Don't Bank On Amerika

The History of the Isla Vista Riots of 1970
By
Malcolm Gault-Williams
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This book is an attempt to give, in one volume for the first time, a detailed look at the history of Isla Vista, California, during its most turbulent period: the rising student activism of the late 1960's, the burning of the Bank of America, the subsequent riots, the trial of the Bank of Amerika 15 and the emergence of community service organizations at the beginning of the 1970's -- essentially: what happened with the whole social change movement in Isla Vista between 1968 and 1971. Admittedly, this is a view from the Left -- a kind of "Peoples' History", much of it in the form of an oral history -- for what is contained herein is collected material mostly spoken and written by the actual people involved.

This study draws from sources unavailable or unused during the time immediately after the riots when the major inquiries into the causes of the riots were made. These untapped sources include KCSB-FM audio tapes, interviews conducted in 1973-74 by Dr. Richard Applebaum's sociology students with social activists of the times, revelations which came out of the Honey Hearings of 1972; interviews conducted in 1983-84 by Jack Whelan, for his Ph.D. dissertation; previously unresearched material available in 2 separate collections at the UCSB library; and the community archives at the offices of the Isla Vista Recreation and Park District (IVRPD) which consolidated the IVCC/MAC archives in 1985.

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This work is dedicated to my sons, Das and Senyo, who have had less time of their father as a result of this project.

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Chapter 1: Anisq’oyo’ Area Prehistory to 1968

The Isla Vista/Goleta slough area has experienced 2 periods of recognized population. The current period classifies Isla Vista -- or, "IV" as locals call it -- as the most densely populated area, per square foot, in the Western United States. Before the coming of the Spanish, the area was equally well-known, for its time, as an area of high population. The Isla Vista bluffs -- known to the Chumash people as "Anisq’oyo’ -- were once part of a larger community that included what is now the Goleta slough area. Before it became a slough, it contained the most heavily populated native community (Goleta) in Southern California. The large population, due to the rich marine fauna and flora of the area, mixed with a predominantly maritime culture. The official account of the 1769 Portola expedition by Father Crespi states:

"(20 August) During this day’s march we have come upon 7 towns -- the smallest having 20, the largest more than 80 houses -- in which we have seen more than 800 natives. Much pasture and water, and many trees. They made us a present of much food, and entertained us greatly with music and dancing." [1]

The Isla Vista/Goleta Slough area's pre-historic chronology divides into 4 major phases: Paleo-Indian, Early, Middle, and Late Periods. The earliest Paleo-Indian occupation in North America is undetermined. It is generally accepted that humans entered the Western Hemisphere during the latter part of the Wurm/Wisconsin glaciation, no earlier than 40,000 years Before Present (B.P.), and perhaps as recently as 25,000--20,000 years B.P. Reliable data is lacking to establish a period of occupation earlier than 30,000 years B.P. The terminal date of Paleo-Indian occupation in the Santa Barbara Channel mainland region is placed at 10,000 years B.P., a date considerably older than the oldest dated Early Period manifestation in the region. The earliest unquestioned evidence of human occupation in southern California, exclusive of the desert region, comes from the coastal strips of San Diego County [2], San Luis Obispo County [3], southern San Joaquin Valley [4], and Santa Barbara County [5]. These manifestations have radiocarbon ages ranging from 10,000 to 8,000 years B.P. So far, there is no defensible evidence of a Paleo-Indian occupation before 10,000 years B.P. in the Santa Barbara Channel mainland region. The lack of early Paleo-Indian sites can be explained by changes in sea level which buried coastal landforms occupied before this time. It is doubtful that Paleo-Indian period sites exist in the Isla Vista area.
The Early Period of the Santa Barbara Channel mainland region has been defined as "Oak Grove" [6]. This definition was based on artifacts and physical characteristics of the midden soil -- the accumulation of refuse about dwellings. The diagnostic feature of the local midden soil is the milling stone. Most reconstructions of Early Period subsistence patterns stress the dependence on terrestrial food sources [7]. However, sites at Diablo Canyon and Surf show evidence of substantial maritime collecting in the period ca. 9000 to 7000 years B.P. [81]. There are a number of sites dating to the Early Period in the Goleta Slough area adjacent to the Isla Vista bluff. These sites are generally on higher elevations.

There is a general lack of published data for the Middle Period. Hypothetically, there could have been a hiatus between the Early and Middle Periods [9]. Then again, Early and Middle Period "cultures" [10] may have co-existed for a short time. Depending on the authority, the Middle Period is thought to span the time between 3000 B.C. and 1000 A.D. During the early Middle Period in the Santa Barbara Channel mainland region, extensive exploitation of the nearshore fishery is evident in midden deposits. Seine net weights, curved fishhooks of bone and shell, and inshore fish bones are common at sites of the early Middle Period. Sea mammal hunting also became important during this period. The Middle Period was a period of economic change reflected in both an expanding trade network which included the Santa Barbara Channel Islands, the Channel coast, interior valleys, and in larger and more permanent settlements [11]. Several of the sites within and adjacent to what is now the Santa Barbara Airport date to this time period.

The Late Period 'culture is usually termed "Chumash" or "Canalinon" (the maritime culture of the Chumash), and is generally agreed to have begun prior to the time of Christ. The Late Period is quite distinctive. [12]

"It is associated with an efflorescence of material culture, an elaboration of social, economic, and political roles and organization, an expansion of trade networks, and an aggregation of the coastal population into larger villages." [13]

There are four Late Period residential sites within 500 feet of the Santa Barbara Municipal Airport perimeter, in the slough area. Prior to the extensive grading done to construct the airport, several of these sites extended into the present airport boundary.

No specific ethnographic surveys have been done of the Goleta Slough vicinity. J.P. Harrington's 1910-20 fieldwork among Chumash descendents recorded placenames and sites of ethnographic importance which survived in Chumash oral tradition into the 20th Century. Ethnographic sites identified by Harrington include: 1) Misik, "at the mouth", refers to the Goleta Slough inlet; and 2) Sitiptip, meaning "place of much salt", refers to the Goleta Slough in its entirety.

