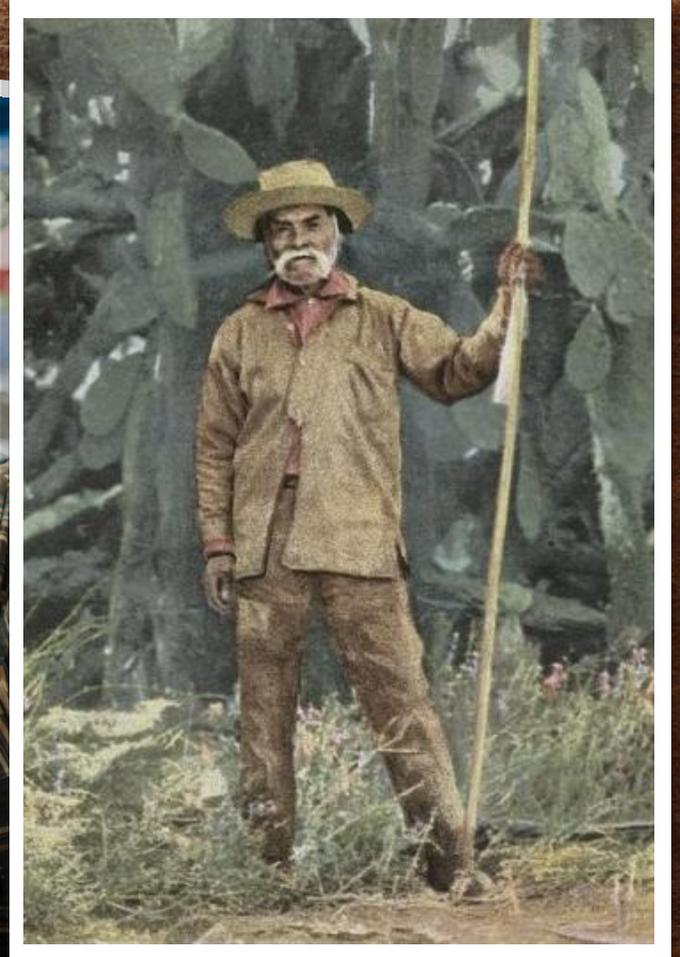
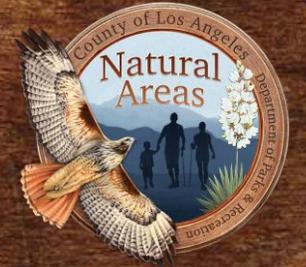


Indigenous Cultures & History





LOS ANGELES COUNTY
Parks & Recreation
Life. Enjoyed.



Sarah Brewer

Regional Park Superintendent

Vasquez Rocks Natural Area

LA County Parks & Recreation

Phone: (661) 268-0840

SBrewer@Parks.LACounty.gov

Today's Presentation Topics

- Checking in on this Topic
- Introduction to the Area's Cultural History
- How Do We Know What We Know?
- Continuing Tribal Sovereignty & Cultural Preservation
- The Tribe Today

A Few Things to Remember...

- The Indigenous story of this area is ongoing and changing. It is not a past tense story, nor is it far away.
- It is *not* our job as educators and interpreters to know everything. You will never know everything, and you do not need to.
- It *is* our job to ensure we do not: spread misinformation, fill in holes where we do not know the answer, or perpetuate outdated ideas.
- Many parts of these stories are uncomfortable, containing unfathomable devastation, but also incredible survival. Remember to not trivialize or discount it, as it is a vital part of the story of our valley.
- We have the opportunity to be a part of opening the public's eyes to these amazing stories of connection and resilience.

Tataviam Affiliated Tribes

State of California Native American Heritage Commission

Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians

1019 2nd Street, San Fernando, CA

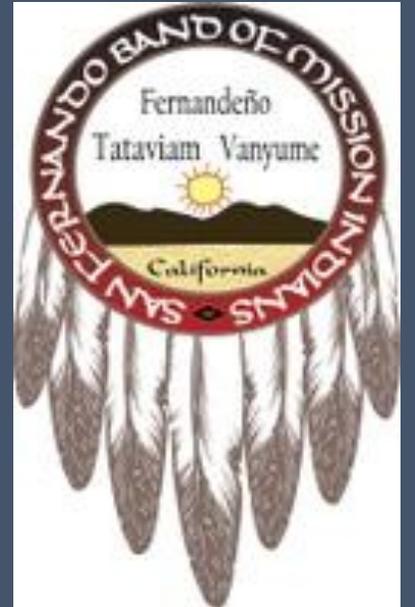
Tribal website: www.tataviam-nsn.us



San Fernando Band of Mission Indians

P. O. Box 221838, Newhall, CA 91322

Tribal website: <https://sfbmi.org>



For more information and resources, visit
<https://nahc.ca.gov/cp/p47tataviam/>

Note: Cultural affiliations are self-reported by Tribes.



