Barona Cultural Center and Museum’s exhibition, *We Stayed Together: 75th Anniversary of the Reservation* was on display at the Museum from 2007-2021. This exhibition was held in honor of the Barona Reservation’s 75th Anniversary in 2007. Historical photographs, drawings, and label text documented the history of the Barona Band of Mission Indians from thousands of years ago through 2007.
The Earliest History

Ancient Times and the Early Ancestors
(Thousands of years ago)

The history of the people goes back to when the Creator gave them this land. Archaeological research dates the Indian occupation of this land from perhaps 40,000 years ago to as recent as 3,000 years ago.

The Spanish Entrada (1542)

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo entered San Diego Harbor on October 7, 1542 and claimed the local native territory for Spain. The Spanish did not return to settle in San Diego for 227 years.

The Mission Period (1769-1820)

The first Mission San Diego de Alcalá was established at the Presidio in 1769. Many ancestors of the Capitan Grande people were taken into the original San Diego Mission under duress.
The Mexican Period (1821-1848)

For a short time, the local Indian people were under Mexican rule. The Mexican influence continued to subjugate Indians. During this period most Indians lost their land and their livelihood.
The Early American Period
(1849-1875)

The indigenous people were pushed further inland, up into the mountains. When they established homes and cultivated the land, their land was taken by the new settlers.
A Safe Home in Capitan Grande

The people were harassed by American settlers wherever they settled and were pushed away from their rich resources into marginal lands. Capitan Leandro and Alcalde Patricio from Mission San Diego de Alcalá and Old Town asked Lt. Col. JB Magruder to give the people asylum in Capitan Grande. It was granted in 1853.

From then on, those Kumeyaay/‘Iipay/Diegueño people and their descendants were known as the ‘Capitan Grande group of Mission Indians.’ The descendents of these Capitan Tribal members also call themselves either ‘Iipay, Diegueño or Kumeyaay, depending upon family preference.
Three ladies demonstrate a mortar and pestle important to their kitchen work at Captain Grande in 1901. Photo courtesy of the San Diego Museum of Man.
The Mission Indian Federation and the Capitan Grande Removal

A new concern arose during this time as Capitan Indians prepared to move; the controversy centered around the Indians who supported the vision of the Mission Indian Federation. The Mission Indian Federation was promoting allotment of Indian land, meaning that it would be individually owned. The promise was that once the reservations were allotted, Indians would have access to more resources and rights. Several Indians objected to this as a serious threat to the sovereignty they had been promised by the US in treaties and in the Constitution. This conflict was not limited to Capitan; all over California Indian territory the people were at odds.

There was a serious disagreement with the Mission Indian Federation members and non-members in the San Diego county reservations. At a Campo fiesta in July 1927, two Federation Indians were killed, ‘Mr. Robertson’ and John Leo (Indian policeman) were seriously wounded.

In 1928, Ramon Ames reported that Bob Quitac (‘Judge of the Mission Indian Federation’) wanted compensation for the disturbance caused by reservoir work; as a result, work stops. Ames objected to money for Quitac, believing it goes to Federation officers. Ames reported that non-Federation Indians do not object to the reservoir.
By Executive Order: The Reservation Is Formed

In 1875 Capitan Grande was made a reservation by Executive Order of President Grant. A total of 9 sections of El Capitan settlement land were patented to the Capitan Grande Band by 1894. The Capitan Grande Reservation was shared by our Capitan group and the southeastern village of Los Conejos, three miles away from our village. Each had its own chief, church, and cemetery.

Capitan Grande, Cullamác

*E-quilsh-a mahk* means ‘behind the mountain’ and has also been spelled Cullamác by the Spanish. In 1775, Francisco El Capitan de Cullamác led a revolt of 15 villages and burned the original mission. The various names for the area are Cullamác, Capitan Grande, or El Capitan. Today, the 3,675 ft peak is also called El Cajon Mountain.
Leadership and History at Capitan

There is very little that remains from this time period. Some early names and dates are our best guesses.

1775       Francisco El Capitan de Cullamác is a leader in the Mission revolt against Mission San Diego de Acalá.

1853       Capitan Leandro and Alcalde Patricio move to the reservation.

(?) Ignatio Couro [exact date unknown] is the last to be called General.

1875       The Executive Order to formally establish the Reservation

1887(?)    Sebastian Cuero, Capitan of the village

1903(?)    Jose Paipo
            1908 First Fiesta at Capitan
            1910 ca. The City of San Diego first proposes the El Capitan reservoir.

