

RESISTING ERASURE:
THE HISTORY, HERITAGE, AND LEGACY OF THE MUWEKMA OHLONE TRIBE
OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

A Project Report
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of Anthropology San José State University

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Of the Requirements for the Degree Master of Arts

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Resisting Erasure: The History, Heritage, and Legacy of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe
of the San Francisco Bay Area

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Abstract

The Muwekma Ohlone have inhabited the greater San Francisco Bay Area for over twelve thousand years. In less than three hundred years, the complete displacement from tribal villages followed by their assimilation into mainstream society has disconnected the Muwekma Tribe from a central land base making it difficult to maintain their culture. Despite these obstacles, and years of cultural erasure, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has undertaken efforts of reclamation to reassert their tribal identity into the Bay Area as part of a cultural revitalization movement. In resistance to erasure, and to support the self-determination of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, my master's project aligns with the Tribe's objective of gaining visibility and educating the public about the Tribe's presence in their ancestral homeland. As a result, this project collaboratively developed a museum exhibit on Muwekma Tribal culture and history through material culture and oral histories, and examines the power relations inherent in anthropological work with indigenous groups.

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This project is dedicated to the life and legacy of my grandmother,
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Whether by conforming to government standards of Indian identity, foreign labor practices, European social and religious expectations, or interference by probing anthropologists and archaeologists, California Indians have been subjected to repeated invasions by Europeans and Anglo Americans. Each invasion has had a cumulative influence on California Indians' contemporary struggle for sovereignty and federal recognition (Lightfoot 2006; Mrozowski et al. 2009; Sunseri 2017). The Muwekma Ohlone have described themselves as California Indians living as refugees in their homeland. Since the early 20th century, the Muwekma have remained outside federal recognition status for tribes, following their illegal termination brought about by the actions of a Bureau of Indian Affairs agent named L.A. Dorrington in 1927 (Field 2003).

The effects of federal termination for Native tribes can be detrimental. Yet, despite the loss of their federal recognition status, the Muwekma Ohlone have survived as a cohesive community. In recent decades, the Tribe has enacted a cultural revitalization and reclamation movement within their aboriginal homeland, the greater San Francisco Bay Area. This revitalization movement has been supported by many anthropologist allies, including Alan Leventhal as well as other faculty and alumni at San José State University. In resistance to erasure, and to support the self-determination of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, my master's project aligns with the Tribe's objective of gaining visibility and educating the public about the Tribe's presence in their ancestral homeland. This project collaboratively developed a museum exhibit on Muwekma Tribal culture and history through material culture and oral histories, and examines the power relations inherent in anthropological work with indigenous groups. It is through the reciprocal relationship between the Anthropology department at San José State and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe that this master's project is possible.

A Muwekma Ohlone Brief Historical Overview

According to oral history, the Muwekma Ohlone have inhabited the greater San Francisco Bay Area for over twelve thousand years (see Appendix A). In less than three hundred years, the complete displacement from tribal villages, harvesting grounds, fishing waterways and other resources, followed by their assimilation into mainstream society has disconnected the Muwekma Tribe from a central land base making it difficult to maintain and regenerate their traditional culture. Despite these obstacles, and years of cultural erasure, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has undertaken efforts of self-determination to reassert their tribal identity into the Bay Area as part of a cultural revitalization movement.

The Muwekma Tribe continues to revitalize their culture and reclaim their ancestral heritage within their homeland. After 28 years of bureaucratic struggle to regain their federal recognition status, the Muwekma have repeatedly been denied by the Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA) in Washington D. C. Without the reinstatement of federal recognition, the Muwekma are at a major disadvantage. Federally recognized tribes have certain rights under federal law that help maintain Tribal autonomy in areas such as land ownership, natural resource protections, religious freedom, Tribal sovereignty and economics, as well as archaeological protections over sacred and culturally significant sites (Miller 2014). Because of their current federally unrecognized status, the Muwekma do not have a permanent, protected space within their homeland that the Tribe can use for cultural gatherings and events. The Tribe also has little control over the destruction of their sacred sites and the natural resources in their homeland. The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's presence and collaboration on archeological excavations within culturally significant sites depends on the people and policies of the archaeological firm that is

hired to do the excavation. These are some examples of how the Muwekma have been disenfranchised by government bureaucracy.

The Muwekma are reclaiming their history, heritage, and legacy in the face of erasure by focusing on several main objectives as part of their reclamation and revitalization process: reclaiming their ancestral remains, sacred artifacts, and writing their own archaeological reports through the Tribe's archaeological firm; renaming of local sites to reflect historic and continued presence in their homeland; and gaining as much visibility as possible to educate through tribal exhibits and publicize their legacy in the Bay Area (Field et al. 1992; Field et al. 2013; Leventhal et al. 1994). In resistance to cultural erasure, and to support the self-determination of the Tribe, my master's project aligns with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's objective of generating visibility and educating the public about the Tribe's presence in their ancestral homeland. This project collaboratively developed a museum exhibit on Muwekma Tribal culture and history through material culture and oral histories, and examines the power relations inherent in anthropological work with indigenous groups.

Decolonizing Anthropology

This project is a collaborative approach to interpretation of a tribe's history and culture, yet is informed by a long history of anthropological approaches to indigeneity. From Ishi's brain to Floyd Westerman's song, "Here Come the Anthros," anthropology's history of perpetuating colonial power dynamics and European-American ethnocentricity has been documented and critiqued by many including Cecil King (1997), Vine Deloria (1969), Orin Starn (2011), and Biolsi and Zimmerman (1997). Whether through grave robbing grandmother's remains (see Platt 2011), or simply reporting on the so-called vanishing Native but failing to identify the reasons behind their exterminations, ala Alfred Kroeber (see Mrozowski et al. 2009 and Platt 2011),

anthropology has an extensive and reprehensible history of studying Native Americans. Fortunately for the discipline, Indigenous scholars and allies have influenced a growing trend in anthropology and other social sciences to apply our theories and methodologies in the service of decolonizing knowledge; the way it is acquired, produced, and disseminated (Alivizatou 2012; Atalay 2012; Evans et al. 2014; Gonzalez et al. 2006; Mihesuah and Wilson 2004; Smith 1999).

Contributions to the radical and theoretical literature on decolonization stems from revolutionary South American intellectuals, those among the African diaspora, and Africana intellectuals such as Paulo Freire, Frantz Fanon, and Aimé Césaire (Tuck and Yang 2012). Because “decolonizing anthropology” has been misused and appropriated, I wish to explain my reasoning for employing such a term. Literally defined as an undoing of colonialism, or the independence of previously colonized people from their colonial oppressors, it has also come to represent the undoing of internalized forms of colonialism, racialization, and exclusion, as a result of domination and legacies of colonial policies.

Presently, the Muwekma Ohlone are a federally-unrecognized Tribe who have petitioned the government to reinstate their previous federal recognition status. After over twenty years of legal battles, their petitions repeatedly failed to grant them sovereignty despite fulfilling all of the BIA Office of Federal Acknowledgment’s demands (Field 2003). Without the rights and privileges that federal recognition bestows upon American Indian Tribes, and recognizing that federal acknowledgment is a colonial process in itself, the Muwekma have established programs of self-determination and agency, without the help of the federal government. For this, I equate the revolutionary actions of Muwekma Tribal leadership—which are largely woman-driven—to a program of decolonization (Krouse and Howard 2009).

As a methodology, decolonizing scholarly research works towards centering the experiences, perspectives, and desires of the indigenous community, or another community in which one works. Sonya Atalay (2012), an Ojibway anthropologist, works toward increased radical and decolonizing methodologies in the discipline. Atalay's approach calls for an indigenous anthropology, which is by, for, and of indigenous people. This project's collaborative focus contributes to decolonizing the archaeology and history of the Bay Area through public dissemination and museum interpretations.

Project Goals

This project utilized a museum exhibit to educate the public on the history, heritage, and legacy of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and their continued presence in their ancestral homeland. The exhibit resulted from a collaboration between the New Museum of Los Gatos (NUMU), the Anthropology Department of San José State University, and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. I acted as a co-curator of the exhibit, as well as a mediator, interfacing between groups and stakeholders in order to meet everyone's needs. As a mediator between two institutions and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, it was my responsibility to clarify the wishes of the Tribe and work to fulfil their visions for the project. With many stakeholders, however, miscommunications and compromises are inevitable. This project has afforded me the opportunity to experience first-hand the complexities of applied, collaborative research projects.

Artifacts of pre-contact Muwekma material culture were selected and featured to demonstrate technology, artistry, specialization, cosmology, social complexity, and subsistence practices. All artifacts were accompanied by artifact labels that include information as to the purpose or significance of the items on display. I researched and wrote the text for the exhibit with the assistance of the tribe's historian, Alan Leventhal. Interactive elements, such as

percussive instruments made out of Elderberry wood, touchable abalone shells, and a modern replica of a mortar for guests to touch and hold were on display as well.

A major element of the exhibit are the panels of text describing the history of the Muwekma Tribe, their colonial interactions, and the Tribe's struggle for the reinstatement of their federal recognition status. This part of the exhibit was the most laborious in terms of hours as well as research. Other forms of research and text I conducted and wrote for the exhibit are present in the artifact labels that accompany each artifact, or groups of artifacts, on display. All textual panels are now property of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and can be used by the Tribe for future educational displays.

Additionally, contemporary elements representing the Muwekma Tribe were also presented. A photo collage from recent years' Muwekma Ohlone Tribal gatherings showcases both the number of tribal members, as well as current Tribal gatherings and examples of community building events. An iPad with a contemporary song sung in Chochenyo was available to play while visiting the initial exhibit, demonstrating the success of the Tribe's language revitalization program that began in 2004.

This initial exhibit was on display from November 2016 to June of 2017. In November of 2017, parts of the exhibit were installed on the fifth floor of the Martin Luther King Jr. Library in honor of Native American Heritage Month. It is planned, and my ultimate hope that, the exhibit will remain in circulation to be featured at new venues, future events, and continue to be relevant and useful for the Tribe.

The main goal of this project is to work collaboratively and encourage Tribal input to frame the scope of multiple exhibits on the history, heritage and legacy of the Muwekma Ohlone of the San Francisco Bay Area. Most importantly, my goal is to create an exhibit that will be of

use and of benefit to the Muwekma Tribe in multiple venues and for many years to come. If the elements of the exhibit are able to be deconstructed from the original exhibit and used elsewhere, the exhibit is to me, a success.

Secondary goals for the exhibit include the creation or maintenance of personal and professional relationships built between the Muwekma Tribe, myself, the Anthropology Department at San José State University, and the New Museum of Los Gatos. In addition to being a beneficiary of Alan Leventhal's connections with the Native American community of Santa Clara County, my project is also largely dependent upon the historic relationship between the Anthropology Department and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. Any future opportunities for Tribal members, San José State students, or myself which arise out of my collaborative project will be representative of a completed goal for this project.

Significance

The significance of this project reflects the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's objective of maintaining visibility and educating the public on the continued presence of the Tribe within their ancestral homeland. These efforts are critical in resisting the cultural erasure that indigenous American communities have faced and can contribute to the decolonization of anthropological methods.

The genocide of Native people and destruction of their cultures are not topics that many Americans find comfortable and easy to discuss. This discomfort begets silence, and silence perpetuates a culture of erasure. Erasure obscures the history of dehumanization and legitimization and its legacy against which some Native Californians are still fighting; as in the cases of the Muwekma, Amah-Mutsun from Mission San Juan Bautista and Esselen Nation from

Mission San Carlos and the Monterey Bay Area (see Leventhal et al. 1994:312-314 and Appendix A).

Widespread public recognition of this erasure is necessary to bring visibility to the issues contemporary California Indians are facing. Generations of Native eradication and the subsequent dismissal of their needs has rendered them invisible and therefore, inconsequential in the eyes and actions of the government and other institutions within the dominant society. By working together, anthropologists can use their advantage in public and academic realms to build beneficial relationships with Native groups. Collaborations such as these are crucial for creating alliances in the fight against a culture of silent racism.

