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Puvunga and Point Conception: A Comparative Study of Southern California Indian Traditionalism

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Contemporary anthropological research in many world regions demonstrates how groups construct ethnic or cultural identities for themselves, particularly in the midst of larger societies. The case of Puvunga in southern California offers interesting examples of how anthropological scholarship may have an impact on ethnogenic processes. Interpretations of the Puvunga tradition are traced over a span of nearly two centuries, showing that twentieth century anthropologists offered differing reconstructions of the location, nature, and cultural impact of Puvunga. Some of these interpretations have proven crucial to the ethnogenic aspirations of certain social groups, especially Native Americans. While some anthropological interpretations of Puvunga currently enjoy wide popularity, all observers should be cautious about ascribing objective reality to these, or any, reconstructions of Puvunga. Anthropologists, in particular, need to understand better how their research models, advanced initially as provisional academic constructs, may take on wholly different functions among groups seeking to forge ethnic or cultural identities.

ARE cultural identities clearly bounded, autonomous constructs that can be described in a relatively objective way by anthropologists? Historically, many practitioners of anthropology have probably assumed as much. On the other hand, as Field (1999) suggested, some anthropologists have rejected this essentialist approach in favor of much more relativistic views of how ethnic or cultural traditions are defined. Recent anthropological research in many regions of the world demonstrates that construction of ethnic or cultural identities is far more fluid and purposive, particularly as groups actively negotiate identities for themselves within larger societal contexts (e.g., Handler and Linnekin 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Haley and Wilcoxon 1997; Haley 1999).

Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) demonstrated processes of this kind in California, documenting the recent rise of Chumash Indian "Traditionalism" as an informative case study of ethnogenesis. Yet the Chumash case is not an isolated phenomenon. The ethnohistorical entity of Puvunga in southern California offers additional examples of ethnogenesis.

As in the case of the Chumash and the concept of the Western Gate documented by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997), anthropological research on Puvunga seems likely to foster Gabriellino Indian Traditionalism. As with Haley and Wilcoxon (1997, 1998), we attempt herein to illuminate the crucial impact that anthropological research can have on emergent Traditionalism, including the role in which anthropologists sometimes find themselves cast—willingly or not—as authenticators of Native American Traditionalism. We believe that the challenges and dilemmas for the practice of California anthropology and archaeology posed by cases such as Puvunga deserve wider recognition and discussion.

For convenient reference, we use the term "ethnogenic processes" to describe interactions between individuals or groups seeking ethnic or cultural recognition and the audiences from whom they hope to receive this recognition as well as various kinds of tangible support. As Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) stressed under the rubric of "Traditionalism," the essence of these processes is a negotiation of symbols, ideologies, and practices that are not only rec-

ognizable by broad audiences as distinctively Indian, but are also useful for advancing various objectives held by mainstream societal groups. Briefly, Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) showed how a constellation of symbols, ideologies, and academic interpretations was assembled over the last 30 years to promote what is now widely perceived as Chumash Indian Traditionalism, which has served as a potent weapon in economic and political struggles between rival Chumash groups and has been used by non-Indians to promote their own social, ideological, political, economic, or academic objectives:

Anthropologists' remembering, forgetting, and imagining shapes the interpretations of the Chumash past that the public comes to use. Powell, Kroeber, Harrington, and Olson named the Chumash, defined their culture on the basis of a particular epoch, and set their boundaries in time and space. Subsequent anthropologists forgot the arbitrary origins of the category "Chumash" and constructed an image of a bounded, continuous, and persistent culture culminating in today's Chumash Traditionalism. These same scholars promote Chumash Traditionalism through an assumption of persistence, the use of primitivist imagery, and the practice of archaeological monitoring for the shared purpose of achieving a higher standard of archaeological heritage preservation (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997:775).

Following this analysis, the Traditionalist movement has its origins not in an ancient cultural past but in sources as disparate as environmental activism, New Age spiritualism, Roman Catholic liturgy, and the pan-Indian movement.

Resistance to construction of a Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) storage facility near Point Conception, Santa Barbara County, from 1978 to 1980, was cited by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) as a defining event in the emergence of Chumash Traditionalism. Although a coalition of Indians, local landowners, environmentalists, and anthropologists denounced this project, the centerpiece of the opposition movement was the claim that the LNG facility would encroach upon Point Conception, a locality said to be sacred to practitioners of Traditional Chumash religion. The crux of this claim was that Point Concep-

tion formed the "Western Gate" of Chumash cosmology, a portal through which the spirits of the Chumash dead passed on their way to the afterlife. The evidence offered in support of this assertion was an interpretation of information offered by one Chumash respondent earlier in this century to John P. Harrington, a prolific California Indian ethnographer. Based on an examination of Harrington's unpublished field notes, this one respondent never used the term "Western Gate"; rather, it is modern anthropologists who have identified Point Conception as the so-called "Western Gate." Following repetition of this interpretation in numerous news accounts and scholarly reports, Point Conception came to be perceived by many Indians, anthropologists, and members of the public as a sacred site of immense cultural significance to Chumash Traditionalists (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997:769-770).

Turning to a detailed analysis of the evidence offered in support of these claims, Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) found no reference whatsoever to a Western Gate in the cited ethnographic data, and only the most ambiguous indications that the key informant in question considered Point Conception a sacred place. Interviews by Haley and Wilcoxon of some of the parties involved in the LNG resistance, as well as accounts of spirit world "gates" or "portals" published in environmentalist and New Age literature before and after the LNG episode, point persuasively to popular forms of contemporary spiritualism as the source of the Western Gate concept (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997:769-775).

The carefully detailed study by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) leaves little doubt that the identification of Point Conception as a sacred locality emerged ultimately from highly subjective interpretations of a small group of contemporary anthropologists and Indians, rather than from a body of clearly established historical or ethnographic facts. Even so, "Save the Western Gate" became not only emblematic of Chumash Traditionalism but also an emotionally charged rallying cry for a wide range of groups opposed to the LNG project. Launched initially by special interest groups, environmental

activists, and local landowners, the movement opposing the LNG project recruited Indians willing to press these claims against development.

Whatever one's assessment of these developments, the case documented by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) clearly illuminates one salient point: Even the most obscure, fragmentary, and ambiguous ethnographic and archaeological information, given interpretive direction by as few as one or two professional researchers, can have profound impacts in the context of Native American ethnogenic aspirations as well as the larger ideological, political, and economic forces that such interpretations may be drawn into.

A recent controversy surrounding archaeological investigations on the campus of California State University, Long Beach (CSULB), shows striking parallels to the Santa Barbara example. We undertake a comparison of these two cases with a dual purpose in mind. First, the CSULB case shows that the dynamics described by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) are by no means anecdotal or isolated occurrences. Second, we suggest that Haley and Wilcoxon have opened an avenue of discussion that deserves far more attention, particularly as California archaeologists and anthropologists seek to integrate their work with public policy mandates aimed at conserving cultural heritage.

PUVUNGA

Registers at Mission San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano note Puvunga and various cognates as a native *ranchería*. Southern California Indians identified Puvunga to Spanish clerics as the birthplace of the prophet Chinigchinich and a religious movement led by him. In recent years, the Gabrielino Indians have been identified by many scholars with the origins of the Puvunga tradition. Since the nineteenth century, Puvunga has been attributed to several locations. During the last 25 years, archaeological sites located on or near the campus of CSULB have been linked to Puvunga. However, it is not our purpose here to resolve this long-standing debate by offering yet another opinion about the ac-

tual location of Puvunga. As described below, the character and location of Puvunga are less certain than many have concluded, and the efforts herein are aimed at examining the nature of the available evidence and the extent to which it will support reasoned conclusions.

Our interest in Puvunga as an ethnogenic phenomenon began as part of the preparation of an archaeological management plan for the CSULB campus (Raab and Boxt 1995). The history of anthropological interpretations related to Puvunga was an obvious aspect of archaeological preservation planning on the CSULB campus. Boxt (1998a, 1998b, 1998c) also directed a series of archaeological excavations and laboratory analyses of campus sites between 1993 and 1996. After these duties were completed, however, we were left with the conviction that cases such as Puvunga offer valuable insights regarding the participation of anthropologists in the genesis of California Indian Traditionalism. Like Haley and Wilcoxon (1997), we came to realize that ethnogenic processes are reliant to a significant degree on the authentication of emergent cultural traditions by anthropologists and anthropological data. It is this anthropological component of ethnogenesis that we wish to focus on in the present case study.¹

In a fashion that has some parallels to the Western Gate and its role in promoting Chumash Traditionalism, Indians and anthropologists have recently claimed that the campus of CSULB contains part of the Gabrielino Indian village of Puvunga, a place widely regarded as sacred to the Gabrielino as the birthplace of Chinigchinich, prophet and inspiration for the enigmatic native religion bearing his name.

Similar to Point Conception and the LNG controversy, CSULB became the focal point of protests and legal challenges by Indians, anthropologists, and others after university officials announced a feasibility study to develop portions of campus terrain. It is not our purpose here to review every detail of this history, but rather to provide a context in which the CSULB case may be compared with the

situation described by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997), particularly with regard to how Traditionalism has been manipulated by interpretations of ethnographic and archaeological data.

