing objects produced through sophisticated knapping techniques in obsidian or tiny shell squares drilled for stringing on a necklace or arm band, for example, reinforced Ruth and her family's conviction that their ancestors were thinking humans who lived in intelligent ways. As the family's cultural knowledge increased, so did their sovereignty and agency in local politics. How did that activism develop? By chance, the lives of Trina and Avelina (Ruth's mother and grandmother) intersected with people and institutional policies that both women absorbed, and—by asserting their own agency—used to negotiate beneficial results for themselves and their growing families.

Ruth Orta's family is linked to the Pleasanton rancheria by Ruth's grandmother Avelina, who was born there in 1863 (SJM Baptism #3 No. 312; see Fig. 4). She grew to adulthood, married, produced nine children, and died in Pleasanton in 1904. All baptisms and some death records of family members were documented by priests in the Mission San Jose registers, but only

two marriage records have been located. Avelina's baptismal record (Fig. 4) identifies her putative father as Pamphilo (Yakilamne)<sup>9</sup> who Milliken (1995, 2008:57, 67, 89–90, 94–95) speculates was brought to the mission as a child and was a member of a group from Plains Miwok territory that was relocated to Mission San Jose in 1835. Avelina's mother is only identified as "Maria," a ubiquitous name that makes her true identification now difficult. Susana (Nichols) and Annieta (Yakilamne) were Avelina's other siblings (Milliken 2008:94; see Fig. 2). According to family oral history, these three girls were part of the household of Captain José Antonio and his wife Jacoba (no dates given; see Milliken 2008:94–95; Harrington Reel 36:12, Fr.6). It is not clear when or for how long the girls lived in the household of the captain of the Pleasanton rancheria, but Ruth remembers visiting "Tia Susana's" son Joe Nichols and his wife Belle in Niles Canyon with Trina on a regular basis as a child, signifying that a long-term sisterly relationship existed between Avelina and Susana that Trina honored and continued (Ruano 1984, 1986). Trina was also born in the rancheria and could point out its location for Ruth to remember. Ruth recalls Trina saying that Avelina was born "in a house right by the *nopales* hill with a stream running by just behind it" (Ruano 1984). Trina remembered "pow-wows" as a small child that went into the night. She remembered bonfires on hilltops and lots of noise (whooping) that was frightening to her (Ruano 1984). Harrington's respondents remembered the temescal was just "up the road" from Niles (1927:Reel



36:17, Fr.6). "People would come from far away to see their song" (Kuksui dance; Harrington Reel 36:47, Fr.4a).

We suggest that the relationship between the girls and the adults was more complicated than that within a simple nuclear family. First, Milliken (2008:94) notes that José Antonio and Jacoba had two children in 1863 and 1865, recorded among Mission San Jose baptisms. Second, Olsen's interview (12/7/1986) with Susana's grandson and his wife, Lawrence and Virginia Nichols (Nichols and Nichols 1986), confirmed the fact that Susana was an Indigenous child who was kidnapped. According to Mission San Jose's baptismal records, the only 'Susana' baptized at the mission during that time was a child perhaps 6 years old who was given the name Maria Susana Bernal, and was baptized in December 1854 (SJM [Mission Baptism #5674]). The godparents that were listed were Presentation Bernal and Fermina Selaya (his wife). No parents were identified. Susana told her grandson Lawrence that she had been kidnapped as a child and was Indian. Lawrence remembered that she always wore her hair in one long braid down her back, which for her signified her Native identity. Lawrence also recalled that Susana was angry her entire life about being kidnapped. Lawrence further recalled that she could make flour tortillas without using a rolling pin (a Hispanic skill; R. Orta, personal communication 2021). Perhaps she became part of the Bernal household for a while. J. P. Harrington identified the language Susana spoke as Rumsen (Monterey-Carmel Ohlone).

During his interview with Susana (Harrington 1937:Reel 71:42, Frs. 9, 10; Reel 37:70, Fr.4), Harrington was told that she married early, but that the man she married was an alcoholic. A female relative told her to leave that marriage. Subsequently, she married Charles Nichols, who died eleven years before the interview took place. They had four children, twins Charles Jr. and Frank, Joe, and Rosie (Holmes and Singleton 2004:22). Harrington commented that he read a Bee-Wasp story to Susana that was told to him by José Guzman, but that Susana did not remember it. She told Harrington that since the death of her daughter (Rosie, age 19) she was "bereft of memory." Harrington completed his comment by saying, "now only her sons maintain her" (Harrington 1937:Reel 71:42, Frs. 9, 10).

Susana's report to her grandson Lawrence that she was kidnapped would make her fictive rather than

biological kin to Avelina. Furthermore, Harrington recorded the fact that siblings in a household called each other "brother or sister," even when related through only one parent (Harrington 1927:Reel 36:486), making the designation of sisterhood between all three girls, Susana, Avelina, and Anieta, a cultural bond more than a literal biological link. If the baptismal records correctly identify the Susana discussed here, she would have been approximately fifteen years older than Avelina, which would explain why "Susana Flores" and "Susana Nichols" appear in five baptismal records as godparents for Avelina's children.

Rafael Marine, "a red-headed Spaniard from Costa Rica" (Ruano 1984), was the grandfather of Orta's extended family and Avelina's husband. Raphael worked with animals and with farm machinery, doing many jobs on nearby farms, but he was not a vaquero. Trina remembers living in a house in Pleasanton before and after Avelina died in 1904 at 41 years of age. The house was just below a cemetery on Pleasanton Blvd. Brother Lucas and Trina discovered it was fun sliding downhill on pieces of cardboard or on wooden boards that gave her splinters. Trina remembered that "Aunt Tuti" (Victoria Marine) took care of them after her mother died, but while Rafael was still alive.