Anthropology as a Vehicle for Social Justice

As a discipline, anthropology has a dark history (as reviewed in Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997; Deloria 1969; Mrozowski et al. 2009; Smith 1999). Yet unlike many institutions with dark pasts and histories of indigenous repression, exploitation, and erasure, contemporary anthropology has sought to unlearn the cycle of domination that the discipline grew from and introduce new approaches and new methodologies that center the needs and wishes of the communities in which we work. Out of this desire to utilize anthropology in applied projects and for endeavors of social justice, an emphasis on public projects and collaborative research has been propelled into the forefront of anthropological theory and practice (see Alivizatou 2012; Atalay 2012; Gonzalez et al. 2006; Krouse and Howard 2009; Lassiter 2008; Sabloff 2008).

Preliminary background research is necessary for any anthropological endeavor. For this project, it was necessary to understand Muwekma pre-history, colonial and tribal histories, in addition to recognizing the intersecting ways colonization has impacted traditional lifeways, issues of sovereignty, and self-determination. The context of injustices faced by California

Indians throughout multiple waves of colonial history has informed and structured present conditions for many native peoples (Lightfoot et al. 2013). It is not enough to simply conduct background research without acknowledging and addressing enduring colonial obstacles, like the politics of erasure, inherent in many indigenous communities and more broadly, communities of color.

A critical understanding of history and historical context is crucial in attempting to work with a community that has faced repeated invasions and occupations of their ancestral homeland. This critical understanding is also necessary in considering the ways in which institutionally western establishments, namely museums and universities, have the potential to perpetuate systems of domination, imperialism and delegitimization. Reflexivity requires constant honest and critical self-evaluations to assess and reassess the communication practices, research approach, and methodologies in a collaborative social justice project. Careful consideration must be paid to ensure that our practices as academics and scholars do not reinforce colonial power dynamics.

Chapter 2: History of the Muwekma Ohlone

The history of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe entails a description of colonial interactions which have had a cumulative effect on the contemporary lives of the Muwekma. Early publications on the Muwekma were also colonial in nature (e.g. Bancroft 1874; Hittell 1879), and often cited Kroeber's work (e.g. Lanyon and Bulmore 1967; Underhill 1953), effectively maintaining the racialization of California Indians and their erasure from the landscape, while doing little to address the genocide mounted against them (Platt 2011). Some of these inappropriate and inaccurate anthropological records have had lasting effects on sovereignty issues and the treatment of Native people in mainstream society (Cipolla 2013; Deloria 1969; Lightfoot et al. 2013). Yet, the Muwekma, like other California Indians, have been led by several generations of strong, dedicated women, engaged in grassroots movements to reclaim their ancestral homeland and revitalize their culture.

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe

Before European contact, the indigenous population of California was one of the largest concentrations of Native people on this continent—second only to the Aztecs of highland Mexico (Leventhal et al. 1994). This population was reduced by ninety-five percent in a period of one hundred and fifty years (Lightfoot 2006, Platt 2011). The cause of this decline has been well documented and attributed to a series of colonial actions. The Spanish conquest and missionization of California devastated native populations by destroying the economic, environmental, cultural, religious, and social systems on which native Californians depended (Lightfoot 2006). In addition to European diseases, filthy living quarters and forced labor further reduced native populations. According to a study by Cook and Borah, the average survival period for a missionized Indian in Alta California was ten to fourteen years (Robert 1987).

According to records from Mission San José, however, an institution in which many Ohlones were indentured and Muwekma families have traced their ancestry (Field et al. 1992), the average life span after was less than five years (Hull 2015).

After the dissolution of the failed Mission system, and the United States acquiring Californian land, the American gold rush and increased western settlement perpetuated a new system of colonialism (Lightfoot 2006; Sunseri 2017). The United States government encouraged early Americans to infiltrate California and exploit its natural resources at the cost of Native lives, as well as environmental degradation (Phillips 1993). Many settlers and gold rushers stayed in the west, further displacing native populations in perhaps the first case of gentrification in the state of California. Native lifeways were dramatically disordered into the margins of society by way of capitalism, new labor practices, and legislated genocide (Lindsay 2012; Lightfoot 2006; Madley 2016).

Indian villages, or rancherias, existed as havens for California Indians seeking retreat from European and Early American invasion. Many Indian cultural traditions thrived in these settings yet were abandoned due to laws declaring Indians as non-citizens and therefore unable to make claim to their ancestral lands (Lightfoot 2006). These early American laws effectively relocated Indians, forcing them to find work in the mainstream culture, while reducing their social status as virtually nonexistent. The efforts of colonization may have disrupted and dissolved traditional lifeways but largely failed to eradicate indigenous California culture.

Early Anthropology of Ohlone Groups

Alfred L. Kroeber, one of the founders of UC Berkeley's anthropology department in the early 20th century, set out to search for and document "timeless" California Indian cultures (Mrozowski et al. 2009). In essence, he was sought to document native culture before European

contact. In the early 1900s Alfred Kroeber was considered the authority on California Indians by western institutions. As a student of Franz Boas, Kroeber was interested in what has been problematically termed, salvage anthropology. As such, he studied many of California's indigenous groups in an attempt to document his idea of *untouched* and *traditional* indigenous culture before they vanished (Starn 2005). Kroeber participated in a state-wide study of the surviving California Tribes with his colleagues and students. His monumental study on California Indians published in 1925 indicated the Costanoans, which included the Muwekma Ohlone, were "culturally extinct" (Leventhal et al. 1994). This opinion was based on the Muwekma's conversion to Catholicism, fluency in Spanish, and their mixed blood as a result of intermarriage with neighboring tribes through the mission system. However, by the time Kroeber reached the Muwekma in the Niles and Pleasanton areas during the early 1900s, their ways of life had first been transformed by Spanish conquest for nearly 130 years.

In his *Handbook on California Indians*, Kroeber (1925) pronounced the Costanoan group, including the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, culturally extinct, influencing the decision of government workers to deny the Muwekma federal recognition status. His work has also influenced other anthropologists and professionals including "popular historians, cultural geographers, and cultural resource management archeologists" (Leventhal et al. 1994:312). Kroeber's erroneous declaration of extinction did not consider the multiple generations of forced European assimilation and white settler colonialism that both purposefully sought to destroy California Indian communities, families, cultures, and attempted to erase the California Indian presence from the historical record altogether. California Indians have had to constantly adapt to cultural upheaval as a consequence of colonization. American Indians, and especially those in California, faced violence and racism, religious persecution, capitalist exploitation, and

institutionalized discrimination leading to genocidal campaigns (Johnston-Dodds 2002; Lindsay 2012; Madley 2016). Each wave of colonization brought new forms of devastation to the natural environment, new diseases and health conditions for which few treatments were available, and new terms of social stratification within which California Indians were subjected to adapt.

Despite being considered progressive for his time, Kroeber's preoccupation with "the purely aboriginal, the uncontaminatedly native" in his study of California Indians reproduced the stereotypes regarding what Natives should look like and how they should live their lives (Platt 2011:48). Additionally, his research became written into history and has been used by many institutions and is still reproduced today in contemporary—albeit inaccurate—works regarding Native California.

Kroeber was not interested in documenting why Native Californian cultures change through time. In a report compiled for the University of California Archaeological Survey, Kroeber asserted:

What happened to the California Indians following 1849—their disruption, losses, sufferings, and adjustments—fall into the purview of the historian... rather than the anthropologist whose prime concern is the purely aboriginal, the uncontaminatedly native" (Platt 2011: 48).

He wanted to interview Indians who remembered a *pure* time before the advent of colonialism, people who remember their songs, regalia, ceremonies and language (as in the case of the Arapaho Indians, among whom he did his dissertation at Columbia University in 1901, titled, *Decorative Symbolism of the Arapaho*). However, different tribes have very diverse histories in coping with colonization. In order to witness this essentialized version of California Indians, Kroeber would have needed a time machine because no Ohlone or Costanoan person was alive at the time of his interviews that was born prior to missionization. Today, we can clearly recognize Kroeber's theoretical and methodological errors by recognizing the ways in which California

Indian culture has persisted despite multiple waves of colonialism and the inherent, overt programs of acculturation by Spanish missionaries of the late 18th century, the Mexican government of the 19th century, and by American settler colonialism of the late 19th century which continues to this day. Instead, his findings highlight the obvious ways that California Indians had to conform to certain Euro-American centric standards, like speaking European languages and engaging in forms of capitalism, in order to survive.

The relationship between native Californians and anthropologists during Kroeber's time during the late 19th and 20th centuries often maintained a tradition of Euro-American ethnocentrism. Even as Franz Boas developed the idea of "cultural relativism"—the idea that the customs, beliefs, and practices of a culture must be understood within its own cultural framework—some scientists claimed they could take better care of Native remains and artifacts than Native people themselves, in an attempt to salvage what information is left of Native cultures before genocidal efforts prevailed (Platt 2011). Problematically, there was little mention of why these cultures may have been facing extinction. Today, anthropologists that work the closest with California Natives have the opportunity to lend their voices on behalf of the Natives, speaking out against the atrocities of white supremacy and the residual effects of colonialism. Yet anthropologists of the late 19th and 20th centuries largely failed to recognize that they were in fact aiding in the rapid disenfranchisement and removal of native populations and their culture from ancestral lands through their complicity (Lindsay 2012) and by destroying important heritage sites and collecting Native burials and artifacts (Platt 2011).

Anthropological interpretations of indigenous authenticity in the early twentieth century was one aspect of a larger colonial program which marginalized and excluded native groups from California society (Cipolla 2013). These interpretations of authenticity have been defined

and described by non-Natives, making the practice inherently flawed, racist, and insidious, considering the deleterious effect claims of authenticity have on Tribes petitioning for federal recognition (see Cipolla 2013; Lightfoot et al. 2013; Mrozowski 2009). The unrealistic and wildly inaccurate concepts of indigenous authenticity have prevented Native groups from accessing resources and maintaining sovereign rights. Cipolla (2013) explains that, "...any indigenous response to colonialism and modernity—other than complete and utter stasis—is framed as inauthentic," and that "evidence of cultural change is used to weaken Native connections –legal or otherwise—to lands and cultural heritage in the eyes of their judges" (12-13). And yet, culture contact between invading Europeans, early American settler-colonialists, and Native groups affected the way modern Native groups identify and delineate their tribal and cultural organizations today (Lightfoot et al. 2013). Kroeber and other anthropologists' erroneous notions of indigenous authenticity influenced the revocation of many tribes' federal status. It is for these haunting injustices that anthropologists today should use their skills in the service of Native Americans who wish to reinstate their status as recognized tribes.

Federal Recognition Case

During the early 1980's, the majority of Muwekma families came together to continue to conduct research on their tribe's history, genealogy, and for the application for Federal Recognition. By 1989, the Muwekma Tribal Council passed a resolution to petition the U.S. Government for Federal Acknowledgment. On May 24, 1996, the BIA's Branch of Acknowledgment and Research made a positive determination of previous unambiguous Federal Recognition.

The BIA then placed the Tribe on Ready Status for Active Consideration in 1998, with a 24 year long waiting list (see Muwekma Ohlone Tribe v. Salazar 2013). The Muwekma Tribal

Council decided this was unacceptable, so the Council took legal action by filing a law suit on December 8, 1999 under the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) for an expedited review of the petition. On June 30, 2000, Federal District Judge Ricardo M. Urbina, ruled in favor of the Muwekma Tribe and ordered the Interior Department to expedite the Muwekma's petition. The Muwekma Tribe is in the final throes of seeking resolution of its Federally Acknowledged status in order to correct the administrative errors perpetrated by the BIA in 1927 and in 2002. The Tribe eventually anticipates, at some point in the future, a positive outcome as a result of their efforts to regain federal acknowledgement status through the reconsideration of the evidence that was submitted in their petition but ignored by the Office of Federal Acknowledgment.

