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History of Tachi Yokut Indians

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(See also [The Protocol For The Bear Lodge \(Asi/Inipi\)](#), [Bear Lodge](#); and [History of The Native American Sweat Lodge](#))



**Hello and welcome back everyone
and welcome to the new members.**

I hope you find this both interesting and informative.

BlackBear

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Tachi Yokut Indians

THE HISTORY OF THEIR PEOPLE

The Tachi Yokut Indians have inhabited the San Joaquin valley for centuries. Their forefathers made their living peacefully through farming, hunting, fishing, and gathering grains, nuts and fruits. Their lands consisted of fertile valleys, marshlands and rolling foothills. With the arrival of the American settlers, they gradually lost the land where they once lived. Their land was given away by the government or sold to farmers and ranchers, sometimes as bounty for killing their people. By the end of the 19th century, the Tachi Yokut Tribe was split across the central and southern parts of California.

Here in the San Joaquin Valley, their people were marched on foot from the valley to the foothills to make way for farmers and ranchers. When oil was discovered near Coalinga, they then were marched back to a desolate spot in the central valley near the present location of our reservation.

The Citizenship Act of 1924 gave all Indians American citizenship rights while allowing them to retain their tribal citizenship but it made little difference in the way they were treated by the government. As part of their integration into white society, the federal government sent their children to government schools, their religion was banned, and the teaching of their language and culture was all but forbidden.

Even after the land grabs and removal efforts had ceased, the damage had been done. The division of their people, the suppression of the Indian culture, and the influence of white society left their people with few ties to the past. Aspirations for the future were being destroyed by the resulting economic hardships and prejudice

For generations their people have tried to support themselves as seasonal field laborers. Government regulations produced long term economic stagnation on the reservation, resulting in 85% unemployment, a crumbling infrastructure, and a cycle of poverty which ground away at the hope for a better future for their children.



Kiowa Honor Song at Pigmented Tipi, c. 1880
Pencil, ink, colored pencil

THE SANTA ROSA RANCHERIA

In 1934, the Santa Rosa Rancheria was established on about 40 acres of desolate farmland in Lemoore, California. Forty people lived on the reservation below poverty level, many living in tule huts, tin houses, old cars and chicken coops. The average education on the reservation was 3rd grade level, with field labor as the primary source of income.

By the 1980's the Santa Rosa Rancheria had grown to approximately 200 members and 170 acres. Government programs such as Headstart, 638 funds, and an AA program were in place, and the average education increased to 8th grade level. Some HUD housing was built, but living conditions were still below poverty level for most members.

A TURNING POINT:

The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act

Self sufficiency and self determination are the two most important goals of any sovereign nation, which is why they have fought so hard to establish and maintain their own form of government and reclaim our right to determine their own future. Thanks to the efforts of strong American Indian leaders, the federal government gradually acknowledged their rights. In 1988, Congress passed legislation providing a means for rebuilding their economy, pride, and hope: the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA).

IGRA acknowledged the right of American Indians to make gaming compacts with the states where their reservations are located. Many tribes in California have been inspired by this legislation and have entered into gaming enterprises of their own. In 1983, the Santa Rosa Rancheria was approached by the New England Company, a casino management firm, and soon after the Southgate Bingo Palace was opened.

At first it was thought their Bingo hall would be a small scale success at best, creating just enough jobs and revenue to give their reservation economy a boost. But Bingo prospered from the very start, eventually seating nearly 1500 players a day. Through the years several management companies assisted in their growth, but in 1994 their tribe took over management of the facility and changed the name to The Palace Indian Gaming Center.

REBUILDING THEIR RESERVATION

The Palace Indian Gaming Center has had a tremendous impact on their reservation. The Palace has grown from 86 employees in 1994 to over 400 employees in 1997, one-third of whom are Native American. The average education of their members has risen to the 12th grade and college levels, and living conditions have improved to wood frame housing, block homes and mobile homes.

