

## Clear Lake's First People

Approximately 10,000 years ago, California became home to migrating groups of native people. Carbon dated artifacts have validated tribes' occupation in the Clear Lake region from 4,000 to 8,000 years old. Therefore by at least 6,000 BC, early Native Americans inhabited the Clear Lake region.

The earliest evidence of human use of the Clear Lake Basin is represented by 6 sites all turning in dates older than 11,000 BP (before present). Three were near the Borax Lake obsidian flow, one in Clear Lake Oaks, and two in the Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. These sites along with one down Cache Creek indicate the period of first use of the Lake Basin as well as the direction from which the first inhabitants came. It is not surprising that the Borax Lake obsidian flow appears to be a key area. Stone tools are critical to prehistoric economies and obsidian is the easiest of all stones to work. Along with the stone resource, the productive tule marsh areas at the eastern and southern arms of the lake would have provided abundant food resources... By 6,000 BP the human population in the Lake Basin had grown to the point that the entire lakeshore was being used. Large villages, evenly spaced around the lakeshore, suggest that they had been partitioned into community territories (Clear Lake Observer 2005).

At 1800 in California there were 70 Pomo tribes using 7 languages with an estimated population of between 10,000 and 18,000. The total aboriginal population of the Northern Pomo was about 350. Pomo tribes lived in valleys near rivers and streams. The Upper Lake Pomo belonged to the Northern and Eastern Pomo language group (McLendon & Lowy 1978:306) (Stewart 1943:42-43).

Clear Lake Pomo were involved in long distance trading networks. Pomo people traded with the Coast Miwok for clamshells and other shells. These would be used for beads and basket embellishments. Magnesite and obsidian, prevalent in the Lake County area from ancient volcanic activity, were traded in exchange.

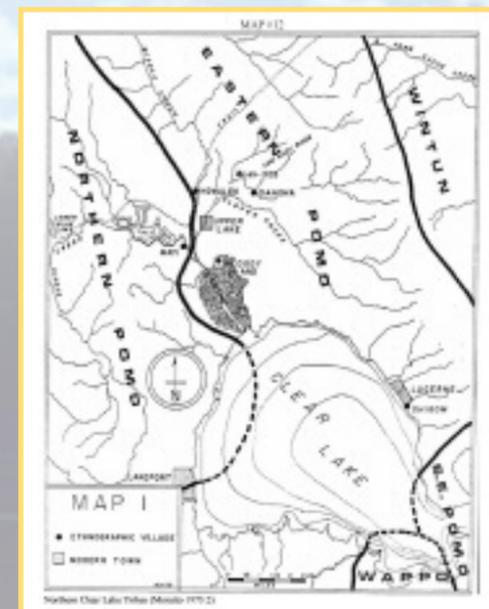
The Pomo are famous for their feathered and beaded baskets.

For more information, see Historical Timeline below.



*The woman above is Lucy "Ni'ka" Moore and a picture of Bloody Island. Ni'ka was six years old when this massacre took place. She survived by hiding in the lake while breathing through a tule reed. (Bloody Island 2000)*

Extensive archeological evidence identifies Upper Lake Pomo's aboriginal territory in Upper Lake California, in Lake County.



In **1878**, tribal groups (Xowalek, Danoxa, Yobotui and Kaiyo-Matuku) joined together and communally purchased 90 acres of land and established a traditional community called Habematolel in Upper Lake.

In **1907** federal government established a Rancheria for the Tribe. An adjacent parcel North of Upper Lake was set aside which the Tribe then occupied. The Rancheria grew from 90 to 564 acres through a series of federal acquisitions.

In **1959**, federal government passed legislation terminating the Tribe's status as a federally recognized Indian Tribe and disestablished the Rancheria. Their land was lost.

In **1975** Tribe filed federal lawsuit against the United States arguing that Termination was illegal.

**1980** - BIA supervised an election of Interim Tribal Council members assigned with the task of drafting the Tribe's new Constitution. Due to internal conflict, the Tribe ceased active re-establishment of a tribal organization.

**1983** - Tribe won federal court case, and the US restored Tribe's federal recognition. As part of judgment, the language for the restoration of land, stated within or without the Rancheria's boundaries.

**1998** - Tribe elected a new Interim Tribal Council and adopted a draft Constitution as an interim-governing document.

The Tribe received and continues to receive federal funding to provide programs and services such as: Environmental conservation; housing assistance for low income members, educational programs- on-site tutorial, computer literacy, cultural arts, and GED preparation and higher education. Judicial advocacy is also provided on behalf of tribal Youth in adoption or placement into foster-care and/or group homes.

**2000** -Tribe requested a Secretarial Election with the BIA to adopt its proposed Constitution.

**2004** - Secretarial Election held, Tribe's Constitution ratified by BIA. An election was held, and a seven-member Executive Council was seated.

