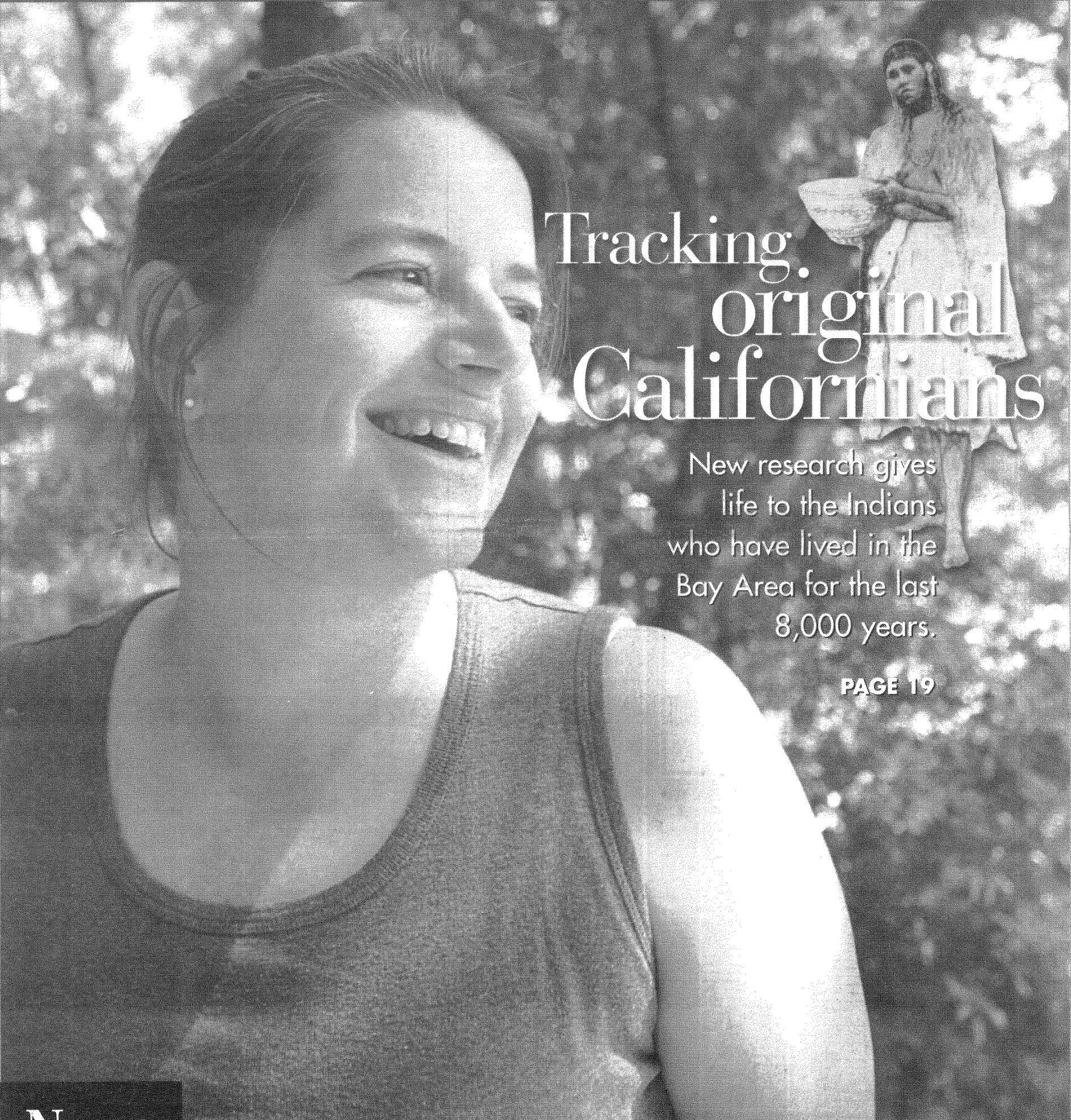


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Tracking. original Californians

New research gives
life to the Indians
who have lived in the
Bay Area for the last
8,000 years.

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Menlo Park weighs options
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► Lifetime of achievement

Helen Leong of Atherton
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are honored for lifelong
achievement. / **PAGE 7**

SECTION 2



► Family Almanac

M-A seniors William Most
and Nathan Kitada
welcomed about 200 people
last month to the La Mancha
Film Festival, which they
founded last year.