Raphael Marine died in 1910, sending Lucas and Trina to Roman Catholic orphanages in 1911; Lucas went to the Albertinum in Ukiah where he learned agriculture; Trina went to the St. Mary's Boarding School for Girls, the Mission San Jose orphanage (6/16/1911), which has since become St. Mary's Sisters of the Palms Convent for Girls. Trina learned housekeeping, cooking, and childcare skills as well as her ABCs. Trina was seven years old when Dominican nuns picked her up and took her to school. While other families paid tuition to St. Mary's of the Palms, Trina's family did not because the Dominican nuns' purpose in the United States (as ordered by the Church) was helping Indigenous people (R. Orta, personal communication 2022). Ruth Orta remembers that Trina was nine when she entered the orphanage and was 12 when she was released to work in the Lowry ranch kitchen. She was about 18 when she worked for the Holzhausen family in the East Bay as a housekeeper, caretaker, and cook. Later she worked for the Liggetts in Pismo Beach, where she met truck driver Charles Elston, who she married at 28 to begin her own family.

The time spent with the nuns at the Sisters of the Palms taught Trina three things besides English, arithmetic, and home economics. First, she learned about racism firsthand from the nuns; the German nuns were especially severe, while the Irish nuns were kind. Trina entered the orphanage speaking Spanish and learned English while she was there. Second, her experience with discrimination made Trina's awareness of her Native identity a resistant reaction that never left her. Trina continued to be intensely proud of that identity all her life. She exhorted all her children and grandchildren to proudly acknowledge their identity and never forget they were just as good as anyone else (Ruano 1984, 1986). Third, she realized the value of education and made sure all her children had the advantage of a California public school education.

Lucas returned to the East Bay on September 18, 1914 to drive tractors with older brother Dario Marine at the Lowry Ranch, while Trina worked as domestic help for the Lowrys and the Holzhausens. Yrineo Ruano (Ruano 1984) recalled Trina describing how Dario made and sold bootleg liquor during the 1920s. Inevitably, Dario went to prison for felony. When it was time for him to be released from prison, Trina was able to get a firm promise from Mr. Lowry to have work waiting, which helped Dario leave prison. From then onward, Dario drove plows and other farm machinery until he retired. According to family oral history, Dario knew the language of the rancheria and could speak it. Lawrence Nichols (Nichols and Nichols 1986) remembered that Lucas, Dario, and Catherine Peralta (a former rancheria Native who was married to both brothers consecutively) spoke Chochenyo.

Ruth recalls that Trina married her first husband, Charles Elston, in 1931. He drove trucks for a living during the depths of the Great Depression; however, that national calamity did not affect Trina and her family greatly since they worked the entire time. Charles Elston died in a car accident before Donald, their first child, was born in 1931. In 1933 Trina married George Ernest Thompson, whose first wife, Magdalena, a Native, had just died. He worked for Wedgewood Stoves in Newark, and later maintained the Dumbarton Bridge drawbridge. He was a veteran of World War I. During the war, Thompson was sent to the Panama Canal where he contracted yellow fever. Ruth remembers that it impacted his health permanently, and he died in 1939. Ernest

Thompson was Ruth's father as well the father of her sisters Faye and Lola. Yrineo (Joe) Ruano, Trina's third husband, was acquainted with Dario and Lucas Marine for four years before they introduced him to Trina (Ruano 1984). Yrineo was partially of Mexican Native descent; he worked for the Southern Pacific Railroad and West Baco Chemical Company in Newark until he retired at age 65. He died in 2001. He was the father of Yrineo Jr., Frank, Lupe, and Irene.

In thinking about her various fathers, Ruth adds that they all worked for industrial companies, and that her mother also worked intermittently as a farmhand for many farmers in Washington Township before industry changed the landscape during World War II. Ruth has vivid memories of walking "everywhere" with her mother and siblings to farmer's fields to work. They rented a house from Frank Perry at his apricot ranch for ten years and worked every season picking and drying apricots. Apricots, cherries, and vegetables were all harvested by the family, especially during the summer when school was not in session. Bushel baskets filled by the kids were recorded, and the parents received credit for their children's work.

Ruth remembers living in four different places while growing up in Newark, and she continued living there after she married her husband Raymond Orta, who was also born in Niles and whose Mexican American relatives grew up working in the same farm fields. Ruth and her siblings went to Centerville Elementary School and Washington Union High School, beginning in 1949. She met Raymond Orta in high school and they married in 1950. Raymond Orta's dream was to play baseball. In Ruth's generation, girls often did not complete high school, but rather began their families while they were in their mid-teens, as was the custom among Native families. Ruth's children's generation is the first generation of boys and girls to graduate from high school; some continued to get further professional training in nursing, business school, and office management. Ruth and all the elders agree that they continued to learn on their own, teaching themselves Spanish and figuring out how complicated domestic machines worked by taking them apart and putting them back together again. Yrineo Ruano recalled how Trina set the example by renovating a washing machine and an iron, and she converted a wood-burning stove into a gas stove by learning how every part fitted,

its purpose, and how it connected to larger components (Ruano 1986). Trina sewed their clothes, canned their food from a vegetable garden of corn, tomatoes, mint, and aloe that she kept, and did her own butchering of chickens, rabbits, and goats. Ruth remembers that she was always busy.

Roberta Orta Lacey recalls grandmother Trina's kindness not only to her grandchildren but also to hobos who came by the house. "She gave them whiskey bottles filled with water, and if they chopped wood for her, she would give them a meal as well." Roberta recalled her meals were always delicious and that her grandmother smelled like spices. Yrimeo and Trina were able to buy a home on Cedar Street in Newark in 1962. Roberta remembered that Trina moved to Cedar Street just before her Uncle Ydie accidentally drowned while fishing at Alameda Creek. Trina saw Ydie's ghost in the Cedar Street house just once and it was gone.

