



Title: The Kashaya Pomo Indians of Metini - The Roots of Our Culture/Stories of Essie Parrish

Author(s): Told by Vana Parrish Lawson and Richard Andriano

Vana Parrish Lawson (October 1948--March 2011) was a Kashaya Pomo elder and daughter of the late tribal spiritual leader Essie Parrish. Vana's upbringing prepared her as an educator of the Kashaya language and traditional practices, including the use of native plants. Skilled with her hands and clever with her words, Vana co-authored the book *Kashaya Pomo Indian Plants* and also excelled at bead work, flower arrangement, and many other crafts.

Richard Andriano met Vana while pursuing his interest in Sonoma County's Native Americans, and their friendship led to the collaborative writing of this manuscript. Vana and Richard have been generous friends of Fort Ross (Metini), helping us better see the world through Kashaya eyes. It was heartening seeing the warm exchange between Vana and visiting Russians.

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THE KASHAYA POMO INDIANS OF METINI

The Roots of our Culture / Stories of Essie Parrish

Told By Vana Parrish Lawson and Richard Andriano

Fort Ross State Historic Park, part of the California State Park system, was once land called Mettini by the Kashaya Pomo. The Kashaya Pomo Indians lived at the Fort Ross site and the surrounding area for 9,000 to 10,000 years. Here they built their villages and developed their culture and customs, respecting nature and its natural resources.

The Kashaya women used sharpened sticks to dig up roots and tubers as a food staple and thus were called "Digger Indians." In addition, they collected berries, acorns from the oak trees and gathered nuts from the Conifer, Pepperwood, Manzanita, and Buckeye trees. The women also did the winnowing of seeds from the surrounding fields. Land was often set aside by the tribe or families to ensure a bountiful harvest, and they rotated the gathering or collecting so as not to over harvest.

The men did the hunting for game, such as Deer and Elk, and set snares or traps for smaller game. They often built V-shaped fences for chasing prey into an enclosure where it could be killed for food and pelts. Weirs were made and set up in streams to capture fish in the local rivers and streams.

A boy became a man when he killed his first deer, usually at the age of 13 or 14. A girl became a woman when she first began her menstrual cycle. The household normally consisted of the conjugal couple, their children, aged relatives, and unmarried siblings, as well as any adopted tribal members. Tribes and families were identified by markings on their faces. Known rules on how to get along were a part of the culture and helped to solve problems in a family or decide communal living disagreements.

There were several trails throughout Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. One such trail went from the lands near Stewarts Point and Fort Ross to Duncans Mill. Here they would meet with other Pomo or Miwok tribes for the trading of goods such as chert, obsidian, abalone and clam shells, magnesite, baskets, food stuffs, bear and deer skins, arrowheads, spear points, salt, dried fish, and other commodities. Often marriage alliances were finalized at these meetings.

The coastal Pacific Ocean provided an abundance of seafood for the Kashaya Pomo Indians. Here they also collected and dried salt, not only for their own use but for barter with the inland tribes. Nature provided all that was required for sustenance and was so woven into their daily lives that they had a respect and spiritual reverence for their natural environment in their communal life and culture.

There was no written language, and, as a result, the Pomo developed excellent memories. Stories were told generation after generation with little or no exaggeration,

as found by several Pomo researchers who compared the facts by interviewing several of the older people in the early 1930's.

CHANGES

The Russian-American Company had explored the West coast of California for three main reasons: to search for a settlement to grow food for their settlements in Alaska, to harvest pelts for the profitable fur trade, and to establish trade relations with the Spanish. The Russian-American Company had previously established their harbor at Bodega Bay on January 8, 1804, but now they settled in the area today called Fort Ross.

The Kashaya Pomo Indians called the Russians "Under Sea People" because when the Russian ships arrived on the horizon, it appeared as though the ships came up from out of the sea. The Kashaya Pomo Indians were at first unsure of the Russians and observed them from the bushes and trees. When they arrived, in addition to offering gifts, the Russian Administrator, Ivan Kuskov, had a feast prepared and served to the Kashaya Pomo Indians. They did not partake, as they were afraid of being poisoned (poisoning was a typical Kashaya Pomo Indian way of disposing of an individual or group).