Four historic Chumash villages were once situated in the
area, including: 1) Heliyik (western promontory above the slough); 2) Gel0 (on Mescaltitlan Island); and 3) Saspilil (near the northeastern airport boundary). "A very large portion of the archaeological material from Helo was used for fill during airport construction" [14]. This redeposited midden is still visible along the airport runways in several locations.

LOS PUEBLOS DE LA ISLA

Until the mid 1800's, Isla Vista was virtually uninhabited. Although no major artifacts have been found in the area, the "Hunting Indians" [15], predecessors of the Canalino, certainly must have treed on Anisq'Oyo'. The first written record of the area's native population was made by Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo on his voyage in 1567 up the Pacific Coast. The Canalinos inhabited the Channel Islands and the coastline of the Santa Barbara Channel until Spanish occupation. In 1769-70, a Spanish land expedition, led by Captain Gaspar de Portola, travelled up the Pacific Coast. The purpose of the Portola expedition was to search for suitable mission sites on the Alta California coastline. Several written records were made by Miguel Costanso, Father Juan Crespi and Lieutenant Pedro Fages. Fages estimated 10,000 locals between Assumpta (San Buena Ventura) and Point Conception. The diaries indicate that the Goleta Slough area was a much different place from what we know today. The military engineer of the expedition, Miguel Constanso wrote (Sunday, August 20):

"We came in sight of a long, bare point of land; on the eastern side of it a large estuary enters through 2 different mouths... half a league more or less, distant from each other. The estuary surrounds a small hill and a tongue of land of moderate length -- this was affirmed to be an island... On this hill, whose verdure and trees gave very great pleasure to the eye, there stood a very populous Indian town containing innumerable houses, so that someone asserted that he had counted more than one hundred. The estuary spreads over the level country towards the east, forming marshes and creeks of considerable extent, and on their banks there are other towns, less populous than the Pueblo de La Isla." [16]

Pedro Fages, Captain of the Catalanian Volunteers and later Governor of Spanish California, recorded:

"... the towns are come upon, which we called the Pueblos de La Isla. It is thus that going over level ground between the mountains and some hills which extend seaward, one comes in sight of a long, bare point of land; on the eastern side of a small hill which rises on a point of land and has the appearance of an island. On this hill the verdure and forest growth of which makes a pleasing and harmonious picture, there is a populous Indian village, in which someone is supposed to have
counted one hundred houses. The estuary spreads continually over the level ground eastward, forming various swamps and ponds of considerable extent, on the banks of which are discerned other towns." [17]

Father Crespi gave more detail on the land form of the area:

"We... came in sight of a long bare point of land. On the west a large estuary enters by 2 different mouths distant half of a league from each other; the estuary is bordered on the north by a good piece of land of moderate extent, entirely isolated. On that island, which is very green and covered with trees, we saw a large town, in which there were counted more than 100 hundred houses. This estuary spreads out to the west, forming many marshes and lagoons upon whose banks there are other towns, but we could not learn with certainty how many there were. Nevertheless, some of our soldiers said there were four, making with that of the island, five, the latter appearing to be the largest." [18]

Six live streams fed fresh water and silt into the area. As these streams joined in the slough, 2 main channels formed from the discharge. The depth of these channels varied with fluctuations in tides and seasons but reached 12 to 15 feet in some areas. In fact, the area offered the only inland small harbor from San Diego to the San Francisco Bay. The slough environment, itself, offered an abundance of food in shellfish and other seafood. Steelhead trout teemed in the creeks which ran to the slough. Other invertebrate animals, rocky shore fish and sandy shorefishe, were found in the area. Sea mammals such as seals, sea lions, and sea otters as well as sea birds were also plentiful [19]. Quail, doves, grouse, and flocks of wild geese abounded in the tidal bayous of the area. Rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, gophers, deer, elk, and other animals lived in and nearby this marshland area. Occasionally, larger carnivorous creatures such as the California grizzly or mountain lion were found in the surrounding region. The flora consisted of coastal sage and various grasses which grew in the rich topsoil creating the salt marshes and small lagoons. Along the streams, which flowed into the slough were the dense oak groves intermixed with sycamores, bay trees and wild cherry trees. [20]

The Chumash peoples who inhabited the Goleta slough region were only part of a diverse population which extended along the California coast from Topanga Canyon in the south to Estero Bay in the north. The land of the Chumash included the 3 islands of Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel. In some areas of the California mainland the territory extended to the periphery of the San Joaquin Valley. The Chumash population spoke several languages and dialects which comprised a single branch of the Hokan language family. The inhabitants of the Goleta Slough probably spoke a variant of Barbarencho Chumash dialect. [21]

The Chumash were a peaceful people. Locals lived in grass huts along the shoreline. The major community of Canalino Chumash
at the edge of Isla Vista surrounded the large lagoon which once covered the entire Santa Barbara municipal airport, but which also stretched west almost to Storke Road and south across El Colegio Road. This lagoon was deep enough to be navigable by the early Spanish and English schooners -- "goletas" in Spanish. Sir Francis Drake may have stopped in the area in 1579, losing an anchor which was discovered about 100 years ago. Not only Portola, but Cabrillo, too, was an early visitor to this lagoon. In fact, according to Walter Tompkins, in "Goleta The Good Land", Cabrillo is reputed by Indian legend to have been buried on Gelo.

Though the Spanish determined much of the future history of what is now southern Santa Barbara County when they arrived in the mid-1500's, the Chumash people were "the earliest documented inhabitants found to date on the California mainland" [23]. This particular branch of the Chumash tribe was distinguished from several others by their sea-going abilities, inhabiting the area possibly as early as 5000 B.C.