The Palace now offers their youth employment opportunities that would not otherwise be available. Many of their former employees have gone on to successful positions elsewhere in the community and are positive role models for youngsters on the reservation. Unemployment has dropped below 25%, and most tribal members are now free from AFDC dependence.

Gaming revenues allow them to rise to the challenges of reestablishing their cultural identity, returning to economic self sufficiency, and rebuilding their reservation. Everyday they move closer to reaching their goals. The Palace has given us an excellent start and placed us in an exciting new role -

as participants in our own destiny



Teton Lakota Tobacco Bag, c. 1880
Hide, glass beads, quill, ink (?), pigment

Santa Rosa Rancheria Cemetery

Tachi Yokut Indian Tribe
Kings County, California



Tachi's are part of a larger division of native Americans known as Yokuts. The Tachi Tribe of Kings County branched from a larger Tachi Village that once resided near a trading post at the Town of Kingston, also in Kings County. The area was originally part of a Mexican land grant known as Laguna de Tachi.

Kingston is now a ghost town, replaced by Kingston Community Park, which is located on the south bank of the Kings River on Douglas Avenue, 4/10 mile west of 12 ¾ Avenue. A ferry once provided transportation across the river at this point, bringing stagecoach traffic and commerce to the area.

The only remnant of once thriving communities in Kingston is California State registered historical landmark #270. This landmark records that on the evening of December 26, 1873, a famous bandit Tiburco Vasquez and his gang raided and successfully took possession of the town. After robbing both citizens and stores they were pursued by a citizen posse, but were able to make their escape.

The current Tachi Tribe in Kings County later relocated to the Santa Rosa Rancheria, near the City of Lemoore. The tribe owns and operates the "Palace Indian Gaming Center", as well as other successful businesses in Kings County. The tribal office of this small Indian community is located at 16835 Alkali Drive, Lemoore, phone number (559)924-1278.

The Santa Rosa Rancheria Tribal Cemetery is situated on 19th Avenue, about 2/10 mile south of Jackson Avenue. Special permission is required from the tribal office to access the property. Most of the monuments in the cemetery were constructed of wood, rendering them vulnerable to time and weather.

In the spirit of Community Oriented Policing, collaborative actions were taken by the Tachi Tribe under direction of Chief Clarence Atwell and the Kings County Sheriff's Office Coroner Division under direction of Sheriff Ken Marvin to preserve ancestral history within this cemetery.

Gravesites within this cemetery are not arranged in rows that can be platted. Inscriptions on many of the monuments are not legible. Kings County Sheriff Sergeant Tom Edmonds recorded inscriptions in December 1999, by beginning at the east cemetery border and working toward the west border.

A YOKUTS PRAYER

My words are tied in one
With the great mountains,
With the great rocks,
With the great trees,
In one with my body
And my heart.
Do you all help me
With supernatural power.
And you, Day!
And you, Night!
All of you
See me
One with this world!

From The Tache-Yokuts: Indians of the San Joaquin Valley, written by Marjorie W. Cummins, Pioneer Publishing, Fresno, CA



Hopi Paiakyamu (clowns) , c. 1895
Wood, pigment

Games

The Yokuts used their games to increase their skills. Games helped the Indians develop more self-control and more give-and-take. They made use of things in nature for game playing. Rocks, leaves, barks, seeds, gourds, shells, and cones are examples.

Guessing games were popular with Indian adults and children. Often a player would chant as the guessing took place. One favorite game was called the Handgame. Each team started with a row of ten or twelve sticks. While the Indians were chanting, one team passed two sticks or dice behind them. One was black; one was white. Then the whole team held its hands in front of it and the other team tried to guess which hand held the black one. If they guessed rightly they got to take a stick from the first team and add it to their row of sticks.

Shinny was another game the children liked to play. They used a ball about as big as a tennis ball which was made of an oak burl, (gall). Sometimes they made a hole in the ground and buried the ball.