Nor does the space available here permit a detailed discussion of Gabrielino Indian history and culture (readers may consult Kroeber [1925:620-635]; Johnston [1962]; Bean and Smith [1978]; Johnson [1988]; McCawley [1996]). Here, we simply note that the arrival of Spanish colonists in southern California beginning in 1769 accelerated the destruction of native Californian societies, including the Gabrielino. In that year, the Portolá expedition passed through southern California, spearheading the construction of a chain of missions that would eventually extend from San Diego to Sonoma. In 1771, the Mission San Gabriel was established on the Los Angeles Plain, with the intent to convert the Indians to Christianity and to train them in the European tradition of agriculture. This mission lent the name Gabrielino to the native peoples of the region.

Twentieth-century scholars have traced Gabrielino cultural influence primarily on the basis of fragmentary demographic, ethnographic, historical, and linguistic data, as well as information collected by a disparate group of ecclesiastics, soldiers, travelers, and local residents. These sources suggest that at the time of European contact, the Gabrielino people occupied much of present-day Los Angeles County, portions of northern Orange County, and the southern Channel Islands. The mainland Gabrielino population at the time of contact appears to have occupied perhaps 100 major communities or *rancherías* containing 50 to 100 inhabitants each (Bean and Smith 1978).

Unfortunately, the lifeways of the Gabrielino prior to European contact remain poorly known. Long before scholarly studies could be initiated, the Gabrielino culture had been largely obliterated by disease, oppression, and cultural assimilation. Indeed, scholars have lamented that the paucity of information about the precontact Gabrielino is particularly severe:

They certainly were the wealthiest and most thoughtful of all the Shoshoneans of the State, and dominated these civilizationally wherever contacts occurred. Their influence spread even to alien peoples. They have melted away so completely that we know more of the fine facts of the culture of ruder tribes . . . [Kroeber 1925:621].

Several other factors make it difficult to identify authoritative sources of information on Gabrielino culture from contemporary Indian commentators. Although state and local governmental agencies may regard some individuals or groups as Gabrielino, this recognition does not preclude the possibility that other individuals, who are not acknowledged by public agencies, also consider themselves Gabrielino. In addition, academic researchers may identify certain individuals as Gabrielino descendants. Any of these individuals and organizations may be recognized as Gabrielino or Gabrielino Traditionalists for various purposes. It is not our intent in the present discussion to determine who is Gabrielino, nor do we regard ourselves as qualified to do so. The main point here is that, however groups or individuals come to be identified as Gabrielino, establishing a Gabrielino Traditionalist identity is an important prerequisite for obtaining cultural legitimacy in the eyes of the public, wielding political influence, and gaining employment as monitors in contract archaeological research projects. One of the most potent ways of asserting Indian identity is to claim a connection with places and practices that were sacred to the Gabrielino prior to European contact. The continuity with the past that is implied by connections to Puvunga offers a forceful argument in favor of the legitimacy or authenticity of current claims of Gabrielino Traditionalist identity.

The present discussion centers on CSULB and locations immediately adjoining the campus, including the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens. This park commemorates the era of the Spanish and Mexican ranchos, and the early American occupation of the region that followed. The 319-acre (127.6-ha.) campus of CSULB is situated less than one-half mile (0.81 km.) east of the park in the Los Altos community of the city of

Long Beach, Los Angeles County, about 20 miles (32.6 km.) southeast of downtown Los Angeles (Figs. 1 and 2).

We hasten to add that the CSULB and LNG controversies differ in important respects. First, the CSULB campus has long been the object of archaeological investigations, and these studies have an important bearing on the case study at hand. A second difference is that, more than 20 years ago, two archaeological loci on the campus were listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as the "Puvunga Indian Village Sites." It may be instructive to look briefly at these developments before considering the ethnogenic parallels between the CSULB and LNG disputes.

CSULB ARCHAEOLOGY AND PUVUNGA

As noted previously, the CSULB case differs from the LNG argument in that archaeological considerations played a direct role in establishing extant understandings of Puvunga. Archaeological sites located on the CSULB campus have been the object of recurrent investigation and debate since 1960, focusing for the most part on relatively technical archaeological questions, rather than issues related to Indian religion or sacred sites. Researchers were concerned essentially with determining how many archaeological sites existed on campus terrain, their precise locations, and the extent to which these sites retained their contextual integrity. Between 1960 and 1979, Keith Dixon of the CSULB Department of Anthropology reconnoitered the campus, compiling an inventory of suspected archaeological sites from a surface survey. The stated purpose for this project was

to aid the Office of Physical Planning and Development in early on-campus planning in order to facilitate conformity to provisions of CEQA and NEPA by anticipating potential problems, as well as to protect the remaining archaeological resources on campus [Dixon 1977:1].

In all, Dixon identified 22 archaeological loci or suspected prehistoric cultural deposits on the campus. Dixon's catalogue of finds encompassed 12

potential or suspected artifact scatters and 10 recorded archaeological sites (also see Boxt 1998a). Over the next two decades, various of these sites or localities were test excavated by archaeologists employed by CSULB as part of campus improvement plans.

In the meantime, Dixon (1974) was instrumental in placing two campus sites (CA-LAN-234 and -235) and one off-campus site (CA-LAN-306) on the NRHP, citing archaeological and ethnographic criteria that, in his view, identified all three sites as components of the Gabrielino Indian village of Puvunga. The off-campus site, CA-LAN-306, is part of the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens mentioned above. As discussed below, CA-LAN-306 takes on considerable importance to the present case because since the 1930s, it had been identified by some scholars as the location of Puvunga. Following the 1974 NRHP listing, a portion of site CA-LAN-234 was set aside for commemorative purposes, including a sign that reads: "Gabrielino Indians once inhabited this site, Puvunga, Birthplace of Chungichnish, Law-Giver and God."

The CA-LAN-235 site was subject to extensive archaeological testing for nine years. Between 1978 and 1986, CA-LAN-235 was the scene of five archaeological excavation and/or monitoring projects (Scientific Resource Surveys 1979, 1980, 1986a, 1986b; Bonner 1984). These projects employed a wide range of techniques, including soil auger bores, test pits, and extensive, machine-excavated trenches. Examination of reports produced by these projects shows that little of the defined site area remains unexplored by archaeologists. By the 1980s, organic gardening plots were planted on part of CA-LAN-235 by individuals from the campus and the community at large.

It is also worth noting that in 1972 workmen employed by a construction contractor found parts of a single human skeleton while trenching near CA-LAN-235. A subsequent study concluded that the skeleton is that of an adult male, buried at an unknown time in the past. This conclusion is based on

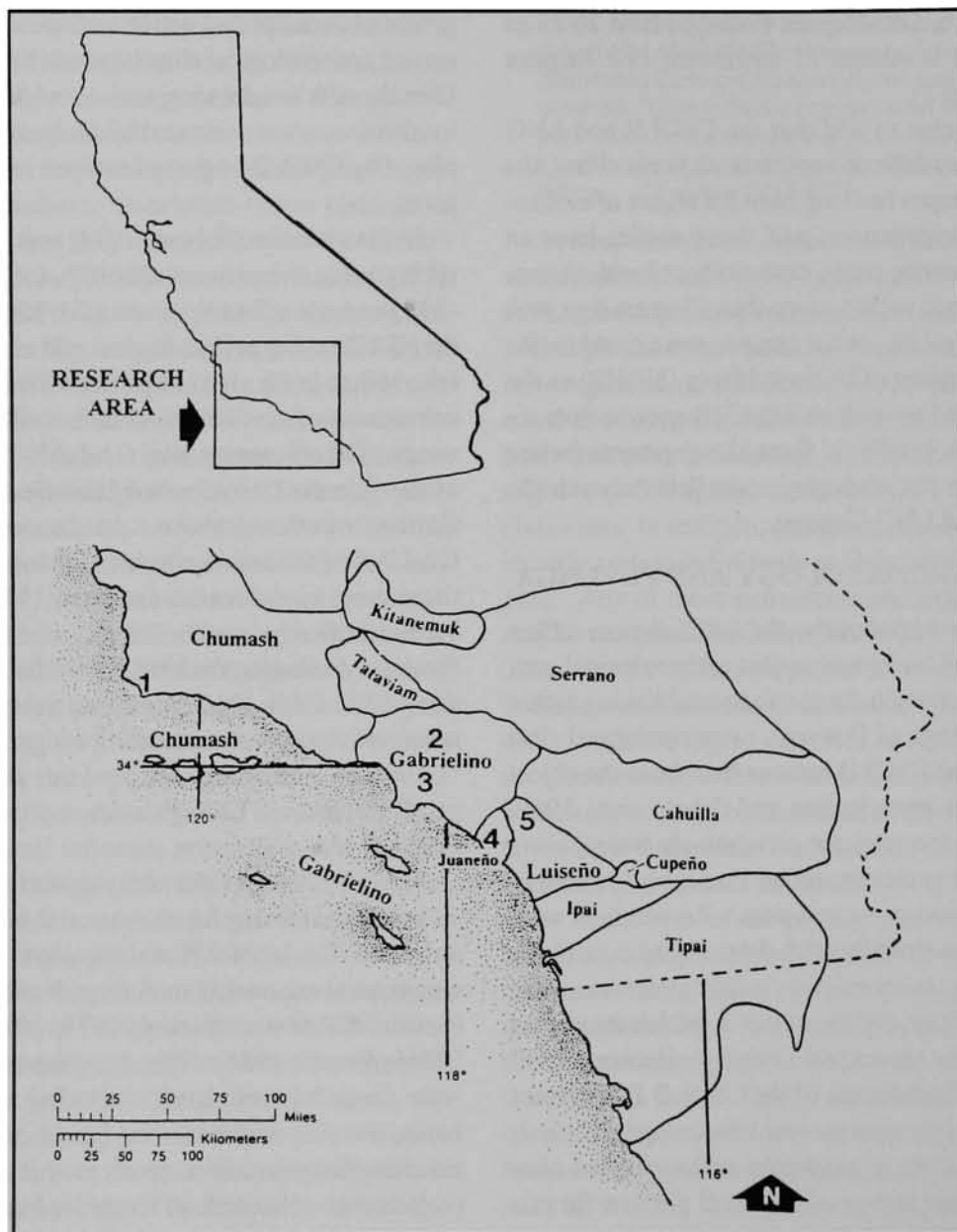


Fig. 1. Diagrammatic map of southern California tribal areas (adapted from Heizer 1978: ix), which includes locations mentioned in text: (1) Point Conception; (2) San Gabriel Mission; (3) California State University, Long Beach; (4) Mission San Juan Capistrano; (5) Lake Elsinore.

