



# **Foothill College and the Land We Use**

**A deeper look into the land Foothill College sits on  
and our Muwekma Ohlone Land Acknowledgement**

Prepared by Kathryn Maurer, Department of Anthropology  
for the New Faculty Orientation & College Retreat  
September 13, 2022  
Half Moon Bay



Foothill Campus 2018. Photo credit: <https://foothillcollege.smugmug.com/Campus/Campus-2018/>

# Acknowledging...and beyond...the land we are privileged to use

## Foothill's formal land acknowledgement(s)

### Horše túuxi! (Hor-sheh troo-hee)

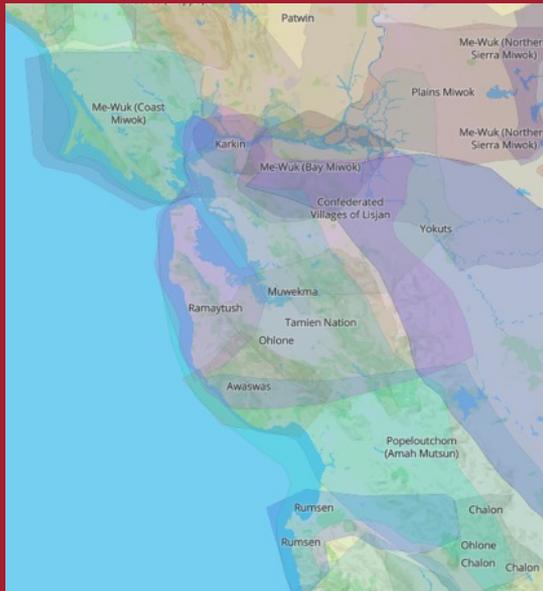
Foothill College recognizes that it is located on the ethnohistoric territory of the ancestral and traditional land of the **Puichon Thámien** Ohlone-speaking People, and the successors of the historic sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County, presently identified as the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area. This land was and continues to be of great importance to the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe and other familial descendants of the Verona Band.

We recognize that every member of the greater Foothill College/Los Altos Hills community has, and continues to benefit from, the use and occupation of this land, since the institution's founding in 1957. Consistent with our values of community, inclusion, and diversity, we have a responsibility to acknowledge and make known through various enterprises Foothill College's relationship to Native peoples. As members of the Foothill College/Los Altos Hills community, it is vitally important that we not only recognize the history of the land on which we live, work, and learn, but also, we recognize that the previously federally recognized Muwekma Ohlone Tribal People are alive and flourishing members of the Foothill College/Los Altos Hills and broader Bay Area communities today. Aho!

