

Clearly Heard Forever

J. P. Harrington Database Project Newsletter

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Continuing a Family Tradition

Members of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band have participated in three training sessions sponsored by the Harrington Database Project. They are actively involved in language and cultural revitalization projects, thus Harrington's notes are of prime importance. Two of the participants in the most recent training, Marion Martinez and Elizabeth Orozco, come from a family with a long history of language documentation.

Marion and Elizabeth are daughters of Harrington's field assistant, Martha Herrera, and great-granddaughters of his primary Mutsun consultant, Ascensión Solórsano. They were delighted to be transcribing notes prepared by their mother, and provided interesting information about her work.



Marion Martinez and Elizabeth Orozco
(Photo courtesy of M. Martinez and E. Orozco)

Martha Herrera

Their mother, Martha Herrera, was born on July 29, 1912. She first met J. P. Harrington in the summer of 1929, when she was 17 years old. As a young woman she worked for him for about four years, accompanying him on trips, translating, recopying his notes, and providing him with typed copies of published materials to use in his interviews with Native American speakers throughout California.



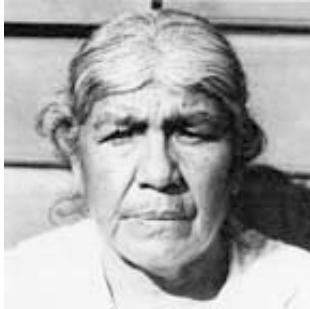
Martha Herrera and J. P. Harrington
(Photo courtesy of M. Martinez and E. Orozco)

Later, Martha became the mother of eight children, five girls and three boys. Two of these daughters, Marion Martinez and Elizabeth Orozco, are now transcribing and coding the linguistic and ethnographic notes that their mother helped create.

Ascensión Solórsano

Harrington first worked on the Mutsun language (part of the Costanoan language family) in 1922. His primary consultant was Martha Herrera's grandmother, Ascensión

Solórsano. She was born about 1835 near Mission San Juan Bautista, the daughter of Bárbara Sierras and Miquel Solórsano, both speakers of Mutsun. She was the granddaughter of Sierras who had been the alcalde of the Mission.



Ascensión Solórsano
(photo Mills 1985:xxxv)

Harrington returned to work with her in Monterey in 1929, after she had moved in with her daughter and son-in-law Dionisia and Joe Mondragon—where Harrington also stayed. It was during this time that he met Dionisia's daughter, Martha.

Harrington found Ascensión's knowledge of Mutsun ceremonial traditions, herbal medicine, and material culture astonishing. At the Mission she had studied with elders, some of whom had been born in the 18th century, even before the establishment of the mission.

This story of continuity from Harrington's consultants to the present is not unique. We regularly meet descendants of Native people who have worked with Harrington in a variety of capacities. We look forward to bringing you more such accounts of Native California. Much of the above information is from Mills' guide to the microfilm collection (1985:82-83).

San Manuel Band of Mission Indians

The Project was the recipient of funding from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. This has allowed us to hire additional students to code their Serrano notes, which we hope to have available for community classes this fall.

National Science Foundation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded our project funding for three more years of work. This funding supports students

working on the Project, and allows the Project team to offer trainings to community volunteers throughout California. Please contact us if you are interested in participating.

LA Times Front Page

A Packrat's Path to Indian Past by Mike Anton appeared on the front page of the Los Angeles Times on July 2, 2004. It continues on page 26 with the title *A Treasure-Trove of Notes Left by a Keeper of Indian Languages*. The article is a great description of Harrington's contributions and includes a mention of this project.

Coming Soon. . .

In our next newsletter we will include a report on the Barona meeting, an update on completed notes and materials available on our website.

General Information

John Peabody Harrington (1884–1961), hired in 1915 by the Bureau of American Ethnology as a research ethnologist, devoted nearly half a century to field work on Native American languages. The men and women he interviewed were often among the last remaining speakers of their languages.

The J. P. Harrington Database Project,

administered through the Native American Language Center at the University of California, Davis with funding from the National Science Foundation (awards BCS01-11487 and BCS04-18584) and bridge funding from the Office of Research, U.C. Davis. Principal investigators: Martha J. Macri, Victor Golla. Project director: Lisa Woodward. Research associates: Ben Burgess, Margaret Cayward, Karen Gould, Michael Grofe, Kirsten Meyer, Suzanne Wash, Georgie Waugh.

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Newsletter name Harrington frequently wrote "ch." next to a word or phrase to indicate that he had asked the speaker to repeat it, so it could be "clearly heard." If he had asked the speaker to repeat it slowly several times, and was absolutely certain of the accuracy of his phonetic transcription, he would write "ch. forever." Martha Macri, Lisa Woodward, Editors