As a Tribe, the Muwekma Ohlone have no legal standing in the eyes of the federal government. Federal recognition ensures the protection of tribal assets, resources, as well as sacred spaces, heritage sites, and artifacts under NAGPRA. Federal recognition also ensures the protection of tribal property under federal law. These rights and provisions do not apply to the Muwekma. After 20 years of lawyers, courtrooms, appeals, millions of dollars in legal fees, and extensive documentation of the over 550 enrolled members proving their ancestry and cultural continuity, the Muwekma have still been unable to convince the BIA's Office of Federal Acknowledgment that they have survived as a functioning and legitimate tribe and a distinct culture since Kroeber declared otherwise.

In the meantime, the Muwekma have their own agenda and have been operating as a cohesive Tribe to reclaim their sovereign rights within their aboriginal and historic homeland. This reclamation involves three objectives: 1) renaming sacred and/or ancestral heritage sites within their homeland, often in their indigenous Chochenyo or Thamien languages; 2) establishing control over the excavation of ancestral remains and culturally significant

archaeological artifacts by retaining professional relationships with archeological firms, institutions of higher education, local governments and development agencies; and 3) maintaining a public presence within the greater Bay Area in order to educate about the Muwekma's continued presence and legacy in their homeland, the San Francisco Bay Area.

Influence on Present-Day Politics: Contemporary Colonial Systems

The laws and actions of early Californian legislators reflected a concerted effort to erase natives from the landscape (Johnston-Dodds 2002). These actions have been chronicled in historical records indicating the physical and violent removal and disenfranchisement of indigenous populations. Subsequent laws and policies were put into place that restricted Native communities from voting, owning land, inter-marrying, and practicing their respective religions. Some of these anti-native laws have survived and still restrict non-federally recognized Tribes from owning land, accessing culturally important sites, and practicing their religions within their own sacred homelands (Field et al. 1992).

Contemporary forms of domination exist in the criteria set forth by the Office of Federal Acknowledgement (OFA). The OFA applies the same standards across an entire continent of diverse cultures with drastically differing histories of colonial contact and periods of forced acculturation (Miller 2004; Ramirez 2007). Federal recognition criteria have been informed in part by the same misinformation created by Kroeber in his survey of California Indians in the early 20th century, indicating that to be a *real* Indian one must dress, speak, and live as a pre-contact indigenous person. Asking tribes to prove their identity, as constructed and interpreted by colonial and bureaucratic policies, in order to grant sovereign status is not only a conflict of interest perpetrated by the federal government, it also presents a conundrum. As Miller argues, “precontact racial and cultural aspects of Indianness recede or evolve over time through the

effects of mass culture and globalization” (2004:4). Taking a one-size-fits-all approach to judging and defining something as diverse as American Indianness should be of enough concern to dissolve the federal acknowledgment process altogether. And yet, a singular model of authenticity is exactly what is applied to Tribes with cases petitioning for federal recognition. In fact, in plain and simple terms, the Acknowledgment process is a total failure. This statement echoes the testimony of Bud Shapard, former Branch Chief for the Federal Recognition Project (FAP) and primary author of the 1978 Acknowledgment regulations, when he provided testimony in 1992 before the Congress on HR 3430. Mr. Shapard (1992) in his testimony made it very clear that:

“After fourteen years of trying to make the regulations which I drafted in 1978 work, I must conclude that they are fatally flawed and unworkable. They take too long to produce results. They are administratively too complicated. The decisions are subjective and are not necessarily accurate. The criteria are limited in scope and are not applicable to many of the petitioning groups which are in fact, viable Indian tribes...

The present regulations cannot be revised, fixed, patched, dabbled with, redefined, clarified or administered differently to make them work. Additional money, staff, computer hardware, or contracts with outside organizations will not solve the problem. The problem lies within the regulations.

In short, the regulations should be scrapped in their entirety and replaced with a simpler, less burdensome, and more objective solution. They should be administered by an independent agency There should be time limits on both petitioning and completing the evaluation process.”

Despite these unrealistic and unfair standards, federal recognition remains a highly sought after designation for over 200 tribes (Miller 2004). Federal acknowledgment maintains a “government-to-government relationship” with Native groups, essentially protecting sovereign status (Miller 2004:3). Federally recognized tribes have access to a range of federal services through the BIA such as the Indian Health Service, and resource protection. The federal government has a responsibility to protect tribal sovereignty, existing tribal lands, assets,

resources, and treaty rights, in exchange for the millions of acres of tribal land that it acquired during the formation of the United States. This means that Tribal property is to be protected by the federal government from being purchased, developed, or occupied by non-Indians.

The process of federal recognition can take years or decades, and cost thousands of dollars in research. Some forms of evidence accepted by the federal government's Bureau of Indian Affairs are sufficient for one tribal recognition case, while the same forms of evidence are not accepted in another tribe's case (Miller 2004; Ramirez 2007). The process has been viewed by many scholars as being broken, deeply flawed (Field 2008; Leventhal et al. 1994), and increasingly "adversarial" (Miller 2004: 4).

The OFA had relied on Kroeber's flawed perception of a "timeless and static" Indian identity, which does not take into account the European assimilation demanded of a continuously colonized people (Cipolla: 2013; Mrozowski et al. 2009). The process of federal recognition places unreasonable expectations on California Indian tribes who have been subjected to multiple waves of colonization and acculturation programs from both foreign and domestic powers. Although they were once recognized as an official tribe with multiple government sources having documented and acknowledged the existence of the Muwekma over the last 117 years, and in 1955 during the California Claims hearings Kroeber himself rescinded his pronouncement of extinction (Kroeber and Heizer 1970), the BIA still refuses to reinstate federal recognition status for the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe (Field 2003).

Federally recognized tribes maintain their right to govern themselves, determine their own membership, regulate property, commerce, trade, domestic relations, criminal and civil conduct, as well as taxes. And yet, tribal sovereignty pre-dates the existence of the United States

of America. The existence of Native American tribes does not depend upon a formal political or legal act by the United States government confirming a tribe's existence.

Resistance to Erasure: Grassroots Organizing and Activism

In the mid-1960s, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe began their cultural revival movement. Inspired and empowered by the social and political activism of minorities in the 1960s, the Muwekma started making alliances with other organizations and groups to secure benefits and resources, such as the protection of ancestral remains and sacred sites (Ramirez 2007). One of the early collaborations was with the Catholic Church in Fremont and the American Indian Historical Society (AIHS) in San Francisco, of 1962 to 1964, preserving their Ohlone Indian cemetery threatened by the development of a California state freeway (Ramirez 2007). Later, in the early 1970s, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe incorporated as a corporate entity and the deed to the Ohlone cemetery was given to the Tribe by the American Indian Historical Society (Ramirez 2007). In the 1980s, the Muwekma founded MICA: the Muwekma Indian Cultural Association to address the educational and housing needs of tribal members. In the 1980s, the Muwekma created their cultural resource management firm, Ohlone Families Consulting Services (OFCS), in order to claim stewardship and control over their ancestral remains, cultural artifacts, and sacred sites (Field et al. 1992). To ensure OFCS would be successful, the Muwekma created and maintained relationships with developers, agencies, and private contractors to encourage cooperation between construction, development, and the Tribe's ownership and heritage over their aboriginal territory (Ramirez 2007). This assertion over sacred sites occurred nearly ten years before the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which still only applies to federally recognized tribes. For many reasons, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, through

their actions and objectives, represents indigenous resistance to colonial systems that have excluded unrecognized, or previously recognized, tribes.

During the 1980s, the Tribe also underwent their twenty three year long legal battle to reinstate their federal recognition status. In addition to appealing every negative court ruling, the Tribe maintained their grassroots efforts for self-determination. Through the assertion of Tribal agency, the Muwekma were able to circumvent the dependency on the federal government for tribal benefits, and instead forged their own benefits through building relationships and alliances with public and private entities in order to have some of their Tribal needs met. Muwekma Ohlone Tribal objectives represent multiple decades of grassroots organizing efforts to provide services and opportunities for tribal members in the absence of federal recognition and include initiatives such as “to reconstruct the present and future for their people” (Field and Leventhal 2003).

Throughout multiple waves of dominant European and United States government oppression, Native groups have resisted subjugation. Resistance has allowed for the preservation and continuation of indigenous cultures, which are celebrated and shared with new generations. The efforts of colonization may have disrupted and dissolved traditional lifeways but largely failed to eradicate indigenous California culture.

One of the manifestations of this resistance can be visualized as a Native hub. In her book, *Native Hubs*, Renya Ramirez (2007) argues that for relocated or displaced urban Indians, hubs are community centers where members from diverse tribes meet and share cultural traditions, strengthening rather than splintering their identities as members of a Native diaspora. The analogy given by an informant in Ramirez’s book, a multi-spoked wheel with a hub in the center, describes the function and utility of a Native hub: “Like a hub on a wheel... urban

Indians occupy the center, connected to their tribal communities by social networks represented by the wheel's spokes" (2007:2). The Muwekma represent an interesting addition to this idea of a Native hub. On one hand, they may represent a spoke in the collective wheel of the pan-Indian community. On the other hand, the Muwekma may represent a wheel of their own: Each spoke representing distinct families and community members who, lacking a home base, are connected through their struggle for survival. The hub is their revitalization and reclamation movement—part of a response to and protestation of their terminated tribal status.

Anthropology has a sordid history of interacting with, studying, essentializing, and dehumanizing Native groups, but it also has a long history of advocating for and collaborating with Native peoples. The discipline has never been stagnant. In fact, anthropology students today are exposed to a variety of equity and justice seeking methodologies, as well as advocacy and service-oriented approaches to engaging in applied research (Alivizatou 2012; Atalay 2012; Evans et al. 2014; Gonzalez et al. 2006; Miheuah and Wilson 2004; Smith 1999). The increase in educational opportunities for marginalized groups, as a result of black, indigenous, women's, and others' political and social activism has invaluabley benefited the discipline. With this diversity of perspectives contributing to scholarship in the field, perhaps anthropology can push back against its historical practices to advocate for social justice and democratize knowledge production.

Chapter 3: Community Engagement in Praxis and Methodology

“...behind each policy and program with which Indians are plagued, if traced completely back to its origin, stands the anthropologist” (Deloria 1969:81).

Vine Deloria did not hold back with his biting critique of anthropologists in his book *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969). That anthropologists view people simply as “objects for observation... experimentation... manipulation, and for eventual extinction” (Deloria 1969:81) describes quite succinctly the approach used by Kroeber and colleagues when studying California Indians. These practices describe the demoralizing subset of anthropological inquiry referred to as salvage anthropology. Never once did Kroeber question why the Indians were beginning to vanish. Indeed he and other anthropological pillars like his colleague, Margaret Mead argued that historians should be tasked with the responsibility of examining the reasons why Native groups were disappearing—not anthropologists (Platt 2011). Such approaches invited Deloria’s scorn when he asserted that anthropologists “contributed substantially to the invisibility of Indian people” (1969:81). This was done by perpetuating an outdated, stereotypical, racialized image of Indianness, static and unchanging.

When it becomes impossible for Indians to identify with the images that colonizers have created for them, this creates indigenous invisibility, perpetuates the myth of the vanishing Native, and dehumanizes extant populations already dealing with the lingering effects of colonization. Additionally, by refusing to examine the conditions of life for Native Americans under genocidal policies, anthropologists have been implicated in the oppression of indigenous communities (see Lindsay 2012). Nobel Prize winning writer Elie Wiesel illustrated this point in his 1986 acceptance speech: “We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented” (Nobel Media AB 2014).

In the past, when anthropologists tried to "do good" without at least first consulting the Indian community in which they work, or incorporating the experiences of Indians, they not only produced questionable work, but they might also have harmed the community. These anthropologists might also have unwittingly perpetuated and recreated racist power structures. As Deloria stated quite clearly nearly a half-century ago, "abstract theories create abstract action" (1969:86). If anthropologists wished to study an Indian community, Deloria suggested that the anthropologist first present their research to the appropriate Tribal Council and ask for permission, then follow up with the action to raise as much money for the Tribe as the anthropologist has raised for themselves and their study (Deloria 1969:95). Anthropology of the past, meddling in Indian communities, attempting to address Indian problems without prior consultation or any influence from Indians themselves, is exactly what the discipline has been attempted to correct through reflexive and collaborative methods. One of the ways this can be achieved is by a novel approach called community-based participatory research.