Then they had to dig it out of the ground with their clubs before the first two players started hitting it toward their goals. The goals were about four hundred yards apart.

The game started from a spot half way between the two goals. Each team tried to get the ball into their goal by hitting it with the wooden clubs. It was a rough game.

Music and Dance

Singing and dancing were very important parts of the Yokuts' everyday life. The Indians chanted songs when they played games. The women would sing to their babies when gathering or preparing food. The men sang and danced when performing the many ceremonial dances, such as the Rainmaking Ceremony and Rattlesnake Dance.

The Yokuts used very few musical instruments. The most popular rhythm instrument was the clapper. Another commonly used instrument for rhythm was the rattle. Yokuts used few or no drums. They would beat two sticks together or beat on a log with a stick to keep time.

Communication and Transportation

Each Yokut spoke its own language and could understand and speak the language of the other Yokut tribes. Because of this there was little use for sign language except with strangers.

Most signs were made with the hands, but they were used in relation to other parts of the body. Smoke was used sometimes as signals that there were strangers in the valley. Messages were delivered by runners from the villages, also.

Symbols were used for rock drawings or pictographs. Some of the symbols represent things, some happenings, but mostly they express ideas and emotions. Boats, rafts, and walking were the principal means of transportation. Boats and rafts were made from the tules that grew near the lakes and rivers.



Cherokee Moccasins, c. 1830
Native-tanned and dyed hide, glass beads, ribbon

Note from BlackBear

The pictures from this and all future issues will be uploaded to Yahoo. This is mainly for those who get the digest version which doesn't have any pictures.

Yahoo/My Groups/TA_DreamCatcher/Photos

<http://www.tachi-yokut.com/>

A Tachi Yokut Myth

A Tachi had a fine wife who died and was buried. Her husband went to her grave and dug a hole near it.

There he stayed watching, not eating, using only tobacco. After two nights he saw that she came up, brushed the earth off herself, and started to go to the island of the dead. The man tried to seize her but could not hold her. She went southeast and he followed her. Whenever he tried to hold her she escaped.

He kept trying to seize her, however, and delayed her. At daybreak she stopped. He stayed there, but could not see her. When it began to be dark the woman got up again and went on. She turned westward and crossed Tulare Lake (or its inlet). At daybreak the man again tried to seize her but could not hold her. She stayed in the place during the day. The man remained in the same place, but again he could not see her. There was a good trail there, and he could see the footprints of his dead friend and relatives. In the evening his wife got up again and went on. They came to a river which flows westward towards San

Luis Obispo, the river of the Tulamni (the description fits the Santa Maria, but the Tulamni are in the Tulare drainage, on and about Buena Vista lake). There the man caught up with his wife and there they stayed all day. He still had nothing to eat. In the evening she went on again, now northward. Then somewhere to the west of the Tachi country he caught up with her once more and they spent the day there. In the evening the woman got up and they went on northward, across the San Joaquin river, to the north or east of it. Again he overtook his wife. Then she said: 'What are you going to do? I am nothing now. How can you get my body back? Do you think you shall be able to do it?' He said: 'I think so.' She

said: 'I think not. I am going to a different kind of a place now.' From daybreak on that man stayed there. In the evening the woman started once more and went down along the river; but he overtook her again. She did not talk to him. Then they stayed all day, and at night went on again.

