Core Knowledge VOICES IN HISTORY™

Toypurina
Woman Warrior

by Leslie Stall Widener

We are pleased that our materials in the Core Knowledge Curriculum Series™, Core Classics® Series, Voices in History™ Series, Collection of Tales™ Series, and Adventures in History™ Series available on our **website**, are made available through a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Through the license, the user is free:

- To share: to copy, distribute, and transmit the work
- To remix: to adapt the work

Under the following conditions:

- You must attribute the work in the following manner:

  This work is based on an original work of the Core Knowledge® Foundation made available through licensing under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial- ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This does not in any way imply that the Core Knoweldge Foundation endorses this work.

- You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

- If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar license to this one.

With the understanding that for reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. The best way to do that is with a link to this web page:
https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/

Toypurina

Woman Warrior

by

Leslie Stall Widener

Voices in History: Biography Series™

ISBN 978-1-68380-943-2

PRINTED IN CANADA

Editorial Director:
Rosie McCormick

CORE KNOWLEDGE FOUNDATION
801 EAST HIGH STREET
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22902

www.coreknowledge.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1

Before Their World Changed

Toypurina, born in 1760, was a member of the Kizh community. The name of the Kizh (pronounced "Keech") comes from the word for their dome-shaped houses. For thousands of years, the Kizh people lived comfortably in these domed houses in their homelands. Part of that land is now called Los Angeles County, California. But Kizh territory extended even beyond those bounds, to parts of Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties as well. It also included four offshore islands, now called Santa Catalina Island, Santa Barbara Island, San Clemente Island, and San Nicolas Island.

Each Kizh village was made up of about fifty to five hundred people. The mild climate and lush landscape provided plenty of food, water, and shelter. Each village was self-governed and not part of a collective group.

A Misunderstanding

During an interview in 1903, ethnographer C. Hart Merriam misunderstood a Kizh woman whose village name was Toviscangna. In his writings, he incorrectly used her village name to refer to all the tribes in the area as Tongva. *However,* Kizh *is the correct tribal name of today's descendants. Toypurina was Kizh.*

Kizh people believed their land to be a sacred place. They understood that all things were connected and that the land, water, sky, plants, and animals cared for the people. In return, it was their job to care for and protect the animals and the environment.

The mountain woodlands were dense with towering oaks, pines, and black walnut trees. Nuts, especially the acorn, were a main source of food. They were gathered by the women and children. Raw acorns tasted bitter because they contained substances called tannins. To get rid of these tannins, the Kizh first ground the hulled acorns into a fine flour. Then they soaked the ground acorns in hot water. After that, the ground acorn meal could be used to make either bread or a kind of porridge.

Berries grew along the banks of the waterways and the edges of the forests. Hillsides were covered in prickly pear cactus, sagebrush, and buckwheat. These nutritious plants were used as both food and medicine.

ethnographer: someone who records information about human cultures

Kizh land was home to animals large and small. Ground squirrels, rabbits, and foxes were abundant. In the mountains, there were bears, bighorn sheep, mule deer, and large cats. Owls, woodpeckers, turkey vultures, hawks, and golden eagles sailed over forests and mountaintops. Kizh men were expert hunters, and they knew the best times of year to hunt and the best places to fish. They killed only enough game to feed their families and no more. They understood how to care for the land and the water. In return, they were given back more than enough food to survive.

In the grasslands, the men also hunted deer and smaller game, such as rabbits, foxes, and coyotes. They flushed quail, bringing them down with arrows, while keeping an eye out for snakes hiding under rocks in the tall grass. The cool spaces beneath the rocks gave rattlesnakes shelter from the hot sun.

The grasslands provided for much of the Kizh people's needs, including housing. Here they found the materials to build the dome-shaped houses that gave the Kizh people their name. They built their houses with the long branches of the willow tree and thatched them with tule (pronounced "too-lee"), a freshwater marsh grass. Tule grass is native to the Kizh homelands. It grows in abundance in marshes along freshwater lakes and rivers. Indigenous people up and down the West Coast had long used and traded this long-fibered green plant.

Women harvested chia and other grass seeds. They gathered wild vegetation, such as bulbs and tender plant roots. In late summer, after the seed crops had been gathered, the Kizh burned their fields to stop the growth of competing plants. This kind of land management allowed important food and medicinal plants to thrive. It helped underground bulbs get the sunlight they needed to sprout early when the rainy season began. The new growth attracted deer and other herbivores, which fed on the sprouts, thus increasing the number of animals available for hunting. Using generational wisdom to manage their land, the Kizh could increase the amount of food they produced each year.