a two-page report appended to the archaeological site survey record form for CA-LAN-235, currently on file at the University of California, Los Angeles, South Central Coastal Information Center. It has widely been assumed that the skeleton was that of a

prehistoric Native American, although the report did not draw such a conclusion. The question of whether this burial was of a prehistoric Native American is not the central issue, however. The crucial aspect of this discovery is that it eventually

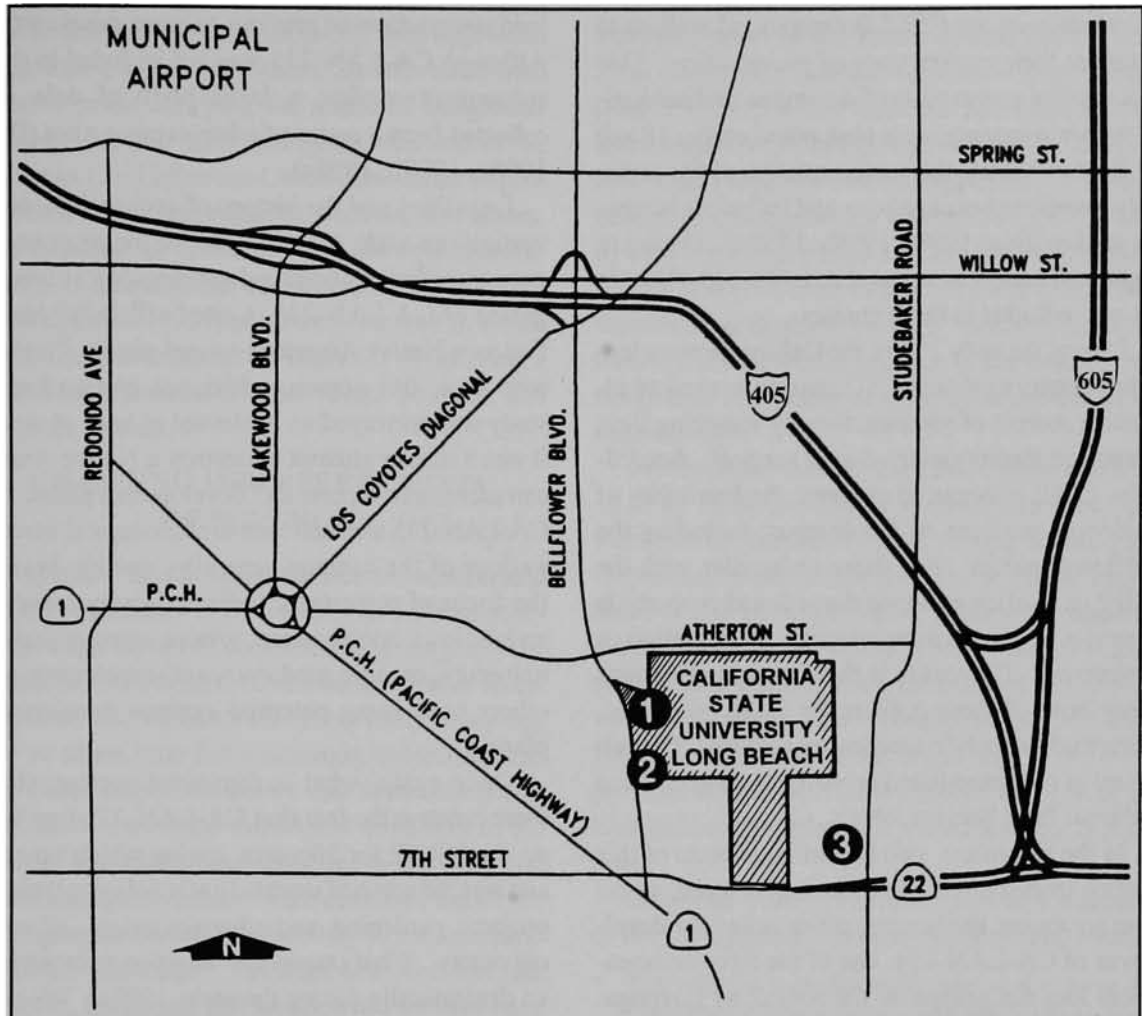


Fig. 2. Locations of the three Puvunga Indian village sites nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974: (1) CA-LAN-235; (2) CA-LAN-234; (3) CA-LAN-306, the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens. California State University, Long Beach, is indicated within shaded area. (Map not to scale.)

helped to reinforce interpretations of an on-campus Puvunga *village*. Even if this burial was that of a prehistoric Native American, the existence of a single, apparently isolated interment, the contextual uncertainties raised by repeated archaeological testing of CA-LAN-235, and the lack of detailed documentation of the skeleton's discovery and excavation, make it difficult to draw secure conclusions about the nature of the cultural deposits of the site.

Over a span of the last 25 years, then, a host of events materially affected sites CA-LAN-234 and

-235. What is remarkable in retrospect is that there is no record that these activities were met with resistance or complaint from Indians, anthropologists, or the public. This picture began to change dramatically in about 1992. The university was ready to embark on large-scale improvement projects, including construction at several campus locations. This initiative required that a fresh round of cultural resource management studies and field investigations be undertaken, in order to resolve the ambiguity about the locations and number of archaeo-

logical sites on the CSULB campus, as well as to document their current state of preservation. This work entailed preparation of a campus archaeological resource management plan noted earlier (Raab and Boxt 1995) and the implementation of the previously mentioned excavations and technical laboratory studies (Boxt 1998a, 1998b, 1998c). Owing to heightened concerns about CA-LAN-235, this site was not included in these studies.

During the early 1990s, the California state legislature encouraged each CSU campus to explore alternative sources of revenue, thereby lessening their reliance on traditional tax-based support. Accordingly, CSULB began to evaluate the feasibility of developing portions of the campus, including the Bellflower parcel. For those unfamiliar with the NRHP, it is often assumed that a listed property is categorically exempt from scientific investigation or development. The reality is that federal regulations permit both of these options for listed properties. Appropriate scientific studies are required if development of a register-listed property is contemplated (National Park Service 1991).

In the meantime, two important aspects of this situation tended to escape wide notice. First, as far as we are aware, the campus never called for development of CA-LAN-234, one of the three archaeological loci designated on the NRHP as Puvunga. Second, many either forgot or never knew that the other listed site on campus, CA-LAN-235, had been the object of the extensive archaeological test excavations and other activities described above. Any impression that CA-LAN-235 was a pristine parcel of undeveloped land was quite mistaken. The objective of the archaeological testing announced in the early 1990s was not to gain a first archaeological evaluation of CA-LAN-235, but rather to resolve a series of questions that lingered from earlier studies. One of the principal questions engaged by the field and laboratory investigations was whether particular localities identified earlier by Dixon and others represented natural deposits of marine shell, intact archaeological deposits, or secondary deposits of prehistoric cultural material introduced by historic

land use practices or previous campus construction. Although CA-LAN-235 was not included in these subsequent studies, a large body of data was collected from a series of other campus sites (Boxt 1998a, 1998b, 1998c).

Legalities and the history of archaeological investigations aside, some questioned the propriety of even considering additional archaeological investigation of CA-LAN-235, a site "officially" identified as a Native American sacred place. To those who took this stance, additional archaeological study was portrayed as irrelevant at best; at worst, it was a sinister attempt to destroy a Native American sacred site in pursuit of development plans. The CA-LAN-235 site, and then archaeological investigations of the campus generally, quickly became the focus of protests by Indians, faculty members and students, homeowners' groups surrounding the university, organic gardeners, anthropologists, and others concerning potential campus development plans.

Once again, what is somewhat curious about these events is the fact that CA-LAN-235 had been on the NRHP for 20 years, during which time the site was the scene of repeated archaeological testing projects, gardening, and other activities—all without outcry. What caused this situation to be altered so dramatically during the early 1990s? We suggest that much like the rallying cry "Save the Western Gate" had done in the LNG resistance, the slogan "Save Puvunga" galvanized a disparate set of interest groups into a protest movement. Again, like the Western Gate/Point Conception incident, the force of this movement was achieved by bringing together a broad coalition of protesters, including individuals representing a range of Gabrielino organizations, local homeowners opposed to more traffic and other undesirable effects of campus development, gardeners outraged at the loss of their handiwork, merchants who feared economic competition from commercial development of the campus, members of the pan-Indian movement who viewed the CSULB case as another assault on Native American traditions, Australian aborigines who

came to demonstrate their solidarity with oppressed indigenous people everywhere, an activist Roman Catholic priest decrying the abuse of indigenous peoples, advocate anthropologists, members of the American Civil Liberties Union determined to protect Native American religious freedom, and others. This spectrum of protestors was not only remarkable for its diversity, but also as testimony to Haley and Wilcoxon's (1997) point that one way in which Traditionalism achieves its impact is by offering a channel for expression of other social, political, and economic interests.

