

A GENOCIDAL LEGACY: A CASE STUDY OF CULTURAL  
SURVIVAL IN NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA

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Master of Arts  
in  
Anthropology

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by  
Aimee L. VanHavermaat-Snyder

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## ABSTRACT

### A GENOCIDAL LEGACY: A CASE STUDY OF CULTURAL SURVIVAL IN NORTHWESTERN CALIFORNIA

by

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Throughout the destructive patterns of Western expansion and the fervor of the California Gold Rush in the second half of the nineteenth century, California Indians suffered unmatched brutality under the guise of California's developing democracy. In 1848, the estimated population of California Indians was 150,000 individuals; by the 1900s, those numbers had drastically declined to 15,000 individuals. This thesis focuses on the cultural and archaeological landscape of the Benbow site on the northwest coast of California, where the Sinkyone people lived and were tragically massacred. Placed within a framework of culture contact studies, landscape theoretical perspective, and the genocidal history of contact era California, this case study exemplifies the contentious conditions for California Indians and how they were able to survive and maintain cultural continuity.

This deep understanding of the nature of the Contact Period in northwestern California illuminates the cultural biases, racism, and systematic erasures of California

Indians in early ethnographic records and historical accounts. This thesis introduces the critical element of collaborative archaeology to provide consilience to the study of the region and explore previously ignored perspectives. Through this collaborative lens, this work also explores the contentious relationship between California Indians and Euro American societies today, and its effect on modern archaeological practice and interpretation. Using the data collected from the case study, combined with ethnographic and historic resources, this thesis analyzes the lives of two massacre survivors living at Benbow in the aftermath of genocide, addressing the repercussions on the survivors and their descendants. Finally, using the harsh and uncomfortable realities gained from a thorough exploration of the Sinkyone case study, this research expands to demonstrate how colonization has vitally affected California Indian identity, both past and present. The relevancy of Benbow transcends the Indigenous and academic realms when ultimately addressed as a human rights issue, providing new clarity for the modern public to understand and sympathize with.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The arrival of Europeans, and other non-indigenous people, in North America marked the beginning of considerable changes in all aspects of indigenous lifeways. The general consequences of culture contact are ubiquitous in that both the physical and biological landscapes were permanently altered. The exploitation of natural resources, the introduction and expansion of invasive species, the deadly spread of diseases causing widespread epidemics, massacres, enslavement, bounty hunts, debt peonage, land grabbing, and the unavoidable impacts on the health and diets of native populations are a few major examples of the reverberation of European and Euro American contact.

The contact period in northern California is especially notable because it was not until the California Gold Rush in the late 1840s and early 1850s that a large influx of people came to the area, largely driven by the idea of “Manifest Destiny” and the desire to strike it rich (Lindsay 2012:122; Madley 2016:67-70). Euro Americans numbering in the hundreds of thousands came searching for California’s gold, and nothing, not even the native populations already living in California, would stand in the way of their believed national right to Manifest Destiny. Colonialism, defined as, “the practice by which states and other political entities assume political, economic, and military control of other territories” (Alvarez 2014:56) had arrived in native, northern California and the results were catastrophic. It is estimated that in 1848, the population of California Indians was approximately 150,000 individuals, by the 1900s those populations had drastically declined to approximately 15,000 (Lindsay 2012:123).

## Benbow: A Case Study

This thesis will focus on the cultural and archaeological landscape along the northwestern coast of California, in the general vicinity of Humboldt County, California (Figure 1).

A case study, the Benbow Archaeological Project (Dalton et al. 2017), will be used as an illustrative example to showcase the research questions that developed in this study. Benbow is located within Humboldt County on the northwest coast of California within traditional Sinkyone territory. According to Baumhoff's work (1958:184), Benbow lies within the territory of the Shelter Cove Sinkyone tribe along the South Fork of the Eel River. Prior to the arrival of Euro Americans in the late 1840s, northwest California was primarily the home of several small tribes that extended from the coast to more inland dwellings: the Mattole, Nongatl, Sinkyone, Lassik, Wailaki, Cahto and the most southerly-located Yuki. By the 1870s, the California Indian populations of the northwest had drastically declined due to contact and conflict with the colonizing Euro American population (Lindsay 2012; Alvarez 2014; Madley 2016; Resendez 2016).

## Purpose of Study

This study will include an overview of the Sinkyone people, placed within a framework of culture contact studies, a landscape theoretical perspective, and is strongly guided by the genocidal history of contact era California. There are two specific research questions guiding this research: (1) What was the nature of the Euro American Contact Period on California's northwest coast and (2) How does the aftermath of colonialism transcend onto the descendant communities. This thesis will attempt to address these

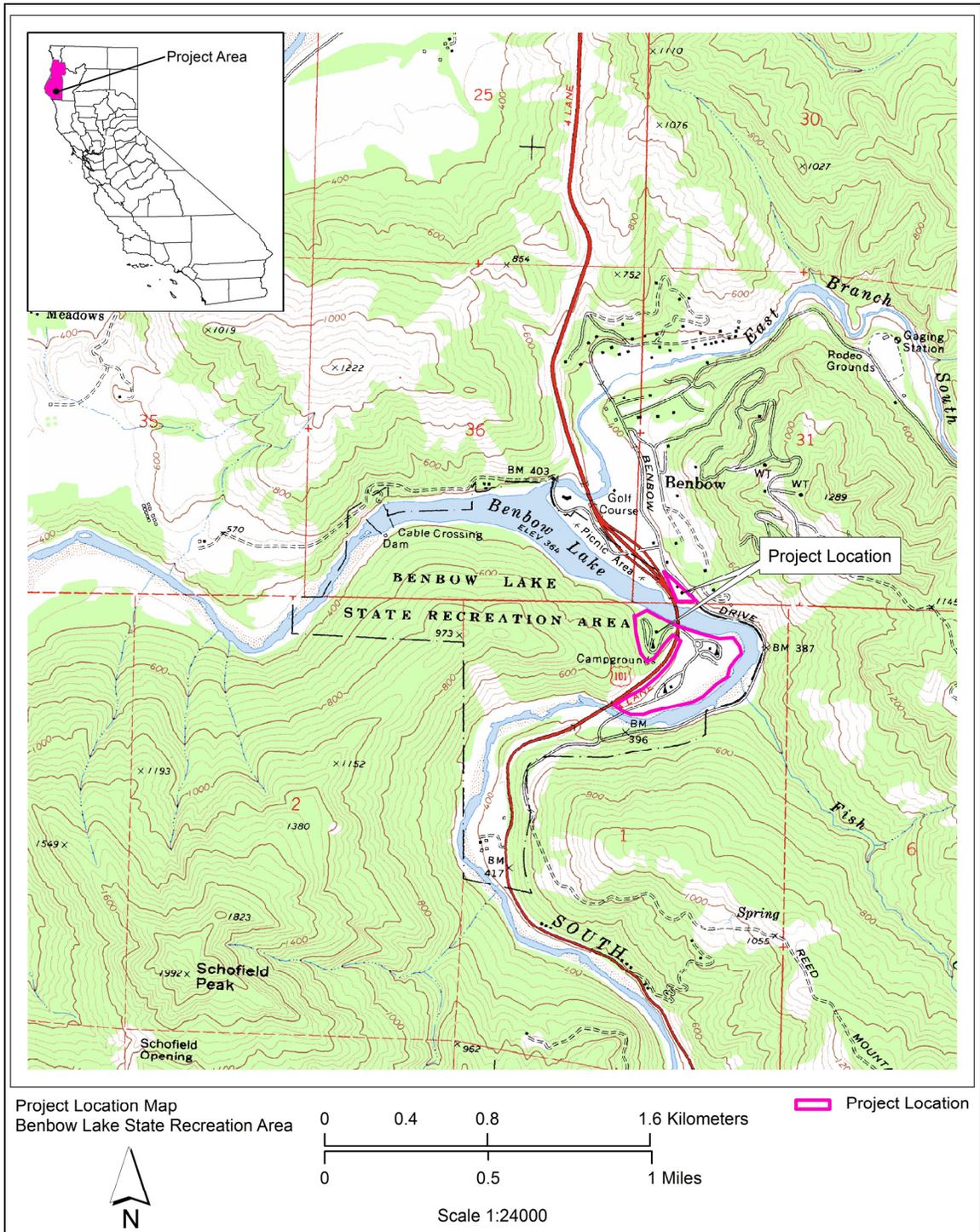


Figure 1. Benbow archaeological project location map. (VanHavermaat Snyder 2017)

research questions by using ethnographic literature, historic documents and photographs, other regional studies, and through the analysis of the data collected during the Benbow Archaeological Project (2013). This analysis will allow for a greater understanding of the archaeology of the contact period on the northern California coast within Sinkyone territory and the surrounding Athabascan traditional territories.

Benbow is a distinctive and important example for this type of research because it is here that many Sinkyone people lived and were tragically massacred. Resulting from this massacre, and many others, very few Sinkyone survivors remained, however, it is historically documented that a Sinkyone couple later returned to the Benbow area and lived amidst the memories of the horrific tragedies that had occurred there, along with the constant fear of being a California Indian during this time. Using archaeological and historical data, the persistence, determination, adaptation, and connection the Sinkyone have to their homeland will be exemplified in this study.

### Research Objectives

The case study of Benbow will be utilized to exemplify the contentious conditions of the northern California coast for California Indians during Euro American contact. This study will move beyond a generalist and “boilerplate” discussion of the Sinkyone people and discuss the realities of their lives during this time.

By looking at the historic context of the Contact Period, the research questions posited by this study will place the nature of contact on the northwestern coast of California within the larger frame of European contact by looking at the case study of

Benbow and the Sinkyone. It will also address the greater context of northern California at state and national levels.

By viewing the changes through differing contexts ranging from local, state, and national levels, this thesis will allow for the research questions to transcend from a small local experience of the Sinkyone and compares it to the larger bodies of research and indigenous loss during the contact period in California.

By understanding the nature of the Contact Period in northwestern California and by viewing early research through that lens, the cultural biases, racism, and systematic erasures of California Indians in early ethnographic records and historical accounts become clearly visible. This also reveals how the relationships between California Indians and Euro American societies still remain contentious today and how that affects modern archaeological practice and interpretation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this thesis research will show how colonization has affected California Indian identity, both past and present.

This research will offer historical context for the culture change experienced at Benbow by revealing the destruction of California Indians through colonization. This tragic history proves relevant today and will be used to argue that Federal, State, and private archaeological contractors have an ethical responsibility to prevent the perpetuation of damaging erasures of Native American histories and experiences. This study will call for professionals to move past the required “tribal consultations” to actively seeking Native American community involvement and participation in projects, research, fieldwork, and the preservation process. Moving beyond ethical considerations,

this research will show that tribal collaborations with the archaeological community can enhance the interpretations of scientific studies in a way that only heritage communities can provide, while also giving power and agency back to these descendant communities where it belongs.

### Terminology

The terminology used within this thesis has been thoughtfully chosen and is inevitably the result of an imperfect compromise, especially because there are no universally agreed upon words to describe the people and groups that are included within this thesis. When speaking broadly, the term ‘Native American’ will be used as it is one of the more generally accepted, and least offensive descriptors in usage today (Alvarez 2014:6).

The often forced names and terminologies placed upon Native Americans have been historically rooted in prejudice, racism, and misunderstanding. The violence that was present in contact-era California caused severe dislocations of tribes, with forced removals and relocations to reservations and Indian boarding schools. Survivors of violence often fled into new areas never to return home, and the rates of intermarriage increased. As a result, tribal designations are not always clear, and individuals or tribes may be historically documented incorrectly. Following the twenty-first-century, many Indigenous Californians began using the term ‘California Indian’ to describe themselves (Madley 2016:15). This thesis research will use this terminology when speaking generally of California Indians of where specific tribal identity cannot be known. The debate of tribal designations, their correctness, and the Federal recognition of tribes is a

hotly debated topic that is present widely across California and within the study area of this thesis. This topic is vast and significant but it does not fall within the scope of this research. As a result, this thesis will use the commonly known names for California Indian tribes, rather than the names used within their own languages or tribal names that are currently contested.

It is also complicated to decide upon the terminology to use for the hundreds of thousands of people that inundated California before, during, and after the Gold Rush. These self-labeled “settlers” saw themselves as saviors to the wild lands and wild people of California while the California Indians, of course, did not view them as such (Madley 2016:15). This research will generally refer to these “settlers” as ‘Euro Americans’ as a way to avoid the semantic baggage of other constructs. Where possible, individuals will be identified by profession, descent, or other identifying terms. This choice is a difficult one because not all “settlers,” “pioneers,” or “miners” that flooded into California were of European descent (see Starr 2005; Leung 2001; Johnson 2000). The common model of contact studies in archaeology is “grounded in the experience of European colonialism in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries A.D.” (Stein 2005:3). The majority of historical documents highlight the lives and events of white men. It is through these documents that the lives and deaths of people of color, and specifically to this research California Indians, are painstakingly found. This causes a biased, Eurocentric view. A more in-depth discussion on the biases found in the historic record, the United States Census, and in California ethnographies can be found in Chapter II and Chapter IV of this thesis.

## Thesis Organization and Chapter Content

This thesis is divided into eight chapters and organized around the specific research questions mentioned above, examining the nature of the Euro American Contact Period in northwestern California and addressing the aftermath of colonialism on descendant communities. Data collected from historical accounts, ethnographies, and the case study of Benbow will be used to answer these research questions and provide insight into the lives of the Sinkyone survivors of yesterday and today.

Chapter II contains a discussion of the genocide of California Indians. Beginning by addressing the question ‘What is genocide?’ the chapter moves to an overview of the state and federal laws that shaped this violent time. The chapter continues by addressing the Euro American mindset and how they attempted to “tame” California Indians. Next the chapter provides a sampling of well-documented massacres that happened within 100 miles of the case study. Following those examples, the next section discusses Sinkyone specific massacres, including the most well known, Massacre at Needle Rock. It is necessary that the reader be aware of the tragic history of California Indians to understand the conditions of the Contact Period in northwestern California and this subsequent research.

Chapter III will discuss the theoretical approach underlying this research. This research is guided by landscape heritage theory and culture contact studies to more clearly understand the Contact Period on the northern coast of California. This chapter will conclude with a discussion of the relationship between modern archaeologists and the descendant communities through the lens of Collaborative Archaeology.

Chapter IV introduces a brief history of Sinkyone ethnographies. The discussion will begin with a critical discussion of “salvage” ethnography and the problems associated with it. The chapter continues by presenting an overview of the ethnographic materials available for the Benbow region and presents a detailed examination of all the Sinkyone informants that have been documented ethnographically. This chapter will conclude with pertinent information derived from these ethnographic interviews and the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Chapter V addresses the archaeological context of the traditional Sinkyone territory, as well as a discussion of traditional Sinkyone lifeways. Chapter VI will introduce the case study of Benbow. This chapter will focus on one site from the Benbow Archaeological Project, CA-HUM-222. The field and lab analyses of the data presented in this chapter will be used to address the research questions of this thesis in the following chapter.

Chapter VII will address the research questions presented in this chapter compared with ethnographic data and the data recovered from the case study of Benbow, as well as, other general themes discussed throughout this thesis. In conclusion, Chapter VII will revisit the topic of collaboration and discuss how it was an important element to the Benbow Archaeological Project; it will also discuss the modern significance of this research and current issues facing the Sinkyone. It will also include suggestions for the future of Benbow and all future archaeological investigations in the area.

## CHAPTER II

### A LEGACY OF GENOCIDE

Nagaicho, the Sinkyone Creator, had looked at the area around Briceland and remarked sadly, ‘It looks just like my people lying around, lying around with all their skin cut off’ [Raphael 1974:92]

#### A Brief History of Genocide in Northwestern California

What happened in northern California has been described as “the greatest human demographic disaster in the historical record.” (Bender 2006:21). The destructive patterns of western expansion, under the guise of the Euro American belief in Manifest Destiny, assured that with the progression of California’s statehood that California Indian populations would be greatly diminished. This section will focus on northern California and how the Americanization of California influenced the political, economic, and cultural lives of the numerous California Indian nations living in the north. This chapter begins with a discussion on genocide, followed by a brief history of the State and Federal laws that shaped the massacre-ridden reality of northern California, followed by a sampling of well-documented accounts of massacres that occurred within the general region of Sinkyone territory, and concludes with Sinkyone specific massacres and the eyewitness account of one of the few Sinkyone massacre survivors.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is necessary that the reader be aware of the tragic history of California Indians to understand the conditions of the Contact Period in northern California and this subsequent research. The placement of this chapter at the

beginning of this thesis is so that the genocide of early California will be able to underscore, and set the tone for the proceeding chapters.

### The Question of Genocide

The discussion of genocide is a contentious one and many historians and anthropologists have debated how to classify what happened in the nineteenth century to Native Americans. The most widely accepted definition comes from the United Nations (UN) *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948:Article II) which defines genocide as

acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such:

- a) Killing members of the group;
- b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within a group;
- e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The UN definition of genocide has been criticized for being too broad and not precise enough (Magliari 2016:2; Alvarez 2014:29). Of particular note to this research, the UN convention does not include cultural genocide (ethnocide) within its definition, although many scholars do include it in their discussions of genocide. Cultural genocide targets the cultural qualities of how groups are connected and attempts to destroy the bonds that unite the people and destroy their collective identity (Alvarez 2014:29). Even though ethnocide is not included in the UN Genocide Convention, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO 1981) stated:

Ethnocide means that an ethnic group is denied the right to enjoy, develop and transmit its own culture and its own language, whether individually or

collectively . . . . We declare that ethnocide, that is, cultural genocide, is a violation of international law equivalent to genocide, which was condemned by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

While imperfect, the UN's definition remains the only authoritative international legal definition with 146 nations that have signed or are in parties to the Genocide Convention and it is used as a legal instrument as a way for investigating cases of potential genocide in an ever growing body of international case law (Madley 2015:107).

It has been argued by some scholars (Benjamin Madley and Brendan C. Lindsey among others) that the UN definition needs to be accepted as the standard definition. Madley (2015:107-108) argues that a standard definition of "genocide" is needed and calls for the research of specific case studies of specific events and people groups that can generate the detailed evidence that is necessary to conclude something as genocide. Alvarez (2014:4) calls for the critical and rigorous examinations of individual claims of genocide because of the danger of sweeping generalizations of genocide that may "suggest that Native experience, and by inference Native peoples, were all the same." California has recently become the epicenter for the American genocide debate due to current scholarly works (Lindsey 2012; Madley 2016) and the ever-growing amounts of evidence that point toward genocide (Magliari 2016:5). California and its violent past do indeed make a unique and shocking case for genocide that will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter. In this thesis and the academic interpretations in this work, it is accepted that genocide is the only term that can be used to describe the systematic and violent destruction of California Indians.

Initially very few scholars and journalists addressed the true histories of California and the California Indian (McWilliams 1949; Caughey 1953; Cook 1976). Many American's had little exposure to the term or knew the meaning of "genocide." First defined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944 (79-95), it was not until the late 1950s when the atrocities of the Holocaust came to national attention that the concept became widely known in the US. "Holocaust-related art, literature, media, and scholarship proliferated during the late 1960s and 1970s" (Madley 2016:6). The 1970s saw a new wave of "critical histories" emerge from New Left historians alongside civil rights activism and American Indian activism. The dismantling of "Manifest Destiny" driven US histories allowed for the gruesome truth of California to come to light. During this time many scholarly works addressed the genocide that occurred in Contact Era California (Kroeber and Heizer 1968; Deloria 1969; Nelson and Bayer 1988; Rawls 1984). Native peoples are often seen as outside the universe of obligation, they are viewed as the "other" (Fein 1994:36-37). "Naming what happened "genocide" is important because of its moral and legal connotations, and because it enables us to locate the California Story within a broad array of human-made tragedies" (Platt 2011:162).

By the 1990s the history of California and the tragedies that befell California Indians became widely accepted by historians and other academics in publications (Almaguer 1994; Hauptman 1995; Buckley 2002; McMurty 2005; Bender 2006; Raphael and House 2007; Kiernan 2007); however, a few outright rejected and argued against it (Hutchinson 1969; Watkins 1973). While this debate has been active among academics, it has not yet fully escaped the confines of academia and reached the public space. More

recent scholarly works attempt to address the genocidal legacy of California (Platt 2011; Lindsay 2012; Madley 2016) and the United States (Alvarez 2014; Anderson 2014; Resendez 2016) and are easily accessible to the public.

### Anthropology and the Study of Genocide

Anthropologists have seemingly avoided joining the discussions on genocide (Scheper-Hughes 2001:348) even though anthropologists have long been advocating for the rights of indigenous peoples by running analyses on violence, conflict, and warfare, and focusing attention on political violence in complex state societies (Hinton 2002:1).

As stated by Levi Strauss (1966:126, quoted in Scheper-Hughes 2002:351):

Anthropology is not a dispassionate science like astronomy, which springs from the contemplation of things at a distance. It is the outcome of a historical process which has made the larger part of mankind subservient to the other, and during which millions of innocent human beings have had their resources plundered and their institutions and beliefs destroyed whilst they themselves were ruthlessly killed, thrown into bondage, and contaminated by diseases they were unable to resist. Anthropology is the daughter to this era of violence: its capacity to assess more objectively the facts pertaining to the human condition reflects, on the epistemological level, a state of affairs in which one part of mankind treated the other as an object.