The Russian founder of Fort Ross, Ivan Kuskov, was finally able to win friendship with the local Kashaya Pomo Indians by giving them gifts in exchange for the use of their land by the Russian-American Company. Among the more notable gifts were the distinctive blue Russian beads, now visible on display in the Visitors Center at Fort

Ross. In earlier years, these blue beads could be found by archeologists and collectors in the area around Fort Ross.

Most of the agricultural pursuits that were developed by the Russians were accomplished by the Kashaya labor. The purpose of Lieutenant-Captain Leontii Hagemeister's visit in 1817 to Fort Ross was to establish a treaty with Kashaya Pomo Indians. This treaty was executed on September 22, 1817. The treaty thanked the Indians for donating the land to the company, with the hope that the Indians would never have reason to regret having Russians as neighbors. Several of the Kashaya Pomo Indian leaders in attendance thanked the Russians and noted that they now lived without fear from other tribes attacking them. The Russians, in addition to being good leaders and administrators, treated the Kashaya Pomo Indians humanely. The Kashaya Pomo Indians were paid for their work, and they received food, clothing, and housing at the Fort Ross site. They intermarried with the Russian, Alaskan, and Creole men.

Fort Ross was sold to John Sutter in 1841. At that time the land comprised over 17,000 acres which were originally Kashaya Pomo Indian territory. The area around Fort Ross continued in the years that followed to be an agricultural and lumbering center, shipping products to San Francisco. The Fort and surrounding lands were eventually bought by George Washington Call. In 1903 the Calls sold the Fort Ross compound site.

It eventually became a California State Park that has, since that time, acquired over 2,000 additional acres of land around the original site.

The Fort Ross Interpretive Association, now called the Fort Ross Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Fort Ross, strives to protect the Kashaya Pomo Indian cultural beliefs and traditions at Fort Ross. Vana Parrish Lawson, the author, served on the Board for five years and, along with the surrounding community, successfully thwarted the Park Service from reconstructing an underground Round House at the Fort. This Round House would have been open to the public, which is not in accordance with Round House traditions. The Kashaya Pomo in earlier days did not construct their Round Houses above ground, such as we see today, until the Russians showed them how to construct wooden buildings.

Currently, work on the Kashaya Pomo Indian Interpretive Trail Project, a cooperative effort of the Kashaya Pomo Indians, U. C. Berkley, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, will provide expanded knowledge to the public on the historical aspects of the Kashaya Pomo Indians and their former lands. These interpretive trails, "on line" sources, and video presentations are a part of the collaborative work of Ph.D. candidates at U. C. Berkley.

A PLACE TO LIVE

The Charlie Haupt Ranch was about 25 miles inland from Fort Ross. Charlie, a white rancher, had married a Kashaya woman called Molly who longed for her people and returned many times to her village at Fort Ross. Charlie wanted to keep his bride at home with him, so he invited her people to come and re-establish their village on his ranch, where they lived from 1859 to 1919. On top of a hill on the rancher's property, the village consisted of six dwellings and a Round House, where they lived in tribal fashion, maintaining their traditions and culture. In this very Round House at the Haupt Ranch, sitting near the entrance, the medicine men of the area would gather to demonstrate their prowess and spiritual superiority by mentally moving large rocks; the larger the rock, the more powerful the medicine man. When asked the question, Essie Parris would answer, "yes they did move the rocks."

The Stewarts Point Rancheria, consisting of 40 acres, was purchased by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1919 from a private land owner. It was four miles inland from Stewarts Point and the California coastal road, Highway One. Many from the tribe moved there, and it is still in the possession of and lived on by Kashaya Pomo Indians to this day. It has never been suitable for large agricultural enterprises and mainly serves only as a place to live and to hold tribal festivals and celebrations. The Bureau of Indian affairs did provide several apple trees for planting, but it provided no help in marketing the

apples, as the Rancheria was located inland at an isolated spot in the mountains of Northern California.

