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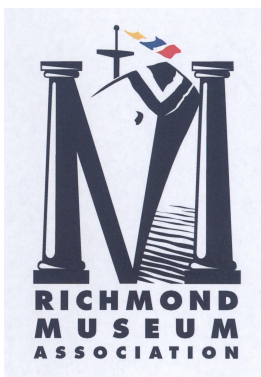


WEST COUNTY DIGS
a project of
Earth Island Institute

Who are the Ohlone Indians?



Indians of the Bay Area of San Francisco, California: by Louis Choris, 1816.



Written and Presented by:

The Richmond Museum of History

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Open Wednesday - Sunday 1-4pm

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Native Americans?

Long ago, the continent of North America was home to its first people. These people lived on the land for many many years and lived successfully in groups of families and friends, known as **tribes**. Together, they helped each other survive during a time when shelter and food could not be purchased. Food, shelter, clothes, jewelry, games, among other things, had to be made by hand or traded. Each tribe had their own names and were referred amongst each other by those names.

North American Continent



European Continent



Then one day, a group of different people, who came from the other side of the world, landed on the shores of North America. These new people met the original people of North America and decided to call them **ALL** American Indians / Native Americans.

Despite being public recognized as American Indians, individual Indian tribes still have different names and prefer to be called by those names. One such tribe is the Ohlone tribe; they lived in what we know today as North California.

The Ohlone Indians

The **Ohlone** (pronounced “óh-lone-e”) lived in present day Richmond and throughout Northern California for over **THOUSANDS** of years.

The area in which the Ohlone Indians lived is roughly from Vallejo to about Monterey Bay. In 1770 there were about 17,000 Ohlones living in this region. That is less people than the people that currently live in Richmond!

Among all Ohlones, they further divided themselves into smaller tribes. There were actually 58 **different** Ohlone tribes! The name “**Ohlone**” comes from just one tribe name, Oljon (pronounced “Ol-hóne”).

What is “Culture”?

Despite their small population, the Ohlone Indians **thrived** (grew and developed well) during a time when modern technology and cities were not known concepts. These accomplishments can be credited to their **culture** (the way different groups of people think of and interact with the world and people around them). The Ohlone Indians lived their lives knowing that all they had and all they could ever have came from the Earth. For that reason, they loved and held the utmost respect for the Earth and all life that comes from it; the animals, plants, water and even other people.

To better understand culture, try answering the questions below about **your** own culture. Depending on how you have answered these questions, your culture may be very different or very similar to the cultures of other kids your age :

- *Who belongs to your family?*
- *What religion do you practice, if any? What beliefs do you have?*
- *What is your first language?*
- *What traditions (things you celebrate) does your family have?*
- *What types of foods does your family make?*
- *Do you have special clothing you wear on special occasions?*

Culture is what makes us different but special from everyone else. Aside from culture being very interesting, understanding culture can also help us feel more connected to others. Even though the Ohlone culture is really old, it is still alive today! This packet is designed to talk about the Ohlone history so that we may come to understand the Ohlones of today. Who knows, one of your classmates may be Ohlone.

One thing to keep in mind as you read this packet is that modern (current) Ohlones practice the culture, but do not always do things in the same way their ancestors did. That’s because as things change in life, there are certain aspects of culture that are not used anymore. That’s okay! ***Everyone and everything changes and grows.***



Here is a painting of how an Ohlone Village may have looked like many many years ago.



Though this is just a painting, there are a few things we can learn from it. Using the above picture for clues, try answering the below questions:

QUESTIONS:

1. How many people lived together? And where did they live?
2. What did their houses look like?
3. How did they communicate?
4. How did the Ohlone travel?
5. What kinds of foods did they eat?
6. Did the Ohlone have special tools?
7. How did the women, men and children dress?
8. Did they have jobs? How about schools?
9. Where are the Ohlone today?

Social Organization

Among the 58 different Ohlone tribes, each one was a little bit different, including in size and in language spoken.

Starting with size, each tribe lived in a number of villages. A **village** is a group of houses and associated buildings. Some villages had as little as 40 people and others had as many as 200. These villages looked a little something like the image below:



? **QUESTION:** How many people live in the village illustrated here? Was it a big or small village? Write your answer below.

