

**Key Findings** from *Ruffeys Rancheria: A History of Unoccupied Federal Fee Land at Etna, California, 1907-1960* by Stephen Dow Beckham, Ph.D.

- There never was a government to government relationship between the United States and any person or entity identifying as Ruffeys Rancheria.
- Ruffeys Rancheria was simply a parcel of land purchased for two Karuk families - that of 'Old Man' Frank Ruffey and Mary Jack.
- The Indian descendants of Old Man Ruffey and Mary Jack are either enrolled with Karuk, enrolled descendants of Karuk, or are eligible for enrollment.
- The self-proclaimed 'chairman' of Ruffeys Rancheria today, Tahj Gomes, is a first generation Karuk descendant. Gomes' mother, grandmother, and great grandfather are/were enrolled with Karuk.
- As recently as 2016, Ruffeys Rancheria 'Chairman' Tahj Gomes identified as the 'Chairman' of the Shasta Nation Etna Band. There is no evidence between linking Gomes to local bands of Shasta or linking local bands of Shasta to Ruffeys Rancheria.

**Additional Findings:**

During the years 1907 to 1959, when Ruffeys Rancheria was owned by the federal government for Indian purposes, the records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives, San Bruno, confirm the following:

- The deed for Ruffeys Rancheria recorded in 1907 did not identify any tribe or band having a beneficial interest in the property. Special Agent Kelsey's letter of 1913, however, confirmed he bought the land for "Ruffey's Band" and another group of "Karok or Adatars Stock" living in the vicinity of Etna.
- There is no record of any Indian living on Ruffeys Rancheria during the fifty-two years it existed.
- There is no record of any tribal meeting, officers, minutes, or exercise of tribal political authority over any Indian, band, or tribe associated with the rancheria.
- There is no record of the construction of any house, barn, outbuilding, well, dam, reservoir, or fence on the rancheria. The sole improvement was a ditch to carry water from the rancheria to Old Man Ruffey's house on nearby fee land.
- There is no record of any farming program, agricultural advice, or technical services to the rancheria.
- There is no record of the collection of social statistics on the health, education, sanitary condition, or welfare of any Indian associated with the rancheria.
- There is no record of identification of Indian children of the rancheria enrolled in any public or Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools.
- There is no record of the Field Matron program administered at the Hoopa Reservation for the Karuk Tribe visiting or providing services for the rancheria.

- There is no record of the administration of “Indian Monies” or “Indian Money Market Accounts” for any Indian associated with the rancheria.
- There is no record of any forestry program for the rancheria until the cruise and valuation of its timber in 1958 and 1959.
- There is no record of any inspection reports of the rancheria.
- There is no record of land assignments or allotments on the rancheria.
- There is no record of the probate of the estate of any Indian associated with the rancheria.
- There is no record of any land leases for grazing or other resources of the rancheria.
- There is no record of any family or tribal cemetery or any cultural resources on the rancheria.
- There is no record of any effort to organize a tribal government under the Indian Reorganization Act (1934) on the rancheria. There were no residents on the property and no functioning tribe associated with the property in 1935 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs organized meetings on the I.R.A. on the rancherias of northern California.