At harvest time, women and older girls carried specially designed baskets made of tule grass. They carried two baskets, one in hand and the other over the shoulder. The women worked quickly, using a stick to knock the seeds off the plants and into their baskets. As they worked, the older women shared stories with the younger women and the children. Children were very important to the Kizh people. Their parents spoiled them with love and devotion—and so did the rest of the village. Sharing stories meant that knowledge of Kizh traditions was passed on and would not be lost. Some of these children became storytellers themselves. In this way, many of the traditional stories have survived.

In the winter months, the Kizh headed to villages in the mountains northeast of the lower grasslands. Just as the Kizh maintained the meadowlands, they also cared for the mountain forests with planned burns. Controlled burning of the forest floor cleared out small trees, dense brush, and undergrowth, as well as the buildup of pine needles, dead leaves, sticks, and fallen trees. Burning this material added nutrients to the soil and encouraged new growth of diverse plants. It also controlled the spread of insects such as wood ticks—a benefit to both wildlife and people. While the undergrowth burned, quail flew from the tall grass and rabbits ran out of the brush. Skilled hunters brought home a bounty of small game.

Large game such as mule deer, bears, and bighorn sheep were hunted for food. Their hides provided warm clothing and blankets for the winter. Hides were also hung on the walls to insulate homes against the cold weather.

The Pacific Ocean lay to the southwest, only a few days' walk from the grasslands. There was plenty of kelp, seaweed, and other sea plants available for gathering. Waterfowl and mussels were abundant. The Kizh hunted seals, otters, and sea lions from large canoes. Fish like garibaldi and sheephead were a source of food from the ocean. Whales and dolphins filled the waters around the four islands.

insulate: prevent heat loss

One hundred miles of seacoast allowed people in the coastal villages to travel great distances in their large wood-plank canoes, called *ti'ats*. They were seaworthy and unique to the Kizh and one other area tribe. Constructed of long wooden planks, these canoes were made watertight by sealing them with a natural tar substance mixed with spongy pith from the inside of tule grass reeds. A ti'at could hold up to thirty passengers and was fast and reliable.

The Kizh were master traders. The ti'ats gave islanders the ability to travel back and forth from the islands to the coast. This made communication and trade possible between the mainland and the islands. Different islands offered different resources for trading. Steatite (soapstone) was plentiful on Catalina Island.

Its strength made it good for carving into cooking vessels, ceremonial pipes, and figurines. Abalone and olivella shells were carved into beads. These beads, along with sea lion and sea otter pelts, were used to trade for goods the islanders needed from the mainland.

Kizh living on the islands traded for deer meat and other large game from the mainland. They also traded for the tule grass they needed to build their homes, weave baskets and mats, and make clothing such as grass skirts.

The Kizh people worked using the seasons as their guide. They gathered nuts and seeds when these were plentiful. The weather was mild, and they could hunt year-round. However, the best hunting came after the animals had grown fat from grazing all summer and eating plenty of nuts and berries. The Kizh understood the rhythms of the natural world and planned their work accordingly.

Each Kizh village was ruled by its own chief, or *tumiar*. The main duty of a chief was to keep their people united while never forgetting the ideology of the people. The village chief kept the peace, resolved differences among the people, and watched over their health and safety.

Village hierarchy was based on blood lineage. Chiefs came from the more successful families of artisans,

ideology: major ideas and beliefs of a group
hierarchy: order of authority
artisans: workers who produce goods

hunters, or traders. Often the next in line would be a son or brother. If there were none, tribal elders could appoint a sister or eldest daughter after the chief's death.

Even greater than the power of the village chief was the power held by the village shaman. This role was important because shamans talked with the Great Spirit. Only a shaman could punish another shaman for any wrongdoings.

Spiritual People

The Kizh were a spiritual people. Their origin story says that in the beginning, there was chaos. Out of the chaos and the many chiefs, there was one great chief, Chingishnish. He traveled to all the Kizh villages and neighboring villages, teaching the people about the spiritual laws passed down from the Creator. He died and ascended into Kizh heaven.