The main local Chumash community was centered on what the Spanish called Mescaltitlan island, which at one time held over 100 homes and 800 inhabitants. The island comprised roughly 62 acres and was densely forested with a solid jungle of oaks. Local historian Russel Ruiz gives an account of how Mescaltitlan got its name:

"Mescalitan means: 'Place of the Mescal', in the ancient Nauhuatl or Mexican language. It is another name for Aztlan, the legendary place of origin of the Mexican people. In the Aztec legend the great Mother of the Earth, the goddess Coatlicue lived in a large lagoon with an island in the center. There in the middle of the island was a crooked mountain called Culhuacan where the goddess lived in a cave. She appeared ugly and dirty. Her face was black and covered with filth, like something out of hell. She was weeping and mourning for her son Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec war god. He had been sent south to found the glorious city of Mexico which would rule the four corners of the world. She had not washed her face, nor combed her hair, or changed her clothes because of her sadness and mourning for her son. She would stay this way until he returned to her."

"There are many ideas and stories about the exact location of the ancestral Aztlan. One site is Mescaltitlan Lagoon in the Mexican state of Nayarit."

"When the soldiers of the Spanish Portola expedition arrived in the Goleta region in 1776, they found an area that reminded them of that Mescaltitlan. On the island in the middle of the Goleta Slough they saw an old woman with a dirty face and disheveled hair. The Mexican soldiers were reminded of the Ancient Mexican legends. Look they said: it is Coatlicue the mother of the god Huitzilopochtli! She has not washed her face, she is still waiting for her son. Because it resembled Mescaltitlan Nayarit in Mexico, they called..."
the island and the region Mescaltitlan as they spelled it. Later the name was reduced to Mescalitan and some maps "My Skeleton Land". The latter name was believed by some early Anglo-American settlers in Goleta to have originated from numerous skeletons found in the Indian graves scattered on the island. Father Ivan Crespi, O.F.M., of the Portola expedition of 1769 wrote in his diary: 'The soldiers called their villages Mescaltitlan and the other (Father Gomez, O.F.M.?) Los Pueblos de la Isla, while I named them in honor of Santa Maria de Contona'. The name Mescaltitlan came to refer to the whole Goleta area including the Santa Ynez mountains. The latter referred to as the Mescaltitlan mountains, first by Lt. Fernando Rivera y Moncada in the 1770's. Mescalitan is the oldest non-Quabajai Chumash Indian name in the Goleta region." [24]

Mescaltitlan Island was a great historical, archeological, anthropological treasure and a prominent landmark until 1941, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leveled it to provide fill for what is now Santa Barbara airport.

"When Tom Stork and a few of his friends decided to put an airport in the slough, they found that they were going to have to raise the level of the land by 9 to 12 feet, so the Corps of Engineers put their bulldozers to work and removed 75% of Mescalitan Island." [25]

While the Corps was doing "this dirty work" [26], it unearthed so many bones from the island that locals referred to it as Skeleton Island. [27]

The term Gelo (pronounced Helo), standing for the large Chumash village located on the island of Mescaltitlan, suggests an island or peninsula surrounded by water. It was the second most populous village in the slough vicinity while Saspilil was the first. Father Crespi claimed the village of Gelo had between 100 to 200 very large round houses [28]. The houses were hemispherical or conical in shape, constructed of poles with thatching. Home size ranged from 20 to 50 feet in diameter, inhabited, typically, by a single nuclear family. Larger households almost certainly belonged to chiefs or other distinguished men [29]. Gelo, like other Chumash villages, had one or more temescals, or sweatlodges, a ceremonial enclosure, a gaming area, and an enclosed cemetery which was isolated from the living area.

The material culture of the Chumash of Mescaltitlan reflected a basic maritime adaptation. Though their technology included some non-specialized hunting and gathering equipment which differed little from other California Indians, they developed a sophisticated complex of implements for exploiting sea resources. The most important technological innovation for these coastal Chumash was the tomol, or plank canoe, used for hunting sea mammals and fishing. Additionally, there were other types of boats and canoes: tule balsa canoes, dugout canoes made from a single
log, as well as the board or plank canoes [30]. The tumol was made of precisely fitted planks sewn together with milkweed and caulked with asphaltum. It was used not only for harvesting sea resources but also to maintain trade between the mainland and the islands.

Other technological items included within the specialized maritime adaptation of the Mescaltitlan villagers were tridents, toggle harpoons, nets, and several types of fishhooks. Fish poison (Chlorogalum pomeridionum) and traps were utilized to tap resources in the inland streams [31]. This inventory of Chumash fishing equipment, in conjunction with the use of the tumol enabled them to provide resources to support the massive population at Mescaltitlan. This maritime adaptation also played a significant role in extending the range of the Chumash fishing environs and in stimulating economic and territorial expansion.

In addition to their complex of fishing tools and techniques, the Chumash of Mescaltitlan used a diversity of utensils for gathering, preparing, and storing foodstuffs. Mortars and pestles, chipped stone tools, knives, scrapers, choppers, and finely manufactured wooden implements were crucial components of their subsistence technology. Heat resistant steatite, from Santa Catalina Island, was imported in order to be used as cooking ware [32]. Finely handcrafted basketry was used for gathering, preparing, leaching, and storing a wide variety of vegetable foods. Basketry was a highly skilled technique which resembled other Southwest and California Indian examples. Most of these handicrafts and implements were manufactured by specialists and were sometimes used as trade items. [33]

Inter-village exchanges were based upon a stable currency, or ponca; flat, circular shell beads which had a precisely measured valuation [34]. This form of currency appears to have been used beyond the confines of Chumash culture. Ponca may have been the standard currency for the southern half of California. Thus, the Mescaltitlan Chumash were involved in a wide-ranging monetized market economy in which their food surpluses, manufactured goods, and services were purchased or sold. Ostensibly, this economic system operated according to the exigencies of supply, demand, and individual profit-oriented decision making.

The sociopolitical organization of the Chumash of Mescaltitlan was extremely complex in comparison with many other California Indian populations. The basic sociopolitical unit of the Chumash was the village, headed by the Wot, or chief. Father Crespi wrote the first description of the Wot of Mescaltitlan:

"They were not content with making us presents of their food, wished also to entertain us, and it was clear that there was a rivalry and emulation among the towns to come out best in the presents and feasts in order to win our approbation. In the afternoon the chief men came from each town, one after the other, adorned according to their usage, painted and loaded with plumage and some hollow reeds in their hands, to the movement and noise of which they kept time with their songs and cadence of the dance, in such good time
They were the only members of the community allowed to be polygamous. The chiefs' duties included arranging intra and inter village feasts and directing important subsistence activities. The chief was assisted by a paxa, or ceremonial leader, and 2 ksen, or messengers. Evidently, the chieftainship was an extension of ranked clans or "totem groups" typical of other highly developed California Indian populations.