Tracking original Californians

Archaeology, Indian memories, and plodding through mission records flesh out lives of the original Californians.

By Marion Soffky
Almanac Staff Writer

Photos by Margaret Kaye



Irene Zwierlein of Woodside, tribal chair of the Amah Mutsun Tribe of Ohlone/Costanoan Indians, divides her time between saving relics and bones and poring over old mission records to get her tribe recognized by the federal government.

"It was paradise."

Thus Irene Zwierlein of Woodside describes the rich environment inhabited by her American Indian forebears. Now she's crusading to gain public knowledge and recognition for them.

For close to 8,000 years, Mrs. Zwierlein's ancestors subsisted on the abundant resources of coastal California. They hunted elk, deer and rabbits; caught fish in the creeks and dug shellfish from the Bay; gathered acorns, seeds and hazelnuts; and trapped the birds that often darkened the skies. "The Bay Area was paradise. There were otters swimming in the creeks," she repeats.

Almost half Indian, Mrs. Zwierlein is tribal chair for the Amah Mutsun Tribe of Ohlone/Costanoan Indians. She is fiercely active in trying to get federal recognition for the

tribe, which is centered in Gilroy. She also works to preserve Indian artifacts and bodies from bulldozers and backhoes in construction sites all over the Bay Area.

In Woodside, Mrs. Zwierlein is a member of the Historic Resources Committee. She looks forward to setting up an exhibit of artifacts

dug up in Woodside in the new Community House that will open in Town Center, possibly next spring.

Mrs. Zwierlein is also one of a growing group of people who are changing

public perceptions of those who shared the land before the successive onslaughts of Spanish, gold-hungry Americans, and modern technology.

As a result, local Indians no longer fade into the distant past, homogenized and rendered anonymous.

See CALIFORNIANS, next page ▶



Over centuries, Indians ground these mortar holes, directly above, into a big grinding rock at Japer Ridge. Above: The mortar and pestles were found in Woodside. The pestles come from Larry Ellison's estate. Irene Zwierlein is still trying to retrieve five crates of artifacts that were dug up from his estate in an archaeological survey, and have been mislaid.

Irene Zwierlein helps revive her people

By Marion Softky
Almanac Staff Writer

So far Irene, Zwierlein of Woodside has taken 10,429 names out of the baptism book from the mission of San Juan Bautista and put them together as families.

This monumental effort is just part of Mrs. Zwierlein's crusade to gain federal recognition for her tribe. "That means we could own land. Our land would be sovereign. We'd be our own nation," she says.

Mrs. Zwierlein is tribal chair of the Amah Mutsun tribe, centered in Gilroy. Amah is the name of the tribe, and Mutsun is its language, some of which is still known, she says. So far the tribe has about 450 members whose ancestry has been traced back to Mission Indians, and another 450 whose Indian heritage has not yet been proven.

Mrs. Zwierlein joined other Indian leaders in San Diego recently to lobby Sen. Daniel Inouye, D Hawaii, who is introducing legislation to make it easier for California Indians to gain federal recognition. The tribe's application is close to complete and ready to be submitted.

This is just one of Mrs. Zwierlein's efforts to preserve her Indian past and educate the public about it. As a member of Woodside's Historic Resources Committee, she watches for artifacts and burials that turn up at construction sites all over town; she helps homeowners deal with them respectfully.

Mrs. Zwierlein also participates in activities throughout the Bay Area that save artifacts and preserve burials.

She was one of the people who helped persuade Stanford to re-bury the bones of some 550 individuals stored on campus in a secret location.

Most recently she scanned the dirt being dug up by machines digging trenches for fiber optic cable in the vicinity of the "Inigo Mound" near Moffett Field. "We found a lot of shells and middens, but no remains," she says. "We went around the remains."

"I love the research," Mrs. Zwierlein adds. "I can look into the past lives and see what they were doing."

Being Indian

Mrs. Zwierlein, who grew up in Redwood City and Woodside, is almost half Indian. She is descended on both sides from John Gilroy, who gave his name to the town. "His son married an Indian, and then they just kept marrying Indians," she says.