Fernandean Tataviam Band of Mission Indians
People Facing the Sun



Preserving Culture







32nd annual
Heart of Tataviam

Pow wow

October 3 & 4, 2026

Previously Hart of the West

William S. Hart Park
24151 Newhall Ave
Newhall, California

**Free & Open
to the Public**

General & Vendor information
hartpowwow@tataviam-nsn.us
<https://bit.ly/TataviamPW>

No sale of sage,
sweetgrass or cedar.
Dogs must be leashed
and kept away from the arena.









Stepping Back
in Time...



Useful Terminology

“Prehistoric” vs. “Historic”

Archaeology

- A subcategory of Anthropology (the study of humans) which focuses on the material remains that humans leave behind. In our case, this includes items such as materials that give information on food processing techniques, ceremonial practices, and role in the trade culture of Native California.

Artifacts and Features

- Portable vs. non-portable

Oral Histories

- Interviews conducted for purpose of preservation.

Ethnography

- The study of single groups through direct contact with the people, particularly through interviews and observations. The work of J.P. Harrington is an example of Native Californian ethnographies and is an excellent resource to further study this subject.

Ethnobotany

- The study of the use of plants by a specific culture

B.C.E + C.E.

- “Before Common Era” & “Common Era”

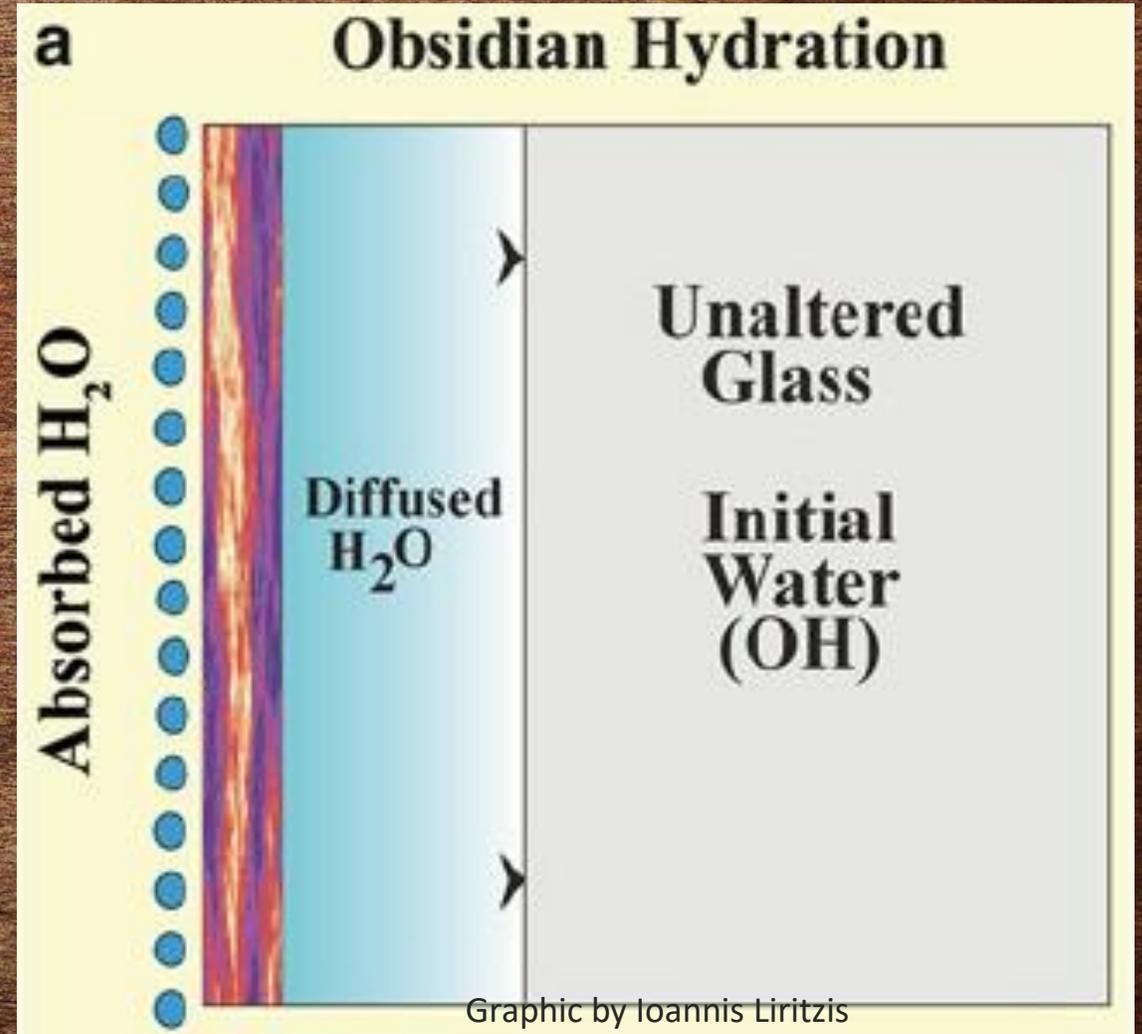
How do we know what we know?