CHANGING INTERPRETATIONS OF PUVUNGA

Attempts to determine the actual location and cultural significance of Puvunga is an arduous journey through layers of conflicting and fragmentary evidence. On the surface, the succession of interpretations and accounts that form this journey appear to share little but a common subject matter. Yet, closer inspection shows that these interpretations share a common thread that continues to the present. The exact location of this community and its archaeological remains were unknown until J. P. Harrington announced his discovery to the academic world 60 years ago: Puvunga had been located. However, the nature and location of Puvunga have been a source of interest since the late eighteenth century, and are at the heart of a recent controversy over contemplated development at CSULB.

Fray Gerónimo Boscana

Some of the first accounts of California Indian religion and cosmology were recorded by Spanish clerics, who were motivated by a desire to replace native religion with Christian beliefs. One of the most detailed of these accounts was penned around 1822 by Fray Gerónimo Boscana, who recorded his observations of Indian life in a manuscript that was not translated until many years after his death. Although Boscana's work is commonly referred to simply as *Chinigchinich*, the correct title is *Relación Histórica de la creencia, usos, costumbres, y*

extravagancias de los Indios de esta Misión de S. Juan Capistrano, llamada la Nación Acagchemen (Heizer 1976a). Alfred Robinson published an English translation of *Chinigchinich* in 1846; however, Robinson's copy has since disappeared. A modern edition of *Chinigchinich* appeared in 1933, edited by Phil Townsend Hanna and annotated by John P. Harrington (Boscana 1933). Kroeber (1925:636) described the Boscana tome as "easily the most intensive and best written account of the customs and religion of any group of California Indians in the mission days."

Stationed at Mission San Juan Capistrano from 1812 to 1826, Boscana's account was based primarily on his missionary work among Juaneño and Gabrielino Indian neophytes. The principal importance of this work for Native American religion is a description of the rituals and beliefs associated with the Chinigchinich cult, elements of which were widespread among native peoples in southern California during the early historical era. It is not our purpose here to provide a detailed account of the Chinigchinich religion, but a brief account is pertinent.

Bean and Vane (1978:669) offered a summary of the Chinigchinich system of beliefs and rituals:

The religion is traditionally supposed to have diffused from Pubunga (near Long Beach) in Gabrielino territory where a shamanlike hero named Chingichngish taught a new body of beliefs that became syncretized with preexisting beliefs and practices. He was assimilated into Luiseño religious literature as creator of the Luiseño and their laws and ceremonies, after he had transformed the people created by *wiyó ʔ*, the earlier creator, into spirits. He provided a more explicitly moral normative order than had hitherto prevailed and enforced this order by creating a new class of spirits, the "avengers" (rattlesnake, spider, tarantula, bear, sting ray, raven), who were assigned to watch that people obeyed his laws and to punish wrongdoers.

Bean and Vane (1978:669) suggested that Chinigchinich may be one of several crisis movements that swept California and other regions of native North America in response to disruptions brought about by contact with Europeans:

A second variation on the toloache religious system was the Chingichngish religion, which may have developed from conditions arising from European contact, perhaps a "crisis cult" developed in reaction to European diseases that were decimating Gabrielino and Luiseño groups prior to 1776. Others have theorized that this branch of the toloache religion developed as a result of contact with Christian deserters or castaways, since many of its central features are reminiscent of Christian themes.

Boscana was much more interested in Indian customs and ritual, however, than ascertaining the exact location of Puvunga. To say that Boscana identified Puvunga as existing on a tract that now contains the CSULB campus is unjustified. Boscana's interest in recording the location of Puvunga was in identifying the place where his informants told him the Chinigchinich religion was born under the influence of the Indian prophet of the same name. The Boscana manuscript places Puvunga about eight leagues (roughly 21 miles) northeast of Mission San Juan Capistrano.

Hugo Reid

During the last century, brief references to Puvunga surfaced in the writings of Hugo Reid, an early Scottish resident of Los Angeles. In a letter published in the *Los Angeles Star* on February 21, 1852, Reid stated that Pubug-na, located at Alamitos, was a principal Gabrielino lodge or ranchería (Heizer 1968:7-8). Reid undoubtedly derived much of his information about Gabrielino history and customs from his wife, Victoria, a Gabrielino Indian, and from friends, including B. D. Wilson, Indian Agent for the Southern District of California, and Abel Stearns, who purchased the Rancho Los Alamitos in 1842. In all, these connections suggest to many scholars that Reid's observations about native traditions and site locations, including that of Puvunga, were valid (Dakin 1978). Still, Reid's reference to Puvunga offers little more detail than Boscana's account.

John Peabody Harrington

Initially reported in the San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano mission baptismal registers between 1782 and 1805 (Merriam 1968), the ethno-

graphic ranchería of Puvunga has long been of interest to scholars. This interest, as we noted earlier, stems from the connection of Puvunga to the Chinigchinich phenomenon. It was of some significance when John Peabody Harrington announced over 60 years ago that he had located Puvunga. Marshaling ethnographic, historical, and archaeological data, Harrington, a well-known linguist and ethnographer of California Indian cultures, was the first to assign Puvunga an exact location. Harrington (1933a:149) presented his conclusions about the location of Puvunga in his annotation of Boscana's manuscript:

The old Los Alamitos ranch house, remodeled to form the Fred. H. Bixby home, lies two miles southwest of Los Alamitos town, on top of an eastward projecting point of hill at the foot of which the New San Gabriel River runs with southwesterly course through the lowlands, and overlooks the river and La Bolsa Chiquita, which lies to the south beyond the river . . . [T]he ground is covered with shell debris—the remains of the ranchería of 'Puvú', birthplace of Wuyót and . . . [Chinigchinich].

The Los Alamitos ranch house and shell scatter described by Harrington are located today within the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens. The shell deposit is archaeological site CALAN-306, noted above. Harrington clearly considered this location to be Puvu, alias Puvunga. What the casual observer may not perceive, however, is that for Harrington's interpretation to stand, Boscana's description of the location of Puvunga must be substantially "corrected." Recall that Boscana located Puvunga about eight leagues *north-east* of San Juan Capistrano Mission. On the other hand, Harrington located Puvunga at Los Alamitos, about 12 leagues, or 36 miles, to the *west-north-west* of the mission (Harrington 1933a:148). The two descriptions of Puvunga's location represent a fundamental discrepancy between the accounts of Boscana and Harrington.

Harrington (1933a:148) essentially concluded that Boscana was mistaken about the location of Puvunga, despite the cleric's familiarity with Indian informants who had firsthand knowledge of the

myths and rituals associated with the Chinigchinich religion. Harrington decided that the actual location of Puvunga was at the Rancho Los Alamitos/Bixby Ranch House (later to become the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens and archaeological site CA-LAN-306) based on three lines of reasoning: informant interviews, geography, and archaeological evidence.

Harrington (1933b:54) sought the information of older individuals, envisioning them as fast-fading links to a distant past:

Each month that passes is sweeping us farther from the good sources of information on the ancient life of the western Indians. After 80 years of overwhelming contact with the Americans, old informants are now being reduced in number faster than ever before—at a truly alarming rate.

Harrington (1933a:148) related that certain of his Indian informants had identified Los Alamitos as the location of Puvunga:

I visited Puvú village site and spring with Kewen and several years later with Acú. Both of these informants equated this village and spring, and the ranch house on the hill upslope northwest of them, to the Spanish name Los Alamitos, as is already done by Reid. . . . Boscana's "Pubuna" and Reid's "Pubug-na" are for the locative Puvu'ŋa.

These visits to the Rancho Los Alamitos were in the company of José de los Santos Juncos (Kewen) and José de Gracia Cruz (Acú), both Indians associated with the Mission San Juan Capistrano. Harrington (1933a:148) also visited the Bixby Ranch site with Father St. John O'Sullivan of San Juan Capistrano Mission and Miss Magdalena Murillo of San Juan Capistrano (born at La Bolsa Grande, south of Los Alamitos, July 22, 1848), indicating that additional, secondhand information

has also been furnished by the members of the Fred H. Bixby family, and many others, among them Guorojos, a very old informant, who at once said that Puvu is Los Alamitos, and described it as the point of hill north of La Bolsa Chiquita.

Harrington used certain geographic references made by Boscana to justify the identification of Los Alamitos as Puvunga. Harrington (1933a:148) ac-

knowledged that a direct interpretation of Boscana's account would place Puvunga somewhere in the vicinity of Lake Elsinore. However, he offered the following somewhat convoluted refutation of Boscana's directions:

a place called "Sejat," distant N. E. from the mission, seven or eight leagues, and in the middle of a valley, now known by the name of "el Rancho de los Nietos." In this case, Boscana not only gives the Indian name, "Sejat," corresponding to "Pubuna," but gives the Spanish name, "Rancho de los Nietos," well-known placename 12 1-3 miles east-northeast of Los Alamitos ranch house, thus proving that by "N.E." northwest is meant, while the underestimation of the distance from San Juan Capistrano is even greater than in the case of "Pubuna," Boscana giving "Pubuna" as "N.E. about eight leagues" and "el Rancho de los Nietos" (in reality as far or slightly farther than "Pubuna") as "N.E. . . . seven or eight leagues."