Hinton (2002:2) suggests that anthropologists may have avoided the topic of genocide because of the uncomfortable truth that many anthropological concepts such as, race, ethnicity, and the concept of “culture,” have contributed to the genocidal process (Arnold 2002; Bowen 2002; Schafft 2002; Scheper-Hughes 2002) and those that have engaged in such research have been met with criticism and controversy. Cultural relativism also likely played a role as this perspective states that one should not make ethnocentric value judgments about cultural differences and therefore makes it difficult to

condemn the acts of genocide (Fluehr-Lobban 1995:1; Hinton 2002:2; Totten et al. 2002:55). Increasingly, anthropologists are collaborating with other disciplines on genocide-related issues (Totten et al. 2002:56). As Scheper-Hughes (2002:351) notes, “Sadly, however, more often than not, anthropologists have served as passive bystanders, as silent rather than engaged witnesses to the genocides, ethnocides, and die-outs they have so often encountered in the course of pursuing their ‘vocation.’ ”

### State and Federal Laws

Prior to contact, California has often been credited with being the most densely populated region in North America (Anderson et al. 1998:14). By the time California achieved statehood in 1850, California Indian populations had been cut down so severely that they became the minority population (Lindsay 2012:123). There are several reasons for this drastic population decline including, diseases brought through colonization, starvation as a result from being displaced from their villages, and the inability to observe traditional subsistence practices because white settlers claimed property “rights” that prohibited California Indians from accessing hunting grounds, fishing areas, and gathering in traditional places. Disease and other factors did kill an untold amount of California Indians and scholars are still exploring those causes, yet by trying to place the emphasis on these factors as the main cause of the California Indian demographic decline “overshadow(s) the equally undeniable role of violence in the population catastrophe and in the conquest of the United States” (Madley 2015:100). The most substantial reason for the destruction of California Indian populations were the genocidal acts of Euro Americans and the Federal and State governments against

California Indians. Originating out of greed, fear, and entitlement, California Indians quickly became a “problem” to all the new settlers coming to northern California. The following decade in California history was especially dire in the north where California’s new state government, Euro American citizens, and the federal government had conflicting ideas on how to address the “Indian problem.”

The Federal government was constrained by three distinct laws that applied to all states equally: the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution, and the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act of 1890.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 defined the manner in which the United States government would manage Native Americans.

The utmost good faith shall always be observed toward the Indians; their lands and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time, be made for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them. [Northwest Ordinance 1781: Section 14, Article 3]

The Commerce Clause of the United States Constitution (1787: Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3) states,

The Congress shall have the power to regulate Commerce with foreign nations and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes.” In this article thereby the Constitution specifies that three governmental entities exist with a form of sovereignty, the federal government, the state governments and the Indian tribes. The Commerce Clause has become “the main source of power for congressional legislation dealing with Native Americans.” [US Senate Guide 2015:256]

The Indian Trade and Commerce Act of 1790 placed almost all interactions with Native Americans specifically under Federal control. Also known as, the Non-Intercourse Act, it remains markedly the same today. This Act “prohibits conveyances of

an Indian tribe's interests in land unless the conveyance is negotiated in the presence of a federal commissioner and ratified by Congress" (The United States Department of Justice 2015). It places specific guidelines for Federal interactions with Native Americans including, trade with the ability to revoke licensure and stop illegal trading (Fixico 2012:182). The Act established the new boundaries of "Indian Country," protection for Native American lands, and stipulated that any injuries against Native Americans by non-Natives was a federal crime (Deloria and Lyttle 2002). Additionally, the Federal Government was bounded by its multiple and individual treaties with different Native American nations guaranteeing territories and sovereign independence (Alvarez 2014:137).

The California government generally had three main concerns regarding Native Americans: (1) protecting Euro American settlers and miners from Native American attack, (2) protecting Euro American property from Native Americans, and (3) taking Native American land and using Native Americans as a coerced labor force. California Historian, Hubert Howe Bancroft (1963:474) summarizes early California State political views toward Native Americans:

That part of the early intercourse between aboriginal Americans and European which belongs to history may be briefly given, short work was made of it in California. The savages were in the way; the miners and settlers were arrogant and impatient; there were no missionaries or others present with even poor pretense of soul saving or civilizing. It was one of the last human hunts of civilization, and the basest and most brutal of them all.

While it is still debated among historians if Federal policies were genocidal in nature against Native Americans, the question if California State policies were is met with few arguments.

California's first legislation was developed in 1850. As will be examined below, the new state of California never recognized Native American civil rights, nor were they treated as sovereign nations. These legislative acts encouraged Euro American vigilante forms of "justice" denied California Indians equal rights and protection under the law, and permitted a new version of slavery, the involuntary and forced labor of California Indians. In 1850, California's first legislature passed the *Act for the Government and Protection of Indians* (Statutes of California 1850:408). These laws and subsequent amendments were enforced and implemented at the county and local township levels and facilitated removing California Indians from their traditional lands, separating at least a generation of children and adults from their families and cultures (Johnston-Dodds 2002:1-5). Some examples include:

- California Indians would be removed off any land in a white person's possession.
- California Indians could not testify against whites.
- California Indian adults and children were "apprenticed" or indentured.
- California Indians, on the word of a single white person, could be declared a vagrant, thrown into jail, and then forced to work for any white person that paid their bail under indentured servitude.
- Under the California Constitution and state militia laws, local sheriffs were ordered to organize parties for the "Expeditions against Indians" (Johnston-Dodds 2002:1; Madley 2016:158-162).

The goals of such legislation are transparent. Californians interpreted the 1850 law in a way that resulted in a new form of slavery for children and adults alike. This resulted in a profitable California Indian slave trade in northern California. Children were forcibly separated from their families and stripped of their languages and traditions, women were purchased for household work and suffered from forced sexual relationships and many men were picked up as vagrants and forced into hard labor all under the guise of the *Act for the Government and Protection of Indians* (Johnston-Dodds 2002:8).

The California legislation also denied California Indians equal protection under the law. The 1850 Act (The Statutes of California: Article 6) states, “in no case shall a white man be convicted of any offence upon the testimony of an Indian.” The enslavement of Native Americans and the denial of equal rights became illegal in 1866 in compliance with the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution (Section 1) which states, “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws” (Constitution of the United States 1787). This federal law did little for California Indians who were already enslaved because California did not enforce the 14th Amendment. The California Constitution was not amended to allow California Indians the right to testify in the court of law until 1872 (Dutschke 1988:9).

California passed a law in 1854, an *Act to protect the bodies of Deceased Persons and Public Grave Yards*, “making it a crime to disinter, mutilate or remove the

body of any deceased person” (The Statutes of California 1850:20; Silver 2003).

However, this new law did not protect California Indian bodies or graves. California and the rest of the United States had a substantial period of Native American grave robbing that did not end until federal legislation passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 (Public Law 101-601; 25 U.S.C. 3001-3013).

During this time of enslavement and rampant killings, the Federal Government was trying to ratify the California Indian policies and bring them into compliance with Federal Indian policy. This consisted of four approaches; negotiating treaties, removing California Indians from their ancestral lands and placing them in the newly-created reservation system, forcibly taking California Indian children and placing them in boarding schools, and allotting California Indian lands.

#### “Extermination or Domestication”

The day after California was admitted to the Union, John C. Fremont proposed ten bills that would effectively transfer vast amounts of California lands to non-Indians and to the government and thus began the assault on all Native California lands (Madley 2016:163). The popular thinking of the time was “extermination or domestication” and the reservations system presented a clear alternative to the extermination of California Indians. From the start, treaty makers and pundits structured the treaties and the idea of the reservation system as the only alternative to the rampant murders of Native Americans (Madley 2016:164). The treaties were seen as a legal means for developing an agreement with and pursuing peace with Native American tribes, which were viewed by the Federal government as foreign nations.

Three commissioners were appointed to negotiate treaties with California Indian tribes. McKee, Barbour, and Wozencraft created eighteen treaties with 119 California tribes, in which it was stipulated that in surrender of their land they would receive federal aid in the form of protection, food, education, clothing, blankets, and tools (Madley 2016:165). When the Indian Commissioners were done they were met with much opposition from the California government and the public. Many Californians appeared to be against the treaties as it was giving “savages valuable land” (Raphael 1993:108). The Senate placed the eighteen treaties negotiated by McKee under an “injunction of secrecy” for 53 years (Madley 2016:168). These negotiated treaties are now commonly know as “the eighteen lost treaties.” In 1853, Congress allotted California Indians with one-sixtieth of the acreage promised in the original treaties and they received no federal aid for the relinquishing of their ancestral lands as previously promised (Madley 2016:170). “The eighteen lost treaties” were a deceitful betrayal and represented the anti-Indian consensus of California and facilitated violence against California Indians under the framework of legality and set the stage for further violence through government funded militias that would play a central role in the genocide of California Indians.

The creation of the reservation system happened at the Federal level and consisted of the removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands and placing them on the newly created reservations. The previously promised federal aid was minimal and insufficient. These federally run reservations operated through violence, deprivation, discrimination, and often used debt and vagrancy clauses to force Native Americans to

work through indentured servitude (Bauer 2009:46). The state offered no protection from the squatters who would come onto the reservations to murder and kidnap the Native Americans who were living there.

In the same vein of “extermination or domestication,” Native American children were sent to federally funded Indian boarding schools that were designed to “whiten” the Native American. It was in these boarding schools that children were stripped of their traditional languages, clothes and cultural practices, separated from their traditional homelands and from familial relationships. The motive of these Indian schools was to teach the Native American children to look, act, talk, work, eat, and live life like a Euro American so that they could better assimilate into white society (Alvarez 2014:147, 153). While attendance became mandatory, resistance to the schools developed. As noted by Heizer (1978:115), the Day School at Portrero was destroyed (1888) and the school at Tule River was burned (1890). By 1900, the government ran 147 reservation day schools with 5,000 students, 81 boarding schools on reservations with 9,600 students, and another 25 off-reservation boarding schools with another 7,430 students, with an additional 32 contracted, private schools, and 22 religious-run schools without any government affiliation (Alvarez 2014:150). These Indian schools are a tragic example of the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, and neglect of helpless children who were forcibly separated from powerless families and communities.

Forced Euro American education is not the only tool used in California toward assimilation. The Dawes Act, also known as the 1887 General Allotment Act, was created as a way to destroy Native Americans, their cultures, and reduced federally

recognized Native American landholdings across the United States by an estimated 90,000,000 acres (Madley 2015:99). The Dawes Act divided up tribal homelands, which were historically held communally and gave them to individual tribal members (80 acres), to families (160 acres) and the remaining allotments were sold off to non-Indians, creating a checkerboard of Indian and non-Indian allotments (Alvarez 2014:155). These actions emphasized the Western idea of individuality, private ownership, and effectively separated California Indian communities. There are many resources that provide a more in-depth discussion of the Dawes Allotment Act (Carlson 1981; McDonnell 1991; Nakamura and Harris 1997; Banner 2005; Middleton 2008; Genetin-Pilawa 2012; Thomas 2015).

### Militias

California legislation encouraged vigilante violence by funding and promoting the work of these militias. The *California Constitution*, (1849: Article VII) gave the Governor the power “to call for the militia, to execute the laws of the State, to suppress insurrections, and repel invasions” (California Constitution 1849). In 1851, California Governor Burnett gave his annual address to the California Legislature discussing “repeated calls . . . upon the Executive for the aid of the militia to resist and punish the attacks of Indians upon the frontier” (Johnston-Dodds 2002:15). During 1851 and 1852, the California Legislature paid \$1,100,000 for the “suppression of Indian hostilities” (Heizer 1978:108). In 1856, a senate sponsored bill awarded \$800,000 to California’s militia campaigns (Madley 2016:251). Additionally, another federally sponsored bill was awarded to California in 1860 for \$400,000 entitled “Act for the payment of expenses

incurred in the suppression of Indian hostilities in the state of California” (Madley 2016:289). Extensive studies conducted by the Sacramento Genealogical Society found that while it is impossible to determine the exact number of men or militia units engaged in attacks against California Indians during the period of 1850 to 1859, the official records verifies that the Governors of California did call on the militia on a number of times incurring a considerable cost (Johnston-Dodds 2002: 15-16). Found in the records of the Comptroller of the State of California, *Expenditures for Military Expeditions Against Indians, 1851-1859*, the cost to the State is found at \$843,573.48, which does not include the totals for 15 California Counties whose Muster Roles could not be located (Johnston-Dodds 2002:16). While the total amount of money thrown at the “Indian problem” can only be estimated, these conservative estimates are shocking. The number of California Indians killed by these militias will never be known because the survivors, if any, rarely left a written record. However, published and archival sources estimate that more than 2,776 California Indians were massacred by the militias between 1850 and 1854, keeping in mind that these accounts tended to only count California Indian men and did not include women or children (Madley 2016:175; 214).

### Massacres

There are numerous and possibly countless occurrences of massacres in Native California. Massacre is defined as “an indiscriminate and brutal slaughter of many people” (Oxford Dictionary 2017). The indiscriminate killings and violent reality of what was done to California Indians is painful to research and sickening to read. However, the details of these slaughters need to be known and acknowledged for those that were

brutally murdered, for the survivors and their descendants, and with the optimism that the truth about California's past will become common knowledge and will open up discourse and understanding. Below will provide a brief description of select, well-documented massacres that happen in northern California generally located within 100 miles of the location of the case study, Benbow. This listing of massacres is in no way comprehensive and only exists as a sampling of the genocidal nature of early California and the indiscriminate killings and the attempted extermination of California Indians.

- **Bloody Island Massacre**, 1850. As reported in the *Daily Alta California* (May 28, 1850) that “on the 1st of the month an expedition was fitted out . . . (75[men] in all) with orders to proceed against the Clear Lake Indians, and exterminate if possible the tribe” (Madley 2016:127). The death toll of the Pomo is difficult to estimate. Bodies were burned along with the villages, they were thrown into the water that was heavily thicketed with tula, and many bodies may have floated away or sank. According to Pomo tradition the remaining bodies were cremated. Varying accounts claim between 60 and 800 Pomo men, women, and children were murdered during the Bloody Island Massacre by US troops that were led by Captain Lyon (Madley 2016:127-133).

- **Cokadjal**, 1850. Immediately following the Bloody Island Massacre Captain Lyon took his troops four miles south/southeast of the city of Ukiah and surprise attacked the Yokaya, a Central Pomo group. Pomo sources accounted that between 75 and 100 people were killed. Lyon reported ‘no less than 75 individuals were killed and that the number was probably double’ (Madley 2016:135).

- **Thompkins Ferry Massacre**, 1851. After several white miners were attacked and killed by local California Indians near Trinidad, a committee was formed that hunted down and massacred as many local California Indians as they could find (Van Dyke 1891:174-181). No recorded death toll.
- **Bridge Gulch Massacre**, 1852. After the reported disappearance of a Mr. Anderson and his dogs having been killed by arrows, a mob assembled by Dixon, located a Nor-rel-muk Wintu village on the South Fork of Trinity River and attacked at dawn. According to non-Native accounts Dixon's mob massacred 140-200 or more Wintu people. Nor-rel-muk matriarch Grace McKibbin states that a young survivor "placed the number of those killed at three hundred" (Madley 2016:206-207).
- **Round Valley Killings**, 1858-1859. A rash of murders occurred on the Round Valley Reservation as squatters and local non-Indian citizens took every opportunity to kill California Indians (Bauer 2009:53-54). These massacres were a part of a loosely organized local campaign killing men, women, and children (Madley 2016:265). From all the report findings it is estimated that at least 550 and as many as 910 California Indians were murdered in Round Valley in the span of a year (Madley 2016: 266).
- **Indian Island**, 1860. Over 200 California Indians were killed in Humboldt County on February 16, 1860. At Indian Island between 80 and 100 Wiyot Indians were killed. At the same time various attacks were being made on villages along the Eel River adding another 100 California Indian deaths (Heizer 1974:255-256). It is estimated that between 380 and 400 California Indians were killed.

- **Humboldt Bay**, 1860. Hydesville residents organized a vigilante group they called the Humboldt Calvary that would terrorize and commit widespread murder to local California Indian populations. Starting on February 6, forty unidentified California Indians were murdered along the South Fork Eel River (Madley 2016:282). On February 25, eighty more people were killed, mainly women and children (Heizer 1974:257). That same day the vigilantes also hit other nearby South Beach and Eel River communities with the death toll rapidly rising to 150 California Indians killed between the three massacres. The murder spree continued and with another two massacres in the area the estimated total is at minimum 285 people murdered (Madley 2016:282-284).
- **Horse Canyon Massacre**, 1861. Up to 240 Wailaki Indians were killed in retaliation for stolen horses (Baumgardner 2006:204).

#### Sinkyone Massacres

These horrific accounts exemplify what was, for all intents and purposes, the genocide of California Indians. These systematic and vigilante killings accelerated through most of the 1850s and 1860s with cash rewards being given out by the state government. Prior to the explosion of Euro Americans to California during the Gold Rush the Sinkyone population numbered over 4,000 individuals (Margolin 1981:165). By the end of the 1860s the Sinkyone were almost completely killed off, largely due to the rampant massacres of these times. The recorded accounts of Sinkyone massacres are limited. A majority of the documented Sinkyone massacres are compiled in *An American Genocide* by historian Benjamin Madley (2016). The following will present these and other accounts.

- **Massacre at Needle Rock**, 1850s. White men attacked a Sinkyone village. Unknown number of Sinkyone killed (Margolin 1981:166).
- **Unnamed Massacre**, June 19, 1858. The *Humboldt Times* reported that fifteen or twenty (Mattole or Sinkyone) Indians were killed by whites (Madley 2016:262).
- **Unnamed Massacre**, 1859. Sinkyone village (*Kos-tcis-kun-dun*) (Goddard 1907b:35), was attacked by white men, Sam Piercy and James Woods (Anderson 1985). Unknown number of Sinkyone killed. Several young teenage girl survivors were taken as wives and all babies and young children were hit on the head by gun butts and killed (Cook 1997, vol. 6:108; Goddard 1907b; Anderson 1985). (This massacre will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter and again in Chapter VI.)
- **Unnamed Massacre**, April 1860. “Vigilantes murdered and scalped six Sinkyone people at Shelter Cove” (Madley 2016:286).
- **Unnamed Massacre**, Early 1861. Soldiers killed “several” Indians on the South Fork Eel River and murdered thirty-nine Sinkyone “on the Main Eel River” (Madley 2016:287-288).
- **Unnamed Massacre**, 1861. Lieutenant Joseph B. Collin’s campaign to exterminate California Natives killed 117 in the region including Sinkyone and Nongatl people (Madley 2016:292).
- **Unnamed Massacre**, 1861. Following an attack by ranchers that killed fifteen Indians in the South Fork Eel River region, a campaign led by Lieutenant James P. Martin came to the area and killed eight Indians on May 28, sixteen on June 4, seven on

June 14, at least nine on June 16, and massacred at least twelve more Sinkyone Indians on June 21, totaling at least 52 California Indians (Madley 2016:292-293).

- **Unnamed Massacre**, June 18, 1861. Near Shelter Cove, four Sinkyone were killed along with one white man, William Oliver. In retribution for the loss of Oliver, a vigilante posse of fifteen men surprise attacked a sleeping Sinkyone village. Most Sinkyone villagers were either shot or drowned and their children were put into a stockade. During the night, a posse member “cut the throats of most of the children” (Cook and Hawk 1997:85; Madley 2016:295).

- **Unnamed Massacre**, May 9, 1863. The second California Infantry led by Captain Henry Flynn attacked some Sinkyone near Shelter Cove murdering four and injuring three “so badly that I found it useless to bring them along, [and capturing] 1 boy and 5 squaws”(Madley 2016:316-317).

- **Unnamed Massacre**, 1863. The Sixth California Infantry and Mountaineers shot and hung eight Sinkyone and Mattole (Madley 2016:323).

- **Unnamed Massacre**, 1865. Expeditions against (Nongatl, Sinkyone, Wiyot, and other) Indians in the Eel River and Humboldt Bay regions resulted in the murder of six to ten Indians (Madley 2016:252).

- **Unnamed Massacre**, no date. Goddard’s interview with Sinkyone, Albert Smith, recalls an attack at the upper end of the drainage, near a pond a short distance east of today’s Bell Springs Road (Dalton et al. 2017:36) called *Bunkuttcotcinnedun* at “that place white man kill all my people” (Goddard 1907b:44-45). This may be referring to an attack by the Asbill party that refers to part of a lengthy Indian killing campaign that

began with an attack near Briceland at the village of *Tochobe*, the survivors were chased to current day Garberville where more were murdered. These survivors fled up the South Fork Eel River and reached Richardson Grove area and crossed over Red Mountain and were caught near the headwaters of Chamise Creek. This tributary rises near the pond by *Bunkuttcotcinedun* (Asbill 1953:108-117). No recorded death toll.

- **Unnamed Massacre**, no date. Attack at the village of *Tug-gus-dun* where John Woods “killed Albert’s mother, Shot through just below ribs. Went in right side came out left side. Men were going up-hill and looked back” (Albert Smith quoted in Goddard 1907b:50). Where “Albert was hid under a basket” and his people “ran off way up by Red Mountain and then came back” (Goddard 1907b:53). No recorded death toll.

- **Unnamed Massacre**, no date. Attack on the village of *To-lun-ki*, a Sinkyone village on the South Fork, located on the south bank, at the mouth of Bull Creek. A Sinkyone informant, Charlie recalled, “Three men (Indian) were killed here by whites, and a woman was shot between her hips; she lay here a day or two and dead. One of the white men, named Steve, cut a piece from the arms of one of the Indians, built a fire, cooked it, and ate it. The best man of the Indians escaped” (Baumhoff 1958:187). No recorded death toll.

#### Massacre at Needle Rock

The Massacre at Needle Rock is the most well known Sinkyone massacre (see above). Sally Bell (Sinkyone) recalls the horrific tragedy that she witnessed and survived. As one of the few surviving Sinkyone people, Sally’s eyewitness account tells

of the monstrosities that befell her family and the other Sinkyone people that were murdered along the South Fork Eel River.