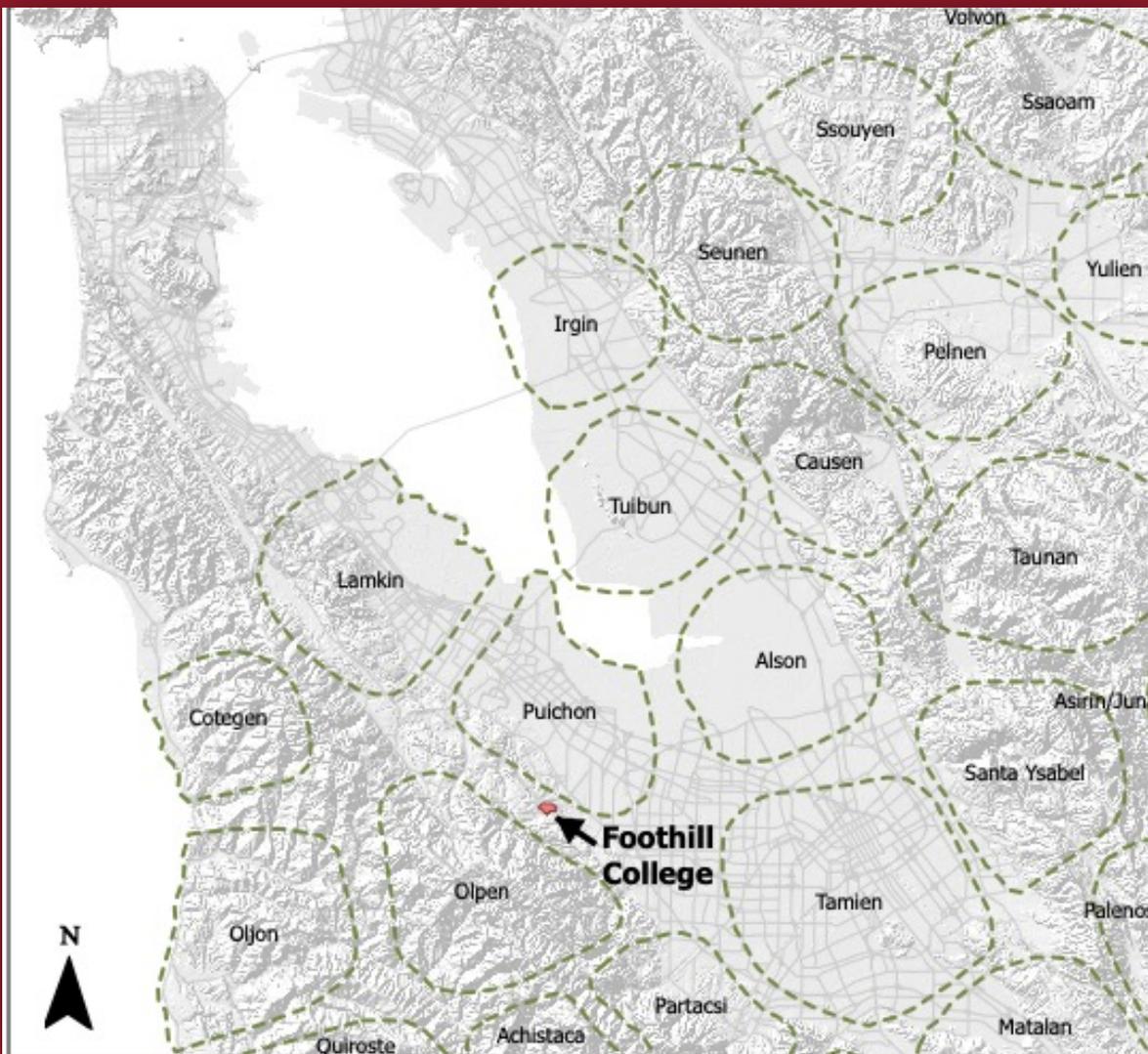
*Approved by the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area, through coordination by Dr. Michael Wilcox.*

# Native Peoples of the Bay Area

- 6,000+ year continuous presence of indigenous peoples in the San Francisco Bay Area.



- Vast cultural & linguistic diversity
- Emerging and waning settlements; constant inter-tribal contact and migration
- Complex and dynamic social, political, economic and religious institutions
- Sophisticated resource acquisition and land management
- At one time, there were at least 58 Ohlone tribes in the greater Bay Area, many with their own distinct languages and cultural identities.



