

Swaxil Lineage 1: Descendants of Maria Rosa Ortega

“Eleven days before Christmas in 1783, Maria Rosa, an eleven-year-old orphaned girl from Swaxil, became the first person from the Channel Islands to be baptized and only the twenty-seventh Chumash Indian to arrive at Mission San Buenaventura. Upon reaching puberty, Maria Rosa married Miguel Bartolome Ortega, a servant of the mission, who came from aljujuca, Mexico (Edberg 1982). This couple had eight children born between 1788 and 1800 at San Buenaventura and Los Angeles, but only three survived childhood (Figure 10.12). Ortega was given a land concession at Rancho Las Virgenes in the Santa Monica Mountains where his family settled. Maria Rosa and Miguel Ortega served as godparents for Chumash Indians from native towns in the vicinity of their rancho who were baptized at Mission San Fernando. Maria Rosa died in 1805 and was buried at Mission San Fernando. Ortega then remarried a Chumash woman from Humaliwo named Anna Antonio Guataljiulelgeni (Edberg 1982).

“Three of Maria Rosa Ortega’s children eventually settled in Santa Barbara. José Antonio Ortega, her first born, served as a soldier at the Santa Barbara Presidio. His sister Maria toribia Ortega married Carlos Lorenzana, an Indian from a Mexico City orphanage who had been brought as a boy in 1799 as part of an early immigration program (Hernandez). The younger daughter of Maria Rosa Ortega was Maria Agueda Ortega. She married Juli’an Lara, who worked as a servant at Mission La Purisima. All three of Maria Ortega’s adult children died comparatively young: Maria Toribia died in 1830, Jose Antonio in 1832, and Maria Agueda in the summer of 1844 during a major smallpox epidemic that took many Indian lives at La Purisima.

“The only lineages of Maria Rosa Ortega’s descendants who have been traced to the present day come from José Antonio Ortega. He married Segundo Cordero, whose father was a presidio soldier at Santa Barbara. It is interesting to note that Segundo Cordero’s brother, the grantee of Rancho las Cruces, also had a half-Chumash spouse, Maria Antonia Jiménez (Northrop 1984:52-55; Olivera 1986). The fate of their offspring is unknown, except for two daughters, Manuela de la Resurrección and Josefa, who married into Spanish California families.

“Manuela de la Resurrección Ortega Manuela married José Arellanes, and Josepha Ortega married Raphael Leiva. Fernando Librado mentioned these families in his recollections narrated to J. P. Harrington and mentioned that they were of Santa Cruz Island descent (Hudson 1979:116). Luis Arellanes, son of Manuela Ortega and José Arellanes, left a manuscript account of early non-Indian settlers and old adobe residences in San Buenaventura in the 1850s and 1860s (Arellanes 1982). He has many descendants living in Ventura County today. Descendants have also been traced to his first cousin, Rafaela Leiva, who married into the Cordero family (Olivera 1986).”