In 1919, the Round House center pole of the old ceremonial building at the Haupt Ranch was moved to the Stewarts Point Rancheria under the supervision of then Spiritual Leader, Annie Jarvis. This was because the pole represented Kashaya Pomo Indians continuum of the traditional ceremonial spirituality of the tribe. Upon the death of Annie Jarvis in 1943, Essie Parrish took over responsibilities as Spiritual Leader of the Kashaya Pomo Indian tribe at the Stewarts Point Rancheria. Essie was a Dreamer, a Seer, a Prophet, a Revelator, a Visionary, and a Healer who called herself "YOMTHA," as she became known by her tribe.

Essie is quoted by her daughter Vana Parrish Lawson (the author) as saying:

"These things we do, they speak of who we are, the families we're from, and about our relatives, too. We are not just one person; we are many. In just one there is the whole tribe and our ancestors too. White people call this 'history or tradition' or something like that. I heard it said in the white church that a man is known by his works. This is true; I was educated about this by the Spirit in my dreams, and it's true."

THE BOLO MARU

In 1870 the Bolo Maru, a mixture of Christian ideals and ancient Indian practices, came about at the Stewarts Point Rancheria. It covered every aspect of tribal life and, to a

great extent, continues to do so today. The Bolo Maru was a movement of American Indian "doctors," or medicine men, who received their power through dreams. These dreams empowered them and enabled them to acquire special knowledge and the ability to heal their tribal patients. Through dreams, they envisioned songs, dances, and procedures to help them guide the tribe. The Bolo Maru outlawed intermarriage, drinking of alcohol, and gambling. It was part of the "Ghost Dance" movement that was practiced by American Indian tribes of the West during the late 1800's.

The dreamers, or "doctors," gradually developed into a single leader or dreamer. Eventually, women began emerging in this position, as the men had become boasters and overpowering in their ways. Among the Kashaya Pomo Indian women who emerged, as we have noted earlier, were Annie Jarvis and the late Essie Parrish.

Essie, at the age of about six or seven years old, was returning home from the Stewarts Point School with several other girls and fell behind. She was burdened with apples in the folds of her skirt that they had picked to take home. As she walked down the trail by herself, she spied a man in the bushes wearing a cloak of feathers and a cone-shaped hat covered with all kinds of feathers. Frightened, little Essie ran as fast as her feet would take her and immediately upon arrival at her home fell sick. Her aunt called in the local medicine man, who cured little Essie. When questioned about the ordeal, she told her family that the man who had cured her was the same man she had seen

crouching in the underbrush along the trail. It was soon after this encounter with that medicine man that Essie had her first dream, and she continued to have many such dreams throughout the rest of her life. Whenever she had dreams, they consisted of her spiritual insights, dances, music, and flags. She would use standards with special symbols emblazoned on them inspired by her dreams in all her ceremonies.

Essie Parrish, because of her strong will and leadership skills, soon took over the tribal leadership when she replaced Annie Jarvis, the former Spiritual Leader. Now firmly established, she became the Bolo Maru Leader of the Kashaya Pomo Indian tribe at the Rancheria. Guided by dreams from her spiritual world. Special dances and costumes became a part of her tradition and that of the Kashaya Pomo Indians, as well as the life force of her tribe at the Stewarts Point Rancheria. The Round House where the festivities were held was about 45 feet across, with the old center pole from the Haupt Ranch Round House holding up the rafters that were attached to the siding. The floor was of packed dirt, with benches around the inside of the building. The entrance was a long hallway attached to the Round House, and there was also an escape door at the rear of the building.

Essie Parrish, in her role as Bolo Maru Leader, taught her people to maintain their sacred life and cultural traditions. But she also emphasized that they must go to school and integrate into the white world to survive. Each Bolo Maru Leader devised his or her

own rules, and Essie Parrish was no exception. She forbade her tribe, as had Annie Jarvis, from intermingling with other races of people for fear of losing their Indian blood line and of the chaos it might bring into their way of life. She also forbade the drinking of alcohol and gambling.

THE POWER OF FAITH

In September of 1991, the Tuscan Daily Citizen announced a larger auditorium might have to be found by the Arizona Medical School to accommodate the 20-minute film, "Pomo Shaman," as told by Essie Parrish, the 61 year old Shaman of the Southwest Pomo of California. "She puts her patients into a hypnotic trance and removes the ailment (germs) from the body. She does this with a supposed spiritual instrument that she possesses in her throat, and the pain is removed in the form of Quartz Crystals." The article continued on to say, "...such practices of supernatural or religious medicine are extremely important to Arizona's medical doctors."

