

## WHY THE ORIGINAL INDIAN TRIBE OF THE GREATER LOS ANGELES AREA IS CALLED KIZH NOT TONGVA

by

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The original Indian Tribe of the greater Los Angeles and Orange County areas has been referred to variously which has led to much confusion and misrepresentation. This article is intended to clarify what they were called, what they prefer to be called today (Kizh), and what they do not want to be called (i.e. "Tongva"). Prior to the invasion of foreign nations into California (the Spanish Empire and the Russian Empire in the 1700s), California Indian Tribes did not have pan-tribal names for themselves such as Americans are used to (for example, the "Cherokee" or "Navajo" [Dine]). The local Kizh Indian People identified themselves with their associated resident village (such as Topanga, Cahuenga, Tujunga, Cucamonga, etc.). This concept can be understood if one considers ancient Greece where, before the time of Alexander the Great, the people there did not consider themselves "Greeks" but identified with their city states. So, one was an Athenian from Athens or a Spartan from Sparta. Similarly, the Kizh identified with their associated villages.

Anthropologists, such as renowned A.L. Kroeber, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley, who wrote the first "bible" of California Indians, inappropriately referred to the subject tribe as the "Gabrielinos" (Kroeber 1925). The origin of the preferred ethnic name is as follows. When the Spanish invaded the local Indian territory in 1771, they set up their headquarters for occupation at a place now called Whittier Narrows located 15 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. The Spanish built their first mission facility there because it was well-watered by the San Gabriel River and especially because it also had a good number of prominent populous villages (e.g. Shevaanga [Sibangna or Siba], Isantcangna, Houtngna, Ouitchingna, etc.). The Spanish used the people from those villages as slave labor to build the first San Gabriel Mission there. Because the Indian people of the Whittier Narrows area there collectively called themselves "Kizh" (McCawley 1996, 43), the Spanish referred to them as "Kichereños" – thereby hispanizing the term with their suffix. The recent-most overview book on the tribe expressed it this way:

“. . . Kizh for the Indians living near San Gabriel (i.e. Whittier Narrows area). . . According to Harrington's (ethnographer J.P. Harrington) consultant Raimundo Yorba, the Gabrielino in the Whittier Narrows area referred to themselves as Kichireño, one of a bunch of people that lived at that place of San Gabriel which is known as Mision Vieja. Kichereño is not a place name, but a tribe name, the name of a kind of people" (Harrington 1986: R129 F345; cited in McCawley 1996, 43).

The word "kizh" itself described the houses they lived in, most of which were dome-shaped and made with a framework of willow branches and roofed over with thatching (Johnston 1962; McCawley 1996). After just a few years, the first mission compound was washed away by most probably El Nino flood conditions. The Spanish then decided to move their outpost five miles north and build a new San Gabriel Mission there in 1774. Once the mission was relocated, the Spanish eventually dropped the use of the term "Kichereño" and replaced it with "Gabrieleño" when referring to the Indians of the area.

Following that origin, the Tribal name of Kizh began with scholars interested in recording the Tribe's language in the form of vocabulary lists. The first such vocabulary was published by John Scouler in his report "N.W. American Tribes" (Scouler 1841, 229, 247-251). However, Scouler referred to the language with the name "San Gabriel" only. The first scholar to publish the Tribal name of "Kizh" was Horatio Hale in 1846 in a United States government report on "Ethnography and Philology." Hale spelled the word as both "Kizh" (p. 143) and as "Kij" (pp. 222, 566) and he also provided a vocabulary list of words in his publication. As was the practice at the time, he meant the word "Kizh" to refer to both the tribe and to its language (as we say today that people speak English in England and German in Germany; Hale 1846, see Attachment A-1).