1912-1913  Charles Rodriguez, Captain and judge

1914-1917  Jose Paipo, Captain
            1919 House Resolution (H.R.) 10495 Amendment to Act of Congress granting City of San Diego Capitan Grande for dam and reservoir. Provides for removal of Indians; guarantees extension of water and land rights.

1919       Charles Rodriguez, Captain and judge

1920s - 1930s Ramon Ames is known as Chief of Capitan Grande. In 1932, he continued as Chief of Barona.

1921 Real Estate Frenzy: San Diego citizens begin to petition the US government to buy their land for the Capitan Indians’ relocation.
1928 Drilling of exploratory holes for the dam cause complaints from some Capitan Grande Indians; Superintendent orders fencing to protect cattle from injury as they graze.
Chief Ramon Ames Urges Unity

Chief Ramon urges the people to pool their allotted money and keep their sovereignty by forming a new reservation at Barona. Ramon Ames and Bob Quitac are appointed as negotiators by the government for the move from Capitan and the selection of the new reservation.

The Splinter Group Goes It Alone

A small group of individuals, sometimes called the ‘Splinter Group,’ took their allotted money and bought homes independently, not joining the reservation. Now known as the Shahuuks [about 10 people], these individuals and their descendents are not enrolled members of Barona or any reservation.
Capitan Children are now Barona Elders

The last baby born before the move from Capitan Grande was Albert ‘Boxie’ Phoenix, July 19, 1932. Josephine ‘Sister’ Romero was about 4 (born 1928), Josephine Whaley was about 2 (born 1930), and Ernie Magginni was one year-old (born 1931). We can imagine some of these children in the arms of their mothers as the wagons came up the Old San Vicente Road and onto the new reservation from Old Barona Road.
Maxine Welch and Ernie ‘Bud’ Magginni at Capitan Grande Reservation, early 1932.
Photo courtesy of Barona Tribal Member Jacque Whaley.

Josephine ‘Sister’ Romero, 1946.
Photo courtesy of Barona Tribal Member Pat Carr.

Josephine Magginni and Maxine Welch at Capitan Grande Reservation, 1932.
Photo courtesy of Barona Tribal Member Jacque Whaley.
TIMELINE:
CAPITAN & BARONA SALES

1910 ca. The City of San Diego first proposes the El Capitan reservoir.

May 21, 1930 Department of Interior decrees that City of San Diego has ‘the right to condemn certain lands of the Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians for the purpose of flooding the same by the construction of a dam at El Capitan on the San Diego River.’

Dec 29, 1930 Indians of Capitan Reservation accept sum of $361,000 for the purchase of Capitan.

Mar 14, 1931 The City makes final payment to the Treasury of the US for $361,428

Jul 6, 1931 Barona Ranch sold under foreclosure to Security-First National Bank of Los Angeles; purchase for the Capitan Grande Indians is investigated.

Mar 12, 1932 Capitan Band renews petition for Barona Ranch request. New tribal roll is included.

Jul 1, 1932 Roll for Capitan is closed. Only those enrolled may receive the per capita payment for the move.

Fall 1932 Barona is finally purchased for $75,000

The Capitan band purchased 5,816 acres of land on the Barona Ranch, originally named La Cañada de San Vicente y Mesa del Padre Barona under the original Spanish land grant. It became known as the Barona Indian Reservation and the people of Capitan began resettling there late in 1932.
Barona Indian Reservation: Established in 1932

The Move 1932-34

Sister Romero was about 4 years old and remembers a wagon ride over the hills. Boxie Phoenix, remembers people talking later about coming around the El Monte Park road through San Vicente and up the mountain and then down Old Barona Road. Pat Curo remembers that his grandfather John told the family that they had to carry water quite a distance to their wagon to get the wood on the wheels to swell up in preparation for the trip.
Acquiring Barona Ranch
1932-1933

Our people were familiar with the Barona Ranch. Great grandparents of the tribal members had worked the ranch with Father Barona during the Mission days. Later, Capitan Grande members worked the ranch under Thomas Daley in the 1880s, James Wadham in 1900 and Jones in the 1920s.

Ames and Quitac put in the request to purchase Barona to the BIA. There was a great deal of interference from competing real estate agents who wanted the Capitan people to choose their parcels. The Capitan people wanted Barona. Many delays were spent in checking Indian signatures. During the depression, people were desperate for money with mortgages in default.