The political structure of the villages of Mescalititan were linked with over-arching inter-community federations or associations. Kinship relations between the chiefs of Chumash villages and/or membership in a formal religious cult known as Tantap may have been the basis for these loose federations. These inter-community associations integrated the diverse villages of Chumash throughout the southern California region and may have been coterminous with variant dialect groupings.

Chumash religious ideology promoted the worship of the sun and the earth. The sun was conceived of as a supreme male principle or entity, while the earth symbolized the maternal provider of the necessities of life. Religious practices included the datura (toloache) drinking initiation ceremony, as well as other life-cycle ritual events. Inter-village public ceremonies included the harvest fiesta and Winter solstice celebrations. Sawil, or shrines, were also associated with the religious beliefs of the Chumash. The shrines at Mescalititan have been described by Harrington's informant Juan de Jesus Justo:

"At helo Mescalitan Island there was a place for throwing things. Justo never saw it but heard there was a big square enclosure 35 feet or more square, made by tying bundles of feathers to tops of poles so stood three feet high. Poles were near together placed upright in the ground. Old men sat in there and made beads. They were very venerated. Not all know very much. They were like interpreters, interpreting for god."

"Anisq'oyo'" was the name the Chumash used for what is today Isla Vista. This term has never been successfully translated into English. To the Chumash, Anisq'oyo' was the oak-covered, coastal mesa between the lagoon and the ocean. While they did not locate their huts on Anisq'oyo', they did use the tar still present on the beaches for caulking their ocean-going tomola. Models of such canoes can be found in the County Court House and the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. The Isla Vista Recreation and Park District (IVRDP) retained this tie with Chumash history by naming IV's central park: Anisq'oyo'.

CHUMASH MISSIONIZATION

Although considered to be one of the largest and most culturally advanced native populations along the Pacific coast,
only a few hundred Chumash survived the Spanish period (1567-1822). The late 1500's Spanish explorers described the Chumash Indians as intelligent, industrious, and independent. But, by the 18th century, the Chumash became comparable

to a species of monkeys, for naught do they express interest except imitating the actions of others and particularly in copying the ways of the 'razen' or white man whom they respect as being much superior to themselves." [40]

In addition to the devastation of European diseases -- including syphilis, measles, chicken pox, and colds -- the Chumash were typically enslaved. In spite of the California tradition that the Franciscan Fathers were devoted and kind, in actuality they could be harsh disciplinarians. When a discharged priest accused them of cruel and excessive punishment, heavy floggings, and confinement of wrongdoers in the stocks, the friars explained that "according to the laws they stood in 'loco parentis' to the natives, and must necessarily restrain them by punishments and inflict none but proper penalties, pardoning first offenses, and always inclining to mercy and kindness [41]. Yet, a traveler in 1825 observed:

"In a few days a willing Indian becomes proficient in these mysteries, and suffers himself to be baptised, and duly initiated into the church. If, however, as it not infrequently happens, any captured Indian shows a repugnance to conversion. It is the practice to imprison them for a few days, and then allows them to breathe a little fresh air in a walk around the mission, to observe the happy mode of life of their converted country men; after which they are again shut up, and thus continue to be incarcerated until they declare their readiness to renounce the religion of their forefathers." [42]

The values of the Indians and the Spaniards were irreconcilable. Fishing, the chief occupation of native males, was, for Europeans a recreation, while to live on the bounty of nature seemed unenterprising to a people who had tilled the soil for centuries. The tribal religious practices, even when chronicled by such careful observers as Father Boscane, were regarded as superstitions that had to be stamped out to make way for the true faith. [43]

The native religious leaders were suppressed and the chiefs were not allowed to speak to their people in their native languages. Sweats were sometimes permitted, but the burning of dwellings and the possessions of the dead were discouraged. The neophytes were forced to wear European type clothing and to regulate their lives by the clock. The missions, instituting their form of patriarchal government, assumed a paternal attitude towards the Indians, and treated them as wards. This left the Chumash and other California Indians unprepared for their
"freedom" when secularization of the missions occurred in the 1830's. At the time of the Spaniards' arrival in California, the native population was estimated at between 125,000 - 400,000 [44]. Among the 3 institutions used by Spain to colonize — the mission, the presidio, and the pueblo — the mission was by far the most important. The missions were designed to be supply depots for the military outposts, furnishing provisions, clothing, arms, and even men for the defense of the Province — a crushing burden for essentially primitive subsistence farms [45]. The Franciscans practiced a policy of reduccion, a suppression of the Indians' culture, for which they had little regard. "They led an idle and lazy life more like that of brutes than of rational beings", wrote the Franciscan Jeronimo Boscena [46]. Mission records indicate that out of an estimated 2,000 Chumash living around the Goleta Slough and Mescalititlan Island when the Spaniards first arrived, only 574 accepted Christianity [47].

The historian Hittell states that the mission fathers:

"... not only compelled them to almost incessant labors, but failed to furnish them with sufficient food to sustain them in working condition, and at the same time for the most trivial offenses they hand-cuffed, imprisoned and unmercifully beat them. When the miserable Indians learning too late that their former gentile life even with its precariousness and constant warfare was far preferable to Christianization such as it was thus exhibited, attempted to regain their lost freedom by flight, they were hunted down and punished with tenfold rigor." [48]

The Indios barbaros were often subjected to violent roundups. An account of one such roundup:

"We took the hostile Indians who numbered 200, including the gentile and Christian fugitives by pretending that our Indian aides would buy all their arrows even though it left them without a shirt. The purchase was concluded. We invited the Gentiles and Christian Indians to come and eat pinole and dried meat. They all came over to our side of the river. Then when they were on our shore we surrounded them by the troops and citizens and Indian aides, and took them all prisoners... we separated 100 Christians from the prisoners and each half mile or mile these were going to die. Each one of them received four arrows, two in front and two in each shoulder. Those who were not killed by this process were killed with lances. The lieutenant did not want to make these executions because he had no courage, but I answered that if I were to put it to my father, he would do the same. On the way the 100 Christians were killed in the manner already explained. We reached camp where we were going to stop with the 100 gentile prisoners. The Lieutenant told me
to decide what was best to do. I answered him that this would be to shoot the prisoners, first christianizing them -- letting them know they were going to be shot and asking them if they wanted to become Christians. I ordered Nazarro Galindo to take one bottle of water and I took another. He began at one end of the line and I at the other. We baptized all the Indians and then shot them through the shoulder. I doubled the charge for the 30 that remained and they all fell." [49]

Systematically, the Chumash were eliminated from this extremely rich ecological zone. A padre wrote, in 1826:

"It seems to me that no other person in the nation has shouleder so much of the burden of supporting the government as the Indians have in supporting this province... This is the situation the Indian is in, for he has ceased to eat and clothe himself so that the province might subsist and could not continue in any other way." [50]

By the 1820's, the Chumash decided to resist. Horses were taken from mission herds and adoption of simple military tactics made the Indians a more serious enemy. Before California Governor Arguello left office he had to deal with an Indian disturbance of substantial proportions. Although there had been occasional uprisings in the past, the Indians had been so disunited that no general Indian revolt had ever occured. In February 1824, the revolt started simultaneously at Mission Purisima Concepcion, Santa Ynez, and Santa Barbara. The rebels held the soldiers temporarily at bay with captured firearms. At the conclusion of the revolt, several soldiers and many Chumash were dead. Documents of the times show raiding and stealing of domestic livestock to be a common occurrence. The situation became so serious as to warrant a proclamation from the new Governor, Pio Pico, which stated: "The savages of the North have been committing serious depredations. With sufficient force and the help of all it would be possible to destroy them." [51]

By the 1840's, the Mexicans who were concentrated along the coastal margin were on the defensive. It is possible that the United States annexation prevented the ultimate driving out of the Mexican overlords, who numbered fewer than 500 [52]. At this time, there were many large ranchos to which thousands of Indians worked. These rancheros thrived, supported by the cheap Indian labor, free land, and cattle that thrrove on the undemanding ranges.

ISLA VISTA

During the Mexican Territory period, the Isla Vista area was an obscure portion of the 15,000 acre Los Dos Pueblos Rancho, a Mexican land grant given to Nicholas Augustus Henry Den on April 18, 1842. "Den, an Irishman, had heard that the Mexican
Government was giving land grants to Catholic citizens as an inducement to settling California, so when he disembarked from the ship in Santa Barbara he never got on board again" [53]. He became a naturalized citizen of Mexico, learned Spanish, and took up cattle ranching. For some twenty years, Nicholas Den was a successful cattle rancher on a piece of land which stretched from Mescalitlan Island to Las Llegas Canyon, between the Goleta foothills and the Ocean.

The heaviest rains ever to hit California began in November 1862 and continued for over 90 days. They caused a major, permanent change in the area by filling in the lagoon, leaving what is now the Goleta slough. During the rains, Nicholas Den became ill and died a month after they stopped. Following his death, there was a major reversal on the weather, and the worst drought the area has experienced began in 1863. By December 1864, the majority of the cattle had died and most of the Dos Pueblos Rancho was sold for fantastically low prices. The Den heirs were able to retain only the Rincon Ranch portion, which ran from Goleta (Pelican) Point past Coal Oil Point, the two major ocean prominances in what is now Isla Vista and the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB). The land was divided between two sons. Augusto Den, who was mentally retarded, received the poorer half, that portion where UCSB now stands. On the dividing line was planted a row of eucalyptus trees. That row of trees now marks the boundary between the UCSB Main Campus and the residential portion of Isla Vista. It has been called the "Eucalyptus Curtain." [54]

During the brothers' ownership of it, the land was used in several business ventures. In the 1870's, whaling ships frequently anchored offshore and their crews would camp on what is now Goleta Beach County Park. Augusto Den rented his land to the More brothers, Henry and Alexander, who cut down the oak forest in order to sell the wood to the whalers to be used for heating their kettles of whale blubber. Typical of the attitude toward natural resources in that era, too many trees were felled, even far beyond what could be sold. The consequence was that the topsoil was lost and Isla Vista soon was left with only blowsand.

Another commercial adventure of that era was the mining of asphalt. The Alcatraz Asphaltum Mining Corporation dug several underground shafts on the present Main Campus, near where the Faculty Club stands. These operated until the turn of the century when they were abandoned as both unsafe and unprofitable. The land was then rented to farmers, but they had little success with the land due to its poor quality topsoil and the lack of water.

Finally, the Rincon Ranch passed into the hands of speculators Jack and Coto Cavalleto, who purchased about 200 acres on the western end in 1913 for a $5,000 down payment. In 1920, Jack Cavaletto sold his 99 acres to Colonel Colin Campbell, from England, for $65,000. Coto Cavaletto sold his share to other speculators for $52,000. Colin Campbell was a very interesting person, and ruins of his strange home can still be found west of the Devereaux slough. Some years later, the Devereaux Foundation, a school for slow-learning and emotionally disturbed children, purchased the Campbell Ranch for $100,000.
During the 1920's, what was still mostly an uninhabited mesa was subdivided with the intention of turning it into a resort community. In November 1925, the "Isla Vista Tract" was subdivided. Included was the beach frontage from Camino Pescadero to Camino Corto streets. In February 1926, the "Ocean Terrace Tract" was formed, extending east of the Isla Vista Tract to what is now the University. In April 1926, the area from Camino Corto to the Campell Ranch (now West Campus) was subdivided as "Orilla del Mar". This resort community idea was never very successful, "perhaps because of the lack of drinking water, perhaps because of the abundance of tar on the beaches" [55]. The three subdivisions were drawn separately, without coordination. This resulted in the present nonalignment of streets which is apparent along Camino Corto and Camino Pescadero [56]. The largest of these subdivisions was called "Isla Vista" -- literally "island view" -- by its developer, and the name stuck for the entire area. [57]

In 1928, oil was struck on the old Elwood Cooper Ranch, west of IV. Submarine pools were found near Tecolote Canyon and later a submarine pool was found fronting Los Dos Pueblos Rancho. Many lots in Isla Vista were sold to oil speculators. On the east side of IV, natural gas deposits were discovered which were drilling for oil on Mescaltitlan Island and along Sandspit. An underground pipeline was built to deliver gas to the Los Angeles area and it is still in use today.

