



From the Office of Certified Genealogist & Researcher

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The Lineage of John Carlos Lassos

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Introduction

At the request of Chairman Andrew Salas, of the Kizh Nation, Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians and in response to his claims John C. Lassos is not of Gabrieleño Indian descent, I agreed to conduct a genealogical investigation of his lineage. The ***result of this investigation demonstrates Lassos is not of California Indian descent.*** This report provides the evidence and analysis which led to that conclusion.

There is no doubt Lassos has presented himself as a Gabrieleño which is clear from his correspondence with the former Bureau of Acknowledgment and Research [now the Office of Federal Acknowledgment] regarding his group’s intention to petition the federal government to become recognized as a Gabrieleño Indian legitimate tribe.¹ Considering the facts his true lineage, he and his family were likely one of those families misled by the paperwork generated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] in relation to the subsequent enrollments under the 1928 California Indian Judgment Act [CIJA].² In light of CIJA paperwork filed by his paternal great aunt, Modesta (nee: Valenzuela) Morales, and the interview conducted with his uncle Albert Lassos, published in *O, My Ancestor, Recognition and Renewal for the Gabrielino Tongva People of the Los Angeles Area*, it is apparent his entire family was misled for years.³ These cases will be discussed within the generation each belongs, i.e. Albert Lassos—Generation 3, Modesta (nee: Valenzuela) Morales—Generation 4.

At the writing of this report, it is unknown if Lassos knowingly deceived agencies and individuals or if he was simply too naïve and/or negligent in her responsibility to verify his

¹ 1) Signature page, The Gabrielino/Tongva Indians of California Tribal Council, dated March 23, 1997; 2) Letter, to John C. Lassos, from BAR, dated 14 Apr 1997; 3) Letter, to BAR, from John C. Lassos, dated August 8, 1997; and 4) Letter, to John Lassos, from BAR, dated 23 Dec 1997. Photocopies provided by Chairman Andrew Salas.

² One of Lassos’s collateral relatives, namely, Isabel (nee: Valenzuela) Perez, was approved for the 1950 Revised Roll of California Indians, as a 4/4 Gabrieleno Indian. Relations who applied to be on the roll, who were not directly descended from a previously enrolled ancestor, were allowed to piggyback on the status of collateral relatives already approved for either the 1933, or 1950, roll. These approvals were based upon the BIA’s own records without any action to investigate whether or not these claims were initially correct.

³ Jurmain, Claudia & McCawley, William, *O, My Ancestor*, “A Conversation with Al Lassos, Dolores Lassos (wife of Al Lassos), and Anthony Morales (cousin of Al Lassos)” (Berkeley: Heyday, 2009), pp. 65-73. Photocopy not provided. No photocopy provided.

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None of the California mission records for these children refer to them or their parents as Indian. Furthermore, the baptism record for Maria de los Dolores Lugo confirms both parents were from *Sinaloa*, Mexico.

In conclusion for the Lugo lineage, the evidence is clear – while it is likely these persons were of a Spanish heritage, there is no California Indian heritage whatsoever associated with these lineages.

Conclusion

Let there be no doubt, Lassos' ancestors were ***not*** Gabrieleño or even California Indian. And, there is no indication any were Mexican Indians. No doubt the flawed CIJA process was, at least, in part to blame for misleading his family about these ancestors for approving claims that were untrue. But, they were not alone. Many other California-born Spanish descendants applied for and were erroneously approved for inclusion on the 1933 California Indian Judgment rolls even though they were not California Indian. The proof requirements just did not demand reliable evidence—only the word of two affiants, who may or may not have been reliable witnesses. But, now, in light of better genealogical methods and evidence accessibility, it is possible to shed proper light on these claims and finally set the record straight.