Community Based Participatory Research as a Response to Marginalization

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR), in the most basic terms, suggests that research should be led and informed by the community, and the deliverables of the research "community-driven and... produce results relevant for the communities involved" (Atalay 2012:10). CBPR is reciprocal and equitable in benefits to all partners involved, and has the potential for communities to increase their capacity and empowerment. Additionally, CBPR also includes "diverse knowledge systems," such as indigenous and local knowledge and oral histories (Atalay 2012:4). CBPR represents a step toward anthropological methodology with the capacity to "democratize knowledge production and decolonize the discipline" (Atalay 2012:23).

Sonya Atalay (2012) urges researchers to consider the ways in which their projects perpetuate systems of domination and inequality. Many examples of research in anthropology have been criticized as exploitative in that research partners are viewed simply as subjects having no control over the research processes nor access to the knowledge such research generates (Atalay 2012). Taking things a step further, community-based participatory research ensures that not only will research partners have influence over the scope of the project, but the outcomes of the research will be directly beneficial to them and their communities. Community-based projects can provide, “a practical methodology through which archaeologists can actively work to decolonize their own research practices” (Atalay 2012:210). This is done through the collaboration of research design, data collection, and through the sharing of knowledge, or other deliverables, that research projects generate. This increases the overall quality of the work, as Atalay (2012) contends, due to the initial participation of community members driving the focus of the research and deciding what issues are most important to address within that community. Furthermore, community-based participatory research forces scholars to engage with the members of the public in mutually beneficial ways, facilitating a path towards activism and community building.

Decolonization Efforts in Anthropological Praxis

Gonzalez and colleagues define decolonization in their article, “Archaeology for the Seventh Generation” as “the process of reversing the colonial structures inherent in both the institutions of colonialism and in the minds of the colonized” (2006: 388). Some hope decolonization to be “truly ending the disparities of colonialism” (Kohn and McBride 2011:1). Gonzalez et al. (2006) argue indigenous people must work toward revitalizing their traditions and implementing these, as well as the social values that accompany traditional cultures, into our

waking life and our worldviews. Through the practice of traditional culture in daily life, the iterative phenomenon of rebuilding Native communities can begin. This is a tangible example of decolonization efforts. This is also, in many ways, what the Muwekma have been practicing since the 1980s, through their contemporary revitalization movement (Field et al. 1992; Leventhal et al. 1994).

Some scholars have expressed their concern with the metaphorization of the term decolonize, especially as it is applied to research methods or educational approaches (Tuck and Yang 2012). The justification for this concern is that by rendering the complex and unsettling verb, decolonize, into a metaphor, it takes away from the power and meaning of true, literal, structural, political, decolonization. For example, we can work towards decolonizing our scholarly methodologies, but that does not change the reality that we are studying and researching, perhaps in the service of Native communities, yet, within a settler colonial society. Essentially, decolonizing methodologies do not return land that was stolen or restore self-rule for all colonized communities. Academic and educational co-opting of the term “decolonize” is seen as a strategic move towards erasing white guilt, an attempt at comforting the settler, or as Tuck and Yang describe it, “settler moves to innocence” (2012:1).

To invoke Frantz Fanon, the decolonization of the mind is the first step in liberation—but as Tuck and Yang (2012) critically remind their readers—it is not the only step. However, while Tuck and Yang (2012) also assert that “critical consciousness does not translate into action that disrupts settler colonialism” as in relinquishing stolen land, I would posit that the Muwekma, by maintaining services and opportunities for themselves and other disenfranchised, non-recognized Tribes, their critical consciousness has disrupted settler colonialism. Because colonialism seeks to extinguish by any and all means any evidence or history of indigenous claims to land, or

place, or even the expression of pre-Colombian belief systems (Tuck and Yang 2012), any assertion of indigenous agency that builds community capacity and empowerment is a disruption of colonialism. Self-determination represents revolutionary action. The empowerment of communities that have been systematically suppressed by colonialism and thus stripped of their history, identity, and social networks—albeit somewhat unsuccessfully—is revolutionary. To resist colonialism, in any meaningful capacity, is to engage in decolonizing work. One of the approaches of the social sciences influenced by Frantz Fanon is based on participatory methods and engaging communities in applied work through CBPR.

Similarly, Field (2008) views the optimal relationship between anthropologists and native people as a collaboration of equals, working toward the goals and interests of native communities. Natives are intellectual experts of their society and to be recognized as such produces a higher quality of data. As a methodology, polyphonic ethnographies provide a means to triangulate oral histories in multiple lines of evidence. Polyphonic ethnographies significantly reduce, or altogether eliminate, the authoritative voice, which is a symptom of domination, in ethnographic writing. Rather than embodying “the child of imperialism” and upholding systems of domination, Field (2003:79; 2008) views anthropologist and Native relations of the future as a reversal of those colonial efforts and a move toward serving natives in their efforts to reclaim their past. This is a foundational element of decolonization.

Museums have a strong colonial history and are “steeped in Western ways of knowing” (Atalay 2006:597). This historical reality is becoming better understood and more apparent on a broad societal level, in part, since the passing of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990, and the international debates sparked by this legislation.

Understanding colonial legacies is the result of critical dialogue that necessarily should be followed by suggestions on how to improve institutions that shape public opinion (Atalay 2006).

As institutions of educational authority, museums provide information in easy to understand terms so that the visitors may leave with an introductory or general understanding of an issue, topic, social practice, or cultural representation. The representation aspect makes the task of curation and exhibition very complicated and rife with potential to perpetuate systems of domination and power. For example, Native experiences and representations of colonial interactions that are honest in the retelling of the brutality faced by Natives on this continent have been met with contrasting receptions between indigenous and non-indigenous groups (Atalay 2006). In regards to an Australian First People's exhibit, the museum utilized focus groups to determine preemptive receptions to a gallery representing indigenous cultures: "indigenous respondents felt that the exhibitions would not be sufficiently hard-hitting, whereas non-indigenous people said that it would be too confrontational" (Atalay 2006:614) This discrepancy was discussed in our collaborations for the subject matter and tone in the written text for the exhibit. Yet, as Muwekma Tribal Vice-Chairwoman Monica Arellano and I insisted, and as Atalay (2006) states, museums should "effectively [present] accurate portrayals of Native histories, regardless of whether the larger culture is 'willing to accept' it" (614). Atalay elaborates:

Native stories and experiences must be clearly presented in a way that has resonance with the audience, for there is so much at stake in these exhibits. Future generations will feel the direct effects of the impressions, lessons, and messages that visitors take home with them in their hearts and minds (2006:613).

Indeed, presentations of Native histories should be sufficiently confrontational in order to present an alternative to the white-washed histories found in educational curricula and mainstream

media. This is crucial in challenging the essentialized images and stereotypes of Native Americans that have plagued Native communities for generations.

One of the ways institutional power and legacies of domination can be addressed in museum curation and exhibition is through a methodology called participatory museology. “Participatory Museology” (Alivizatou 2012:190) is an alternative to top-down decision-making practices about exhibitions, curation, and caring for collections of traditional material culture. The practice of participatory museology is founded on the principles of equality, respect, and participation. Through this practice, it may be possible to transform a settler-colonial institutional bureaucracy into a democratic institution, by building mutually beneficial relationships with local communities (Alivizatou 2012). Alivizatou (2012) advocates for a participatory museology in part because, “the transmission of cultural expression should be led not by strict criteria and measures imposed by governmental institutions, but rather through the active and ongoing engagement of practitioners” (190). Sonya Atalay in her critical response to the National Museum of the American Indian expresses the need for the same emic approach to cultural expression: “Bringing Native voices to the foreground to share these experiences and worldviews is a critical part of readjusting the power balance to ensure that Native people control their own heritage, representation, and histories” (2006: 615). Alivizatou (2012) argues that participatory museology empowers communities who have historically been excluded and disempowered specifically from top-down curation and exhibition methods that retell Native stories from an outsider’s or settler’s perspective.

Another implication of participatory museology is the provision of “an active space for the performance of living culture” (Alivizatou 2012:191). Living culture including festivals, celebrations, interactive theater, and other events and performances exhibit the relevancy of

traditional cultures in a contemporary setting—of course, presented by the communities in which they are practiced. This creates a “presentation of living culture” as opposed to relics representing an abstract idea of culture, without context, encased in glass, and static in time and place (Alivizatou 2012:191). Providing an active space for the exhibition of living culture also enables the museum to act as a “contact zone” wherein it is possible to “address issues of survival and cultural change” (191).

Alivizatou’s analysis of the new museum, based on community participation, can be understood as an attempt on the part of western institutions to become more inclusive with respect to the cultures and beliefs that are exhibited or curated within their spaces. I will resist the temptation to claim that participatory museology is a form of decolonization of museums, until such museums are owned and operated by those who have historically had their cultures co-opted and represented through the interpretation of white museum staff. Non-hierarchical approaches may seem like a rather obvious and unremarkable practice to some—who may be asking, “why hasn’t this happened sooner?” However, the revolutionary idea of participatory methods materializes generations of indigenous struggle and the “empowerment of indigenous peoples to control, represent, and maintain sovereignty over their own cultural heritage” (Atalay 2006:599-600). Participatory methods thus, represent a huge milestone in indigenous grassroots efforts and should be acknowledged, respected, and celebrated.

Indigenous and Decolonized Anthropology

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has been practicing indigenous archaeology since the 1980s as part of their cultural revitalization movement by reinserting themselves into and reconnecting with their ancestral heritage sites within their aboriginal homeland. Whenever possible, it is the goal of the Tribe to have as many tribal members working on a site together to achieve multiple

objectives. The first objective is to continue building meaningful relationships within the Muwekma Ohlone community and between families by working in a group towards ends that are materially and spiritually meaningful. Another objective is to “[reestablish] a very real link between the contemporary people and their ancestors” (Field and Leventhal 2003:96). Finally, the archaeological report writing process is another objective that, once fulfilled, replaces the interpretive ownership and authority of the past back into the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe’s possession.

Decolonizing archaeology, according to Gonzalez et al. (2006), “involves a reconfiguration of archaeological goals” (390). Indigenous and non-Indigenous archaeologists and academics can support the movement to decolonize methodologies and disciplines. This can be achieved by centering the issues of indigenous communities in academic work, or by assisting indigenous peoples in the attainment of their immediate goals through scholarship, archaeology or other forms of projects. Atalay (2006) maintains that:

Indigenous archaeologists have pointed out that archaeological research should not only focus on precontact periods but that archaeology must also contribute to decolonization by providing physical evidence of the process of colonization, the dramatic effects it had on our communities, and the changes and adaptations Native people made as a result. (611).

In this way, both indigenous and non-indigenous archaeologists can contribute to decolonizing archaeology by recognizing and fulfilling the demands of indigenous communities in representing and retelling their histories, as this provides context for contemporary experiences. Gonzalez and colleagues (2006) assert that, “In writing about ‘others’ we commit political acts by choosing what is important, whose voices really matter, and interpreting events based upon these decisions. By failing to incorporate indigenous voices into histories of colonialism, our histories become colonial” (391). Working collaboratively and non-hierarchically with

indigenous groups, or hiring indigenous archaeologists or archaeological firms, can allow for these changes and recognitions to be made.

There are, however, many minute and complicated differences between participatory paradigms and decolonization methodologies. Even participatory archaeology, with archaeology being a historically colonial process, extracts objects from the earth and knowledge from descendant communities in the interpretation of those objects. This ultimately benefits the study and career of the archaeologist, reinforcing institutional power and cultural authority of the settler-colonial actor, if culture being studied is not their own. Unless the benefits are mutual, this type of consultative participation in archaeology ultimately remains to be a colonial endeavor.

For these reasons, the Muwekma have taken initiatives and demonstrated agency in writing and publishing their own archaeological reports and making these reports available online to the general public and interested scholars. In other instances, archaeologists or anthropologists have given themselves co-authorship and allowed the writing and publishing processes to be collaborative as well. This is the hopeful direction in which anthropology and its disciplinary fields will progress.

