

California's First Maritimers

Bruce M. Mitchell

Baltimore: PublishAmerica LLLP, 2008, 89 pp., \$16.95 (paper).

Reviewed by Jack Hunter

Caltrans, San Luis Obispo

This book was not written for either the professional archaeologist or the knowledgeable layman. The author states that most people get little information on Native Americans after the fourth grade, and that would seem to be the audience at which the book is aimed. With the exception of museum visits, the bibliography cited draws on published sources exclusively, with little if any unpublished materials being examined. The book's title is a misnomer, because its contents consist largely of generalizations about indigenous California coastal cultures after contact, gathered from those published sources and recounted in a casual, rambling style. The exciting new direction of anthropological research that is aimed at Pleistocene seafarers traversing open waters to explore and settle coastal and insular land masses at lowered sea levels is mentioned only in passing.

The book's content involves an average of 3–4 pages devoted to each Native American group located on the California coast, beginning with the Diegueño/Kumeyaay in San Diego County and proceeding north up the coast to the Tolowa of Del Norte County. Less than half of each section generally pertains to maritime topics, with the remainder consisting of tangential details not particularly germane to the subject at hand.

This book is greatly in need of an editor. For example, the table of contents lists an index, which is not present. There are no individual citations for statements that are made; instead, each section concludes with up to a dozen references that are repeated in a bibliography that follows the summary chapter.

With the exception of references to rafts, balsas, dugouts, and plank canoes, there is no discussion of watercraft styles, construction, or navigation details within these pages. The work is completely devoid of explanatory images or illustrations, and there is not even a map of the cultural areas discussed. It appears as though the publisher was content to go to press with the draft manuscript. It might be acceptable as reading for elementary and high-school-age students, and it highly praises Native American society and resiliency against the depredations of Euroamerican colonialism.



6 Generations: A Chumash Family's History

Film based on a script by Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto and John R. Johnson; produced, directed, and photographed by Paul Goldsmith, ASC; John R. Johnson, executive producer. Copyright Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 2009. Running time: 56 minutes 45 seconds. (Price \$18.00, order from Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, estore@sbnature2.org.)

Reviewed by Glenn Farris

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In this beautiful video, Barbareño Chumash descendant Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto shares the story of six

generations of the Indian side of her family, reaching back to the arrival of the Spanish expedition of Portolá in 1769. The story, as told through the eyes of women in six generations of Ernestine's family, is the result of her collaboration with John R. Johnson of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. In both his anthropological and personal interest in the culture and history of the Chumash Indians, Johnson picks up where the famed linguist, John Peabody Harrington, left off in his ongoing interest in Ernestine's family. Harrington was introduced to the Ygnacio family by famed California anthropologist Alfred Kroeber. Harrington became virtually part of the family over 50 years of interaction, to such a degree that in his declining years Ernestine's mother, Mary Yee,