The Sugar Bear Story
A Barbareño Chumash Tale

Story by Mary J. Yee
Illustrations by Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto
The Sugar Bear Story
Inspiring a passion for the natural world.

Published in Cooperation with the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
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Story by Mary J. Yee
Illustrations by Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto

With contributions by Marianne Mithun, Ph.D. and John R. Johnson, Ph.D.
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Acknowledgements

This little book would not have been possible without the assistance of several individuals. Dr. Marianne Mithun, a specialist in American Indian languages at the University of California, Santa Barbara, checked over the linguistic accuracy of my interpretation of my mother’s Barbareño Chumash text and contributed the vocabulary list and pronunciation guide. My friend Dr. John R. Johnson, Curator of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, facilitated the process of bringing forth this book. Marie Murphy, Art Director at the Museum of Natural History, and Mike Carpenter assisted in putting my original drawings and design ideas onto the printed page. Jennifer Redmond of Sunbelt Publications ably guided us in making this book a reality, and Leah Cooper of Armadillo Creative added the finishing touches to our original design. Jennifer and Leah patiently worked with us to create an updated map and legend that accurately reflects our current understanding of the original linguistic relationships among the Chumash peoples and their neighbors. This publication was made possible in part through a grant received from the John and Beverly Stauffer Foundation. I would like to express my gratitude to all of the above for their contributions.

Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto
Preface

When I was little, lying in the dark, I listened to the nightly bedtime stories told by my mother. Now that I am past my mother’s age, I feel that the stories were for her as much as they were for me. They kept the memories of her Chumash childhood alive, as they filled mine.

The story of the **Sugar Bear** was not one that she told me, but I found it in her journals where she recorded her language and stories while she worked with the anthropologist and linguist John P. Harrington in the 1950s. This story has become near and dear to my heart because my mother loved bears and so do I.

Many Chumash stories carry the message of how you should behave in life. The moral of the **Sugar Bear Story** is how you should treat your guests.

*Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto*

September 10, 2003
Distribution of Linguistic Groups

**CHUMASH**
- O Obispeño
- CU Cuyama
- P Purisimeño
- I Íneseño
- B Barbareño
- V Ventureño
- C Cruzeño

**UTO-AZTECAN**
- Kawaiisu
- Kitanemuk
- Tataviam
- Serrano
- Gabrielino
- Luiseno
- Juaneño

**SALINAN**
- YOKUTS

Base map from *The Material Culture of the Chumash Interaction Sphere* (5 vols.), by Travis Hudson and Thomas Blackburn, Ballena Press, 1982-1987, Menlo Park, CA.
Chumash History

The homeland occupied by Chumash peoples was first settled some 13,000 years ago, according to archaeological evidence. Over time, the population increased and the people continued to adapt their way of life to the local environment. At the time of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo’s voyage in 1542, about 20,000 people lived throughout the territory where Chumash languages were spoken. Between 1772 and 1804, five missions were founded to convert the Chumash populations. The languages spoken in different parts of the Chumash region are now known by names taken from these missions: Obispeño, Purisimeño, Ineseño, Barbareño, and Ventureño.

By the end of the 62-year Mission Period, introduced European diseases had reduced the Chumash populations to a little more than 2,000. Despite these losses, Chumash communities persisted in the neighborhood of the former missions. Chumash Indians farmed their own lands or worked on ranches to support themselves. Some families, like the Ygnacio family into which Mary J. Yee was born, continued to speak their native language and preserve the stories handed down through the generations. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chumash population has increased and more than 5,000 descendants live today in their former homeland.
“Chumash” is the name of the American Indians who lived in about 150 towns and villages along the Central California coast and neighboring islands, mountains, and valleys. There were several different Chumash languages. The Barbareño language was once spoken along the Santa Barbara mainland coast between the present town of Carpinteria and Refugio State Beach. Chumash Indians lived off of the bounty of the sea and land, fishing, hunting, and gathering wild seeds and acorns. They are known for their skilled basket weaving, sea-going plank canoe or tomol, shell bead money, and their colorful rock paintings. Respect for nature and care of the land has always been part of Chumash life and religion. Storytelling is the way that Chumash Indians have passed on their culture and history to their children, as this little book demonstrates.
S-wil-waš hiʔ-l ayʔi
There was someone
hiʔ-l wil-waš hi s-qaʔ hiʔ-l xus

who had a bear as a pet.
S-qili-niwal’ik hi s-wala-kumihas.