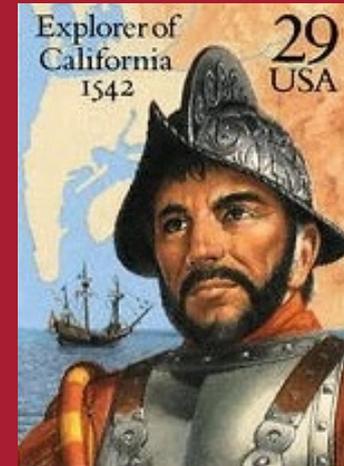
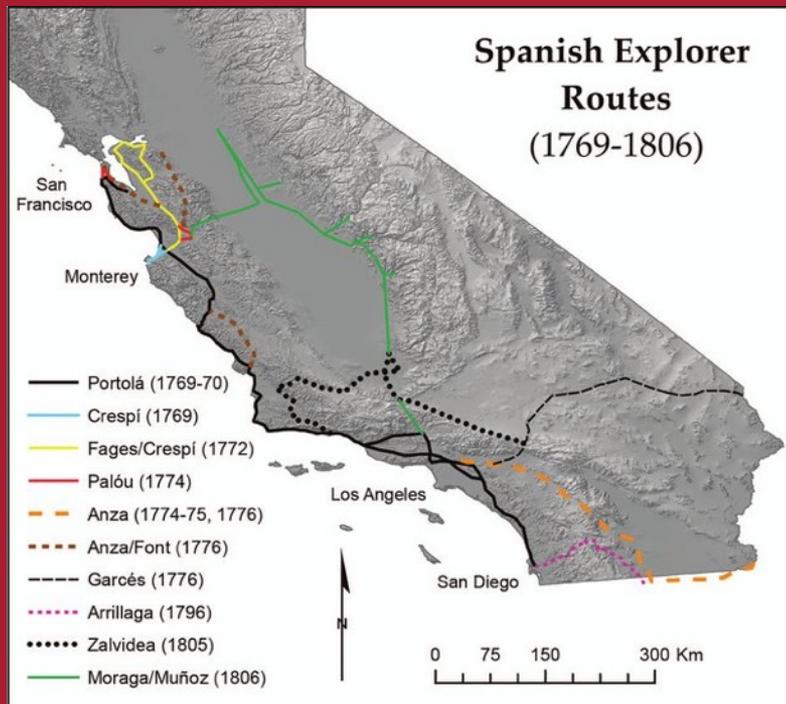
*...We would like to recognize that while we gather at **Foothill College** located in **Los Altos Hills, CA**, we are gathered within the ethno-historic tribal territory of the **Puichon (pooee-chon) Thámien (thah-mee-in) Ohlone-speaking tribal groups...***

## Map of Tribal Homelands Based on Linguistic Groups

Map credit: Dan Cearley

# Spanish Contact and Conquest

- First record of intrusion onto these lands by non-Native peoples in 1542 (near Monterey Bay) by the Spanish (Cabrillo/Ferrelo sea expedition and soon after Portola land expedition), followed by two centuries of upheaval from land and sea expeditions and ultimately missionization.



# Spanish Missionization 1770-1833

- Permanent settlement of Spanish missionaries, soldiers and ultimately civilians
- Missions, presidios (forts), pueblos (towns) and land-grant ranchos (ranches with titles held by King of Spain)—all built and run with forced labor by Native peoples
- Introduction of cattle, horses, invasive plants + outlawing of Native land use and management practices
- Disease, violence, ethnocide...genocide



Image credit: "Native Peoples of the East Bay Past to Present," East Bay Regional Parks, 2018

# Mexican Ranchos 1834-1846

- Independence of Mexico (from Spain) 1821
- Secularization & privatization of mission lands (titles held mostly by "white" Mexicans)
- Vast ranchos with serf-like labor from Native peoples: vaqueros and house-servants
- Very little mission land returned to Native peoples despite Spanish promise
  - 1834 land grant to a mission-born Ohlone? Later privately sold, becoming **Rancho La Purisima Concepción.**

