

# **Jonjonata: And Chumash Indian Traditionalism**

**An Archaeological Site Located West of Santa Barbara**

Submitted by Dr. J. Anderson

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*The report was submitted to the Santa Barbara county government and the California State Department of Transportation in April 1998 and a news release entitled "Controversy Over the Chumash Archaeological Site Called Jonjonata" was submitted to various newspapers. Dr. Anderson wants the public to be aware of the many substantive issues involved as the state government concluded hearings on the fate of this important Chumash Indian site. Too many Chumash towns have been destroyed by developers in the past decades, he concludes in his findings which are highly critical of California State policies regulating development on and near native American sites.*

## **The Report Submitted to Caltrans**

Anderson submitted a controversial report on Jonjonata to the California transportation agency called Caltrans. The Jonjonata town site is located in Santa Barbara County, near the contemporary town of Buellton. Anderson's report provided an overview of Jonjonata and proposed significant changes in Caltrans's policies governing public historical reports on native American sites. Anderson acknowledged his misgivings about the ability of Caltrans, or any other state agency, to properly represent the history of native California sites without changes in its operating procedures.

One of the most important statements Anderson makes in this report is that he no longer has confidence in the state practice of hiring a single company or individual scholar to write

ethnohistories of sites selected for "salvage" studies. He believes the traditional role of university-trained researchers has changed dramatically in recent decades, as a large number of doctoral graduates from anthropology and archaeology departments have been unable to find teaching jobs in universities and colleges. A growing number of these scholars have turned to industry and government for employment. Many of these "practical" anthropologists have become spokesmen for corporate and government interests, increasingly conflicting with colleagues who have been traditional advocates of preservation of native California sites.

Anderson identifies a recent article by Dr. B. Haley and Larry Wilcoxon, published by the journal of *Current Anthropology* as a pivotal influence on his thinking about Jonjonata and other Chumash sites scheduled for "salvage" study. The field of Chumash Studies is currently in a state of turmoil. One has only to read the Wilcoxon/Haley complaints against a long list of anthropologists, archaeologists, and Chumash groups to identify some of the rival factions active in the various fields of Chumash Studies. Wilcoxon/Haley do not resolve any of the problems, because their article only mirrors a long-standing dysfunctionality that persists in Chumash anthropology and archaeology. If the reader believes even half of Wilcoxon/Haley's charges against their colleagues, then common sense tells us that no single source of analysis should be favored in such a contentious arena.

Dr. Anderson believes that for future public contracts the State of California should openly acknowledge the disunity of the academic community in the area of native American studies. Conflicts arise continuously between native and non-native residents, between growth and non-growth interest groups, and even between conflicting native Californian bands. The academic community is too fragmented, and no longer enjoys the necessary esteem of tribal, corporate, and government interest groups to serve as a sole depository of public trust.

With new pressures for rapid growth in the Santa Ynez Valley, it is essential that the public understand the declining role of University trained anthropologists and archaeologists as disinterested arbiters of Chumash authenticity. The policies established by the Department of the Interior for evaluating Chumash cultural heritage have too often proved unworkable. Instead of neutral judges, academics have become spokespersons for various interest groups and frequently express conflicting views on public policy issues. Given this disunity, Anderson concludes that the State of California should revise its existing policies for selecting a neutral arbitrator. The procedural role for native American heritage preservation should be upgraded so that the referees do not have close ties to the conflicting parties. A public hearing should represent the full spectrum of opinions on native California issues, so that it includes not only the views of commercial developers and government agencies but also reservation, non-reservation, Catholic, Protestant, and Traditional Chumash, as well as dissenting Chumash families who don't associate with any particular contemporary group.

