

Notes taken by Dean Dixon regarding

Acjachemen presentation by Kathleen ***Adelia Sandoval***

Orange County Historical Society General Meeting on May 13, 2021 via Zoom.us

- 1,900 known Acjachemen verified only by genealogy confirmed by records at Mission San Juan Capistrano; tribal council does not use DNA for verification. About 500 known Acjachemen families live in Orange County.
- Literal meaning of the word Acjachemen is “wild sweet pea.”
- Acjachemen sacred sites, e.g. Nawil (Niguel), are along Aliso Creek where private tribal ceremonies are held. Aliso Creek was not a dividing line between the Acjachemen and Tongva peoples.
- Hundreds of Acjachemen villages ranged throughout Orange County from San Gabriel River in Seal Beach to Santa Margarita River in Camp Pendelton.
- The Acjachemen never used drums but do slap sacred split sticks into an open hand for singing accompaniment and rhythm.
- Their history and mythology is told in their songs passed from generation to generation. Today’s Acjachemen women have a singing group. Their language is not written and has much in common with neighboring tribes.
- Acjachemen men wore no clothes and women only wore only loin cloths.
- Social status and leadership within the Acjachemen tribe was determined by generosity of spirit and worldly goods assessed as individual’s kindness. Leaders are not called “chief” and are as often women as men.
- Protocol for tribes visiting each other was to only attend each other’s ceremonies when invited by a leader of the tribe visited. To assume otherwise was considered extremely rude.