



# BENNETT VALLEY VOICE

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BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 1985

## BVHA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

David A. Steiner, President  
Bill McIver, Vice President  
Tamara Boulton, Secretary  
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Dona Moberly  
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## MEMO FROM THE BOARD

**ELECTIONS:** Every year three of your 9 member board is up for re-election in the fall. This year those seeking re-election are Tamara Boulton, Nancy Batson, and Dona Moberly. Tamara has stated she would like to continue serving, Nancy has said maybe, and Dona said no. Other BVHA members are welcome to nominate themselves or other members. The election will be held at our monthly meeting on OCTOBER 16. We need your vote and support.

**ROAD CONSTRUCTION:** Anyone who has travelled to town recently has surely seen the re-construction of the B.V. road and Yulupa Ave. intersection. The City of Santa Rosa is up-grading the stretch of B.V. Road between Bethards Ave. and Yulupa. As part of this effort, Yulupa Ave will become the through road in both directions while B.V. Road will be modified. When your board first heard of the plan, a stop sign was proposed on B.V. Road at the intersection. We were able to convince the City to allow a "free right" lane in the south-eastern direction. We are told safety will be improved with the re-alignment.

**BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION:** Additional construction will proceed in June, 1986 at the B.V. Road bridge over Matanzas Creek. A new bridge will be built adjacent to the narrow existing one and several dangerous curves of the road in that area will be straightened. Your board has followed this project closely also. Hopefully, both the bridge and Yulupa intersection projects will reduce traffic accidents which are common at those locations.

**CURRENT ISSUES:** Annadel access, the second unit ordinance, and the county General Plan update. The board is following these issues.

## THE POMO INDIANS OF BENNETT VALLEY

The research for the following article was obtained from the Northwest Information Center for California Archaeological Research at Sonoma State University; a report by Brian Paul Wikstom, B.A., June 1985 on the archaeological investigation of prehistoric sites at Matanzas Creek; and a "Handbook of the Indians of California" by A.L. Kroeber by Dover 1976 originally published in 1925.

The Pomo Indians, one of California's best known tribes, inhabited Bennett Valley with the exception of an area from Bennett Mountain eastward where the Wappo Indians lived. Like most California tribes, the Pomos were a peaceful people having only feudal battles with their Wappo neighbors. The climate was moderate with a great variety of food available year round perhaps contributing to a more peaceful coexistence.

The largest concentration of Pomos in this region were along the Russian River. The Indians would gather together in large villages in the winter and disperse in family groups over the countryside in the summers. Their shelters were built on the sunny open slopes and meadow like valleys. Rivers were boundaries separating one family group from another. They did not inhabit the Redwood groves as they provided little food but preferred the open slopes, oak clustered knolls, and access to rivers and lakes.

The Bennett Valley Pomos were of the southern dialect group, one of 7 dialectical groups covering the North Coast, Russian River Valley and Clear Lake areas. Dialects were one strong determining factor in relating one tribe to another. There are 10 Pomo groups throughout California from the northern to southern border. This southern dialect group was called Bitakomtara and covered 200 square miles of the Santa Rosa area from Mark West Creek in the north, to the east by Sonoma Canyon, Bear Creek, Mayacamas Mountains and the peak of Sonoma Mountain, to the south by an east west direction just north of Cotati and west by Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Over the past 20 years as many as 30 excavations have been explored in this area historically known as Llano de Santa Rosa. As development continues -- so does the research.

Food was plentiful in Bennett Valley. Fishing was done on the creeks and deer and elk were

hunted with bow and arrow -- rabbits taken with snares. Summer and winter trips were made to the coast for fish, clams, and other seafood. Blackberries, manzanita and grape provided fruit through the summer months. Wild potato, clover and medicinal herbs were gathered here. During the fall acorns were gathered and were a major food source. Obsidian and basalt were readily available as a source for tool making.

Basketry was a highly advanced craft as well as an industry for the Pomo. Their color schemes were simple but the varied use of coiling and twining techniques excels that of most other Indian tribes.

Other occupations shared among men and women included making beads, bows and arrows, stone tools; that of medicine or herb doctor, gambler, sportsmen and storytellers; all giving an individual status in the community and an added income. The Pomo also supplied most of the money to central California in the form of clam shells. The shells were ground round, bored through the center, polished, and strung. The older the strand the more valuable, age added a patina not obtainable by polishing. The diameter of the shells indicating social status as well.

The clothing of these people was minimal. The men either wore none or wrapped skins from the waist. The women also either wore none or a double skirt of deer hide or shredded inner bark of the redwood, willow, or tule rush. Only occasionally did they wear footgear woven of tule rushes or made of skin. The men wore decorated ear tubes and pierced their noses. Marriage was a matter of exchanging gifts rather than a purchase agreement. A newly married couple would live with inlaws of both sides until the first child was born and then they would make their own home. Polygamy was practiced although the status of Pomo women was high in the community as they were admitted into religious ceremonies and held political positions as well. Religion was Shamanistic with ceremonies towards animals and nature. Mythologically speaking they believed in a high and wise deity called Madumda, in the sky, whose younger brother, the coyote, enterprising and mischievous, formerly roamed the earth, begot children, fanned a world fire, created human beings, stole the sun for them and transferred animal into their present condition. The Coyote being the real creator.

The dead were mostly burned. Many tools were made by the Pomo and among some found in this area are drills for bead making, mortar and pestles, bone awls, hammerstones, a wide variety of obsidian and basalt points varying in size according to use. This was obviously a highly developed craft due to the availability of materials.

Two very interesting dating methods are used today for dating obsidian tools. One is the Obsidian Hydration dating method and the other is X-ray Fluorescence analysis of Obsidian. Tom Origer, coordinator of the Hydration Lab at the University, says they have found points in the Santa Rosa area dating back 6,000 years with the hydration method used in conjunction with radio carbon dating. Newly exposed surfaces of obsidian will absorb moisture from the outside surface inwards and this hydration layer is microscopically measurable. The older the point the deeper the hydration layer can be. Temperature and chemical composition of the obsidian are available affecting the hydration rate also. X-ray Fluorescence is the analysis of the composition of obsidian. This helps in determining the hydration rate and the origins of the obsidian, which area it came from.

Many thanks to the staff at the Archaeological Research center at the University. They were most helpful.

Marilyn Franc



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