

THE GABRIELINOS

BY MARY LEIGHTON THOMSON

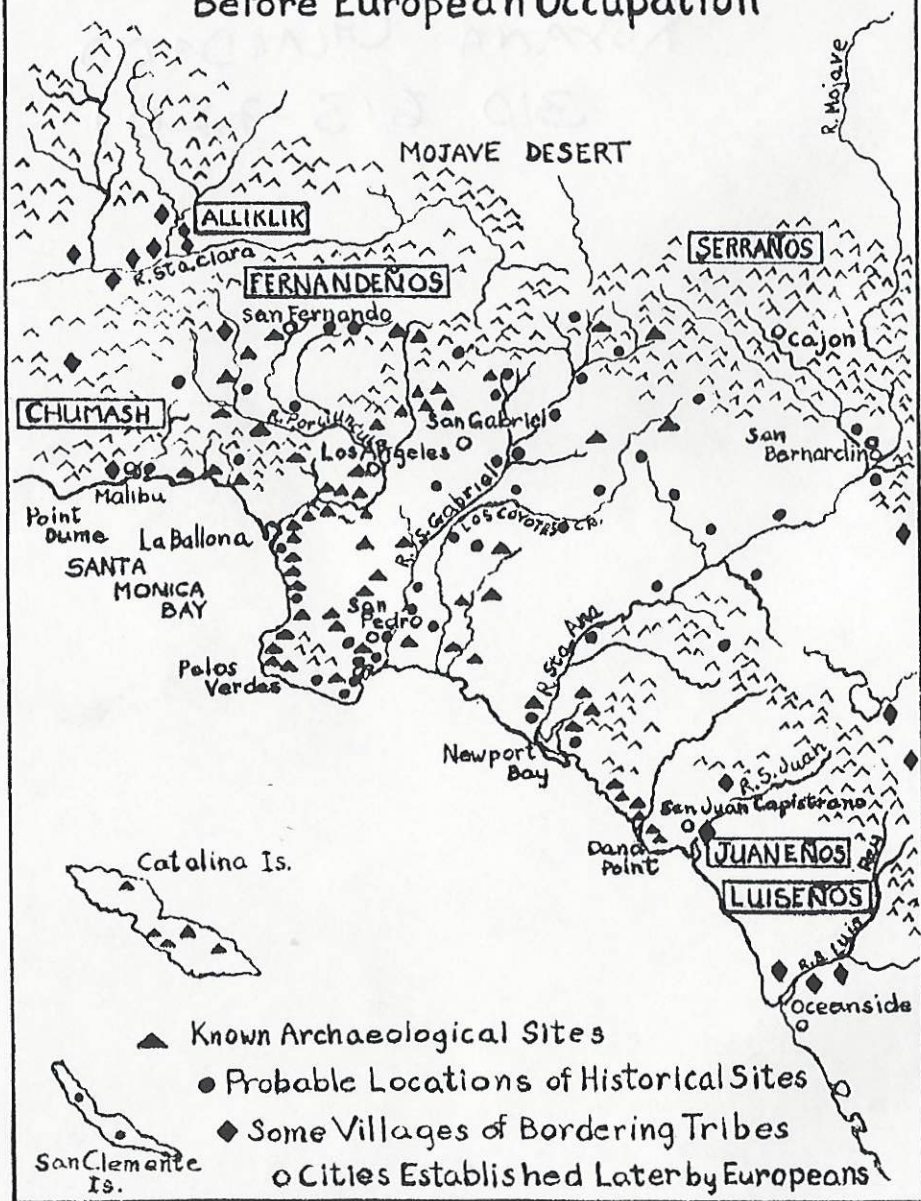


"WIYOT'S CHILDREN"

Gabrielino Indian Village of Sa-angna, Playa del Rey, California

Ballona Wetlands

Gabrielino Villages at the Time of the Portolá Expedition of 1769 Before European Occupation



The Gabrielino Indians

by Mary Leighton Thomson

The Gabrielino Indians who lived in the Ballona area at the time the Spanish came, have all but disappeared but have left their names on the land throughout Southern California. Some of their descendants survive and have been seeking their roots and information about their lost culture. Although the Federal Government does not recognize them as a tribe, they have formed a tribal council and have set up a Center in San Gabriel for education and mutual support. Some of them participated in the fight to save Ballona Wetlands.

Satwiwa, site of an ancient village in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, is used by the Gabrielinos and the Chumash for ceremonies, and for weekly Sunday presentations open to the public featuring story telling and history.

Origin

There is still a debate about when Man first reached North America. Long-accepted dates have placed modern man in Europe 33,000 years ago and in Siberia 30,000 years ago. Until a few years ago, the arrival was set between 15,000 and 12,000 years ago by most scientists because in the ice ages a land bridge connected Asia and North America where the Bering Straits are now. The difficulty in accepting this late date is that the spread of these pioneers throughout two continents to the very tip of South America, and the development of so many different tribes, cultures and languages could hardly have taken place in such a short time.

With the development of radiocarbon dating in the 1940's, extremely accurate up to 40,000 years, radio potassium dating in the 50's, and a new technique, thermoluminescence (TL), the time has been pushed back for American occupation to perhaps 33,000 years (Chile) or 32,000 years (Brazil), as well as increasing the age of modern man in Africa to perhaps 100,000 years.

These new dates put man in China 67,000 years ago. Dental evidence, the shovel-shaped incisors appearing in every Native American population and still present in China, links their origin to North China.

Some scientists, including the well-regarded Leakey of Odulvai Gorge, believe early man was here and have been searching in the Mojave Desert and in the mountain passes of Alaska and Canada for evidence.

One delightful theory of a California genesis holds that there was an east-west return during the ice ages which would explain the sudden appearance in Europe of the Cro-Magnon with their well-developed flints and art.

Whenever they came following the herds, hunting sea mammals and gathering berries and grasses on the tundra or over seasonal sea ice, they came in three waves; the Gabrielinos' ancestors were in the second wave of peoples, traveling south, east of the great mountains, and settling in the great basin area which was then full of lakes, forests and grasslands.

