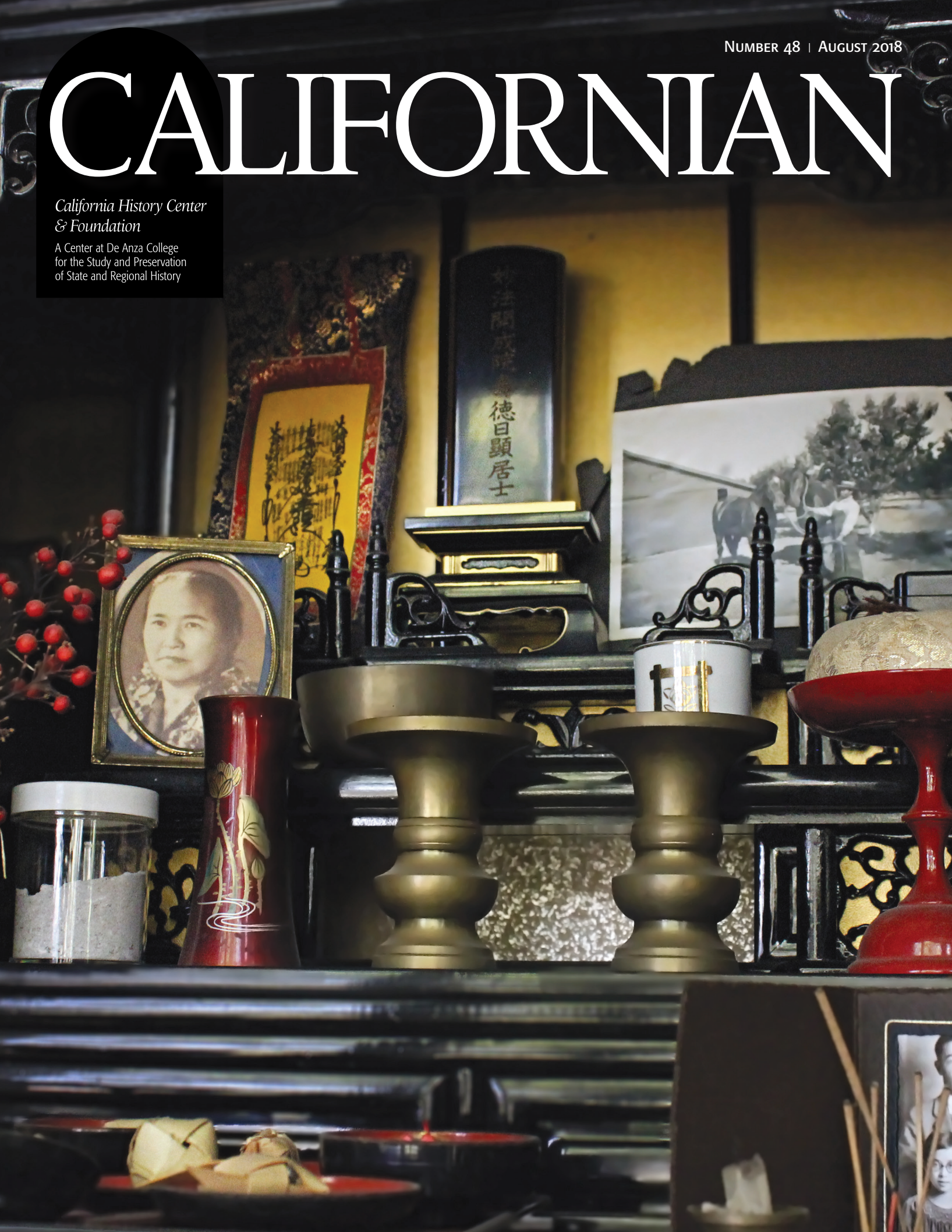


# CALIFORNIAN

*California History Center  
& Foundation*

A Center at De Anza College  
for the Study and Preservation  
of State and Regional History





**Front cover,  
back cover,  
inside front cover:**

A *Butsudan* or traditional Japanese Buddhist shrine is set up in households as part of a spiritual practice which may include display of mementoes of deceased family members. Judy Dang, CHC civil liberties grant project director, is the designer of the commemorative display: on the tree are messages of memory, blessing, and inspiration from community members.

Michisaki Family Butsudan. Butsudan photographs are by Judy Dang. Thank you also to Susan Hayase. Thank you to the Michisaki Family. See story by Jiro Saito, page 16.



# Calendar

## Summer Session

### JULY

- 2 First day of summer quarter
- 4 Independence Day holiday
- 17 Extended year course – Civil Liberties – begins at California History Center

### AUGUST

- 6 Extended year course ends
- 12 Summer session ends



## Fall Quarter

### SEPTEMBER

- 24 First day of fall classes

### OCTOBER

Exhibit "Wherever There's a Fight" (version 3.0) is our fall exhibit. Stay tuned for opening dates.

CHC Faculty Speaker Series continues, dates TBD.

- 27 Taste of History "Wesley Ueunten and Friends" 3 – 6 pm

### NOVEMBER

- 12 Veterans' Day observed
- 22 - 23 Thanksgiving holiday
- 28 Urban planning San José, lecture, 6:30 – 10:20pm, CHC

### DECEMBER

- 1 Urban planning San José, field study, 9 am – 5:30 pm
- 5 Urban planning, lecture, 6:30 – 10:20 pm, CHC
- 6 Winter solstice open house, 1 – 4 pm
- 8 Urban planning, field study, 9 am – 5:30 pm
- 14 Last day of finals



California History Center & Foundation  
A Center for the Study of State and Regional History  
De Anza College

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Trianon Building Hours:  
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or call for an appointment.

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# Director's Report



Tom Izu

## Using local history as a perspective on civil liberties

Civil liberties are currently on the minds of many and how can it be otherwise given the historical debates and battles raging over dramatic efforts to shape and change the direction of our nation? Will we redefine who can be an “American,” who truly belongs here, and whether some people in our nation may have rights and liberties while others may not? These are critical issues with tremendous implications for the future of democracy in the U.S.

While I am well aware of the limits of our work here at the center, I believe we have contributed, however modestly, to the efforts to educate our students and public on the nature of civil liberties by using local history. I am speaking of the collaborative work we are just now completing with the Japanese American Museum of San José and J-Town Community TV funded through a grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program of the state library.

This project's purpose was to highlight the lessons learned from the Japanese American World War II incarceration experience and connect this historic episode to the past and contemporary

treatment of Mexican, Chinese, Muslim Americans and others, particularly the exclusionary policies facing these groups in the San José area. We conducted a dozen oral history-style interviews, many inspiring and insightful, and hosted two very successful public programs to bring together and engage these communities and encourage their participation in efforts to promote and protect the civil liberties of all Americans, especially those groups who are currently facing attacks on their civil liberties, including Muslim Americans and other immigrant groups.

We made some wonderful new contacts and because of this work we are now positioned to plan and organize some new collaborations with other local history organizations and civil liberties education groups. I will be sharing in much more detail the fruits of this work in future issues of our magazine,

as well as sharing how to access the video recordings of our project as we complete them, but in the meantime here are some lessons I personally learned from this past year's efforts:

The personal stories we can cull from local history are powerful and help connect people across culture, experience, and background, making *empathy* a path towards deep reflection and a way to enrich standard academic discourse and debate, not detract from it. This is especially true if we present these stories using culture and art whenever possible.

Contrary to the hate, fear-mongering, and divisiveness we are being bombarded with at present, people really want to connect, work together, share, and understand each other, not just to feel good, but because it seems normal and right in contrast to slogging through the negativity around us.