My grandfather and all of my family – my mother, my father, and me – were around the house and not hurting anyone. Soon, about ten o'clock in the morning, some white men came. They killed my grandfather and my mother and my father. I saw them do it. I was a big girl at the time. Then they killed my baby sister and cut her heart out and threw it in the brush where I ran and hid. My little sister was a baby, just crawling around. I didn't know what to do. I was so scared that I guess I just hid there a long time with my little sister's heart in my hands. I felt so bad and I was so scared that I just couldn't do anything else. Then I ran into the woods and hid there for a long time. I lived there a long time with a few other people who had got away. We lived on berries and roots and we didn't dare build a fire because the white men might come back after us. So we ate anything we could get. We didn't have clothes after a while, and we had to sleep under logs and in hollow trees because we didn't have anything to cover ourselves with, and it was cold then – in spring. After a long time, maybe two, three months, I don't know just how long, but sometime in the summer, my brother found me and took me to some white folks who kept me until I was grown and married. [Margolin 1981:166]

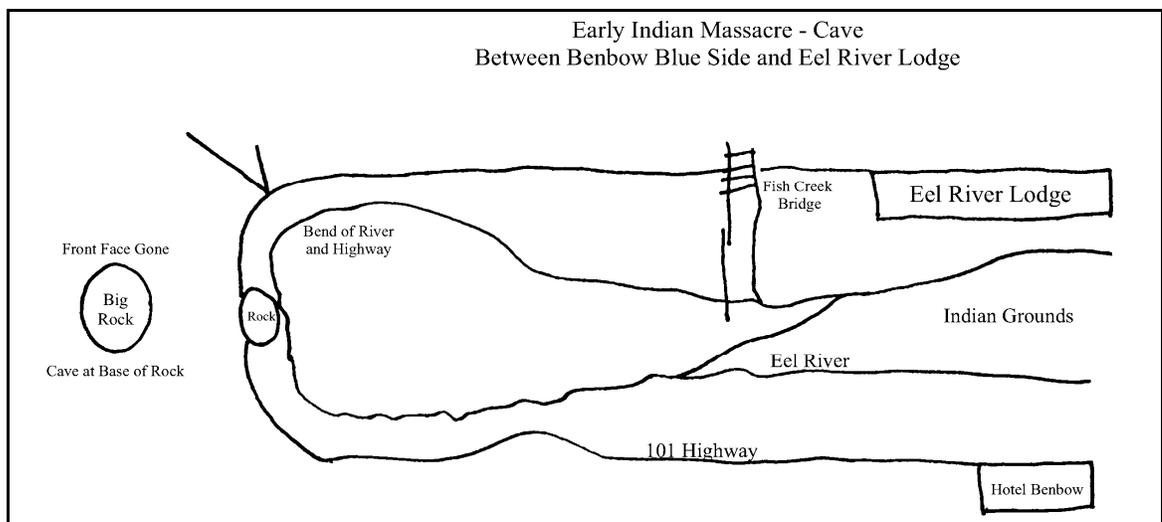
Bell's shocking recollection of the Massacre at Needle Rock is one of the few eyewitness accounts by a California Indian about a massacre in the area, and certainly is the only documented tale from a survivor of a Sinkyone massacre. Bell's account is an example of the determination it took to live and persist despite incredible odds that was necessary for the survival of all California Indians. Today there is a California redwood stand, *Sally Bell Grove*, which commemorates Bell at Sinkyone State Park (Department of Parks and Recreation 2017).

### *Kos-tci-kun-dun*

The case study used for this research, Benbow, is located directly across the South Fork from the location of an 1859 unnamed Sinkyone massacre (listed above). Sinkyone informant, Albert Smith provided information concerning the location of three

villages on the South Fork Eel River and that at one specific village, *Kos-tci-kun-dun*, “used to be lots of Indians died”

Additional information on *Kos-tci-kun-dun* can be found in the unpublished works of Margarite Drucella Cook (1997). Based off her interview with massacre survivor, Jane Johnson, Cook (1997, vol. 6:108) claims that a massacre happened “between Benbow blue side and Eel River Lodge.” In her unpublished notes, Cook provides a crude sketch map that indicates a cave area on a hillside across the river from present day Benbow Campground (Figure 2). “The early white men came in 1859. All of the Indians except several young teenage girls killed. These girls were kept for their wives. The babies and younger children were hit on the head by gun butts and killed” (Cook 1997, vol. 6:108).



**Figure 2. Map of early Indian massacre site adapted from Cook’s original sketch map (VanHavermaat-Snyder 2017).**

Source: Original sketch map located in the unpublished notebooks of Drucella Margarite Cook (1997) available at Humboldt State University, California Library, Special Collections.

Anderson's (1984, 2011) interview with Nona James, the granddaughter of local rancher and Indian slaver James Woods provides a non-Indian account of this massacre:

Sam Piercy was with my grandfather when they were coming through on horseback to clean out the Indians from this part of the country ... They found the Indian encampment out by Benbow, up where those red rocks are now that they use for gravel pit. The Indians used to camp up there when it was wet weather. They were going to clean those Indians out and they cleaned them out all right. They'd killed all the men except the ones that run and hid and then take the women.

By piecing together the three different accounts of the massacre it becomes clear that the Sinkyone living at *Kos-tcis-kun-dun* were the probable victims of the 1859 massacre. The location of *Kos-tcis-kun-dun* and the massacre will further be discussed in Chapter VII.

#### Chapter Summary

The California Indians' experience of genocide is challenging to piece together. However it is vital to have an understanding of the extreme violence, fear, and terror that northern California Indians lived with everyday. In most cases these massacres did not leave any survivors to tell their stories. When there were a few survivors they were often children who were subsequently then often raised by non-Indians and in some cases by the men who had just massacred their community. Many massacre survivors were probably fearful to tell their stories as relatively few exist in the written record or they were constrained by cultural taboos of talking about the dead. Government policies such as forced relocations separated families and communities, boarding schools for children stripped them of their traditional languages and cultural practices, along with the mandated bans on ceremonial practices, diminished the transmission of oral histories

between the generations. The few eyewitness accounts that do exist shed light on the strong perseverance that California Indians had to have in order to survive in northern California during this catastrophic time.

The reality of contact period California and the Genocide of California Indians is not well known to most Americans, let alone Californians. This work aims to provide sufficient and specific evidence that will generate an understanding of the past and how the past informs our present. The goal of this research is to add to the growing body of work on California genocide, specifically related to the Sinkyone, and to assist in the process of revitalizing, rebuilding, and compensating California Indian communities by educating all Americans.

CHAPTER III  
UNDERSTANDING THE CONTACT PERIOD  
IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA USING  
THE LANDSCAPE APPROACH

The concept of territory is typically used to define specific places to specific people. The theoretical perspectives of heritage landscapes present the idea of territory as a place for modern humans to exist within a spatially constructed framework of other species and other times (Zedeno 2008:210). Historical, geographical, and archaeological versions of “real landscapes” are not the only versions that must be taken into account and treated as valid (Bradley 2008:636).

The landscape theoretical perspective has been chosen as the catalyst theory for this thesis research because it has the ability to merge with other theoretical perspectives and frameworks. In this way, the landscape becomes not only a source of geographic reference but also social meaning. Despite the seeming vastness of landscape studies, it retains the ability to deconstruct theoretical perspectives that may be stuck in an antiquated realm. In this thesis, landscape theory will be paired with other theoretical frameworks such as, agency theory, contact studies, and collaborative archaeology. The different ways of understanding, along with differing perceptions, contribute to what is known about particular landscapes and events. As stated by Bradley (2008:636), “Understanding is multilayered and not easily reduced to the language of objectivism.” This chapter will begin with an introduction to the development of the postprocessual

archaeological theoretical approach and explore those themes in application to this thesis research followed by a discussion on colonialism and culture contact in order to evaluate the consequences of the contact period on California Indians. Next, agency theory will be discussed followed by a discussion of landscape theory. The chapter will conclude with an exploration of collaborative archaeological practices and thoughts on the decolonization of archaeology.

### Postprocessual Archaeology in Americanist Archaeology

The interdisciplinary dynamics within the fields of anthropology are especially apparent within archaeology. The blend of social elements with the sciences, that are well established within the discipline today, developed over time. This section will provide a brief overview of the advancements that occurred throughout the Post-Processual Period in American anthropological archaeology.

Processual archaeology played an important role in the development of archaeological practice and is still relevant today. However, postprocessual archaeology, developed by Ian Hodder, was a response to the inadequacies of processual archaeology (Trigger 2006:444). Hodder proposed that to understand the past, culture must be understood as “the result of the meaningful and purposeful actions of people” (Chazan 2008:53). With an increasing awareness of relativism, American archaeologists began to recognize that the processual approach was too narrow for acceptable archaeological interpretation (Trigger 2006:456). Hodder stressed the importance of context as a necessary element to understanding the meaning of artifacts (Chazan 2008:53). The

interpretation of artifacts in association to the context that they were found permits interpretations about the relationship between them. In this view, artifacts were not simply a single element but a piece of a larger picture. It was also during this time that archaeologists began to admit that all interpretations are influenced by the preconceptions of the researcher (Trigger 2006:457).

### Colonialism and Culture Contact Studies

Archaeological studies of colonialism can identify social changes through time, generate cross-cultural comparisons, and establish regional sequences of change and development (Schneider 2010:23). To clearly understand the impact of colonialism and to interpret cultural interactions, a distinction must first be drawn between colonialism and culture contact. The terms are often incorrectly used interchangeably. The difference between the two can be clarified by looking at early acculturation research (Redfield et al. 1936; Herskovits 1938; Beals 1953; Linton 1963; Broom et al. 1954; Spicer 1961, Deagan 1983; Cusik 1998) and Immanuel Wallerstein's (1974) world-systems theory (also known as, 'core-periphery' and 'center-periphery models). These early studies of acculturation in North America addressed the extent of contact onto Indigenous populations, the different methods of culture change, and the resulting consequences of culture transfer. Acculturation as a concept is often labeled as problematic as a result of being "steeped in the colonialism and anti-immigrant fervour of nineteenth century America" (Cusik 1998:127). According to Deagan (1983) acculturation is an appropriate framework for studies that involve "creolization and the to

and flow of information/material between colonizers and the colonized (quoted in Russell 2008:39).

World systems theory utilizes the study of large-scale spatial systems and can be used to understand culture contact and colonialism on a global scale. As a model, world systems theory showed that societies are not closed systems, in relation to their neighboring societies and that societies and cultures were probably constrained or influenced by the broader social entanglement that is was a part of (Trigger 2006:438). This approach has also been met with some criticism for being too overarching and “core-centric” and not being able to address small-scale change within colonized regions (Schneider 2010:11). Both of these approaches can be adapted and used for evaluating culture change at a wider scale

Typically used as broad terms, colonialism and culture contact have developed ambiguous meaning within archaeological approaches to understanding cultural interactions. Culture contact can be used to describe any basic interactions between any two groups of people. As Gosden (2004:5) states, “there is no such thing as an isolated culture.” Cusik (1998:4) has defined culture contact as “a predisposition for groups to interact with ‘outsiders’—a necessity created through human diversity, settlement pattern, and desire for exchange—and to want to control and interaction.” Culture contact is an array of encounters that involve two or more groups of people and it can exist within a context that creates a shift in power that can contribute to many outcomes. There are numerous possible outcomes that exist with culture contact and these conditions can lead to new settlements with a mix of people groups and can also

lead to colonization. While not all culture contact is colonialism, colonialism is a type of culture contact (Silliman 2005:58). It is argued by Silliman (2005) that the term ‘culture contact’ within North American archaeology is insufficient for colonial studies.

Colonialism has been defined as “a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2017).

Colonialism, in practice, is not a new phenomenon and has happened throughout time.

The term *colonialism* in this thesis research will be used to refer to the dual process, as clarified by Silliman (2005:59),

(1) of attempted domination by colonial/settler population based on perceptions and actions of inequality, racism, oppression, labor control, economic marginalization, and dispossession and (2) of resistance, acquiescence, and living through these by Indigenous people who never permit these processes to become final and complete and who frequently retain or remake identities and traditions in the face of often brutal conditions.

The influential work of Kent G. Lightfoot (2005a; 2005b) looks at the long-term effects that colonialism had, and currently has, on Native American communities. Lightfoot shows the deep relationships between new identities, social processes, cultural relationships, politics, and technology. Through this multidimensional, comparative approach these relationships can help to discover the variations within colonial encounters. The asymmetrical relationship of power and dominance between colonists and California Indigenous populations has been called genocidal in nature, as discussed in Chapter Two (Alvarez 2014:57). As Wolfe (2006:388) states, “Settler colonialism destroys to replace” and it can clearly be seen in the colonization of California.

## Agency in Landscape Theory

Landscape theory looks at the relationship between individuals and the land, and then interprets how the landscapes were experienced by people (Chazan 2008:58; Pauketat 2005:198-199). This approach places importance on the individual and the individual's role in their environment and society and how that will effect archaeological interpretation. The main focus of agency is to show that the experience of individuals is shaped by their role within their society (Chazan 2008:57). It takes this idea of the individual further and states that the basis of archaeology is not society but the individuals living within it (Chazan 2008:58) and looks at the purposeful choices and actions of individuals. This has graduated into new ideas about the relationships between people and things (Kopytoff 1986; Gosden and Marshall 1999; Hodder 2012).

There are several approaches to applying agency in a theoretical approach (Silliman 2001). This thesis adheres to the idea that individuals often act with specific intent and strategies for accomplishing their objectives, but also act and participate in ways that allow them to 'go on' in the world as part of social negotiation (Silliman 2001:192, 194). Instances of remarkably unequal social relationships, such as those present in contact era California, show that seemingly simple acts of daily practices can fluctuate in impactful ways. First, the dominating group can identify superficially meaningless daily activities and use them as ways to gain control over the dominated group. Second, these same mundane daily practices can be a powerful way for the dominated group to exert social agency within a rigid power structure of colonialism. By conducting specific practices, the dominated group can be displaying resistance by not

participating in such activities or they can demonstrate compliance at a socially visible level through compliance (Silliman 2001:195). Silliman (2001:195-196) also points out that individuals can use both newly introduced and ‘traditional’ practices as a way that reworks their identity, often through the appropriation and adaptation of material culture. This idea will be discussed more thoroughly and in context with the case study of Benbow in Chapter VI and Chapter VII.

### Landscape Archaeology

In the fields of anthropology and archaeology, the study of landscapes, ecological and physical, initially existed to support culture studies. Eventually it was acknowledged that the landscape changes, and in this process of change the culture responds to these changes, thus engagement with the environment would be apparent archaeologically. These developing and constant changes in the relationship between people and places become what Sauer (1963) called a “palimpsest”- as described by Strang (2008:51) “a layered and inscribed record of human activity in temporal and spatial terms.”

Studying the meaning of the physical landscape, as it is culturally oriented to the past is now referred to as landscape archaeology and seen as the postprocessual equivalent to settlement archaeology (Bender 1993; Bradley 1993, 1998, 2000; Tilley 1994; Sherratt 1996; Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Thomas 2001; Ashmore 2002, 2004). Landscape archaeology began to be widely used within archaeological academia during the mid to late 1980s (David and Thomas 2008:27). Trigger (2006:473) states that this

rise in landscape archaeology is the result of Hodder's 1984 study of "the symbolism of prehistoric European houses and tombs in relation to their geographic settings."

According to David and Thomas (2008:32), landscape archaeology was propelled by several factors, including "(1) sourcing studies; (2) the rising importance of cultural heritage management and public archaeology; (3) a developing interest in "style", and (4) Indigenous critiques." It is also important to note that with the development and spread of the concept of landscape archaeology and thereby the recognition of "place" other disciplines (cultural anthropology, ecology, evolution, depth psychology, and philosophy) also shifted their ideologies to better suit the growing comprehension of human culture and engagements in place (Casey 2008:45).

With the development of landscape archaeology, more attention was paid to the landscape as an actual "thing" to be studied in its own right. Lightfoot and Martinez (1995:472) advocated for the understanding of frontiers (landscapes) to be broadened and for a reconceptualization "as socially charged places where innovative cultural constructs are created and transformed."

Within its short history, landscape archaeology has transitioned and it no longer means what it once did. Landscape studies, and all it encompasses, have been broadened and revised numerous times and will continue to be refined. Because of its often-ambiguous nature, landscape studies are not utilized universally and tend to shift in accordance with the different contexts to which it is applied. "We cannot form an idea of landscape except in terms of its time relations as well as its space relations. It is in

continuous process of development or of dissolution and replacement” (Sauer 1962:333 cited in Strang 2008:51).

The built relationships between humans and the natural world create the social constructions of landscape, including individual and group identity, memory and imply that groups engaged in direct interactions with their surroundings (Zedeno 2008:213). For many Native Americans, these intersections are grounded in their epistemologies and oral traditions (Anyon et al.1996; Basso 1996; Deloria 2003). Heritage Landscape theory assumes that the ancestors of the group that inherited the landscape had the ability to access, and the opportunity to interact with their ancestral lands. Hicks et al. (2007) write that cultural landscapes are ways of explaining and capturing complex intersections among people, material culture, and geography. Remembering that many cultural groups or ethnic groups can hold different understandings of the same land (Barth 1969). Cultural landscapes develop from a people’s historical memory. Their cultural understanding of the land is shared and is transferred over generations through oral traditions and ceremony (Stoffle et al. 2001; Hicks et al. 2007).

Contemporary Athabascan descendants, as presented in this thesis, or any conquered, dispossessed, or relocated people for that matter, can feel that the landscape, as it has been passed down in oral traditions and sacred texts, or seen in historic documents, maps, and monuments or found within memories, was once theirs, that it still belongs to them and that they should utilize it as an ancestral right on their own terms and within their own understanding (Zedeno 2008:213-214). Not only do these sites provide a place of connection and a space to share traditional knowledge, they also serve as an

example of survival, the ability to adapt to change, and the perseverance to maintain one's identity amidst tragedy and extreme change.

### Collaborative Archaeology and Decolonizing Archaeological Practice

An aspect of archaeology that is of particular importance is the acknowledgment of the effect that archaeology has on the lives of Indigenous, local, and descendant communities and the public (Atalay 2012:1). The approach of collaborative archaeology acknowledges that the practice of archaeology is inseparable with past public policies that are rooted in racism and greed, and entangled in the dark shadow of colonial domination (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:3). When viewed in its historical context, it is undeniable that the discipline of archaeology was created by Western knowledge systems and methodologies and is rooted in colonialism (Atalay 2006:280). It must also be acknowledged that the colonialist foundation of archaeology remains in today's realities and practices. The positions of power held by archaeologists and physical anthropologists today "have powerful continuing implications for Indigenous peoples in North America and elsewhere precisely because they disrupt the self-determination and sovereignty of Indigenous populations with respect to their abilities to govern and practice their own traditional forms of cultural resource management"(Atalay 2006:282).

While the idea and principles of "collaboration" with Native Americans has gained widespread attention from archaeologists and anthropologists in the United States it is too often approached as something you must do because it is mandated by the law.

Federally, Executive Order 13175 (2000) states, “Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments. Establishes standards for regular and meaningful consultation with tribal officials to strengthen the government-to-government relationships with Indian Tribes . . .” This ruling does not apply to non-federal lands or entities. States generally have planning laws that require cities and counties to consult with Native American tribes. California law (SB 18, Chapter 905, Statutes of 2004; Burton et al. 2004) “requires cities and counties to contact, and consult with California Native American tribes prior to amending or adopting any general plan or specific plan, or designating land as open space.” SB 18 is unique in that it requires consultation with California Indians on projects taking place on both public and private lands and includes both federally recognized and non-federally recognized California Indian tribes (Governor’s Office of Planning and Research 2005:4).

The difference between consultation and collaboration must remain clear. One is the minimum involvement an archaeologist or entity must have to legally pursue an archaeological project and the other is a step toward decolonizing archaeology. Atalay (2006:284) contends that if collaboration and decolonizing is the goal then continued exploration is needed to find ways “to create an ethical and socially just practice of archaeological research . . . using methods and practices that are harmonious with (Native American) world views, traditional knowledges, and lifeways.”

The devastating repercussions of colonialism undeniably effect Indigenous populations and their descendants. This is why a key element in collaborative archaeology is to create multivocal narratives in every step of the archaeological process.

Archaeology practiced on any level; private, state, or federal has an ethical responsibility to stop these detrimental, yet common, practices that not only erase Native Americans from the collective history but also effectively remove the ownership of their heritage. Current archaeological practice requires critical reflection that must result in considerable change.

Generally speaking collaborative archaeology has been an important step in a new direction of archaeology that attempts to shed the constraints of colonialism but it is not without its problems. There are many issues that arise when trying to engage and transfer power to previously powerless people. Firstly, defining the communities for collaboration brings in to question who is Indigenous and who gets to define that, coupled with the fact that there are often multiple communities with differing interests for a single archaeological site (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008:467). This has the potential to diminish the benefits of the collaborative approach and can deter the archaeologist, government agency, private company, or institution from employing it. Another issue that arises is that in some cases, archaeologists, scholars, or scholarly institutions have been resistant and unwilling to give up their colonialist-fueled power and control. This mind-set keeps the Indigenous and local communities as passive partners making the “collaboration” exist in name only and not in practice (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008:467). Keeping these issues in mind, the goal of “equal partnership” between archaeologists and communities often result in uneasy relationships. As there are no definitive answers to these problems this approach to archaeology does not yet exist as standardized practice.