In truth, the pain was not removed in the form of quartz crystals, but was extracted from the body into the mouth of Essie Parrish, hence the name, "sucking doctor." The pain or ill was regurgitated onto a spiritually constructed woven blanket for disposal and never shown to the patient for fear the sickness would return. In addition to her Bolo Maru leadership in the tribe, Essie taught in the local Kashaya Pomo Indian School where she emphasized Kashaya Pomo Indian culture, traditions, laws, and language,

teachings that her eldest daughters continue to this day at the Stewarts Point Rancheria School.

In 1956, she began assisting the prominent anthropologist, Dr. Robert Oswalt, from the University of California, Berkeley, in developing the Kashaya Pomo Indian written language and a dictionary for use in developing tribal myths. Essie Parrish was often sought out by others, including Berkeley professors who pressed her for information that she had not documented in earlier films or cultural teachings. These were the kind of people that needed Essie to further their educational goals and their studies of Native American Indian Culture to enhance their credentials. Essie Parrish cooperated with them to help ensure the preservation of the Kashaya Pomo Indian culture for future generations. She also assisted Dr. Oswalt in developing the Kashaya Pomo Indian alphabet, still a work in progress by others. Dr. Oswalt spent much time with Essie Parrish and her family at the Stewarts Point Rancheria, he was so well accepted that he was invited into the Round House to view tribal Dream Dances, Feather Dances, and the tribal speeches of Essie Parrish. He was the first linguist fluent in their language and authored several authoritative publications on the Kashaya Pomo Indians, such as his 1964 publication, "*Kashaya Texts*," that told stories of the tribe and was developed and interpreted into an English edition. She worked with Dr. Oswalt for many years; he ended his work and anthropological studies with her in 1964.

Essie Parrish also worked with the famed Professor S. A. Barrett, from the University of California, Berkeley who, along with his students, had written about Pomo Indian Basketry. He later documented the cultural traditions and spiritual aspects of Essie's life, making it possible for the Kashaya Pomo Indian tribe and her family to refer back to these documented films and tapes. Her desire was for her family and her tribe to never forget their roots and the importance of their Kashaya Pomo Indian heritage. This is inculcated into their daily lives today at the Stewarts Point Rancheria School, where students are taught the language, basket making, and other Kashaya Pomo Indian traditions.

VISITOR OF DIGNITY

In 1968, at the Stewarts Point Rancheria, Essie Parrish was notified by the Bureau of Indian Affairs that an important visitor was to arrive. That visitor was Senator Robert F. Kennedy. As his helicopter approached the landing area near the Stewarts Point Rancheria, he waived the usual security sweep of the area that normally would happen before he got off of a plane or helicopter. Senator Kennedy said to his security team, "I consider these my people."

Senator Kennedy was greeted by some 160 to 300 Indians and their neighbors. Among them were many school-age children from nearby county elementary schools, as well as tribal leaders from the Kashaya Pomo Indian and other Indian Rancherias. Senator

Kennedy was greeted by Sidney Parrish, the Kashaya Pomo Indian Tribal Chairman, and his wife, Essie Parrish, the "Spiritual Leader" of the tribe, along with other people from the community. He was then escorted with great dignity by Essie and Sidney to the Round House. Here he was entertained with traditional Kashaya Pomo Indian dances and a feast that included the traditional acorn mush for him to sample. Here Essie presented Senator Kennedy with her own handmade Pomo Indian basket, which she had previously refused to sell. She now understood why she had not sold it, as she unknowingly was awaiting Senator Kennedy's arrival. After his death, it is said that the family tracked the gift basket down and found it in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C.

Note: Senator Kennedy was on a fact-finding trip and was in charge of the Senate Committee on Indian Education. While visiting the Indian people, he was asked by the tribe to provide a new water system for the Kashaya Pomo Indians, which, though previously promised, had not been forthcoming. The Senator asked his aides to follow up on the request. Within the year, the tribe received a water system. To this day, however, the water supply is still not adequate for large irrigation projects, and the soil is sub-standard.