She remembers attending Selby Lane School and Woodside High School before the influx of blacks and Latinos. "We were the minority," she says.

But with seven brothers and sisters and 11 cousins, she had company.

Her mother used to tell stories from the old times, but "Like a kid, I didn't listen," she says. "Now I listen to her."

Mrs. Zwierlein was impressed by one story her mother told of her grandmother:

"She was sitting on a mountain in Santa Clara County and looked up

at the sky and said, 'One of these days, things will be flying in the sky, and people in them.'"

Now she soaks up the stories and legends that have filtered down from the old people and their parents and grandparents. Half wondering, half skeptical, she asks, "How else can you find people who can tell you what's going to happen?"

Mrs. Zwierlein is conscious of the discrimination that has followed Indians far beyond the Spanish period into this century. Into the 1920s and sometimes beyond, Indians couldn't own land or bear witness in a trial. "We couldn't ride a horse."

That reminds her of a story she found in the archives in San Jose: "My great grandfather, Elaido, was arrested for riding a horse and carrying a sword. They couldn't punish him (because he was a slave), so they punished his owner, Don Jose Alviso — who let him ride," she says. "To this day we're still fighting for religious freedom."

Relics and bones

In 15 years of digging at archaeological sites, Mrs. Zwierlein has helped unearth many things — like a whole grizzly bear in Milpitas.

When San Jose decided to build a jail over an Indian cemetery in Milpitas, the tribes had the opportunity to excavate it. They dug up 244 bodies and reburied them in a safe place.

The most exciting part of her work watch-dogging Indian sites and burials is finding artifacts, Mrs. Zwierlein says. "There's such a difference in artifacts, from earrings, necklaces and pendants, to a mortar bowl that is so big you can't even lift it."

Most impressive was a breast plate made of shell beads at Milpitas; her husband, Harold, counted 2,600, she



Irene Zwierlein is a member of Woodside's Historic Resources Committee.

says. There have also been whistles made out of animal rib cages and bird bones, pipes made of serpentine, and a pestle almost 3 feet long, broken.

Mrs. Zwierlein tries to work cooperatively with construction crews, landowners and businesses. "We don't want to shut you down. We work with developers and companies," she says.

Santa Clara County and Woodside are best at working with natives, Mrs. Zwierlein adds. Woodside has an ordinance. At one site in Woodside, workers found 16 burials. With Mrs. Zwierlein's advice, they left some intact, re-routed some sewer and water lines, and reburied the rest.

She says she's happy to work with property owners, who can either keep the artifacts they find, or donate them for display in Woodside's future Community House.

Mrs. Zwierlein says she even has Larry Ellison helping her retrieve five boxes of artifacts taken from his estate in an archaeological survey that have disappeared.

"We'll get them back," she says confidently. ■

► CALIFORNIANS

continued from previous page

mous by the Spanish mission system. Led in part by the Indians themselves, new research has given them names and faces. Individual lives have been traced, mainly through meticulous Spanish records of baptisms, marriages and deaths. Scholars — historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnographers and linguists — have learned far more than anyone dreamed possible 40 years ago.

"The biggest thing I've seen is the Indians' change of attitude to themselves," says non-Indian Harold Zwierlein, former Woodside town councilman. "Now they're proud to be called Indian."

On Stanford lands campus archaeologist Laura Jones digs, teaches, and researches the life of the people who occupied the Midpeninsula in the millennia before Don Gaspar de Portola first discovered San Francisco Bay in 1769.

These were not primitive people living an idyllic life in a romantic setting, Dr.

This is an Indian woman from Monterey as depicted by an artist.

Courtesy of Stanford Archaeology Program

in very different ways, and they were extremely successful."

Meanwhile, since 1976 Sylvia Vane of Menlo Park has been publishing scholarly books about Indian life in California. Her Ballena Press (named for "whale" in Spanish) has more than 30 titles, including four that focus on the Indians of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Her most unusual book may be "Inigo of Rancho Posolmi," which tells the story of a specific Indian, Lope Inigo, who bridged three cultures. He was born into a native tribe in 1781, served the Santa Clara Mis-

Jones says. "They were as complex as we are."

They solved the same kind of problems we face, but with very different tools," she explains. "They related to the environment

sion from 1789 to 1839, then acquired a land grant to the rancho that covers the present Moffett Field. There he raised crops and livestock through the Gold Rush era. He died in 1864 at the age of 83.