He used to come running all the time in a bad mood.
hi ho's-2ap
to his house
and he used to want to bite people.

Aieeee!

Grrrr!

kʔe s-qili-sili-ʔuw-š
They used to quickly give him sugar
hi mal'i s-wala-kumi

as soon as he arrived
ču s-am-su-čʰo-l-us hi s-ʔantik.

to make him happy.
Ču ka k-iy-qiliʔip
And so we used to say
hi mal?i sʰ-aʔ-kumi  hoʔ-l ʔap,
when someone is coming to the house,
Grrrr! ay'i hi?-l xu'wil, one who is angry,
“Su-ti-lek’en-us hi ho’ s-mow!”

“Quickly set his sugar down in front of him!”

Ummm!
Born in 1897 at her grandmother’s adobe home near Santa Barbara, Mary J. Yee was one of the few children of her generation to be brought up speaking a Chumash language. Being brought up in her grandmother’s household until the age of twelve, she heard and committed to memory many old Chumash stories spoken in her native tongue. Many years later she was to write down these stories while working with the noted anthropologist John P. Harrington. This little book, illustrated by Mary Yee’s daughter Ernestine, is one of those stories.

Mary J. Yee (1897-1965)
Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto

A lifelong resident of Santa Barbara, Ernestine grew up listening to the Barbareño Chumash language being spoken by her mother and great-uncle. Throughout the day and as bedtime stories, she heard many Chumash tales recited in English by her mother. While making her living as a registered nurse, Ernestine finds the time to keep her culture and history alive through presenting Chumash public programs and collaborating with the Department of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Ernestine illustrated her mother’s Sugar Bear story with its bilingual translation as an example of how life’s lessons are transmitted to children in traditional Chumash society.
### Vocabulary List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xus</td>
<td>bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qo’</td>
<td>pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-qo’</td>
<td>his pet, her pet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʔap</td>
<td>house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-ʔap</td>
<td>his house, her house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mow</td>
<td>sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-mow</td>
<td>his sugar, her sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ʔantik</td>
<td>heart, spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-ʔantik</td>
<td>his heart or spirit, her heart or spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-ʔuw-š</td>
<td>he bites, she bites, it bites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-sili-ʔuw-š</td>
<td>he/she/it likes to bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-qili-ʔuw-š</td>
<td>he/she/it used to bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-qili-sili-ʔuw-š</td>
<td>he/she/it used to like to bite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-yik-us</td>
<td>he gives it to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-api-yik-us</td>
<td>he quickly gives it to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-qili-yik-us</td>
<td>he used to give it to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-qili-api-yik-us</td>
<td>he used to quickly give it to him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-ʔip</td>
<td>I say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-qili-ʔip</td>
<td>I used to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-iy-ʔip</td>
<td>we say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-iy-qili-ʔip</td>
<td>we used to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-ʔip-us</td>
<td>I say to him or her, I tell him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-iy-ʔip-us</td>
<td>we tell him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-iy-qili-ʔip-us</td>
<td>we used to tell him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k-iy-qili-sili-ʔip-us</td>
<td>we used to want to tell him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-am-ʔip</td>
<td>someone says, people say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-am-qili-ʔip</td>
<td>someone used to say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-am-qili-ʔip-us</td>
<td>someone used to tell him or her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s-am-qili-sili-ʔip-us</td>
<td>someone used to want to tell him or her</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vowels
The letters used to write Barbareño have about the same values as in Spanish.