Kizh mourning ceremonies lasted for eight days. They included several rituals meant to guide the deceased person on their spiritual path. One ritual involved cutting down a pine tree, stripping away its branches, and covering it with paintings. Special baskets were woven for mourning ceremonies. These ceremonies usually involved cremation and included offerings of personal items such as bows, arrows, beads, seeds, and animal skins.

shaman: priest or priestess
mourning: grieving
cremation: act of burning a dead body

Another ritual held was the mourning anniversary ritual. This ritual served to remember those who had died during a particular year, especially when there were multiple deaths in a family or clan. Food and gifts were prepared to take to the ceremony. The images of those who had passed were painted on grass matting. These ceremonies were organized by the chiefs of different villages and often involved more than one community. The rituals lasted several days, during which the dead were remembered with stories, singing, and dancing.

Life for the Kizh and the other Indigenous tribes of California was disrupted and eventually destroyed. In 1769, Spanish missionaries arrived and began building a series of missions. They were there to convert the Indigenous people to Christianity—and to make the Kizh, and all others they encountered, subjects of Spain.

2

San Gabriel Mission

In 1542, Spanish explorers sailed up the California coast and landed on the island now known as Santa Catalina Island. This was the first recorded contact between Spain and the Kizh people. The Spanish were attacked, and the expedition returned to Spain. It wasn't until 1769 that an organized group of Spanish colonizers returned. This time, they came to establish control of the territory. Their plan was to build missions up and down the California coast. In all, they would build twenty-one missions. When they arrived, a Kizh girl named Toypurina was nine years old.

Initially, the Kizh people were friendly to the newcomers. They saw the Spanish as visitors, not conquerors. But in 1771, when the *padres,* or Spanish priests, began to break ground for a mission, the Kizh people realized they were planning to stay permanently. They feared that the Spanish would bring destruction to their land and their food sources. Chiefs from two of the

villages planned an attack. A large number of armed Kizh warriors gathered on the building site, intending to run off the invaders and stop them from building a mission.

It's recorded in mission documents that one padre, in fear for his life, unfurled a painted banner with a picture of Mary, the mother of Jesus. This dramatic gesture was recorded by one of the padres. His account says that when the villagers saw the image, they threw down their weapons. This may have been because of Mary's resemblance to a female spirit known in the Kizh religion as Chukit—or because the Spanish were pointing guns at them. Whatever the reason, the padres chose to believe the act of laying down weapons meant the Kizh people were open to accepting Christianity.

Unveiling the banner stopped the first act of Kizh defiance against the missions. After this resistance, the padres requested that more soldiers be sent from Spain to guard the mission during its construction. However, the new soldiers turned out to be a continuing source of problems for the padres—and especially for Kizh people.

Soldiers at the missions often treated the Kizh cruelly. Many accounts were recorded of soldiers on horseback

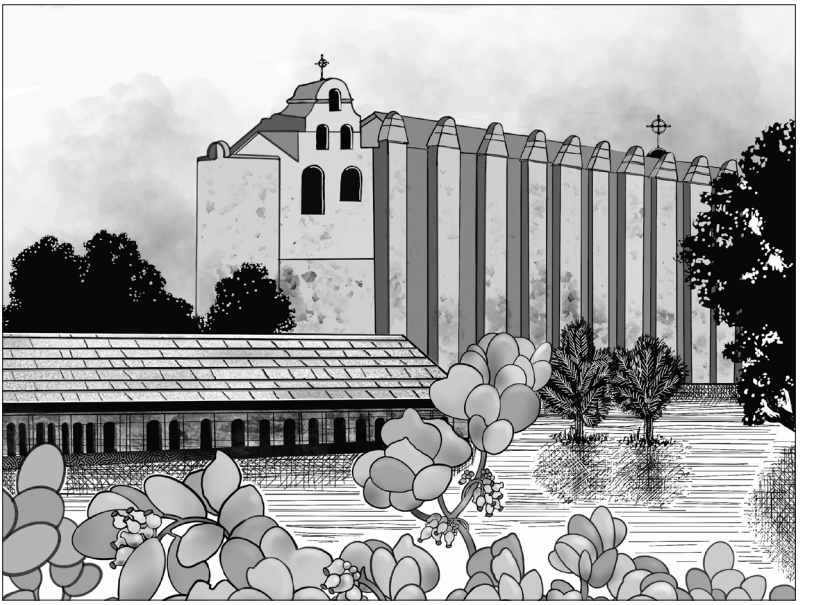
unfurled: unrolled
resemblance: similar appearance
defiance: resistance

riding out into remote Kizh villages. When the villagers saw them coming, they ran, and the soldiers rode them down. When the Kizh men tried to resist this treatment, they were often killed by muskets.