Collaborative archaeology is one of the most powerful ways of including stakeholder communities, landowners, and the public in the protection of archaeological heritage. Collaborative approaches will always encounter the challenge to make decisions that do not exclude or marginalize any interested parties even though that may not be realistically achievable (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008:476). The relationship between archaeologists and stakeholder communities can get strained because of their differing principles. As discussed by Chirikure and Pwiti (2008:476), “the idea of multivocality is important, but if not controlled it can lead to a free for all.” This “free for all” could threaten the fundamentals of modern day archaeology, which involves objective study and the conservation of the past. Mainstream archaeological practice in the United States places primary importance on the value of Western scientific knowledge, and it is through that lens that all studies are viewed (Atalay 2008:124). “Until issues of inequality are addressed, archaeology will continue to be viewed as a colonialist enterprise by Indigenous groups” (Nicholas 2008:243).

There is a deep history of unequal relations between races and that inequality still exists today. Collaborative work will continue to make all parties involved face this reality as it is seen in the archaeological past and how things are interpreted and approached in the present, and finally how Indigenous communities are involved in archaeological projects concerning their ancestors and their cultural heritage. Collaboration and a multivocal approach benefits archaeological interpretation and the protection of archaeological heritage. It is necessary to remember that archaeology’s role is to contribute to the stories being told and not to solely create those stories (Warner and

Baldwin 2004:149). By involving stakeholder communities in the different aspects of the archaeological process it provides an outlet for their voices to be heard and a deepening closeness to their ancestral past (Reeves 2004:79).

The responsibility falls to the archaeologist in almost every aspect of collaboration because the nucleus of power still resides there. For collaboration to move beyond just being a politically correct exercise, all of the involved parties must be contributing and mutually recognize each parties knowledge and expertise to keep multivocality manageable. (Damm 2008:477). It is essential that collaborative projects continue to expand their frame of interaction. The process of decolonizing archaeology is difficult because it requires that the archaeologists, or whoever is in the position of power, be willing to work as equal partners with the stake holders and to relinquish control regarding the process and products resulting from archaeological investigation (Nicholas 2008:243). The results of collaboration are many and varied yet, “it almost always brings about more responsible historical narratives and research practices that ramify into representations of the past, issues of the present, and concerns about the future” (Silliman 2008:1). Nearly any archaeological endeavor can be collaborative but that decision must be made by the stakeholders and the archaeologist to find the terms and means of cooperation (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:22). Atalay (2006:301) gives a balanced perspective of Indigenous advocacy and rigorous scientific study:

I argue that if archaeologists and Indigenous people are to be successful stewards of the archaeological record, we must begin to explore ways of moving beyond posturings that pit science against religion and polarize interests of Indigenous people against archaeologists, and I advocate for a collaborative approach that

blends the strengths of Western archaeological science with the knowledge and epistemologies of Indigenous peoples to create a set of theories and practices for an ethically informed study of the past, history, and heritage.

Collaborative archaeology and the goal to decolonize archaeology will drive the future of archaeology in different directions, as what will become required of archaeologists will be in response to the community-based research and the needs of the community (Atalay 2012:7). These relationships will have to be established and diligently maintained to create a sustainable connection, repair broken trust, and create an environment of research and preservation that thrives on collaboration. Moving beyond ethical considerations, collaborative efforts will improve the archaeological process starting at a project's infancy to its completion, assuming that collaborating extends through the entirety of the project. These collaborations will improve the quality of professional reports and academic research but more importantly, true collaboration will place the descendant community back into the conversations and decision-making processes concerning their ancestral lands and ancestors. Collaborative archaeology has the opportunity to give power and agency back to the descendant communities where it belongs.

### Chapter Summary

Archaeological theory has been characterized by a diverse range of approaches. The labels of “processualist” and “postprocessualist” make many archaeologists uncomfortable as current archaeological practice incorporates elements from multiple periods and theoretical perspectives. Hodder has argued that archaeological theory needs to change and become a discipline that is built upon what “archaeologists

actually do, rather than prescribing what they should do” (Chazan 2008:60). A more holistic approach is one that combines elements of Processualism and Postprocessualism as both approaches contribute to a more well rounded archaeological interpretation.

The diverse approaches of archaeology have lead to change, confusion, confrontation and frustration. The ability to maneuver between theories and disciplines is a necessary component of current Americanist archaeology. A broad spectrum of factors and approaches must be taken into account to interpret and understand past lifeways (Trigger 2003:687). By using these theoretical approaches this study will view northwestern California and the case study of Benbow as a landscape that the Sinkyone people attached specific cultural meanings, some of which are of great tragedy but also of cultural survival. These landscape connections can be used to understand how and why, despite the devastating brutality displayed at places like Benbow, the California Indians came back, and still remain resolutely connected to their ancestral homes today.

## CHAPTER IV

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF SINKYONE

#### ETHNOGRAPHY

Prior to 1850, direct contact between northern-California Natives and European-Americans were mainly contained to coastal areas and were limited due to northern California's general inaccessibility and its lack of desirable resources (Hurtado 1988:123). It was not until the Gold Rush that northwestern California experienced a surge of Euro Americans (Lindsay 2012:122; Madley 2016:67-70). This colonizing population brought dominance, destruction, and terror to California Indians. Prior to the onslaught of Euro Americans, it is estimated that over fifty Sinkyone villages were located along the Eel River and nearly twenty near the coast, with population numbers reaching over 4,000 individuals. (Margolin 1981:165). By the end of the 1860s, there were only a few Sinkyone survivors.

#### “Salvage” Ethnography and Biased Histories

As previously mentioned (Chapter I), the common model of contact studies in archaeology is “grounded in the experience of European colonialism in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries A.D.” (Stein 2005:3). This centralized European view most often ignores people of color. By acknowledging these biases, we can develop a more realistic understanding of the historical records and the contact period in California. The history of the California ethnographic canon and the context in which early ethnographic accounts were written needs to remain pertinent and relevant to the archaeological investigation.

The ethnographic research conducted in northern California during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was heavily influenced by the direct-historical approach (Trigger 2006:510) and the cultural-historical paradigm, which both viewed Native American culture at Euro American contact as essentially being reflective of the prehistoric past as a whole (Raab 2000:13-14). Adding to the biases that this perception creates were the problematic ways in which ethnographic research was carried out during this time.

Kroeber initiated a program of “salvage” ethnography that employed a conceptual scheme for classifying indigenous peoples by language, culture area, and polity—ethnographers focused their research predominately on groups they considered the least contaminated by contact (Lightfoot 2005a:34). This classification model essentially disguised many of the less prominent cultural characteristics that define California’s Indigenous peoples while simultaneously placing an unnecessary level of emphasis on others. Karuk scholar, Julian Lang wrote that Kroeber was so preoccupied with pre-contact cultures that “he never introduced us to the living people” (Thompson 1991:xx). Kroeber (quoted in Scheper-Hughes 2002:354) wrote,

I have omitted all directly historical treatment . . . of the relations of the natives with the whites and of the events befalling them after such contact was established. It is not that this subject is unimportant or uninteresting, but that I am not in a position to treat it adequately. It is also a matter that has comparatively slight relation to aboriginal civilization.

According to Kroeber, and his research goal of salvaging “authentic” aboriginal societies, these cultures were “ruined,” in the anthropological sense, and were too tainted to be of any use.

Despite the limitations and inherent biases associated with ethnographic research in northern California, ethnographies do supply insight into the lifeways of many indigenous groups. They also act as historical records that document the interaction between academia and their indigenous informants, and provide some guidance for archaeologists who are concerned with the most recent prehistoric past. Rather than accepting the ethnographic literature as being reflective of prehistoric lifeways without any critique or critical examination, ethnographic reconstructions should be viewed as hypotheses that are created and should be interpreted with concern to the theoretical context in which they were erected (Raab 2000:14). While these early ethnographic accounts have problems they are still valuable and without them the information that they hold would be lost.

### Sinkyone Ethnographies

Several ethnographers have documented the Sinkyone that provide invaluable information. Following along with the previously mentioned problems with ethnographies from the early twentieth century, many of these ethnographies provide only a very general coverage and many lack first-person accounts or interviews from California Indians living in the Benbow area and simply present an incomplete presentation of the Sinkyone (Goddard 1907; Hodge 1910; Baumhoff 1958; Nomland 1935; Merriam and Talbot 1974; Kroeber 1976; Elsasser 1978; Anderson 1985; Merriam 1998; Cook 1997). The unpublished notes of Pliny E. Goddard (1907), Mary Anderson (1984) and interviews by C. Hart Merriam (1998) provide very detailed information from Sinkyone informants.

In Kroeber's *Handbook of the Indians of California* (1976) the Sinkyone are summarized. Though brief, Kroeber's writing contributes relevant culturally significant information. He describes an unidentified, older Sinkyone person that had been born and raised on the South Fork of the Eel River never ventured more than 20 miles from their home and eventually died there (Kroeber 1976:145). Kroeber (1976:145) presents the locational data and differentiates between a "Lolangko" group living on the South Fork and a coastal dwelling group, the Mankya or Bankya (as referred to "by those inland"). This research also provided information about seasonal settlement patterns.

Elsasser (1978:191-192) presents an overview of the Sinkyone traditional territories. Rohde (2008:2) critiques Elsasser's ethnographic conclusions because the linguistic evidence that was used to divide the Sinkyone is not presented or elaborated upon. Nomland conducted field interviews in 1928 and 1929. Nomland's (1935:149-150) description and map of the extent of Sinkyone territory appears to be missing information and some of the boundaries that are drawn are confusing and must be taken with reservation. Much of the information derived from her published work cannot be checked for validity with her field notes because they have never been recovered (Rohde 2008:3).

Mary Anderson, a southern Humboldt historian, published a history of southern Humboldt County (1985), which provides a copious amount of local Humboldt County historical information and utilizes a number of informants to provide great detail of life in southern Humboldt County between 1849-1920. Anderson interviews the descendants of the areas white settlers, as well as California Indian informants to expand the understanding of what happened in the area during that time. Anderson's unpublished

interview with Nona James (September 12, 1984) provides an invaluable collection of Humboldt history.

Margarite Drucella Cook, a local amateur historian from southern Humboldt County and Mendocino County, had an extensive collection of notes from interviews from California Indians and non-Indians, including original photographs and photocopies that she collected and put into scrapbooks. Working with her close friend, Diane Hawk, some of this collection was compiled into a book (Cook and Hawk 1997) and her original scrapbooks were made into notebooks by Hawk (Cook 1997) and are available at two local Humboldt County libraries for the public.

Merriam, with his daughter Zenaida Merriam Talbot, published an overview of Sinkyone tribal boundaries based off of field interviews with informants in which they established tribal boundaries for the Sinkyone (Merriam and Talbot 1974:10). A later work was able to present various tribal divisions and locations for the Sinkyone (Merriam 1976:77-96). The unpublished interviews conducted by Merriam are valuable resources for Sinkyone information. He interviewed four individuals who all lived within Sinkyone territory and are presumed to be Sinkyone. He also interviewed six California Indians from surrounding tribes (including Wailaki, Kato, and Mattole), which provide additional information on the Sinkyone. The unpublished work of Merriam is part of a University of California, Berkeley's microfilm collection that can be accessed at the Humboldt State University Library.

Goddard contributed a paragraph on the Sinkyone for Hodge's *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (1910:576). When comparing his field notes to the

published information, the published account does not accurately reflect the information gathered in his field notes (Rohde 2008:7-8). This early misrepresentation of the Sinkyone and their territory has had repercussions as early ethnographers followed what Goddard wrote and applied the term, often inaccurately, to a wide range of tribes who were probably not Sinkyone or even living in Sinkyone territory (Rohde 2008:7; Keter 2009:2). Goddard's unpublished field notes from the 1900s consist of his field notebooks and a set of notecards. The original notebooks were kept at Berkeley but now are kept by the American Philosophical Society after being donated by Kroeber in 1946 (Rohde 2008:13). The notecards are a part of the UC Berkeley Bancroft Library's "Ethnological Documents" collection. Microfilm reels of the notebooks and the notecards have been donated to the Cultural Resources Facility (CRF) at Humboldt State University. The CRF is currently conducting an Ethno-History Project inventorying cultural resources identified in Goddard's notebooks with students scanning and transcribing these notes. For the purpose of this research the microfilm reels containing the notecards were not able to be accessed however, Rohde (2008:22-23) summarizes their contents. Rohde (2008:22-23) organizes them into three categories, 1. Villages on the main Eel River 2. Villages on the lower South Fork Eel River and Salmon Creek 3. Villages farther up the South Fork. The notecards also pertain to the nearby Mattole and Nongatl Tribes.

Baumhoff (1958) produced a review on the Sinkyone based off of the published works of Merriam and Goddard, Kroeber, Nomland and Loud, as well as the unpublished field notes of Merriam and the unpublished, and incomplete, field notecards of Goddard (Baumhoff 1958:158). Baumhoff's (1958) comparison of previous

ethnographies leads to his own conclusions of Sinkyone territory boundaries based mainly off of the works of Goddard, Nomland, and Loud. In Rohde's (2008:7) review of Baumhoff's work it is noted that Baumhoff often omits important information and inaccurate village site designations. Other ethnographic works of surrounding tribes have also greatly contributed to the understanding of Sinkyone territorial boundaries, settlement and subsistence patterns and the identification/confirmation of various individuals' identities (Goddard 1907; Loud 1918; Nomland 1938; Gifford 1939; Merriam 1966 and 1976; Kroeber 1976; Harrington 1983).

#### Sinkyone Informants

Despite the many generalized ethnographic accounts of the Sinkyone there are some valuable first-person accounts and interviews available. The interviews conducted by C. Hart Merriam (1998) and the unpublished notes of Pliny E. Goddard (1907) provide very detailed Sinkyone interviews. Nomland (1935), Cook (1997), Anderson (1985) and Gifford (1939) also provide ethnographic accounts from Sinkyone informants, while Anderson (1984) contributes a Euro American interview that contributes to the general knowledge of events in Sinkyone territory.

#### Albert and Sallie Smith

Goddard interviewed Albert Smith, also referred to as, Alford Smith or Albert Bob, in September 1907. Unpublished notes of his interview with Albert provide vocabulary and texts as well as a detailed ethnographic/geographic description of Albert's homeland (Goddard 1907a, 1907b). It is in these interviews that Albert provided detailed accounts of tribal locations along the South Fork and East Branch of the Eel

River and recounted that his tribe occupied approximately seven to eight miles of the South Fork and shared information about Sinkyone sites located in the modern Garberville and Benbow areas (Goddard 1907b:48). Goddard (1907b:47-48) recorded that they occupied the area near the mouth of Sproul Creek upriver toward the village of Tuggusdun, in close proximity to the ranch of Jose Domingo Smith. While Goddard's interview of Albert provides much information he neglected to record Albert's last name or his tribal affiliation. Albert's last name and affiliation are known through the ethnographic accounts of C. Hart Merriam (1998).

Merriam interviewed Albert in 1921 and 1922 at his home on the Rohnerville Rancheria. Albert died in 1922 before Merriam's interviews were completed; however, Merriam learned the name of Albert's band, Tokubbe from George Burt another Sinkyone informant (Merriam 1998:416). Merriam's interviews with Albert provided locational information, not only about the Tokubbe, whose location subsumed them under Sinkyone territory, but also of other bordering tribal groups such as the Wailaki, and the Lassik (Merriam 1998:6, 168). While describing Tokubbe territory Albert discusses a location he calls "Kos tcis kun dun," which he says was "on west side of South Fork" Goddard notes that "Albert has a cabin there" and then provides the location of it, which is the current location of the Benbow State Recreation Area (Goddard 1907b:35). Cook (1997, vol. 3:117) mentions two Native Americans, Alfred and Sally Bob, who lived in Sinkyone (*To-kub-be ke-ah*) territory in the location of the Benbow Campground. More research is needed to decipher if Alfred and Sally Bob are in fact Albert (Alford) and Sally (Sallie) Smith. Cook (1997, vol. 3:117) includes a photocopy of

two Native Americans fishing and it is labeled “Alfred and Sally Bob – Lived in a cabin across river from Eel River Lodge” (Figure 3). This would place Alfred and Sally at the



**Figure 3. “Albert and Sally Bob [sic] – Lived in a cabin across the river from Eel River Lodge”-caption on back of photocopy of a photograph, no date. Located in the unpublished notes of Cook (1997, vol. 3:117).**

location of Benbow Campground and in the same location of Albert Smith’s cabin, as documented by Goddard (1907b: 35). Photographer, Roy Jerome Baker (1859) (Figure 4) photographed Albert and Sallie Smith in front of the store at Briceland and these two people appear to be the same individuals from Cook’s photograph of Alfred and Sally Bob. A more detailed discussion of Albert and Sallie’s cabin can be found in Chapter VI



**Figure 4. Albert and Sallie Smith outside the Briceland Store (Ray Jerome Baker 1859).**

Source: Used with permission, Humboldt State University, California Library, Special Collections, Humboldt Room Photograph Collections: Swanlund-Baker Database.

and Chapter VII. Albert also provided details to a little known Sinkyone massacre, which was discussed in Chapter II.

Albert spent a short time at a reservation, “Stay half winter at Hupa (Kneeland Jack) is boss [;] come home here in summer he told don’t kill anybody, you may go home . . . Albert stayed with Tip Smith of Mattole” (Goddard 1907b:107-108). The exact time frame in which Albert returned home is unknown. It is also unclear when he married his wife Sallie; however, they are listed in the 1910 census in the South Fork District, both aged at 70, which is probably an estimation (Department of Commerce and Labor 1910).

Sallie Smith died in January 1920, in Fortuna, California. The obituary refers to her as “Sally Alford Smith” with no mention of her husband or any other relatives. The obituary names that she “until recently . . . lived on the Indian allotment near Rohnerville” (*Humboldt Standard*, January 29, 1920, cited in Dalton et al. 2017:38). Albert Smith, referred to on his death certificate as “Alford” died of “old age” in August 1922 in Fortuna, California according to *Humboldt County Abstracts of Death Records, 1873-1925* (Milota 1993).

### George Burt

Merriam interviewed George Burt in August 1921, July 1922, with the final interview being in July 1923. Burt states the name of his tribe as “Lo-lahn-kok” located at “Bull Creek and South Fork Eel River” (Merriam 1998:reel 30, frame 340). Burt also provided the names and locations for several surrounding tribes in what is considered Sinkyone territory (Merriam 1998:reel 30, frame 416). During the 1922 visit Burt

supplies Merriam with “more than 80 place names and about 50 names of plants in the *Lolahnkok* [sic] language” that are collected in Merriam’s *California Journal 1922* (Merriam 1922:54-60).

Goddard’s interview with Burt does not provide any information pertaining to Burt’s own tribe or their location but he does give the location of a garden belonging to Albert Smith (same as mentioned above) (Goddard 1903a). The most substantial documentation available for any of the informants discussed here is for George Burt. He and his extended family are listed on the 1910 census and the obituary for his wife Susie (Nongatl) provides an extensive list of her and George’s relatives (*Humboldt Standard*, March 18, 1940, cited in Rohde 2008:42).

#### Sally (Bowles) Bell and Tom Bell

Goddard interviewed Sallie (or Sally) Bell in September 1907. She supplied Goddard with vocabulary and cultural information (Goddard 1907b). Merriam interviewed Bell in August 1923. Bell gives her tribal affiliation of *To-cho-be ke-ah* tribe in the Briceland region and (Merriam 1998:reel 30, frame 422) identifies three nearby tribes within Sinkyone territory (Merriam 1998:reel 30, frame 497). Bell was also interviewed by Nomland in 1928 or 1929 and was over ninety years old (Nomland 1935:149). Notably, Bell recalls the “Massacre at Needle Rock,” a massacre that devastated the Sinkyone population, as discussed in Chapter II.

Gifford (1939:293) interviewed Tom Bell, Sally’s husband and a relative of Tony Bell (see below) in 1929. It is in this Coast Yuki ethnography that she is referred to as “Sally or Tox ‘cheso’ (tarweed blue, in Sinkyone), a Shelter Cove Sinkyone, whom he

married long before the great earthquake of 1906 (Gifford 1939:293). Gifford (1939:367) states that at his 1929 visit Sally, Tom Bell's Shelter Cove Sinkyone wife, was blind, and was seeing and singing to spirits in the Sinkyone language. It is also in Gifford's account that we learn that Tom Bell was previously married to a Bear Harbor Sinkyone with whom he had four children (Gifford 1939:367). Further research will be required to follow the Sinkyone line from Tom Bell's first marriage.

Anderson (1985:65-67) writes about "two other Indian survivors," Sally and Tom Bell. This recounts Tom and his brother Richard's early years and also states that he married the widowed Sally Bowles in 1899 (Anderson 1985:65). In her description of Sally, Anderson (1985:65) names her tribal affiliation as Sinkyone and that she, along with her sister Jennie Young (see below) was one of the only survivors of the massacre. Anderson (1985:65) states that Sally had two children with her first husband, a son named Gill who died at a young age and a daughter whose married name was Mrs. Jesse Bowen. Della Womack, an "Indian (unidentified in Anderson) and descended from both James Wood and John Briceland" was another informant of Anderson (Anderson 1985:66). Della remembers Sally and even describes the three vertical line tattoos on her chin (Anderson 1985:66), which were also documented and sketched in Goddard's field notes (1907a). Della recalls Sally and Tom coming to the Briceland Store to get groceries, how Sally loved to eat river eels, and how she eventually went blind after having cataract surgery (Anderson 1985:66).

### Sara Carroll

Sara Carroll (or Carl) was interviewed by Merriam on August 30, 1920.

Carroll provided a brief list of vocabulary, however there was no geographic or cultural information (Merriam 1998:reel 9, frame 5). Merriam and Carroll completed a plant and animal field identification list (Merriam 1998:reel 52, frame 228-231). The 1910 census lists Sara Carroll and her family. According to Rohde (2008:11) it appears that Merriam believed that Carroll was Sinkyone as he labeled his interview notes with her as “To-kub-be ke-ah” (Merriam 1998:reel 52, frame 228-231).