An understanding of civil liberties can be used as a balancing point or fulcrum especially if presented in a non-didactic way that includes the nuances and contradictions inherent in the lessons it can teach us. Civil liberties focus on the *individual* but also speak to the aspirations of the group as a whole. These two elements need to be presented together even if they seem to be in conflict sometimes, otherwise our desire for individual rights and liberties becomes meaningless without a collective effort and sense of obligation to enforce them for all.

Out of history comes our nation's *heritage*, something we *inherit*, including the good, the bad, and the many ugly social actions from the past taken in our name as Americans. There is no escaping it: we deny the truth of this inheritance at great peril to the practice of democracy. But we do have a choice – history also allows us to choose what we want our *legacy* to be; we can decide what we want to leave for future generations, and what social actions we wish to be a part of our *continuing* legacy. Joining the movement for protecting and expanding civil liberties allows us to be a part of a long legacy rooted in the fight for equality and justice.

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Over the next year, we will be engaged in some serious discussion over the future of the center, what it will look like in years to come and how it can restructure itself to become self-

# Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative

## Francisco Balderrama presents “I Never Saw My Father Again”

“Because equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air: we all have it, or none of us has it. That is the truth of it.”

—Maya Angelou



Francisco Balderrama speaks to a packed house at the Japanese American Museum in San José, May 3, 2018. His presentation, “I Never Saw My Father Again” is part of a collaborative series called “Don’t Exclude Us”. Dr. Balderrama is author of *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s*.

Professor, litigator, activist Bill Ong Hing spoke June 7, 2018 at JAMsj. His talk’s title is “Here to Stay” as part of the “Don’t Exclude Us” collaborative speaker series on immigration, racism, and civil liberties.



Bekki Shibayama, left, and Judy Mine, right, enjoy discussion at the reception concluding the evening’s program.

Panelists, left to right: Ammad Rafiqui, Balderrama, Susan Hayase, Tom Izu. Rafiqui is Civil Rights and Legal Services Coordinator for Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR).

# Charlene Eigen-

*Charlene Eigen-Vasquez (formerly known as Charlene Sul) was born and raised in San Jose, California. Her mother was born in San Francisco, her grandmother was born near Morgan Hill. Members of her family have lived within this 50-mile radius for hundreds of years. Her career and artwork is a reflection of a strong tie to this region of California, and incorporates both Ohlone and Mexican cultural influences. Today, Charlene is an accomplished textile artist and acrylic painter. She is considered an Activist in the sense that she not only serves as a spokesperson for her tribe, but she uses her artwork to influence others and her ideas to help others through self-actualization, discovery of purpose and self-inspiration. At the age of 51 years, Charlene earned a J.D. from Mitchell Hamline School of Law and began a mediation firm. Her goal is to help families and communities use their voice to solve challenging legal problems.*



The first part of her oral history appeared in the Winter 2018 issue of *Californian* and concludes in this issue. This is the second part of her oral history, originally recorded in 2014.

## **One Thousand Hummingbirds**

The idea of a women's council focused on water issues was conceived over 10 years ago at an Ohlone gathering in Indian Canyon which is an Ohlone place of prayer near Hollister, California. The first conversation was spurred by a small group of Ohlone women concerned about issues surrounding the availability of water and access to clean water in particular. In Indian Canyon alone, where there was once a thriving waterfall, dropping into a babbling creek, over a short period of time the water had all but disappeared. As discussions continued over the next few years, the circle grew to include women from other nations, from all walks of life, everyone with a water story and genuine concern. Nearly two years after the first conversations, Catherine Herrera brought up the idea of a council of women who would gather to hold prayers for water. It was agreed that the name of the council would be the One Thousand Hummingbirds. From the time of the initial gathering, I would become the first council leader and a constantly evolving group of women took turns as council and



Photo by Ruth Morgan.  
Annual story-telling event at Indian Canyon, June 30, 2012.

# -Vasquez

Descendant  
of the People of  
Chitactac

Council Woman,  
Confederation of  
Ohlone People





Hummingbird Women are inspired to lift their hearts, lift their voices and lift their energy. Hummingbird Women have stepped forward and with absolute purpose, are finding ways to heal and protect Earth using the skills already within each one of us.

committee members committed to the success of the first four years of the 4-day gatherings. During the first four years, the idea of environmental preservation, water purity and prayer ways took on a natural progression. Each year was guided by an international, multi-generational Hummingbird community of women with basic common understandings. We knew, for example, that prayers must be accompanied by spiritual teachings, leadership teachings, and most important, a call to action. We quickly began to hear more stories of women having similar discussions and gatherings around water and environment issues throughout the state and word spread across the country.

Hearing the need for action, our first move was to create an invitational that would allow women to share the concerns as representatives of their respective communities. More than addressing regional concerns, my personal hope was that participants would share their own involvement in terms of political or social action that seemed to be making a difference. By facilitating discussions, perhaps solutions to common problems would be revealed. In the meantime, I knew we needed to take it upon ourselves to create awareness and promote possible solutions. As miracles happen, for the first gathering we were welcomed by the naturalists at Coyote Hills Regional Park in Fremont, California thanks to Bev Ortiz, a long-time advocate of Native people and the Ohlone in particular. The support we received from the park staff was incredible. They provided us with all of the things that we needed to convert a dry, remote park location into a temporary village site for a 4-day gathering. When the park staff asked us how many women would be in attendance, we estimated that perhaps 50 women could commit for the entire four days. At the end of the first year there were over a hundred women who camped out for the duration of the gathering. A dozen or more came early to build our temporary village space; a few women stayed afterwards to help return the space back to its original state. It was truly a beautiful experience of teaching, learning and praying. The second year we moved to a different location and we estimated two hundred women. Instead, over three hundred committed to the 4-day camp out. Today women still

ask about the gathering and look forward to the gathering to be hosted by a new council of women. While mission statements evolve, today the One Thousand Hummingbird mission reads as follows:

Hummingbird Women are inspired to lift their hearts, lift their voices and lift their energy. Hummingbird Women have stepped forward and with absolute purpose, are finding ways to heal and protect Earth using the skills already within each one of us. *“Through every action there is a reaction.”* Our actions move others to reflect upon their own actions. Hummingbird Women live with the certain knowing that: *The time is now!*

The One Thousand Hummingbird council is now in its sixth year. New leadership will carry the mission forward. The council was never intended to stay with the Ohlone. From its inception, our hope was that others would be moved to take on the task of leadership and sharing the hummingbird message in their community. The founding council members are pleased that the One Thousand Hummingbird circle will continue to thrive with new energy.

### Language Restoration

I have studied the language, but I can't hold a conversation. I speak a few words. I'm always practicing. A lodge leader by the name of Grey Fox, or Uncle Gordon, told me that songs, dances, cultures, medicine ways, traditional practices for living and being never disappear. They will all come back to you in dreams through Spirits who will reveal the way. That being said, one needs to be open-minded and unafraid. If you do not understand your dreams, if you are afraid of your own visions, it is likely that you will miss an opportunity to bring something from the past back to life. Day dreaming, night dreaming is the doorway to an unspoken world. Language is sometimes the connection to that other world. While I do not speak the language, the elder I relied on told me not to worry, it was likely my children or grandchildren would learn. My path would take me in a different direction. These discussions were taking place during the 90's. That became my mantra to those wanting to learn. "It will come back to you in your dreams, in songs." I was told that one day I would be standing next to somebody who will speak to me in Ohlone language. At the time I was told that for me it was not whether I learned the language, but to focus on *living* the language.