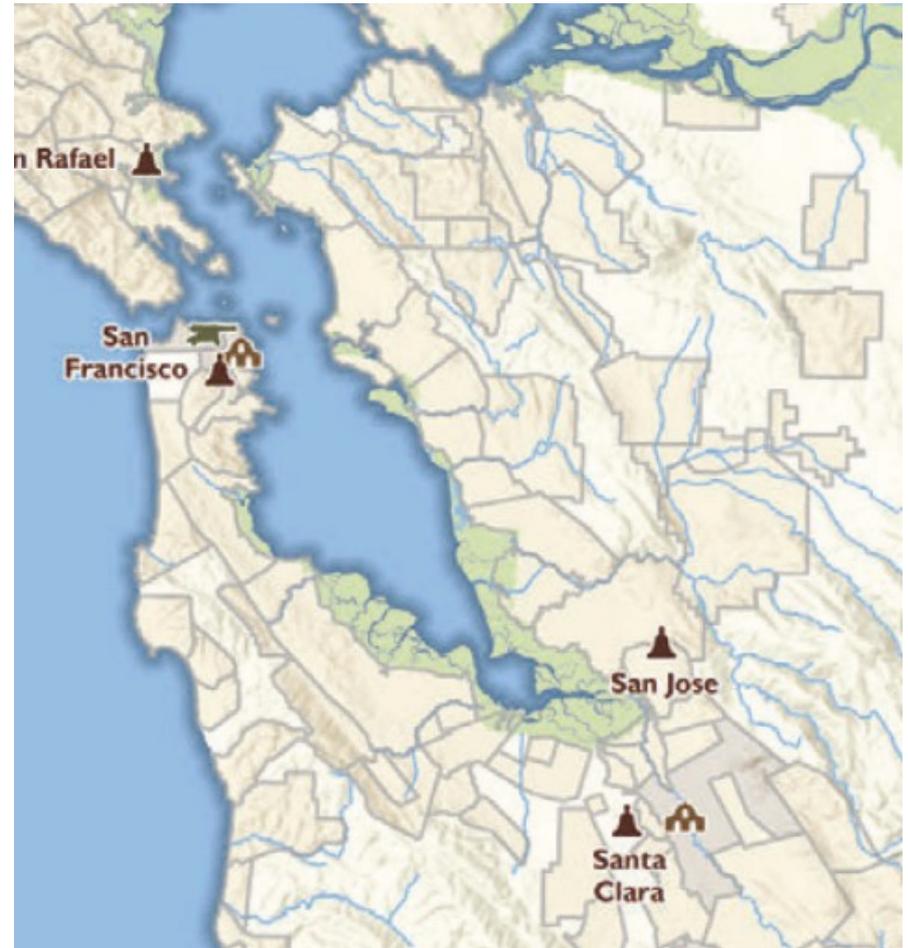
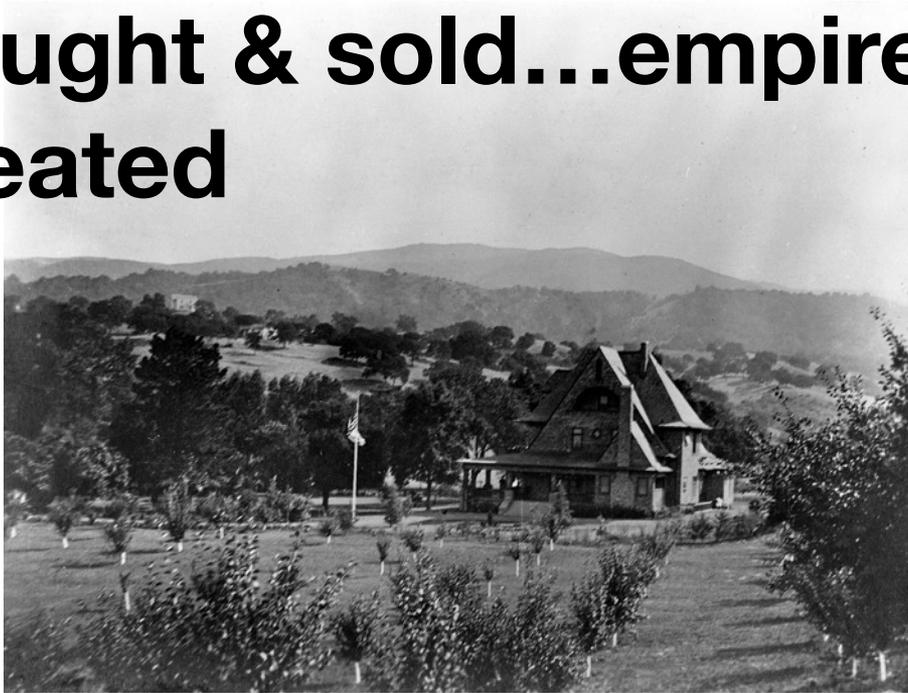


Image credit: "Native Peoples of the East Bay Past to Present," East Bay Regional Parks, 2018



Los Altos Hills circa 1915. Photo credit: <https://distarch.fhda.edu/s/primary/page/foothill-site-land-history>

# California Settlers...land bought & sold...empires created



Griffin House, early 1900's



Juana Briones, original title holder of Rancho La Purisima Concepción

- Late 19<sup>th</sup> century: Taaffe Ranch
- 1899: **Griffin** ownership of "Lake Grove" Fruit Ranch- later Owl Brand



- 1908 Grace Holt (Lohman)
- 1948 Sidney Treat (1<sup>st</sup> mayor Los Altos)
- 1956 William Cusack
- **1957 Foothill Junior College District**
- 1961 Foothill Junior College opens



Foothill land 1958. Photo credit: <https://distarch.fhda.edu/s/primary/page/foothill-site-land-history>

# Why Land Acknowledgements?

What do they really say? What do they really mean?