The next scholar to recognize the Tribe's name of "Kizh" was Lieutenant A.W. Whipple (Whipple 1855) who contributed a presentation on a Kizh vocabulary list which was published within a "Report upon the Indian Tribes," in 1855 for the U.S. War Department (Whipple 1855). In it, he acknowledged the earlier work of Hale (1844) and provided his own Kizh vocabulary list (see Attachment A-2). The next year, a German scholar with the name Johann Buschmann published his study of the tribe's language in 1856. He published it in the German "Royal Academy of Science" in Berlin. In concert with Hale (1846) and Whipple (1855), he referred to the Tribe and their language as "Kizh" and used that term for the title of his publication (Buschmann 1856; Attachment A-3). Given that he published his study in the prestigious German Royal Academy of Science, it was a *de facto* recognition by another nation of the Tribe's name of Kizh. In the same year, Robert Gordon Latham published the name of the Tribe and its language as "Kij" (Latham 1856, 85; Attachment A-4). Four years later, Latham published his "Opuscula, Essays Chiefly Philological and Ethnographical" in which he acknowledged Dr. Coulter's work at San Gabriel. Latham later again referred to the Tribe and its language as "Kij" (Latham 1860, 304, 305). Since Dr. Latham's work was published in both England and in Scotland (London and Edinburgh respectively; Attachment A-6), his work was another *de facto* recognition by both England and Scotland of the name of Kizh or Kij as the Tribe's name. In 1858, Hermann E. Ludewig also published in London a book entitled American Aboriginal Languages (Ludewig 1858). He mentioned Kizh throughout his book (Ludewig 1858, 26, 62, 63, 220, 237 and 250). In it, he acknowledged the previous works on the Kizh language by Hale (1846), Turner (1855), a paper read by Buschmann in 1855 (published by Buschmann 1856), and Scouler's work published in Whipple (1855; see Attachment A-5).

Fifteen years later, the noted scholar Lewis H. Morgan published his "System of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family." It was published in our national museum, The Smithsonian Institution's "Contributions to Knowledge." In it, he mentions various tribes including "...The Mission Indians, namely, the Kizhes of San Gabriel..." (Morgan 1871, 252; Attachment A-7). Six years later, Albert Gatschet, in his "Indian Languages of the Pacific States and Territories," mentions the "Kizh" (Gatschet 1877, 152, 171; Attachment A-8). The renowned historian Hubert Howe Bancroft (for whom the library at U.C. Berkeley is named) mentioned that one of the native languages of "...southern California...(was the) Kizh..." (Bancroft 1883, 674). Bancroft also mentioned "The Kizh appears to have been spoken, in a slightly divergent dialect, at the Mission of San Fernando..." and provided two versions of the Lord's Prayer in the two main Kizh dialects (Bancroft 1883, 675-676; Attachment A-9).

Next, another scholar named Daniel G. Brinton published "A Linguistic Classification and Ethnographic Description of the Native Tribes of North and South America" in 1891. He also referred to the same tribe as "Kizh" (Brinton 1891, 133; Attachment A-10). Nine years later, David Prescott Barrows published his landmark study "The Ethno-Botany of the Coahuilla Indians of Southern California" (Barrows 1900). In that study he too refers to the Tribe as the "Kizh" (Barrows 1900, 12, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21). Barrows also opined "Mr. Gatschet is in error when he speaks of the Serrano and San Gabriel Indians calling themselves Takhtam and Tobikhar, respectively. The words are unknown as tribal designations among these Indians themselves, and precisely this point constitutes the objections to them" (Barrows 1900, 20; Attachment A-11). Finally, and prior to publishing his landmark 1925 book on the California Indians, A.L. Kroeber published his study of the "Shoshonean Dialects of California" at U.C. Berkeley in 1907. In it he acknowledged the tribal term of "Kizh, also written Kij," but then used the term "Gabrielino" to refer to the tribe in both that publication and later in his 1925 book (Kroeber 1907, 141; Attachment A-12).

A priest of San Gabriel Mission, Fr. Eugene Sugranes, published a book entitled, "The Old San Gabriel Mission" in 1909. In it he stated, "The language spoken by the San Gabriel Mission Indians was the Kizh. The Lord's Prayer in the Kizh dialect is as follows..." (Sugranes 1909, 29). Fr. Sugranes verifies that Kizh initially was recognized by the Catholic clergy at San Gabriel Mission, even though they went on to rename them "Gabrieleños", thereby further degrading the culture of the Kizh (Attachment A-13).