In this description, Harrington made a critical correction to Boscana's directions. For Harrington, the reference to Rancho de los Nietos clinched the location of Puvunga, since the Nietos Valley referred to by Boscana is presumably within the land grant awarded by Governor Pedro Fages to José Manuel Nieto in 1784. If the Los Nietos location anchors the whole structure of inference here, then it would be logical to assume Puvunga was actually west-northwest, not northeast, of Mission San Juan Capistrano—thus Harrington's conclusion that Boscana meant northwest as the location of Puvunga. In favor of Harrington's inference, the Nieto land grant, as shown in Cleland (1941:11) did not encompass the Lake Elsinore region. Even so, the Harrington account requires us to conclude that Boscana was confused about the pertinent geographical facts. Inconsistent textual information, coming from two or three versions of the Boscana manuscript, adds to this confused situation. Harrington (1934:57) subsequently claimed to have found the long-lost original Boscana text. Curiously, this version contains no mention of Pubuna, although it does mention *Sejat*:

The place from which those who populated this Mission and its environs came was a land or place called

Seját, at which place or rancheria the inhabitants were called *Pubuim*, which signifies: people of the land or place *Seját* (this place *Seját* is distant from this Mission about 7 or 8 leagues, and it is in the valley which they call Los Nietos Ranch).

For Harrington, then, the combination of evidence offered by native informants, shell debris, and Spanish placenames seemed to indicate that Puvunga had been located at Rancho Los Alamitos. A closer examination of this evidence suggests other possibilities.

It is by no means unanimous among investigators familiar with the evidence that Puvunga and the Chinigchinich tradition can be traced to a single point of origin or an actual messianic individual in the person of Chinigchinich. A broadly distributed mythic tradition, which all authorities agree characterized the Chinigchinich religion in southern California, is one logical explanation for variation in Indian accounts of the location of Puvunga. Concerns of this kind prompted no less a figure than A. L. Kroeber to become a severe critic of Harrington's interpretations of Puvunga. Kroeber was unwilling to dismiss the possibility that the Chinigchinich tradition was of historical origin and based on myth, rather than historical fact. In contrast to this cautious approach, Harrington's account imbues the tradition, including the location of Puvunga, with a degree of finality and literalism that Kroeber believed had little foundation in solid evidence:

Now Harrington . . . says that Chinigchinix-Quoar was a prophet, in other words a man, a human being. He says, moreover, that he was born at Pubu—not that the Indian legend had him born there. Is this an inference drawn by Harrington from Boscana's statements? Or has he possibly collected from the surviving Indians or from some other documentary source hitherto unrevealed information about a particular Gabrielino, perhaps Ouiamot son of Tacu, who turned prophet of a Messianic cult during mission days, the cult surviving him as a retronative one and spreading to other tribes?

This sort of thing might well have happened; if so, we would all like to know the specific account that says so, and from whom it was obtained, so we could judge for ourselves how much of it to accept, and why.

If on the other hand there is no new documentation, and it is simply Harrington's conjecture that Ouiamot was merely one of several hundred . . . Gabrielinos at Pubu who proclaimed himself and was accepted, not only as a prophet and Messiah but as God himself under a name like Changichnich—well, an avowal that the statement was conjectural would at least be informative as to the basic situation, and reasons for belief might be convincing.

Without some further illumination, Harrington's view, though interesting and possible, is wholly unsupported by either evidence or argument, and can be viewed only with reserve [Kroeber 1959:292].

Harrington's informants may have identified a location known to them in connection with the Chinigchinich tradition, but does this identification necessarily preclude the existence of other Puvungas known to other southern California Indian traditions? Apparently not, since an account by Lobo (1977), a Juaneño Indian descendant, follows Boscana's description of the location of Puvunga, placing it in the Lake Elsinore region. At the same time, modern descendants of Gabrielino and Juaneño peoples celebrate their heritage at an annual function at Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens, which they indicate is the Tongva (Gabrielino) site of the ancient village of Puvunga.

Nor does Harrington's rendition necessarily prove the existence of Chinigchinich as a single and actual messianic individual associated with a specific location. Indeed, Harrington's account is problematic in a number of ways. The critical information that Harrington gives in support of his theory constitutes little more than one published page (Harrington 1933a:148-149). Moreover, this information is apparently based on data collected directly from only two Indian informants. There is no indication that Harrington attempted to seek accounts from additional informants that would confirm or alter his conclusions about Puvunga or that his Puvunga research employed any validation methods that contemporary ethnographers consider vital to controlling informant bias. And yet, that such bias or regional differences of tradition might have existed into Harrington's era is suggested by Kroeber's comments above.

What are we to make of these conflicting evidentiary claims? Some might attribute Kroeber's criticisms to clashing personalities or academic rivalry. Just the same, Kroeber's comments make it clear that there has never been unanimity among anthropologists or Indians about the nature and location of Puvunga. Harrington's interpretations may have been more popular than others in recent years, but they can hardly be described as universally accepted by knowledgeable California anthropologists or as objectively established.

Greater Puvunga

An important question arises at this juncture of the discussion: Even if one accepts Harrington's identification of Rancho Los Alamitos (CA-LAN-306) as Puvunga, how did two archaeological sites on the CSULB campus, removed about one-half mile from CA-LAN-306, also come to be regarded as Puvunga? Harrington never identified locations on the present-day campus as Puvunga or even hinted at such a possibility. As we saw above, Harrington assumed that Puvunga was a single, discrete location. To understand how the campus and Los Alamitos became linked under the rubric of Puvunga, we must return once again to the NRHP.

As described earlier, Keith Dixon of CSULB nominated three archaeological sites to the NRHP as "The Puvunga Indian Village Sites," including the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens. This aspect of the nomination was in keeping with Harrington's identification of Rancho Los Alamitos as Puvunga, following the notion that "it is probably safe to identify the legendary and historic site of Puvunga with the actual midden which is visible at Rancho Los Alamitos" (Dixon 1972:2). The way in which Dixon connected this site to the campus, however, departed from any previous understandings of Puvunga.

The crucial linkage between CSULB campus sites and Los Alamitos/CA-LAN-306 was provided by a concept of Puvunga devised by Dixon himself, a notion we call "Greater Puvunga" for ease of reference. Dixon suggested that Puvunga was a vil-

lage whose location had shifted over an unspecified span of time, creating many separate archaeological sites. Following this notion, it seemed to Dixon (1974:2) that Puvunga should be considered a geographically extensive phenomenon:

Puvunga, a village of the extinct Gabrielino Indians, is known in recorded history and in legend both as a prominent village and as the major Gabriolino ceremonial center. Puvunga occupied a low hill in eastern Long Beach, overlooking swamps and marshes that provided abundant wild food resources. At the base of the hill was the major freshwater spring of this region.

Although much of the evidence of the village sites has now been destroyed by construction and other recent activities, archaeological work has shown that remnants of the living areas still exist in at least nine places in an area of about 500 acres. It is probable that the Puvunga village was moved around gradually over time within this small area.

Dixon (1972:2-3) additionally theorized that:

Puvunga was probably at one particular spot only intermittently, and we should perhaps consider the name to apply to a small region. In previous surveys on and around the hill I found and recorded nine sites (LAN-232 through 235, 271, 273 through 275, and 306). If it had not been for loss through construction activity, more sites could have been found. What the archaeologist (in his ignorance) might identify as a number of "separate" sites may well have been a succession of Puvungas.

Greater Puvunga, then, was based partly on Harrington's assignment of Puvunga to Rancho Los Alamitos/CA-LAN-306, but also on an entirely new archaeological twist on the Puvunga tradition in the form of an expansive regional settlement pattern model. One should note here that Harrington made his case for Puvunga based on ethnographic and historical criteria, while Dixon's interpretation relies heavily on a new archaeological dimension. There are many criticisms that can be leveled at the Greater Puvunga concept, but one of the most obvious of these is the absence of archaeological data demonstrating a relationship between the three sites in question. Fundamental to establishing any connections between the sites is the problem of chronology. To this day, it is not clear that these three

sites contain contemporaneous cultural components that would logically connect them with the Chinigchinich tradition.

Boxt (1998a, 1998b, 1998c) obtained over 100 radiocarbon dates from archaeological sites on the CSULB campus, including dates on materials excavated from CA-LAN-235 during the 1980s. These dates show that the vast majority of the prehistoric cultural components currently documented on the campus range in age from about A.D. 900 to 1700. Interestingly enough, the oldest dated cultural components currently known on the campus, dating between $1,640 \pm 70$ and $1,480 \pm 80$ cal. B.C. are derived from CA-LAN-235 (see Table 1).² In other words, as currently known, portions of CA-LAN-235 were occupied at least 2,500 years earlier than virtually all of the other sites presently known on the campus. These early dates do not, of course, preclude the presence of protohistoric or early historical era cultural components at CA-LAN-235. Again, the cultural chronology of CA-LAN-235 remains unresolved, despite previous archaeological testing at the site. By the same token, however, Dixon could not have relied upon chronological data from this site to infer that it was contemporaneous with what is presumably a protohistoric or early historical time frame for Puvunga or that it is contemporaneous with any others in the region of the campus.