The total amount of $361,428 from San Diego for the sale of Capitan Grande was supposed to go to our village of Capitan whose property would go underwater. Suddenly, Los Conejos was also being moved although they were three miles away from the flooded area. Monies then had to be shared with Conejos. Each person received $2400.
Moving Our Cemetery

One of the most difficult parts of the move was removing our ancestors’ bodies from the cemetery at Capitan and bringing them to the new cemetery at Barona. Each year they are specially remembered at the Candle Lighting on All Souls’ Day.

Families on the Move: Roll Call

About 56 tribal members moved to Barona over a period of time from 1932-1934. The names on the Government roll include: Ames, Banegas, Bombadilla, Curo, Duarte, Espinoza, Guacheña, LaChappa, Leo, Magginni, Mesa, Prieta, Quitac, Rodriguez, and Welch
Barona Homes by Irving Gill

The Barona Mission Church was built first before the homes. The funds and labor came from the Tribal members alone. It was designed by noted architect Irving Gill. The church opened for services September 10, 1933. Services were held under the oak tree until it was dedicated August 15, 1934.

Twelve families moved into the Wadham and Jones ranch homes, bunkhouses, and barns while waiting for their homes. The government promised to build thirteen houses according to family size. Architect Irving Gill was commissioned to design the first Barona Homes. Catherine Welch’s house was built first. Records indicate that the homes were built on the Reservation from 1933 to 1937. Everything was included in the homes from furniture to dishware as part of the compensation.
The First Barona Children, Elders of Today

Eugene (Boy) Quitac was probably the first baby born at Barona on January 11, 1933. The elders with us today who were among the first ones born to the Barona Group during the time after the move (1932-34) include Virginia House (1933), Mary Parcell (1933), and Charlie Rodriguez (1934). Also among our living elders are those who were the Capitan children during the move, Sister Romero, Josephine Whaley, Ernie Magginni, and Boxie Phoenix.
Barona Tribal Councils 1932 to 2007

1932 - 1945 Chief Ramon Ames
[also Chief of Capitan 1920s-1932]

1946-47 Chairman Baptisto (Bob) Quitac

1948-1968 Chairwoman Catherine Banegas Welch Council:
Vice-Chairman Albert ‘Boxie’ Phoenix (1950), Richard Curo, Charlie Curo and Secretary Christine Banegas Maxcy.

1969-77 Chairman Edward (Joe) Welch
Council: Vice-Chairman Albert ‘Boxie’ Phoenix, Josephine ‘Sister’ Romero

1978-80 Chairwoman Josephine 'Sister' Curo Romero
Council: Vice-Chairman Albert ‘Boxie’ Phoenix, James ‘Danny’ Magginni, Clifford LaChappa, Robert Welch, Larry Banegas, Margaret McGinty

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Changes in the 75-year History of Tribal Council

As the Reservation has grown through the years, Barona Tribal Council structure has changed. The Tribal Council is elected by all voting Tribal members and is called the General Council. The title Capitan changed to Chief, and then changed to Chair. At first, the officers all served two years; then, four year terms were instituted. Later, the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair and Council were staggered, alternating so that someone with experience was always in office. At first the positions were unpaid. In recent years, the office of Chair was a paid position by the Tribe, and then, all of Council became paid positions.

Meetings of Council and the General Council

In the early years, the people met at the home of the Chief or the Chair. Tribal Office was first in the large Ranch House, the home of Chief Ramon Ames (later destroyed in a fire). Then, the Council met at the present tribal office which was named ‘the Clubhouse.’ Originally, before 1932 and prior to the move, Jim and Lenora Banegas lived in that small house while working on the Barona Ranch. Over the years, many other Barona people have lived in the house. For a short while, Southern Indian Health had offices there. Since the 1940s, tribal office moved from the Clubhouse, to the Church’s Clubhouse, to the Community Center and then back to the renovated Historic Clubhouse where it is today. The General Council meets at the Community Center. Ground-breaking for a new government building is slated for late 2007.
Barona History

1920s - 1940s *Ramon Ames Administration*

Born in 1877, Ames was the last to be called Chief. He was also on the Tribal police force. He passed away in 1957.