Today is an incredible time. It's a time of melding the Ohlone language with contemporary times. Speakers of all ancient languages must use traditional words to describe a

The hummingbird is a prominent figure in Ohlone lore. Among other things, she is part of the Ohlone creation story. The story references a peak surrounded by an endless sea of water. Some believe this peak to be Mt. Umunhum, since umunhum is the word for hummingbird. Thus, you have the connection to the past and to water. Additionally, the flight of the hummingbird is known to be far, wide and expedient, for that reason she is the perfect messenger to tell the story of the critical need to focus on fresh clean water around the world.



modern society. It is truly inspiring to know that the language lives and evolves at a time when it is once again “okay to be Indian” as Grandma Edna once said.

### **Role of the Elders in the Revitalization Process**

Certainly there are a handful of Elders visible at Ohlone gatherings, but they are truly such an incredibly small proportion of the larger population of Ohlone Elders. Outside of those who have made their way to the “circle,” most Elders are not present in the circle because they truly do not have a conscious understanding for Ohlone people. They often do not know about the revitalization of culture. It is difficult when our ways have sometimes not been sustained over generations. Sometimes Ohlone my age are teaching those 20 years our elder. That being said, what I’ve learned is that the Elders are becoming more interested and supportive as the younger adults demonstrate their dedication to Ohlone-ness. Even without a clear understanding for Ohlone ways and history, Elders have been known to “catch the Spirit” and become inspirational and a motivating factor for those who are younger.

For example, my grandmother did not talk about her youth for many reasons. I think a lot of it has to do with embarrassment and shame. I remember Uncle Butch often claiming, “I’m Indian.” Grandma would quickly correct him saying, “No you’re not. Stop talking about that.” She had childhood lessons of privacy and protection ingrained in her memory. While she taught her children not to be ashamed or embarrassed about who they were, at the same time not one of her children knew for sure if they were Native. It was more of a family rumor. The only thing I could figure was the concept of “If you don’t talk about identity, you’re not lying.” If you don’t say anything bad, then you’re not hurting anybody. Today, however, things have changed and the Elders I know are excited to see people searching for information and trying to get it right for once.

History and truth can be healing. Here is a short example: my granddaughter, Boots, got really, really sick and ended up in the hospital. On my first visit to her I brought some spearmint from our yard. I used to take this same plant to Grandma when she was in the hospital. She loved the aroma. She said spearmint reminded her of home and her childhood. Every visit I brought her a fresh batch, and she would share stories of her childhood. Grandma would hold the bunch and rub it on her face. It seemed as if the aroma helped to wake her memory as she was able to describe things so vividly. When I took Grandma’s medicine to my granddaughter when she

was in the hospital, I knew it would help her. She was having respiratory problems and I knew the spearmint would bring Grandma’s Spirit back. My daughter, Justina, and I put the spearmint in my Boots’s little hospital bed and offered prayers. The nurses were a bit concerned. They began to ask questions. “Oh, what’s that in her bed? Is that mint? Do you use it for tea? Do you make something with it? I know my grandmother does.” At some point, I suppose they figured our doings were beyond their comprehension, so they let us have our way. To me that was a blessing in itself. I brought the spearmint for Boots, but this process helped the nurses realize that yes, indeed, people still use fresh herbs for healing. Our way, the Ohlone way, piqued their curiosity.

### **Significance of the Women Elder Ceremony at Indian Canyon, 2005**

As people get older they start to really think about their lives and where they’ve been. Many elders end up secluded, whether they are in their home or their local neighborhood. For many reasons, travel simply becomes less frequent. I saw that with a lot of those ladies who came to the first Women Elders Ceremony at Indian Canyon. In these cases, it is important to convince elders that they are appreciated and have a place in the community. The really, really exciting thing was that the Elder women had a chance to talk amongst themselves and share the similarities in their histories. Even though some of them had never met each other, it was as if they lived in parallel universes. When they had a chance to share, it felt like a gap in their cultural identity began to make sense. When they spoke it was as if they could finally release their true identity to those beyond their family circle. I did not know any of the ladies prior to the Elders’ circle because they had never been to the Ohlone ceremonies. Most of them did not even know Ohlone ceremony was alive. However, once we were connected we hugged and all I remember were the tears that came as they said “thank you, thank you” over and over again. It was an honor and a transformative experience to recognize them and bring their Spirit back to the Ohlone circle after generations of disconnect. To me the most important part of the honoring of elders, is bringing in new elders. Such a gathering creates an opportunity for individuals to reclaim their Native identity, not for themselves, but for their entire family, for generations to come.

The women who came together at Indian Canyon are a part of a generation who had never been connected to their Ohlone-ism. Ohlone culture and ceremony had not been a



It is important to convince elders that they are appreciated and have a place in the community. The really, exciting thing was that the Elder women had a chance to talk amongst themselves and share the similarities in their histories. It was as if they lived in parallel universes.



The role of Elders in any community is sometimes the task of reminding the younger generations about the need to walk with dignity, be respectful to themselves and others and be thoughtful with their words.

part of their lives. Even those who knew they carried Ohlone blood, generally did not practice the ways. The great thing is that when you see elders in ceremony today, you often see them transform before your eyes. Ceremony is intended to be a “homecoming” of sorts. It can be healing and rejuvenating; it is intended to be welcoming. Some of the ladies who came to the first honoring were a little confused and overwhelmed. First, the gathering was entirely women, and that was awesome. Some had simply never seen people in regalia, and had never been before the sacred fire. They were being honored as individuals by a community they did not even know existed.

So what might be the role of an Elder separated from her indigenous history? Perhaps their [the Elders’] role is simply to be present. That alone can be spiritually and mentally healing for them, but also encouraging for those working so hard to revitalize Ohlone-ism. While the Elders who consistently show up to gatherings understand their lineage, a majority of elders do not know Ohlone ways. Families might have been assimilated into the Mexican lifestyle or adopted mainstream American culture. In this case, THEIR presence and encouragement is truly needed and appreciated. While some Ohlone may not be able to speak in terms of traditional Ohlone culture, young ones still need to appreciate what those before them went through. The young ones need to appreciate their role as the new carriers of Spirit. The role of Elders in any community is sometimes the task of reminding the younger generations about the need to walk with dignity, be respectful to themselves and others and be thoughtful with their words. What I am speaking of is not specific to being Ohlone, it is about guiding others to be stronger in a chaotic society. It is about talking to the next generation about living thoughtfully and purposefully from sunrise to sunset. These are the things elders can speak to.

There are other Honoring of the Elders gatherings that take place on a regular basis. I went to my first Honoring of Ohlone Elders over 25 years ago at Mount Madonna. While the Mount Madonna gathering has changed, the first gatherings were dedicated to the Ohlone. Each honoring ceremony focuses on the special medicine elders carry. Facilitating a gathering in order to give elders an opportunity to share this medicine and encourage future generations serves to provide healing and strength to the community.

While I can speak of the influence my own grandfather had on my life, I can point to a few elders from the first honoring circles who were incredible influences. They gave me my marching orders and while these elders have now passed, I

still hear their voices guiding the way. For this reason, I would like to see Ohlone gatherings in general grow. I am not speaking of inviting the general population; I am talking about family members encouraging their Ohlone family members to attend. This is how the culture, tradition, language and Ohlone Spirit will survive.