### Charlie “Little Charlie”

Goddard interviewed an informant named Charlie in September 1903. In 1906 and 1908, Goddard interviewed someone he refers to in his notes as “Little Charlie,” local Humboldt historian; Rohde (2008:19) has postulated that they are the same person. Those interviews provided geographic information as well as historic details, and information about other Sinkyone informants (Rohde 2008:19-21).

### Sam Suder

Goddard’s 1903 interview with Suder mainly produced a list of vocabulary and has information related to Suder’s village (Rohde 2008:21).

### Jack Woodman

Nomland conducted her interviews in 1928 and 1929. According to Nomland (1935:149) “Jack Woodman only reliable informant.” The information gathered pertained to his birthplace and those of his relatives. Woodman was born and lived his life in Briceland, his father was born near Bridgeville, his mother was born near Briceland on

the other side of Elk Ridge, and his grandparents, probably paternal, are from Bridgeville (Nomland 1935:149). These interviews with Woodman, along with interviews with Sally Bell and Jenny Young, helped to inform the information in Nomland's *Sinkyone Notes* (1935).

#### Jenny (Jennie) Young

Young was interviewed by Nomland in 1928 and 1929. The information obtained from the interviews state Young's birthplace as Shelter Cover and that she was raised there (Nomland 1935:149). Nomland (1935:149) has deemed that Young's information was unreliable because whites had influenced her since she was a small child. Young and her tribal affiliation are discussed, often incorrectly, in Harrington (1983) by several of his Non-Sinkyone informants. Jenny Young is listed on the 1910 U.S. census alongside her "cousin" Sally Bell and Sally's husband, Tom Bell (see above) as "Jenny Young Bell" (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Department of Commerce and Labor 1910). Anderson (1985:65) states that Young is Sally Bell's sister. The relation between Sally Bell and Jenny Young is not yet clear. Young had one child, a daughter named Hattie, who eventually married a man named Bonsel (Anderson 1985:65).

#### Jane Johnson

Johnson was an informant to Cook and a survivor of an un-named massacre that occurred in 1859 near present day Benbow (Cook 1997, vol. 6:108). Currently it is unknown if Johnson is a survivor of the same massacre as Alfred Smith (see above). It is recorded in the 1900 census that Johnson was widowed and had given birth to five children, three that were living (U.S. Census, 1900).

### Tony Bell

E. W. Gifford (1939:292) interviewed Tony Bell sometime during the summers of 1926 and 1929. This interview is published in an ethnography on the Coast Yuki (Gifford 1939). This account details the birthplace of Bell as well as his parents (Gifford 1939:293), and sister Henchem (crow) also known as Mary Standley (Gifford 1939:360). It states that Bell was born at Usal in Sinkyone territory, sometime between 1840 and 1850, to a father of Usal Sinkyone descent and to a Cost Yuki mother (Gifford 1939:293). These interviews with Gifford provide information predominantly referring to Coast Yuki but do include some information concerning the Sinkyone. This account also provides information concerning Bell's paternal Sinkyone line. It supplies information about his paternal uncle Mebemhalse (small foot) whose Sinkyone name was Kiyai, his paternal aunt Kinagumka and her daughter Naisposeke (girl big) and his paternal grandfather Mebemkiye (crooked toes) whose Usal Sinkyone name was Kedjwashali (Gifford 1939:361).

### Nona James

Mary Anderson interviewed Euro American, Nona James on September 12, 1984. Nona James was the granddaughter of local rancher and Indian slaver James Woods (Anderson 1984). The unpublished notes from this interview provide, in great detail accounts of horrific acts against the local California Indians (Anderson 1984, 2011).

## The U.S. Bureau of the Census

Prior to the Indian schedules from the United States census in 1900, few Native Americans were included in the decennial federal census. Starting with the 1900 Census, Native Americans living on and off reservations were included. The 1900 and 1910 Census both had an “Indian” identification column (column 5), “Color or Race.” Special Indian schedules are found at the end of the county roll or the last microfilm roll for the state. Census data was accessed online through FamilySearch.org by way of digital copies of National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) microfilms.

The Indian schedules from the United States Census Records for 1900 provided information on two Sinkyone informants, Jane Johnson and Jack Woodman and his family (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1900, Department of Commerce and Labor: image 22 and 24).

1. Jane Johnson, age unknown, widowed tribe: “Digger”  
(United States Census, 1900: image 22)
- 2a. Jack Woodman, age unknown, head of household tribe: Coast Range
- 2b. Jennie Woodman, age unknown, wife, tribe: Coast Range
- 2c. Hanson Woodman, age unknown, son, tribe: Coast Range  
(United States Census, 1900: image 24)

The Indian Schedules from the United States Census Records for 1910 provided information on several Sinkyone informants and their families (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1910, Department of Commerce and Labor 2015: image 12 and 22).

- 1a. Albert Smith, age: 43, head of household, tribe: Wailaki
- 1b. Sallie Smith, age: 70, wife, tribe: Wailaki
- 2a. Robert Carroll, age: 50, head of household, tribe: Wailaki
- 2b. Sarah Carroll, age: 26, wife, tribe: Redwood Whilkut
- 2c. Ernest Carroll, age: 2, son, tribe: Wailaki, Redwood Whilkut
- 2d. Lawrence Carroll, age: 6, son, tribe: Wailaki, Redwood Whilkut
- 2e. Amela Carroll, age: 4, daughter, tribe: Wailaki, Redwood Whilkut



Just like there are problems with early ethnographies the United States census also has many problems. Mainly, for the purposes of this research, the tribal identities used by the census takers are often incorrect, incomplete, and derogatory. The non-specific, and racist term “Digger” was often used without any obvious reason. The non-specific term of “Siaz” was also used. “Siaz” is described by Merriam (1976:88) as a variation of the term used by the Hupa, Wiyot, and Whilkuts to describe the Athabaskan tribes to the south. Identifiers such as, “Coast Range” and “Redwood Whilkut” are geographically descriptive but not a correct tribal affiliation. Despite the fact that the U.S. Census Bureau’s South Fork precinct was centrally located in Sinkyone territory the tribal name “Sinkyone” was never used (Rohde 2008:43). Furthermore, based off ethnographic accounts several individuals were given incorrect tribal affiliations. Albert Smith was not Wailaki but from the *To-kub-be ke-ah* tribe in Sinkyone territory (Merriam 1998:416). The 1910 Census lists Sally Bell as Wailaki however; Bell gives her tribal affiliation as the *To-cho-be ke-ah* (Sinkyone territory) in the Briceland region, (Merriam 1998:reel 30, frame 422), Anderson (1985:65) names Bell’s tribal affiliation as Sinkyone and Gifford (1939:367) states that Sally is Tom Bell’s Shelter Cove Sinkyone wife. Sara Carroll is listed in 1910 as Redwood Whilkut, however, Merriam labeled her as *To-kub-be ke-ah* (Sinkyone territory) (Merriam 1998:reel 52, frame 228-231). Jenny Young was labeled as a Coast Yuki in the 1910 census and also as the cousin to the head of the family, Tom Bell, when Anderson (1985:65) refers to Jenny as Sally’s sister. These few examples call the census data into question. The true tribal affiliations of all California Indians listed on these censuses should be called into question. Many more southern

Humboldt California Indians are listed on the census rolls, and will require more research to determine their true tribal affiliations, which may not be possible, however, it is entirely possible that some of these individuals were Sinkyone.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the problems with early ethnographies, historical documents and the United States Census. It also introduced some of the key California Indian informants and ethnographers that attempted to document information pertaining to the Sinkyone. Despite the Eurocentric biases and the limitations present when using historical documents and ethnographies these sources still provide important information concerning Sinkyone lifeways and in some cases Sinkyone tragedies such as massacres.

While these early ethnographic accounts present problems they are more valuable than they are problematic and without them the people and cultures that they discuss would be (in some cases) lost. While imperfect, and sometimes insulting, these ethnographies provide a window into the survivor's lives post-trauma. These accounts of cultural survival serve as a reminder of California's horrific past and serve as a source of inspiration to the cultural survival of Sinkyone descendants and California Indians today. The following chapter will provide the archaeological context for northwestern California and the ethnographic context for the Sinkyone people.

## CHAPTER V

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ETHNOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The case study for this thesis lies within the ancestral territory of the Sinkyone. This chapter will discuss the archaeological context of northwestern California, and the ethnographic context of the Sinkyone people. The archaeological context section will introduce a brief history of the research done in the area, current research, and provide an understanding of the archaeologically defined patterns and what those patterns represent. Keeping in mind the inherent problems of early ethnographies, as discussed in Chapter IV, this chapter's ethnographic context will provide an understanding of the "traditional" lifeways of the Sinkyone people and will serve as a parallel between the material culture associated during a time of active colonialism and the pre-contact period. This chapter is important because it will lay the groundwork for the archaeological interpretations of the following chapters.

#### Archaeological Context

Early archaeological research in the northernmost portion of northwest California was very limited compared to elsewhere in California. Early research by Loud (1918) at CA-HUM-67, Bennyhoff (1950) at CA-DNO-2, CA-HUM-67, 118, 124, 169, AND 170, Elsasser and Heizer (1966) at CA-HUM-118 and CA-HUM-169, and Gould (1966) at CA-DNO-11 (the Point St. George Site) were mainly concerned with the cultural-historical identification and description of Native American archaeological

collections, as well as, defining the prehistoric chronology for the region (Dalton et al. 2017: 21). From the early 1960s, while generally rare in archaeology, collaborative ethnoarchaeological studies gained momentum in northern California and southwestern Oregon, although not always a balanced relationship between the tribes and the archaeologists (Tushingham and Brooks 2017:108). Little additional research was conducted in the area of northwestern California until the late 1970s and the early 1980s. During this time Fredrikson's chapter, "North Coastal Region" was included in "California Archaeology" by Moratto (1984).

Northwestern California has been the focus of multiple, some-what generalized publications originating from graduate student research, small and large cultural resource management projects including (but not limited to) the work of Hughes (1978), Hildebrandt and Swensen (1982, 1985), Hildebrandt and Hayes (1983, 1984, 1993), Levulett and Hildebrandt (1987), Fitzgerald and Hildebrandt (2002), Hildebrandt and Levulett (2002), Verwayen, Rohde, and Burns (2007), and Tushingham (2009, 2013). Developed from the small but established work in the area, studies have attempted to address a variety of topics ranging from historic trade (Hughes 1978; Levulett and Hildebrandt 1987), technological innovation (Hildebrandt and Hayes 1983, 1984, 1993; Tushingham 2009) paleoenvironmental reconstruction (Hildebrandt and Hayes 1983, 1984, 1993), adaptive responses to environmental change (Hildebrandt and Swenson 1982, 1985; Hildebrandt and Hayes 1983, 1984, 1993; Tushingham 2009), cultural heritage publications (Tushingham 2013), socio-economic organization (Tushingham and Christiansen 2015), indigenous persistence and ethnoarchaeology (Tushingham and

Brooks 2017), historical ecology and the investigation of historical marine environments (Tushingham et al. 2016), and an information inventory for Northwest California (King, Hildebrandt and Waechter n.d.). The variety of work is exciting and includes the archaeological report from the investigations at the Benbow State Recreation Area by CSU, Chico, which is the site that serves as the case study for this thesis (Dalton et al. 2017).

Of distinct note, within northwestern California, are the groundbreaking work of Hayes and Hildebrandt (1983, 1984, 1993) in the Pilot Ridge area located on the North Coast Range and the dissertation research of Tushingham (2009, 2013) along the Smith River in Del Norte County at Red Elderberry Place (CA-DNO-26) and CA-DNO-33. These works have provided valuable data and interpretations regarding major archaeological trends, as well as environmental shifts in the region over the past 8,000 years.

The human occupation of northwestern California and southwestern Oregon remains uncertain during the Pleistocene-Holocene transition. Temporal units within northwestern California include the Borax Lake Pattern (10,000-4500 cal BP), the Mendocino Pattern (4500-1500 cal BP), and the Gunther Pattern (post-1500 cal BP) (Fredrickson 1984; Hildebrandt and Hayes 1993; Hildebrandt and Levulett 2002; Hildebrandt 2007). These patterns generally correspond with the following time periods: Paleoindian Period (13,500 to 8,500 B.P.), Lower Archaic Period (8,500 to 5,000 B.P.), Middle Archaic Period (5,000 to 2,500 B.P.), Upper Archaic Period (2,500 to 1,100 B.P.), Late or Emergent Period (1,100 to 150 B.P.) and the Post-Contact Period (150 B.P. to

Present; Dalton et al. 2017:21-27). Within a historic context, the Contact Period is generally accepted as beginning in the early 1850s during the influx of Euro American settlers coming to northwestern California during the Gold Rush. For the purpose of this thesis only the Late or Emergent Period and the Post Contact Period are discussed, as they represent the periods immediately preceding and following culture contact.

#### Late or Emergent Period (1100 to 150 B.P.)

The Late or Emergent Period in northwestern California is represented by the Gunther Pattern. The Gunther Pattern is characteristic of the material cultures of several ethnographically documented tribes on the north coast including, the Sinkyone, Mattole, Nongatl, Coast Yuki, Wailaki, Lassik, and the Bear River. The way in which the Gunther Pattern is expressed on the northwestern coast of California represents some of the most socially complex hunter-gatherer populations in California that were living predominantly on marine and riverine resources (Loud 1918; Kroeber 1976; Fredrickson 1984). The Gunther Pattern represents the dramatic increase in populations, site frequency, and village sedentism in coastal areas and along major river ways. When compared to preceding patterns, the Gunther Pattern displays more cultural complexities as substantiated by permanent and structurally elaborate sites populated by houses, cemeteries, and artifact caches, as well as, well-developed midden and refuse areas that include large marine mammal and fish faunal assemblages (Hildebrandt 2007:93-94).

Artifact assemblages within the Gunther Pattern are also complex as they contain specialized tools for the area and surrounding marine and terrestrial resources. The documented projectile point assemblages of the area include a high frequency of the

Gunther Series (Gunther Barbed, Gunther Variant, and Gunthersnake), as well as Rattlesnake Corner-Notched, Corner-Notched, and the regionally rare, Desert Side-Notched points (Tushingham 2013:22-23). Gunther Barbed points have a wide distribution throughout northern California and beyond, extending from the Columbia River Gorge in the north to Tulare Lake in the south (Tushingham 2013:22). The now problematic Trinity Series was originally defined by Hildebrandt and Hayes (1983 and 1984) as belonging to the Late Period. Hildebrandt (2007:91) has expressed doubts concerning this point type and suggests that the Trinity Series projectile points are actually reworked dart points rather than Late Period arrows. A new method developed by Hildebrandt and King (2012) differentiates atlatl darts from arrow points by adding neck width and thickness values, however, this methodology has not yet been applied to any Trinity Series point assemblages from northwestern California (Hildebrandt, October 10, 2013, personal communication).

Gunther Pattern assemblages along northwestern California are often characterized by oceangoing canoes, specialized wood-working tools, concave-based projectile points used to tip composite harpoons, mauls and other groundstone tools, notched net sinkers, polished stone adze handles, and wealth items like zooform clubs and large obsidian blades (Tushingham 2013:23). Other ceremonial items include dentalia and clam shell disc beads (Hildebrandt and Levulett 2002). Exchange and trade networks were well established by the end of the Emergent Period and are documented in the archaeological record (Hughes 1978; Levulett and Hildebrandt 2002) and in the ethnographic record (Loud 1918; Kroeber 1976; Nomland 1935, 1938; Powers 1976).

The arrival of Algonquian speakers into this region, beginning with the Wiyot sometime around 1850 B.P., likely relates to the introduction of the Gunther Pattern (Morrato 1984:481-484; Golla 2007:73-74). The subsequent waves of Athabascan speakers presumably follow the arrival of the Yurok (1250-1150 B.P.) occurring sometime around 1150-1050 B.P. (Golla 2007:73-74). The mix of Algonquian and Athabascan speakers in this region leads to a very linguistically and culturally diverse area. Southern Athabascan speakers include the Sinkyone, Wailaki, Lassik, Mattole, and Nongatl (Kroeber 1976).

#### Post-Contact Period (150 B.P. to Present)

As previously discussed in Chapter II, the traditional lifeways of California Indians living in northwestern California coast were dramatically altered due to colonialism. Their lives were changed in terms of material, economic, social, and ideological culture (Elsasser 1978). As Euro Americans increasingly populated northern California they displaced and destroyed California Indian families and exploited natural resources leading to a permanent and catastrophic change for the regions native inhabitants. Many California Indians were forced to relocate away from their traditional homelands, mainly to reservations and rancherias where they often had no choice but to adopt some of the ways of the dominant Euro American cultures. This type of forced acculturation changed settlement patterns, disassembled tribes and familial groups, displaced people from their traditional homelands, altered traditional diets, and stole their cultural freedoms. It is during this time that the archaeological record shows bottle and

window glass replacing traditional materials like obsidian and chert, and glass trade beads replacing clamshell disc beads, dentalium and obsidian as the central trade items.

## Ethnographic Context

### Location

The case study of Benbow is located within the ethnographic territory of the Sinkyone. The name “Sinkyone” comes from the tribal term for the area of the South Fork Eel River, Sin-ke-kok (Rohde and Rohde 1992:70). The Sinkyone tribe has often been divided into two linguistically different groups: the Lolangkok Sinkyone, which were located on the lower part of the South Fork Eel River and a section of the main Eel River, and the Shelter Cove Sinkyone, who occupied the area from the South Fork of the Eel River to the coast (Baumhoff 1958:184). The Lolangkok are named after the name for Bull Creek, and the Shelter Cove are named after a preferred spot on the coast near Point Delgada (Elsasser 1978:191). It is argued by Rohde (2008) that there is no actual basis for dividing the Sinkyone into two groups because there are several tribal groups, both named and unnamed, located within traditional Sinkyone territory. Throughout this thesis the Sinkyone are not divided, however, within this chapter the designations have been used as an attempt to accurately represent the original ethnographic work.

According to Baumhoff (1958) the Benbow area is located within the territory of the Shelter Cove Sinkyone. In Goddard’s (1907) field notes of his interview with Albert Smith there were village sites along the South Fork Eel River immediately upstream (south) of its confluence with the East Branch. Goddard provides the locations of these village sites in two ways: by section number and on a rough sketch map of the

Benbow area. Based on the map, it appears that the section numbers are inaccurate. As discussed by Collins (May 28, 2013, personal communication) the reference to the northeast corner of “Section two” is almost certainly inaccurate because this would place the village site on top of the high, heavily forested ridge that runs southeast from the northern part of the Benbow campground. What was the most likely intended location depicted by Goddard’s sketch map (1907a), places the village in the northeast corner of “Section one” not “Section two” (Collins, May 28, 2013, personal communication). This orientation is the current location of the Benbow campground. The village of interest is *Kos-tci-sun-dun*, “on west side of South fork about two miles from here. Albert has a cabin there. Not yet East branch. N.E. 2” (Goddard 1907b:35).

The Shelter Cove Sinkyone coastal territory extends from Spanish Flat south to Usal Creek. Major places of habitation were centered along the upper reaches of the Mattole River and the South Fork of the Eel River, including its major tributaries (Levulett 1985:53). The northern neighbors include the Mattole and Lolangkok Sinkyone. To the east were the Lassik and Eel River Wailaki. The southern neighbors were the Cahto and Coast Yuki.

The Sinkyone are located within the Athabascan linguistic area as defined by Kroeber (1976:145). The most extensive study comes from Baumhoff’s (1958) *California Athabascan Groups*. This work is mainly derived from the unpublished field notes of Pliny Earle Goddard and C.H. Merriam. This synthesis of Goddard and Merriam’s work provides tribal boundaries, village locations, and place names, among other cultural information. More ethnographic information exists for the Sinkyone than

any other Athabascan group (Baumhoff 1958:184). There are approximately 40 languages of the Athabascan family and they are all closely related, however, the California Athabascan is a slightly more diverse cluster of four languages in Humboldt and Mendocino counties that includes, Hupa-Chilula, Mattole-Bear River, Cahto, and Eel River (Golla 2011:68-69). The Eel River dialects include Sinkyone, Nongatl, Lassik, and Wailaki. Generally, the Eel River dialects are not well documented and there is a substantial amount of unpublished, raw field data by Goddard (Sinkyone 1903-1908; Nongatl 1907-1908; Wailaki 1906). As discussed in Chapter IV, Humboldt State University, Cultural Resources Facility (CRF) is scanning and transcribing Goddard's notebooks from microfilm reels.

### Settlement

Several authors (Kroeber 1976; Nomland 1935, 1938; Gifford 1939; Baumhoff 1958; Kroeber and Barrett 1960; Elsasser 1978) have defined a general model of settlement patterns and subsistence practices relevant to the Sinkyone and surrounding tribes. Merriam and Goddard provide locations for settlements and villages along the Mattole River and the South Fork Eel River (Merriam 1967, 1976; Goddard 1907). According to Levulett (1985:54), eighteen villages and place names have been recorded for the Shelter Cove Sinkyone territory. These site locations are primarily along the coast and rivers, which implies a dependence on sea and riverine resources. The range of these sites does not accurately reflect the scope of land and resources utilized by the Shelter Cove Sinkyone. This lack of information is evident in Kroeber's (1925) ethnographic accounts of the Shelter Cove Sinkyone. According to Kroeber (1976:145), permanent

village sites were occupied in the stream valleys during the winter half of the year and spent the summer in the mountains. As discussed by Levulett (1985), this ethnographic information does not address the Shelter Cove Sinkyone who occupied several miles of the coastal region. This inaccuracy in the ethnographic information of the Shelter Cove Sinkyone has yet to be sufficiently addressed. Further discussion on the integration of coastal resources into the settlement-subsistence system and resource scheduling can be found in Levulett (1977, 1985) and Fredrickson (1975).