A simpler life

Laura Jones picks up a handful of dirt specked with white from the grassy field on Stanford's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve and sifts it through her fingers.

Notice the dirt is dark, she tells an attentive tour group from the Stanford Linear Accelerator next door. Notice the white specks; they are shells from native oysters. And, she says triumphantly, "Oysters can't walk."

This, therefore, is the site of an old village that has never been excavated. "It's perfect. It's never been plowed or farmed," she says enthusiastically. "We're trying to bank enough archaeological sites for future

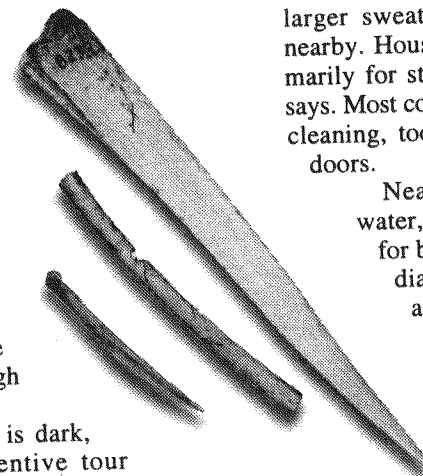
investigation."

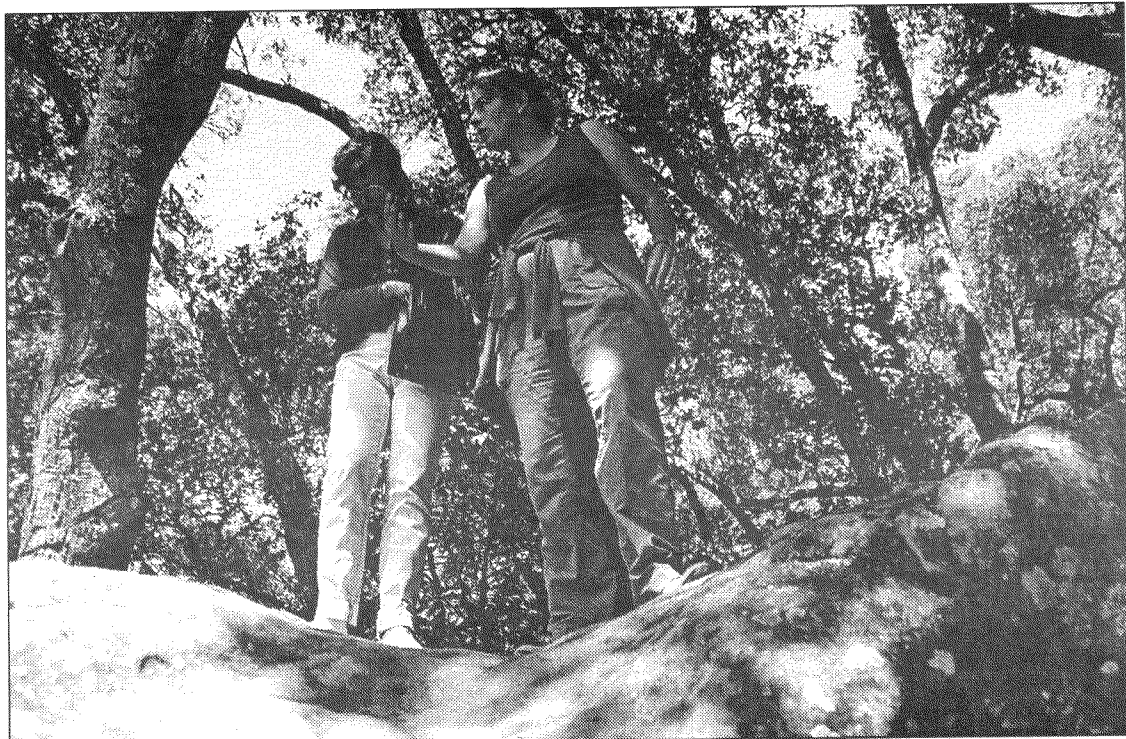
Yet without sinking a spade, Dr. Jones already knows that some 60 Neolithic hunter-gatherers lived here about 700 to 1,200 years ago. Their village probably had two rows of small tule huts with a larger sweat house and a dance house nearby. Houses were small and used primarily for storage and shelter, Dr. Jones says. Most community activities — cooking, cleaning, tool-making — took place outdoors.