## Future Vision

I think it would start with personal wellness and then community wellness. In 1992 I created the Ohlone Wellness Project. The intent was to encourage those who had been disconnected generationally from their heritage to simply return to their place of creation and reconnect with their indigenous surroundings. We organized small gatherings at the ocean or other sacred places for prayer and reconnection. Eventually, we showed up at larger Ohlone gatherings with materials to teach pine needle basket making or shell necklace creation. The success of this project is that today there are others continuing exactly what we started. It is wonderful to see people using ceremony gathering-time to teach others to create, or simply host a place for artists to work on regalia or gifts. In addition, I have seen some of those who sat in our circles now showing off their skills in art shows. Indeed, it is an example of the rejuvenation of Ohlone-ism.

The next natural step was to try and create an objective forum to engage those who had a grasp of their cultural identity and history with those who were coming alive with their roots. As a result, the Confederation of Ohlone People was created. The original intent was not to focus on tribal recognition or even associate with any particular tribe. Instead, the primary function was to allow anyone to join, whether they were connected to a group seeking federal recognition or not. While tribes tend to function as a closed membership, we wanted to create an inviting space in society for Ohlone descendants wanting to learn their history, and also to serve as a resource for community members needing to connect with the Ohlone people.

Interestingly, the second goal, to serve as a community liaison, seems to have surpassed the first goal. Today, we serve more as a source for referrals or voice for the Ohlone. People interested in educational resources will contact us in search of classroom ideas and we have been called to make classroom visits. When international visitors come to Ohlone territory we might be called in order to arrange for a proper welcoming. When Ohlone remains are unearthed we have been contacted to share our voice, or attend a meeting. When good news

comes related to the protection of land or healing projects, we are happy to be contacted in an effort to collaborate or provide advice. Because the focus of the organization is on inclusion, building bridges, and welcoming allies, the network that surrounds and supports the Confederation of Ohlone People is a demonstration of the emergence of insightful community members. Sometimes the visibility of the Ohlone people along the California coast has increased because of new allies. Those who created the Confederation of Ohlone People can only be pleased by the natural evolution of the concept.

### **Federal Recognition**

I have been working on an academic paper regarding the legal pitfalls of federal recognition for tribes like the Ohlone. I make reference to the idea that federal recognition is more than access to land, scholarship opportunities, and self-governance. Federal recognition acknowledges that a people *exist*. In a few recent court decisions, the court actually states in their written opinion that the tribe in question was denied federal recognition because they no longer existed and were, in fact, extinct. I KNOW the tribal chairs of these tribes! Such a broad, bold statement is incredibly disingenuous. It is no wonder that there is such tension. A complete denial of federal recognition with no option for future revitalization is the current state of affairs.

### **Role of Next Generation**

Young people are becoming active in the revitalization process. By young people I am referring to those 30 years old and younger, essentially young adults, the generation following my generation. You can see their participation on multiple levels. First, one of the priorities for Ohlone people is the protection of village sites and cultural remains. Evidence of engagement is well-documented in photos taken during social activist demonstrations. Not only do you see Ohlone youth represented, but you also see the community support they have been able to generate in the name of the ancestors. Often the call to organize may not always come from the young adults, but when called upon they have the capacity through technology to organize others quickly.

Today's young adults are sharing music and art more openly than ever before. I would like to think that those before them opened the doors to new venues, and the result is that the request for Ohlone artists continues to grow. Through technology like online music and video sharing, the youth have access to cutting-edge technology and have been successful in promoting Ohlone issues. Finally, there is an increase in

the participation of children at Ohlone gatherings. It is truly inspiring to see the participation growth of those under ten years old in regalia dancing, singing Ohlone songs, or sitting in a circle at home, without the prompting of adults. This change is due to either the exposure their young parents had as children, or grandparents encouraging the participation of children. While the young adults help create the space for a new wave of Ohlone-ness, it will be some of today's children who will finally be able to claim that they were born into a living Ohlone culture, a culture not simply preserved and experienced during ceremony or at community gatherings, but in their own home, amongst their own family members.

It really has to be a family approach and parents must take the lead. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles can help, but parents must be responsible. Imagine if Native parents really understood that culture and tradition and health and wellness and everything related to Native life was more important than football or sleepovers with friends. Being Native, or part of any other race, is not an extra-curricular activity; it is part of one's bloodline, and one's being. Unfortunately, when you go to Native gatherings, the adult representation always far outnumbers the children. This is especially sad when you think of the fact that there are far more children in society than adults. A handful of children at a Native gathering simply is not enough. So where are the children? How do we expect them to learn, to lead, to be spiritually and physically well?

I see Ohlone gatherings accompanied by a day-to-day Ohlone life equivalent to walking in Spirit shoes. Those who are involved and walk this way know the direct relationship between prayer, self-empowerment, self-respect, gratitude, humility and Ohlone culture. What I am referring to does not allow for one to walk in and out of character. To be Ohlone means sharing breath with one's ancestors and honoring their struggle and, in some cases, their suffering. I cannot speak to the past, but bringing children into the Ohlone way today helps to build essential foundational skills that can only be experienced when present. The holistic skills I am referring to will simultaneously sustain individuals and the Ohlone Nation.

So, how does this begin? First, those adults who seem to have a grasp for their Ohlone identity must be welcoming. It is essential to bring family members into the circle. Exclusion has been a long, drawn-out history for many Native people. Unfortunately, this leads to cultural and traditional genocide. When family members, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters are introduced to Ohlone-specific gatherings, the healing, learning and bonding will explode! Eventually, the youth



Today's young adults are sharing music and art more openly than ever before. I would like to think that those before them opened the doors to new venues, and the result is that the request for Ohlone artists continues to grow.

will find their natural place in the circle where they must not be smothered by the voices and actions of adults. While I know adults feel that it is natural to take charge and correct youth, my belief is that the adults need to nurture and facilitate youth growth. Let them be the organizers, let them lead and finally honor them by paying attention when they call for the support of adults.



Most important is the sharing of information with and among tribal members. As in many traditional Native cultures, the best lessons are those shared face-to-face over a long period of time. For Ohlone, these sharings generally take place in and around ceremonial camps.

### **Role of Public Schools Regarding the Teaching of Ohlone Culture and History**

I have five children. Justina graduated from high school in 2001 and Cassandra in 2011. All of the children went to school in Ohlone territory. From the youngest to the oldest, indeed the mission system was covered and they were taught about the role of Native Californians of the past. To the best of my knowledge, the lessons were void of contemporary California Native culture. To speak of the past is fine. I do not think any of the older children recognized the void, and I assumed teachers made mention of populations like the Ohlone who lived within the communities. My assumption proved wrong when Anthony, my youngest son, came home angered that his teacher declared that the Ohlone were now extinct. This was in or about 1998 when Anthony was eight years old. Being pretty outspoken at times, he said, “No they’re not. I am right here!” Suddenly I was asked to a meeting and eventually asked to review their curriculum. Since then I have had a chance to review curriculum for the State of California, as well as curriculum for middle school science camps hosted within Ohlone territory. In addition, the Confederation of Ohlone People has been contacted numerous times by teachers and school districts requesting cultural presentations. The problem is that requesters are looking for volunteers and finding individuals who can provide such a service without any compensation or transportation reimbursement is difficult to impossible. Truly the best solution at this time is the ability to influence statewide and local curriculum, and to develop independent curriculum including support materials and perhaps provide teachers with regular announcements regarding public cultural activities hosted by regional parks.

Most important however, is the sharing of information with and among tribal members. As in many traditional Native cultures, the best lessons are those shared face-to-face over a long period of time. For Ohlone, these sharings generally take place in and around ceremonial camps. The best way to teach children is through experience and interactive opportunities. Overnight Native gatherings serve this purpose. These gath-

erings tend to mimic outdoor schools. Through these family gatherings, young and old alike have the opportunity to discover the truths for themselves. The wonderful thing is that when young people are aware, they will always see the truth for what it is and question that which does not make sense.