- a . . . . . . as in English father
- e . . . . . . as in English weigh
- i . . . . . . as in English pizza
- o . . . . . . as in English smoke
- u . . . . . . as in English super

They can be heard in words in the Sugar Bear Story.

- ap . . . . house
  - sounds about like the beginning of English operation
- k'e . . . . so
  - rhymes with English okay
- hi . . . . the
  - sounds like English he
- mow . . . . sugar
  - sounds like the English verb mow, as in mow the lawn.
- xus . . . . bear
  - rhymes with English juice

Consonants
Some of the consonants sound just like they do in English

- h . . . . . . as in English hat
- l . . . . . . as in English let
- m . . . . . . as in English met
- n . . . . . . as in English get
- s . . . . . . as in English get
- w . . . . . . as in English wet
- y . . . . . . as in English yet

The sounds below are pronounced almost as in English, but without a puff of air.

- p . . . . . . as in English spin
- t . . . . . . as in English stick
- k . . . . . . as in English skip

The sound spelled c is pronounced like ts, and that spelled q is pronounced almost like k, but further back in the mouth.

When these sounds are pronounced with an extra puff of air, as in English, the puff is shown with an additional h.

- pʰ . . . . . as in English pin
- tʰ . . . . . as in English tick
- kʰ . . . . . as in English key

The sound written x is something like h with more friction, or like the last sound in Bach.

There are also some special letters.

- č . . . . . . like English ch in chip
- š . . . . . . like English sh in ship

Finally, there are some sounds in Barbareño Chumash that are not exactly like any English sounds. These are the glottal stop ʔ and glottalized consonants like pʔ, tʔ, cʔ, č, kʔ, qʔ, and lʔ, mʔ, nʔ, wʔ, and yʔ. The glottal stop is like the sound in the exclamation uh-oh, meaning woops, or in some pronunciations of bottle. The other glottalized consonants are pronounced with a similar constriction in the throat. Something close to the sounds might be produced by pronouncing certain phrases very quickly, with special force on the second word: up out at all, pack up.
The language of this story, Barbareño Chumash, belongs to the Chumash language family. A language family is a group of languages that have all developed from the same parent language. The known languages of the Chumash family are Obispeño, Purisimeño, Ineseño, Barbareño, Ventureño, and Cruzeño (also called Island Chumash). Since these six languages all had their origins in the same parent language, they share certain similarities, much like English and German or Spanish and French. They are, however, separate languages, which means that they are mutually unintelligible. A Barbareño speaker, for example, could not understand a Ventureño speaker without learning Ventureño.

Most of the Chumash languages have several dialects. Speakers of different dialects of a language can understand each other, but their speech is not exactly the same. Different dialects of English are spoken in Santa Barbara and New Orleans, for example. Barbareño Chumash also had several dialects. Speakers from the Dos Pueblos area could easily converse with speakers from Syuxtun, near the present Santa Barbara wharf area, but each group would notice slight differences in the speech of the others, and perhaps be able to identify them right away just on that basis. The Ventureño language had a number of dialects as well: people from the communities around present Mugu, Malibu, Shisholop, Matilija, and the area around Ojai, Santa Paula, Sespe, and Castac, each had slightly different forms of speech. Cruzeño, the language spoken on the Channel Islands, also had several dialects. People from Santa Cruz Island could easily understand people from Santa Rosa Island, but they would know where they came from as soon as they heard them speak.

The Chumash languages show no demonstrable genetic relationship to the languages of their neighbors or any of those beyond. Their neighbors to the east spoke languages of the Uto-Aztecan family: Gabrielino, Tataviam, Kitanemuk, and Kawaiisu. Because Chumash-speaking peoples did talk to their neighbors, they borrowed certain words, but the languages of the Chumash, Salinan, Yokuts, and Uto-Aztecan families all developed from different ancestral languages.