**2005** -Tribe purchased a site in its aboriginal territory to restore its land lost in 1959 due to termination.

**2006** - Tribe engaged in a federal process to restore its tribal land. Under federal Law, the Tribe will be authorized to offer gaming on its restored tribal lands under Indian Gaming Regulatory Act.

# The Tribe's HISTORY and CULTURE

*A Summer Camp, Upper Lake Pomo, Edward S. Curtis, photographer 1924. (Curtis 1924)*



HABEMATOLEL POMO OF UPPER LAKE

## Founding of Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake

Upper Lake Pomo is an amalgamation of four pre-contact tribes whose territories together constitute its aboriginal sacred territory. Here its ancestors, lived, hunted, fished and practiced sacred religious ritual ceremonies and dances (the Ghost Dance) at the Roundhouse that was located at Behepal village. The Roundhouse later burned in 1906. Its ancestors and other visiting neighboring tribes attended great ceremonies. Natives came from as far west as the coast and as far east as the Sacramento-Delta. Its people spoke a dialect that was a combination of Eastern and Northern Pomo.



Dancers ready for Hindll dance. At Upper Lake Roundhouse before 1906. (Meighan and Riddell 1972: 17)

## The 1800s

In 1810, Pomo who were given refuge in other villages in Ukiah (Yokala) Valley migrated east, some of the families established a settlement named Komli in Eight-mile Valley, while others moved on to Scotts Valley with the Boalke.

In 1850 a terrible massacre, ancestors and neighboring tribes, mostly innocent women and children were murdered at Bloody Island (Bo-No-Po-Ti). Act committed by the 1<sup>st</sup> Dragoons US Calvary.

In 1856 Pomo in Lake County were rounded up and forced to live on the newly established Nome Cult Indian Farm in Round Valley Northern Mendocino County, (which later became Round Valley Indian Reservation).

In 1866, town site of Upper Lake decided upon.

In 1879 the Upper Lake Indian community formed, and its members of the former village-communities communally purchased 90 acres north of Upper Lake at Xabematolel.

## The 1900s

From 1907 to 1910, six Clear Lake rancherias were set aside by the federal government, and their locations coincided with the residential pattern of their native people at the time, (Big Valley, Scotts Valley, Suphur Bank-known as Elem (across from Rattlesnake Island), Lower Lake, and two in Upper Lake, first the Upper Lake Rancheria). Few years later the Robinson Rancheria. Robinson Rancheria was then formed of the Shigom (Cigom) by tribal members who had been living in Xabematolel and Upper Lake.

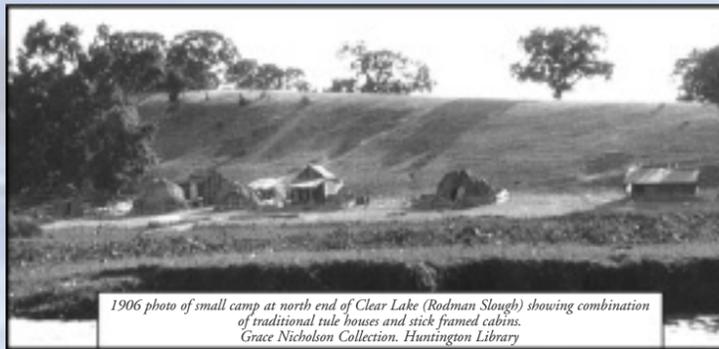


Upper Lake Dance House which burned down about 1906. (Meighan and Riddell 1972: 17)

In 1956 federal government (California Rancheria Act) terminated forty-one California rancherias of which Upper Lake Rancheria was one. A Distribution Plan to allocate the Rancheria's assets was developed by the BIA and approved by the Secretary of Interior in 1960. In 1961, Termination Proclamation published in Federal Register.

In 1975 Tribe filed Federal lawsuit against US alleging termination of the Upper Lake Rancheria was unlawful.

In 1983 Tribe prevailed and Federal Court (Upper Lake Pomo Association vs. James Watt) restored its federal recognition. Federal Government proceeded to make policy decisions that delayed Tribe's reorganization process, and prevented from restoring its land. This with lack of financial resources and unified tribal government delayed the Tribe's move forward.



1906 photo of small camp at north end of Clear Lake (Rodman Slough) showing combination of traditional tule houses and stick framed cabins. Grace Nicholson Collection. Huntington Library

## Habematolel. Pomo of Upper Lake Today

Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake (the Tribe) is a landless federally recognized Indian tribe. In 1998, the Tribe reorganized and worked with the BIA to re-establish its government. In 2005, the Tribe held a Secretarial Election with oversight from the BIA to approve its new constitution.

A seven-member Executive Council was elected in June 2004 by its membership to lead the organization.