Within these villages, the people that lived in them were often related. Very much how some of us live with our parents, brother and sisters, but we may also live with grandparents or our aunts, uncles and cousins. Imagine having an entire block of homes being occupied with different family members, that's how Ohlone villages were set up!

These villages were often located near a source of water, including creeks, rivers, even oceans. This is because water is a very important resource for humans to have. Having water close by means having enough drinking water, being able to bathe, and having food easily accessible (seafood and animals that come by sources of water for food and water).

Though they had villages and houses, they didn't usually stay in one place for too long. After about a year, many villages would pack their things and move. Where they moved to depended on what food was available there and what the weather was like. Because the Ohlone lived off of what the land provided, sometimes that meant having to move often.

Housing

Despite their occasional **nomadic** (*meaning that they often moved from place to place*) lifestyle, the Ohlone did have homes. As the ones demonstrated in the painting, they were made of dried tule-grass and built in the shape of a dome. Did you notice that it has no windows or a door? That's totally different from how houses look like today! In today's time, that is considered unsafe. Though different tribes could visit each other, often times they kept to themselves; making privacy less of a concern.



This is what tule grass looks like



This is how dried tule grass looks like



Example of a tule-house

Language

Across these tribes, the Ohlone spoke 8 different languages. These languages are *Karkin*, *Chochenyo*, *Ramaytush*, *Tamien*, *Awawas*, *Mutsun*, *Rumsien* and *Chalon*.

Here is a map of the different languages paired with present day locations.



QUESTION: Using this map as a reference, do you know what Ohlone language was spoken in the area we know today as Richmond? Write your answer below.

Transportation

Thousands of years ago, humans had not yet created transport like cars, planes or bikes. So when it came to traveling, the Ohlone had to do so either by foot or by boat.

QUESTION: Can you find the tule boat on page 3? Circle it.

Also made out of dried tule grass, the Ohlone discovered that tule grass floats and that when dried and tied into bundles, they made the perfect tool for moving through water. And so they made boats!



The Ohlone used the tule boat to travel through water and fish using either spears or nets. The Ohlone swam and fished in the creeks, rivers and oceans. Thousands of years ago, when the Ohlone were the only people in this area, our sea shores were full of sea life. It is in modern (current) times that our oceans have become so polluted, it is less safe to swim in. When looking to swim in nature, always make

sure to look for the signs that tell you whether it is safe or unsafe. Many of our shorelines are tested for bacteria levels every bi-weekly. If the waters are not safe to swim in, park officials close beaches.

QUESTION: Do you know the name of the beach in Richmond? Write your answer below:

Find out what the bacteria levels are like today by visiting the following page:

<http://www.ebparcs.org/activities/swimming/facilities>

Food

The Ohlone were **hunters and gathers**, meaning that they would only eat what they could kill (animals) and what they could pick (fruits and vegetables).

? **QUESTION:** Using the list below, can you figure out what foods were hunted and what were gathered by the Ohlone? Put an **H** next to foods that you think were **hunted** and a **G** next to food that you think were **gathered**.

- Skunk _____
- Raccoons _____
- Rabbits _____
- Squirrel _____
- Mouse _____
- Reptiles _____
- Insects _____
- Fish _____
- Shrimp _____
- Clams _____
- Wild berries _____
- Wild grapes _____
- Acorns _____
- Seeds _____
- Onions _____
- Carrots _____
- Clover _____
- Thistle _____
- And much MORE!

You may think that some of these foods are gross, but remember, this is before grocery stores or fast food restaurants. If they did not catch or find their food, then they would not eat. A lot of these foods were actually really delicious to the Ohlone and most importantly, nutritious!



To catch their food, the Ohlone made bows, arrows, spears, snare traps and nets. They were excellent craftsmen and women!

Tools

Because there were no stores back then, the Ohlone only had what nature provided, anything that was not made by themselves was traded.

Very quickly in their lives, they figured out that if they were to survive, they would need tools to help them. Using stone, trees, plants, and animal bones they quickly became experts! Here are just *some* of the tools made and used.



Mortar and Pestle
Made of stone

Used to grind seeds, such as acorn, into a fine powder for eating



Basket
Made of tule grass and other plants.
Painted using crushed plants.