Are they enough?

- Indigenous land acknowledgment is an effort to recognize the Indigenous past, present, and future of a particular location *and* to understand our own place within that relationship.

# Muwekma (“the People”) Ohlone Tribe Today

- Comprised of all of the known surviving American Indian lineages aboriginal to the San Francisco Bay region who trace their ancestry through the Missions Dolores, Santa Clara, and San Jose (1776-1836).
- Includes (but not limited to) descendants of the historically Federally Recognized **Verona Band of Alameda County**.
- Not currently federally recognized. Began to organize in 1980. Over 600 enrolled members today.



Image credit: <http://www.muwekma.org/>

# Foothill College's Ohlone Past... Today.

## Excerpts from our "Long" version of the Land Acknowledgement

- The lands on which Foothill College is established was and continues to be of **great importance and significance** for the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal People.
- Surrounding areas held *túupentaks*, traditional semi-subterranean spiritual roundhouses. Places of celebrations, healing, rituals, dances, intertribal feasts, and religious ceremonies.
- The Foothill College Campus also extends to nearby ancestral heritage "shellmound sites" which served as the Tribe's territorial monuments and traditional cemetery sites for high lineage families, craft specialists, and fallen warriors.
- Today, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribal leadership and members work as stewards for many of their up-to, 10,000-year-old ancestral heritage village and cemetery sites.
- It is important that we not only recognize the history of the land of the ***Puichon Thámien Ohlone*** on which we gather to participate, learn, and honor, but also recognize that the **First People** of this region – the Muwekma Ohlone People, are alive and thriving members of **Los Altos Hills** and broader Bay Area communities today.

Foothill sponsored, and continues to house some significant Ohlone artifacts from, a series of archaeological excavations in early 1970's

# Foothill College's Ohlone Past... Tomorrow.

## Excerpts from our “Long” version of the Land Acknowledgement

- We respectfully request, that the good citizens of Foothill College...**be faithful stewards** on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe by **maintaining the bay, freshwater ways, native plants, animal habitats, and the air we all breath.**
- We request that Foothill College...**honor the military service of the Muwekma men and women who have honorably served** overseas during World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Iraq and who are still serving in the United States Armed Forces today; and honor the tribal veterans and service members from California, North and South America who have served this country with dignity and honor.
- We ask everyone who attends or visits Foothill College...to be respectful of these aboriginal lands and natural habitats within their traditional homeland, and **consistent with their principles of community and diversity**, strive to be good stewards on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, on whose land you are guests.
- And on behalf of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe, we hope you **celebrate, honor, and stand in solidarity with all Indigenous People** with their struggles to reverse the adverse colonial legacies affecting all people of color in **Los Altos Hills**, the Bay Area, California, the United States, and the Americas, as we gather and reflect on the sacred lands of the **Muwekma Ohlone Tribe.**

# Want to learn and support more?

- October 6<sup>th</sup> 7-8:30 p.m. Zoom lecture: **"Archaeology, History and Heritage of the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe"** by Dr. Alan Leventhal (San Jose State) hosted by the Los Altos History Museum
- November 11-13<sup>th</sup> **American Indian Heritage Celebration** at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds
- **Muwekma Ohlone Preservation Foundation**: a new Indigenous land trust that will help members of the Tribe reconnect with their culture, language, ceremonies and each other on their ancestral lands.



**AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE CELEBRATION**

SPECIAL GUESTS:  
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BILLY MILLS,  
SUPAMAN, AND MUCH MORE!

AMERICAN INDIAN / ALASKAN NATIVE VETERANS HONORING CALIFORNIA DANCERS

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**FREE EVENT**  
3 DAY EVENT - PARKING (\$15)

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HOMELAND TRIBE 2022



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