All major California areas were settled by 8,000 B.C. In the Southern California area a shoreline subsistence economy was firmly in place by 7,500 B.C. Remains of over 100 species of mollusks, sea and land mammals and fish have been found in their middens. There may have been even earlier coastal dwellers but evidence of their occupation is lost because of sea encroachment; 8,000 years ago the shoreline was 3 to 6 miles further west than it is today over much of the California coast. In 1936 fossilized remains of "Los Angeles Man," the earliest found here, were found 140 feet below Moynier Lane and 170 feet south of Higuera Street in the Ballona Valley, 1100 feet east of mammoth remains in the same Late Pleistocene deposits. In 1934 six skeletons called the Angeles Mesa skeletons were found at the upper end of La Ballona Creek valley, 1/3 mile west of Angeles Mesa Drive and 300 yards south of the Pacific Electric Line. These were dated at thousands of years but not tens of thousands of years in age.

About 6,000 B.C. there was more seed-gathering as evidenced by the use of milling-stones. At this time, Hokan-speaking peoples predominated. Westward movement of people from Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, because of climate change and desert expansion, took place from 6,000 to 1500 B.C.; Uto-Aztecan languages, related to the Great Basin languages, came into California from the east, along with the Gabrielinos. This Shoshonean branch of the Uto-Aztecan-speaking people was probably in place here by 2,000 B.C.

By the 18th century, California Indians spoke no fewer than 90 distinct languages -- almost every linguistic stock in North America was present -- and they were split into hundreds of dialects.

The Shoshoneans, which included the Gabrielinos, were distantly related to the Comanche and to the Hopi Pueblo people. Their presence filled a wedge-shaped area between Hokan-speaking tribes such as the Chumash to the north and the Yumans and Diegueños to the South, with its apex at the sea at Ballona between Malibu and Capistrano or as far as Oceanside, and its base nearly to the Colorado River. Eight related languages were spoken by these people.

California Indians developed trade very early; a string of olivella shell beads was found in a Nevada cave in deposits 8600 years old. Southern California's mild climate and the abundance of food from plants, fish and game gave them a good living and allowed them to gather a surplus to exchange for the things they lacked in their own areas. The Gabrielinos were trading acorns, salt, fish, shell ornaments, clothing, baskets, steatite, and even dogs over a wide area. Obsidian for spear and arrow points was a valuable import.

Because of the favorable environment and trade, they were able to prosper and live in established communities, unusual among hunter-gatherer societies which did not use agriculture, and to develop an artistic and religious tradition. The Southern California Indians had the most complex cultural development known among such societies. Each of the groups in the area was an ethnic nationality but not a political one; they shared similar language, history and culture as well as territory. Adaptation to the various environments of this area -- seacoast, tidelands, mountains, valleys and desert -- was the main cause of cultural diversity, and by about 500 A.D. these tribes had diverged into differing cultures. By 1200 A.D. they were set in the forms noted by the Spanish explorers.

Social institutions such as marriage and ritual brought these people together and made for an exchange of goods and ideas; they had been politically stable for thousands of years before European contact. Favorable climate, geography and abundant nature supported the largest aboriginal population in North America.

Shoshonean neighbors of the Gabrielinos were the Paiute and related tribes of the desert, the Cahuilla and the Luiseños in desert and mountain areas over to a coastal strip by San Luis Rey. More closely related were the Juaneños who were gathered in to Mission San Juan Capistrano. Even more closely related were the Fernandeños living along

the upper Los Angeles River, and the islanders of Santa Catalina and possibly San Clemente; their dialects were so similar that they were classified as one people. Upper Santa Clara Valley, the Tehachapi and Tejon, the San Gabriel Mountains and the San Bernardino Mountains were home to various bands of Shoshoneans called Serranos, or mountaineers. These people survived the mission period because of their rough and remote lands.

The Hokan-speaking Chumash living in Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, and as far south as Malibu, had made striking development in the technology of boat building, fishing equipment and tools, as well as paintings of dazzling skill and beauty. The Gabrielinos and their neighbors copied their canoes and other items so that the material culture of these tribes was practically the same; most scientists disregard the language difference and label the way of life in the coast and Channel Islands area at the time the Spanish arrived as the "Canalino Culture."

European Contact and Decline

The first European contact with the Gabrielinos was in October of 1542 when Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo landed on Santa Catalina Island. He sailed along the coast and anchored in Santa Monica Bay, attracted by many signal fires ashore. He named it the Bay of Smokes. Although the natives paddled out to the ship and motioned him to come ashore, he did not visit Ballona.

In 1602 Vizcaino also saw these signal fires and visited Catalina where he was welcomed with gifts and food by the people, and found them "attractive in appearance, skillful craftsmen with their baskets, plank boats and nets, thread, ropes resembling linen." The Spaniards attended a religious ceremony of the people where the two priests in the expedition placed Christian symbols over their altar and had the soldiers shoot two ravens which flew up, saying that they were "of the Devil", to the wild lamentations of the Indians.

Over the next two centuries, other Europeans cruised the coast and Manila Galleons passed on their way south to Mexico. Meanwhile, tales of the bearded strangers had drifted in from the east and some trade beads had appeared in California.

Because of the threat of English, Dutch, French and Russian activities in the Pacific, Spain planned the occupation of Alta California

from Mexico. Gaspar de Portola' was chosen to lead an expedition by land and sea and the two forces met in San Diego in July of 1769. Father Junipero Serra accompanied the expedition and was charged with the religious conquest of the new land. He and many of the survivors of the two groups, decimated by scurvy and the desert crossing, stayed in San Diego to establish the first mission while de Portola' started north on his epic journey of exploration. Two priests accompanied the party of soldiers; the diary by Father Crespi of this expedition is fascinating reading.