Imagine those who had been cut off from the truth about their own history. Elders analyze their own family experience and realize they ARE Ohlone and have the power to help guide their family towards discovery. As one can imagine, this process is not easy. Essentially it means that your parents, grandparents and others kept you from your true identity. As an elder, I wonder how many felt a bit confused or deceived when their identity is confirmed. Perhaps, instead, knowing is a relief! Looking forward, however, things can be different for young Ohlone adults and children.

### **Learning from the Ohlone Experience**

Sharing what has been archived and documented regarding contemporary thought is key. Today, with the ease of self-publishing, and the availability of recording audio and video, people from all cultures have the opportunity to portray themselves as they choose. In a sense, we can each write our own history in a manner that is truthful and respectful. I mention this because publications available regarding the Ohlone can be inaccurate or deceptive if they were not created by the Ohlone or trusted allies. Since this is purportedly the information age, the Ohlone have certainly learned the importance of participating in the dissemination of information being shared on their behalf. In essence, when you do not like the message, change the message. I would encourage others to write, photograph, and record their own stories and life experiences that can be referenced by future generations.

Recently I was online looking at ABC news clips; all I saw were highlights of war and tragedy. Our nation is so much more. What if these types of clips were all we had to represent society in 2014? What the Ohlone have learned, what many are focused on today is taking charge of the discussion, sharing authentic stories, facilitating deeper interpersonal connections to the world.

It is critical to acknowledge that what has been taught to school children in the past simply is not true. The Ohlone people never disappeared. As mentioned before, the Ohlone assimilated into mainstream society, and in a sense became invisible for the sake of preservation. The need to linger in the shadows may have been critical in generations past, but today is different. As society struggles with the impact of en-

vironmental and political chaos, it is clear that there are those who understand the value of indigenous culture and tradition. Ohlone priorities are most often guided by the past, and that is as it should be. It is our connection with the ancestors that draws us to protect sacred sites, open spaces and spiritual ways. This path, this ideology is part of what I call “Ohlone-ness.” It is one thing to have Ohlone blood, and it is another to live in and with Ohlone-ness.

While social-political protest is one way of bringing visibility to the things Ohlone value, visibility also takes place through art, education and prayer ways. I am convinced that if more people better understood the power of the connection Native people have with the past, and offered a greater respect for sacred places and sacred ways, society in general would benefit on a level that can only be experienced. I have seen the transformation of individuals who first came to understand the Ohlone reverence for the past and then used that understanding to explore the possibility of a reconnecting with their own familial history. It is truly beautiful. I have witnessed this transformation take place when we access public sites for prayer. Those who see the connection we have to the land understand the seriousness of the matter. For the Ohlone, we are related to land, water, plants, and animals. When others learn this, sometimes they come to strengthen their relationship with “all that is” and become our advocates. This is essential for progress. While some agencies and local organizations attempt to include Ohlone perspectives in decision-making processes, the need for greater genuine conversations around land and education must become common practice. This can only take place when all parties, society in general, understand that we often come from a place of higher-level common goals and speak from a place of respect and truth.

I was watching a documentary in Minnesota on public television called *Saving the Bay*, [<http://savingthebay.org/>] about the San Francisco Bay. They talked about the history of the Bay Area -- literally the water, the plants, the animals, the marshes and what used to be, and the Ohlone people and how they lived in that environment and how much it changed and why it changed. When one considers those fighting for the environment, this is taking place because activists realize what the world used to be like, how safe it was, how healthy it was, and how much damage has been done between a time at point A to a time at point B. I wonder, if one were to share traditional ways with the general population, would people see the correlation between the physical and spiritual health today as compared to some time, pre-mission invasion?

Some think a connection with ceremony, an understanding for natural healing, and a holistic perspective for life, is only available to a few, or possible for those with ‘time’ on their hands. Neither of these assumptions is true. If this way of life is a priority, material things and competing activities become less significant, making way for a new lifestyle. Walking in two worlds is a frame of reference, but it does not need to be a challenge. Almost all of us walk in two worlds, but we just don’t think about it.

In 2000, I had the opportunity to study law in Austria for a summer. While I was there I met with some attorneys and thought it was really interesting that they talked about Native people and how much they admired them. It turns out that this particular group of attorneys were civil rights revolutionaries, but their work was very much underground because of the country’s political climate. They had to figure out how to create change and support people without the visibility we enjoy in the United States. Between 1989 and 1990 the Berlin Wall had fallen and there were so many people coming to these attorneys asking for help in terms of reestablishing themselves in a new world. The attorneys were looking toward Native people in the United States to see how they had survived a changing nation. They had a great respect for the way Native people had integrated and preserved a sense of identity. I was blown away by their interest! They were looking at indigenous populations in terms of how to make people stronger and keep their culture intact. It made me think, so how do we keep our families together? How do we preserve the ideas that we have, and at the same time, how do we bust out of the oppression we sometimes feel and make something out of ourselves?

### **Living in Two Worlds**

At one point living in two worlds was a bit of a challenge and going back and forth was exhausting! One of the things that happened in the last couple of years came as the result of people losing their jobs. I was one of the many people who lost their job due to departmental outsourcing. The timing was perfect. My little consulting firm had just received a nice long-term opportunity to provide research and evaluation for university projects. This work could easily carry me over for a few years while allowing me to build the firm and create incredible flexibility in my life. In addition, the firm could sub-contract assignments creating flexible lifestyles for others. When I found out that I was going to lose my job, it was horrible for a split second until Creator shook me and I quickly realized that there was a reason for such a drastic change.



Some think a connection with ceremony, an understanding for natural healing, and a holistic perspective for life, is only available to a few, or possible for those with ‘time’ on their hands. Neither of these assumptions is true.



To me, living within the natural flow of community-centered service is in line with old traditional ways of supporting the circle.

What I can say is that living in two worlds can be incredibly challenging, but with faith, it can be incredibly satisfying. I left that job and the contract work went well. While it can sometimes be a challenge to manage a business, seek new and retain old business, the reward of independence is undeniable. I have been able to set my own schedule and choose my own projects. I am able to live in a way that is more authentic and better aligned with my values, and to step away from my home office when needed to advocate for the Ohlone, help plan projects, teach classes, and delve into ceremony.

The contracts that I choose are totally in line with my Spirit and my purpose.<sup>1</sup> I contend that, after many years of compartmentalization comprised of 12-hour work days, caring for 5 children, spending off-hours as a grassroots organizer and dedicating regular time to Ohlone ways, all of these efforts are finally either merging or evolving! At this point the children are grown. I am proud of who they have become and I believe that they each have a well-rounded appreciation for who they are and their potential. When they were young, I did my best to immerse them in Ohlone ways. I remember taking them to gatherings all by myself. We would drive for two or three hours one way to attend a four-day ceremony, and we would do the same to attend a half-day ceremony. About every two weeks I woke before dawn, packed our car with sleepy, cranky children, and gathered supplies. I could always count on them falling back to sleep while I enjoyed a cup of coffee along the way. Upon arriving the kids were always greeted by their young friends and playmates as well as their community teachers. At the end of each trip they each came away with stories to tell, new songs to sing, and a new commitment. At the end of every trip I knew that not only my efforts but the community effort at a particular gathering would provide the children with a sense of belonging and a foundation for Spirit. Today I take comfort in witnessing the children and grandchildren carrying on the Ohlone culture. As they take on the responsibility of keeping the Ohlone culture alive, I have the opportunity to realign my energy, hoping to live life with purpose and in Spirit.