Today, the Tribe is comprised of 181 members, all of whom are lineal descendants of the 28 original members who were on the Plan of Distribution, and were plaintiffs' in the federal Court case of 1975 - 1983 that led to its restoration of the Tribe. Approximately 33% of the Tribe's members reside in Lake County, or about 60 of its 181 members.

The Tribe is the recipient of annual federal grants. Funds are to provide much needed programs and services for its membership, for environmental conservation, housing assistance for low-income members, educational programs such as: on-site tutorial, computer literacy, cultural arts, GED preparation and higher education. Judicial advocacy is also provided on behalf of tribal Youth in adoption and/or placement into foster-care and/or group homes.

It has a staff of ten (10) employees, of which eight (8) are full-time employees, and two (2) are part-time, and one (1) is a contractor who works on a case-by-case basis.

The Tribe maintains its governmental offices at 375 East Highway 20, Suite I, in Upper Lake, California.

With its developer, Luna Entertainment Gaming Upper Lake, LLC, the Tribe purchased sixty (60) acres of land approximately 1/4 mile from its governmental offices and one (1) mile from its former Rancheria, which was lost through federal termination in the mid 1950's.

Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake is in the process of restoring its land within its aboriginal territory of Upper Lake. Land acquired is located near Maiyi, a historic tribal village that is central to the Tribe's creation story and oral traditions.

Reference: Anthropological History provided by Dr. Lee Davis, Director of the American Indian Studies Department at San Francisco State University

# HISTORICAL T I M E L I N E

**Prehistory** - UL Pomo lived in area thousands of years prior to European contact.

**Mid 1500s** Spanish Manila Galleons, discovered coast of Northern California, Bodega Bay/Cape Mendocino (Munson 2003). Yearly trade destinations made for Clear Lake with Pomo. Pomo may have journeyed to Sir Francis Drake expedition north of San Francisco bay for trade (Barrett 1908:36-37).

Pomo basketry was a highly regarded trading item, uniquely identifiable as Pomo, whose weavers were both highly skilled and creative with adornments.

Mission Dolores and Presidio at San Francisco were established in **1776** which signaled the death knell for the Pomo way of life.

In **1796** first American ship, the Otter, sailed the California coast, collecting hundreds of sea otter pelts. Landed at Monterey for supplies of water and food. After that many American ships made trading expeditions to California harbors. They occasionally defied Spanish prohibitions and engaged in clandestine trade with local Indian otter hunters along the coast. Soldiers and mission Indians had gone into Napa Valley.

In **1806** Russian American Company sailed south from Alaska to Presidio at Monterey. Negotiated trade deal with Commander Jose Arguello, and scouted for a location to build a California outpost to serve the Russian colonies in Alaska.

**1806-1810** a great deal of traveling, both ways, between Mission Dolores, the Napa Valley, and Coast Ranges just south of Clear Lake.

In **1809** Russian fur expedition sent to California, temporary buildings erected at Bodega bay, about forty-five miles north of San Francisco.

In **1811** thorough exploration of the area and the coast, a permanent settlement was located at Fort Ross.

It was not the Spanish, but the Russians from Ft. Ross, who in **1812** conducted the earliest intensive dealings with Pomo. They routinely exploited Pomo and other native tribes encountered along coast.

In **1817**, the San Rafael Mission was established, and Pomo from far north were brought to the new facility.

In **1821** Spanish soldiers arrived in Clear Lake, led by Luis Arguello, first provisional governor of California in 1822 under Mexico. Soldiers on expeditions to take Indians back to missions, as the Presidios sent forays into increasingly distant outlining tribal areas.

Epidemic disease spread from the Spanish Missions. Populations of missionized tribes shrank rapidly as a consequence, high death rates among the migrants themselves.

In **1822** California became part of Mexican Republic, which secularized the missions in 1834 "freeing the natives", to a world they no longer knew! Settlers obtained grants of large tracts of land from the Mexican government, some of which were confirmed by the US after the cession of California to the US (Barrett 1908:41)

In **1823** Sonoma Mission was built. All Pomo were transferred there. It was later abandoned in 1840 and/or sold (Barrett 1908:40-41)

**1832- 1833** massive malaria epidemic devastated the Sacramento Valley tribe and was carried into the Clear Lake area by members of the John Work expedition for the Hudson's Bay Company. By 1839, the indigenous population had been reduced by about 75 percent.

Russians remained at Fort Ross until **1840**; they voluntarily withdrew from pressure from the Spanish.

**1841** John Sutter bought Fort Ross from the Russians.

**1847** New arrivals at the Fort brought measles, further reducing the population.

**1848** California Gold Rush, 100,000 of local natives died from a smallpox epidemic (Gibbs 1972:9).

In **1850** Upper Lake Pomo and other tribes' ancestors, including women and children were massacred at Bloody Island by US Calvary.