Traveling north along the coast through Luiseño and Juaneño villages, they turned inland and entered the Gabrielino borderland past several villages, camping near the present Santa Ana at the village of Hutukna where there was a great gathering of people who gave them gifts of food. Crossing the Puente Hills via La Habra, they camped at the San Gabriel River which was running so fast they had to make a pole bridge to cross. There were several earthquakes and they named it "de los Temblores." They pushed on across the Rio Hondo and arrived on August 1st at the Porciuncula River and the village of Yang-na scattered along the west bank with probably 200-300 residents, the site of the later Pueblo de Los Angeles.

They continued southwest along the high ground past several villages and camped on Ballona Creek west of a large marsh and the Brea pits whose bubbling pitch amazed them. All the members of a large village were out gathering seeds as they passed the next day; they skirted the Cheviot Hills and on August 4th camped at a village with two springs - - probably the Artesian Springs at University High School, now called Tongva Springs, and the Veterans Hospital - - perhaps called Kuruvung-na, "where we are in the sun."

The scouts explored along the northern edges of Ballona to the sea and along the beach north of Santa Monica until the way was blocked by steep cliffs. They turned back and the party left the Ballona area, crossing the mountains by way of the present Sepulveda Boulevard, stopping at a large village by a pool which was probably at Balboa and Ventura Boulevards. They crossed the San Fernando Valley with its many villages and left Gabrielino country as they passed Castaic where they turned west toward the Chumash areas. On their return march from San Francisco Bay, they crossed the Santa Monicas at Cahuenga. Several years passed before the coastal villages from the south edge of Ballona and down to Capistrano were contacted again, but word of their passing spread over the Gabrielino villages.

The founding of San Gabriel Mission in 1771, which gave its name to the Gabrielinos, the 1774 Anza Expedition overland to Monterey which crossed the eastern edge of their territory, the 2nd march in 1774-75 with 240 colonists to San Francisco Bay; and the 1781 establishment of the Pueblo of Los Angeles with eleven families from Sonora, marked the beginning of the end for the Gabrielinos, as for most of the native peoples of California. From an estimated population of 310,000, the missionaries baptized 53,000 adult male Indians; the number of "neophytes" peaked in 1805 with 20,300. In the same period, from 1769 to 1834, they buried 37,000, a death rate of 69%. This does not include the thousands of women and children at the missions nor the people outside the limits who also died.

The founding of San Juan Capistrano Mission on the southern borders in 1776 and San Fernando Mission in 1797, along with the granting of ranchos to retiring soldiers begun in 1784, took up the rest of the land and homes of the remaining Gabrielinos.

The ideal purpose of the missions was to save pagan souls and to train good subjects for the Crown. Conversion was supposed to be on a voluntary basis without coercion, but the reality was quite different. Persuasion alone for converts to the new religion was almost impossible considering the language difference, although some of the missionaries made an effort to learn the language and to teach their converts. The military, secular leaders and the church had an ongoing battle as to methods; after Mexico became independent from Spain this led to the secularization of the missions in 1834-1836. The mission lands were supposedly given to the Indians, but the land soon ended up in the hands of the Californios, and after 1847, in the hands of the Americans.

No matter how altruistic their motives, the mission fathers and their soldiers caused the decimation of these people by forcing them into crowded unsanitary dormitories away from their families, by regimentation and hard work in tedious unfamiliar occupations, and substitution of their varied and healthy diet for one not quite enough to sustain them in their work. Before the Spanish came they had no infectious diseases and consequently no immunity; the crowding and poor diet combined with the introduction of disease from the newcomers were the main causes of the deaths of so many. Homesickness, despair, abuse and alcohol also contributed to the descent of these once-happy peoples into the sad remnant who slipped so easily into death.

Those who stayed in their original villages, or rancherías, soon had their food base destroyed by the introduction of cattle and farming. The ancestral homes, chosen over the centuries for the best shelter, water and abundant game and plant foods, were the very places taken over by the ranchos and towns. The people were reduced to laboring for the foreigners for aguardiente or for a meager subsistence and to scattering to other tribes for refuge.

The Tongva Story

The Gabrielinos were named by the Spanish for the Mission of San Gabriel. They had no name for, nor concept of, themselves as a tribe; rather, they considered themselves as a family. Today their descendants call themselves "Tongva" from the word for "The People." Much knowledge about their ancestors has been lost because the people were separated from their roots and their way of life. Their own religion was forbidden, their culture was destroyed and even their own language was lost to them. This all took place in the space of 75 years.

Some of what we know today about the Gabrielinos comes from mission baptismal records which noted the villages of origin of the converts. These names were translated into Spanish of various spellings and some cannot be accurately located. The Ballona villages were called Sang-na. Thanks to the interest of an un-named priest at San Gabriel, some of the language was recorded along with some of the religious practices and beliefs. The name "Sang-na" is traditional and does not appear in the records.

Father Geronimo Boscana of San Juan Capistrano Mission wrote in approximately 1820 an historical account of the Indians including Gabrielino place names and legends, and of the Chingichnich religion. Hugo Reid, who acquired Rancho Santa Anita in the 1840's married a Gabrielino widow and adopted her four children. He wrote articles for the Los Angeles Star in 1852 about her people. Dr. John P. Harrington of the Smithsonian and the Southwest Museum interviewed surviving Gabrielinos and wrote extensively about their culture in the early 1900's. Other information about the Gabrielinos came from neighboring tribes whose culture and religion survived the mission period. The rest of the story has had to come from archaeology.

Recent Studies in the Ballona Area

Christobal Machado, whose ancestors owned the Rancho La Ballona, recalled in 1939 a rancheria below the present Loyola University and another near his family home at the present Jefferson and Overland. These were the late survivors of the sites along Ballona Creek and the bluffs to the south. Much amateur and commercial "pot-hunting" has occurred over the whole area and the artifacts are widely scattered.

Serious investigation in the Ballona region started with Malcolm Farmer, who between 1934 and 1936 located 16 sites in the area between Sepulveda and Pershing Drive. The material is at the Southwest Museum. Oscar Shulene of Culver City started about 1939 digging at least to 1950. He had a collection of about 200 artifacts which are in the L. A. Museum of Natural History. Neither of these men was a trained scientist.