This is a matter of crucial interest. Researchers are virtually unanimous in concluding that the Chinigchinich religion was a crisis movement that arose from disruptions to Indian life by the appearance of Europeans in southern California (Bean and Vane 1978; Chartkoff and Chartkoff 1984). The moralistic and messianic elements of Chinigchinich are inconsistent with the shamanistic religions that predominated in native California but bear an obvious resemblance to Christian dogma. Accordingly, most experts believe that the Chinigchinich religion was partly inspired by Christian ideology during the early historical era (Wallace 1977:238). If so, the older an archaeological site is, the less likely it is to be connected with the Chinigchinich tradition. Sites

that are hundreds to thousands of years older than the arrival of Europeans in California (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) could be logically excluded from a role in the Chinigchinich religion. These data suggest just how hazardous it is to assume that the three sites named in the NRHP were all part of the same cultural tradition. The notion that these sites were part of a contemporaneous settlement pattern is increasingly difficult to defend, based on presently available chronological data.

Related doubts can be raised about CA-LAN-306. Identification of CA-LAN-306 as Puvunga is an interpolation that lacks strong archaeological evidence. Zahniser (1974) conducted an excavation of CA-LAN-306 at the city historical park one year before the listing of this and the two campus sites with the NRHP. In his report of this excavation, Zahniser (1974:33) commented that

[t]he evidence suggests that the part of 4-LAN-306 excavated in the summer of 1973 is a much disturbed remnant at the edge of, or at least near to the site inhabited at least intermittently during late prehistoric, protohistoric, or contact times. The relationship between this site and the recently remembered location of Puvunga cannot be clarified by this evidence, a thing I do not think especially important anyhow. Further, the evidence cannot be stretched to determine conclusively without equivocation either the type of site it is a part of or the time period to which it belongs, for the site was disturbed and the quantity of materials remaining from prehistoric times was so small that statistically supported inferences would be of dubious value.

Excavations at CA-LAN-306 have thus far produced scant amounts of prehistoric and historical artifacts (Zahniser 1974), and yet it remains the focus of arguments in favor of locating Puvunga on or near the CSULB campus. The relatively small quantity of artifacts and absence of cultural features found at CA-LAN-306 leave the identity of the site as a permanently occupied village open to debate. Once again, on the basis of evidence of this kind, it is difficult to support a strong inference linking CA-LAN-306 to the settlement pattern dynamics described in the NRHP nomination. Even if it could be demonstrated that sites CA-LAN-234,

Table 1
RADIOCARBON AGE DETERMINATIONS FROM CA-LAN-235

Lab. No.	Location	Radiocarbon Age ^a	Material	Calibrated Age A.D./B.C. ^b	RCYBP
Beta-76720	Unit 6, 40-60 cm.	2,420 ± 70	<i>Argopecten aequisulcatus</i> ^c	B.C. 295-A.D. 80 (cal 85 B.C.)	2,083
Beta-76723	Unit 6, 40-60 cm.	2,510 ± 90	<i>Laevicardium</i> sp.	B.C.175-A.D. 290 (cal A.D. 70)	1,880
Beta-76722	Unit 6, 60-80 cm.	3,910 ± 70	<i>Chione undatella</i>	B.C. 1855-1440 (cal 1,640 B.C.)	3,638
Beta-76721	Unit 6, 60-80 cm.	3,780 ± 80	<i>Argopecten aequisulcatus</i>	B.C. 1695-1285 (cal 1,480 B.C.)	3,478

^a Uncorrected age in radiocarbon years before present (B.P.), half-life of 5,568 years. Each of the samples was corrected for fractionation in nature ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$); all dates corrected to $-25\text{‰}^{13}\text{C}$ PDB-1.

^b Dendrocalibrated age of samples in years A.D./B.C., with 1- σ age range and mean intercept in parenthesis, calculated by *Calib rev. 3.0.3* (Stuiver and Reimer 1993).

^c *Calib rev. 3.0.3* marine reservoir corrected (ΔR) shell dates involve two components: (1) a time-dependent global ocean correction (402 years) incorporated into the program's marine calibration curve, and (2) a local ocean offset of 225 ± 35 years for southern California (Stuiver and Braziunas 1993:138, 155-156).

-235, and -306 were contemporaneous, it does not automatically follow that they were utilized by the same group of people.

The Puvunga Land Mass or Puvunga Peninsula

The lack of archaeological data supporting the Greater Puvunga concept did nothing to restrain its subsequent acceptance. In fact, regional archaeological inquiry undertaken by Scientific Resource Surveys, Inc. (SRS) expanded on this concept. From 1979 to 1986, SRS conducted a series of archaeological investigations on the CSULB campus, attempting to define the approximate areal extent of Greater Puvunga. This research began with the objective of testing the Greater Puvunga model by verifying sites belonging to the "Puvunga Land Mass" or "Puvunga Peninsula" to predict "the probabilities of true aboriginal vs. redeposited or natural shell deposits," and to seek data indicative of a "village" occupation (Scientific Resource Surveys 1979:11, 1986a:13). The SRS research seems to have largely accepted the basic premises of the Greater Puvunga model. Importantly, however, the

model was recast in physiographic terms. The higher and lower elevation portions of the campus, corresponding to ridges and stream channels (current and relict), were projected as the natural or ecological underpinnings of the Greater Puvunga settlement model; thus, "Sites within and above the 25-foot contour were probably all associated with the historic Puvunga Village or similar *villages on the Puvunga land mass* belonging to earlier time periods" (Scientific Resource Surveys 1979:7-8; emphasis added).

In the SRS model, Puvunga is equated more or less directly with a land mass, anchoring the village to the area where the campus is now located and to a larger settlement plan. By the late 1980s, then, the concept of Puvunga as a dispersed village that encompassed part of the CSULB campus seemed well established to both anthropological audiences and the casual observer.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

. . . [T]he person of Chinigchinich, prophet and divinity . . . must be considered as one of the great-

est religious leaders and founders among the American Indians, second only to the founder of the ghost dance as regards the far spread of his law. When first encountered by Europeans, practically all of the tribes of the southern California coast followed his faith. We shall never know the date of Chinigchinich's birth because of the blending of mythic elements with the accounts of his life. We do know however, the place of his birth: it is a site on the Fred H. Bixby ranch on Alamitos Bay, near Long Beach, Los Angeles County, Calif., and should be marked as one of the most famous sites of aboriginal history. It was there that the Indian leader was born and revealed himself to people, and from there he ascended to heaven [Harrington 1933b:55-56].

Despite this enthusiastic reconstruction by Harrington, as well as the identification of two CSULB archaeological sites as Puvunga in the NRHP, a wider view of the available evidence makes it difficult to conclude that the site of Puvunga has been located, or perhaps even accurately characterized, with any degree of certainty. The acceptance of Harrington's version of the Puvunga story, specifically the identification of Los Alamitos as Puvunga, is no doubt due in part to Harrington's annotation of Boscana's widely read Indian ethnography. As discussed above, however, Harrington's interpretation of Puvunga may be relatively popular, but it cannot be regarded as an authoritative, airtight analysis. In order to embrace Harrington, we must disregard Boscana's original report, ignore Kroeber's misgivings about Harrington's literalism, and overlook conflicting southern California Indian traditions that place Puvunga in locations other than Rancho Los Alamitos.

Even if one accepts Harrington's account regarding the Bixby Ranch, a second leap of faith is required to place Puvunga, or portions of it, on the CSULB campus. One must accept something akin to what we have called the Greater Puvunga model; the notion that Puvunga was a village that migrated from place to place around the region of the CSULB campus. In the NRHP Inventory Nomination Form, Dixon (1974) stated that remnants of Puvunga village living areas still exist in at least nine places in an area of about 500 acres. If, as he

suggests, the entire campus, as well as much of the surrounding countryside, constitutes (or constituted) part(s) of Puvunga village, then

[t]his would make this the largest Indian village recorded in California, and raises the question why there are several discrete site numbers assigned to areas of the campus. . . . There is also no mention that some of these sites may be entirely prehistoric—all are considered to date from the ethnographic present [Meighan 1993:2].

The idea that village sites such as Puvunga were relocated because garbage grew unbearable is central to Dixon's (1972, 1974) hypothesis that the settlement occupied vast tracts of land. Wallace (personal communication, 1994) noted that discarded seashells, animal bones, and acorn husks—the usual village rubbish—would hardly have given off a foul stench, and that standards of offensive (or nonoffensive) odors vary from culture to culture. Whether prehistoric peoples would have exhibited great sensitivity to such circumstances is imponderable. Native American settlement patterns in California reveal many examples of both shifting residence patterns and long-term stability. Heizer (1962), for example, cited abundant ethnographic information on the names and locations of shifting village sites and tribal territories. On the other hand, immense shell middens accumulated for millennia in the San Francisco Bay area. The Emeryville shellmound (CA-ALA-309) covered an area of roughly 100 x 300 m., and is estimated to have contained 39,000 m.³ of habitation debris (Moratto 1984:227, 229).

As discussed above, chronological data collected recently raise serious doubts about the connection of one of the NRHP sites, CA-LAN-235, to any such pattern. Undoubtedly, the fact that this Greater Puvunga theory is enshrined in the NRHP, and that concepts such as the Puvunga Land Mass have been derived from it, are the most persuasive pieces of evidence in the minds of many that Puvunga has been accurately located. Just the same, it is difficult to conclude that listing of campus sites on the NRHP has authenticated Puvunga.

There also appears to be confusion about the nature and limitations of the NRHP itself. The NRHP was established as an honor roll for properties or objects of local or national cultural significance (Parker 1985; Sprinkle 1995; Townsend 1995). Yet, the collision of scholarly skepticism with a demand for the *real* Puvunga betrays the limitations of the NRHP as a truth-seeking device that few seem to recognize. Scholars and scientists may view the information on which an NRHP nomination is based in quite different ways than Indians and members of the public, who often look at the same information from the perspective of a search for a single, confirmed truth.