Then, one month after the new soldiers arrived, another violent clash occurred. This time, a Kizh chief was killed. Soon after, a Kizh child—the son of the murdered chief—was brought to the mission to be baptized. The reasons for this response cannot be known for sure. Maybe it was done as a show of peace in hopes that the Spanish would leave them alone. However, the Spanish missionaries decided that this meant the Kizh had accepted the mission and were willing to join the Catholic Church.

Mission San Gabriel Arcángel, or the San Gabriel Mission, was completed in 1771. It was the fourth California mission to be built. These missions had several purposes—to grow food to feed the Spanish soldiers, to convert the Indigenous population to Catholicism, and to build *pueblos*, or towns, for the Spanish settler families. To support the missions and the military fort, workers were needed to grow the food and care for the herds of cattle, sheep, and pigs. The goal of the missionaries was to replace the Indigenous traditions of hunting and gathering with European-style agriculture and ranching.

remote: far from other settled places
baptized: brought into the Christian community through a water-based ceremony
convert: change the beliefs of



The Spanish government gave the Kizh homelands to retired soldiers and settlers in hopes of drawing more people to the area. These parcels of land were in the Spanish style of *ranchos*. As Kizh lands decreased, so did their seed crops, hunting areas, and water sources. Important Kizh food sources were destroyed when grasslands were turned into grazing lands for domestic animals. Cattle and sheep ate the grass before it could produce seeds, and pigs tore up the ground, eating bulbs and plant roots. The animals trampled the tule grass that grew in the marshes, fouled the waters, and scared away the wild game. Armed settlers prevented the Kizh from using the water sources that had always belonged to the Indigenous people in the area.

With a smaller food supply, many Kizh had no choice but to move into the missions so they wouldn't starve. The padres at San Gabriel named the Kizh people inside the mission *Gabrieleños*. The expectation was that work would be exchanged for food and lodging. Although this was recorded as recruitment, once Kizh people entered the mission, they were held as prisoners. They faced physical restraint, and as one priest wrote, if they ran away from the mission, "they [would] be followed and sought and then [would] be punished."

Not only did the Spanish believe that it was their duty to convert the Kizh to Catholicism, but they also believed that the Kizh should follow the Spanish way of life in general. Such social and cultural changes included the creation of a labor class and a change to the expectations of Kizh family life. And so, upon moving into the mission, the Kizh found that their traditional way of life was replaced by imprisonment and the requirement to live side by side with nonfamily members. To the Spanish, and in particular the padres, they were simply offering food and shelter to the struggling Kizh in exchange for working in the fields and caring for the livestock. But for the Kizh, this way of life caused illness and death.

restraint: restriction of movement
labor class: group in society who perform low-paying jobs that require limited skill
expectations: beliefs of what will probably happen

3

Disease

The Spanish grouped all Indigenous people into one category. They did this by calling them all *Indians*. As the weeks and months went by, the Spanish padres busied themselves with baptizing, converting, and maintaining those living inside the mission. The padres took over the rights and duties of parents to Kizh children living inside the mission. Beginning at age six, children were taken from their parents and made to live in the mission dormitories. Girls were married off at age thirteen to husbands chosen by the padres. Their husbands were either baptized Kizh or Spanish soldiers. Everyone in the mission was considered a legal ward of the padres.

Meanwhile, the Spanish governor of the Californias, Felipe de Neve, decided to limit the padres' power over the missions. He wanted to replace some of that power with Spanish government control. Neve also decided that some of the Indigenous people living at the missions should have a certain amount of self-rule, or control over their own lives. Baptized captives could now elect

two judges from their own people. These judges would have certain privileges and would not receive any kind of physical punishment. Each judge was to perform duties such as acting as marriage witnesses and as godfathers to Indigenous people who were baptized.

These new decisions upset the padres, as they took away some of their control. One of the judges elected by the Gabrieleños—the Kizh at San Gabriel—was Nicolás José. He had been baptized, lived inside the mission, and had converted to Catholicism.

In 1785, there was an outbreak of disease inside San Gabriel Mission. This left one-third of the adults and half of the children dead, including Nicolás José's young son and wife. Nicolás José requested that a traditional Kizh mourning ceremony be held for his son, but the Spanish padres refused. They had stopped all Indigenous rituals and ceremonial dances for the Kizh dead.