In 1950 Rozaire and Belous of UCLA published a report of a preliminary survey of the Ballona Creek area, 6 miles west of the downtown area, 2 miles wide and extending 7 miles to the sea, locating at least 14 sites. Their report urged further work before the sites were completely obliterated by housing, industrial development and the planned yacht harbor. An effort was made to study the site of the Howard Hughes building at Lincoln Boulevard and Hughes Way before its construction in the late 1980's; however, only 2 days were allowed and nothing was found. A nearby area below was reserved for further investigation.

The last archaeological dig was done at the vernal pool on the bluff-top near Hastings canyon in 1989 in preparation for future development on the Hughes' property there. This was a very extensive investigation over several months.

The development of the Gateway Project at the intersection of Lincoln Boulevard and the Marina Freeway where some skulls were found, was required to conduct a survey and to provide a Gabrielino Memorial at the site as part of its permit.

Although the Ballona Wetlands appear to be undeveloped land, they are criss-crossed above and below the surface by railroads, oil wells, gas lines, sewer and water lines, cables, roads and the channeling of Ballona Creek, as well as construction of the Marina Del Rey and housing. Some material may still be there, but most has been fairly well obliterated.

Appearance and Costume

In appearance the Gabrielinos were generally small in stature and somewhat heavy-set as compared to the Europeans. Their skin color, especially the children, was a light brown, much lighter than that of the Indians of Mexico familiar to the Spanish explorers. Their hair was fine and straight, often almost brown or reddish rather than deep black. In old age, hair turned a pure gray or white. Baldness was absent. The men plucked their beards, which were rather sparse. There was a custom of washing the hair in urine to eliminate lice, which may have caused some bleaching. In early accounts, the Spanish sometimes referred to them as "rubio," the Spanish word for "blonde." This gave rise to tales of "white Indians" in California, although there is no evidence of racial mixing. The skin darkened with age and exposure to the sun; many of the women used a "sun screen" of red ochre to slow the darkening and wrinkling of their skin.

Women wore their hair loose and long, sometimes with cut bangs or braids at the sides to keep it out of the way for work. Women in mourning cut or singed their hair short; a real sacrifice, since hair was considered a symbol of the spirit.

Men also wore their hair long, but with the top part wound into a top-knot bun, sometimes with a "horse-tail," and fastened with pins of bone or wood.

Girls were tattooed before puberty on the forehead and chin, and adult women wore tattoos as decoration below the eyes and over the breast. The skin was pierced with thorns, then charcoal or a blue pigment made from burned pinyon nuts for color, was rubbed into the cuts. Some men were tattooed on the forehead.

Women wore knee-length skirts or front-and-back aprons of skins, grasses, shredded bark or strings made from yucca fiber. Basketry hats without brims were worn to protect the head from abrasion by the ropes of burden baskets.

Men went naked or wore loin-cloths of skins or fiber; they also wore belts for carrying implements. The children wore no clothing. All went barefoot except for foot pads of plant material or sandals in cactus country or rough mountain areas. In winter they kept warm with robes of furs, of bird-skins still with the feathers, or blankets woven from strips of rabbit-fur skin. These were also used as bedding at night.

At ceremonies and dances, feather skirts and head-dresses were worn. Sometimes elaborate head-dresses were made of fiber and down topped with an upright crown of feathers. Necklaces, bracelets of shell, bone or steatite beads, bangles of abalone shell, ear ornaments and nose plugs as well as body paint were worn. Shells and beads decorated the deerskin skirts.

Homes and Villages

Houses, or "jacals" as the Spanish called them, were dome-shaped, made of poles set into the ground with smaller horizontal branches bent and lashed around them to form a frame. A thatch of grasses, reeds or tule leaves covered the support. A hole was left at the top to let out the smoke from a central fireplace. A low doorway faced away from the wind, with a drape of skins or woven plant material for privacy. Reed mats and skins covered the floor and sleeping ledges with nets and baskets hung from the walls to hold possessions. Most cooking was done outside where there was often a sharing of the cooking and food.

There may have been several jacals in a family group, and several clusters of homes in a village. Occasionally large multi-family structures for up to 50 people were built.

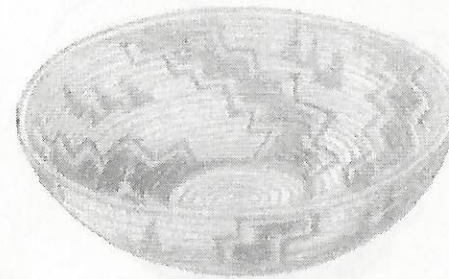
Each cluster would have a storehouse for acorns made of woven branches raised on 6-foot poles, lined with grasses and thatched to keep the acorns dry. Each group had tall racks to sun-dry meat and fish; the flattened, dried fish was hung on strings above the reach of animals.

There were small family sweathouses and large communal sweathouses dug into the earth, thatched and covered with dirt in every village. Stones were heated in the fire and splashed with water to make steam. Daily bathing was part of the religion and villages were located where there was a bathing place as well as water for drinking.

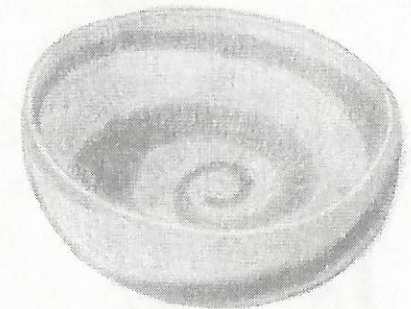
Large ceremonial houses and dance floors of compacted earth surrounded by wicker fences were in the bigger villages.

Village population could be less than 100 up to 1,000. As trash accumulated, or the flammable structures burned, new houses were built in the same general area, near fresh water and within 2-5 miles of food resources. For harvesting food farther away, such as acorns, the whole village would pack up and temporarily move to the food source.