### Subsistence

Sinkyone subsistence patterns are characterized by seasonality that shows a syncretism between the northwest coast style of marine and riverine resources and the coastal Californian oak woodland resources. Hunting, which was mainly seasonal, functioned as main source of food and clothing. The observance of taboos was an important element in these seasonal hunts. Men would abstain from sexual intercourse, avoid menstruating women, and practice a purification ceremony in a sweat lodge called “good-luck dance” while rubbing their body with angelica leaves or chewing angelica roots (Nomland 1935:152). These populations depended on hunting deer, elk, black bear, grizzly bear, and various other small land mammals. Additionally, large sea mammals, such as seals and sea lions, were also hunted (Nomland 1935:152).

According to Nomland (1935:154), the Sinkyone’s main plant-food supply came from acorns, buckeyes, seeds, and camas among the various nuts and berries. Meat was supplemented with seasonal berries, including blackberry (*Rubus ursinus-vitifolius*), huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), salal (*Gaultheria shalon*), strawberry (*Fragaria*

*ananassa*), thumbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*), elderberry (*Sambucus*), and manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*). Additionally, several species of herbaceous greens, including bear clover (*Chamaebatia foliolosa*) and sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*) were collected during the spring period, while acorns, nuts, and tubers were gathered seasonally and throughout the year. Nomland (1935:154-55) notes, that each year a ‘first-acorn ceremony’ was held after the first harvest. The importance of the acorn to the Sinkyone is also mentioned in Levulett (1985:56), Baumhoff (1958:195), and Kroeber (1976:151).

Coastal and riverine resources played an important role in the diversified collecting activities of the Shelter Cove Sinkyone. Fish were a primary food source for the Sinkyone (Elsasser 1978:192). There are early accounts of travelers who traded with the California Indians that lived along the banks of the Eel River for large quantities of eel that had been fished out of the river, which evidently led to the name, Eel River (Elliot 1881:91). Fishing supplied an abundance of food that could be dried and stored for the winter. As discussed by Levulett (1985:66), anadromous fishes, especially seasonal salmon were vital for Sinkyone survival and they employed the construction of weirs, dams, nets and the use of mashed-up soap root as a poison as different methods of obtaining this important resource. The Sinkyone performed seasonal salmon rights and did not hold any taboos for fishing (Nomland 1935:154). According to Nomland’s (1935:153) informant Jack, “fish were stupid and not able to smell under water” so women and children could participate in all fishing activities. First-salmon rights are a characteristic Northwestern trait and the most southern extension of this custom is within Sinkyone territory (Nomland 1935:153). For the coastal-dwelling Sinkyone, shellfish

beds and sea mammals were also easily attainable (Levulett 1985:55) and any whales that washed ashore belonged to the tribe and were used for oil and the meat was dried (Nomland 1935:153).

### Technology and Material Culture

According to Nomland (1935:157), the Shelter Cove Sinkyone built excavated houses which conflicts with Kroeber (1976:146) who stated that the Shelter Cove Sinkyone dwellings were not excavated. Additionally, the Sinkyone also built semi-subterranean sweathouses that were used in dance and purification ceremonies (Nomland 1935:152) that were circular in style and oriented around the central smoke-hole entrance (Elsasser 1978; Kroeber 1976). Structures used for hunting or seasonal gathering were abandoned and left to the elements after the seasonal activities ceased (Nomland 1935:157).

Both men and women's clothing were made from hides with little ornamentation with the exception of ceremonial dress (Nomland 1935:158). According to Baumhoff (1958:194-195), the deerskin used for clothing was tanned with deer brains and dried with warm ashes, then soaked and rubbed until soft. Bear hides were used for blankets and winter clothing, rabbit fur was used exclusively for blankets, and summer clothing was made from de-haired skins (Nomland 1935:153).

It is ethnographically documented that the Sinkyone had various forms of material culture. The Shelter Cove Sinkyone were adept at woodworking, lithic technology, and basket making. Both dug out canoes and log rafts were constructed from primarily redwood trees (Baumhoff 1958:194; Kroeber 1976:147; Levulett 1985:64;

Nomland 1935:156). Wooden implements ranged from the more utilitarian digging sticks made from cascara wood to the elaborately carved and painted canoe paddle handles that were often decorated with birds and animals (Nomland 1935:156). Bows were crafted from yew wood, arrow shafts were made from elder wood, and short, tubular pipes used during ceremonial dances were made from alder wood (Nomland 1935:156; Kroeber 1976:147).

Bone and antler were crafted into awls, deer-bone hunting knives, musical instruments (Nomland 1935:156), elk horn chisels (Baumhoff 1935:194), and elk horn spoons (Nomland 1935:156; Kroeber 1976:147). Taxidermy was practiced and was used as a method of camouflage during hunting activities (Nomland 1935:152). Basket weaving technology had both functional and decorative forms, including decorative hats for women, rope and string made from iris leaf fiber, fishing traps and nets, cradle boards, hopper baskets, cooking baskets, and storage vessels made out of spruce and redwood root fiber with overlay patterns of bracken fern, maiden hair, and red alder (Kroeber 1976:147-148; Levulett 1985:62-63; Nomland 1935:156). Sinkyone informant, Sally Bell stated that the Shelter Cove Sinkyone did not make coiled basketry like the neighboring Wailaki (Gifford 1939:346).

Stone tools used by the Shelter Cover Sinkyone can generally be classified into two categories: groundstone and chipped stone. Groundstone tools included the pestle, which was used in conjunction with the mortar to grind acorn and other plant food materials (Kroeber 1976:148; Nomland 1935:156). The flat slab mortar was used with a hopper basket (Levulett 1985:62-63; Nomland 1935:156). Other groundstone tools

include the rock maul (Baumhoff 1935:194; Nomland 1935:156), and stone fishing weights (Nomland 1935:156). Chipped stone tools include scrapers, projectile points, and knives primarily made from chert and obsidian. Northwestern Californian Indians predominately used the locally available Franciscan chert and obsidian traded from distant sources (Whitaker et al. 2007:2).

### Trade

Little ethnographic information is available pertaining to the trade relations of the Shelter Cove Sinkyone. According to Nomland (1935:165) “the products of the surrounding tribes were so similar that active barter was not carried on to any great degree excepts with the Wiyot, from whom the Sinkyone obtained their supply of beads.” Whitaker et al. (2007:8) postulates that the coastal items that were available to the Shelter Cove Sinkyone would have been of greater exchange value with interior groups directing the flow of trade inland toward their northern neighbors the Bear River and their eastern neighbors the Wailaki. Nomland (1935:156) recorded that the Shelter Cove Sinkyone used obsidian projectile points and knives. Since obsidian does not occur naturally in this region it was most likely obtained through trade.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided an archaeological and ethnographic overview. Insight into the lifeways of the Sinkyone, prior to contact, allows for a better understanding of what life was like for California Indians in northwestern California and will make the harsh realities of colonialism more clear as they are represented in the archaeological record. This understanding will inform the following chapters and

concluding discussion of this thesis. The following chapter will introduce the case study used for this thesis.

## CHAPTER VI

### A CASE STUDY: THE BENBOW ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT

This thesis has examined the systematic erasures of California Indians. Through the discussion of genocide and by looking at both local and Sinkyone-specific massacres, this thesis has revealed the role that violence played in early northwestern California and the repercussions that this type of violence has on descendants and descendant communities. This chapter will use archaeological data, paired with the other research presented in this thesis, to unveil the persistence, determination, adaptation, and connection the Sinkyone maintained to their homeland in the aftermath of genocide. The case study of Benbow will be utilized to exemplify these contentious conditions.

Moving beyond a generalist discussion of the Sinkyone people, this chapter will provide archaeological data that will allow for this thesis to address a specific, known Sinkyone village that was massacred and discuss the realities of two massacre survivors that lived in the location of present-day Benbow amidst the repercussions of these tragedies. In addressing the research questions of this thesis, the case study of Benbow will provide site-specific clarity as to the nature of the Contact Period on the northwest coast of California and how two survivors of genocide were affected living in the wake of such violence.

## The Case Study

The site of Benbow was chosen as the case study for this thesis because, as will be expanded upon below, it was a pre-contact Sinkyone village that was abandoned post Euro American contact as a result of the massacre that occurred here. It is historically documented that the location of Benbow is located directly across the South Fork Eel River where a brutal massacre occurred taking the lives of a multitude of Sinkyone people (Goddard 1907b; Anderson 1984; Cook 1997). The tragic history of Benbow is not unique for the area or for California Indians. This chapter will present the archaeological data and interpretations for the site CA-HUM-222, located at Benbow, in preparation for a deeper discussion in Chapter VII when the case study of Benbow will be placed within the historical context of colonialism.

## Historical Background of the Study Area

After passing through ownership of several Euro Americans, in 1922 a large parcel of land that included present day Benbow, was purchased by the Benbow family (Cook and Hawk 1997:36). In 1958, the Benbow Lake State Recreation Area (name later changed after the removal of the dam that created the lake) was purchased and established by California State Parks. Since then there have been many alterations to the area mainly associated with campground infrastructure and developments including, but not limited to, paved access roads, paved parking areas, graded areas used for campsites, support buildings, and septic systems. Additionally, the expansion of California State Highway 101 (Redwood Highway) in 1969 bisected part of Benbow (Nash 1988b:14). The construction of the highway predates any formal archaeological documentation.

Archaeological documentation of the Benbow area spans over thirty years (1969-2001); however, the modern modifications have altered the surface appearance of many archaeological sites at Benbow. Today, Benbow consists of approximately 1,200 acres with 77 campsites and a large day-use picnic area (Figure 1).

In June of 2013, the North Coast Redwoods District of California State Parks, the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria, and the California State University (CSU), Chico Archaeological Research Program completed an extended archaeological survey of Benbow and conducted limited archaeological test excavations. This project was important for adding to the archaeological record of the region and to inform any future projects in the area. This project presented a unique opportunity for California State Parks to invite students from CSU, Chico to work on this project along with members of the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria. The following information concerning the field methods, archaeological sites, and artifacts were obtained from the California State Parks report, *Archaeological Investigations at the Benbow State Recreation Area, Humboldt County, California* (Dalton et al. 2017).

#### Field Methods and Archaeological Sites

The field portion of this project was completed over two intensive four-day field periods. Fieldwork consisted of intensive pedestrian survey, vegetation clearing, boundary delineation, auger testing, site recording, approximately 450, 50-centimeter (cm) by 50-centimeter (cm) shovel scrapes, and the excavation of six, one-meter by one-meter test units. Auger testing was conducted throughout the survey area, within the

archaeological sites, and at the end of each excavation unit (with varying vertical extents). In total, 98 auger tests were completed within the project area.

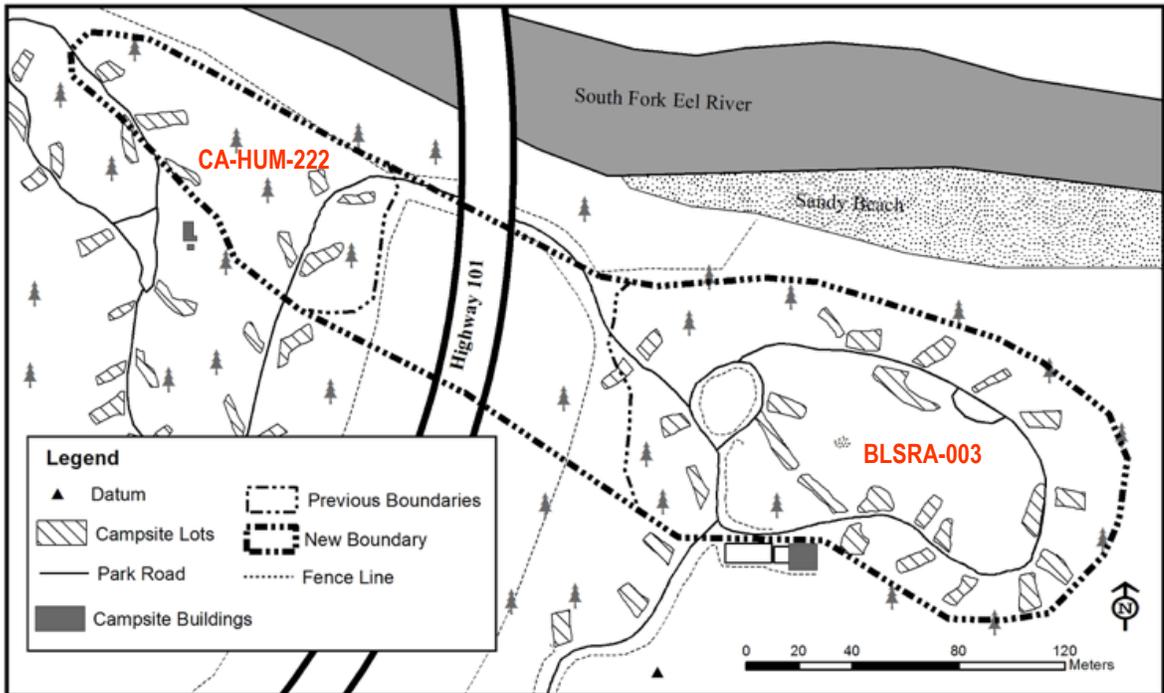
The archaeological test excavations were conducted at four previously recorded archaeological sites (CA-HUM-172; CA-HUM-222; BLSRA-002; BLSRA-003) and were selected based upon ethnographic research conducted by Associate State Archaeologist for California State Parks, Greg Collins (Figure 6). The previous recordation of these sites identified them for project specific management and did not address the issue of the landscape-scale relationships between the sites, an issue that the Benbow Archaeological Project attempted to tackle (Dalton et al. 2017:12). The sites were all well sampled and thoroughly documented. It is because of this detailed work and the extensive sampling strategy employed that the data collected during the Benbow Archaeological Project can confidently be used in this thesis and used to support the interpretations that will be presented later in this chapter.

Through the extensive testing of the Benbow Archaeological Project, it was determined that BLSRA-003 should be combined with CA-HUM-222 (Figure 7). The initial separation of these two sites was likely due to the construction of California Highway 101 (as mentioned above) that bisects through CA-HUM-222 and BLSRA-003. The other two sites, CA-HUM-172 and BLSRA-002 were investigated during this field project however due to sub-surface disturbances and lack of data, pertinent to this discussion, they are not included in this thesis. The following section will address the prior archaeological recordation of the case study site and discuss the archaeological data that was produced during excavations.



**Figure 6. Previously identified archaeological sites.**

Source: California State Parks, Redwoods District (Dalton et al. 2017:10).



**Figure 7. Map indicating updated 2017 boundary of CA-HUM-222 (modified by VanHavermaat-Snyder 2017).**

Source: California State Parks, Redwoods District (Dalton et al. 2017:83)

### CA-HUM-222

CA-HUM-222 was originally recorded by Eric W. Ritter and colleagues in 1969, and was described as a small lithic scatter. It was also noted that the site probably extends across the terrace near the location of another site (BLSRA-003). Valerie Levulett rerecorded CA-HUM-222 in 1986 and these updated findings were consistent with the 1969 recording of the site being a small lithic scatter. Levulett also noted that the site was probably much larger but that the surface manifestations had been obscured by the culmination of different construction activities within and surrounding the site vicinity.

BLSRA-003 (now subsumed under CA-HUM-222) was originally recorded in 2001 by Humboldt State University Center for Indian Community Development. This site was described as having well-developed midden with an abundance of fire affected rock (FAR) on the ground surface. Like CA-HUM-222, BLSRA-003 had been altered through campground improvements, such as paved roads and graded campsites.

Test units were intentionally placed in possible locations of interest (i.e., where midden development was evident on the site surface), throughout the now combined site. The goal of the excavation units were to test for subsurface integrity while also looking at the potential relationship between the two sites. All unit level records, as well as, auger testing and shovel scrape records can be found in the appendices of the official Benbow Report (Dalton et al. 2017:102-178). The following section will discuss the results of the archaeological test units at CA-HUM-222 in order to inform the archaeological interpretations that will be presented later in this chapter.

## Results

### CA-HUM-222, Unit 2 and Unit 2.5

Unit 2 was placed at the presumed center of the midden deposit; test excavations and auger coring indicate that the midden deposit extended to a depth of at least 100 cm below current ground surface. Three diagnostic projectile points were recovered in this unit, all falling within the Mendocino Pattern (4,500-1,500 B.P.). Projectile points include Corner-notched, a Trinity Stemmed, and one point belonging to the Willits Series. A dense, horizontal rock feature of FAR (Feature 1) was also located.

A total of 202 artifacts were recovered from Unit 2, including projectile points, edge modified sandstone flake tools, and groundstone. No historic artifacts were recovered.

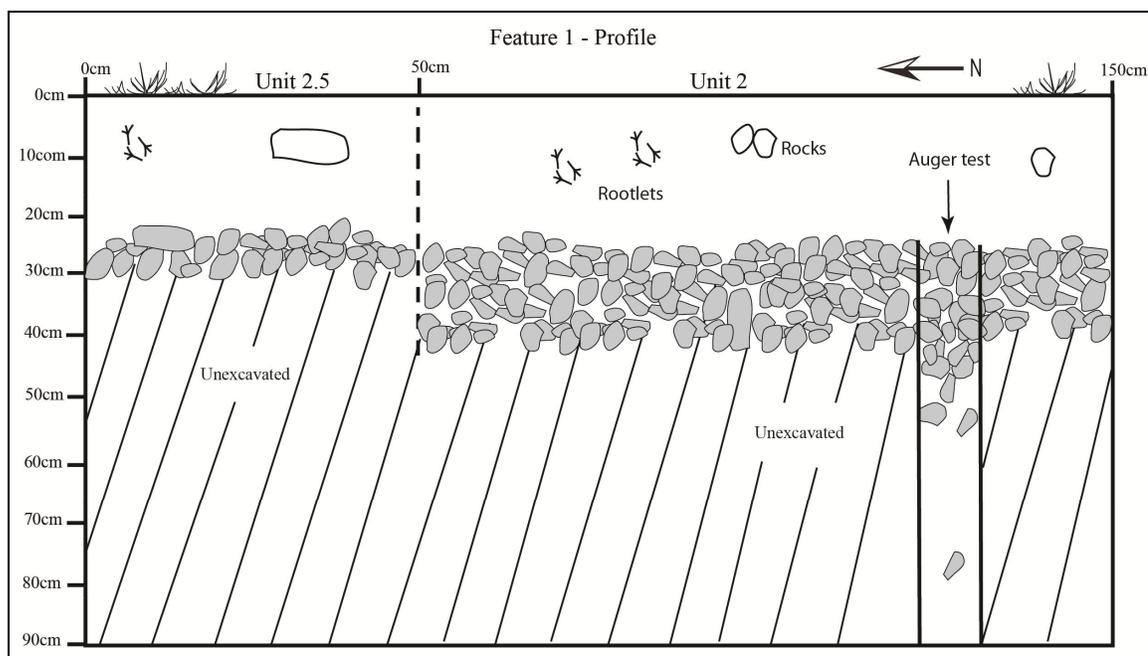
Unit 2.5 test was an extension of Unit 2, extended 50 cm north. This extension was an attempt to further expose Feature 1. Unit 2.5 was excavated to Level 2 (10-20 cmbs), the surface of Feature 1. This expansion was excavated to a total depth of 27 cmbs. A total of 70 artifacts were recovered. The majority of ground stone and FAR located within this unit was left in situ to preserve the integrity of Feature 1. No historic artifacts were recovered.

#### CA-HUM-222, Feature 1

At a depth of 22 cm below surface, Unit 2 and Unit 2.5 produced a rock feature, designated as Feature 1. This feature is a dense horizontal concentration of FAR. Most of the FAR within this feature consisted of groundstone fragments that had a reddish color due to oxidization and were brittle suggesting that the stones were exposed to intense heat. The feature also had a sparse amount of chert lithic material throughout. An auger test taken in Unit 2 revealed that the FAR feature dissipated between 50 and 60 cmbs (Figure 8). The horizontal extent of the feature was not established as the feature continued outside of test excavation units 2 and 2.5.

#### CA-HUM-222, Unit 3

This unit was located in the upper (western) midden deposit in an area that was postulated to have been the historic location of Albert and Sallie Smith's cabin based on the presence of vinca (*Vinca major*), which is a non-native vine that was a popular historic choice for landscaping and in gardens. Unit 3 extended to a depth of 70 cmbs. A



**Figure 8. Reconstructed profile of Feature 1.**

Source: California State Parks, Redwoods District (Dalton et al. 2017:61).

total of 367 artifacts were recovered from Unit 3, including both historic and prehistoric materials (Table 1).

CA-HUM-222, Unit 4

This unit was located in the lower (eastern) midden deposit. Unit 4 extended to a depth of 60 cmbs. A total of 864 artifacts were recovered including one Willits Series projectile point, one serrated tip (Gunther arrow point), and other prehistoric and historic artifacts (Table 2).