Today I am completing what I believe will be my final major academic accomplishment. I am in the pursuit of a

law degree. It is something I began nearly 15 years ago, and I feel called to come back and tie up this loose end. I would not consider such an endeavor for someone nearing 50 years of age, but like other things in my life it aligns with the larger calling. Working towards this goal has really forced me to think strategically and become a better writer. The school has supported opportunities to promote new social justice discussions. I believe this academic break will have been well worth it when I return to the university to teach, or when I am able to continue political or social advocacy work that will benefit not only Ohlone, but society at large.

To me, living within the natural flow of community-centered service is in line with old traditional ways of supporting the circle. Finding a way to put my education to use while maintaining a schedule that allows me to attend ceremony, teach, be of service, and provide advocacy is the merging of two worlds.

### **Who is Native American/Indian?**

I am a person open to inclusiveness. The term Native American cannot be limited to those who the census might 'recognize.' In fact, according to the census the Ohlone people are invisible, deceased, and as a result excluded, since we are not 'federally recognized.' When I think of Native Americans I include anyone who identifies themselves as Native and indigenous to the Americas. To me it makes sense since indigenous nations of the Americas have so much in common. The term can be one that unifies people with similar political, cultural and economic histories. Just to be clear, this is my perspective and my personal definition. Definitions I have come across are often exclusive and sometimes seem to divide nations, creating animosity amongst people. Native Americans need to continue to define themselves. In this way, the unification of progressive, spiritual people may continue.

### **Reconciliation between the Ohlone and Society**

I believe reconciliation is possible. I think, however, it will only happen with federal recognition. Not federal recognition in its current state, but a reformed version that incorporates elements of restorative justice.

### **Proud to be Ohlone**

The Ohlone have assimilated into the various waves of immigrants who now call California their home. This assimilation has provided a certain amount of insulation as they walked in the shadows of their ancestors, but lived amongst

<sup>1</sup> Some examples of the way Spirit has guided my work decisions can be found in the types of assignments that have crossed my path. Over the past few years I have taken on assignments working with statewide arts councils to collect data that will help verify the value of government funding towards improving community relations. I have had the opportunity to work with health departments and social service agencies that provide indigenous-based treatments. My assignment is to identify gaps or provide evidence that their alternative forms of treatment are really working. Consulting has allowed my firm to work on evaluation programs for universities running programs geared towards communities of color. I have worked with refugees and migrant education programs. The point is that I have a chance to choose each assignment, based upon an alignment with purpose.

the newcomers. That is not to say that the Ohlone have not felt the impact of colonialism and sometimes this has resulted in oppression and depression. Some have found themselves dependent upon drugs and alcohol. Other outcomes are demonstrated in mental health stresses. One might argue that the Mission system created havoc for the Ohlone people. I would argue that it also forced the Ohlone to survive. Unlike other tribes, many Ohlone stayed within their traditional territory and stayed connected with their traditional homeland. While access to sacred places has been severely limited, the Ohlone have always been able to find sanctuary near the ocean, in the valleys, near creeks, and on mountain peaks in and near San Francisco, Oakland, Livermore, Fremont, San José, San Juan Bautista, Santa Cruz, Monterey, and Carmel. Because of this we have consciously and subconsciously been able to maintain a connection to home and Spirit. This connection is powerful; in fact I would argue that a traumatic disconnection from “home” can create chaos between generations of any particular population.

In general, the Ohlone have figured out the path to self-sufficiency. Right now is a time of traditional cultural revival, a time of nation-building. This period could never have come to fruition if the Ohlone were in personal survival mode. Today, adults, young and old, are stable enough to vigorously assert their right for national recognition and a healthy, holistic life. In addition, when one considers the incidents of young people who have turned to drugs and alcohol, overall, the numbers for Native people are disproportionate to the general population. This is simply not the case for the Ohlone. The suicide rate for Native people today is raging, Native people represent over 3 times the national average and, on some reservations, the rate is 10 times the national average. Again, these numbers simply do not hold true for the Ohlone. As a college instructor I have seen the data over and over. Studies demonstrate that these travesties can be a result of multi-generational oppression and external dependencies. I teach about some of these realities, and then in contrast offer students another perspective. Students need to know that there are incredible Native nations making a difference in this country. I am proud that the Ohlone are amongst them. The Ohlone represent scientists, environmentalists, writers, artists, and social activists in the Bay Area. Their successes are not simply measured amongst other Native groups, but amongst the best in the nation. The Ohlone are not segregated in any way; this means we must compete with the general population. I am proud to see my Ohlone brothers, sisters and young ones strive to do incred-

ible things that will make society a better place.

In terms of economic stability, because the Ohlone are not federally recognized like other tribes, we have never been able to fall back on the same subsidies as other tribes. This may seem like a disadvantage to some, but in our case I consider it to be character-building when one is forced to figure out how to be self-sustaining. What I have learned is that while it is important to provide for one’s family and future financially, it is just as important to practice sustainability in terms of natural health and wellness. This means retreating to the land for peace of mind and physical healing. An elder once told me that you can go out in the world and work, shop and keep a bank account, but how will that help you if there is a natural disaster? If you lose a loved one? If you need to heal a relationship? How will you survive? You will survive because you know how to heal yourself, and know how to live off of the land, because you’ve been put through ceremonies that require endurance. Ceremonies require you to forgive yourself and others; one is forced to put everything aside. No matter how difficult a ceremony might seem, or life might seem, you will be fine because you have learned how to manage. Some people may panic, but you will be fine. I hope I don’t have to experience the extremes he referred to, but he is right. The sense of survival can be incredible.

When the mission system attempted to perpetrate cultural genocide, all that was not lost. All we knew, all we needed simply went dormant for a few generations. I was told that when you start to dream and start to pay attention to those dreams everything will come back when the time was right. In essence, our identity has always been in a safe place. That is what is happening right now. I am proud to be part of the revival of Ohlone-ness!

Charlene Eigen-Vasquez (fka Charlene Sul) was represented in the California History Center’s recent exhibit – “Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy “ by her portrait (Ruth Morgan, photographer), an excerpt from her oral history with Janet Clinger, and by four quilts in the series *CROSSING PATHS – Ohlone Mother, Turtle Mother, Spirit Connection*. This oral history appears in its entirety, along with 18 other oral histories, in the compilation *Ohlone Elders and Youth Speak: Restoring a California Legacy*, produced by Costanoan Indian Research, Inc. and Community Works West, Ann Marie Sayers Project Director, Ruth Morgan, Photographer, and Janet Clinger, Oral Historian.



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# OTAY KAIRI

By Jiro Saito

Jiro Saito is a San José resident who has chaired the Department of Asian American Studies at San José State University and worked on the campaign for redress for the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans in a lifetime of varied occupations. He told his family's story to an assembly at the San José Japantown Buddhist Church on Day of Remembrance 2002 and again on May 3, 2018 at the Japanese American Museum, San José, at an event shared with Francisco Balderrama and others.