Anderson proposes not only the preservation of the Jonjonata town site from future county road building activities but also asks Caltrans to consider whether Zaca lake, located upstream from Jonjonata, should be set aside as a tribal park or monument assigned to the nearby Santa Ynez Indian Reservation. Zaca lake was a 'doorway' into the heavenly realm for the ancient Chumash, according to the testimony of two Chumash traditionalists, M. S. Piliqutayiwit and L. Garcia. In one myth, a Chumash islander used the lake as a pathway to follow the soul of a drowned girl to the celestial realm of the souls. He brought her back through the gateway located at the bottom of the lake. Sites with similar religious associations often warrant special consideration under state laws protecting native California religions.

Anderson also proposes construction of a rest stop or historical sign near the Jonjonata archaeological site at intersection of highway 101 and 154. This highway pull off should be dedicated to a historical discussion of Chumash Traditionalism which continues to be a neglected subject on public history roadside signs in Santa Barbara County. The pull off should feature the history of the resistance of local Chumash to 'reduction' in the nearby Purisima and Santa Ynez missions. If Jonjonata citizens did migrate into the Chumash mountains, Anderson concludes, they undoubtedly suffered numerous relocations as the ebb and flow of warfare washed through this mountainous region.

The Spanish and Mexicans sent numerous expeditions to punish the Mountain Chumash and their Penutian and Uto-Aztecan allies who joined them in raids and harbored them in times of stress. And the native towns organized numerous counter- attacks against the colonial ranches and missions. Eventually, the Mountain Chumash were pressed deeper and deeper into the highlands by disease and warfare, until they were concentrated in the far northeastern Chumash mountains. Chumash refugees who left the missions during the later decades of Mexican rule would have been welcomed into the Tecuya Chumash community, a militantly anti-colonial coalition of coastal refugee families who relocated primarily from the lower Santa Ynez Valley.?

### **Excerpts From Dr. Anderson's Report**

(Commentary from the conclusion)

"Further historical and archaeological study is warranted to determine what Merriam meant by his assertion that Jonjonata moved. If there are indeed two *Jonjonata* town sites, then this rare duality offers historians an important opportunity for comparative studies.

On the other hand, if there was only one *Jonjonata* town site, and Merriam intended to report a significant population shift to another town, then this *Jonjonata* population shift needs to be explained in the ethnohistory submitted to local governments in Santa Barbara county and to the authorized California State reporting agency (Caltrans). In particular, if Dr. Johnson's Jonjonata-to-Zaca explanation is correct, Far Western's final ethnological report should

include a careful assessment of the relationship between *Jonjonata* and the *Zaca* community and their common relationship to nearby Zaca lake.

Given the current turmoil generated by the Wilcoxon and Haley article that recently appeared in *Current Anthropology* (a national professional journal) it would be prudent for Far Western to proceed cautiously. It seems to me that existing working relationships between the Chumash and university trained scholars have been seriously damaged by Wilcoxon and Haley's article, and Caltrans needs to distance the state government from a potentially factious ethnohistorical report on *Jonjonata*. I would suggest that the state respond to the negativity generated by the Wilcoxon/Haley article by inviting the Santa Ynez Reservation and the numerous non-reservation Chumash groups to submit separate commentary on Far Western's ethnological report. And other commentary should be judiciously sought, from non-native and native Americans interested in the academic politics of the western Chumash region.

The final *Jonjonata* report will not be complete, therefore, unless it presents a wide spectrum of views on *Jonjonata* and the role played by its citizens in the volatile post-invasion politics of the Santa Ynez (Tsmala) Valley. In addition to other objectives, the *Jonjonata* report should include a discussion of the sacred role of Zaca Lake (as documented by Chumash Traditionalists), grievances by the citizens of *Jonjonata* and their neighbors against the California mission system, and (perhaps most importantly) a frank discussion of the inhumanity of both Spanish and Mexican colonialism which caused the out-migration of Chumash peoples from the Santa Ynez Valley into the relative safety of the Chumash Mountains.

### **Expanding The Historical Record**

The proposed highway development at the *Jonjonata* archaeological site provides a unique opportunity for the State of California to fund public roadside signs featuring the fascinating history of this area of Chumashia. These displays, if properly designed, would stimulate public interest in the little known history of the western Chumash. Since the State has not previously presented a comprehensive public education program on Traditionalism among the western Chumash, the road construction at the *Jonjonata* site provides an ideal opportunity to address this important subject.