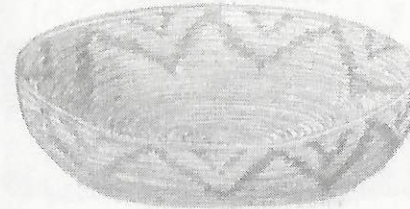
BASKETRY



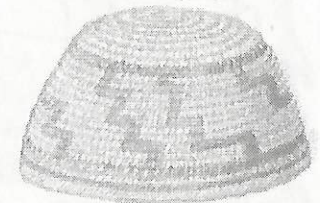
WHIRLWIND PATTERN BASKET



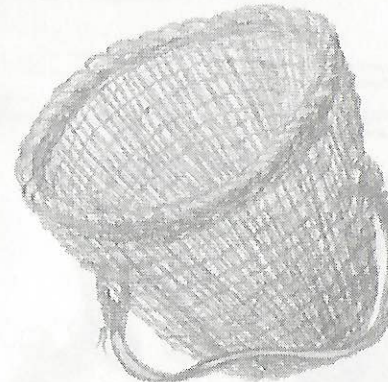
CEREMONIAL BASKET



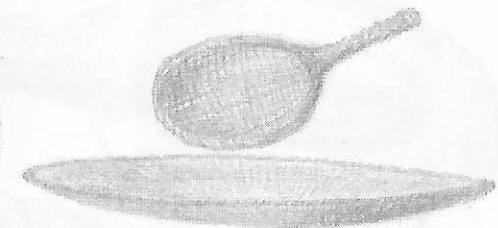
OVAL BASKET



WOMAN'S HAT



BURDEN BASKET FOR GATHERING ACORNS



SEED BEATER AND COLLECTING TRAY

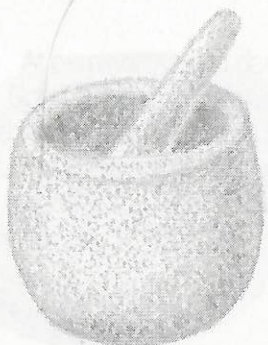


STONE MORTAR WITH BASKETRY HOPPER ATTACHED WITH ASPHALTUM



WATER BOTTLE - ASPHALTUM WATERPROOFED; SHELL BEAD DECORATION

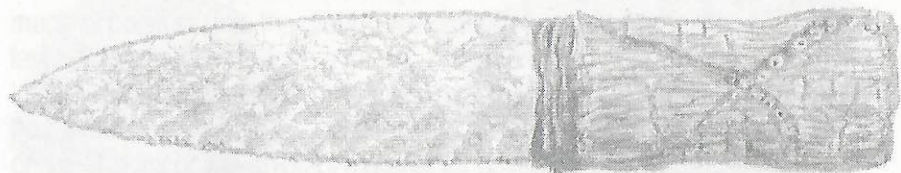
STONE WORK



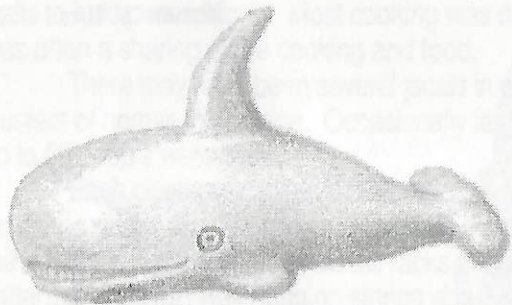
STONE MORTAR AND PESTLE



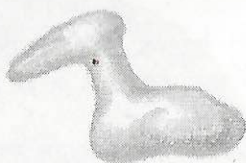
STEATITE BOWL



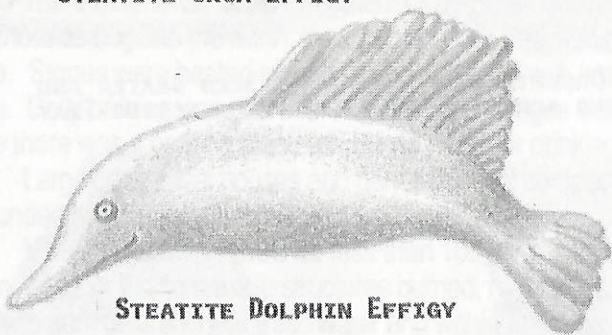
MOTTLED CHERT KNIFE WITH WOODEN HANDLE - SHELL BEAD INLAY



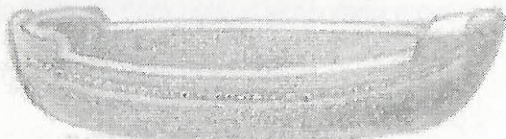
STEATITE ORCA EFFIGY



STEATITE BIRD FIGURES



STEATITE DOLPHIN EFFIGY

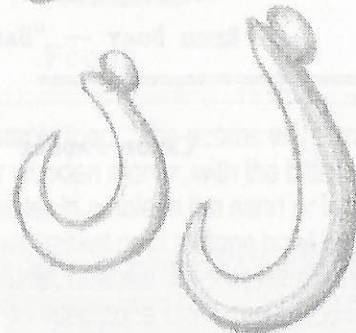
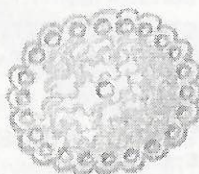
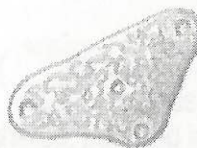
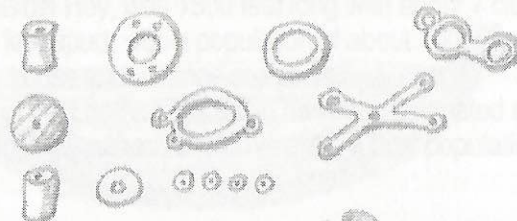
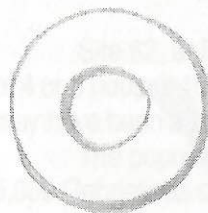


