

The Indigenous Inhabitants of Burton Mesa and its Environs

1. Prehistoric period: California's southern Central Coast has been inhabited for at least 9500 years. The Reserve contains no prehistoric archaeological sites, but there may be sites buried in the alluvium.

2. The Early Period (5500 B.C. – 600 B.C.): A few of the Reserve's sites date from this period. Large numbers of milling stone artifacts indicate reliance on plants, and there is little evidence of hunting. Evidence of food remains and technology indicate that gathering shellfish and fishing were common.



3. The Middle Period (600 B.C. – 1150 A.D.): The Reserve has several sites from this period. Abundant evidence of mortars and pestles shows that acorns were a staple food (coast live oak the most preferred), and deer hunting rose in importance. Larger numbers of residential sites and the presence of non-local materials indicate larger populations and more trade across the region.

4. The Late Period (1150 through the Spanish colonial period of 1542 to 1800's): The Reserve has several archaeological sites from this period. Chumash culture reached its height in this period. Population numbers flourished as they took advantage of abundant terrestrial and marine resources.

They had a complex non-agricultural, foraging society organized by a Chiefdom, and managed large trade networks based on shell bead money. They burned vegetation close to the coast to increase desirable plant and animal resources (though no evidence of this on Burton Mesa). The Spanish established Mission La Purisima Vieja on this land in 1787, and implemented agriculture and grazing. An oil field opened in the early 1900's.

5. Today: The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is the only federally-recognized Chumash tribe in the nation. Its reservation (east of Solvang, where 246 meets 154) was established in 1901. For many years, the reservation had no running water or electricity, and few tribal members lived there. It began a housing program in 1979, prompting the arrival of more residents. Tribal members are now on a path to economic self-sufficiency thanks to the Chumash Casino Resort. Today there are 249 residents on the Santa Ynez Reservation and 97 homes, with many more living outside the reservation.

Fast Facts:

- Most settlements in prehistoric and historic time were along the coast and in Santa Ynez valley and its tributaries.
- The area that is now Burton Reserve was probably a marginal settlement zone, which provided seasonal resources (as required) for subsistence.
- Chumash means "bread maker" or "seashell people."
- Before European colonization, the Chumash extended from Morro Bay in the north to Malibu in the south (including Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa and San Miguel Islands).
- Modern place names with Chumash origins include Malibu, Lompoc, Ojai, Pismo, and Simi Valley, among many others.