**Key Issues**

- A beloved leader, Ames is pivotal in the fight to keep the Tribe together and the move to Barona. He was part of the Committee and Speakers who fought Termination and the Mission Indian Federation.
- The 1933-1940 censuses showed 64 living at Barona; 100 acres cultivated and 600 dry farmed.
- In the early days, the Tribal office was in the home of the elected Chairperson. Chief Ames and his sister-in-law Catherine Banegas Welch (future Chair) helped raise her children, including Joe (future Chair) and Robbie Welch (future Vice-Chair). The Banegas family lived in the Ranch House with their Uncle Ramon.
Community meeting of Barona Indians, Ramon Ames presiding ca. 1938-40.
Building the Barona Road

The road is finished from Ramona to Lakeside. Abel Rodriguez lost the use of an arm in a dynamite accident around 1931 in Barona Road construction.
1946-1947 *Baptisto (Bob) Quitac* Administration

**Key Issues**

➢ According to the San Diego Union, March 3 1947, a new Barona Constitution is “described as a cooperative business plan to build community funds from sale of resources and to modernize the reservation. Barona was the first tribe in Southern California to institute a large conservation program for the natural resources on their land.”

➢ Bob Quitac was known for his skills in games. The Museum has a shinny game and a peon set in this exhibit.
Holding a copy of their newly ratified constitution, Bob Quitte, Barona Tribal Chairman, reviews the text with his council in 1947. Standing is Elemore Brown with Frank LaChappa (right).

(Photo courtesy of the San Diego Historical Society)
1947-1967 Catherine Banegas Welch Administration

Longest Chairmanship at Barona, 20 years. Tribal meetings went from the Old Clubhouse to the Church Clubhouse. Sister Romero calls this time period, ‘the Peaceful Years.’

Key Issues

➢ 1950s: Termination era imposed by federal government with PL280. Catherine Welch and Ramon Ames from Barona, with Tom Hyde, Steve Ponchetti, Max Mazzetti, Banning Taylor and other tribal leaders fought it. Referring to the Mission Indian Federation Boxie Phoenix said, “They wanted us to live like the white man; they wanted termination.”

➢ 1953 Electricity and the paved highway came to Barona. Sold rights for the highway for $1 in exchange for assistance from the Government.

➢ First Tribal income included selling hunting permits—went to maintaining wells and electricity.

➢ End of Barona Fiestas in the late 1960s.
Photo courtesy of Barona Tribal Member Teri Sloan.
1981-88 Edward (Joe) Welch Administration

Welch returned for a two more terms. Joe Welch came back to tribal service 2002-2006 as a Barona Councilman and in 2007 as a Gaming Commissioner.

Key Issues

- Traveled to the Seminole Reservation in Florida to evaluate high-stakes Bingo operation.
Roundup feast 1953.
Photo courtesy of Barona Tribal Member Jacque Whaley.
1977-80 Josephine 'Sister' Curo Romero Administration

Sister Romero has served the Tribe for about 29 years in key positions such as Chairwoman and Council. She continues her service on the Enrollment, Housing and Museum Committees.

Key Issues

➢ Bingo: Council was approached by the BIA and the idea is presented to the General Council (entire Tribe).
➢ Change occurs in Council structure: four year terms; grew from five to seven Council members.
➢ Chairwoman started first ‘Customs and Traditions Document’ as a constitution for the Tribe. Tabled at the final step.
➢ Grants were very important. First Tribal Office was built in the Multi-Purpose Room; also had the first Seniors Room there (now the Community Center).

Sister Romero testified to Granting agency. The controversy was that Barona’s grant was going to be turned down based on a different Tribe’s performance: “You have to see Barona as a separate government. You would not judge a grant to El Cajon based on what the city of La Mesa had done. Each reservation is like that.” Chairwoman Romero received the grant.
1981-88 Edward (Joe) Welch Administration

Welch returned for a two more terms. Joe Welch came back to tribal service 2002-2006 as a Barona Councilman and in 2007 as a Gaming Commissioner.

Key Issues

➢ Traveled to the Seminole Reservation in Florida to evaluate high-stakes Bingo operation.

The 1983 Barona Tribal Council (l-r): Albert ‘Boxie’ Phoenix, Danny Magginni, Chairman Joe Welch, Clifford LaChappa, and Daniel Curo.

Before Barona invested in their own bingo enterprise, Tribal members visited the Seminole Tribe in 1983 to research their successful gaming business.