STEATITE MINIATURE CANOE



STEATITE ARROW STRAIGHTENER

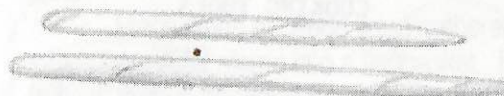
SHELL AND BONE



ABALONE SHELL FISH HOOKS



BONE HARPOON POINT



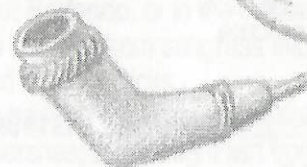
SHELL NOSE RODS



BONE HAIR PIN AND SHELL BUCKLE



STEATITE BEADS



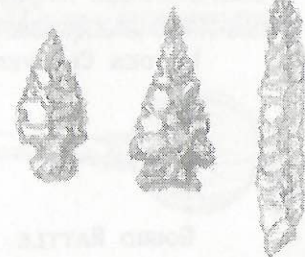
STEATITE PIPE



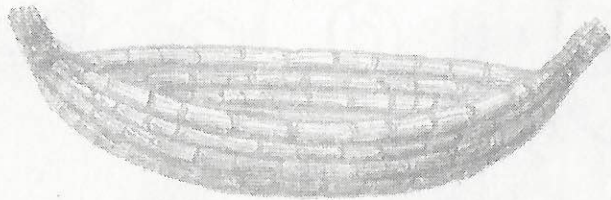
WOODEN ARROW POINT



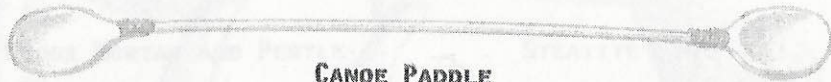
OBSIDIAN POINTS



CANOES



REED BOAT -- "BALSA"



CANOE PADDLE



WOOD PLANK CANOE - "TOMOLO" OR "TE-OTT"

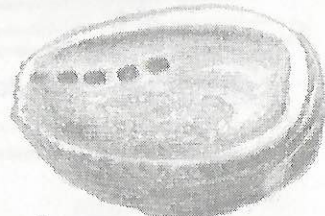
COOKING TOOLS



WOODEN PADDLE FOR STIRRING MUSH



LOOPED STICK FOR LIFTING
HOT STONES FOR COOKING



ABALONE SHELL BOWL --
HOLES FILLED WITH
ASPHALTUM

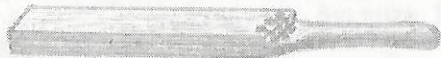
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS



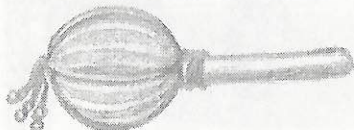
BIRD-BONE WHISTLE



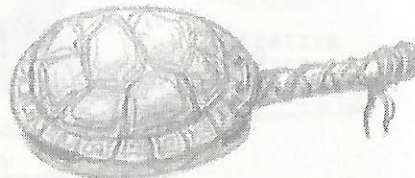
WOODEN FLUTE



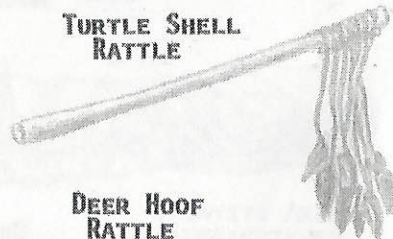
WOODEN CLAPPER



GOURD RATTLE



TURTLE SHELL
RATTLE



DEER HOOF
RATTLE

Site 62, at Playa del Rey, was 1500 feet long with about 7 clusters of 4 or 5 houses 15-20 feet apart, with a population of about 100. There may have been a larger house and a dance enclosure.

The population in the Los Angeles basin has been estimated at 5,000 Gabrielinos and in the Southern California area, a total population of about 20,000.

Foods

Acorn mush was the staple food. The acorns were cracked and shelled, pounded in a stone or wooden mortar, with the bitter acid in the acorn meal leached out with water in a hole in the sand or in a basket. It was then boiled in a water-proof basket or in a stone bowl by dropping hot rocks into the water. Roots, seeds, beans and meat were prepared the same way. Fish was planked on soapstone slabs, meat and fish were roasted in hot coals in a deep pit. Shellfish and crustaceans were steamed in pits layered with hot coals and seaweed or leaves, and covered with sand.

Many kinds of seeds were gathered using a beater to knock the seeds from their stems into a flat basket. Pinyon nuts, walnuts, and the fruits of cactus added to the diet. They were shelled and winnowed in baskets, then parched in baskets with hot coals; the baskets were shaken to keep the coals from burning the baskets. Seeds and nuts were ground on stone metates or boiled. Holly-leaved cherries, fruits and berries were mashed and dried for sweetening and honey was collected. Salt was obtained from deposits at Redondo, or in the coastal wetlands was collected by beating the crystals from saltgrass into a container. Roots were dug using weighted digging-sticks.

The Gabrielinos trapped small schooling fish in nets and weirs in streams, lagoons and marshes; they caught fish from the shore or from boats using nets or fish-hook and line with hooks of bone or shell. They dug for clams in the mud flats, collected shellfish, sea urchins and crustaceans at low tide and hunted seals and sea lions using spears or harpoons. There was no whale hunting on the south coast, but the occasional stranded whale supplied much meat and bone. Sea otters were prized for their skins. Rodents, tortoises, lizards, grasshoppers, caterpillars and larvae were gathered.

Burrowing animals were smoked out of their holes and snared, or killed with curved throwing sticks. Rabbits were sometimes driven into nets or snares by a communal hunting party. Ducks and geese were snared or caught in nets, using decoys to attract them.

Deer, elk, mountain sheep and bears were hunted using bow and arrow or spear and spear-thrower, usually from blinds along game trails. Antelope had to be surrounded by a large party of hunters. Bears were dangerous game, especially the grizzlies, and required a large party of hunters. Dogs assisted in hunting and protection from bears; they were not bred for food as was done in Mexico, but occasionally were used.

Manufactures

All these activities required manufacture of implements from stone, wood and bone and the string, rope and baskets made from plant material. Some highly skilled individuals specialized in stone or wood-carving, arrow making and basketry. Men did most of the hunting, sea-going fishing and hide-dressing; women did the gathering and basketry, but women did some hunting and men did some gathering. Children assisted in the work.