Robin Orta Morales remembers with great fondness Sunday automobile trips to Half Moon Bay to go to the beach. Events that brought Ruth's family together were birthdays, Fourth of July barbecues, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The last two are still events celebrated every year, first at Ruth's and Ray's house, and now usually at someone's place that has room for everybody! Both Christmas Eve and Christmas Day at their grandmother's house are remembered by all seven generations of family very fondly; these are special times for visiting with cousins, aunts, and uncles—seeing the whole family together.

Ruth recalls driving Trina around the Bay Area to visit relatives, since her mother did not drive. Enos Sanchez remembered Trina visiting his mother, Trina's older sister, Ramona Marine Sanchez. Lawrence Nichols also remembers Trina visiting his family. Dario and Lucas visited Trina often. Dario's visits happened later in life, after he retired. Lucas visited often because he and Trina were always close and visited constantly. Michelle, a granddaughter of Ruth's, joyfully recalls riding with her grandmother "everywhere" to visit cousins, indicating that the custom of visiting relatives is ongoing.

With regard to Native identity, Trina's words to her entire family were, "You are Indian, don't ever forget it! And don't let anyone tell you that's not good. Be proud to be a Native" (Ruano 1984, 1986). Trina's determination to hold on to her Native identity was as strong as her

resistance to formal Catholicism. Ruth states that "Mom was a Catholic to the day she died. Mom didn't change religions, rather she never believed in confessing sins. Mom redefined Catholicism for herself. She followed the New Testament version of Christianity. Mom said, 'I believe in a Creator, God, he made all people equal. If I want to talk to God, I can go outside—I don't need a church to do it for me. The way one lives one's life is one's own business.'" Ruth thinks that Trina believed in the spirituality that one feels, for example, when one is together with the rest of the Native community during a dance. Trina had encounters with ghosts. Once, just after Uncle Lucas had left the house after a visit, it was getting to be dusk, Ruth and her siblings and Trina heard a jingling (like coins) coming from under the floorboards and someone speaking in a foreign language. Trina assured them that it was okay, "that's just spirits, they won't hurt you" she said. Trina thought if one encountered a ghost, that it would "just pass right through you" without harming the living.

During East Bay California State University interviews in 2017 with Ruth's family, all the participants identified themselves as Ohlone—men and women, young and old. Everyone is interested in their heritage and supports Ruth's efforts to increase knowledge about and respect for Ohlone culture in the public. There is still room for improvement in the public's perception. Until Covid-19 put Olsen's classes online, Ruth and her daughter Ramona came to De Anza cultural anthropology classes to talk about their heritage. Students would invariably remark at the end of class that they had no idea California Natives were still present in the area.

The narratives of Susana's and Trina's lives both contain vestiges of structural violence. While Susana was successful in as much as she married an Anglo man who could buy property, farm the land, and place her children in the local school (Holms and Singleton 2004:22), the earlier trauma of being kidnapped appears to have affected her in a PTSD-like manner for the rest of her life. Lawrence Nichols reported that she was always angry. Her memory did not work well. She had difficulty remembering all her Rumsen language when Harrington interviewed her, for example, and when her daughter Rosie died at age 19, she told Harrington that her memory no longer worked, which is a symptom that can occur with PTSD (Mayo Clinic 2022).

The death of both parents introduced Trina and Lucas to society's remedy for orphanhood in the first decade of the twentieth century. According to Harrington's respondents at the time (1921–1937), other family members usually took in children who had lost both parents. In some cases, godparents or neighbors in the community might do so as well. Jacoba and José Antonio provided a home for several Native children (Harrington 1921–1937; United States Census 1900). Joe Guzman, for example, was able to provide Harrington with many Indigenous songs because his godparent, Santiago Piña (Harrington 1921–1927, Reel 36:47), took the responsibility of raising José after his father Avencio Guzman died (Harrington 1921–1927:Reel 36:19, Fr.1). Since Trina and Lucas no longer lived in the rancheria community and the community itself was dissolving (1911), Trina and Lucas were eligible to enter Roman Catholic orphanages where they were safe and had a place to grow and learn. Their move to the orphanages had both advantages and disadvantages simultaneously, and both will be covered in the following section on work/labor.

By marrying American truck driver Charles Elston, then American worker Ernest Thompson, and finally Yrineo Ruano, Trina gradually broke away from the cycles of poverty that stem from structural violence, while Dario and Lucas Marine were never able to leave farm work. Furthermore, Trina never stopped learning about the society in which she lived and worked, and excelled because of her dedication. Ruth notes that education never ceased. When she and her siblings got home from school, their education continued at home about everything that the school did not cover (R. Orta, personal communication 2022). Since all three of her husbands had permanent jobs in new industries coming to Newark, Trina and her children had the advantage of living in an officially incorporated community with fire/hazard emergency help, police, grocery stores, public schools, and churches, rather than living in a rural neighborhood and attending a school that was five miles away to which one had to walk every day (Sanchez 1985).

Further, similar to earlier generations of Ohlone women marrying outside one's immediate culture to gain freedom to move within a network, Trina maintained kinship links with the Anglo and Hispanic communities around her as well as with her extended family which widened her network of alliances and safety. In 1928

Trina pushed her family to put their names on the California Indian Rolls, to be federally recognized Native Californians. Ruth recalls that Trina never relinquished her identity as anything other than Native Californian. Through mission mixing of cultures, loss of original language, and decades of loss of local knowledge, Ruth says “We didn't know who we were. You hear the term ‘Digger’ and think you're one of them” (Ruano 1984).