Another example of decolonizing and beneficial academic-indigenous research topics centers around the effects of colonization and lingering colonial policies as well as the contemporary forms of oppression that result as a consequence of the legacies of colonialism (Gonzalez et al. 2006). The Muwekma have partnered with the Anthropology department at San José State University for many projects that both support the careers of faculty and students while also empowering or assisting the Tribe with their goals of cultural reclamation.

Partnerships and collaborative works such as these, with concrete outcomes that address real world problems, are the foundations of applied anthropology.

Regardless of one's subscription to a decolonizing approach, the contemporary anthropologist has an ethical responsibility to at least consult the community in which one is studying. Of course this then implies an element of accountability. These formulas for responsible and ethical research require contemporary anthropological work to be inherently collaborative. Furthermore, the methodology of decolonization requires the researcher to adhere to the needs and wishes of the community (Gonzalez et al. 2006), placing decolonizing anthropology inherently into applied work.

Chapter 4: Project Methods

This project produced a collaborative museum exhibit *Back from Extinction* to address tribal objectives of the Muwekma Ohlone. The project was undertaken from March 2016 to December 2017 at the sites of San Jose State University and the New Museum of Los Gatos. As a result of the exhibit production of this traveling display and negotiations between display organizations and the Muwekma tribal council, the project has been a good opportunity to see Community Based Participatory Research in action.

In addition to their litigious bureaucratic struggle for federal recognition, the Muwekma Tribe has identified key objectives in combatting their cultural erasure. The current Tribal objectives of the Muwekma Ohlone include the renaming of local sites, relearning their indigenous languages, seeking ownership over their material culture and ancestral remains through their CRM firm, and maintaining a public presence whenever possible to educate the public about their continued presence in their aboriginal homeland. Nominative cartography (Leventhal et al. 1994; Field et al. 2013) is a current objective in the Muwekma struggle for visibility through the renaming of local heritage sites that often pay tribute to the colonizers who later inhabited Ohlone land, or working with local governments to install plaques and monuments honoring the Muwekma in their native landscape. The Tribe's language committee renames their ancestral heritage sites in the Chochenyo and Thámien languages, thus reversing the programs of colonialism that sought to erase Native American culture, language, and identity.

As a result of not having access to or receiving the published results from archaeology firms, some members of the Muwekma Ohlone have become archaeologists in order to gain direct access to their ancestral heritage sites. Only educated and supportive archaeologists and contractors have complied, while others have simply chosen their own Native monitor, usually

from a separate nearby federally acknowledged tribe or from an individual who self-identifies as an Ohlone. Whenever possible, Tribal members conduct archaeological excavations and participate in the analysis and publication of the findings themselves as a way to reclaim ownership of their ancestors, their history, heritage, and artifacts. These objectives reflect an overall, pan-Indian agentive strategy to combat cultural erasure and the myth of the extinct American Indian.

Since the Muwekma exhibit brings visibility to the Tribe in their ancestral homeland, while educating museum visitors on the Muwekma's history and heritage, this project will satisfy two of the tribal objectives directly. In addition, nearly half of the artifacts selected for the exhibit are from the Yukisma Site (CA-SCL-38), in which members of the Muwekma Tribe excavated in 1993. The collections featured in the exhibit are from three donating entities: The Muwekma Tribe, San José State University, and the George Herbert Collection which was donated to the university.

What is essential in any exhibit on Native Americans is the present-day representation of Native culture and their continued existence despite the many obstacles they have faced. To achieve this, active participation and collaboration between Native groups and curators is essential. Cultural continuity was exhibited through native songs and arts, and photographs depicting contemporary resistance movements, community gatherings, as well as Native involvement in government, sports, entertainment, and other areas of popular interest.

Within the relatively short time frame of a little more than twelve weeks, I was given license to process and curate titled artifacts for exhibition, research, and write the text for the exhibit including storyboards and artifact labels, then prepare the exhibit space, and finally build the exhibit. As a member of a collaborative team I was an intermediary between the New

Museum of Los Gatos (NUMU), San José State University, and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. I received guidance from Alan Leventhal, Muwekma Tribal Ethno-historian and Archaeologist, professors in the Anthropology department including Dr. Sunseri and Dr. English-Lueck, Muwekma Tribal Vice Chairwoman Monica V. Arellano, as well as the historical curator and several members of the NUMU staff.

Tribal Objectives and Goal of Exhibits

My goal for this exhibit was to make the opportunity valuable for the Muwekma Tribe by fulfilling one or more of the Tribe's ongoing cultural revitalization objectives. One of the ways to ensure this goal was fulfilled, was to incorporate the Muwekma ancestral history and heritage into the research, design, and implementation of the exhibit. By creating an exhibit about pre-contact, historic, and contemporary Muwekma culture, the exhibit would meet the tribal objective of maintaining a public presence, especially one that educates the public on the Tribe's continued presence in their aboriginal homeland.

I had the privilege of working directly with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's anthropologist, archaeologist, and ethno-historian, Alan Leventhal, as well as the Tribe's Vice Chairwoman, Monica V. Arellano, who is also co-chair of the Muwekma language and education committees. In the formative stages of the exhibit project, I conducted an interview with Muwekma Ohlone Vice Chairwoman Monica V. Arellano, to gain an initial sense of what the Tribe would like to see and what they hope the visitors to the museum might learn about the Muwekma Tribe. The historical curator at the museum wanted to focus the exhibit on the Muwekma's struggle for federal recognition. Although this determination was made independently by the curator, it corresponded perfectly with Vice Chairwoman Arellano's response to the interview questions. Arellano wanted visitors to understand the difference between the Native American relocatees—

having come from federally recognized tribes mostly from out of state—and the Muwekma Ohlone. Additionally, Ms. Arellano wanted the exhibit to show the continued presence that the Muwekma have had in their ancestral homeland: “That we are still here and have never left” (Monica Arellano, personal communication August 26, 2016). Multiple stakeholders expressed their distinct interests in the project which coalesced into a mutually beneficial outcome: the exhibit would tell the story of the Muwekma’s struggle for federal recognition while expressing the fact that the Muwekma has always existed and practiced their culture in the Bay Area—their aboriginal homeland.

The Urban Relocation Exhibit and Muwekma Ohlone Component

In the Spring 2016 semester, I began collaborating on a community-based participatory research project along with faculty and students of the Anthropology Department at San José State University, the American Indian community of Santa Clara County through the Indian Health Center, and the New Museum of Los Gatos (NUMU). This collaboration, named the Urban Relocation Project, collected oral history interviews from relocatees and the children or grandchildren of American Indians who relocated to the Bay Area during the BIA’s Urban Relocation initiative during the 1950s and 1960s. I joined the interview team and participated in collecting oral history interviews both as a note-taker and twice as an interviewer along with professors Dr. Jan English-Lueck and Dr. A.J. Faas. The interview team then coded each interview into thematic domains. These oral history interviews were recorded on video, in the IRC’s video recording studio on the San José State campus, analyzed thematically, and edited together into vignettes for an exhibit at the NUMU entitled *Cement Prairie*.

I offered the curator from the museum my help with additional aspects of that exhibit. The curator believed it was necessary to include an exhibit on the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe in

addition to the Urban Relocation *Cement Prairie* exhibit since the relocation happened within Muwekma tribal homeland. She asked if I would be interested in becoming part of “Team Ohlone” with Alan Leventhal, Muwekma Tribal collaborators, and with another anthropology student, Brieann DeOrnellas.

The Lewis Binford Tri-Part Approach

Beginning initially with the selection of artifacts from three different collections, the Muwekma Ohlone exhibit artifacts were to follow the Lewis Binford (1962) model of material culture: technological, social, ritual. This strategic organization of artifacts was chosen to demonstrate and celebrate the technological, or use-based objects, such as dart points and other materials used in subsistence practices; spiritual, ideological, and cosmological objects such as charmstones and Kuksu pendants; and artifacts signifying status and the complexity of social stratification through material culture, such as secular jewelry like bird bone septum tubes.

This demonstration of specialization and materiality would address the historic legacy of racism in the historical, archaeological, and anthropological record falsely proclaiming that California tribes were lazy, unintelligent, and did not produce objects of quality (see Field et al. 1992). These artifacts were to showcase the complexity of ethnohistoric Muwekma Ohlone Tribal culture, social values, as well as artistic ability.

Project Timeline: Artifact Selection, Research, and Drafting the Narrative

In June of 2016, I began curating artifacts from three collections housed in the San José State facilities storage: A collection belonging to the university, another belonging to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, and the third from the George Herbert collection. Additionally, several objects were offered from Alan Leventhal’s personal collection, like abalone shells and his hand made foreshaft with an obsidian point.

The majority of artifacts I chose from largely came from two sites: CA-ALA-329, the Ryan Mound, and CA-SCL-38, the Yukisma Mound (meaning “at the oaks”). I selected small collections of charmstones, ceremonial tobacco pipes, bird bone whistles, mortars and pestles, dart points and arrowheads, elk pendants, deer bone awls, Kuksu, or banjo, pendants, round, trapezoidal, and rectangular abalone pendants, *Olivella* shells and shell beads, and other status-related jewelry.

Initially, I selected artifacts that I sensed would display well, especially as assemblages. Items were then grouped by type and photographed for documentation. These photographs eventually accompanied a spreadsheet wherein each artifact received a distinct exhibit number cross-listed with the specimen’s catalog number for identification and inventory tracking purposes. The spreadsheet included all the institution’s donating information such as from which collection and archaeological site the specimens originated.

Several more spreadsheets were created to organize our inventory of the artifacts specifically as a sort of roadmap as to where and how each group of artifacts would be displayed. The spreadsheets included categorization by collection and/or donor, and cultural/typological classification, according to the Binford tri-part model: technomic, sociotechnic, and ideotechnic. This cultural typological categories would correspond to the display case in which the artifacts were to be installed. Each artifact in the spreadsheet correlated to a cell with descriptive text for the accompanying artifact label, and with a designation as to which case the group of objects would be placed. Some of the artifact labels were eventually placed on the outside of the display cases, such as on an adjacent wall near the display case.

The next phase of curation involved writing the narrative, or storyboard, and artifact labels for the exhibit. This phase required detailed research, writing, and editing. A majority of

the information was provided by Leventhal, his recommended articles, excerpts, and archaeological site reports. The research I conducted for the artifact labels happened concurrently as I was researching and writing the main panels of text for the exhibit. Some of the information on the meaning and significance behind the artifacts was not readily available on the internet or from credible sources. This was remedied by asking Leventhal directly about the significance of the artifact in question and then taking note of his answer.

Although the writing phase lasted the longest and accounted for the majority of time spent in preparation for this exhibit, most of the writing was edited down to a fraction of the written material I initially drafted. This meant that much of the complicated histories, and tribal information had to be summarized, synthesized, or omitted altogether. This editing process naturally created many concerns. For example, the storyboard which provided information about the Spanish occupation and missionization period of Muwekma history was so heavily pared down that the rough edit did not include any mention of the violently brutal treatment of Indian laborers. This omission was not acceptable to me or the Tribe's Vice Chairwoman, my Muwekma point of contact and collaborator for the exhibit. We insisted that a statement about the mistreatment of Indians be reinserted, and it was.