Listing of a property on the NRHP essentially requires a rationale that relates a property to one or more historical, scholarly or scientific themes (National Park Service 1991). As anthropologists familiar with the NRHP are aware, but frequently the public is not, this process does not demand the best or final interpretation of the case in question, merely a credible, professionally informed opinion in favor of listing. It also weighs in favor of the nomination if there is no expressed opposition to it. The fundamental objective of the NRHP is to encourage preservation by offering landowners the satisfaction of listing a property, and perhaps the assistance of federal tax credits for expenses related to preserving the property. Generally speaking, listing a property is not conceived as an adversarial process. When Dixon (1974) described Puvunga in the NRHP nomination as "a village of the extinct Gabrielino Indians," few could have anticipated conflict over land use issues or Native American religious rights. Since the goals of this nomination were idealistic and commemorative and met no opposition at the time, we doubt that an atmosphere existed in which anyone was inclined to put the logic of nomination under a microscope.

Yet, the processes and objectives utilized by the NRHP are not necessarily consistent with the traditional truth-seeking mechanisms employed by scholars and scientists. Scientific and scholarly skepticism demands that any conclusion be subject to log-

ical or empirical limitations, and that new conclusions be considered on the basis of additional information or new conceptual approaches. This willingness to reach new conclusions based on fresh ideas and data is fundamental to science and scholarship. On the other hand, as a registered historical property, it is difficult for many to escape the perception that Puvunga is real, offering an opening for supporters of the status quo to characterize continuing, critical scholarly and scientific debate as irrelevant or even an assault on the beliefs of Indians and others.

Today, it seems unlikely that sites CA-LAN-234, -235 and -306 would be identified as Puvunga by federal historic preservation procedures, based on the documentation offered to the NRHP in 1974. Currently, cases such as Puvunga would be evaluated on the same basis described by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) in their investigation of the Western Gate/Point Conception claims advanced by Chumash Traditionalists; that is, as a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) (Parker and King 1992). Haley and Wilcoxon's discussion suggests that documentation of a TCP is likely to trigger a more extensive evaluation of supporting evidence than the brief arguments (two pages) that were offered in favor of the 1974 NRHP nomination. Today, the process requires more than the judgment of as little as one authoritative individual, and is more procedurally structured to obtain and evaluate a wide range of information that might weigh both for and against listing.

Another fundamental difficulty highlighted by the LNG and Puvunga cases is the problematic role of ethnographic data in southern California anthropology and archaeology. The perils associated with these data, particularly as related to ethnographic analogy, have long been recognized. It is generally conceded, for example, that the direct historical approach (Ascher 1961; Gould 1974:38-39; Willey and Sabloff 1980:108-109) produces the strongest ethnographic analogies; i.e., instances in which "there was historical continuity with little culture change between the ethnographic case cited and the

past being interpreted" (Binford 1983:7). Yet, few California anthropologists and archaeologists explicitly acknowledge that these continuous analogies are comparatively rare as they attempt to understand phenomena such as Puvunga.

Analogies cannot be regarded as continuous, and therefore reliable, simply because they refer to cultural patterns of the relatively recent past. Elsewhere, we have discussed the dangers of simply assuming that the past is accurately revealed to us through ethnographic data (Dillon and Boxt 1989; Raab 1993). While a detailed review of these problems exceeds the scope of the present discussion, Lightfoot (1992) offered a succinct summary of the perils of ethnographic data for archaeologists. Although speaking specifically of Pomo Indian ethnographic sources from the Russian River area of northern California, Lightfoot (1992:42) sounded a clear warning for archaeologists and anthropologists working in any region:

It is unclear whether . . . ethnographic case studies describe actual . . . patterns that once operated in the region prior to Euro-American contact. They may, in fact, reflect "shreds and patches" of practices dating to the mid-19th, late 19th and early 20th centuries. In any event, these ethnographic studies should be viewed only as models that represent explicit endeavors to reconstruct Indian lifeways prior to Euro-American contact. There is no necessary objective reality inherent in the scenarios; they are hypotheses.

Lightfoot's observations carry two important implications. First, we cannot assume that ethnographic data based on memory culture (oral history) reflects an objective reality. Unfortunately, in using ethnographic data, there seems to be an implicit assumption by some researchers that such sources have epistemological priority over the archaeological record. Observations derived from living people or written accounts are sometimes seen as more "real" than archaeological information. This assumption, implicit or otherwise, can be devastating to scientific archaeology. The central problem is aptly referred to as substantive tautology by Dunnell (1989:37). In such an approach, the principles

that are said to explain the archaeological record are frequently rephrasings of intuitive observations.

Ethnographic facts are particularly seductive in this regard. While ethnographic accounts are a productive source of hypotheses about the past, they can also invite circular reasoning. Dunnell (1989:37) aptly described the confusion that results from a reliance on substantive tautology rather than on testable hypotheses:

This confusion between reason and cause . . . allows archaeologists to account for the record in exactly the same way they account for themselves—they just imagine what they would do or should do were they there.

Substantive tautology also has another debilitating effect. It precludes empirical testing and forces its users into an interpretive mode. Since its "theory" is also its conclusions, the possibility of being wrong empirically cannot arise. Particular interpretations can be more or less popular, but there is no definitive way to show that one is better than another.

Viewing the past in terms of an ethnographic diorama brings reassuring order to the chaotic and impersonal reality of the archaeological record. Approaches of this kind may also be popular because they reinforce the social, political, or economic objectives that various groups or individuals attach to archaeological research. None of these benefits offer much assistance, however, in differentiating reconstructions of the past that are merely popular from those that are demonstrably accurate.

A second implication of Lightfoot's (1992) argument clearly follows from this point: Once ethnographic accounts are viewed as hypotheses rather than objective reality, archaeological data become essential to forging the strongest possible explanations of the past. It is the testing of hypotheses based on the interplay between archaeological and ethnographic data, free of assumptions about the epistemological priority of one over the other, that is likely to lead to scientific advance.

In the present discussion, we have identified some of the risks that may follow from uncritical reliance on ethnographic information, and in our view, the potential dangers are nowhere better illus-

trated than the case of Puvunga. Puvunga has been regarded for decades as one of the most convincing instances in which a historic Indian locale has been linked to archaeological sites by ethnographers, ethnohistorians, and archaeologists. Reliance on these conclusions has recently played a major role in the CSULB controversy described above.

Uses of Harrington's ethnographic research, a conspicuous common denominator in the LNG and Puvunga cases, illustrate the problems that can arise when we forget that ethnographic case studies are in many instances hypotheses about prehistoric and historical native cultural patterns, not objectively established facts. As we saw above, accounts by Harrington of Puvunga, each little more than brief notes, have been used recently by various parties to warrant sweeping archaeological, historical, and ethnogenic interpretations. On this account, the Puvunga case is similar to the LNG controversy.

Over 20 years ago, Heizer (1976b:82) cautioned that Harrington was rapidly achieving a latter-day linguist folk hero status among some California anthropologists. Part of the mystique surrounding Harrington seems to arise from the fact that, although he was a prodigious collector of California Indian linguistic and ethnographic information, he published very little of his work (Haley and Wilcoxon 1997:769-770). Since his field notes and papers have never been widely circulated or critiqued, information drawn from these sources takes on nearly the quality of discovery—of finding a previously hidden vein of ethnographic gold from which new interpretations of a vanished past can be extracted.

We see nothing wrong in principle with scholarly interest in Harrington's work. This prolific corpus of information may well yield significant insights and, in any case, we cannot judge the lasting impact of Harrington's legacy without scholarly attention to it. Similarly, while we believe there is little scientific evidence that supports what we have called the Greater Puvunga model, we are not suggesting that Dixon was wrong in advancing his ideas. Scientists and scholars should be free to offer

new interpretations; otherwise, dogma would never yield to advances in knowledge.

On the other hand, the LNG and Puvunga cases reveal troubling trends. One of these is the question of how anthropologists should approach truth-seeking. In traditional scholarly and scientific research, open debate and requisite skepticism, along with rigorous peer review, help to distinguish well-founded ideas from those that are not. What we find troubling in both the LNG and CSULB cases is that these traditional truth-seeking mechanisms can be bypassed so readily, allowing what is essentially the exercise of personal opinion—albeit informed by academic expertise—amplified by ethnogenic, governmental, and legal processes to the point that they can have enormous social, political, legal, and economic consequences before their intellectual validity can be assessed.

Another common denominator of the LNG and Puvunga cases suggests that this problem is structural rather than a matter of personalities. Both of these cases involve what can be described broadly as historic preservation mechanisms, and it is within these contexts that scholarly or scientific opinions can be employed in legal or administrative processes without regard to traditional intellectual oversight. Societal conditions have overtaken the traditional truth-seeking mechanisms of academia. It remains for anthropologists to develop adequate professional responses to several problem areas.

One of these problem areas may be those same historic preservation mechanisms. It should be borne in mind that listing of a property on the NRHP or as a TCP is purely voluntary. How many landowners are likely to allow their property to be listed, if it is perceived that interpretation of the property by any anthropologist or Indian as sacred can provide grounds for a legal challenge? Such an outcome would entail considerable irony. As Haley and Wilcoxon (1997:775) noted, one of the reasons that some archaeologists feel justified in acting as advocates for Indian Traditionalism is that this strategy is perceived to result in improved protection for archaeological resources. One must seri-

ously question whether this will be the long-term result, however, if an NRHP or TCP designation comes to be viewed as a mechanism by which Indians and anthropologists can mount legal or regulatory attacks on landowners on the basis of even the most limited and ambiguous information.