### GILDED AGE INFLUENCE ON CHOICES

Two sets of voices can be heard in this paper—that of experience (i.e., Orta) and that of anthropology (i.e., Olsen, who utilizes Bordieu's view of labor as practice (2013[1972]) to give perspective to the oral history of a family whose personal experiences (mother, Trina, and daughter Ruth) lend authority to that history. Harrington's linguist's-eye view from his Cochenyo notes adds a third set of voices—those of Native speakers in Niles and Monterey recalling their experiences during the 1920s and 1930s.

Prior discussions on the utility of practice as a way of achieving a pluralistic view of labor (Sillman 2001; Sunseri 2020) provide a framework for linking California structural violence with Orta family narratives, illustrating how past violence, though no longer present, continues to affect family members. Since labor weaves together a colonial past with an industrial present, to which members of the Orta family have contributed their time and effort, labor becomes the medium through which anthropology can demonstrate how Trina was able to turn family opportunities away from cycles of poverty and toward joining the ranks of the middle class. The contexts of labor in the 1890s and 1900s were quite different from present contexts, since unions and unionizing in the 1930s and 40s pushed legislation toward the enactment of labor laws that made jobs safer, less exhausting, and with fairer wage structures (Roosevelt 1938). Differences in the types of jobs that one is eligible to perform now depend mainly on education, access to the internet, and computers. Degrees earned through post-secondary education now separate available opportunities and (to some degree) salaries.

The term ‘Gilded Age’ expresses the materiality that existed at the end of the nineteenth century, when some individuals amassed immense wealth in such industries as



railroads, mining, banking, and manufacturing, involving a capitalist regime of maximizing profits that were largely retained by owners and the managerial class. As Sunseri (2020:2) shows, the glitter of industrial successes and progressive achievements such as electrical inventions tend to gloss over social and economic inequalities, a solid amount of racism, political corruption, and the fact that the working class was locked into long and/or hazardous working conditions for low wages (Sunseri 2020:2). In California, railroads, mining, and lumbering extracted raw materials that relied on a man's daily investment of physical energy. The benefits for workers were wages that barely housed and fed families (Street 2004:xxii). Farms and ranches in California fed growing populations in cities, towns, and sites of resource extraction in the Sierras, starting with the Gold Rush in 1849 and continuing right on into contemporary sweat shops. Mechanization came later to agriculture in California than in other parts of the country because of influences from mission labor and separation from America's east coast resources.

While farmers in Iowa could harvest between 12 to 15 bushels of wheat per acre, the missions in California averaged 10 bushels per acre because they relied totally on manual labor using scythes instead of the more mechanized techniques that were starting to be used in America's heartland (Street 2004:29). Missions also pressed grapes for wine and olives for oil using human energy (Street 2004:30). The only non-human labor during the harvest involved threshing. Oxen or horses were driven over the harvest laid out on "threshing floors" to separate the wheat seeds from the rachis (Street 2004:29). Missions used women's labor to grind wheat into flour on metates (Street 2004:28). In 1841, José de Jesus Vallejo built one of the first flour mills in the East Bay on Alameda Creek, using water current to turn the grinding stone (Holmes and Singleton 2004:11). Native labor produced grain, flour, wines, and oil well into the 1870s. Dario and Lucas Marine were part of a long tradition of Native labor when Lucas began to work on the Lowry farm in 1914. By that time, much of agriculture was mechanized, except in the case of specialty crops (strawberries, orchards, vineyards) which still needed to be picked by hand (Street 2004:183). Transcontinental railroads finished in 1863 finally enabled farmers and ranchers to buy farm machinery in the east and have it sent to California.

Richard Street (2004:xvii) describes farm work as "unrelenting manual labor," especially in the days before machines were developed. He notes that women and children became part of the labor scene in the twentieth century, although women and children did some kinds of farm work at the missions before that (2004:32). Agriculture was primarily a male domain with all of the attendant competition for status, relationships with overseers and bosses, and fellow workers. Street (2004:xviii) indicates that the seasonality of the work gradually created a constant migration of workers from farms that grew wheat to farms that had orchards, vegetables, or vineyards. Because of that need for migration, Street (2004) thinks that movement led to marginalization of workers from the mainstream society, leading to their stigmatization as individuals who were constantly on the move and generally did not have a home base. Instead, field workers created their own culture and customs that depended on one's ability to work from sunup to sundown and beyond, and to drink just as hard on weekends (Street 2004:171). However, farm workers did not have many avenues to escape because of their general lack of other skills, making them vulnerable to exploitation (Street 2004:157).

Some interesting differences stand out if one contrasts Street's description of farm workers from a primarily Western European heritage (from the 1870s into the twentieth century) with data in Harrington's discussions with Native Californians about their languages and lives in Niles and Monterey. The stability that the Ohlone displayed as a community, despite the farm work that occupied them, is perhaps the most striking. As was the case during the period of the Mexican ranchos, Indigenous workers continued to live in communities close to their jobs rather than traveling constantly. The community lived in or near Niles, California, which was created as a company town by the Central Pacific Railroad in the 1860's (Ruiz 2019; Randolph Ruiz, personal communication 2022). Nearby Vallejo's mill ground the wheat that Vallejo grew on his Rancho Arroyo de la Alameda (Holmes and Singleton 2004:10). The rancho's southern boundary was what is now called Niles Canyon, which creates a passage for Alameda Creek through rugged terrain from Sunol to San Francisco Bay (Vioget 1868). Niles is on the Bay side of the hills, at the entrance to the canyon. Although Harrington was focused on language, the jobs

that people did were described as respondents talked about themselves and others. For example, Joe Binoco worked for “the Frenchman” (Lané) in Sunol who had a winery (Harrington 1921:Reel 36:12, Fr.6), Reyes worked on the roads, while others worked for the Bernal brothers and/or other local farmers between Pleasanton and Sunol, and continued to fish for salmon and catfish in Alameda Creek (R. Orta, personal communication 2021) and to gather quail eggs in Niles Canyon (Harrington 1921:Reel 37:65, Fr.7), demonstrating that the community maintained some of their hunting-gathering diet breadth into the 1930s, along with wage labor.