The common origin of the Chumash languages can be seen in many shared words and grammatical structures, features they all inherited from their common parent. Barbareño and Ineseño are so close that they are nearly dialects. Their closest neighbors, Purisimeño and Ventureño, are also quite similar. Obispeño, at the far north, and Cruzeño out on the islands, show the greatest differences. In this story, for example, we saw the Barbareño word xus bear. Words in the other Chumash languages are quite similar. We saw the word kiyqílí'íp we used to say, composed of kiy- we, -qílí- used to, and 'íp say. The verb root say is nearly the same in the other languages. We also saw the word s'ap his house, composed of s- his, her, or its and 'ap house. The noun root 'ap house is the same in Ineseño, Barbareño, and Ventureño, but different in the others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Bear</th>
<th>Say</th>
<th>House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obispeño</td>
<td>tuquisi</td>
<td>'ipi</td>
<td>qhnipu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purisimeño</td>
<td>axus</td>
<td>'ip</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ineseño</td>
<td>xus</td>
<td>'ip</td>
<td>'ap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbareño</td>
<td>xus</td>
<td>'ip</td>
<td>'ap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventureño</td>
<td>xus</td>
<td>'ip</td>
<td>'ap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruzeño</td>
<td>xu'us</td>
<td>'i</td>
<td>'awa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

— Dr. Marianne Mithun
Sunbelt Publications

Incorporated in 1988 with roots in publishing since 1973, Sunbelt produces and distributes publications about “Adventures in Natural History and Cultural Heritage of the Californias.” These include natural science and outdoor guidebooks, regional histories and reference books, multi-language pictorials, and stories that celebrate the land and its people.

Sunbelt books help to discover and conserve the natural and historical heritage of unique regions on the frontiers of adventure and learning. Our books guide readers into distinctive communities and special places, both natural and man-made.

“In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, we will understand only what we are taught.”

— Bouba Dioum, Senegalese conservationist

Suggested Reading List

Anza-Borrego A To Z: People, Places, and Things.......................D. Lindsay
Autobiography of Delfina Cuero (Ballena Press).........................F. Shipek
Cave Paintings of Baja California, Rev. Ed.................................H. Crosby
Chumash and Their Predecessors: An Annotated Bibliography........M. Holmes & J. R. Johnson
Chumash Indian Games.....................................................T. Hudson & J. Timbrook
Chumash People: Materials for Teachers and Students.............Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History
December’s Child: A Book of Chumash Oral Narratives..............T. Blackburn
Forgotten Artist (ABDNHA)..................................................M. Knaak
Grass Games and Moon Races (Heyday Books).........................J. Gendar
Indians of the Oaks (San Diego Museum of Man)......................M. Lee
My Ancestors’ Village.........................................................R. Labastida
Painted Rocks (San Dieguito River Park Assoc.).........................R. Alter
Native Ways: California Indian Stories (Heyday Books).............M. Margolin
Way We Lived: California Indian Stories (Heyday Books)...........M. Margolin

www.sunbeltbooks.com
The Sugar Bear Story

This tale, passed down by the illustrator’s mother, tells the story of a person who had a bad-tempered pet bear and how they used to feed him sugar to sweeten him up. Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto illustrated her mother’s Sugar Bear Story as an example of how life’s lessons are transmitted to children in traditional Chumash society. The book, with text in the original Barbareño Chumash and English on each page, also includes a basic glossary of the words used, and a map that shows where the Chumash lived.

About the Illustrator

Ernestine Ygnacio-De Soto is a life-long resident of Santa Barbara. She grew up hearing the Barbareño Chumash language spoken by her mother, Mary J. Yee, who also told her many Chumash tales in English. A registered nurse, Ernestine keeps her culture and history alive by presenting Chumash public programs and collaborating on projects like this book with the Department of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.