Nearby, Bear Creek furnished water, fish, and reeds and rushes for baskets and fish traps. "For Indians, the creek was a magnet, an organizing force," says Dr. Jones.

There was also division of labor, Dr. Jones notes. Men would hunt abundant game or trap fish or make tools. Women gathered plants, carried water in waterproof baskets, wove baskets, ground seeds, bulbs, acorns and even meat in mortars — "a sort-of Indian Cuisinart."

They cooked in baskets using rocks heated by the fire because they had no pots. "Men made tools; women sharpened them," she adds.





Standing on an Indian grinding rock at Jasper Ridge, Stanford archaeologist Laura Jones, right, explains what is known of Indian life to a visiting Rumanian archaeologist.

When the Spanish first began settling and setting up missions in the 1770s, the region between San Francisco and Monterey held between 45 and 60 independent groups of Indians speaking five to six languages, Dr. Jones says. "Every Indian in every village was multilingual."

Dr. Jones tries to explain the confusion of names used to describe Bay Area Indians. Costanoan and Ohlone both come through the Spaniards. Costanoan means coastal; Ohlone derives from the name of a tribelet near Pescadero. The local tribe around the San Francisquito Creek wa-

tershed was actually called Pui-chon.

Descendants of that local tribe call themselves Muwekma Ohlone, Dr. Jones continues. They are well organized and have traced the genealogy of each member back to Indians in the missions.

Continuing the tour, Dr. Jones leads a women's science group from SLAC down the creek past several more living sites. While the Ohlone didn't plant crops, they set fires to encourage new growth, and tended the plants that grew naturally, says Dr. Jones, whose own research cen-

ters on the economy and ecology of the prehistoric Ohlones. "How did they feed their families? How did they trade with neighbors?" she asks.

The Indians ate a great variety of foods, Dr. Jones says. Studies of food remains in mortars show they used dozens of foods, from seeds to rabbits. In one oven, researchers found 65 different foods. "They loved hazelnuts," she adds. "They tenderized meat."

Dr. Jones believes that, at least in later years, about 500 local Indians lived in settled villages. Maybe 200 or more lived in the largest village near where the creek empties into the Bay. Another hundred or so may have lived in permanent villages near where the Stanford Shopping Center now is, where Stanford has an 11-acre archaeological preserve between the creek and the new Stanford West apartments. Also, there was always a village at Jasper Ridge.

People also moved seasonally as they followed salmon or elk or hazelnuts, Dr. Jones says, and every so often they would move an entire village. "After a while, tule houses got a little nasty. They would abandon them and move a couple of hundred yards," she says. "At any given time only one village was active on Jasper Ridge."

By and large, these Indians were fairly peaceful; they would defend their territory but seldom attacked. "There were not a lot of weapons, not a lot of injuries," Dr. Jones says. "We never found a body with arrowheads."

"The people here were not warriors," adds Mrs. Zwierlein. "Their way of keeping peace was to marry women out of the villages."

The Ohlones lived in a world where animals and birds, even rocks, had spirits. "The landscape is animated by personality," Dr. Jones says.



Laura Jones and her helpers built this replica of an Ohlone hut, made out of tules, in the woods at Stanford's Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. The hut is small because people used it primarily for storage and shelter, while most activities took place outdoors.

See **CALIFORNIANS**, next page ►

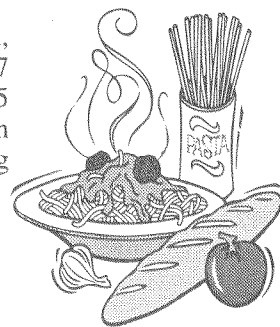
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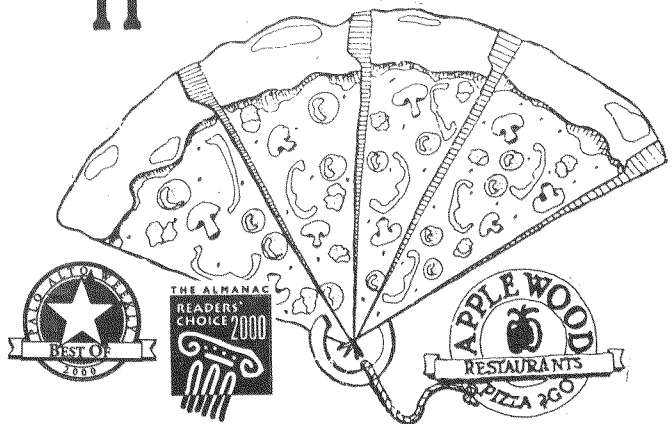
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► CALIFORNIANS