In Monterey, Harrington talked to Isabelle Meadows, whose mother Loretta and grandmother Omesia were Chochenyo speakers, to compare what he found in Niles with that area. Isabelle was Harrington’s authority for Monterey, a community that was also stable; Isabelle’s grandfather James Meadows purchased 4,592 acres in 1866 (Report of the Surveyor General 1844–1886) and married her grandmother, a Native Californian. Isabelle continued to live on the farm, and with some help managed to support herself. Many members of the local Indigenous community visited Isabelle and Loretta, which allowed Harrington to record a great deal of information. Stories of calamity are present in both Niles and Monterey—some of them are consistent with Street’s descriptions of calamities befalling farm workers because of drained energy, some are common to the period (such as accidental deaths on jobs or at home, often associated with alcohol), and some may reflect vestiges of trauma that continued within the community. For example, Omesia’s son was lynched in downtown Monterey in 1934 (Harrington 1937:Reel 36:22, Fr.6). Omesia reacted to the shock by cutting herself, which was a custom used by some northern California shamans for healing (Wilson 2007:B1). The Indigenous community in Monterey appears to have been more rural than in Niles, where houses apparently were owned by the respondents. (See map of Niles drawn for Harrington by José Guzman:Reel 36:11, Fr.5).

As was consistent with social divisions during the Gilded Age (Sunseri 2021:5), Natives in both Niles and Monterey lived in marginal areas—in Monterey on ranches, and in Niles at the edge of town near the railroad tracks and highways (per map Jose Gusman drew for Harrington 1921–1937:Reel 36:11 Frame 5). An ecologist

might argue that Natives in Niles were closer to natural resources in Niles Canyon when they lived on the edge of town. It could also be argued that the community lived on the boundary between town and country to take advantage of the resources in both areas. Although Natives did not have much choice with regard to labor, they did have an advantage over Street’s farm workers of Western European descent. Natives could live on the low wages that were paid to farm workers because they supplemented their pay with traditional hunting-gathering strategies in Niles Canyon. Traditional knowledge about the local environment gave power to Natives, allowing them to stay more independent of the mainstream local economy than their counterparts while remaining “invisible” to society.

Trina’s education in the orphanage gave her an advantage that folks in Niles did not have. Although her jobs all circulated around domestic help, she was able to develop personal relationships with superiors whom she strived to please. The warm personal relationships she developed with farmers and later employers gave her greater job security. Other advantages for Lucas and Trina stemmed from their assignment to orphanages. First, the Albertinum and Sisters of the Palms followed their established custom of teaching Lucas and Trina English, giving them an elementary education, and teaching them how to earn a living that was appropriate for their status and gender in the first decade of the twentieth century. Second, the Gilded Age (1880 to 1914) had set new parameters for domestic life that emphasized civility, morality, knowledge, and social rules that people in wealthy homes attempted to reflect (Sunseri 2020:5). Trina, who was immersed in this environment through her employment, absorbed the parameters and applied them to her own life. Because Trina knew the unspoken social rules and honored them, her value as a domestic employee increased. Third, employers valued that trust, which enabled her to continue in domestic employment in wealthy circles until she chose to marry and begin her own family, thus asserting power over her own life. Trina was privy to all the niceties—as well as the strict divisions between employer/employee and Western European/Native ethnicities—that were also inherent in Gilded Age social structure (Sunseri 2020:3).

There were some disadvantages to being in these institutions. Preparing children to spend life as a servant was a vestige of the hierarchical mission system as well

as a silent condoning of the segregated social hierarchy maintained by the dominant society in the early 1900s. Domestic work was the only way Indigenous women could be gainfully employed, while for men it was work in agriculture. Generally, children who went to work at 12 years of age (or less) and were no longer in school potentially stopped learning and might spend the rest of their lives in a limbo of dependency on others to make decisions for them (U.S. Department of Labor 2022). Trina went to work for the Lowry family two years before Congress addressed the issue of child labor outside of mining and industry (1916 Owen-Keating Act). However, despite all the legislation that Congress passed, children helping parents on their farms was discounted as late as the 1938's FLSA legislation. The question of whether a child was a legitimate offspring on a farm fell into a grey area that no one pursued. Hence, Lucas and Trina joined the legion of child laborers that had already been consumed by industry, because managers perceived children as being more manageable, less likely to strike, and could be paid lower wages. In 1914 Lucas would have been 14 and Trina 12 when they both went to work, earning room and board through fieldwork or by cleaning, cooking, and caring for white people's children.

Trina's marriages to men who worked in new industries entering Newark, unlike Dario's choice to make illegal liquor as an alternative to working in agriculture, gave her children access to the social life of a community with public schools, as well as to employment opportunities unavailable to Trina's generation. Shielded by their affiliation with an Anglo and/or Mexican heritage, Trina's children were able to be visible, associate with others in a plural community, and generally learn about a larger world with extended work opportunities. Trina and her husband Yrinea bought a home in Newark in 1962, making them part of the working class with home ownership and a foundation in the capitalist system that had exploited earlier generations. In a word, Trina was gradually able to leave the vestiges of structural violence behind through the choices open to her, because she adhered to all the social rules. Other Indigenous communities caught in cycles of farm work remained within the seasonal rounds of agriculture into the 1980s and beyond. Trina's Native identity also became a basis for resistance which she maintained during her lifetime and passed on to her children. The Civil Rights

movement in the 1960s finally provided the family the opportunity for the first time to promote their Indigenous heritage openly and with dignity and public respect.