I would suggest, therefore, construction of a rest stop or a historical sign at the intersection of highways 101 and 154 dedicated to a historical discussion of Chumash traditionalism. I propose that there are many fascinating stories yet untold about this part of the old Chumash Nation. The sign could remind travelers, for example, that the Chumash people who lived at the *Jonjonata* archaeological site were located nearest to the Santa Inez Mission, and this town's reduction by the mission presents an interesting study of Chumash Traditionalism because it remained on the periphery of mission influence.

Zaca Creek was in a separate drainage from the mission, and the trail along Zaca Creek led from the present Jonjonata archaeological site to nearby Zaca Lake which was a documented 'doorway' into the supernatural realm. Even after the Santa Inez Mission seized the grazing lands near the lake and set up a cattle station, Chumash families living in the area never fully abandoned Traditional beliefs. Thus, I think it important for the Far Western ethnohistory on Jonjonata to explore whether Zaca lake is still a sacred site to contemporary Chumash living both on the Santa Ynez reservation. Do any other Chumash groups consider it a sacred site? Is it protected under state law as a native California religious site? Should we consider it for purchase and transfer to the Santa Ynez Reservation as a tribal park or monument, in recognition of the need to expand this tiny reservation's land base? And should any of the surrounding national forest be added to such a park, for the same purposes?

What is interesting about the trail up Zaca Creek is that it had always been easy for the Chumash to use the creek trail to travel unobserved by mission priests. A traveler did not have to stop at Zaca Lake, but could proceed further into the Chumash mountains. Until the final reduction of *Soxtonoxmu*, for example, the trail up Zaca Creek was undoubtedly used by Traditionalists living west of the Santa Ines mission to also visit *Soxtonoxmu*, a center of Tsmala Traditionalism. And a short distance into the mountains north of Zaca Lake and *Soxtonoxmu*, a traveler came upon Hurricane Deck and Sunset Valley. Both were known centers of Traditional religious use far into the modern era. And from both sites once could follow obscure mountain trails to shrines on the Sisquoc River, and to the hidden mountain refuges used by earlier generations of "free" Chumash hostile to European colonialism.

The *Jonjonata* ethnohistory should not be considered complete until we better understand the attitudes and actions of the Chumash Traditionalists living at Jonjonata and their family members and allies living in the general area. How many *Jonjonata* citizens were so disheartened by the prospect of being forced into servitude at the missions that they migrated into the Chumash mountains before the mission priests could have recorded their names in the colonial records? How many *Jonjonata* citizens were reduced into La Purisima mission, and how many of these joined in the mass exodus into the Chumash mountains following the 1812 earthquake? And how many *Jonjonata* citizens who stayed behind fought in the 1824 Chumash War of Liberation? Were any hung by the Mexicans in reprisal against the La Purisima nationalist leaders?

If *Jonjonata* citizens did migrate into the Chumash mountains, they undoubtedly suffered numerous relocations as warfare washed through this mountainous region. The Spanish and Mexicans sent numerous expeditions to punish the Mountain Chumash and their Penutian and Uto-Aztecan allies who joined them in raids and harbored them in times of stress. And the native towns organized numerous counter-attacks against the colonial ranches and missions. Eventually, the Mountain Chumash were pressed deeper into the highlands by disease and warfare, until they were concentrated in the far northeastern Chumash mountains. Chumash

refugees who left the missions during the later decades of Mexican rule would have been welcomed into the Tecuya Chumash community, a militantly anticolonial coalition of coastal refugee families who relocated primarily from the lower Santa Ynez Valley. Here they allied themselves with the nearby Yokuts and Uto-Aztecs in a military alliance called the Tejon by the Mexicans and Americans.



Any comprehensive history of *Jonjonata* would need to include an assessment of this interesting pattern of out-migration by Chumash towns of the lower Santa Ynez Valley, and its impact on *Jonjonata* social li