Obsidian and chert for arrowheads and spear points were brought in by trade from the desert or the Sierra, but most arrow points were made of hard wood. The points were doweled into the shaft, and were fixed to the shaft with asphaltum and wrapped with sinew.

Steatite for bowls, mortars and sculpture was quarried on Catalina Island; the bowls were hollowed and shaped, cut out of the rock and brought across the channel for later finishing. The Gabrielinos did not use pottery; they preferred instead the steatite which did not crack in a fire, and using their baskets.

They produced the most beautiful and skillful baskets known, ranging in size from small treasure baskets to large storage and carrying baskets. Some were woven so tightly that they were waterproof; some were waterproofed with asphaltum from the Brea pits or from deposits on the beach which had floated ashore from underwater oil seeps. The baskets were often decorated with shells, shell beads or feathers, or made with patterns from the different colored grasses and fibres.

Two kinds of canoes were made. *Balsas* were made from tules tied into long bundles, then tied together to shape a canoe with low sides and a higher prow and stern. Rafts were also made. These were good for

lagoons or short journeys, but eventually they absorbed water. They would be stood on end against the houses to dry out for further use. *Tomolos* were made of pine, split into boards. They were long and narrow with high sides and a higher prow and stern. A two-inch plank formed the bottom; 1-inch planks formed the sides. The boards were planed and sanded and were steam-bent in hot sand pits. Holes were drilled at the plank edges, and they were laced together with fiber cords with the holes filled with asphaltum. The *Tomolos* were different sizes; some carried 20 people. The paddlers used 10-foot double-bladed paddles. This was a very durable and sea-worthy boat. The Spanish explorers had noted how they seemed to fly across the water.

Other manufactures were fish hooks of shell, weights for nets, effigies of animals or birds, and game-pieces for games and gambling made of steatite. Many cog-shaped "charmstones," ranging in size from two inches to two feet in diameter, have been found. These may have had some religious purpose. Throwing hoops and balls of stone or hard wood for a team game very like soccer, rattles of gourds, tortoise shells, clam shells or deer hooves strung together, whistles and flutes, stick clappers and bull-roarers to accompany singing were made.

Everything was made with an eye to decoration and beauty of form, as well as utility. Other expressions of art which have survived were cave paintings in red, white, black and yellow pigment, and petroglyphs -- designs pecked into the rock. Mortar holes in granite outcroppings or boulders near oak tree stands give evidence of communal work parties.

Extra foods and manufactured goods were traded over great distances. Measured lengths of shell beads or large disc beads made from clam shells were used for money. Accounts were kept on knotted strings. The Gabrielinos had names of numbers, using the primary numbers and the words for "double," "plus," "minus," and "times."

Social Structure

Each village had a head person who might also be the religious leader. Several groups of villages together usually had a head chief. They were hereditary, but if a person in line was not suitable, the village would choose another person from the same family group or clan. Sometimes women were the designated leaders. Shamans were the religious interpreters, knowing signs from the spirit world and receiving messages in dreams.

The chief, assisted by the heads of families and shamans, was the advisor, collector and distributor of resources and arbitrator, as well as keeper of the sacred objects, in charge of the calendar of sacred events, and also a war chief.

There was a wealthy elite class of the families of these chiefs and shamans, a middle class of fairly wealthy families with long lineages and a third class of the ordinary people. There were several clans or moieties throughout the villages.

Marriage within the clan was forbidden. A wife would join her husband's clan - - this was opposite to the practice of most tribes living in established communities; this is an important difference. The man would visit the woman in her home before marriage; after marriage she could not return home but her family could visit her. Exchange of gifts at the marriage and birth of a child allied the families politically. Marriages were arranged by the parents from families of equal wealth or status. Most marriages were within one culture group, but some intermarriage occurred between Gabrielinos, Cahuilla, Luiseños and the San Diego area tribes. Liaisons before marriage were tolerated; all children were considered legitimate. Venereal disease was unknown before European contact.

Birth control was practiced; no intercourse occurred until a previous child was weaned. In the mission period the birth rate fell severely, and girl babies were particularly low in number. This could have been because of disease and malnutrition, but it is likely that it was due to abortion and infanticide.

Children were loved but not coddled; they were the last to eat and sat farthest from the fire. Direction of children was left to the parents; bad behavior reflected on the status of the family. The Gabrielinos used no corporal punishment as a rule, however, if a boy was particularly incorrigible or broke an important religious taboo, he could be killed on decision of the Council.

Divorce was possible if the woman was abused, or if she was barren or unruly. The wedding gifts had to be returned, and then she was free to return to her family home. Deliberate incest was punishable by death; in adultery, a wronged husband could punish his wife, but usually he would take the other man's wife.

Old people were cared for and revered as the keepers of history and tellers of stories, songs and religious heritage. Men were usually responsible for ritual and sacred affairs; women prepared food for these events and participated in dancing and singing but were not in the inner circle.

Older women stayed home to care for and teach the youngest children; children helped adults in their tasks, and older girls helped with the younger siblings.

Conflict between villages over failure in gift-giving at ceremonies, abduction of women, poaching and trespassing, or hurtful sorcery sometimes resulted in war. Reed armor, war clubs, heavy bows and swords existed. The decision to go to war was taken very seriously, as all members of the community were involved. The decision was made by a council of the offended village and those allied villages they could enlist. Most conflicts and inherited feuds were resolved by "song fights," the days-long singing of obscene and insulting songs in vile language, accompanied by much stamping and trampling of the ground.

Religion and Ritual

Religion was important to the Gabrielinos and ritual controlled daily life. There were origin legends and ancient gods, often associated with special locations. Powerful beings controlled the universe for either good or evil; ritual was used to turn this power to good in an unpredictable environment. Since Man was a part of Nature, and any action would affect all other parts of the universe, an ecological ethic existed.