Used to gather fruits or seeds. The Ohlone were so good at weaving that some of their baskets could also be used to hold water and cook in with hot stones.



Needles

Made of bone

Used for sewing, exactly like the needles we use today.



Nets
Made of dried plants

Used for fishing or catching small animals.



Arrow Points
Made of stone
Used for hunting and as a sharp end

for cutting into surfaces things with.
If attached to a long thick pole, these arrowheads became a part of a spear.
If attached to a shorter and thinner pole, it became a part of an arrow meant to be used with a bow.



Tule Boat
Made of tule grass

Used to navigate the waters, whether that be the ocean, streams or rivers.

Learn how to make your own basket!

Follow the instructions below!

Materials Needed:

Basket template

Yarn (14ft)

Scissors

Tape

Instructions:

1. Cut out your basket template (thicker paper attached to packet)
2. Take your template and place it in front of you with the black dot facing up
3. Fold tabs up along the black circle and then let them go
4. Taking one end of your yarn, place it on the black dot and tape it down.
5. We will now start the process of **weaving!** Note that we will be moving in a clockwise fashion (from right to left).
6. Pull yarn in between two tabs
7. Pull yarn to the left and behind the tab
8. Pull yarn to the left again towards the next tab and place it on the top
9. Pull to the left and behind the next tab
10. Pull and place on top of next tab. YOU GOT IT!
11. Weave as tightly as possible, but not too tight! For a neat look, push the yarn down as you go along
12. Keep going until you get to the top!
13. Cut yarn off we you've reached to the top
14. Tape down last piece of the yarn to the inside of your basket. You are now done!

Dress

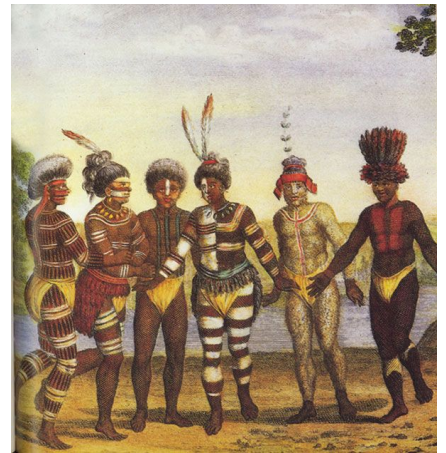
Again, this was a time before shopping malls or sewing machines, so when it came to clothing their bodies, the Ohlone always looked around at what was already available in nature. Much of their clothing is made of a variation of plants and animal skin for warmth.



Women wore a two-piece apron that tied together creating a skirt. A small front apron was made of tulle reed or grass, braided and fastened to a waist cord. A larger back apron was made for the back out of deer or sea otter skin. They did not wear tops.

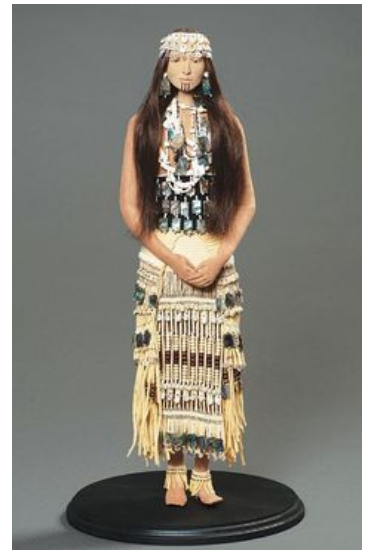
Men and boys usually did not wear any clothing. In cold weather, men and women both used robes made of animal skins or duck feathers, but sometimes, rubbing a layer of mud on your body was enough to keep them warm.

No one wore shoes back then, but they did love decorating their bodies with jewelry, headdresses and even paint. Everyone had long hair, but the women had bangs. Tattooing was done on the face, forehead, and arms. Earrings, nose rings, and necklaces were made of olivella, abalone shells, and of feathers.



The Ohlone saved their best clothes for ceremonies; we refer to this clothes as ceremonial regalia. Men's regalia consisted of feathered net capes and bands that hid men's eyes in reddish-orange flicker quills. The men also wore necklaces made of abalone. In their hair they wore feather hairpins.