We find that vestiges of structural violence were present in contemporary California before Cesar Chavez inspired the grape pickers' strikes in 1968, which began to change the economic and social structure through the United Farm Workers. By applying Farmer's (2004) ideas about mechanisms of oppression, we find that two mechanisms for suffering were present. First, labor was a mechanism for suffering since long hours, physically exhausting work, and low wages held farm workers in poverty until Chavez' organized strikes. The second mechanism involved the low status held by farm workers (first Native Californians, now immigrants from Mesoamerica) and was manifest in the low wages that farmers expected to pay, the poor housing conditions in which field workers lived, and the hazardous working conditions that affected the workers' health. The low wages initiated by the Franciscans and continuing under capitalism controlled the lives of farm workers by limiting their opportunities to advance to more lucrative employment; workers remained unskilled and poorly educated, and thus were less able to break out of poverty and were caught in a "catch 22" situation. These two noxious effects of structural violence existed for decades. In the late 1970s and into the 1980s, Olsen taught in the Intercultural Studies Division at De Anza College, where a concerted effort was underway among Chicano instructors to target that lack of education in subsequent generations of farming families.

A timely opportunity emerged during the 1970s and 1980s for Natives to be involved in San Jose city affairs when city renewal projects often funded construction to update the appearance of downtown blocks. The managers of these projects were completely dumbfounded to discover (1) that these projects were uncovering Indigenous village sites (Winter 1978), and (2) that local Indigenous people were lobbying to be part of mitigation projects as representatives of the ancestral Ohlone who had lived in the area prehistorically. Natives retained their Indigenous identity, and while feeling resistant to the local bureaucracy, were willing (with the support of the American Indian Movement [AIM] and the Civil Rights movement), to tackle the very old and contested question regarding their sovereignty over the land. The opportunity

to take responsibility for the reburial of ancestral remains encountered during CRM mitigation projects in the final decades of the twentieth century created an existential inroad into local politics, enabling Natives to actively address sovereignty while simultaneously advancing city planning issues (see Winter 1978).

Advocacy for ancestral rights, as developers plan more construction in open spaces once occupied by people to whom the family is linked through DNA testing (Brown 2002; Curry 2022), has been a consuming interest of family members in the East Bay. What all the ramifications of their Native heritage means for each member of the family is an individual matter. One member expresses heritage through art, another through right action, while none hesitate to correct authorities to point out that the “Ohlones are not extinct” (as a result of structural violence) but have always been “right here.” Currently, the family has joined with Corina E. Gould’s organization, the Confederated Villages of Lisjan, to lend support for mutual goals. Corina and Ruth are related through marriage by way of Joe Guzman’s family in Niles (see Fig. 2).

### ETHNOGENESIS, RE-EMERGENCE OF AGENCY, OR PERSISTENCE?

If ethnogenesis is the transformation of one group of people into another, such as Spanish-Mexicans into Californios (Voss 2015:656), then one could argue that California Natives in the East Bay chose to join the missions in order to become more like Hispanics (per Milliken 1995), and later assimilated into American culture under the duress caused by Spanish Mexican and American hegemony. It could be argued that physical displacement, the gradual loss of language by many speakers, the gradual loss of sacred places through construction, the destruction of *temescals*, and the loss of memory about cultural beliefs and practices replaced by American English, the Western economy, and Christianity, demonstrates assimilation. On the other hand, if ethnogenesis is thought of as descriptive of Native Californians whose self-identity persevered and never wavered (as in Akin and Bauer 2021; Bauer 2016; Galvan 1968; Hill 1996; Nelson 2021; Olsen and Izu 2017), and whose social agency has expressed itself publicly, particularly with regard to land and ancestral

remains, only since the Civil Rights movement, then something more is at work than transformation.

During separation from ancestral places, becoming neophytes whose labor was strictly ordered and monitored, subject to diseases, hunger, and the threat of punishment, cooperation and resistance braided together to form the complex mechanism through which California Natives gave up their old lives (willingly or not) and embraced new ones in the missions and beyond. Resendez points out (2017:319–20) that ironically—like African Americans in bondage on southern plantations—Natives joining the Spanish Mexican system were participating in a very old mechanism of enslavement that existed in spite of laws decreed by Spain and others outlawing slavery. Indeed, Natives learned agricultural or domestic skills that sustained them through the twentieth century, but early incorporation into a foreign culture’s economic system created a condition of on-going marginalized ethnicity.

Bauer Jr. (2016), Akins and Bauer Jr. (2021), Schneider (2015b), and other historical archaeologists have shown that Native identity persisted, but deaths created gaps in knowledge, new Native communities entered the missions and mixed with surviving souls, and identity changed slowly from an association with a traditional specific place on the landscape to a Spanish name, a general direction, and a group name (e.g., Yak/Yaku—south, Ilamne—Plains Miwok; Barret 1908:366). The mingling of Indigenous cultures in mission villages and at estancias initiated a sharing of customs, knowledge, experiences, and forms of resistance. Indigenous languages continued while Natives learned to speak Spanish, the language of the dominant culture. A change in the dominant culture to Anglo-American ways initiated even greater changes for Native Californians, who continued to support the agriculture that emerged as an industry in the twentieth century.