In 1942, the City of Santa Barbara leased its airport to the Navy for a Marine Corps Air Station. Because of the configuration of the slough, the housing areas had to be separated from the air field. The barracks and mess hall were located on the mesa near Goleta Point, the former Gus Den Ranch. After World War II, the War Assets Administration offered the Marine base, in total, to the University of California for use as a campus (see chapter 2). For Isla Vista, it was "an eventful day when, on June 1, 1948, the University took possession of the Marine base, for the University has since set the pace for the growth of Isla Vista" [58]. In 1954, the Santa Barbara College of the University of California moved to the new campus site at Goleta Point. At that time, Isla Vista was sparsely populated and no streets were paved.

In 1953, Santa Barbara County Supervisors approved the first zoning of IV, forming the basis for the zoning that existed during the riots and most of which still exists, today. It included C-2, commercial and R-2, 2-unit residential. The R-1 regulation, single family residential, was added in 1957. In 1957, a design regulation was added which allowed no buildings to be built without approval from an Architectural Review Board. The goal was to have buildings that would be harmonious with the surroundings and one another. In 1962, speculators influenced the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors to discontinue the architectural review guidelines established under the D-design provision of the County Planning Commission. A year later, construction of low-cost apartment units in IV increased somewhere in the range of 100 to 250%. From 1962 to September 1970, building esthetics were unregulated. More significantly, during this period, over half of the existing buildings were constructed.
Most of the construction was substandard by previous measurements. Isla Vista's accelerated growth produced several of the basic problems that helped bring on the riots of 1970. When the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB) began its most rapid growth period, during the 1960's, land speculators made quick and substantial profits in the area by building low cost apartment units for rental to University students. The early speculators enjoyed high occupancy rates on their property due to the shortage of on-campus housing and the problems and expense of commuting from Santa Barbara or Goleta.

"It used to be a small town -- not in the sense that it was conservative, but, I mean, it was essentially comprised of the same kinds of people... I've been here since '63... This was nothing more than an enlarged off-campus dormitory. Nobody lived here who didn't go to school here..." [59]

In the early 1960's, universities were a growth industry. Few administrators gambled so heavily on growth than did Chancellor Vernon I. Cheadle. His goal was the transformation of a small liberal arts school of modest reputation into a large university campus of the first rank, in the shortest possible span of time. The Master Plan for UCSB was modified several times during his administration in order to speed-up the rate of development and raise enrollments. As enrollments soared, the administration facilitated enormous capital investment in campus facilities, massive recruitment of new faculty and the shuffling of the student housing problem onto the unincorporated area of Isla Vista.

IV residents faced problems usually associated with the urban ghetto. In fact, Isla Vista increasingly became known as a "student ghetto." Some of the problems in IV included: absentee property ownership, a transient population, inadequate street lighting, lack of sidewalks, crime and health problems, and an almost total lack of community facilities. Isla Vista had no police or fire department, no city parks and no city government. Students living in IV for 9 or 10 months out of the year had been repeatedly discouraged from registering to vote by the Santa Barbara County Clerk. The reasoning went that students maintained a home address at their parents' residence. In effect, this perpetuated the significant percentage of students over 21 (the minimum voting age at the time) having no voice in the governance of the area where they mostly lived. The result, as more than one study on Isla Vista has proven, was a community with a multitude of problems, the foremost of which was a lack of effective local government.

In 1958, the year UCSB was officially declared a campus of the University of California, its ultimate enrollment was projected to be 10,000 students. A report by the Los Angeles planning firm of Pereira and Luckman -- commissioned by UCSB prior to the enrollment decision -- recommended that Isla Vista be immediately designated an urban renewal district, that it be replanned as "a master plan community", and that the UCSB
administration "guide and assist in the development of such a vital, well-balanced community... [601]. The rapid growth of UCSB forced these projections upward. As enrollment soared, the burden of UCSB housing fell more completely and quickly on Isla Vista than ever could have been anticipated by an outside planning firm.

In 1964, a few months after the Isla Vista Sanitary District's sewer lines had overflowed from "unanticipated overloading", a controversial high density zoning application -- a change from 2-unit to "multiple" unit residential designation -- came before the Board of Supervisors. The County Planning Department opposed the application and prepared a report which declared that there was:

"already housing capacity in Isla Vista under existing zoning for twice the number of students the University now estimates will live off-campus when ultimate enrollment of 15,000 is reached (that decision had been made in 1963), and more than what would be required 24 years from now if the University increases to 27,500 ..." [61]

In its argument for denial of the rezoning, the county planning staff stated:

"It is the opinion of the staff, the present R-4 (apartment) standards encourage second-rate construction with too little space around the buildings and with totally inadequate parking space. Many of the apartment buildings which are only a few years old are deteriorating and, we are told, cannot compete with the better units when demand falls off. We believe the area is headed for a crisis..." [62]