Today, Essie Parrish is remembered as an Indian doctor, historian, basket maker, and devoted mother. Her preservation of the Kashaya Pomo Indian culture and heritage live

on at the Stewarts Point Rancheria, and in the films and lectures she produced, as well as in the documented writings of several anthropologists and historians.

Essie Parrish's biography is listed in the publication, "*Notable American Women, 1607 to 1950.*" She also received a Film Award at the International Canes Film Festival for the best documentary, called "*CHISH KAHLE,*" ("The Beautiful Tree"). She not only performed, but narrated this film about acorn processing. Other films by her were about the Kashaya Pomo Dances and Shaman Healing, made for the University of California at Berkeley.

In 2007, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the two oldest structures at the Rancheria, the Round House and small Regalia Shed, as the eleventh most endangered historical site in our nation. Vandals and robbers have taken many of the sacred items as souvenirs, as well as the sacred dresses, vests, table cloths, and towels with Essie's designs on them which they have used to make copies for profit.

Essie Parrish, as Spiritual Leader, declared that upon her death the Round House was to be sealed and not preserved in any way. "It is to fall naturally, and no part of the wood should be removed until a new Spiritual Leader comes forth to the tribe." Essie entrusted her eldest Parrish daughter with the means to recognize such a person.

The Kashaya Pomo Indians were known as the premier basket makers along the Northern California coast, and Essie Parrish was one of the best in her tribe. She sold

her baskets to buyers from all walks of life. Her baskets have ended up in private collections of anthropologists. Many are in museums, such as the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology in Berkeley, California, and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C. The aunt of Sidney Parrish, Essie's husband, made the biggest basket known among the Pomo, which, according to family members, was sold to the Smithsonian Institute.

Essie had a Spiritual sister, Mabel McKay, who made the smallest basket in the world. Now located in the Smithsonian Institute, this tiny basket is the size of a pinhead. It has a design that is impossible for the regular viewer to see with the naked eye. When viewed with a magnifying glass, however, one will see a design which was woven under the guidance of the Spirit of basket making, in the tradition of the tribe.

The two women met in the late 1950's and were similar in their Spiritual beliefs and doctrines. Mabel became known as the best Pomo basket maker in the world. Both of the ladies demonstrated Pomo basket-making techniques at the local Sonoma County Fair each summer in Santa Rosa, California where the local newspaper, the "Press Democrat," would photograph them for publication. Both Essie and Mabel can be credited with the continuance of ancient rituals of the Kashaya Pomo Indians and of traditional basket making. They believed that spiritual guidance was given to the basket makers, and each basket made held spiritual powers from a spirit guide. Each basket

was made for a specific purpose, whether it was for cooking, for carrying a baby, for holding clothes, for a wedding gift, or created for another important use.

Essie Parrish lived her life as she was instructed through her dreams, spirit, and natural instincts. She raised sixteen children with the traditional help of her extended family members and her older children. She was busy in life with her Spirituality and imparting Kashaya Pomo Indian information that she possessed, resulting in her becoming a world-renowned American Indian, spiritual teacher, and healer. Essie, as a mother, was a strong influence within her own family, where she taught her children independence and pride in their Indian heritage.

Essie wore many hats and was involved at the local Santa Rosa level by giving testimony to the U.S. government, along with others, on behalf of Indians living in Sonoma County. She worked towards an agreement between the Santa Rosa Junior College District and Sonoma County with the Sonoma County Indians that would allow her and the other Indians to gain use of the land which she named Ya-Ka-Ama (our land), and she invited all Indians of Sonoma County to share in it, for it was "theirs again."

Her son-in-law, Richard Lawson, a Manchester/Point Arena Pomo, was a former board member of Ya-Ka-Ama Board of Directors. He was intensely involved with others in upgrading the facilities and improving educational offerings for the Native American

Indians. This included supporting their studies so they could take GED and Junior College courses, aiding them to qualify for technical schools in preparation for entering the job market.