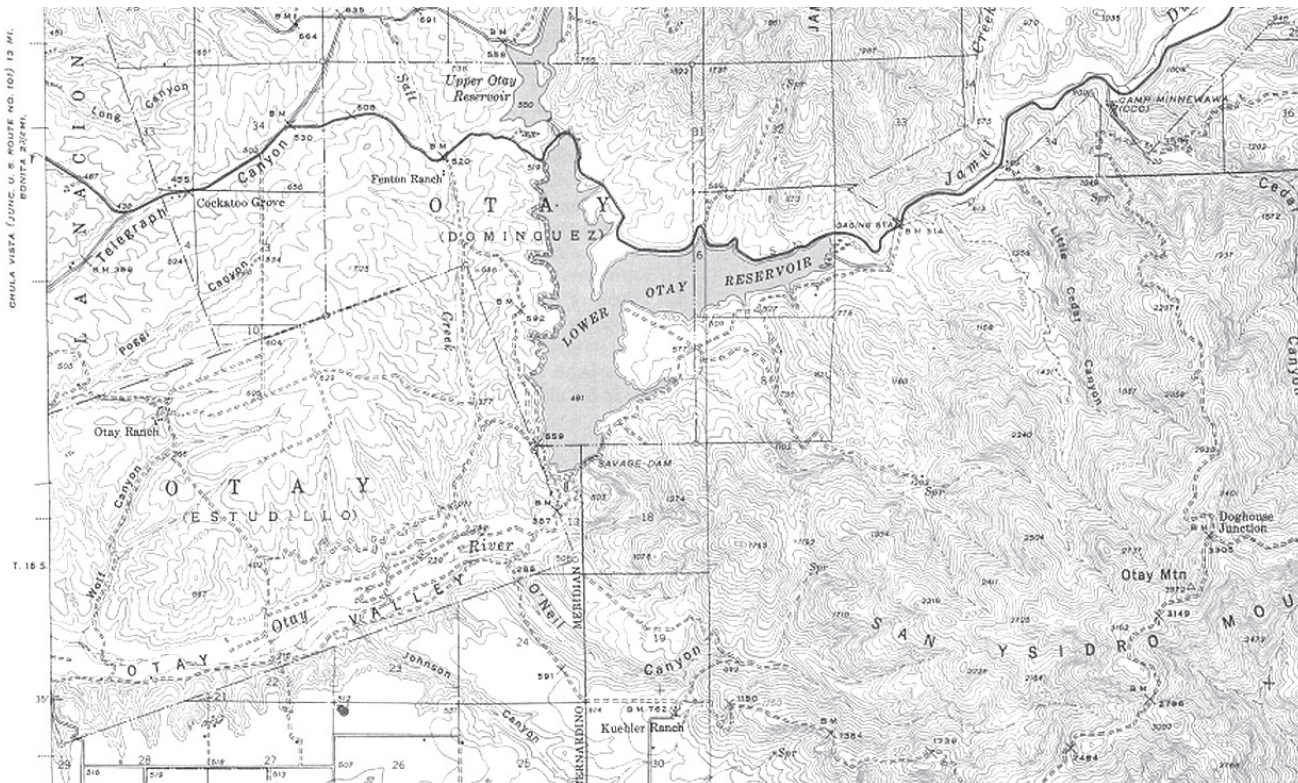


I was a little more than two years old when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, and almost three when our family was taken from our farm in Otay, California, which is near San Diego, to Santa Anita Racetrack. My remembrance of that time is largely the remembrances of my mother and sister, and tonight I would like to tell you their story and mine.

By the time I was born in 1939, my father and mother had operated a farm for seven years. Only ten of its forty acres was arable. Papa had been a fisherman and decided that farming would be a better way to earn enough money to move the entire family back to Japan. That was his plan. I had four sisters and a brother and was the youngest by eleven years, so I may have not been planned.

Mama helped out in the fields but her main job, along with Kanta no Obasan, our great aunt, was to do the cooking and cleaning of our home. Mama told me that once in awhile, when she was home while everyone was out working, Mexicans, who had crossed the border, would come by and she would make them sandwiches to take with them on their journeys northward.





Otay Mesa, southeast of San Diego, is one of two ports of entry for border crossing in the City of San Diego (the other, San Ysidro). It is now the site of a United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention Center and five other law enforcement facilities.

1943 edition of Jamul topographic map, surveyed 1938-1939, map found at U.C.S.D. Library, Wikimedia Commons.

My sister Yoshiko, who we called Yottan, said that on December 7, she was stoking our family's *Ofuro* or hot tub when one of the farm workers came by to tell her that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. She didn't know where Pearl Harbor was and told Papa and Mama what she had heard. She did not remember what their reaction was to the news but guessed that they must have been in shock and worried about my two sisters and brother who had left for Japan in 1940 to finish their education.

As Japanese men were being taken into custody, Papa had a feeling that his turn would be soon. Yottan said that he had packed a small suitcase to be ready to go when the FBI came to pick him up.

Yottan came home from school one day in late December and Mama told her that the FBI had come to take Papa away. They had also confiscated our family's *Butsudan*, a small Buddhist shrine many families kept at home. Yottan could not understand why my father had been arrested. He was neither a Buddhist priest, nor a Japanese language teacher, nor a community leader. The only reason she could think of was that Papa had grown children, who happened to be American citizens, living in Japan.

The day arrived when our family had to leave the farm.

Papa, while at the detention camp in Los Angeles County, had told Yottan, through a barbed wire fence, that she would be responsible for selling what she could. So at the age of 15, she had to sell farm equipment that went at bargain prices and a year-old truck that sold for \$50.00. The things we couldn't store or sell would be left behind for anyone to take, like my red tricycle.

An army truck came and took us to Santa Anita Assembly Center in L.A. County around a month later than other families in San Diego. My sister Itsuko had contracted measles and our family had been quarantined. Because of her illness and the delay it caused, we had the truck to ourselves for the journey to Santa Anita. As we were leaving our farm the truck stopped. One of the soldiers got out and in a few moments he returned to the truck. He handed me my red tricycle.

At Santa Anita we lived in horse stalls whose thin walls did not allow privacy. Yottan told me that my mother would have to carry me away from the stalls at night because I would constantly cry, "Otay kairi, Otay kairi," "I want to go home to Otay, I want to go home to Otay." I never knew what Mama was thinking during those days. Her husband was gone, three of her children were



The Santa Anita Park race track is converted into an internment camp for evacuated Japanese Americans who will occupy the barracks erected in background in Arcadia, California. Photo taken on April 3, 1942.

in Japan, she had lost her home, and now had to put up with a crying boy who wanted to go home to Otay.

Yottan said that she was peeling a red radish in our living quarters at Santa Anita when we received a stack of telegrams from Lordsburg, New Mexico. It just so happened that the telegram on top told about my father's death in the Lordsburg camp. His heart had given out. My mother saw the stunned expression on Yottan's face and she asked her what had happened. Yottan said that to tell Mama that Papa had died was one of the hardest things she ever had to do. Even now, she told me, she recalls what she felt that day whenever she peels radishes.

My father's body was shipped from Lordsburg and his funeral took place at the Santa Anita Racetrack, at one of the smaller grandstands. I remember the close of the funeral when our family gathered around the casket. Mama was carrying me as she took me closer to the casket she whispered for me to say goodbye to my father. I don't remember if I said goodbye or was even sad looking at Papa for the last time. I believe that at most, I was confused over his lifelessness and about not going home.