Now they were close to the island of the dead. It was joined to the land by a rising and falling bridge called ch'eleli. Under this bridge a river ran swiftly. The dead passed over this. When they were on the bridge, a bird suddenly fluttered up beside them and frightened them. Many fell off into the river, where they turned into fish. Now the chief of the dead said: 'Somebody has come.' They told him: 'There are two. One of them is alive; he stinks.' The chief said: 'Do not let him cross.' When the woman came on the island, he asked her: 'You have a companion?' and she told him: 'Yes, my husband.' He asked her: 'Is he coming here?' She said, 'I do not know. He is alive.' They asked the man: 'Do you want to come to this country?' He said: 'Yes,' Then they told him: 'Wait, I will see the chief.' They told the chief: 'He says that he wants to come to this country. We think he does not tell the truth.' 'Well, let him come across.' Now they intended to frighten him off the bridge. They said: 'Come on. The chief says you can cross.' Then the bird (kacha) flew up and tried to scare him', but did not make him fall off the bridge into the water. So they brought him before the chief. The chief said: 'This is a bad country. You should not have come. We have only your wife's soul (itit). She has left her bones with her body. I do not think we can give her back to you.' In the evening they danced. It was a round dance and they shouted. The chief said to the man: 'Look at your wife in the middle of the crowd. Tomorrow you will see no one.'

Now the man stayed there three days. Then the chief said to some of the people: 'Bring that woman. Her husband wants to talk to her.' They brought the woman to him. He asked her: 'Is this your husband?' She said.- 'Yes.' He asked her: 'Do you think you will go back to him?' She said: 'I do not think so. What do you wish?' The chief said: 'I think not. You must stay here. You cannot go back. You are worthless now.' Then he said to the man: 'Do you want to sleep with your wife?' He said: 'Yes, for a while. I want to sleep with her and talk to her.' Then he was allowed to sleep with her that night and they talked together. At daybreak the woman was vanished and he was sleeping next to a fallen oak. The chief said to him: 'Get up. It is late.' He opened his eyes and saw an oak instead of his wife. The chief said: 'You see that we cannot make your wife as she was. She is no good now. It is best that you go back. You have a good country there.' But the man said: 'No, I will stay.' The chief told him: 'No, do not. Come back here whenever you like, but go back now.'

Nevertheless he man stayed there six days. Then he said: 'I am going back.' Then in the morning he started to go home. The chief told him: 'When you arrive, hide yourself. Then after six days emerge and make a dance.' Now the man returned. He told his parents: 'Make me a small house. In six days I will come out and dance.' Now he stayed there five days. Then his friends began to know that he had come back. 'Our relative has come back,' they all said. Now the man was in too much of a hurry. After five days he went out. In the evening he began to dance and danced all night, telling what he saw. In the morning when he had stopped dancing, he went to bathe. Then a rattlesnake bit him. He died. So he went back to island. He is there now. It is through him that the people know it is there. Every two days the island becomes fall. Then the chief gathers the people. 'You must swim,' he says. The people stop dancing and bathe. Then the bird frightens them, and some turn to fish, and some to ducks; only a few come out of the water again as people. In this way room is made when the island is too full. The name of the chief there is Kandjidji.

A.L. Kroeber, Indian Myths of South Central California,
University of California Publications,
American Archaeology and Ethnology, vol. IV, no. 4 (1906-7), PP. 216-18



Seminole Bandolier Bag, c. 1830

Wool, silk, glass beads, copper alloy, cotton thread

Native American Recipe

Making Acorn Bread

It is harder to make flour of acorns than of corn or Wheat. Yet the California tribes learned to make flour from acorns many centuries ago. In the fall the Indians gathered the ripe acorns and put them into storage bins and large baskets. When a woman wanted to make acorn flour, she first hulled a basketful of acorns. Then she pounded them with a stone, till she had a fine flour."

She next spread the meal in a shallow pit in clean sand and poured water over it. The water dissolved the tannic acid out of the flour. She let the flour dry. As it dried, the flour formed a crust. It was easy to lift this layer from the sand.

The woman mixed some of this flour with water. She patted the dough into cakes and put them on hot stones to bake acorn bread.

Acorn flour is rich and nourishing. There were always enough acorns, so the people lived without fear of hunger.



I hope you have enjoyed this issue of Dream Catcher.

Be safe and I'll see you next time!!

Your editor

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