On November 29, 1903, on a cool fall day, Essie was born Essie Nellie Fisk Pinola on the Haupt Ranch among the redwoods and oak trees which she came to love. There on the Haupt Ranch she lived with her people until 1920 when the Winama-Bahkhe-Yachma, which they called themselves at that time, moved to the 40-acre Stewarts Point Rancheria. There the previous land holder still owns part of the land bordering the Rancheria. They were then called the Kashaya Pomo by neighboring tribes, meaning "good gamblers." Not all from the villages at the Haupt Ranch relocated to the new Rancheria. Many moved into the Lake County area, into the valley areas, and some North into the Gualala area, which became part of the Kashaya Pomo Indian territory. Prior to her death, her husband, Sidney Hummingbird Parrish, passed over into the spirit world on July 6, 1979. She followed one year and three days later on July 9, 1980. Before Essie's death she was planning a trip to Russia to contact possible Kashaya Pomo descendants and to do some basket and artifact identification of items that had been taken over to Russia during the Russian-American Company occupation.

Essie Parrish always confided in author Vana Dean Parrish, her youngest daughter.

When they reached adolescence, Essie considered the girls in her family to be

"Princesses" and her sons to be "Warriors." Essie herself was considered a person of great wisdom, grace, and nobility in the tribe. She embodied a regal bearing, not only in her tribe but in the white world as well. She always carried herself in a regal manner and demonstrated strong leadership qualities and the possession of Spiritual powers. Her Indian name was Essie "Pinola" Fisk, which was a family name. The Fisk name came from the family of her grandfather, Charles Fisk, a white settler who owned the Fisk Mill, just above Salt Point. The name Pinola that she was known by came about in the next generation when John, her father, was granted the name by the elders of the family who had taken him in as a young boy at Salt Point, as part of a Pomo marrying custom.

Essie Parrish is buried next to her husband, Sidney, and buried nearby is her Spiritual Sister, Mabel McKay, who died a few years later. All three of these Kashaya Pomo Indian leaders were buried with great Tribal Honors and laid to rest in the most honored part of the cemetery.

Vana Parrish Lawson (the author) writes: "My two parents, both with barely an education, made sure all sixteen of us children had all they could provide, and gave us satisfaction and knowledge within the family, giving us no reason to look beyond these two parents or elsewhere for acceptance, entertainment, or happiness in our lives. My Mother entertained us by playing the violin, piano, accordion, organ, jamboree, and she

sang not only to us children, but in the Mormon Church where she was an acknowledged leader. My Dad was an Elder in the Church and an avid Bible reader, who kept up with tribal politics as our tribal headman. Our Kashaya traditions and heritage left by my mother and father and documented by anthropologists are now in use by other Pomo Indian tribes who lost their traditions, ensuring that the Pomo Indian heritage continues to live on for the newer generations as they look to regain their roots.”

In addition to the Parrish family, the Pinola, Lawson, and Ball families are carriers of their Pomo traditions and history. Essie Parrish’s image is painted along with 49 other Sonoma County luminaries, including Jack London, Luther Burbank, and Charles Shultz, on the southern wall of the Press Democrat building on Mendocino Avenue in Santa Rosa, California.

AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FROM VANA PARRISH LAWSON

After writing by myself, it was a very welcome relief to have Sir Richard Andriano Moore, with his knowledge of research and writing, to work with and assist me in writing the story of my mother, the greatest in our tribe, Essie Fisk Parrish, a woman who was the Spiritual Leader of my Kashaya tribe of Pomo Indians. He gave me a lot of ideas that, with our collaborative effort, enabled the completion of this piece. I felt Sir Richard’s family background and my own were not that different. He is a Knight and

has the hereditary title of Count; in my background I became a Princess by the declaration of my aristocratic and noble mother, Essie Parrish, who always conducted herself with dignity and was recognized for her regal manner.

This article grew out of Richard's interest in the local Native Americans of Sonoma County and his stepping out to locate and learn more of their culture. As a young child of five or six, Richard had imaginary friends like many children do. These imaginary friends seemed real to him because of the local Sonoma County Indians that had lived on his family's ranch along a creek. There the soil was still blackened by their fires, and they had once roamed as free as the grazing deer. Along this tributary of the Petaluma River in Sonoma County, Richard found obsidian arrow heads of all shapes and sizes. He also found little flat rounded and polished beads about 3/8 of an inch in diameter, made from clam shells. These beads were used as decorations for baskets and for trade with the inland tribes. They were also considered as objects of wealth among the Pomo Indians, and were often worn in many strands around the necks of both men and women of the tribe. Richard was fascinated by the life of these Indians because of the closeness they had with their natural surroundings, which he came to understand was an integral part of their culture and daily life.