Nicolás José remarried shortly after his loss, but his new wife also died within a year. Although Nicolás José was baptized a Catholic, he continued to hold an important position of leadership in the religious and political life of the Kizh inside the mission. As he watched the deaths of his fellow Kizh and their lack of control over their lives, his resentment of the Spanish grew.

Someone else was also watching these hardships unfold. Her name was Toypurina.

Although Toypurina and her family did not move to San Gabriel Mission, she grew up hearing how her people were suffering and dying from the drastic changes the Spanish made in the Kizh homelands. Those who remained in their remote villages, away from the mission, still faced hardships. Growing numbers of settlers were taking their lands and using force to keep them from their water and food sources. Staying away from the missions was the only way Indigenous people could protect their self-sufficient way of life, keep their tribal customs, and maintain their religious practices and beliefs.

Seven Giants

The Kizh people followed a religion now known as Yovaar. The name comes from the sacred circle they worshipped in. Yovaar included several deities, or gods, who lived in the sky as constellations. One story is about seven giants who held up the world. Each time the giants grew tired and shifted their weight, there was an earthquake. Generations of storytellers passed these stories down. This system of religion provided a bond between the Kizh people, the spirit world, and the natural world. It also provided bonds between Kizh villages and between the Kizh and other peoples. These bonds were resilient and long-lasting.

self-sufficient: able to meet one's own needs
resilient: able to adjust to or resist change

As she was raised in a traditional Kizh village, Toypurina would have learned the ways of a medicine woman from her mother and her other female relatives. Trained as a shaman, she was a religious leader and a healer and was considered more powerful than a chief. Shamans spoke directly to the Great Spirit. No chief had authority over them.

Toypurina was a gifted storyteller and a born leader. She was intelligent and well spoken. As she grew older, her words were influential. Men and women listened to her and respected her wisdom.

Even as a child, Toypurina understood what her people lost when the Spanish padres and soldiers began to change their world. As she grew older and her awareness of these changes increased, so too did her resentment of the padres, the soldiers, and San Gabriel Mission.

One of the biggest grievances was the taking of the Kizh homelands. As more and more settlers arrived, the size of the Kizh lands shrank. And with the settlers came sickness and diseases. Toypurina's people had never before been exposed to such diseases. They simply had no immunity. Death swept through the Kizh villages in the form of smallpox, influenza, dysentery, malaria, measles, and other illnesses. Starvation was a problem too, and many babies died. The Kizh people were rapidly being killed off.

influential: able to affect others
immunity: resistance to disease

4

The Revolt

Nicolás José continued to live at the mission, but he secretly began to plan a revolt. The personal tragedies he had experienced, the things he had seen, and the padres' continued denial of important Kizh practices had brought him to this point.

Nicolás José recruited Toypurina to help him with his plans. He knew Toypurina had the trust of the Kizh people. She had the status of a shaman and the ability to organize chiefs and warriors from the villages. He presented her with a gift of beaded shell necklaces. This was an appropriate offering for Toypurina, as it showed his respect for her as a shaman and as the daughter of a chief.

Toypurina's brother Temejavaguichia, the chief of her village, agreed to help too. Their plan was to take over San Gabriel Mission.

Toypurina, her brother, another village chief named Temejasaquichi, and Nicolás José approached at least six other Kizh villages. At each village, leaders met and discussed the planned revolt. The Kizh people believed that because Toypurina was a shaman with special powers, she could use her powers against the padres during the revolt. Then the other rebels could sneak into the mission and attack the soldiers. But first, someone had to visit the mission and tell the Kizh people there of the plan. The person chosen to do this was Temejasaquichi.

When Temejasaquichi made his first visit to the mission, he pretended to be a friend, and the padres did not suspect anything. However, his true intention was to seek out and convince the Kizh people living inside the mission that they should join a revolt against the Spanish. He instructed the Kizh not to believe anything the padres told them. The revolt would only succeed if they listened to Toypurina and no one else.

On October 25, 1785, Toypurina joined Nicolás José, Temejasaquichi, and another village chief, Ajiyivi, as they led an armed group of warriors from at least six Kizh villages. Their plan was to conduct a sneak assault and attack the soldiers who guarded the mission under cover of darkness. They would then enter and take over the mission.

Unfortunately for the Kizh, a corporal in the Spanish guard understood some of the Kizh language. He had overheard talk inside the mission walls and had reported what he'd heard to his commanding officers. The forewarned Spanish military had enough time to station their troops around the mission and plan their counterattack.