After the close of the NUMU exhibit, in November of 2017, part of the exhibit was transferred to the Fifth floor of the Martin Luther King Library and set on display for the Library's annual Native American Heritage Month exhibit. Certain artifacts were selected and placed in cases alongside their artifact labels. The panels of text from the exhibit were placed around the cases on top of surrounding bookshelves, to outline the exhibit space. The elements from *Back From Extinction* were joined with other artifacts and objects from the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's mobile displays that are set up at festivals and events. These objects included

basketry, pestles, feathers, bundles of sage, and posters with information about the Tribe's ancestral lineages. This exhibit at the Library was offered to a couple Anthropology classes as a form of extra credit.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Exhibit

Moving away from the antiquated museum exhibition process of Indians and their cultures as objects of study, in her article “No Sense of the Struggle: Creating a Context for Survivance at the NMAI” Sonya Atalay (2006) reviews, deconstructs, critiques, and offers suggestions where appropriate on both the successful and problematic displays at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. As Atalay’s title alludes, the context for indigenous survivance and the celebration and recognition for indigenous agency must be presented simultaneously with the honest retelling and sometimes traumatic inclusion of the realities of colonization and the violence of imperialism. Atalay (2006) maintains that, “in any museum or other telling of Native histories, there can be no stories of survivance without an understanding of extreme struggle and survival in the face of horrific circumstance” (610). Atalay defines survivance for Native people as “active, present agents whose humanity is emphasized as their responses to struggle are poignantly portrayed” (609). Furthermore, Atalay contends, “One cannot appreciate and experience the power of Native survivance if the stories and memories of our histories are not placed within the context of struggle” (610). I believe this article is useful in reflecting and considering both the tone of the text in the *Back From Extinction* exhibit and the quality of collaboration between stakeholders involved in the project.

Critical Analysis and Limitations of the Exhibit and the Exhibition Process

Reflecting on the process of researching, formulating and constructing the exhibit on the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, there are several areas of concern that I would address differently, if given the opportunity. These areas of concern deal with matters of collaboration and power dynamics, preparation of exhibitions and background knowledge in both museum studies, as well as historical issues with respect to Native American representation in western institutions.

Considering the time frame of the exhibit process I was given, meaningful, independent, background research on these subjects was not entirely possible. However, the Applied Anthropology graduate program curriculum includes a wealth of information on collaboration, public anthropology, and community-based participatory research. This prior academic exposure to collaborative projects, as well as my background in critical race theory, intersectional feminism, and liberation politics, I believe, prepared me sufficiently for this project. Still, I realize the benefits that a concerted effort of individualized research into the aforementioned concerns could have afforded me, the overall exhibit, and the stakeholders involved in the project.

As to be expected, there were areas of miscommunication and issues of representation that created some difficulties in resolving. It was evident that the Muwekma exhibit was a secondary afterthought and installation, supporting the larger Urban Relocation exhibit. Additionally, the limited placement, size of remaining space, and lack of promotion for the exhibit led some collaborators to question the motives of the NUMU staff in creating an exhibit on the Muwekma in the first place. Discussions took place between myself and the museum staff to address these concerns. Although the placement and size of the exhibit space was unable to change, museum staff eventually made a greater effort to promote the *Back From Extinction* exhibit in print and on social media sites. Finally, in an effort to address last minute actions involving contemporary representations of the Muwekma Tribe, a photo collage on display boards belonging to the Tribe was installed on an outlying wall connecting the *Back From Extinction* exhibit to the McMoon exhibit space. The photo collage was an inclusion that was admittedly out of place. Aesthetically the collage was divergent from the general production quality of the museum, and yet all too important to leave out, despite how awkward the

placement or the materials may have been. Our collaborative process could have benefitted from increased Tribal input as well, however participation was limited due to time, the projects constraints, and other obligations and responsibilities of my Tribal contacts who were working on the excavations of several of their ancestral heritage sites. Again, having more time to complete the project would have remedied this issue. Both Monica and I felt there was a lack of supporting information or follow-ups to the exhibit regarding contemporary information about the Muwekma. As a result, I designed and wrote a supplementary informational booklet the night before the exhibit's opening reception. In fact, my partner and I snuck off into the NUMU staff office to staple the booklets together. These were placed on a pedestal near the photo collages and visitors were encouraged to take one (see Appendix B).

Reception of Exhibit

As one descends the stairway from the main entrance of the NUMU, entering the historic exhibit space below, the *Back From Extinction* exhibit is completely invisible. Only after walking half way across the space, through the *Cement Prairie* exhibit, is the *Back From Extinction* display visible. Situated in the rear left corner of the exhibit space, the original title of the exhibit was on a rear-facing wall above the last few panels of text, giving the impression that this is the place to start reading: in a clockwise progression. Because of this orientation, it was requested that the title of the exhibit instead be placed on the opposite wall, so that upon approaching the exhibit, the title is on the first wall that one encounters. It was our hope that this would encourage visitors to read the panels in the correct order: going counter-clockwise. However, what resulted was two titles of the exhibit on opposing walls, adding to the already awkward orientation of the space.

Nearly everyone who entered the exhibit space began on the left and circled their way around the exhibit in a clockwise pattern. The text panels, however, began on the right hand side of the entrance to the exhibit and were to be read chronologically in a counter-clockwise succession. This design flaw was not a consequence of the collaborative process, but was the product of the museum staff's installation.

Atalay (2006) has generalized the behaviors of museum visitors into three categories: “streakers,” those who move quickly through exhibits, “strollers,” or those who read and visually browse but spend more time than streakers, and then “readers” who will spend the most amount of time in an exhibit while reading nearly all the information presented (613). However, on average, visitors spend only a few minutes in each exhibit, and Atalay (2006) contends that written and visual information must be judiciously presented to communicate efficiently and effectively for all types of visitors. My observations from the opening day of the exhibit regarding the time spent in the *Back From Extinction* exhibit are mixed. While those who knew me personally, or were personally connected or interested in the Muwekma Tribe, spent a considerably longer amount of time in the exhibit, and comprised nearly the entirety of those visitors who read and observed everything within the exhibit. Most people started reading the panels and observing the artifacts simultaneously, alternating back and forth between reading the panels and reading artifact labels. While there was, admittedly, a considerable amount of text for such a relatively small space, other exhibits on display—such as the McMoon exhibit about an abandoned and repurposed McDonalds building turned NASA photography lab—on opening day maintained similarly dense textual panels broken up with relevant photos. It would have been interesting, if I had the chance, to compare the behaviors of viewers in the *Back From Extinction* exhibit and the concurrent McMoon exhibit, adjacent to my exhibit.

Development of Personal and Professional Experience and Relationships

As a first generation college student, quitting my job to go to graduate school full time felt like the biggest sacrifice I had ever made in my educational career. Throughout my college experience, I watched other students, presumably without full-time jobs, participate in field schools, internships, and other unpaid projects gaining practical skills. After hearing about the Urban Relocation Project and the chance to collaborate with the American Indian community in Santa Clara County, the urge to participate in this opportunity grew stronger than the fear of being willfully unemployed.

Meeting Alan Leventhal and collaborating with him opened up many opportunities for me as a student with the desire to apply my educational training to real world issues. Although we had never worked together before, Leventhal entrusted me with culturally sensitive information and sacred artifacts, principally from the Muwekma assemblage derived from the Yukisma Mound (CA-SCL-38) excavation. He also entrusted me with responsibility to collaboratively represent the Muwekma Tribe and their culture by introducing me to Vice Chairwoman Monica V. Arellano. Leventhal also treated me as an equal and introduced me as a colleague to those we worked and interacted with during the course of the project. For these reasons, I will always remain grateful for the experience to work with such generous and progressive educators such as those within the Anthropology department at San José State.

There have been many professional opportunities for graduate students in the Applied Anthropology program during my time at San José State. My participation in such projects has been a culminating experience. The archaeological field work for the Muwekma Tribe, and the multiple pending cultural exhibits I have been requested to work on with the guidance and

instruction by the Tribal leadership, represent the immediate professional opportunities offered to me because of the relationships built through working on the *Back From Extinction* exhibit.

Indigenous Archaeology: My Participation in CA-ALA-565/H and CA-SCL-215

In the Fall 2016 semester, just before the exhibit opened, I was hired by the Muwekma Ohlone Indian Tribe's cultural resources management office as a Native American monitor, working on behalf of the Tribe. Part of the Tribe's objectives around education result in collaborating with educators and students in a form of community archaeology. As a result of my work on the exhibit, other opportunities for employment and collaboration were available to me as an advocate for the Tribe. The first site in which I worked for the Muwekma was at the Sunol Water Temple, CA-ALA-565/H. The site was excavated in preparation of constructing an interpretive educational center for the current owners of the property—San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC). When completed in 2019, I will have the opportunity to help curate and install elements for exhibition representing the Muwekma at this facility. It is planned that some of the artifacts excavated at this site will be on display in the interpretive center.

During the course of excavation, we found that the site contained the graves of over sixty individuals dating from the mid- 1500s to Spanish contact (post-AD 1769). Some individuals were cremated before being interred and some burials contained grave regalia such as beads and abalone pendants, while others had none that preserved, such as feather work, baskets, fur and other woven materials. Some of the first types of artifacts excavated from this site were glass beads, indicating a European presence in the area at the time of interment. Of the more prolific items we uncovered as grave goods were large, flowerpot shaped mortars, suggesting wealth and elevated social status. Other types of grave associations included *Olivella* shell beads, abalone pendants including anthropomorphic Kuksu pendants, steatite pipes, obsidian points, and

charmstones. Although many were disturbed by historic cultivation, orchards, and the use of heavy machinery on the site, especially during periods of intermittent rain causing the ground to become spongy and soft, the burials were wonderfully preserved. Several burials were nearly complete, and provided an ideal setting to learn the methods of archaeological burial excavation. My contribution to this site involved working a few days a week, off and on as was needed, to assist the Muwekma in excavating their ancestors.

I was contacted again in December of 2017 to help excavate four burials from the East San José site, CA-SCL-215. The individuals buried at this site were considerably less well preserved. As my second experience in burial excavation, this site was somewhat distressing due to the fragility and disintegration of the bones upon uncovering. Despite the challenges of less than ideal preservation, my participation at CA-SCL-215 has been very instructive and fulfilling for me personally. At this site, our archaeological crew consisted of both anthropology graduate students and undergraduate students as well as Muwekma representatives. Only those who had worked on behalf of the Muwekma Tribe at the Sunol Water Tower site (CA-ALA-565/H) were asked to train and teach the new student archaeologists on burial excavation. This supervisory team consisted of myself, my close friend Briann DeOrnellas, Alicia Hedges, and Ariana Heathcote. Anthropology undergraduate students Harrison Foo and Brianna Graves also worked at the site.

Each new opportunity working with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe offers new insights into the practice of indigenous archaeology, and Native heritage preservation more generally. As one would expect, there exists a deeply rooted historical trauma between American Indians and archaeologists. The trauma, which can be felt across the nation, and likely the globe, is only compounded with the local and historical political and social disparities between Native

populations and archaeological firms and the institutions and public agencies that support them.

For the Muwekma Tribe, multiple generations of unprofessionalism, distrust, blatant racism, and betrayal are only some of the localized traumas associated with archaeologists and those that take issue with indigenous claims to ancestral remains, artifacts, and sacred sites.

On a personal level, working with the Muwekma Tribe has given me more insight into the dynamics of a Tribal organization than any experience in my life, or any amount of research could provide. As a person with mixed Chumash heritage, my participation and experience in excavating the ancestral remains of Muwekma Ohlones have connected me to a deeply revolutionary practice: indigenous archaeology (see also Appendix C).

Chapter 6: Conclusions

In this project I have worked to develop the relationship between the Anthropology department at San José State University and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe following the methodology and approach of community based participatory research (Atalay 2012; Lassiter 2008). Reciprocal relationships such as these are changing the practice of anthropology from a largely colonial and Euro-centric discipline, to one that centers on the needs and interests of marginalized groups. Although anthropology still has a long way to go until the discipline in the United States reaches some semblance of racial equity (see Fiske et al. 2010), the move toward an indigenous anthropology, and an anthropology that emphasizes the decolonization of knowledge and knowledge production, are promising fields that gain momentum with each project that centers indigenous populations.

For many years, the San José State University Anthropology department has maintained a professional, mutually beneficial relationship with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. The relationship between the Anthropology Department at San José State University and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe reflects the Tribe's strong personal and professional relationships with various organizations that are built on reciprocity; a development resulting from their grassroots activism approach to cultural revitalization. Many students and alumni have participated in projects that are relevant for the Tribe and related to the Muwekma's revitalization and cultural reclamation program. In the past, Tribal members have been trained by Anthropology department faculty to identify human remains, participate in osteological analysis conduct archaeological excavations for the Tribe's cultural resource management firm. These trained members of the tribe then share their knowledge and experience of archaeological excavations with other tribal members, creating a reproduction of knowledge that supports self-determination. These collaborations

resonate with the work of many scholars (Cipolla 2013; Lassiter 2008; Lightfoot et al. 2013; Mrozowski 2009) who have demonstrated that anthropological partnerships can, and should, be beneficial to Native groups in meaningful ways.