Richard recalls memories of the drive up Highway One from Petaluma to Stewart's Point as a small child. On the old gravel road, he remembers the honking of horns as

the vehicles rounded sharp curves and hairpin turns on their way to the old Richardson campground at Stewarts Point, some twenty miles north of the former Russian settlement at Fort Ross.

Each summer, his grandfather would go on ahead and set up a campsite near the old Stewarts Point Schoolhouse. Everyone seemed to have respect for this old icon of learning on the coast with its deteriorating white paint and red painted window trims. Its little front porch was barely large enough for more than a few of the students to stand on while waiting for the teacher to open the door or while taking shelter from the weather. The school served grades one through eight, including both local white children and Kashaya Pomo Indian youths from the reservation about four miles inland. The Indian children were of the Kashaya Pomo Indian tribe whose ancestors had lived at Fort Ross and at the Haupt Ranch before relocating to the Stewarts Point Reservation. Among the children who attended the school was Essie Fisk Pinola Parrish, as noted earlier.

At the Stewarts Point campground, various family members of Richard's grandfather, Charles D. Cook (Koch-Andriano), would arrive during the summer months to fish, hike along the coast, laugh, play, and visit each other. In those days there was an abundance of abalone and fish to be taken and prepared for the evening meals. Mussels were always a favorite delicacy to be enjoyed around the evening fire, as the ocean

roared below. The wind would sing its swaying song through the trees, signaling its power throughout the night.

Highway One snaked its way along the coast up through the old settlement of Fort Ross which in those days housed a small store and a gasoline filling site inside of the West gate. One day Richard's grandfather took him to the bluff above Fort Ross Cove and told him that, in days long past, the area was the home of many sea otters, but, due to over harvesting by the Russians, there were few, if any, still to be found.

HOW RICHARD AND VANA MET

Recently, when Richard was doing research on his family history, he veered and came across a book titled, "*Kashaya Pomo Indian Plants*," written by Jennie Goodrich, Claudia Lawson, and Vana Parrish Lawson. Richard had been introduced as a child to a few local native plants such as "Indian Lettuce" and "Soap Plant" by his mother, motivating him to purchase the book, only to later learn that one of the authors, Vana Parrish Lawson, lived in Santa Rosa, CA. He contacted her and was very much surprised to find that she was the daughter of the aforementioned Essie Parrish, world-renowned Kashaya Pomo Indian "sucking doctor" and the last Spiritual Leader at the Stewarts Point Reservation. Richard and Vana struck up a friendship based on their mutual interest in the Kashaya Pomo Indians, their heritage, and her upbringing and

interactions with her famous mother. Soon it developed into the collaborative writing of this story.

A TRIBUTE TO VANA PARRISH LAWSON BY RICHARD ANDRIANO

Vana Parrish Lawson was a major contributor of this work, along with her brother, Otis Parrish. She is very proud of her Kashaya Pomo Indian heritage and shared stories of her childhood on the Rancheria and her interactions with her mother, Essie Parrish. She described in one story accompanying her mother to the river where they washed clothes while her older sisters stayed home to clean the house and prepare the evening meal. This story and others and my interest in Native American Culture gave me the impetus to join and collaborate with Vana Parrish Lawson in our writing of the story of her mother and her people. Vana was a highly respected elder of her Band of Pomo Indians. She displayed many of the characteristics of her mother, Essie Parrish, cherishing and retraining their Pomo heritage and culture, yet understanding the importance of being in the white man's world.

At this writing Vana Parrish Lawson co-author, has passed into the Spirit World, yet she lives among those with whom she touched with her abiding love for all of humanity, its creatures, and our natural environment. She was a well known designer and maker of Bead Necklaces, who stated that "those who purchase my necklaces are wearing the spirit that was given to me to make these necklaces".

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