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Some of these beliefs are reflected in taboos. Indians wouldn't eat frogs, coyotes, mountain lions or owls, Dr. Jones notes.

"Owls mean death," adds Mrs. Zwierlein. "Some people even believe that now," she says, recalling an aunt who would say someone was going to die every time she heard an owl call.

Mrs. Zwierlein notes some of the other powers associated with animals. Hummingbirds were brains; the eagle was strength; and the coyote was prankster.

Dr. Jones points to Rattlesnake Rock, where strange rock formations stand out of Jasper Ridge above SLAC. This was a sacred place, she surmises, because there are tiny mortar holes in the rocks that were suitable only for grinding medicines and pigments — which are used in rituals. "You can see Mt. Diablo, which is the center of the Earth for the Ohlones," she says. "It's an Ohlone power spot."

Dr. Jones has great respect for the Ohlone people, who represent a level of society that all cultures have gone through. "This is an important kind of human organization," she concludes. "It's not backward or primitive; it's extremely effective — and low-impact."

Inigo: a life

With the Spanish missions came the disintegration of the indigenous culture.

At first, the natives must have been impressed by the power, pomp and ritual of the invaders. They began to bring their children, and later themselves to

■ INFORMATION

Information on Stanford courses and archaeology studies can be obtained by writing Campus Archaeologist Laura Jones, Archaeology Program, Building 60, Stanford, CA 94305; or e-mailing her at ljones@leland.stanford.edu.

For information on handling archaeological remains, particularly in Woodside, or researching Indian archives, call Irene Zwierlein at 851-7747.

Ballena Press has published four titles on Bay Area Ohlones: "Inigo of

Rancho Posolmi" by Laurence H. Shoup and Randall T. Milliken, 1999; "The Ohlone: Past and Present" by Lowell John Bean, 1994; "A Time of Little Choice" by Randall Milliken, 1995; and "The Costanoan/Ohlone Indians of the San Francisco and Monterey Bay Area: A Research Guide" by Lauren S. Teixeira.

Ballena Press Publisher Services can be reached at P.O. Box 2510, Novato, CA 94948; or contact 415-883-3530 (phone), or 415-883-4280 (fax).

be baptized, perhaps not realizing that once baptized, that child belonged to the mission.

For the Spanish, of course, the Indians were heathen souls to be converted, and free labor to build the missions and work the land. As European diseases killed nearby, convenient Indians, the Spanish went farther and farther away to enlist new souls and free labor.

The grim process is described in a title from Ballena Press, "A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area 1769-1810," by Randall Milliken.

Dr. Jones states bluntly, "The missions enslaved the Indians. They were captured and forced to work; they were whipped and starved if they didn't."

The mission fathers were, however, meticulous in recording baptisms, marriages and deaths, so scholars can now determine the structure of lives, if not their content.

The book, "Inigo of Rancho Posolmi," recounts one such life, which spanned 83 years and two huge

transitions — from native to Spanish, and from Spanish to American. While the book gives facts about Lope Inigo and the cultures he survived — even thrived in — his personal life can only be inferred.

Lope Inigo was born in 1781 in a native village just a few miles from the new Mission Santa Clara, founded just four years before. As he was learning tribal ways, the mission was introducing new technologies. Agriculture and livestock produced abundance that must have seemed miraculous to local people who subsisted by hunting and gathering.

The 8-year-old boy — his native name is not known — was baptized Lope Inigo (#1501) on December 26, 1789, along with five other children from the area. Two sisters were baptized the same year, and his parents, five years later.

Inigo spent most of the next 50 years in the mission. He was apparently cooperative, and rose to be an alcalde, a leader among the mission Indians. He and his wife, Viviana, had 11 children; three survived. Viviana died in 1828; she was 46.