Wherever possible and appropriate, independent study courses in anthropology at San José State offer students the opportunity to learn skeletal biology or archaeological methods with Muwekma human remains and cultural artifacts, as well as authoring and co-authoring archaeological reports and presentations at professional meetings. This benefits students by way of hands-on learning of specialized skillsets that are directly transferrable to work experiences. These projects benefit the Muwekma Tribe in that they result in the formal cataloging or report writing of Tribal material culture and ancestral remains. These opportunities for students would not be possible if not for the permission of the Muwekma Tribal Council to utilize the laboratory and labor available to them in the anthropology department. This applied anthropology project would not be possible if not for the historic relationship between local California Indian tribes and the anthropology department at San José State. That these relationships exist gives me pride in my institution for embodying the principles of decolonizing knowledge production and the discipline of anthropology (Atalay 2012).

I believe in the utilization of anthropological methods as a way to engage in critical resistance and express solidarity for social justice causes. In our politically precarious times, fueled by a combination of a lack of credible information, misunderstandings, deception, and widespread inability to decipher who is working for the interest of the people, and who is working for the interests of their bank accounts, disciplines based on methodical collection of information, careful interpretation, and approaching problems holistically, anthropology has never been more relevant. Relatively new forms of anthropological approaches only prove to

make the discipline more relevant and more accessible to those who stand to benefit the most. Indigenous anthropology, by and for indigenous communities (Atalay 2012), is in itself a movement of reclamation and repatriation.

The resilience and effectiveness of American Indian communities and social networks during destructive periods of colonization have provided a space for the continuation and celebration of Indian culture today. Despite Catholic conversion followed by capitalist enculturation, relocation and displacement, foreign, alienating, and precarious labor practices, few options for social mobility, systemic racism and anti-miscegenation laws, as well as disease and violent extermination policies, California Indians found ways to resist colonization (Hurtado 1988). Even when racist colonial programs threaten the existence of Native identity, cultural revitalization movements, such as the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe's, suggest that Native culture and community networks cannot and will not be destroyed. Throughout multiple waves of dominant European and United States government oppression, Native cultures have been preserved and continue to be practiced, celebrated, and shared with new generations. The efforts of colonization may have disrupted and dissolved traditional lifeways but largely failed to eradicate indigenous California culture. This is a fundamental concept in the *Back From Extinction* exhibit that my collaborators and I hoped to convey.

As a result of the collaborative efforts between myself, Alan Leventhal, and the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal leadership, the exhibit will take on new features, artifacts, and textual elements after this project report is completed. This collaborative team will continue to create public displays using photos, text, music, artifacts, and other aspects of Muwekma culture to be shown in other venues in Santa Clara County. Additionally, the Muwekma Tribe has decided that some of the artifacts recovered from CA-ALA-565/H and other sites I have excavated with the

Tribe will be incorporated into prospective exhibits. Muwekma Tribal Chairwoman, Rosemary Cambra, has generously asked me to be involved in these future projects. For these multiple opportunities afforded to me by Tribal leaders, I am both humbled and honored.

Cultural anthropologists have the background knowledge to understand that self-determination and agency are critical to liberation, and by exploiting Native culture anthropologists are only perpetuating racist and classist ideals, leaving more dark stains on the profession. Based on Vine Deloria's assertion that anthropologists should act as reporters, rather than interpreters who filter what they see then present their information to the world, the ideal anthropologist should use their academic privilege as a platform for the advocacy of marginalized groups (Platt 2011). This type of partnership gives voice to the silent struggles of subordinate populations. In turn, anthropologists would be creating a career and reputation for themselves out of cooperation and humanitarian efforts, rather than self-service.

The ultimate goal for applied anthropology should be to assist communities in need of allyship, advocacy, or utilizing the distinct resources available to anthropologists. In this way, those with the privilege of spare time, academic institutional backing, access to publishers, or simply the power and social status to provide support in other ways, can create a space for reciprocity, rather than self-promotion and individualized projects. Applied anthropology allows for the academic to leave the ivory tower and hit the streets with all the same resources and skills as conventional academics, in the pursuit of a goal that is mutually beneficial to the anthropologist—in experience and personal growth—and to a community seeking volunteers.

Anthropologists of the past, in all their conceit, abused the relationships between researcher and informants in ways that permanently stained the discipline (see King 1997; Vine Deloria 1969; Biolsi and Zimmerman 1997; Leventhal et al. 1994). These unjust actions resulted

in unconscionable tragedies and informed unforgivable policies. But through these insensitive mistakes, a new opportunity to reflect on and address the errors of the past became apparent. Now, by constantly reevaluating our actions and addressing the ways in which anthropologists engage in a process of advocacy and therefore, uplifting the communities in which they work, rather than perpetuate colonial legacies and unequal power dynamics, we have the option to reclaim anthropology as a humanitarian discipline; a way of exploring the world and its people in order to bring about at most positive structural changes, or at the very least, an understanding of that which was previously unknown, mysterious, foreign, or hidden from view.

Applied anthropology is useful for uncovering histories that have been lost, erased, and co-opted or completely discredited by political or economic forces seeking to uplift their own agendas at the cost of indigenous populations (Cipolla 2013; Lightfoot et al. 2013; Mrozowski 2009). The lack of adequate American Indian representation in school curriculums, in representative politics, mainstream media—virtually everywhere—is testament to the subordinate status of the American Indian. Yet Indian cultures survive. They persist and thrive within mainstream society, having adapted to generations of colonial disruptions (Cipolla 2013; Lightfoot et al. 2013; Mrozowski 2009). The lack of public knowledge about Native groups is an example of the legacies of colonialism that seek to disrupt Native lifeways, destroy communities, and erase identities. These legacies of colonialism manifest themselves easily and without much work or forethought. They disguise themselves in everyday conversations, in easy-to-say and remember phrases such as “it’s too bad they’re mostly all gone,” simply because American Indians do not always wear feathers, are not constantly beating drums, or engaging in other stereotypical behaviors, largely derived from colonial ideas about authenticity (Cipolla 2013).

The contemporary Native American may not wear feathers or war bonnets, and as such, she is believed to be extinct by many misinformed or altogether uninformed groups of people.

The ideal way to address issues of erasure and invisibility of indigenous groups is to assist those communities directly affected in dismantling the conditions that determine their erasure. An alternative approach is to assist indigenous communities in *creating for themselves* the conditions that facilitate the celebration of indigenous groups, cultures, and legacies. Fortunately for me, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe has had a long and successful history of working with students and faculty at San José State, and have been assisted by the University in achieving immediate goals in their cultural revitalization movement. To continue building a more ethical and socially responsible discipline, anthropologists and anthropology departments must engage with indigenous groups in critical, creative resistance.

The Anthropology department at San José State University has maintained a long-term, productive, and reciprocal relationship with the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, making potential collaborations with the Tribe much easier. These existing relationships should be maintained throughout generations of cohorts to come through future projects that are relevant to the Muwekma community, that center their perspectives, direction, and needs. However, there are other tribes with which anthropology students can collaborate as well. Other California Indian tribes, such as the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band from the San Benito County area, the Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation from the Monterey County area, and non-local tribes like the Kutzadika Paiute, are all currently historic, but no longer federally recognized Tribes that may benefit from the resources available to students and faculty.

Creating and maintaining relationships is arduous work. Fortunately, faculty like Alan Leventhal and Dr. Charlotte Sunseri, among others, have already created and helped maintain

professional relationships as academic allies—or honorary members of the Tribe, as the case may be. Relationships between indigenous communities and academic institutions require reciprocity, respect, and a tremendous amount of trust. Therefore, collaborations may not be appropriate for all individuals or all institutions who cannot deliver on these and other important terms. Furthermore, some tribes may not wish to collaborate with anthropologists at all, and these boundaries must also be respected. Nevertheless, existing relationships between indigenous Tribes and the San José State Anthropology department should be upheld as a model for future collaborations that advance the goals of these communities.

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Appendix A:

Terminology: The Muwekma, Ohlone, and Costanoan Indians

The term Ohlone refers to a group of tribes with distinct languages spanning from the San Francisco Bay area to south Monterey County. These groups include the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, the Amah-Mutsun Tribal Band, and the Ohlone Costanoan Esselen Nation. The name Costanoan is an invented English translation of the Spanish word *costeños*, or *costehos*, meaning coastal people (Field 2003) or “coast dwellers,” respectively (Leventhal et al. 1994:301). In the mid-nineteenth century, government agents merged distinct California Indian tribes based on similarities in their languages. Working with government agencies, linguists, anthropologists coined the term *Costanoan* to create a new, “scientific” sounding, official identity for purposes of the government to refer to these culturally diverse groups (Field 2003:92).

However, for over one hundred years, California Indians of the greater San Francisco Bay Area have referred to themselves as Ohlones (Leventhal et al. 1994). The descriptive ethnonym Muwekma was added by the descendants of the Verona Band, and their ancestors before them at the Alisal and Niles Rancherias, to distinguish themselves from other Ohlone groups (Field et al. 1992). Muwekma means “the people” in Chochenyo, a language spoken by the Ohlone tribal groups of the East Bay (Field et al. 1992; Leventhal et al. 1994).

The Amah-Mutsun tribal band comes from various regions of San Benito County. Like the Muwekma, Amah also means *the people* in the southern Costanoan language (Field et al. 1992). The Amah-Mutsun territory includes at least five distinct tribal groups. Amah-Mutsun people were held at two different missions occupying native lands in San Juan Bautista and Santa Cruz (Field et al. 1992).

The name Esselen refers to the Monterey Band of Monterey County, an indigenous group existing in this location for over fifteen thousand years. Linguistically distinct from other Costanoans, the Esselen tribal groups are thought to have descended from the Hokan culture. The modern day Esselen Nation, represent the amalgamation of two major linguistic traditions southern Costanoan and Hokan, and whom were previously intermarried prior to Spanish colonization and later brought into Missions San Carlos and Soledad in Monterey County.

Appendix B: Accompanying Informational Booklet for the *Back From Extinction* Exhibit



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endured for around 4.5 generations; **leaving no living memory of a time before European contact.** The Franciscan padres separated families, the young from old, and encouraged the marriage of Indian women to Spanish military men--these arrangements often resulted in the rape and sexual abuse of women.

About 80% of the indigenous population was decimated after the missionization of California between 1767 and 1836. This extreme demographic decline was the result of many factors: the devastation of natural resources, filthy living quarters that became breeding grounds for disease, the nature of the regimented labor forced upon the natives, as well as physical abuse and corporeal punishment. The average lifespan for a missionized Indian was 2-3 years.



THAT CALIFORNIA INDIAN CULTURE HAS SURVIVED THESE DESTRUCTIVE TIMES SHOWS THAT STRENGTH, RESILIENCE, AND RESISTANCE TO OPPRESSION PREVAILED.

After California statehood, at least six Muwekma Indian rancheria communities emerged and maintained themselves during the 19th and early 20th centuries in the East Bay. These rancherias were located in San Leandro ("The Springs"), Alisal near Pleasanton, Sunol, Del Mocho in Livermore, El Molino in Niles, and later a settlement in Newark.

The Verona Band of the Alisal Rancheria is considered to be **the most significant Ohlone community in the Bay Area.** The rancheria was used as a place of retreat from mission life as well as increased European settlement and the resulting loss of jobs. Alisal was a diverse community located at the site of an old tribal village. Many native arts, songs, and languages thrived at this location for almost 50 years.

Indians eventually left Alisal because the land could no longer sustain them nor their traditional economic system. They remained in the Bay Area working as ranch hands, truck drivers, or for local companies such as the Spring Valley Water company and Wells Fargo and Co. Women grew food crops, worked in homes, maintained chickens and livestock, and continued to harvest native plants for medicine and basketry.