As the above references attest, the scholars of the international academic community recognized the name of “Kizh” as both the name of the Tribe and its language. Also, as noted above, given the presence of the term “Kizh” in four nations’ publications (i.e. in the United States, England, Scotland and Germany), the term was widely recognized and respected in both the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Apparently, when the renowned and highly respected A.L. Kroeber published his major work on California Indian tribes, in which he dropped the use of Kizh and replaced it with Gabrielino, he influenced later scholars, who also disregarded the original term of Kizh. That appellation of “Gabrielino” unfortunately became a standard term for the Tribe with both academics and laymen alike (e.g. Johnston 1962, Bean and Smith 1978 and McCawley 1996).

The tribe today, also known as “The Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians,” prefers to call themselves with a name which originated with their own language and which is the closest thing to a pan-tribal name that was used by their ancestors historically (at Whittier Narrows). They prefer it to the Spanish derived name of “Gabrieleños” (sic “Gabrielinos”) as that was the name given to them by their conquerors and it is not appropriate today whereas “Kizh” is. The Tribe has published their name in a landmark book about their 18th century hero Toypurina who led a 1785 revolt against the Spanish Empire’s brutal conquest of their territory. That publication is the Tribe’s first book published with its own press: the Kizh Tribal Press (Teutimes, Salas, Martinez and Stickel 2013).

But if Kizh is the preferred tribal name, why has the name of “Tongva” been used? I shall address that next. Over one hundred years after the tribal name of Kizh was published by Hale (1846), an ethnographer by the name of C. Hart Merriam was studying the tribe’s culture. He interviewed one of the tribe’s female members whose name was Rosemyre. This interview took place at Fort Tejon located, today, at the beginning of the “Grape Vine” part of the pass through the San Gabriel Mountains north of the tribe’s territory and north of present-day Los Angeles. Merriam asked her what the name of her tribe was. He did not understand that she could not accurately answer his question as her people did not have such a concept. The current Chairman of the Tribe, Andrew Salas, has opined a scenario of how she responded and how Merriam misunderstood her. Mr. Salas thinks Rosemyre responded not with a tribal name *per se* but with her village name—in the manner in which she and her people were accustomed. She responded with the word “Toviscangna”—which was the name of her home village that was located at Mission San Gabriel (Serra 1778). It is believed that Merriam glitched her response into “Tongva” and wrongfully attributed it as the name of the tribe. Merriam later published his misinterpretation in a paper that he subtitled “A Mortuary Ceremony of the Tong-va of Tejon” (Merriam 1955). Not only did Merriam misinterpret the name for the tribe, but he thought the tribe’s territory was at “Tejon” when that area was that of the Tataviam Tribe (cf. Heizer 1978, ix; Bean and Smith 1978, 538). Unfortunately, the term of “Tongva” was promoted by persons claiming to be Gabrieleño Indians. They were so effective at promoting this false concept in the 1980s and 1990s that they not only got the general public to believe it (the term does sound “Indian” as did Tonto of the Lone Ranger fame), but they even got some genuine tribal members to believe it as well (e.g. Rocha and Cook 1982).

The perpetrators have also gotten various cities in the greater Los Angeles area to believe the farce of “Tongva” to the point where they have named monuments and a park with the false name. The name of Tongva was prominently promoted by one Cindi Alvitre, who has been on the teaching staff of California State University at Long Beach. In an interview with her by the staff of DIG “CSULB’s Monthly Student Magazine” posted on the internet on April 9, 2011, Ms. Alvitre stated “the name given to the collective group of Tribes that inhabited what is now CSULB was ‘Gabrielino,’ given to the group by Spanish settlers. . .” and she went on to state: “The name Tongva is what we’ve chosen to use in the present which means ‘people of the earth’... There was no one tribe called ‘Tongva’ ” (Alvitre 2011; Attachment A-14).

The above discussion has hopefully shown that the term “Kizh” is the appropriate name for the original tribe that inhabited the greater Los Angeles area whereas “Tongva” is an illegitimate word for the tribe. Because the perpetrators have been so successful in promoting the false concept, it will take a great deal of “damage control” to correct all the mistaken usages of the false word and replace it with the most legitimate one of “Kizh.”

## Acknowledgments

The author would like to acknowledge the useful research assistance the Arthur Mgebrov provided to this article. His literature search disclosed several scholarly references included in this paper. Also, the assistance of James Flaherty, who helped produce this paper, is gratefully appreciated.

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