Women's regalia consisted of skirts that was decorated with different types of beads. They also wore necklaces made of clamshell disk beads, abalone pendants, and magnesite beads.



The Ohlone used many types of shell including abalone. They were used for jewelry, basket decorations, coloring decorations, even as money somethings. Jewelry was a way to show one's status.



Learn to make your own Shell Bead Necklace

Follow the instructions below

Materials Needed:

String

Different types of beads

Scissors

Instructions:

1. Remove the clear string from the bag. Be careful not to spill the beads from the bag.
2. Choose a plain bead and tie one end of the string to that bead. Double-knot so that the bead does not fall through
3. One by one place each bead on the string. Feel free to get creative! Choose a pattern or randomly drop beads down the string.
4. Once done, tie both ends together making sure the necklace can fit over your head!
5. If there is extra string, please ask an adult to help you shorten it.

Jobs

Jobs today are places grown-ups go to several days a week to do specific duties. Depending on that job, after a said number of days, the worker receives a check as compensation for the work done. That worker then uses that check as money so that they may purchase things they need at home, such as food, clothes and toys for their children.

The Ohlone did not have jobs. Instead, they had responsibilities. Responsibilities are different from jobs because they do not pay. Still, responsibilities are very important and help us survive!

Some of the Ohlone's responsibilities included:

- Finding and building shelter
- Finding food
- Finding water to drink
- Preparing foods and cooking
- Making clothes
- Making tools
- Keeping and passing history

Tasks like building shelter, finding food and making tools were usually done by men.

Tasks like preparing foods, cooking, making clothes and making some tools were often done by women.

Keeping and passing history was a very special responsibility, and that was usually done by the elderly. The elderly were very strong and wise. They helped their children and grandchildren with their responsibilities but were also gatekeepers of history and stories of the past. Using these stories, elders passed on lessons and advise.

Many of these stories were about their ancestors, the people that lived before them. Through these tales, children came to learn about the Ohlone culture, who they were and where they came from. Many of their stories also had learning lesson, used to teach kids about how to make the right decisions. These stories are referred to as oral histories, meaning that they are histories that are passed down by voice. They are not written or recorded anywhere.

Sadly, many of these oral histories have been forgotten. This was due to the Spanish colonization that forced the Ohlones to stop practicing their culture, and to even forget about their past. However, some oral histories still do exist, but those stories are usually only shared within the Ohlone community.

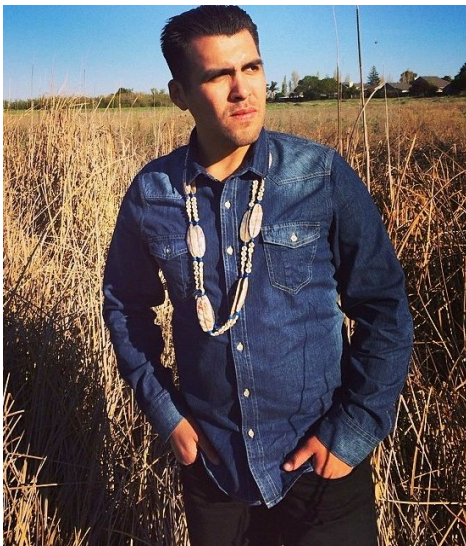
School

The Ohlone had no schools. Instead, everyday life experiences and tasks became learning lessons. From a young age, children accompanied their relatives on their responsibilities. Kids then learned to hunt, cook, and make tools by watching their older relatives, first. Life was simple and lessons were taught and perfected with time.

Where are the Ohlone Indians now?

Despite the Ohlone Indians being from an older civilization, they are still very much around us today. Reason why you may not have noticed them is because they don't look like they used to.

