Finding Aid to The Lost Woman of San Nicolas Island Collected Manuscripts MS.770

Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson
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Title: The Lost Woman of San Nicolas Island Collected Manuscripts
Identifier/Call Number: MS.770
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library
Language of Material: English
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Date: 1937
Abstract: This file contains a letter from Arthur Woodward to Southwest Museum director Frederick Webb Hodge and copies of typed manuscripts collected by Woodward regarding the "Lost Woman" of San Nicolas Island. The manuscripts include a transcript of interviews with George Nidever and Charles Brown circa 1882, Nidever's account as recorded by E. F. Murray in 1878, and an undated manuscript by E. M. Sheridan.
creator: Hodge, Frederick Webb, 1864-1956
creator: Murray, E. F.
creator: Sheridan, Edwin M., 1854-
creator: Woodward, Arthur, 1898-1986
Scope and Contents
This file contains a letter from Arthur Woodward to Southwest Museum director Frederick Webb Hodge and copies of typed manuscripts collected by Woodward regarding the "Lost Woman" of San Nicolas Island. The manuscripts include a transcript of interviews with George Nidever and Charles Brown circa 1882, Nidever's account as recorded by E. F. Murray in 1878, and an undated manuscript by E. M. Sheridan.
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Processing history
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Access
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Biographical note
Juana Maria (died October 18, 1853), better known to history as the Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island (her Indian name is unknown), was a Native American woman who was the last surviving member of her tribe, the Nicoleño. She lived alone on San Nicolas Island from 1835 until her discovery in 1853.
In the fall of 1853, Carl Dittman discovered human footprints on the beach and pieces of seal blubber which had been left out to dry. Further investigation led to the discovery of Juana Maria, who was living on the island in a crude hut partially constructed of whale bones. Juana Maria was taken to the Santa Barbara Mission, but was unable to communicate with anyone. The local Chumash Indians could not understand her, so the mission sent for a group of Tongva or Gabrieleño who had formerly lived on Santa Catalina Island, but they were unsuccessful as well. Four words and two songs recorded from Juana Maria suggest she spoke one of the Uto-Aztecan languages native to Southern California, but it is not clear to which branch it is related.
Juana Maria was reportedly fascinated and ecstatic upon arrival, marveling at the sight of horses, along with European clothing and food. Just seven weeks after arriving on the mainland, Juana Maria died. Modern analysis suggests she contracted dysentery.
Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juana_Maria
Subjects and Indexing Terms
Brown, Charles
Juana Marie, d. 1853
Nidever, George, 1802-1883
Channel Islands (Calif.)
Correspondence
Nicoleño Indians
San Nicolas Island (Calif.) -- History
Transcripts
Typescripts