

MO-KEL-UM-NA RIVER INDIANS

By F.T. Gilbert, Thompson and West, 1897

The Mo-kel-um-na river takes its name from a powerful tribe of Indians, the "MO-KEL-KOS," who formerly inhabited its lower banks, and adjacent country, from time immemorial; or the *tribe took* its name from the river-probably the latter. The Spaniards called and spelled it, variously--" El Rio ,Moquelomos," "Moquelumne," and "Mokelumne."

The three principal tribes, who had their homes on the Moke-lumne, according to their history, were the Mo-kel-kos, the La-las, and the Ma-cha-cos. The lands of the "Mo-kel-kos" embraced the territory lying between the Mokelumne, lower Co-sumnes, and Dry creek, on the north, and within 300 yards of the center of Stockton on the south, Staples' Ferry on the east, and the San Joaquin river on the west. The La-las occupied that portion between Staples' and Athearn's Ferry. The Machacos, the country east of Athearn's, and into the hills.

The Mo-kel-kos were the most numerous and powerful tribe, and the Mokolkos say, they had twelve or more principal rancherees, of from 200 or 300 persons each--say a total of 3000. This was prior to the advent of Gen. Sutter, which forms one of their epochs in history. At this time they had four principal chiefs, all brothers of one family. Sen-a'-to, the oldest, lived on the frontier at Staples'; Lo-we-no, at Woodbridge; An-ton'-io, on the Calaveras; and .Max'-i-mo, the youngest, near Benedict's Ferry, until the death of Senato, when he moved to Staples. Loweno was killed by Sutter in one of their wars. Maximo is still living on the Megerle ranch, and must be about sixty-five or seventy years of age; he is unable to say just how old he is.

The Mokolkos were almost constantly at war with the neighboring tribes; boundary lines and trespassing on hunting grounds being a prolific source of trouble. Sometimes a young brave would gain the affections of a dusky damsel, and take her home to his tribe without the usual gifts, and a consequential "unpleasantness" would occur. One of these wars lasted twenty years. Sometimes it was the Ya-che'-kos, who lived near Stockton; sometimes the La-las and Ya-che-kos combined; sometimes the Cosos, who lived on the Cosumnes, and the Jakson valley Indians that fought against the Mokolkos. A favorite battle ground was near the brick church, just south of the old Staples' Ferry; and the Mokolkos still point out the

places where many of the dead were buried. They often carried the war into the enemy's country, and, as they relate, were always successful.

They fought only with bows and arrows, and scalped the dead; from thirty to fifty scalps were considered a good day's work.

The Mokolkos claim that they were successful because they had the greatest number of fighting men, and were of superior physique. Our informant says, that they had some braves among them who would stand six feet and six inches, in their bare feet. Some of these braves believed themselves invulnerable, as well as invincible. The Mokekos relate, that they had frequent conflicts with the Walla Wallas, a tribe of Oregon Indians, who came to fight on horses, and had guns. Then all the valley Indians, as far south as Los Angeles, confederated to resist them ; and the Mokolkos charge that the Walla Wallas poisoned the waters, and that thousands died in consequence. They say that this was before Gen. Sutter came, and has undoubted reference to the scourge which swept their valleys in 1833.

Maximo relates that he was sick with the disease, but that their medicine man, by his natural and supernatural powers, kept him from dying, "It would not do to let him die, he was the chief," said his son-in-law. The present number of the Mokolkos probably does not exceed fifty.

The Mokolkos conquered and absorbed the La-las, of whom but three are now alive, a mother, her daughter and a son. Ah-a-moon and Alino were permanent Lala chiefs; they died about ten years ago.

The Ma-cha'-kos have suffered equally with other tribe by their contact with civilization. In 1850 their rancherees lined both banks, from Athearns to the hills about Campo Seco. They numbered then about 2000; now only about 40 or 50 are alive. Al-wi-no, their chief, is now about eighty years of age, is still erect, and standing six feet four inches. Speak to him of his old foes, the Mokolkos, and his eyes will yet flash the fire of his warrior days, as he exclaims with energetic emphasis, ."Mokolkos! bad Indians!"