The use of ethnographic data within California anthropology is an equally difficult problem area, particularly as these data contribute to certain Indian ethnogenic processes. The LNG and Puvunga examples document relatively direct and obvious ways that ethnographic scholarship contributes to the making of Indian Traditionalism. The prominent use of Harrington's research in these two controversies are cases in point. We suggest that there are other, even more pervasive, ethnogenic trends at work. The Chumash Traditionalism described by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) cannot be attributed entirely to idiosyncratic interpretations of Harrington's notes by a few anthropologists. As one of us argued elsewhere (Raab 1996; Raab and Larson 1997), understandings of Chumash culture that have arisen in the last 20 to 30 years are not only popular and widespread, but are also based on uncritical acceptance of generalizations made on limited ethnographic data by a number of researchers. One major point here is these ethnographic hypotheses have not received nearly enough scientific scrutiny to be regarded as objectively established constructs, particularly as regards testing ethnographically inspired theories with relevant archaeological data (Lightfoot 1992; Raab 1996; Raab and Larson 1997).

The Puvunga case may bear comparison with the LNG resistance and its Traditionalist aftermath. It is our impression that Gabrielino Traditionalism has not yet reached a degree of development comparable to that described by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997) for the Chumash. At the same time, the Gabrielino and Chumash cases may share ethnogenic connections. One striking indication of the way that Chumash Traditionalism has developed in recent decades is the fashion in which elements of traditional Chumash culture have spread to other

contexts, including interpretations of Gabrielino ethnographic information. McCawley's (1996:114) recent synthesis of Gabrielino Indian culture is an excellent example of this influence, in that this treatise unabashedly models Gabrielino economy, social organization, and culture-environment interactions on Chumash research. Certain elements of Chumash culture, including aspects of the Traditionalism described by Haley and Wilcoxon (1997), are thought to be so firmly established that they can be used to interpret other bodies of ethnographic data. Thus, we find not only a reification of Chumash culture, but Chumash Traditionalism serving Gabrielino ethnogenic aspirations. Recent controversy connected with Puvunga may yet prove pivotal in Gabrielino ethnogenesis, providing a model for a series of future ethnogenic events, comparable in impact to the LNG resistance.

The reader may note that we have taken no position here about the actual location of Puvunga. We do not wish to contribute any new layers to the lengthy and convoluted story of Puvunga. Instead, we suggest that one of the most positive lessons that Puvunga has to teach anthropologists is constraint. It may be worth repeating Haley and Wilcoxon (1997:777) at some length, because we believe they have captured precisely some of the key issues that anthropologists should take away from cases such as Puvunga:

Although we remain sympathetic to the ideal of self-determination and the protection of Native American sacred places and heritage sites, the degree to which [Indian] identity and tradition are jointly constructed and negotiated with anthropological and other non-Indian participants suggests to us that neither self-determination nor traditional sacred places can exist in this setting in anything near the manner in which either is popularly conceived. Many anthropologists need to refresh their memories of the discipline's historical role in making bounded, persistent, and essentialized identities and traditions . . . Anthropologists might wish to approach more obvious gatekeeping roles like traditional-cultural-property evaluation warily, considering that the cultural units of such analyses frequently began as . . . "ethnographic fictions." These and perhaps other anthropological practices deserve

wider recognition—and more accurate reporting—as important sources of constraint and opportunity operating on identities and traditions.

Before closing our discussion of Puvunga, we would like to make two points. First, we recognize that some, including Native Americans and anthropologists, may be inclined to view any questioning of Puvunga and the traditions associated with it as racist, profane, or neocolonial. We did not undertake this analysis to support or to criticize the views of anyone regarding Puvunga. We particularly emphasize this point with respect to Native Americans in search of their origins. Although this discussion addresses itself to scientific and scholarly issues, the great spiritual significance ascribed to Chinigchinich religious traditions by California Indians cannot be discounted. We are all entitled to our spiritual beliefs, however or whenever we come by them. On a more practical level, it seems to us that Native American Traditionalism can and will persist, and thus meet the needs and interests of some groups and individuals, regardless of scholarly debate. Those who suggest that scholarly discussion of Native American religious or spiritual traditions will prove damaging ignore the fact that Native Americans frequently enjoy enormous support in their ethnogenic endeavors from the public and public agencies. This fact follows precisely from the negotiation of ethnic identity—a process which, in this case, involves mutually reinforcing aspirations of Native American Traditionalists and the various interest groups named above.

Second, some will undoubtedly suggest that discussions of the kind presented here amount to meddling in matters that are better left to Native Americans. Contrary to this view, we argue that anthropologists have a direct and legitimate interest in analysis of the ethnogenic processes connected with Puvunga. One of the points that should come through clearly from the foregoing discussion is that widely held understandings of Puvunga are almost entirely a product of anthropological scholarship. This fact is rarely acknowledged. Accordingly, the Puvunga case is no less worthy of continuing schol-

arly analysis than any other body of anthropological research. Our comments have been directed primarily to this issue and to our anthropological colleagues. Like Haley and Wilcoxon (1997:777), we believe that “Many anthropologists need to refresh their memories of the discipline’s historical role in making bounded, persistent, and essentialized identities and traditions.” It seems to us that this process cannot begin until we undertake more routinely the kinds of analysis presented here.

NOTES

1. The name *Puvunga* has been rendered in a variety of ways in Spanish mission documents, ethnographic notes, and archaeological studies. Among these are *Pubuna*, *Pubug-na*, *Puvungna*, *Pubu*, *Puvu*, *Puvivit*, *Pubuvit*, and *Pububit*. For simplicity’s sake, we have used the most common spelling of *Puvunga*. The name of the prophet also has been recorded in many different ways as a result of the difficulty in transcribing sounds not present in English or Spanish. The common form in the literature is *Chinigchinich*, which is how the name appears in the most widely cited versions of Boscana’s account of native religion. Other versions of the same name are *Chungichnish*, *Chingichngish*, *Chinigchinix*, and *Changichnich*, as well as linguistic transcriptions. In this account, we have used the Boscana spelling except in quoted passages from other sources.

2. Four shell samples recovered from the 1980 SRS excavations at CA-LAN-235 (Unit 6) were submitted to Beta Analytic, Inc., in Miami, Florida, for radiocarbon age determinations. Two of these—recovered from the 40 to 50 cm. and 50 to 60 cm. levels—produced calendar dates of 85 B.C. and A.D. 70. Curiously, one sample each taken from the 60 to 80 cm. and 80 to 90 cm. depths produced dates significantly older than any other derived from the CSULB campus. Specimen Beta-76722 produced a date of 1,640 B.C. ($3,910 \pm 70$ RCYBP); Specimen Beta-76721, recovered from 80 to 90 cm. below surface, produced a date of 1,480 B.C. ($3,780 \pm 80$ RCYBP).

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Comment on "Puvunga and Point Conception . . ." by Matthew A. Boxt and L. Mark Raab

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THIS article by Drs. Matthew A. Boxt and L. Mark Raab is presented as a comparative study of traditionalism. Their general discussion of the process repeats what has been said before by others, including the references they cite. What needs review and comment is the reliability of their two case studies which justify the article. I will leave a review of their Point Conception case to others.

It seems clear from how this article evolved that the basic subject is Boxt and Raab's views of the Puvunga issues. I find that their analysis is too flawed and superficial to be used in a comparative study and is misleading as a presentation of the issues. Therefore, my main purpose is to correct some errors and misrepresentations of data and to point out that they omitted important information that is contrary to their views. The rest of this comment is a summary of how the article evolved and the situation on campus which may account for errors.

Since 1993, Boxt and Raab have been expressing opinions about whether Puvunga, an ethnohistoric village, conforms to their conception of the nature of villages and also about the relevance of

archaeological data. They have challenged the evidence of its historic and religious significance and even its location.

Boxt and Raab began to express their opinions shortly after they started doing archaeological work on campus under contracts with California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). Some reports on their fieldwork have been prepared under contract but have not yet been released. However, in addition to the present article, two earlier documents became available. One is the immediate predecessor to this—an unpublished paper with a related theme (Boxt and Raab 1997). The other (Raab 1993) is a statement which was the source of data used by attorneys in public hearings and in litigation on behalf of the university. There are numerous errors and misinterpretations in the three documents. It is necessary to comment on the two earlier ones because Boxt and Raab include viewpoints in the present article which they discussed in more detail there.

Boxt and Raab make several errors regarding the campus location (pp. 46-47).¹ They say that the CSULB campus is "east" of the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch and Gardens. In fact, it is on the west side as their map shows. Their simple error lends support to their critics. Boxt and Raab are alone among scholars of reputation, as far as I know, in refusing to acknowledge Boscana's simple and widely recognized error in writing northeast instead of northwest in locating Puvunga. Boxt and Raab (pp. 53-54) use this in trying to cast doubt on the reliability of both Boscana and Harrington.

Only one source was cited by Boxt and Raab to support their view that Boscana did not make an error and that Puvunga, or another Puvunga, was located elsewhere. They cite "an account by [Kurtis] Lobo (1977), a Juaneño Indian descendant, [which] follows Boscana's description of the location of Puvunga, placing it in the Lake Elsinore region [to the northeast of San Juan Capistrano]" (p. 54). They do not further identify Lobo or his source of information. However, their phrase "follows Boscana's description" does leave the reader