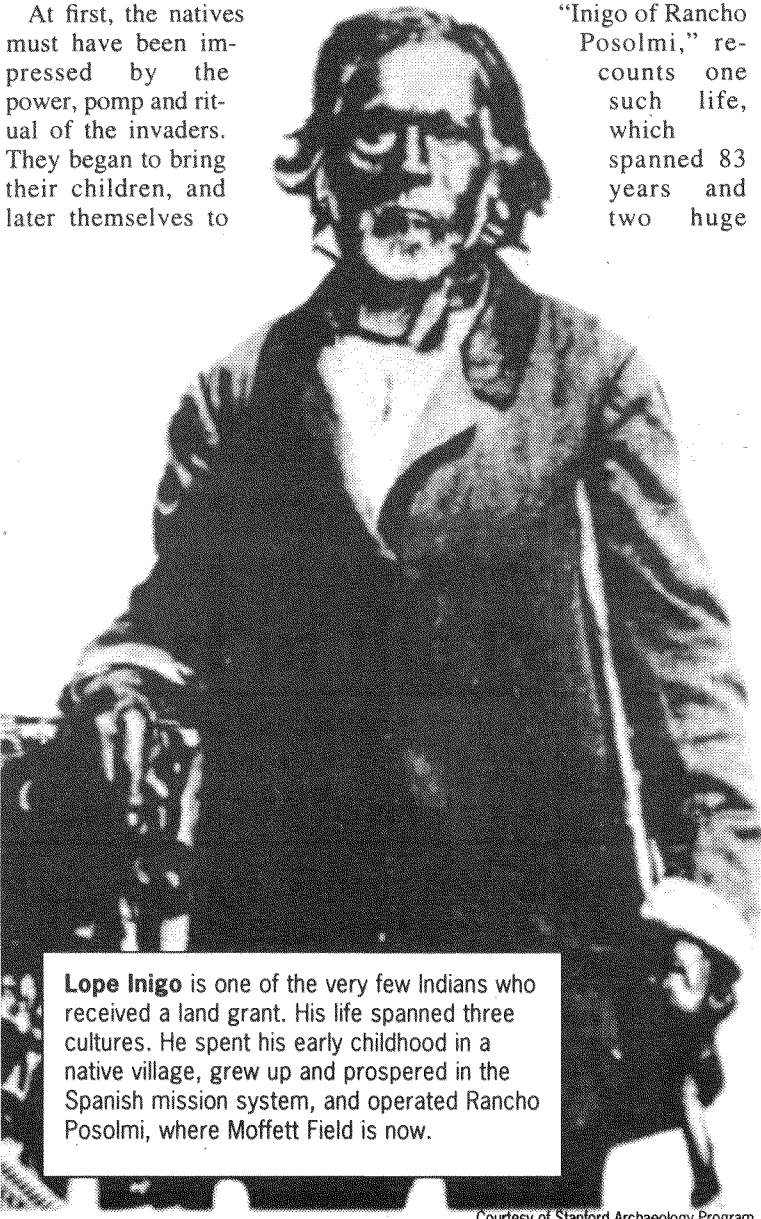
By 1839 Inigo had "obtained his liberty" from Mission Santa Clara and was squatting on a portion of what was later to become his land grant at what is now Moffett Field.

The next 25 years were spent in trying to obtain and defend his land grant. Of the 3,042 acres he applied for, 1,696 acres were eventually confirmed by the U.S. government.

With another family, Inigo built some houses, raised livestock and field crops. As the Gold Rush brought fortune hunters and adventurers, he tried to fend off squatters.

In a tantalizing glimpse of his personal life, a newspaper story by Mrs. Fremont Older tells of a duel with an old friend, Marcello, over Marcello's fourth wife. By the end of the fight, Inigo lost an ear and had a swelling on his head that showed up in his pictures.

Inigo died, old and respected, on February 28, 1864 — just a month after the railroad, which could travel 40 miles an hour, arrived in Mountain View and San Jose. ■



Lope Inigo is one of the very few Indians who received a land grant. His life spanned three cultures. He spent his early childhood in a native village, grew up and prospered in the Spanish mission system, and operated Rancho Posolmi, where Moffett Field is now.

Courtesy of Stanford Archaeology Program