The Mokolkos had been christianized by the Jesuit Fathers, and prided themselves on being Christians. They also were

accustomed to consider themselves as the elite of the Indian tribes in California.

Occupying as rich and healthful a country as there is on the Pacific slope, abounding in a great variety of game, to-wit: The grizzly and brown bear, mountain lion, wild cat, elk, deer, antelope, rabbit, quail, geese, and duck, and the river filled with salmon and other fish, it was a veritable hunter's paradise, and, with full annual crops of acorns and ground nuts, it was to them a land of plenty. It is no wonder that they were the envy of their less fortunate neighbors. As late as 1850 this state of things still existed, and acres of elk-horns-notably in Elkhorn Township, along the border of the tulies-covered the ground, attesting the large number of these animals.

In 1850 and '51 the Indians were still in their aboriginal simplicity. With the exception of a few of the wealthier chiefs, who at that time dressed and rode, "a la Mexicans," the costume for the men consisted of a simple shirt and sometimes even less; and a short skirt attached to the waist for the women. In their character they were as simple as in their habits. The valley Indians at first were inclined to look upon the Americans as trespassers; but the lessons learned by their conflicts with Gen. Sutter, and the teaching by the "Padres," had not been without effect, inspiring them with a salutary awe; and they accepted the situation gracefully as possible, believing that a masterly peace for the present, was their best policy. It is among their traditions that the white man was to come, but would be expelled by the plague and their own prowess, and that they will again enjoy their former hunting grounds.

Although nominally christianized, they still keep up their monthly aboriginal feasts and dances. At these they invoke the spirits to crown the seasons with plentiful crops of ground-nuts and acorns, and abundance of game. If their hopes are realized, they invite the neighboring tribes to a grand harvest feast; when feasting, dancing, gambling and athletic games, are the order of the day. Their medicine men perform their incantations, to pacify the evil spirits, ward pestilence and disease, and to heal the sick. Their prophets and seers orate on the traditions, past prowess and glories of the tribe, and forecast the horoscope of the future.

Their present great prophet and seer is Mau-ritz, said to be one hundred and fifty years old. He is seven feet in height, and still of stalwart and imposing appearance. Our informant says, "twenty five years ago I thought him the most remarkable Indian I had ever seen; tall, handsome, graceful and well-timed in his actions, with a well-formed head, he was the beau ideal of an impassioned orator, and he had a magical influence over his hearers." He still travels among the different tribes, east and west of the Rocky Mountains, and undoubtedly is the master spirit that keeps alive their old traditions of former glory and power, and hopes for the future.

It was nearly two years ago that the Indians here told Capt. G.C. Holman, of Lockeford, of the contemplated rising that took place the present year in Idaho and Montana. It was to have been much more general, but, doubtless, the vigilance of our army officers prevented the desired combination.

On the occurrence of a death, their lamentations are touching in the extreme. The mourners of the tribe sit in a circle, with bowed heads, and for hours, and through the long night previous to a burial, give expression to their deep grief in dismal wailing, or the dolorous chanting of a death song. They bury their dead, bestrewing the graves with beads and shells. Some of their traditions are interesting and poetic, but in a brief sketch like this are inadmissible.