Kroeber's declaration of extinction influenced the public, professional, and elected officials, and continues to impact the Muwekma Tribe's struggle for land ownership and federal recognition today. His faulty judgment declaring the Ohlone as extinct has been cited and reproduced numerous times in textbooks, curriculums, and legislation.

Kroeber's experience documenting Indian tribes of North America differed greatly from his findings in California. California Indians—especially among the coastal region—were typically smaller and more dispersed than the interior Indian tribes. Smaller territories and communities made intercultural exchange much easier, thus resulting in a blending of cultures in a relatively small region compared to the larger plains Indian tribes, for example.

Kroeber's opinion was based on the Ohlones' conversion to Catholicism, fluency in Spanish, and their mixed blood. By the time Kroeber reached the Ohlone, their ways of life had been transformed by Spanish conquest for nearly 200 years, as well as the Gold Rush and increased Anglo settlement and acculturation into a new cultural and economic model: capitalism.

EVIDENCE OF EXISTENCE

The direct ancestors of the present-day Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area who comprised the Verona Band became Federally Acknowledged by the U.S. Government through the Appropriation Acts of Congress in 1906 and later years. Nearly all members of the Verona Band and their Muwekma descendants registered with the BIA during the enrollment periods between 1929 and 1957.

Although the Tribe was left completely landless, and in some instances homeless, the Muwekma remained

functioning during this time as a tribal band through their **strong social ties and active culture**.

A BROKEN SYSTEM

Did you know?

The Branch of Indian Affairs (BIA) is an office within the Department of the Interior which was formerly the Department of War.

During the early 1980's, many Muwekma families came together to continue to conduct research on their tribe's history, genealogy, and for the application for Federal Recognition. By 1989, the Muwekma Tribal Council passed a resolution to petition the U.S. Government for Federal Acknowledgment. On May 24, 1996, the BIA's Branch of Acknowledgment and Research made a positive determination of "previous unambiguous Federal Recognition" stating that:

"Based upon the documentation provided, and the BIA's background study on Federal acknowledgment in California between 1887 and 1933, we have concluded on a preliminary basis that the Pleasanton or Verona Band of Alameda County was previous acknowledged between 1914 and 1927. "The band was among the groups, identified as bands, under the jurisdiction of the Indian agency at Sacramento, California. The agency dealt with the Verona Band as a group and identified it as a distinct social and political entity."

The BIA then placed the Tribe on Ready Status for Active Consideration in 1998, with a 24 year long waiting list. The Muwekma Tribal Council decided this was unacceptable. The Office of Federal Acknowledgment would not provide a date as to when the Tribe's petition would be reviewed, so the Council took legal action.

On December 8, 1999, the Muwekma filed a law suit against the Interior Department over the issue that, as a previous Federally Recognized Tribe, they should not have to wait over 24 years to complete their reaffirmation process. On June 30, 2000, Federal District Judge Ricardo M. Urbina, ruled in favor of the Muwekma Tribe and ordered the Interior Department to expedite the Muwekma's petition.

Despite affirming federal records, in-depth, cohesive genealogical records, and confirming field notes from officials in the BIA's Branch of Acknowledgment and Research (BAR), the Muwekma Ohlone petition filing for the federal recognition of their tribal status was still denied.

As a result of continuous negligence and indifference by the Department of Interior, the Muwekma Tribe is in the final throes of seeking resolution of its Federally Acknowledged status in order to correct the "administrative errors" perpetrated by the BIA in 1927 and in 2002. The Muwekma Tribe has waited since 1906 – one hundred and ten years – for some semblance of justice.



A NOTE ON FEDERAL RECOGNITION

Tribal sovereignty pre-dates the creation of the United States of America. **The existence of Native American tribes does not depend upon a formal political or legal act** by the United States government confirming the tribe's existence.

However, with federal recognition, the government has a responsibility to protect tribal sovereignty, existing tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights, in exchange for the millions of acres of tribal land that it acquired during the formation of the United States. This means that Tribal property is to be protected by the federal government from being purchased, developed, or occupied by non-Indians.

Recognized tribes maintain their right to govern themselves, determine their own membership, regulate property, commerce, trade, domestic relations, criminal and civil conduct, as well as taxes. Federally recognized tribes have access to a range of federal services in education, social services, law enforcement, health services and resource protection.

The process of federal recognition can take years or decades, and cost thousands of dollars in research. Some forms of evidence accepted by the federal government's Bureau of Indian Affairs are sufficient for one tribal recognition case, while the same forms of evidence are not accepted in another tribe's case. The process has been viewed by many as being broken and was revised in 1994 with the hope that federal acknowledgment will be simpler for Tribes who once had previous recognition status. In the last 20 years the Federal Acknowledgment Office has only granted federal recognition to 9 California Tribes.

There are over **550** federally recognized tribes in the United States.

There are approximately **595** unrecognized tribes.

More than **100** of these unrecognized tribes are from California alone.

It is the official duty of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Office of Federal Acknowledgement to accept or reject the tribal status of Indian people in order to grant federal recognition to native groups. The BAR is responsible for defining the criteria for what it means to be Indian. This government office decides who qualifies for benefits and access to resources **based on its own definition of native culture and identity**. It also has the power to determine what sources of information are acceptable to use when petitioning for federal recognition. However, the diversity with which California Indian tribal groups organize and govern themselves is not compatible with many of the colonial standards set by the United States government. This results in the continued disenfranchisement of Native people, like the Muwekma Ohlone, who seek federal recognition and rights to their own ancestral lands.

CURRENT OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT-DAY MUWEKMA OHLONE TRIBE

The Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area has developed strategies of empowerment and stewardship over their ancestral cemeteries and villages within their aboriginal tribal territory, as these heritage sites are uncovered and need to be investigated before they are destroyed by development.

As a result of not having access to or receiving the published results from archaeological excavations,

some members of the Muwekma Ohlone became trained archaeologists in order to gain direct access to their ancestral heritage. Whenever possible, Tribal members conduct archaeological excavations, monitoring, participate in the analysis and publication of the findings themselves through the Muwekma Tribe's Cultural Resource Management firm, Ohlone Family Consulting Services, as a way to **reclaim ownership of their ancestors, history, heritage, and artifacts**.

The Muwekma Tribe's language committee also renames their ancestral heritage sites in their Muwekma Ohlone Chochenyo, Tamien, Ramaytush, and Awáwas languages, as part of the reclamation and revitalization process thus reversing the colonialism that sought to erase Native American culture, language, religion, and identity.



To learn more about the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and to stay informed on events and actions in the Bay Area, visit us at www.Muwekma.org

Or on Facebook @
Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area

Appendix C: “Crossing the Cultural Threshold, Breaking the Ground”

Working on this project has been a blessing for me in deeply personal ways. I began collaborating on these projects with very little knowledge of my own American Indian heritage. I knew I was Indian, but my family had no knowledge of which tribe or from which culture our heritage originated. I expressed interest in learning more about my ancestry to Leventhal, and suggested that after the exhibit was completed I would seek his assistance with this personal project. While researching for the exhibit one day, Leventhal quickly flipped through a publication when I saw a page with a photo I recognized. It was my great, great grandmother, Mary Dixon Marquez Soto. There have been several pieces of local Monterey peninsula history written about her so the photo we saw was quite familiar to me. Brilliant as he is, Leventhal told me that if I was related to Mamita that I must be Chumash. He even referred to her by her nickname. I learned more recently that members of my extended family have commissioned professional genealogy and DNA studies, concluding that our indigenous roots have been traced back to a woman from a village on what has been renamed by the dominant society as the Channel island of Santa Cruz, or *Limuw*.

I have contextualized this unexpected personal discovery by learning about the ways that California Indians had to sometimes pose as Mexican or Hispanic to survive particularly violent, racist periods of early California history. My heritage as an Italian American and Chumash descendent is the result of the segregation and discrimination of both racialized Southern European immigrants, and Indians in the late 19th century who became interethnic members of the same marginalized population—considered non-white by the dominant society du jour. Now, some of the most expensive restaurants in the town of Carmel, California are Italian restaurants.

Italian families who prospered in the beginning of the 20th century own a significant amount of property and a number of hospitality businesses in Monterey County. The town in which Mamita was once a well-known local figure is now known as an expensive high end shopping district with Michelin-rated restaurants, and ninety percent white residency, according to the 2010 US Census.



In transcending the purely academic realm into the cultural realm, and becoming an ally to the Tribe, Leventhal has described these events as crossing over the cultural threshold. This crossing over has led to my involvement as a Native archaeologist in breaking ground and uncovering sacred artifacts and ancestral relations of the Muwekma. Over the summer of 2016, Leventhal invited me to a Muwekma Tribal Council meeting to introduce my master's project, the *Back From Extinction* exhibit, to the Tribe for approval. During the meeting, Tribal Vice Chairwoman Monica V. Arellano, asked me to stand up and introduce my project. I remember Tribal Chairwoman Rosemary Cambra nodding in approval at my speech put me at ease. While I was fielding questions about the project, Leventhal interjected at one point and told the council that I was of Native descent. I felt that I had to give some background to the statement because the new information about this aspect of my identity was so fresh that it did not completely feel like it was my own. I decided to share with the Tribal Council the story of how Leventhal and I came upon my great great grandmother's photo while working on the project. I heard quiet gasps, whispered "wows" and "ahhs," and suddenly I felt like the room opened up and accepted me.

At that time I had purple hair, so perhaps I was justified in feeling like a bit of an outsider at first. But by sharing my story of personal discovery about my Native roots while working on

this project, I may have allowed for a sense of membership in contemporary and communal struggles to retain Native identity in a society that has been nothing short of inhospitable to Native peoples.

After I presented the scope of my work and answered any questions the Tribal Council had, I was asked to leave the room while the Council discussed. After a short while, Leventhal emerged from the boardroom and informed me that the Council had approved my research topic and would allow me to incorporate their history and legacy as the focus of my master's project. Additionally, the Council discussed my involvement as an archaeological field technician and Muwekma Tribal representative. I was informed at this time that I would join the Muwekma field crew and excavate the burials of ancestral Muwekma Ohlone people. I was beyond humbled. The weight of these opportunities and responsibilities is not lost on me. I hope my gratitude is apparent.



Learning about Mamita's Chumash heritage inspired me to learn more about my indigenous Californian roots. My interest in this subject coincided with my family's interest in learning more about our ancestral background and history. Finding information about Mamita prompted my mother to do some searching of her own. She joined Ancestry.com and was immediately put in contact with distant relatives of Chumash descent as well. My mother discovered there was a book written about Mamita which my partner Roman took it upon himself to find. Now all the elder women in my family own this book about our Chumash great grandmother, and great great grandmother, curandera, herbalist, caretaker, and community leader, Mamita.

In the oral history interviews conducted for the Urban Relocation exhibit, *Cement Prairie*, one statement that is declared several times, is: “I always knew I was Indian.” This reaffirmation often comes at a time in an individual’s relocation narrative where they felt isolated in urban life and separated from their Native family, community, and as a consequence, their identity. When I tell people about my personal discovery, seeing Mamita’s picture and becoming aware of my family’s Chumash ancestry, I often find myself saying the same thing: I always knew I was Native, because my grandmother told me so. She was my native connection, though she admitted that she could not remember the name of her grandmother’s tribe. My personal experience throughout the research phase of the Muwekma exhibit has given me the opportunity to connect with a part of my identity and heritage that I felt had vanished after my grandmother passed away. Myself and my family have personally and deeply benefited from my master’s research in ways that will impact our lives forever. Our identity as a family with a mixed indigenous background is ours once again to embrace and embody.

The importance of oral history, the foundation of indigenous knowledge, is sacred. These are the stories that must be shared to keep Native identity alive in a landscape that was systematically separated from its culture. These are the practices that expose the failures of colonial systems in their attempts to eradicate indigenous pride, culture, and knowledge. Speaking these stories and owning our histories is an act of resistance.