Photo courtesy of Barona Tribal Members Carol and Revere Curo.
Boxie Phoenix, Jim Banegas, Sr., and Leonard Banegas, Sr. around 1960 at an Imperial County rodeo.
Photo courtesy of Barona Tribal Member Jacque Whaley.
Chuck Bahegas, Boxie Phoenix, and Benny Romero at a horse race during the roundup, ca. 1950s. Photo courtesy of Tonita Tribal Member Charles ‘Bever’ Cate.

Boxie Phoenix, Vice Chairman/Councilman: Record Service to Tribe for 40 years

Elder Albert “Boxie” Phoenix served for a record 40 years on Barona Tribal Council. With 36 consecutive years as Vice-Chairman and four more years as a member of Council, he has had the longest service of any Barona Tribal member. Boxie continues as a respected advisor for the Tribe and is the representative for the Tribal Council on the Southern California Tribal Chairman’s Association.
California may prove to be the nation's most innovative slot market.

Golden Promise

Clifford LaChappa, tribal chairman, Barona Band of Mission Indians
1989- 2004 Clifford LaChappa Administration

Clifford served for 16 consecutive years as Chairman during a very complex time as the multi-million dollar Casino Resort emerged.

1989-1992 Tribal Council

Key Issues

- 1991 Card-room and Off-Track Betting added to the gaming facility. And, another expansion in 1993 included pull-tab machines, the first in San Diego.
- In November 1991, the state seized 98 machines from Barona. A San Diego judge ruled that Indian casinos were under federal, not state, jurisdiction.
1994 Tribal Council
Key Issues:
➢ The Barona Big Top opened as the first themed Casino and first Las Vegas style buffet.
➢ Great strides made in infrastructure, educational and social needs.

Barona Tribal Councilman Larry Banegas, Chairman Clifford LaChappa, Councilwoman Josephine ‘Sister’ Romero, Josephine Whaley, Councilman Paul ‘Sunny’ Darby, Jr., and Councilman Danny Magginni cut the ribbon to open the Barona “Big Top” Casino.
1996 Tribal Council

Key Issues

➢ Ground-breaking for Founders’ Way honors the elders and ancestors.
➢ First Commissioners elected to the new Gaming Commission.
1998 Tribal Council

Key Issues

- 1998 Ground-breaking on the new resort including a championship golf course.
2000 Tribal Council

Key Issues

➢ 2000 Opening of the Barona Cultural Center & Museum, the first fully professionally operated Tribal Museum in San Diego County. Also opened was the Community Recreation Center with a gym, pool and tennis courts for tribal members.

➢ Prop 1a is approved by California Voters amending state constitution to give Indian reservations the right to open Las Vegas style slots and card games.

➢ Barona is the 7th largest casino in the country.

➢ 2001 Barona Creek Golf Club opens and receives top championship accolades by Golfweek and Golf Magazine.
YES on 5
Indian Self-Reliance
2002 Tribal Council

Key Issues

➢ 2003 Barona Valley Ranch Resort and Casino opens including 400-room hotel, wedding chapel, Golf Events Center, and golf course.

➢ 2003 The Cedar Fire devastates a third of Barona’s homes and burns a good portion of the reservation.

➢ 2004 Convention Center opens.
The History of Barona’s Gaming Commission

The general council adopted the Gaming Ordinance on October 13, 1993 and the Gaming Commission started in October 1996. The five-member Commission was appointed by Tribal Council to serve for a term of three years. The Commissioner must be at least 21 years of age, have no felonies, crimes of dishonesty and no outstanding arrest warrants; does not work at the Barona Casino; refrains from all forms of gambling at the Barona Casino; has a high school diploma, or equivalent; knowledge or experience in at least one of the following areas: gaming operations, gaming law, gaming control, law enforcement, accounting, or public administration; is willing to sign and be bound by a confidentiality agreement; is not an elected official of the Tribe; agrees to a complete background investigation; agrees to participate in random drug tests.

- First Commissioners: Edward ‘Joe’ Welch, Kathryn Clenney, Robert Wallace, Larry Banegas, Harold Hill

All Commissioners have been tribal members except for Kathy Clenney (Blackfoot Tribe) who also serves as legal counsel for Barona.

Compiled by Commissioner Beverly Means Oct. 6, 2006
Lisa Welch, age 3, with Bob Quintac. Barona Museum Collection.
Donald ‘Tiny’ LaChappa served as Vice-Chairman for 13 years before he passed away in 2005. In 2006, the Tribe donated $1,000,000 to East County’s Sharp-Grossmont Hospital in Vice-Chairman Tiny’s name for improvements to the CCU for future care of the citizens of East County.