The communities that Harrington visited and wrote about appear to have been refuge communities (Lightfoot 2005:27) composed of individuals who came from San Rafael, San Francisco, Hayward and San Leandro, Stockton, Modesto, Sunol, Alviso, and Mission Santa Clara. Our study contributes a view of Native choices as expressed by Native voices. Harrington’s most diligent respondents were José Guzman, María de los Angeles Colos, and Isabelle Meadows, so we obtain a somewhat limited view of the community, although others such



as Susana and Catherine Peralta contributed additional individual views. Some, such as José Binoco, presented information cheerfully and willingly, but could not (or would not) speak their language to Harrington (Reel 36:14), so their stories are short. These individuals appear to comprise a group frozen in time, although in reality they moved about from refuge to refuge, perhaps because of their jobs. But they were not part of the seasonal round of agricultural jobs described by Street (2004). Everyone in the Niles community knew all the other members personally, and usually beyond. The binding link between people was their Native identity. People in the past were remembered and were included in this oral history as a consequence of their blood relationships and marriages and the important traumas in their lives.

Because of the mixing of cultures, Native identity appears to have changed from association with a specific place on the landscape (per Bauer 2016) to a more generalized direction with mission identity added, followed by the name of the person for whom one worked (understanding that respondents knew they are speaking to an empathetic outsider). Although Natives became the laboring backbone for Spanish Mexican culture in California, statehood created new sources of trauma through laws passed by California's first legislature that allowed "vagrant" adults and children to be kidnapped and sold into bondage, which involved hard physical labor for men and domestic work for women and children. To offset this danger, Natives chose invisibility, and living around the margins of mainstream society. Demanding physical labor was often offset or relieved by the consumption of alcohol after work, which in turn led to accidents, arguments, and some fatalities (Harrington 1927:Reels 36, 37). Currently, Indigenous identity is based on birth and is passed on to offspring through either the mother's or father's side of the family. In Ruth's family, there tend to be more matrilineal links with a heritage that focuses on the women of the family. All family members know about their Indigenous heritage through both birth and kinship with cousins and relatives. When the Civil Rights movement began to provide opportunities (through power and safety) for family members to actively proclaim their heritage, agency began to emerge from invisibility. One section of the family emerged with the backing of the Catholic church, and the other emerged as the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.

The Ortas advocate education for themselves and for the public. The family wants to relearn their heritage in more detail—how was the culture adapted to the environment before the *entrada* into the East Bay, and what more can be discovered about the ancestors identified in the oral history. With regard to identity, the Ortas prefers the term "Native" to "Indian," since the latter word suggests colonial roots—the mistaken identity that Columbus and others assigned to Indigenous people of the Americas, thinking they had reached India.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the "available light" of Farmer's concept of structural violence, it is clear that Natives had few choices once their lives were engulfed by the missions through baptism. Their main choices were to resist or escape (Arkush 2011:84) the narrow trajectories of lives working in the fields or in the mission. Other than in the mission records, but consistent with Hispanic ignorance of Native cultures, the division of labor was by gender and age, which entailed heavy field work for men, and domestic work for women and children. Deaths due to periodic diseases motivated military raids into the California interior to replenish the labor pool. By the Mexican Rancho period, Natives' life trajectories were predictable and predetermined and did not change under capitalist labor. The divide continued—work was determined by gender, with work appropriate for men or women according to Gilded Age standards. In this regard, women's choices were much more limited. Gilded Age labor for women revolved around domestic environments—cooking, laundry, cleaning, and childcare, while men went into farming by default, although they could also hire themselves out as "handymen" (U. S. Census Bureau 1900, 1910). During the Gilded Age, labor was so exploited that "subcultures of opposition" (Sunseri 2020:9) formed that foreshadowed future unionization. Thanks to union organizing, fair labor laws passed during the Roosevelt administration, and Feminism during the Civil Rights movement, labor now is more diversified with regard to gender, and the Orta family has much broader work options and educational opportunities that allow them to go in many different directions. Observed through the "available light" of Bourdieu (2013[1972]), Silliman (2001), and Sunseri (2020), experiences with labor become the currency that connects past with

present, in terms of both the choices that Natives had and how they identified themselves to each other and to outsiders. Gilded Age labor maintained the “corporate paternalism and industrial capitalism” discussed by Sunseri (2020:3) by dividing workers not only by gender but also by status and ethnicity. Housing separated ethnicities spatially, and by the twentieth century there was a wide distribution of nationalities. Harrington did not evaluate the collateral social outcome of industrial labor in Niles or Monterey. Niles was originally a company town that was established by the Central Pacific Railroad to house workers laying tracks through Niles Canyon, work that was completed in 1869 (R. Ruiz, personal communication 2022). The town of Niles grew around the railroad, but by 1900 company influence had shrunk and was represented by a maintenance crew of Irish and Portuguese railroad workers (Holmes and Singleton 2004:30). When comparing the Guzman map of 1927 in Harrington (Reel 36:11, Fr.5) with early town maps in Holmes and Singleton (2004:18), it is interesting to note that together they illustrate the spatial separation of the Anglo-American town from the Indigenous settlement farther out along the highway. The spatial division is consistent with Sunseri’s (2020:4) description of the social separation of ethnicities in company towns (originally to emphasize its authority)—a company in this case that by the 1920s had become the Southern Pacific railroad (Holmes and Singleton 2004:30).

Remnants of structural violence and elemental racism kept the presence of the Indigenous communities in the Bay Area out of public awareness until the Civil Rights movement made it illegal to discriminate against ethnic groups in housing, job opportunities, college acceptance, and any other business dealings. Self-determination motivated ethnic studies departments in colleges and universities to engage students in alternate views of race. When it became safe for Indigenous people to publicly announce their true identity without the fear of being lynched or subjected to other forms of racial retaliation, it emerged, but not without public opposition. A member of the extended family once called a local San Jose radio talk show and said “Hello, my name is Jorge Alvarado [name changed for privacy] and I’m an Ohlone Indian.” The radio host was not about to be fooled, and replied, “How can you be an Ohlone Indian with a Spanish name?”