To explain, however, the condition of some of the tumuli, or mounds, built by the Indians, containing large quantities of human bones, found at various Indian encampments on the Mokelumne river, They say that these tumuli, are the burial places of the dead, of the plague already referred to. It is also a tradition that these valleys, prior to the advent of the whites, had periodical showers of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, during the summer months, and that the Great Spirit, as a token of his displeasure at their coming, has withheld the rain, proposing to drive them out by the sterility of the soil which would necessarily follow the absence of rain; that, when the whites leave the country, the summer rains will come again. This change in the climate occurred about sixty year ago. They have another tradition which should be of some interest. To the whites of the present and the future generations. It is, that a flood once filled the valley of the Mokelumne from bluff to bluff, and overflowed at a point near the Poland House, at the rancharee, on the Megerle ranch, and below Staples' ferry, the water running in the direction of Stockton, and that many thousands of Indians were drowned. We have faith in this occurrence, as the country bears evidence of such a wash, at no very distant date; and the slope of the country is such that the sweep of the currents would be in that direction. Maximo, the old Mokolko chief, says that it occurred about five years before he was born; this would fix the date at about 1805 or 1810. Their legends and customs would make a paper of great value to those interested in the history of a rapidly vanishing race; but for the present work we must forego further mention.

In 1852, most of the Indians had removed to the mountains. There were four rancharees; first at the crossing of the Calaveras, at Davis' and Atherton's Ferry, containing about forty; second, on the Mokelumne, near Staples' Ferry, numbering fifty-five; third, at Dent and Vantine's Ferry, on the Stanislaus river, numbering two hundred and seventy-five; fourth, at Bonsell's Ferry, on the San Joaquin river, numbering twenty. The last remnant of the Indians of San Joaquin Co., seeing the lands all passing under the control of the whites, sought to save a little piece for themselves, by purchasing it from the people who had taken it from them. They made a bargain with a man, by the name of Thos. B. Parker, to take up for them a school section, for which they were to pay him in work \$350. They worked until, by an agreed price, their labor amounted to \$371, but they never received a title to the land. Mr. Parker was killed in the mines, before deeding the land to them, and they were turned off from the section by an order of the court.

Glen View Recap By Randy Jones

First off I would like to apologize to all of you. I have not put together a news letter for more than a year now. No excuses, I just let procrastination get the best of me. Since our first section took more room than expected, I will keep this short and sweet.

We have a new board member. We would like to thank Joann Barbero for volunteering to take Gina Hesseltine's duties as secretary. As many of you may know, Joann grew up in this area and has a deep passion for keeping Glen View alive and orderly. At the same time we would like to thank Gina for all the work she has put in from organizing the address list to making sure the burial map is as complete as can be.

The 2010 cleanup was very productive this year. A big thank you goes out to all the people who helped. Mike Schneider took charge of dismantling the broken water fountain and moving the pipes to make way for a new fountain. Kory Jones donated a California State flag for the flag pole. Brian Trevena built a very nice bench and cover for his Eagle Scout project.

You should see some changes to the web site, www.glenviewcemetery.com. We are in the process of adding a photo gallery and changing the format for easier viewing.

Best Regards.
Randy



LATEST HAPPENINGS

Treasure Chest

By Ed Jones

Howdy Friends. It's not fun being Treasurer with the Country in the situation it's in. Maybe we just won't participate in the crisis!

This spring whether we wanted to or not it was necessary to spend \$3,000 on the removal of seven very large diseased elder trees. Weed and squirrel control has also hit the bank account to the tune of about another \$2,000. We need someone with a bell and a bucket to stand out front or... any suggestions?? Maybe save all your cans and bottles and donate the proceeds? I did that this year and put \$75.00 in the cash box. Bless You All Who Did Donate...In These Times.

Your Treasurer
Ed

We thank the following Businesses for their Donations!



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Payless Market Lockeford

Glen View Cemetery

P.O. Box 25
Clements, Ca 95227

Current Box Holder
Clements, Ca. 95227

***Next Annual Cemetery Clean-up
Saturday April 16th 2011 at 8:00 AM
Free BBQ Tri-Tip Lunch
Don't Forget a POT LUCK SIDE DISH
Stay for the Annual Board Meeting***

Board of Directors

President : Winnie Jones
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2nd Vice President: Robert Edwards
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Secretary: Joann Barbero
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For comments/concerns/corrections please feel free to contact the board

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