Information available on the Tataviam and earlier inhabitants of the Santa Clarita Valley comes mainly from these sources:

- **Ancestral Knowledge**
 - *Information passed down and preserved through the generations.*
- **Archaeological Evidence**
 - *Including organic/non-organic dating methods*
- **Tataviam Ethnographies**
 - *Which were written by pioneering anthropologists such as J.P. Harrington.*
- **Genealogical & Genetic Research**
- **Mission Records**

Earliest Inhabitants (Pre-Tataviam) at Village at Vasquez Rocks

Obsidian Hydration Dating: ~2,300 B.C.E. / 4,300 years ago







Traditional Tataviam Village Site

by Tataviam Elder Larry Ortega

The “Ki’j”

Courtesy FTBMI

“The house, or Ki’j, was a dome-shaped framework of willow in a circle.

This structure represents a permanent family dwelling the poles were bent in at the top, to form a dome then smaller saplings or branches were tied on cross-wise.

To cover the outside, bulrush or cattails were added in below. A hole was left in the top, which was covered with a hide when it rained, allowed for a fire pit in the center of the Ki’j.

If it rained, the people could cook inside and remain warm and dry. The Ki’js were between 12 to 20 feet in diameter.”



A recreation
of some of
the more
common food
processing tools,
storage
implements
& native plant
foods used by the
Tataviam.

*Courtesy Leon
Worden, 1995*





Seeds from cones of California Juniper (*Juniperus Californica*)



Dried Pits from fruits of Holly Leaf Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*)



Sonoran Scrub Oak Acorns (*Quercus turbinella*)



Dried Flowers & Seeds of California Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)

Valley Oak
(Quercus lobata)

Coast Live Oak
(Quercus agrifolia)

**Sonoran
Scrub Oak**
*(Quercus
turbinella)*





Types of Artifacts

Groundstone Artifacts



Primary Types:

Manos
Metates
Pestles
Mortars
Milling Slabs
Hopper Mortars

Primary Materials:

Schist
Basalt
Granite



Local Agua Dulce groundstone artifacts, photographed c. 1997 by Art Brewer & Bill Perry

Groundstone Tools & Vessels vary widely in size, weight, and material, and are typically the best and most commonly-surviving local artifacts.



These artifacts were found in the vicinity of Vasquez Rocks in Agua Dulce. Large bowls, such as to the right, have been found weighing over 100 lbs.





Bedrock Mortars

Cupules



Autry National Center



Flaked Stone Tools

Common Materials:

Chert, Obsidian,
Rhyolite, Chalcedony,
Quartzite,
Andesite,
Jasper, Quartz



Tataviam Basketry

“When it comes to Native American basketry- woven bowls, baskets, trays, water bottles, etc. - none is rarer than basketry made by Tataviam people of the Santa Clarita Valley.”



Left: Juncus & Deerglass coiled basket base fragment, found in Vasquez Rocks in the 1970s.

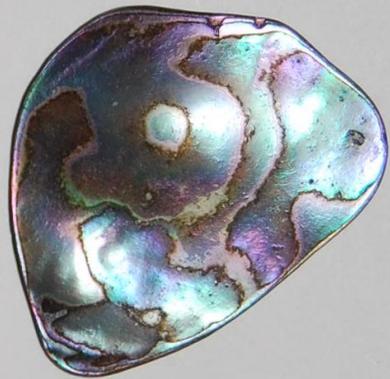
Right: Juncus basket side fragment, from lower Piru Creek. NHMLA, on display at the La Brea Tar Pits Museum.



Other Interesting Local Artifacts



Indicators of Trade



Soapstone: Utility, Ornamental & Role in Trade



Local steatite artifacts in care of the Autry Museum, Vasquez Rocks, and the Brewer Family.



October 1968 -

Two steatite bowls
unearthed during initial
construction of the Hydraulic
Research facility at 25200
Rye Canyon Road, Valencia (later
known as HR-Extron, later
Woodward HRT).
The photographer is
Fred Trueblood Jr.

They were reportedly taken
to the Southwest Indian Museum
in Los Angeles.