There were several versions of creation legends; most told of a brother, the sky or night, and a sister, the earth, existing in a dark void. Sometimes she was in the water in a place below the earth. The six children of this union were earth and sand, rocks, trees and shrubs, herbs and grasses, animals, and Wiyot, an animate being. He was also associated with the moon and death and rebirth. His sons plotted against him and poisoned him; there was no death until Wiyot died, and the people mourned him and awaited his promised return.

He may also have been the legendary captain who led the first people ever southward in the cold land that rolled out before them at the beginning of the world. He assigned each tribe its own territory and after his death he went to live in an island paradise beyond Catalina.

A new religion, beginning on Catalina Island, swept the Gabrielino country shortly before the Spanish occupation, and extended into all the other tribes. Chingichnish appeared at a great council at Puvungna as a spirit. The people thought that Wiyot had returned, but he announced

himself as a new and great chief, and was associated with the sun. He revealed to the people a great number of rules and taboos -- he was all-seeing, a severe and demanding god who had to be obeyed or there would be terrible consequences. This religion may have been a "crisis cult" rising from the decimation of the tribes by diseases introduced by the European explorers.

Shamans were powerful and fearsome figures who were skilled in magic, sleight-of-hand, hypnotism and second sight. Their power came straight from the supernatural through dreams and visions often induced by the use of datura.

Ritual was expressed in complicated song cycles, music and dances, dramatic reenactments of myths and reciting of sacred oral literature. Sacred animal messengers and avengers such as eagles, hawks, owls, bears and coyotes, whales and dolphins, and especially ravens, had an important place in mythology.

Ceremonies required special costumes, foods and equipment. Sacred bundles of eagle feathers, ritual wands, funeral poles and banners, and sand paintings were used in these events.

The Gabrielinos had practiced cremation from prehistoric times, and a long series of rituals began when a person died, culminating in an annual mourning ceremony at the year's end, where effigies of the dead were burned and their possessions added to the pyre for their spirits' use in an afterlife. This was also a time for great gatherings and the ritual exchange of goods and foods, and lasted about a week.

Toloache, an initiation ceremony for boys, using a drink made from the leaves of datura or jimson weed, took place when a number of candidates were ready. Besides instruction and dreams, they had to endure the pains of hunger and thirst, whipping with nettles, stinging by red ants, and branding usually on the upper arm to raise a scar as a badge of having completed the ceremony. The visions they had from the drug were to stay with them throughout life; an animal which appeared in the visions was to be a kind of guardian spirit. Foot-races and sand paintings closed the ceremony. This was rather recent and connected to Chingichnish, and not all boys qualified for initiation.

Far older ceremonies were the ones for death, for birth and girls' puberty. Girls' ceremonies were expensive so sometimes several girls were honored at one time. Instruction on behavior and customs, isolation and fasting, burial to the neck in sand-pits heated with hot rocks, face-painting, sand paintings and a final foot-race were used in the ceremony, whose main

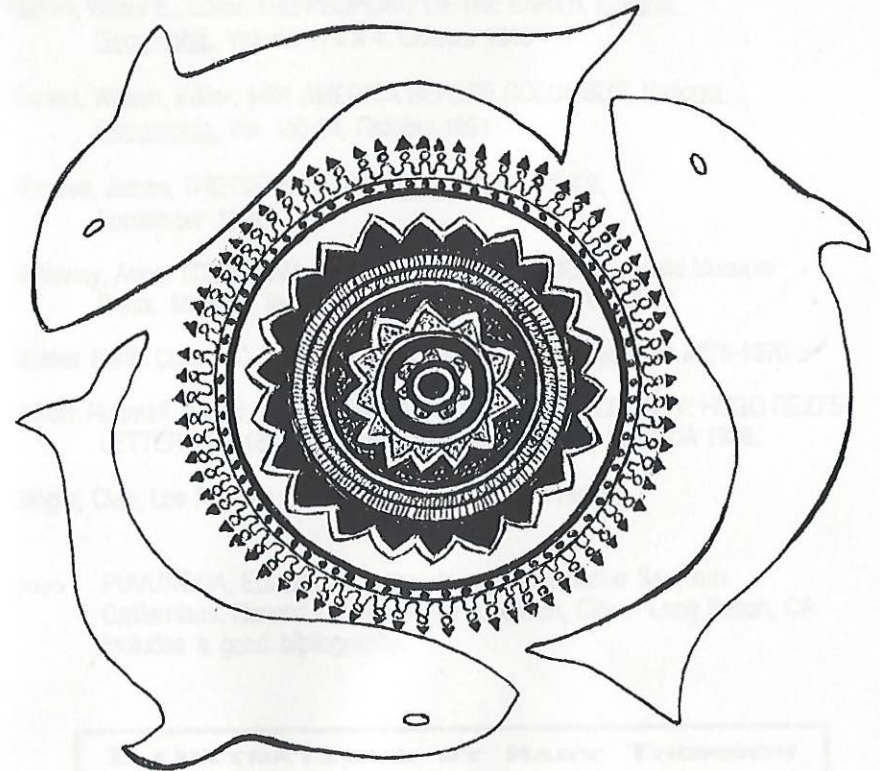
purpose was for the girl's health and future happiness. The foot-race, face-painting, and sand paintings were repeated monthly for a short period after the 3-day ceremony. Food restrictions could last up to a year.

At childbirth there was a somewhat similar ceremony -- for three days the new mother would fast except for warm water, and was steamed over an opening in a pit of hot rocks. The father also fasted over the days before and after the birth and could not fish nor hunt.

There was religious symbolism in the stars and planets, rainbows, comets, meteors and lightning. An eclipse was the portent of a great calamity; falling stars indicated a death in the group. The Milky Way symbolized all the people who had lived before. The Gabrielinos had names for ten months; the ones at the solstice had two full moons.

There were also legends and fables interspersed with songs and dances -- ghost stories and fanciful fiction not connected with religion.

The ritual that encompassed their lives and filled the year guided their actions and served to connect the people to each other, to the sacred past and to the environment.



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