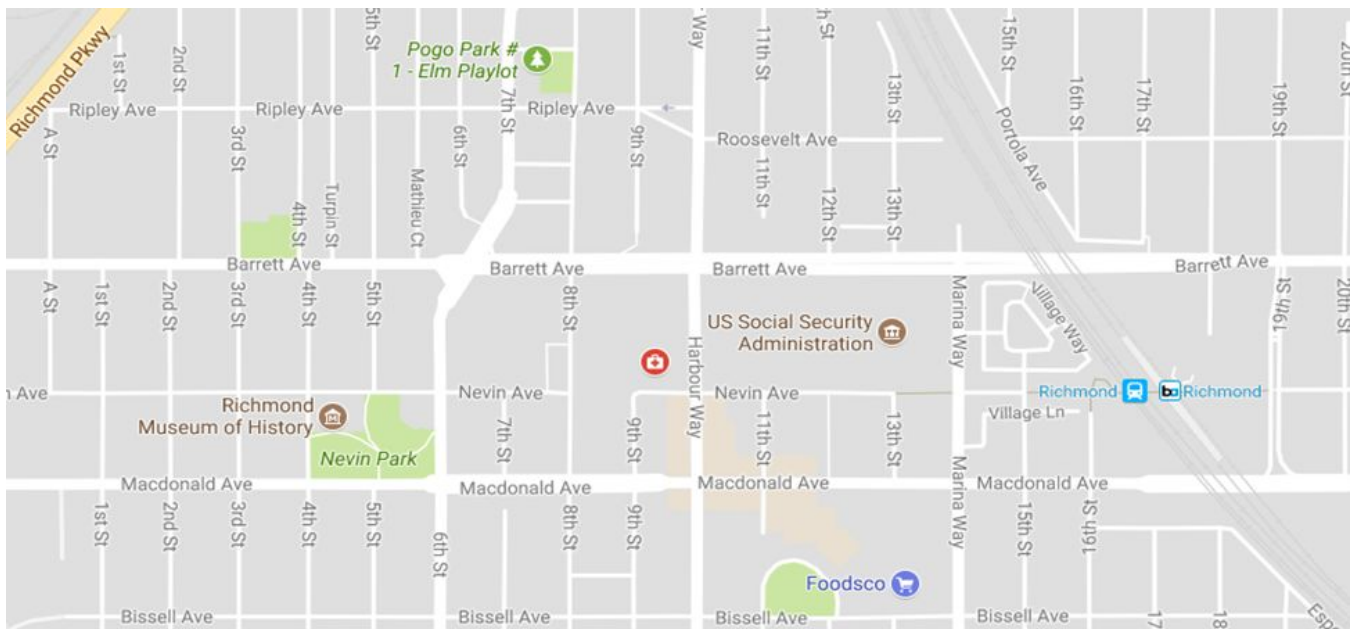
Just like every year you get older and change, the Ohlone culture does as well. Here are some images of modern day Ohlones. Many of these people still live in the Bay Area and love teaching others about their very special culture!



Where can you find the Richmond Museum of History?

The Museum is located at **400 Nevin Ave. Richmond, CA 94801** in between 4th st. and Nevin Ave. That's about three blocks down from Kaiser Permanente Hospital and six blocks from Richmond BART.

We are open Wednesday through Sunday, 1 - 4pm. Se habla espanol.
\$5 adults, \$3 senior students or Discover and Go



Movement Activities for Kids

Why is crossing the body's midline important for kids?

The midline is the median plane of the body, an imaginary line dividing the body into right and left halves. Crossing the body's midline is the ability to reach across the middle of the body with the arms and legs. This kind of movement links the body with the brain. It is an important developmental skill needed for many everyday tasks such as writing, hitting a ball, and self care tasks.

What can be done to improve the ability to cross the body's midline?

- Bilateral integration skills - using both sides of the body at the same time
- Midline crossing activities
- Core stability and trunk rotation

Examples of activities for crossing the midline

- Elbow to opposite knee, or hand to opposite hip
- Cross right arm to left shoulder and back
- Leg kicks crossing the midline
- Toe touches to opposite side of the body
- Pick an apple from a tree opposite side of body, at shoulder height, pick a weed from the ground, opposite side of body
- Wash the train windows, wash the table

Why are balance and coordination important?

With good balance and coordination a child is less likely to injure themselves as they have appropriate postural responses when needed.

What are the building blocks needed to develop good balance and coordination?

Concentration, body awareness, crossing the midline, muscular strength, postural control

What activities can improve balance and coordination?

- Hopscotch
- Stepping stone or lily pad games
- "Writing" the alphabet with one foot at a time while standing
- Walking with a bean bag on the head
- Statue games or Freeze Tag
- Tightrope walking with a rope on the ground
- Essentrics and Yoga

basket template