The bowls would have been
a trade item that the local
Tataviam people received
from the coastal Chumash people.

The steatite came
from the Channel Islands.

The workmanship is of a Chumash
style.

Courtesy SCVHistory







A close-up photograph of a woven basket filled with dark brown soil and dried, brown plant matter. The basket's rim is visible at the top and bottom edges. The soil is rich and dark, with some lighter-colored roots or stems protruding. The dried plant matter is scattered throughout, adding texture to the scene. The word "Break" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the upper right quadrant of the image.

Break

The Significance & Tragedy of “Bower’s” Cave

- On May 2, 1884, brothers McCoy & Everette Pyle stumbled upon Bowers Cave in the Hasley hills behind Castaic. Inside they found a treasure trove of artifacts, believed to have been deposited there by Tataviam ancestors.
- Among the artifacts were:
 - 9 baskets; 15 complete and 18 partial flicker (and other) feather bands; 45 bone whistles, & various bullroarers; 4 ritual staffs or "sun sticks".
- According to Van Valkenburgh, the Bowers Cave artifacts constituted "some of the most famous Indian material ever to be discovered in the United States".
- Sold to Dr. Stephen Bowers, most of the collection found its way to the Peabody Museum of American Ethnology at Harvard University. Some of the items were traded overseas, the rest still lie in storage, far from their homes and relatives.

The Cave is located within the boundaries of the Chiquita Canyon Landfill property, near its northeastern border. An approved (2017) landfill expansion was required to avoid the cave and is unlikely to disturb it.

Courtesy SCVHistory –
Tataviam Indian artifacts from Bowers Cave on display at Peabody Museum. Photograph predates 1952.



The Popularity of Artifact Collecting





Courtesy FTBMI



Courtesy FTBMI



‘It’s not about the way you look, but what’s in your heart about our people.

Brad Two Bears,
organizer of the powwow

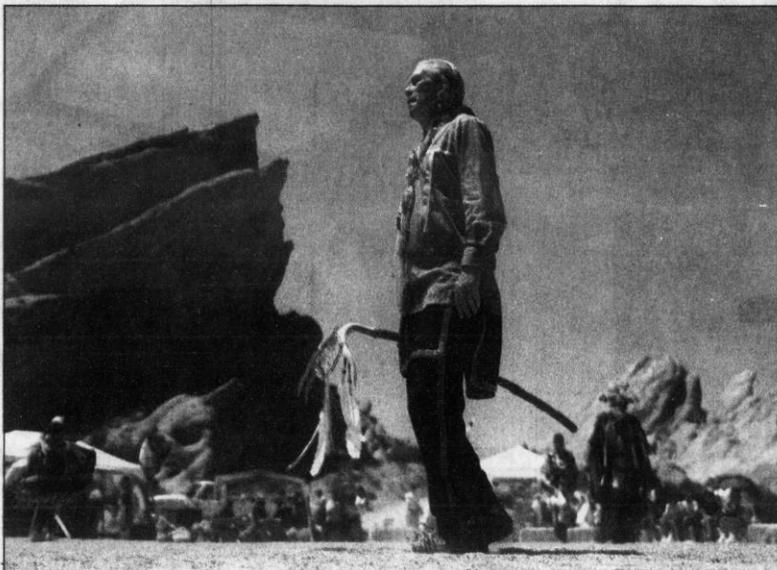


Photo by JULIE MARKES / For The Times

Brad Two Bears, an Echota Cherokee, organized the first intertribal powwow held Saturday at Vasquez Rocks Park.

Tribal Tradition

Native Americans Gather at Vasquez Rocks Powwow to Honor Ancestry



An overview of the scene at the powwow, where tribes gathered to honor their heritage. Steven Calderon of Sylmar, a 10-year-old Shoshone, leads a dance during the celebration.



Photoes by JULIE MARKES / For The Times

Gathering and Education: Near & Far



Left: the 2014 annual Tataviam Family Gathering.

Right: Elder Alan Salazar displaying the FTBMI flag on a visit to Bath, England to present a lecture on Chumash & Tataviam storytelling. Alan was the first California Indian to visit the American Museum in Bath. July, 2015.



TATAVIAM
LAND CONSERVANCY
HERITAGE • PRESERVATION • EDUCATION



Press Release / San Fernando, California /
January 8, 2024

“The Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (Tribe) announced today the donation of more than 500 acres of historic ancestral land to the **Tataviam Land Conservancy**, a nonprofit organization formed by the Tribe in 2018.

The donation made by Land Veritas is the first-ever land donation to the conservancy and marks the **first time in more than a century that the Tribe will regain ownership and stewardship over a portion of its original territory.**”



**Thank
You**