Voss (2015:95) states that the word “ethnogenesis” is intended to signify change in a group of people held together by “rhizotic” roots of experience and kinship; it is not viewed as a process but rather as an outcome of chance, of people’s lives intersecting with choices made on the basis of circumstances and cultural contexts. Patterns of remembrance (Silliman 2009:226) appear in the archaeological record but our study is about people rather than artifacts—thus we see a change in what is chosen to remember about the past. Younger generations experience gaps in information when there is no recollection of an event or when an Indigenous person denies their heritage (Eigen-Vasquez 2018:9). Eigen-Vasquez finds that some memories of violence were lost because elders remained silent about disturbing experiences (Eigen-Vasquez 2018:9). To the Orta family, a remembrance of an elder’s words, stories, thoughts, and feelings is as important now as it was in the past. However, silence and time create confusion in the present regarding how to react to such gaps. For example, one elder blatantly denied her Native heritage, which caused Trina to reprimand her and exclaim, “You little jackass! You know you’re not Mexican! You are my sister and you know our mother was Indian, she was an American Indian, what’s wrong with you?!” (Ruano 1986:41–42). Events in Susana’s early life and her kidnapping were unknown to other members of the family. Did Lawrence Nichols make up facts during his interview with Olsen? Given the amount of violence perpetrated against Indigenous people in California, it is more likely true than false. It is likely that Susana deliberately chose not to add such a painful part of her life to family memories. These chosen elisions remain vestigial consequences of structures of violence against earlier generations.

The family’s involvement with an organization composed of fellow Natives who shared their goal of establishing a cultural center to educate the general public about their continued presence in the East Bay asserted collective agency and was a positive action for members of a family that have always been aware of their heritage. Ethnogenesis may actually be a result of the mainstream society gradually loosening its grip on marginality and becoming more inclusive since the Civil Rights Act of 1964, while persistence and maintenance have always been a function of Indigenous knowledge.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>In his notes on the Chochenyo language spoken by Native Californians in the East Bay and Monterey areas, J. P. Harrington remarked that there was no word for “work” in the language. (Reel 37:48, Fr.6).

<sup>2</sup>Although they recorded local ethnicities as part of a neophyte's identity, the priests were oblivious to Native cultural differences (Bauer 2016:23).

<sup>3</sup>In 2015, Olsen approached Marjorie Rhodes-Ousley, assistant director of the C. E. Smith Museum of Anthropology, at California State University, East Bay, Hayward to elicit her interest in supporting a grant application to the California Council for the Humanities. The goal—to research and mount an exhibit on the family's history and heritage at the Museum—was approved by Rhodes-Ousley, who then enlisted the help of Beverly Ortiz as a Humanities authority and of Dr. Henry Gilbert, museum director. The Smith Museum was awarded the grant beginning in 2016. The grant enabled researchers and students to design an exhibit, hold interviews with over twenty members of Ruth's immediate family, and learn how individual members of all ages felt about their heritage, the recollections of their grandmother Trina, and how her knowledge of being a California Native that she passed on to subsequent generations empowered their own self-identity. This 2.5-year project included anthropology students at EBCSU, who planned and mounted an exhibit entitled “Against All Odds: Native Californian Stories of Endurance and Continuance,” (C.E. Smith Museum 2017) which emphasized the fact that the members of the family had never left their ancestral lands and were still actively involved with those lands.

<sup>4</sup>The inconsistent spelling of Native names and place names was not a problem at the time, but for contemporary scholarship the inconsistencies create some ambiguity, which Milliken tried to resolve by using his preferred spelling for all entries in his data base (Milliken 1991:Appendix I).

<sup>5</sup>See Kroeber 1908:25 for an early twentieth century interpretation of Ohlone marriage customs. Examples of Native monogamy and polygamy were elided by priests (Beebe and Senkewicz 2001),

<sup>6</sup>In our opinion, “fresh” groups were brought into a mission as a way of masking mission population reduction, since the priests could continue to report X number of baptisms, thus countering the death tallies and deepening the elision.

<sup>7</sup>Report of the Survey General to the State of California 8/1/1884. Rancho Valle de San Jose, Alameda County, confirmed to Antonio Sunol, Augustin Bernal, Juan Bernal, and Antonio Maria Pico 1839 (Hoover et al. 1966:18–19). Survey map completed in 1868 and on file at the Bancroft Library <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb9s20090/?orders=1> (accessed 8/6/2022).

<sup>8</sup>Rancho Arroyo de la Alameda granted to José de Jesus Vallejo in 1842 (Hoover et al. 1966:18–19). The southern boundary is Niles Canyon. Survey map made by Jean Jacques Vioget

in 1868 shows “Indiens” occupying the eastern side of the drainage near Pleasanton's present location, and on the shore of the East Bay approximately where Hayward is located today. MS on file at the Bancroft Library, <http://www.oac.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb9s20090/?orders=1>(accessed 8/6/2022).

<sup>9</sup>Yak-Ilamne, in Miwok. Barret's (1908:366) list of Miwok terms has the Plains Miwok word for ‘south’ as ‘yaku-wit.’ The root of the word was ‘yak,’ with suffixes. Additionally, Gifford stated that a Miwok man's self-identity involved a male lineage attached to an ancestral home (1926:389). If he was a Gualacomne, Ponfilo's ancestral home would have been south of the Ilamnes, making the name Yakilamne consistent.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Conversations with Professor Randolph R. Ruiz (California College of the Arts) and the late Professor Alfonso Ortiz (University of New Mexico) provided us with many insights, and we gratefully acknowledge their role in laying the foundations for this manuscript. Our research was greatly enhanced by access to the collections of both the Bancroft Library and the Stanford University Library, and we thank them both. Finally, we greatly appreciate the multiple contributions of the members of the extended Orta family, who spent many hours discussing their family's history and their personal experiences.

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