CA-HUM-222, Unit 5

This unit extended to a depth of 90 cmbs. Artifact density in Unit 1 spiked in Levels 7 (60-70 cmbs) and eight (70-80cmbs). This dramatic increase in artifact density

**Table 1.** Unit 3 artifact types by level.

	FLAKED & GROUND STONE				ORGANICS		HISTORIC & MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS				Total	
	PPT*	Flake Tool	Core Tool	Flake	Ground Stone	Charcoal	Bone	Glass	Clothing Rivet	Nail		Modern Trash
<i>Unit 3</i>												
Level 1 (0-10cm)			1	32	6	1	8	1	1	6		56
Level 2 (10-20cm)			3	79	3	7	4			4		100
Level 3 (20-30cm)			1	43	6		1					50
Level 4 (30-40cm)			2	35	5		1					42
Level 5 (40-50cm)				17	9							27
Level 6 (50-60cm)				33							7	40
Level 7 (60-70cm)		2		32	2	7	5				2	50
Level 8 Auger (70-80cm)				1								1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>367</b>

\* PPT = Projectile Point

Source: California State Parks, Redwoods District (Dalton et al. 2017:63)

**Table 2.** Unit 4 artifact types by level.

	FLAKED & GROUND STONE						ORGANICS				HISTORIC & MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS					Total		
	PPT*	BF*	Flake Tool	Core Tool	FL*	SH*	GS*	CH*	Bone	Burnt Wood	DecompRock	Glass	Worked Glass	Metal	Button		Nail	Modern Trash
<i>Unit 4</i>																		
Level 1 (0-10cm)					74	45	4	8	14		7	21	1	13	5	11	3	206
Level 2 (10-20cm)	1			2	92	20	40		4	9		3		1		1	3	176
Level 3 (20-30cm)			1	1	65		44											111
Level 4 (30-40cm)		1			49	11	31	1	1									94
Level 5 (40-50cm)				1	90	6	52	7	3									159
Level 6 (50-60cm)					87		19	10	2									118
Total	1	1	1	4	457	82	190	26	24	9	7	24	1	14	5	12	6	866

\* PPT = Projectile Point, BF = Biface, FL = Flake, SH = Shatter, GS = Ground stone, CH = Charcoal

Source: California State Parks, Redwoods District (Dalton et al. 2017:65)

in the lower unit levels suggests a more intensive earlier occupation of this portion of the site. A total of 79 artifacts were recovered from Unit 5. No historic artifacts were recovered.

## Discussion

It is very probable that CA-HUM-222 is the ethnographically documented village of *Kos-tcis-kun-dun* which is located across the river to the location of the 1859 massacre documented by Cook (1997) and is related to that Sinkyone massacre event. Based upon archaeological findings of the Benbow Project, paired with ethnographic evidence, it has also been discovered that the same location probably became the ethnographically documented home of Albert and Sallie Smith, two California Indians that lived in a cabin during the early 20th century in the vicinity of present-day Benbow (Cook 1997; Goddard 1907).

In an early Sinkyone ethnographic interview, Goddard (1907b:35) spoke with Sinkyone informant Albert Smith who gave locational information concerning the village of *Kos-tcis-kun-dun* and his cabin which is described as “on [the] west side of South Fork.” As previously discussed in Chapter V, Goddard (1907b:35) notes the location, probably inaccurately as “N. E. 2” which refers to the northeast quarter of Section 2 in township 5 South, Range 3 East, Humboldt Meridian (Collins 2013, personal communication; Dalton et al. 2017:86). This would place the village and Albert’s cabin on a densely forested ridgeline approximately 500 feet above the South Fork, which is an unlikely place for a habitation site, or historic cabin. It is likely that Goddard mistakenly provided the location one section west of the actual site in Section 2 when it is actually in

Section 1 (Collins 2013, personal communication; Dalton et al. 2017:86). This correction places the pre-contact village site and the historic cabin along the west bank of the South Fork across from the mouth of Fish Creek, at present day Benbow Campground and the location of CA-HUM-222.

### Pre-Historic Significance

The collective results from CA-HUM-222 resulted in 1,649 artifacts. Chert is the most prominent lithic material present at CA-HUM-222 and is probably from a local source. All major flake categories are represented (i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary), as well as cores, projectile points, and bifaces. Sandstone is also well represented in the forms of groundstone and in expedient flake tools (e.g., edge modified flakes and scrapers). The sandstone material is also from a local source and was likely taken from the Eel River. Obsidian occurred very infrequently and is only represented by tertiary-stage, pressure flakes. This information, when paired with the results of the obsidian sourcing (see Dalton et al. 2017:128), indicate that the obsidian was transported to the area from a long distance away. In northern California, trade by way of travel by watercraft on waterways from more distant northern sources was often a more efficient strategy to acquire obsidian versus traveling to the closer southern sources without waterway access (Whitaker et al. 2007:9). This appears to be true for the Sinkyone located at Benbow. The obsidian sourcing results show more obsidian from the northern source of Medicine Lake and less coming from the geographically closer southern sources such as, Borax Lake and Mt. Konocti. The significance of the lithic material types present at Benbow indicates extensive habitation. The use of poorer quality, locally

available, materials suggest extended habitation at this pre-historic site, as does the rare occurrence of obsidian that was probably acquired through trade related activities.

There is an abundance of FAR at CA-HUM-222, averaging 178 kg per cubic meter. The FAR could likely be associated with domestic activities such as, cooking, roasting, or boiling. The high amount of FAR at this site is indicative of a village site and is most likely the result of pre-historic activities versus any post-contact activities. This conclusion is probable because of the other domestic elements found at CA-HUM-222, such as, milling-slab technology, as well as a possible cooking feature (Feature 1), discussed in further detail below.

This pre-contact/prehistoric data is pertinent to this post-contact study because it provides evidence that the current location of CA-HUM-222 is consistent with that of a village site that was abandoned post-contact, presumably *Kos-tcis-kun-dun*. The site use and mobility patterns for CA-HUM-222 are indicative of a permanent habitation site. This conclusion is drawn from the substantial midden deposit at the site and the prehistoric artifacts that were recovered during excavations and supports the ethnographic evidence.

#### Post-Contact Significance

The historic artifacts found at CA-HUM-222 are from Unit 3 (Table 1) and Unit 4 (Table 2), and are located within the boundaries of the midden deposit at this site. As previously noted, Unit 3 was intentionally placed where a non-native species of vine, that was often used historically, was prevalent on-site. At the end of Unit 3 (60-70 cmbs), a compacted surface was noted and may represent a habitation floor or a possible footing

for a cabin (Dalton et al. 2017:68). The amount of historic artifacts recovered here implies that this site was used historically and are consistent with the existence of an occupied cabin. It is very probable that Unit 3 is located in the immediate vicinity of the ethnographically documented cabin belonging to Sinkyone survivor, Albert Smith and his wife, Sally. The presence of historic windowpane glass, square and wire nails, a clothing rivet, metal buttons, and single edge-modified bottle glass are indicators of historic use. The following section will explore the possible interpretations of this archaeological data, along with historic and ethnographic sources.

#### Interpretations

The archaeological data present at CA-HUM-222 indicates that there were Native Americans living at the location of CA-HUM-222 and that they were using European/Euro American material goods along with traditional Sinkyone/California Indian tools. In past studies, living in the cabin would show native peoples assimilations into a new material world and the adaptation of window glass being flaked into the style of a “traditional” tool would serve as a proxy of cultural conservatism. While material culture does play a role in the creation of social identities and their relationship to the new multi-ethnic context in which they live, it is not enough to extrapolate from. While it is very probable that CA-HUM-222 is the site of the ethnographically documented cabin belonging to the Smiths, the identity of the Native Americans that lived there post-contact may never be known. Despite the ethnographic evidence from the Albert Smith Interview (Goddard 1907b), the photographic evidence (Baker 1859; Cook 1997), hand-drawn maps (Cook 1997), and the presented archaeological data, there is still no concrete

evidence of the historic cabin and to whom it may have belonged. While the Smith's are associated with a cabin in the general vicinity, and the archaeological findings of the Benbow Archaeological Project may be representative of that, this association has not been thoroughly established and warrants further investigation.

CA-HUM-222, Feature 1 was a dense concentration of FAR that was exposed to intense heat and was found in context with fire affected groundstone and lithic material. The extent of Feature 1 is unknown. A consequence of not knowing the extent of Feature 1 is that there are multiple interpretations that could be applied to its function/purpose. Below will provide some of those possible interpretations.

Based on archaeological and ethnographic evidence, it is possible that Feature 1 is part of a sweathouse. These types of structures are typically conical and semi-subterranean (Nomland 1935:157; Elsasser 1978; Curtis 1924). The structures that are used for sweathouses are almost always ceremonial houses that are used for various ceremonies, dances, public meetings, and sweathouses (Curtis 1924:6). In observance of seasonal hunting taboos Sinkyone men would practice a purification ceremony in a sweat lodge called "good-luck dance" while rubbing their body with angelica leaves or chewing angelica roots (Nomland 1935:152). Sinkyone informant, Charlie (no last name), describes a Sinkyone village located on the South Fork to Goddard (Baumhoff 1958:187):

There were ten pits along the bank of South Fork and the pit of a yitco, eight paces across, about 200 yards west of the mouth of Bull Creek. A large redwood, hollowed by fire had fallen, the floor being four feet below the ground. Charlie remembered Indians living in it. Charlie thought there used to be three or four houses on the south side of the creek.

Not only does this description by Charlie paint a picture of what a Sinkyone village on the South Fork Eel River may have looked like, he also describes excavated pits and a traditional *yitco*. Goddard used the term ‘yitco’ in his notebooks for the Sinkyone and other surrounding southern Athabascan tribes. Goddard did not describe the definition of ‘yitco’ for the Sinkyone language so the term was compared to other, nearby southern Athabascan speaking groups. In Goddard’s *Kato Texts* (1909), the word ‘yitco’ is used several times (1909:132, 143, 145) and is translated by Goddard to mean dance house. According to Curtis (1924:10) the Cahto (also Kato), are strongly influenced by north-central California and their immediate northern neighbors the Sinkyone and the Wailaki (northern and northeastern neighbors respectively). The Wailaki are documented as having sweathouses that are the same as the Cahto sweathouses (Curtis 1924:25). Loeb (1932:26, 43) also describes the Cahto as having dance houses he called *yitco*.

There are approximately forty Athabascan languages and they are all closely related with California Athabascan being a more diverse cluster of four languages: Cahto, Eel River, Mattole-Bear River, and Hupa-Chilula (Golla 2011:68-69). Where Goddard (1932) and Loeb (1932) simply refer to *yitco* as dance houses, Curtis (1924: 6) describes them as, “the conical ceremonial house, or sweat-house . . . was used for dances or any public meeting, as well for communal sweating for men.” The Cahto dictionary defines the term “yiichow” as “dance house, sweat house, or ceremonial house” (Cahto Dictionary 2017). The Wailaki dictionary, based off ethnographic sources, does not have a similarly defined word (Wailaki Dictionary 2017). For a more in-depth discussion on California Athabascan linguistics see Chapter V.

The evidence presented above is compelling enough to infer that the word ‘yitco’ is probably the same as, or closely related to, the Cahto word ‘yiichow’. It is not uncommon in the world of ethnography or linguistics for the interviewer to misspell indigenous terms, incorrectly define the word, or to simply have mistakes that unfortunately have the potential to spread. As Loeb states (1932:2), “I have simplified the spelling of native terms . . . to make them uniform with my own phonetic system.”

The FAR appears to have been through extreme heat due to the presence of cracking, spalling, and discoloration from oxidation. The typical use of stones in a sweathouse is to heat the stones and to pour water over them to create steam. The intense (dry) heating and then subsequent rapid cooling, and creation of steam would cause cracking and discoloration.

A second possibility for Feature 1 is that it is a type of cooking feature. Archaeological investigations into the domestic sphere, including cooking, has been considered a relevant course of study for colonialism studies and large-scale societies (Brumfiel 1991; Lightfoot et al. 1998; Scaramelli 2012; Stein 2012). Martin (2014:29) describes rock-lined ovens as being a basin-shaped pit or depression with rocks heated in situ (in place) with at least one layer, or multiple layers of cook-stones, with small ovens measuring 50-100 cm in diameter and larger ovens measuring one to three meters in diameter.

In Feature 1, Unit 2 the rock feature began at approximately 25 cmbs and was excavated to a depth of 45 cmbs. Feature 1, Unit 2.5 was left in situ and began at approximately 21 cmbs and extended to a minimum depth of 30+ cmbs. Auger testing

conducted at the end of the unit in Unit 2 showed that the FAR dissipated between 50 and 60 cmbs. Based off Martin's (2014) description, and the fact that the full extent of the feature was not delineated, if Feature 1 were a cooking feature then it would be classified as a large oven.

In these types of cooking features, broken tools and flakes might have been discarded into the oven as part of site cleanup (Martin 2014:30). Feature 1 mainly consisted of FAR groundstone but also had a light scattering of chert lithic material. For a more detailed description of different cooking technologies see Martin (2014:27-31).

It is unclear whether Feature 1 is related to a sweathouse, or if it is instead a cooking feature. This uncertainty will remain unless further excavation is conducted. Despite uncertainty, Feature 1 is an intact, buried archaeological feature that indicates that other intact features may also be located within CA-HUM-222. It is also of note that the majority of the FAR was groundstone. This fact leads to the probability that this deposit corresponds with a pre-contact village settlement versus the two-person, Sinkyone family living in the historic cabin at CA-HUM-222 because it is very unlikely that the abundance of FAR groundstone belonged to just one family.

The substantial midden deposit at the site, the projectile point dates, and the prehistoric artifacts that were recovered during excavations show extended occupation of the site pre-contact. The majority of groundstone recovered at the site is milling slab and hand-stone technology with the exception of one fragmented pestle and one probable mortar located on the surface. The high amount of groundstone located at the site indicates that plant and seed resources were processed regularly at the site. The sizeable

weight totals of FAR also could be an indication of intensive cooking occurring on a regular basis or, as previously discussed the FAR could also be associated with sweathouse activities. Both of these scenarios indicate prolonged, pre-historic activity at the site.

The high amount of lithic debitage also points to permanent habitation of the site. The debitage is lacking cortex, the flakes are late-stage (tertiary) which rules out the possibility of the site being used for quarrying, decordation, or expedient lithic reduction. All projectile points recovered at the site were made from chert as well as the majority of flaked and formal tools. Obsidian debitage had the smallest average flake size and this is probable due to the distance of the obsidian sources and the amount of effort into acquisition. Furthermore, the use of readily available, local lithic material, such as sandstone for expedient tools suggests intensive use of the lower quality lithic resources immediately available, which is consistent with a long-term occupation of a site. The site use and mobility patterns for CA-HUM-222 are indicative of a permanent habitation site. This conclusion supports the ethnographic evidence that places the pre-historic village of *Kos-tcis-kun-dun* at this location.

### Chapter Summary

Prior to the undertakings of the California State Parks Benbow Archaeological Project (Dalton et al. 2017) no in-depth archaeological investigation had been done at this location. Previous recordation was project specific and only identified sites and marked them as warranting further study. This project allowed for a better understanding of the nature and extent of these localities. The archaeological data recovered from this study

has shown that both temporal and spatial relationships exist among the archaeological sites at Benbow. There is considerable information potential at Benbow regarding the history and prehistory of the area including intact, subsurface features and diagnostic artifacts.

The data recovered at CA-HUM-222 testifies to multicomponent occupations at the site and are consistent with the ethnographic information concerning the Benbow area and Sinkyone villages located along the South Fork Eel River. The site use and mobility patterns for CA-HUM-222 are indicative of a permanent pre-contact habitation site, which supports the ethnographic evidence that this location was the prehistoric site of *Kos-tcis-kun-dun*. As previously discussed, the historic data recovered at the site supports the ethnographic evidence that there was an occupied historic cabin located at Benbow post-contact, which is the probable location of the Smith's cabin.

The pre-historic elements of the Benbow data are vital in establishing the existence of the pre-historic, Sinkyone village site that has been ethnographically documented as being in the location of Benbow. This fact needs to be established to support the connection that the Smiths had to this locality. This will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The following chapter will discuss the research questions presented in Chapter I compared with results of the case study of Benbow. It will attempt to place Benbow within the historical context of colonialism and those consequences, past and present. This case study serves as one example, of many, of an archaeological project that can be looked at through the tragic lens of California's Contact Period.

## CHAPTER VII

### DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter consists of a discussion derived from the original research questions presented in Chapter I and other general themes developed throughout this thesis. This discussion will be guided by the archaeological data collected from the case study of Benbow, as well as, ethnographic and historic resources. Culture contact studies often utilize a “holistic anthropological approach that considers multiple lines of evidence from ethnohistorical accounts, ethnographic observations, linguistic data, native oral traditions, archaeological materials, and biological remains (Lightfoot 1995:199).

This thesis specifically sought to answer to two basic questions: (1) what was the nature of the Euro American Contact Period on California’s northwest coast? and (2) how does the aftermath of colonialism transcend onto the descendant communities? The answers to these seemingly general and broad questions immediately started to become clear during the early stages of research and greatly influenced the direction of this thesis. By delving into the history of early California, the truly horrific relationship between Euro Americans and California Indians emerged. As discussed in great detail in Chapter II, the genocide that took place in northern California affected every aspect of California Indian life and developed into the baseline of this thesis.

Through this thesis research and the data collected from the case study, it is clear that Benbow and the surrounding areas were vibrant places where the Sinkyone and other tribes thrived prior to Euro American contact. Much of this thesis can be applied and compared to other northwestern California Indian groups and archaeological sites.

While the case study of Benbow is distinctive in its own right, the overarching atmosphere of terror and violence of early California can be applied comprehensively to every California Indian tribe and site in northern California. The following discussion will attempt to address the research questions by synthesizing the existing literature from several different aspects of anthropology, archaeology, and the case study of Benbow.

### Archaeology and Anthropology

Much of what we know about Native Americans in western North America is the result of early twentieth century ethnographies, as discussed in Chapter IV. Archaeologists in northwestern California have always drawn heavily from these ethnographies in their interpretations of the past (Tushingham 2013:147) and this thesis is no exception. It is hoped that by acknowledging this flawed tradition that the ethnographic information that is available can be used to aid in the discussions and interpretations of archaeological sites. As previously discussed (Chapter II), there is growing recognition in anthropological and historical spheres, as well as, a slowly developing recognition in the public sphere, of the social upheaval and violence of early California. By attempting to understand the colonialist setting of the time, we can better comprehend how these disruptive and often cruel events may have altered California Indian populations, land use, subsistence patterns, and other aspects of their daily lives.

### Applying Landscape Theory

The survival of California Indians post-contact can be seen in the archaeological record and in a limited way, the historical record. By addressing the

research questions through the lens of landscape theory the following discussion will attempt to provide examples from the case study of Benbow to demonstrate what life was like for northern California Indians in the aftermath of colonial contact.

Landscape theory allows archaeology to assist in explaining the past as it allows for the “dynamic, interdependent relationships that people maintain with the physical, social, and cultural dimensions of their environments across space” which can then be seen through archaeological remains (Anschuetz et al. 2001:159). “By studying and recording [archaeological] sites it is possible to document the physical remains of the relationships that people and societies maintain with their environment” (Westphal 2012:15). By viewing the case study through this theoretical lens, it is possible to gain a greater understanding of Indigenous life post contact.

Typical post-contact archaeological studies look for the adaptation/adoption of Euro American materials and also looks for any traditional persistence. While looking for both “adaptation” and “persistence” can be telling, it can also be too simplistic when placed within the realities of California Indians living in this time of turmoil and terror. In this shallow way, “archaeologists have employed an explicitly material focus in their examinations of identity” (Conlin Casella and Fowler: 2005:1). The social environment was much more complex involving one or more local native populations, Europeans and Euro Americans of varied nationalities and backgrounds, and many “other” peoples of color. These interactions may have created selective cultural exchanges in complex processes involving various economic, political, ideological, and engendered considerations that Native Americas were active participants in selecting new materials

or technologies (Lightfoot 1995:200-206). There is a variety of post-colonial lenses that California Indian communities or individual responses can be viewed.

Lightfoot, Martinez and Schiff (1998:200) addressed the need for the development and refinement of the approaches that are used for the study of culture change and persistence using material remains within culture contact research. They question how to “evaluate the magnitude, direction, and meaning of change that may result from encounters between diverse people in multi-ethnic communities” (Lightfoot et al. 1998:200). Simply totaling the number of Euro American artifacts in comparison to Native American artifacts in archaeological collections does not infer any tangible information about the process of culture change (Lightfoot 1995:207). Lightfoot (1995:207) suggests, a diachronic approach that examines these changes within the ideological structure of people in prehistoric, protohistoric, and historic contexts by implementing an approach that considers the broader spatial organization of the archaeological record. By looking at these spaces over time, they can provide insights into the individual households and the community. By using spatial contexts as the unit of analysis, an evaluation of whether significant transformations were taking place in the individual household or in the communities before, during, and after Euro American contact and colonization can occur (Lightfoot 1995:207). Silliman (2009:215) states, “practice and memory frame the social context in which these artifacts took on their meanings.” The comparative analysis of archaeological remains recovered from different age contexts still remains valid to evaluate the full effects of culture change over time (Lightfoot 1995:208). The approach just too often focuses too much on the dichotomies

between culture change and continuity through material culture, rather than on their interrelationship (Silliman 2009:211).

Another pertinent issue of this approach is that Native American communities have been, and still are, consistently judged by scientists, researchers, the government, the media, and private citizens on how much they have or have not changed (Silliman 2009:213). Those that are in positions of power, or the dominating culture, attempt to control aspects of daily life of the oppressed culture as a form of control and these changes then become “politically-charged markers of stereotyped bodies and groups” (Silliman 2001:195). Subjecting Native Americans, past and present, to these cultural judgments is racist in nature. Europeans and Euro Americans in North America have never been subjected to this type of cultural judgment (Silliman 2009:227), so why are Native Americans? These judgments directly affect issues of sovereignty, federal recognition, land rights, and question the idea of personhood by placing the idea of “authenticity” on individuals and groups, and a multitude of other aspects of daily lives. “Native Americans in this country have faced, as part of the colonial process, the theft, appropriation, and misrepresentation of [their] history, cultural heritage, and intellectual and cultural property” (Atalay 2006:270).