The change from R-2 to R-4 multiple unit residential was effected on 8 acres located between Abrego and Sueno Roads and between Camino del Sur and Camino Corto. The "Supes" approved the R-4 zoning over the Planning Commission denial and the protest of 99 IV residents. A "special committee" was formed, in 1966, to develop special zoning regulations later put into effect in IV. The committee included Carl Chandler, 3rd District Supervisor Dan Grant's campaign manager; Jack Schwartz, Isla Vista property owner; John Harlan, IV realtor; and Planning Commissioner Sexton. County Counsel Dana Smith, two additional IV developers, and Planning Director Whitehead were also on the committee. The special "Student Residential (SR)" regulations developed by this committee proposed that 25 foot-wide lots be combined to build 4-plexes, 3 lots combined to build 6-plexes, et cetera. In addition to allowing an increase in lot size, it allowed a decrease in the proportionate amount of side yards, front yard parking, and a reduction of required off-street parking space on the east side of Del Playa. This was on the assumption that, as Jack Schwartz, Isla Vista realtor/developer explained: "students arrive with a backpack, a surfboard, and a small foreign car."
When the SR zoning was presented to the Board of Supervisors, Planning Director Whitehead stated that he was in opposition to parts of it, including reduction of parking space size and front yard parking. The final draft was similar, but required larger parking spaces while at the same time allowing for tandem parking in the front and side yards of the ocean lots. The regulations were designated SR-2 and SR-4. Not satisfied with the new regulations, some developers asked for, and were granted, variances to further increase the number of units allowed per lot. This zoning designation is unique in Isla Vista and is nowhere repeated within the state of California.

The Third District Supervisor responsible for lobbying within the county government for these variances was Dan Grant (see Chapter 2). Living in a large ranch-style home built on several acres and hidden by avocado groves, Supervisor Grant showed no hesitation in approving zoning changes that destined Isla Vistans -- his constituents -- to an environment equal in density to the slums of Hong Kong. [65]

"Remember, back in the very early 60's, this campus had the reputation of being the party school... (parents) sent their daughters to do safe things like drink 'Coors' on the beach... (IV) gradually got discovered by other people of that same nature of 18 to 25 or 18 to 30 who had no connection with the University. Having no connection with the University, they had other questionable connections... We saw dope hit Santa Barbara -- actually, Isla Vista -- in 1965, really... (IV) was between San Francisco and L.A.... it was very convenient..." [66]

"We have always called Isla Vista 'Sin City'. Around 1965 dope arrived and everyone got into that, the hippie thing, but there was little or no political awareness -- all the New Left struggle passed us by, and people would just say, 'Berkeley is an illusion'." [67]

"We had to wear beanies, for Christ's sake, when we were freshmen in 1963. That's where things were at then... a big fraternity scene. Most of us were rich kids, and we thought, why not lay back and enjoy ourselves, minimize the hassles, right? I mean, our parents always told us that the college years were going to be the best ones of our lives, so... We relaxed." [68]

Stickney, in his "The Burning of America", wrote: "But in 1968... things began to change" [69]. Two years before the burning of the local branch of the Bank of America, Isla Vista was a peaceful student community located adjacent to the University of California, Santa Barbara, about ten miles north of the city of Santa Barbara. It had a population of about 13,000 people, of which three-quarters were UCSB students and the rest students of
other local colleges and high schools, transients and local business people. Larry Goodwin:

"When I first came here, UCSB was a ball -- greatest looking women I'd ever seen -- a good time. It was a fun place." [70]

The population was drawn largely from two California urban centers: the Los Angeles Basin and the San Francisco Bay area [71]. It was an area of some 340 acres, bordered by the University campus on three sides and the Pacific Ocean on the fourth. During the ten-and-a-half month school year, this relatively small area featured approximately 13,000 residents, around 9,000 of which were UCSB students. The community was not part of any municipal corporation and, as such, the County of Santa Barbara was its primary governmental agency. [72]

"I lived here from 1963 to '69. I didn't see one fight in this town. I never saw anyone punch-out anyone... Half the parties I went to I was not invited to. I would just walk by, hear a band playing, or a Hi-Fi, and I was never uninvited to a party the entire time I lived here. No one ever locked their door..." [73]

There were fewer than one hundred single-unit (R-1) family dwellings. While a few non-University families lived in apartment units, 79.6% cent of the area's residents were between 15 and 24 years of age. The majority were UCSB students. As many as 1,000 to 1,500 young non-students resided in IV, as is typical in communities bordering college campuses. A small proportion of these younger non-students -- fewer than 100 in the summer -- were unemployed or underemployed transients and "hippies".

"Constituting... no more than two per cent of the college population, activists and hippies populated the fevered imaginations of millions of older Americans, who seemed to conceive of college campuses as overrun with them, as well as with wild-eyed radicals on the faculty who supposedly encouraged them daily in their destructive activities. In cocktail parties in Santa Barbara, when the student rebellion was at its height, in the late 1960s and at the opening of the 1970s, local residents were heard to say that they would happily close down the entire University of California at Santa Barbara, just to remove one or two professors whose names inevitably stimulated angry comment." [74]

In the 3 summers leading up to the bank burning (1967, 1968, 1969), this hippie and transient population swelled to as many as several hundred persons at any given time between early June and late September. The seasonal influx indicated that many of the summer visitors were students elsewhere during the school year. Robert Kelley underscored the differences between hippies and
leftist politicos:

"Leftist students and hippies differed sharply from each other. Leftist activists believed that the system was worth saving (though they were profoundly alienated from it in its existing state), that it could be saved, and that personal involvement in the revolutionary transforming of American life was the highest possible goal. For the most part highly intelligent, often concentrated at such prestige institutions as the University of California and Columbia University that demand high grades for entrance, and springing from affluent, well-educated families, they called themselves the 'New Left'. They were outraged young people angry at what they felt to be the hypocrisy of the American system, the mistreatment of innocents, and public evil. They operated from the oldest motivation among reformers in the modern centuries: a conviction that the society they lived in was corrupt, and required cleansing.