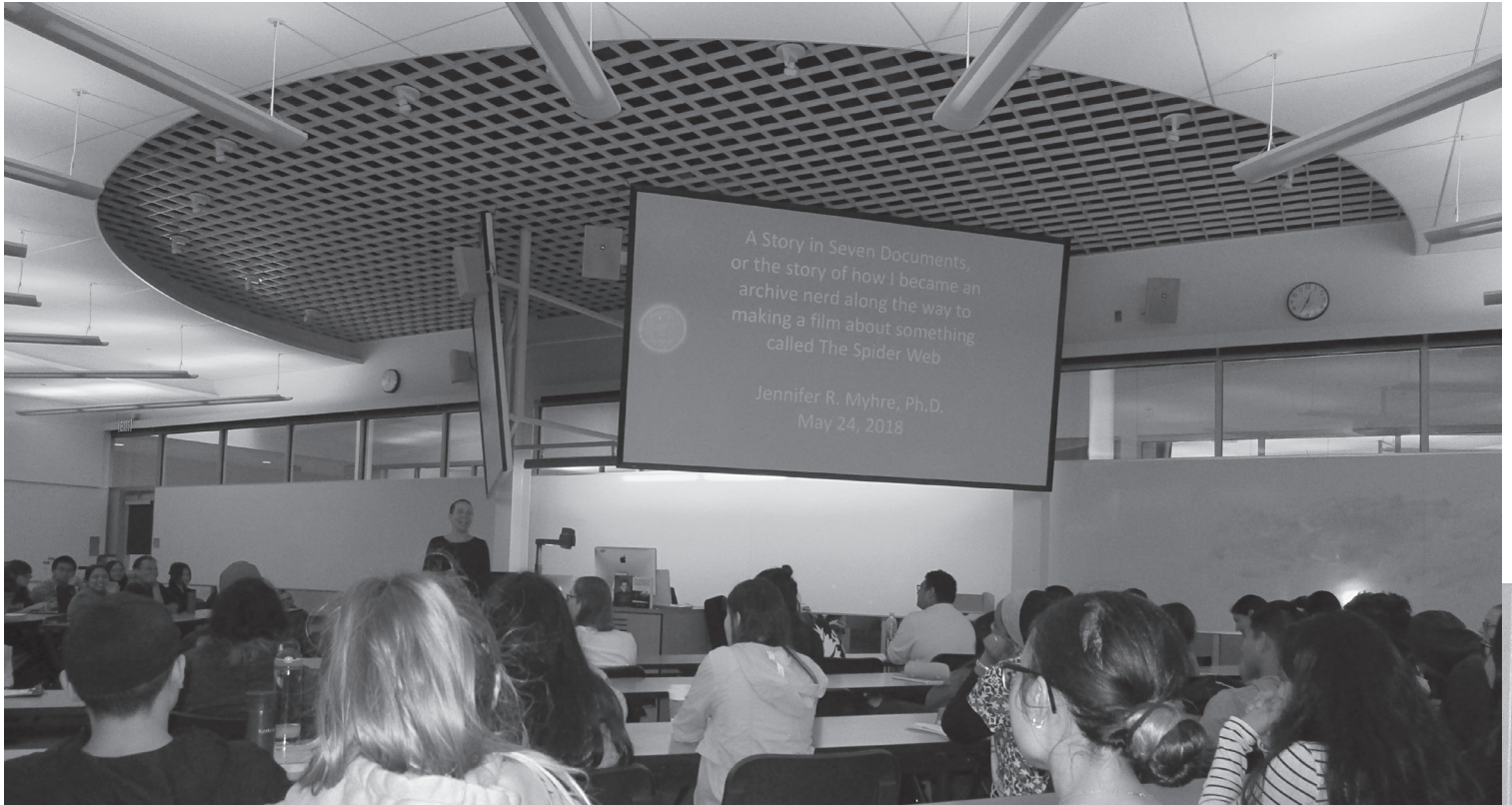
**I**V A few years after the war ended and we had returned to San Diego from Poston, Arizona, we took a trip to Otay. The farm was under new ownership but looked the same, according to Mama. I remember when we left the property I could see the hills nearby covered with golden poppies.

I returned to Otay again, but by then, Mama had passed away as had Kanta no Obasan. My sisters and brother had returned from Japan and had raised their families. I was married with my own family and lived in San Jose. The hills near our farm that had once been covered with golden poppies were now covered with homes. My life and the Otay that had been part of my childhood had both changed. But in hearing the calls for the expulsion of some immigrants and imagining the feelings of dread and anxiety of young people threatened to be sent away from the only country they have ever known, I'm reminded of what happened to Papa, Mama, and the rest of us in Otay, and I say to myself, let no child ever cry out as one did in 1942, "Otay kairi, Otay kairi."



# At the Center

## CHC Faculty Speaker Series, organized by board members Purba Fernandez and Mark Healy featured, spring quarter:



Instructor and video documentarian Jen Myhre, May 24, on the U.S. government's harassment of woman peace activists, among them Jane Addams, following World War I in a presentation called "The Spider Web."



Instructor Ben Kline, author of *First Along the River: A Brief History of the U.S. Environmental Movement*, at CHC, April 19.



Author, social activist, instructor and director of De Anza's Vasconcellos Institute for Democracy in Action (VIDA) Cynthia Kaufman leading a faculty and staff discussion on solutions to the world's worst problems, June 21.



# At the Center

Left to right  
Ulysses Pichon,  
Purba Fernandez,  
and Cecilie  
Vaughters-Johnson  
enjoy *Power and  
Protest* reception.



## Director's Report

*continued from page 4*

sustainable. The college itself is undergoing a difficult process of downsizing to face a massive budget deficit. *Transition* will be the defining word for all of us beginning in fall.

### Speaking of transitions...

I wish to express my deep appreciation for De Anza College's president, Brian Murphy, who will be retiring at the end of spring quarter due to health-related issues. He has been a consistent and eloquent champion for social justice and civic engagement, always supportive of the center's work. We wish the very best for him on his retirement!

I also wish to congratulate Azha Simmons, our staff and curatorial assistant who completed her Master's degrees in Museum Studies and Business Administration this June. We are immensely proud of her and her work, especially on our last exhibit, "Power and Protest" and her successful efforts to make valuable connections with and promote the work of individuals engaged in documenting the history of San José's African American community. (Please see page 19)

Lastly, I wish to extend my appreciation to Judy Dang who coordinated our civil liberties grant work this past school year, helping us stay on course while adding an artistic flare to our efforts (Please see page 2). She will be embarking on an adventure overseas for a year and will be greatly missed. We wish her the best and look forward to her return!

## MEMBERSHIP

*New and renewing members*

### Special Donations

Loretta Bassman –  
in memory of Trudy Frank  
Judy Miner  
James and Susan Wade –  
gift in support of "Mattie" book  
project

### Faculty/Staff

Diana Argabrite  
Karen Chow  
Tracy Chung-Tabangcura  
Marc Coronado  
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David Howard-Pitney  
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## FALL 2018 CLASS

### California History Center State and Regional History Academic Program

The following course will be offered Fall quarter 2018 through the California History Center. Please see the History class listing section of the Schedule of Classes for additional information [www.deanza.fhda.edu/schedule](http://www.deanza.fhda.edu/schedule) or call the center at (408) 864-8986.



### The Intricacies of Urban Planning: Significant Landmarks of Downtown San José

**Course:** HIST-053X

**Units:** 2

**Instructor:** Crystal Hupp

[huppcrystal@fhda.edu](mailto:huppcrystal@fhda.edu)

The downtown area of the City of San José has been under continual redevelopment for well over a decade and is now also preparing to welcome Google. Revitalization efforts have created a wide variety of discussions and debates about the historical, cultural and social significance of nearly all of San José's downtown buildings. This course will examine the political, social and cultural debates surrounding a cross section of significant landmarks in downtown San José. This course is designed to foster a deeper understanding of San José's past, the intricacies of long-term urban planning and the social and cultural communities that have developed and grown with the landmarks themselves.

**LECTURES:** Wednesdays 11/28 and 12/5, 6:30 - 10:20 pm, CHC

**FIELD STUDIES:** Saturdays, 12/1 and 12/8, 9:00 am - 5:30 pm