In North America, Native Americans are usually given a cultural “baseline” or standard that existed prior to the arrival of Euro Americans, which was recorded by Euro Americans after the arrival of Euro Americans. This convoluted “baseline” and idea of cultural purity has been used to measure all subsequent periods of culture change in Native American cultures. This reflects dominant themes in the United States’ national

narrative “that any changes in Native American societies must have corrupted their identities, core values, demographic resiliency, and, by extension, their rights to self-identify authentically as Indigenous people” (Silliman 2009:214). This blanket application of culture change does not consider the other elements that lead to culture change, such as, the social context of practice, the meaning and memory behind it, and if the change was in fact given any meaning. These irresponsible and dangerous assumptions need to be addressed (see van Dommelen 2002).

According to Silliman (2009:213), colonialism needs to be understood “as a complex entanglement of histories, identities, and power struggles” removing the antiquated and rigid ideas of “culture change.” By keeping in mind the multi-ethnic contexts of the time and the social environment, the focus of the study moves beyond simply looking at artifacts and putting them into two categories. This thesis has attempted to move beyond only looking at the inhabitants of Benbow and also takes into account the diverse groups of people who would have interacted with them and places that within the context of post colonialism. This approach should help define the range of variation between individual members of a specific ethnic group and allow it to be compared across the landscape to other members of the same group that can then be compared and contrasted to other patterns present on the regional landscape (Lightfoot 1995:209).

#### Survival and Adaptation at Benbow: The Cabin

The study of long-term culture change necessitates an integrated and contextual approach to provide a better and more complete understanding of culture

change in California. Unfortunately, a majority of archaeological investigations in California and for the purpose of this thesis, the Benbow area, have not employed broad-scale excavation strategies or produced broad-scale studies. So what does this mean for the analysis of Benbow and what can be ascertained from the archaeological and historic data? The archaeological materials recovered at Benbow and the meticulous sampling strategy employed during the field project are adequate to provide a glimpse into the lives of the people living at Benbow post contact and supports the following interpretations.

As discussed in Chapter VI, it is highly probable that the historic cabin belonging to Albert and Sallie Smith was relocated during the surveys and excavations of the Benbow Archaeological Project. The Smiths are massacre survivors (also discussed in Chapter II, Chapter IV, and Chapter VI) that are historically documented as having lived in the cabin located at Benbow in the early 1900s. They are both listed on the 1910 United States Census as living in the South Fork District (see Chapter IV). The archaeological materials recovered at this probable cabin site yielded both prehistoric/traditional materials and historic-era artifacts. The Euro American items included, clothing rivets, square nails, windowpane glass fragments, and ceramic fragments. These historic era artifacts can, and often are interpreted as interaction with Euro Americans and/or the adoption of Euro American materials and practices.

As discussed above, these generalizations can paint a generic picture of what life was like in the aftermath of genocide. A deeper discussion is necessitated because human beings are not simplistic and the adoption of aspects of another culture does not necessarily infer compliance or a desire to change. For example, in many cases, clothing

existed as a potential barrier from danger for Native Americans. The reasoning to adopt European style fashion could be necessary as an attempt to blend in as much as possible as to not draw unwanted attention to oneself. At the same time, European style clothing could signal to the oppressor that you, as a California Indian, are trying to change, to become more like the self-proclaimed, “superior” race.

The power dynamics and significantly unequal social relationships between California Indians and Euro Americans can fluctuate along two inter-related fronts, as discussed by Silliman (2001). Firstly, “those wielding power attempt to control the minutiae of daily life as a way to re-constitute individual subjectivities” (Silliman 2001:195). These aspects of daily life fall under scrutiny and become markers for the oppressing culture to recognize and assault. The prohibition of things such as, dress, routines, rituals, technologies, and the enforcement of others (i.e., labor) issue a forced change to the daily lives of the oppressed. Secondly, “quotidian practices of daily life take on explicit political significance for those conducting them” (Silliman 2001:195). These practices are a way for the oppressed to exert social agency whether that be in the form of compliance or resistance.

The oppressed individual, and communities, know that they are under scrutiny and are being watched. Through the self-regulation of these practices, they can serve as visible resistance and defiance, while at the same time not practicing them can indicate compliance, at least at the social level (Paynter and McGuire 1991:12). The oppressed can also practice a form of identity negotiation through the appropriation of material culture that in some cases can be a form of resistance (Silliman 2001:195).

Clothing existed as a form of protection during a time when it was dangerous to be a California Indian. The archaeological record shows rivet style buttons at the cabin site. Several historic photos (including Figures 3 and 4) show the Smith's in European style clothing. The photograph that was taken outside of the Briceland Store (Figure 4) is dated 1859. The other photograph (Figure 3) has no date but the clothing style suggests circa 1900s. Did the Smith's actively choose to wear European style clothing as a form of protection, or as a way to fit in? It is almost impossible to know why the Smiths chose to adopt European style clothing. This question has too deep a meaning for a researcher to understand from just the available information. Just like it can be irresponsible to assume historic era items automatically equate to the adoption of another culture and the disregard of one's own, it too can be irresponsible to assign too much meaning to our own perceived interpretations. These approaches to viewing the individual's actions (agency) "have barely begun to scratch the surface in understanding the ways in which material culture reproduces, promotes, and thwarts agency" (Dobres and Robb 2000:12)

The presence of traditional tools found within the same age context as Euro American style items shows the use of new and traditional tools and materials occurred at the same time. Through photographic evidence (Figure 4) it is known that the Smith's had access to, and presumably patronized the Briceland store. By frequenting the Briceland store, the Smith's would have had access to non-Indian and imported goods, as well as, interethnic interactions. Archaeological data provided small amounts of evidence that the Smiths were acquiring non-traditional/local goods. It is not clear if the bottle glass or ceramic were the result of broken vessels being used and broken at the site or

were scavenged as raw materials. The presence of worked glass does suggest that the newly introduced materials were also used in a traditional way and is an example of individual intentionality and social action (Lightfoot and Martinez 1995:477-488).

While clothing existed as a shield of protection similarly, choosing to build a cabin style home instead of a traditional Sinkyone-style structure would also have served as a way to “fit in.” In past archaeological studies, living in the cabin would show Native assimilation into a new material world and the adaptation of window glass being flaked into the style of a “traditional” tool serving as a proxy of cultural conservatism. While material culture does play a role in the creation of social identities and their relationship to the new multi-ethnic context in which they exist, it is not enough to extrapolate from. A more holistic approach is needed to better understand the dynamics of sites such as this, and is discussed in more detail elsewhere (Lightfoot 1995; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Lightfoot et al. 1998; Voss 2005, 2008).

Perhaps these different items and materials were used in coexistence with each other, or perhaps they were used in different contexts, or were used under completely different circumstances. The idea of “identity switching” may have been a necessary aspect of survival while living on the fringe of the dominant Euro American society (Tushingham 2013:146). The cultural flexibility displayed at Benbow demonstrates the continuity and persistence of traditional lifeways and the incorporation of new materials. The cabin and its associated contents show a clear continuity with earlier periods of time and the use of more modern items. Overall, it appears that the Smiths incorporated historically introduced materials, items, and technologies into their

traditional cultural system. However, it is essential to remember that the adoption of European or any outside material culture does not always mean assimilation to the donor culture.

Besides the information that archaeological and historic data can provide, there are other factors that provide insight into the Smith's lives and what it was like at Benbow post-contact. The location of the Smith's cabin, located at present-day Benbow, is also the probable location of Albert Smith's ancestral village, *Kos-tcis-kun-dun*. This is also the location of a Sinkyone massacre, as previously discussed in Chapter II.

In Indigenous North America, Native Americans were created in their traditional homelands since time immemorial and therefore have deeply developed connections and understandings of their ancestral landscapes (Van Vlack 2012:93). As discussed in Middleton (2008:31-32), "the relationships between people and their homeland are central to that groups cosmology and history . . . transcend(ing) generations and invaders, and are interwoven with spiritual, political, economic, and cultural perspectives." In a very short period of time the Sinkyone people went from living holistically within their ancestral landscape and with one another within a coherent cosmology, to struggling to survive as displaced people within their own homeland.

The choice that the Smith's made to return to *Kos-tcis-kun-dun* may be representative of the connection that Albert felt to his home village. This connection persists and prevails despite the tragedies that occurred there. The choice to live among the memories of the horrific murders that took place at Benbow exemplifies that regardless of the efforts of Euro American's to completely exterminate the California

Indians in the area, the connection that the Sinkyone, specifically the Smith's, have to their home was, and remained unbreakable.

This research demonstrates the continuity and persistence of California Indians despite the impact wrought by Euro American contact. The cabin and its associated artifacts demonstrate continuity with earlier periods of time, as well as, adaptive behavior demonstrated through the use of Euro American items and materials.

### A Genocidal Legacy: Northwestern California at Contact

The guiding theme of this thesis has centered on the California Indian genocides that occurred as a result of Euro American colonialism in northwestern California. The Sinkyone were almost completely killed off as a result of this genocide. As this research unfolded, it was truly sickening to locate so many accounts of California Indian massacres. With only a very small amount of survivors remaining, and only a few survivors willing to discuss the tragic events of the time, it was shocking to discover so many accounts of Sinkyone-specific massacres. Knowing that the nature of historic documentation is very Eurocentric and generally unconcerned with documenting the lives of people of color it leads one to believe that the documented accounts of Sinkyone massacres must be very small compared to the undocumented realities of this time.

In revisiting the first research question proposed in this thesis, addressing the nature of the Contact Period on the northwest coast of California, it now seems like a somewhat absurd and highly loaded question. The answer is that it was a violent, racist, terror-filled, monstrous time where it was truly dangerous to be a California Indian. The

following section will discuss the second research question of what life could have been like for California Indian survivors in the wake of genocide.

### Living in the Aftermath of Genocide

The question of genocide transcends onto descendant communities in several ways. There are political, economic, psychological, and health consequences in direct correlation to the aftermath of genocide. Madley (2015:101) discusses that the urgency for the approximately 5,220,000 U.S. citizens of self-reported Native American ancestry cannot be underestimated and will dictate monetary issues like reparations and land control; political elements like official apologies; Native American involvement in the gathering of evidence for past genocidal acts; and how these communities should commemorate these events of genocide, “while also emphasizing successful accommodation, resistance, survival, and cultural renewal.” The psychological consequences of genocide on descendant communities can occur in a multitude of ways. For example, the increased knowledge of genocidal acts may strip away patriotism from country or state, or when an individual discovers that they are a descendant of both victim and perpetrator that can be difficult to come to terms with (Madley 2015:101-102; Duran et al. 2008:288-295). These consequences can also be felt at the community level where the effects of colonial trauma correlate to “present-day illnesses, substance abuse, domestic violence, and suicide” (Madley 2015:101-102; Duran et al. 2008:288-295).

The horrific reality of California Indian genocide transcends time and deserves to be known worldwide. But just the acknowledgment of these past tragedies is not enough. In fact, referring to the genocide of California Indians as a “past event”

leaves it in the past when the aftermath of it is here. California Indians deal with the aftermath of genocide everyday. “For all the complexity and varied experiences of American Indians, the end result [of contact] was all too often violence, destruction, and pain . . . paid and continue to be paid in the blood and of suffering of human beings” (Alvarez 2014:160).

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the role of agency in the discussion of the archaeological materials from Benbow and attempted to interpret possible Indigenous responses to the aftermath of colonial contact within a framework of landscape theory. By addressing the individual’s role in their environment, both physical and social, this thesis has attempted to provide insight into what it was like to exist in post contact era northwestern California as an Indian by attempting to place the focus on the interrelationship of social change and the politics of social practice (Silliman 2001:205). This chapter has also attempted to answer the research questions posited at the outset of this research. By using the case study, focusing on the Smith’s lives at Benbow, and addressing the mass genocide of the Sinkyone, it is the hope of this author that the harsh and uncomfortable realities of the past become clear. The following chapter will conclude this thesis and include a discussion on collaborative archaeology, modern significance, current issues, and the importance of this type of research.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Benbow area is a beautiful redwood and riverine landscape, however, beneath this picturesque environment is a soiled social history of people almost completely lost to destruction and devastation. It is widely acknowledged that northern California during the mid-nineteenth century was one of the most barbarous places in the country (Platt 2011:3). The case study of Benbow used in this thesis permitted a small glimpse into what life may have been like for California Indians during these horrific times.

In a piece written for *Sunset* magazine Kroeber (1910:260) writes that California Indians are “vehemently attached to the particular locality where they have been born.” Perhaps this reflection by Kroeber can help explain why the Smiths returned to Benbow and built their cabin in the location of a Sinkyone massacre site. As discussed in Chapter VII, the daily practices and choices made by the Smith’s while navigating their lives during this dangerous time only permits for a hazy understanding of the reality.

#### Collaboration

The 2013 Benbow Archaeological Project was a collaborative effort that brought together California State Parks, the California State University, Chico, student volunteers and the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria. The Benbow Archaeological Project provided students and volunteers from the Bear River Band with

academic based cultural resource management training and archaeological field experience while also integrating Native perspectives, ideas and participation.

As discussed in Chapter III, the field of archaeology is inextricably entwined with the past policies and programs that resulted from colonialism, and the appropriation and exploitation of one culture's resources to enrich the more powerful, dominating culture (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008:3). California's Indigenous populations have lost rights to their heritage through the direct and indirect effects of colonialism. Through these colonial processes and the devastating effects that followed, Indigenous groups have an impaired ability to manage their own cultural resources and heritage, to tell their own histories, and to educate their descendants in their own culturally appropriate ways (Atalay 2008:123). Collaborative archaeology attempts to provide an alternative dimension to standard archeological practice, which has been deeply imbedded in colonialism.

For collaborative archaeology to become more standard in practice it is necessary to look at various case studies across the world in order to discover best practices, identify problems, and address past issues in order to move forward. The Benbow Archaeological Project provided a good case study to look at collaboration between California State Parks, the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria and the Chico State. This collaboration truly began with one State Park archaeologist, Greg Collins, who chose to go above and beyond the legally mandated Native American consultation under the Section 106 process, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and other legislation. Collins took an infrastructure

necessary project and developed it into a successful program of research that involved the participation of tribal scholars, elders, band members and their youth, and field school participants from CSU, Chico in all components of the archaeological endeavor.

The case study of Benbow began with a call for meaningful involvement from all parties involved. The great strength of a collaborative project like this is in its diversity. It brought together people who share an interest in the archaeology and history of a place, but who approached the project from very different cultural backgrounds, experiences, and worldviews. Collaborative archaeology can have an important and impactful effect on the next generations of undergraduate and graduate students by producing archaeologists and scholars that are educated to conduct ethically and socially just research (Atalay 2008:143). This outcome necessitates the development of curricula and field schools that are developed to expose students to “the issues of collaborative methodologies, the incorporation of alternative (Indigenous and other) concepts of research and teaching of the past, and the development of research designs that address community concerns” (Atalay 2008:138-139).

As Lightfoot (2008:213) discusses, “this kind of critical collaborative framework forces archaeologists to engage in dialogues from multiple standpoints, to consider multiple scenarios, and to scrutinize their own ideas very carefully.” The importance and significance of this site to descendants at the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria has proven key in the development of community involvement with the archaeological investigations of locations, such as Benbow, where ancestors have lived, died and persisted well into historic times.

## Modern Significance

The descendants of the people that inhabited the Benbow area at the time of contact are part of the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria, located on 65 acres in Northern California on the Pacific coast in Rohnerville. The Rancheria is comprised of the Bear River, Eel River, and Wiyot tribes and has an enrollment of approximately 285 members (Steele et al. 2010:15).

The concept of territory is typically used to define specific places to specific people. The theoretical perspective of heritage landscapes presents the idea of territory as a place for modern humans to exist within a spatially constructed framework of other species and other times (Zedeno 2008:210). Historical, geographical, and archaeological versions of “real landscapes” are not the only versions that must be taken into account and treated as valid (Bradley 2008:636). The different ways of understanding, along with differing perceptions, contribute to what is known about particular landscapes and events. As stated by Bradley (2008:636), “understanding is multilayered and not easily reduced to the language of objectivism.”

Heritage landscape theory assumes that the ancestors of the group that inherited the landscape had the ability to access and the opportunity to interact with their ancestral lands. The Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria or any conquered, dispossessed or relocated people, can feel that the landscape, as it has been passed down in oral traditions and sacred texts, or seen in historic documents, maps, and monuments or found within memories, was once theirs, that it still belongs to them and that they should utilize it as an ancestral right on their own terms and with their own understanding

(Zedeno 2008:213-214). The collaboration and participation from the descendants at the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria contributed a perspective to the archaeological investigations that only they could give. They chose to work, teach, learn, share, spend time, and experience a place where their ancestors lived amidst racism, slavery, terror, and violence.

### Current Issues

The Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria are federally recognized as the most likely descendants of the Sinkyone people, however, there are some archaeologists and historians that are trying, or have tried, to disprove the ancestral link between the members of the Bear River Band and the Sinkyone. It has been suggested that the Sinkyone people, culture, and territory may have never existed (see Keter 2009; Rohde 2008). It has also been proposed to reclassify the Sinkyone into “better known” tribal groups in order for the proposed and currently federally unrecognized California Indian tribes to qualify for federal recognition (Rhoades 2008:2).

Harriet L. Rhoades is of Coast Pomo, Coast Yuki, Sinkyone, Wailaki, and Wintu descent whose family includes members of the Bells (descendant of the Sinkyone informant Sally Bell, see Chapter IV). She is a California Indian elder whose goal is to educate the public about the true histories of Northern Californian Indian tribes as a way to encourage a greater understanding and respect for Californian Indian peoples. She has thoughtfully addressed the idea of Native identity and argued for her Sinkyone identity in her 2008 article, *Relevance of ‘Sinkyone’ to Local Peoples’ Cultural Heritage Explained*. Rhoades (2008:2) states, “It is important to understand and appreciate these cultural

differences and to recognize that the cultures of all California Indian Tribes are equally unique, beautiful, and important.”

Rhoades asks her readers and critics to address the idea of “knowing.” This necessitates the confrontation of personal and group identity and asks if anyone has the right to give or take away someone else’s identity. In these acts of archaeological and historical investigation some professionals believe that they are obligated to present the truth as they have scientifically interpreted it, even if it does not agree with Native American beliefs. This type of approach can inadvertently, or purposefully, attempt to rip away Native American culture, identity, rights, and strip them of their past and culture.

The work of Rhoades has been influential to the perspective expressed in this thesis concerning this issue. Rhoades provides the perspective of someone who is a Sinkyone descendant and advocate for her culture and people. She discusses the Sinkyone as a living people who “are among us today” (Rhoades 2008:2). She says that people that “attempt to dismiss the accounts of (their) Indian ancestors are often those who are unable to understand the significance, or unwilling to discern the relevance, of the informant’s statements- or those who resent having their misguided views about Indian culture refuted by the informants greater cultural knowledge” (Rhoades 2008:2-3). This is a “hot-button” issue that has the potential to divide and stress personal and professional relationships for many people. It is presented here simply as a culturally relevant and important issue that needs to be acknowledged, addressed and considered academically.

## Conclusion

Native America faces a historic and ongoing challenge of dealing with outsiders who try and define how they should react to their history. Healing from the tragedies related to California Indian genocide requires addressing the many manifestations of trauma, including the lack of recognition of the trauma. The process of decolonization and healing is difficult because both take place at multiple scales and are intertwined with the individual and the community (Middleton 2008:442). The genocidal events of California occurred very recently, within the last 150 years, and the results of those events are entrenched in institutions and patterns of colonialism that continue today.

This thesis focused on the genocide of the Sinkyone people and how the aftermath of genocide affects the survivors. The study of genocide is a worthwhile endeavor for several reasons,

Decency demands that even long after the deaths of the victims, we preserve the truth of what befell them, so that their memory can be honored and the repetition of similar crimes deterred. Justice demands that even long after the perpetrators have vanished, we document the crimes that they and their advocates have too often concealed, denied, or suppressed. Finally, historical veracity demands that we carefully examine the Native American demographic catastrophe, in all its varied aspects and causes, in order to better understand formative events in both Native American and United States history. [Madley 2015:133-134]

It was never a goal of this thesis to try and propose any “solutions” to these issues but instead to shed light on the reality of Native northwestern California and the aftermath of that history. It is hoped that this study is sufficient to educate people and generate recognition of California’s inhumane past and that it will also encourage people

to address our collective colonial legacy and actively participate in the process of decolonization and help in the processes of revitalization, rebuilding, and remunerating California Indian communities.

The history of this place inextricably links the lives and deaths of many people. The lives of any Sinkyone descendants will forever remain connected to this locality as a place of great loss but also as a place of persistence and survival. It is the author's hope that this thesis has not only introduced the tragic truths of California's past, but also the Sinkyone people, as well as introduced new ideas, such as heritage landscapes and genocide studies.

The meaning and significance of this site to the descendants of the Bear River Band at Rohnerville Rancheria is great, but it is also unknowable. It is unknowable to someone who is not a direct descendant of a survivor of genocide. It is unknowable to someone who is not a California Indian having to deal with the repercussions of colonialism in your everyday life. While the Native significance of Benbow may be unknowable to a non-Indian the truth of what happened in northwestern California is a human rights issue to which all people should be able to understand and sympathize. Today, Benbow provides a place of connection and a space to share traditional knowledge for the descendants of the Sinkyone. It also serves as an example of survival, the ability to adapt to change, perseverance, and it can also inspire hope, pride and encouragement for everyone.

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## APPENDIX

February 4, 2017

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Alturas, Ca 96101

Carly Marino  
The Library, Special Collections  
Humboldt State University  
One Harpst Street  
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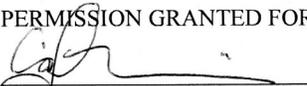
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