"The hippie, on the other hand, was so culturally alienated from American life that he or she withdrew from it. Almost always white, hippies were also from affluent families and had little sense of the need to succeed at anything at all. Like the activists, who resembled the Puritan reformers of earlier Anglo-American history, the hippies were a familiar phenomenon. As far back as the Adamites in the second century, there have periodically been highly self-conscious groups of people who feel that they have found the road to innocent, pure lives: withdrawal from society and a total rejection of its ways. Hippies, like their predecessors, denied reason and exalted feeling; detested restraints; searched in Oriental mysticism for a means of transcendance, or in drugs of various kinds; and dispensed with the ideas of work, production, and achievement. The senses were to be freely deluged with 'experiences', either ecstatic or manic; everything was to be 'naturally' done; and laws and principles were to be discarded. They established what they believed would be innocent communes of mutual love and sexual freedom." [75]

A half year after the burning of the bank, Cril Payne, an FBI agent with the alias of "Bill Lane", wrote in his book "Deep Cover":

"...I.V. as the locals called it, was located a short distance north of Santa Barbara and was unlike any community I had ever seen. Its limited commercial district was adjacent to the campus, and the housing, most of which stretched north along the coastline, consisted of apartments, duplexes, and older houses which were rented to students or those of similar age. A few single-family dwellings were owned by professors
or university employees, but for the most part, Isla Vista was pure youth culture..." [76]

Other views:

"Of course Isla Vista was a ghetto -- fourteen thousand people crammed into a square mile and a half, with the highest population density in California. Two-thirds of the residents were under twenty-two years old, making Isla Vista a sociologist’s dream for pure research in a ‘youth community’, a revolutionary’s ideal of a potential ‘liberated zone’. " [77]

"Isla Vista was kind of a slum town." [78]

"Isla Vista... was literally an island... The town sprawled around the university, which had quadrupled its enrollment in the past decade, providing assembly-line education for its students in bleak but efficient institutional buildings, somehow cold in a warm climate. The campus was dominated by a carillon tower, proudly outfitted with three more bells than the tower at Berkeley...

"I.V., as everyone calls it, became an instant town surrounding an instant university. It was filled with post-war building boom architecture, pink and white stucco apartment buildings and houses, Hispanic-contemporary styled, the Los Cedros, the Montezuma, the House of Lords, low and bland, moldering away already and settling in the sand, sagging structures pasted on the environment by greedy developers grasping for high rents, the youth dollar. Construction was shoddy -- somebody told me he was lying in bed one evening, listening to the patter of raindrops on the roof of his new apartment, when suddenly the entire ceiling collapsed, allowing him to experience the stormy sky at first hand. The buildings’ cockroach population was said to outnumber students and nonstudents ten to one.

"Around the Embarcadero there were perhaps two dozen tacky shops and restaurants, several price-gouging supermarkets, a movie theatre, one stoplight for the residents’ six thousand cars, few sidewalks and street lamps, no hospital. Isla Vista was an unincorporated community, without an official government, receiving only whatever services Santa Barbara County chose to provide. A cheerful anarchy prevailed, every man for himself -- but it was easy to see how frustrations would develop in the youth ghetto. The sunshine could not gloss over every problem." [79]

In the mid-to-late 1960’s, Isla Vista’s character changed somewhat from something very hedonistic to something very political. Stickney says it was 1968 where “things began to
"All of a sudden we had all these problems that you had to be involved with. Nobody went and partied out. People thought having a keg of beer, standing around and talking with a bunch of people was a waste of time: 'why should I do that?' Instead we see alot of people sitting around smokin' dope, getting very serious and tense about whatever." [80]

Perhaps Cril Payne overstated it abit:

"By the time I arrived in Isla Vista, there was little evidence of the carefree party days of old. On the contrary, I.V. looked like a militant, revolutionary community whose inhabitants appeared hostile, suspicious, and defiantly radical. It seemed as though everyone had long hair, dressed shabbily, resented authority, and despised the Establishment. Illegal drugs were used openly and in apparent disregard for potential arrest. It wasn't at all uncommon to see kids nonchalantly smoking marijuana as they walked to class, and the "Smoothie" stand, which sold a blended concoction of fruit, yogurt, honey, and ice cream, featured a Peyote Smoothie with the price determined by the number of buttons requested. Vacant lots had been converted into communal people's gardens where organic vegetables were grown. The walls of just about every commercial building in town were covered with brightly colored psychedelic murals and revolutionary slogans. Even the streets were painted with replicas of Viet Cong flags and antiwar graffiti. I don't recall a stop sign in I.V. that hadn't been altered to read 'STOP the War' or 'STOP the Figs'. In the revolutionary vernacular of the day, Isla Vista was a 'liberated Zone' for the youth of the counter-culture." [81]

Isla Vista was different:

"One thing about Isla Vista is that it's totally unique. There is no other community like it..." [82]

"The isolation is a gift. For the future of Isla Vista, I think the isolation of Isla Vista from Goleta and being surrounded by the university is the best thing that could happen. What can happen here that can't happen in Berkeley, for instance, is really the gift of geography more than anything else... whether you're in Berkeley or (anywhere else) there's no edge. The gift of geography is one of our greatest assets. All the complaining about isolation, it seems to me, overlooks the fact that it's a gift if you're gonna build a community." [83]
"Things kinda happened first, here..." [34]

Greg Knell, one of the foremost student leaders of the period of UCSB's and Isla Vista's most active political years was asked if, in the formative period, political change was directed at IV itself. He replied:

"No, not at that time. It developed really soon afterwards that the rent issue, absentee landlord issue, tenants rights issues came up; developed as an issue for organizing in Isla Vista and some really good things went down around it. The BSU (Black Student Union) was heavily into that and leaflets were written mostly around those issues. Ideas were discussed like buying up the bulk of buildings and having cooperative ownership and tenants (in control of buildings)... As the movement progressed, Isla Vista became more and more an issue." [85]

Richard Harris elaborated:

"Going back to the Spring of '70, what happened was the radicals -- or the activists -- conceived of the major issues around which to organize people as being national issues or international issues and little or no interest was given to organizing people at the local level, around local issues. It's true that the issue of the pigs, in IV, was used to sort of mobilize opinion against the total -- you know -- sort of structure of our society...

"Aside from things like the realtors and the local county sheriffs -- which, even then, weren't used as a means of organizing for, say, local control, but which were just used as local representatives of the American system, which we were all opposed to. And so, then the disturbances took place..." [86]

One Isla Vista, interviewed fifteen years after the Isla Vista branch of the Bank of America was burned to the ground by other numerous Isla Vistans, retrospected:

"It was the beginning of the end." [87]
Mascatitan Lagoon in 1782
Chapter 1 index: Anisq'oyo Area Prehistory to 1968

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