On the night of the planned revolt, the Kizh leaders led the group of rebels toward the mission. As they began to close in on the mission walls, they were ambushed

corporal: army officer

by the soldiers. Toypurina, Nicolás José, and the two Kizh chiefs were captured, along with a dozen or more warriors, and imprisoned in the San Gabriel Mission jail.

The Spanish accused Toypurina of being a sorceress, among other things. They insisted that she had used her persuasive powers to bewitch her people into rebelling against the mission.

sorceress: woman who uses evil magic

A trial was held for the imprisoned leaders of the revolt. They were made to testify while wearing shackles, or heavy chains. Pedro Fages, then governor of the Californias, was in charge of the trial, which was held at the Spanish colonial capital in Monterey.

The kinds of questions asked meant that if the prisoners replied, they might accidentally blame each other.

In the end, Nicolás José and Toypurina were blamed for the planned revolt against the mission. Toypurina freely admitted that she "came to encourage them [her people] to be brave and fight." The seventeen captured Kizh warriors received between fifteen and twenty-five lashes each. Toypurina remained imprisoned at San Gabriel Mission, and Nicolás José was sent to the Spanish fort in San Diego Presidio. They were both held in shackles for two and a half years while they awaited their final punishment.

Finally, Governor Fages made a decision about their punishment. He had no wish to make Nicolás José and Toypurina martyrs, so he did not order them to be executed. Instead, Nicolás José remained where he was and served six years of hard labor.

Toypurina was banished to the most distant mission, Mission San Carlos Borroméo, located in what is now Carmel, California. Records make it appear that Toypurina accepted Catholicism and was baptized, taking the name Regina Josefa. It was written that she willingly divorced

martyrs: people who have died for their cause

her Kizh husband and married Manuel Montero, a soldier of the Royal Presidio of San Carlos of Monterey. She had three children by her Spanish husband, all of whom were baptized. It was written that Toypurina changed her culture, religion, and way of life. However, the Kizh people, and especially her descendants, never believed that she willingly gave up her beliefs.

Toypurina died on May 22, 1799, at age thirty-nine. She likely died from one of the many diseases introduced by the Spanish. She died without making a full confession of her sins, as required by the Catholic Church. Her refusal to do so may have been her final rebellion against the Spanish Empire and the cruelty and domination it forced upon her people.

5

Toypurina's Legacy

To this day, the history of the powerful and influential Kizh woman Toypurina still impacts the Kizh Nation/ Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians. She was single-minded in her efforts to save and preserve her people's way of life and the land that had supported them for thousands of years. According to colonial records, she is the only known woman to have led a revolt against European colonial expansion in the Indigenous lands of North America. She stood up to the mission system of the Catholic Church and to Spain's oppressive military presence.

Joan of Arc of California

The Kizh Nation refers to Toypurina as the "Joan of Arc of California." Both women were religious leaders of their people. Both led a rebellion against foreigners who invaded their respective countries and threatened the lives of their people. They both experienced great tragedies of arrest, torture, false allegations, and fraudulent trials

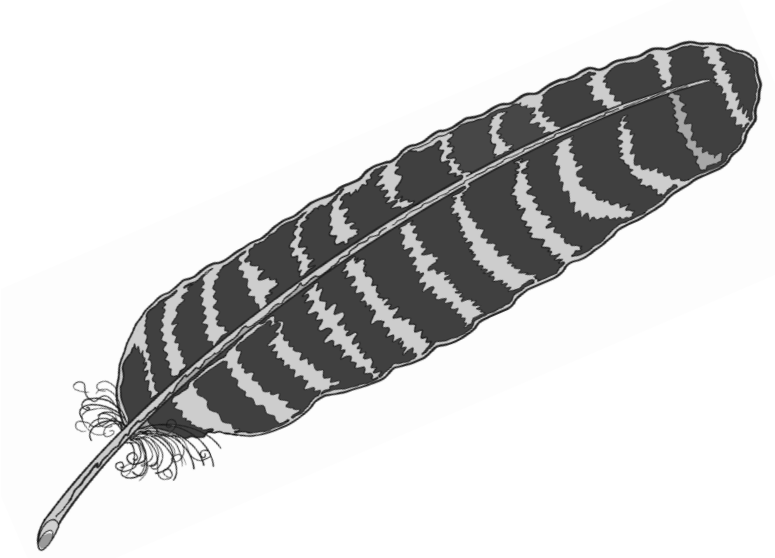
oppressive: unjustly overwhelming and controlling
fraudulent: dishonest or misleading

The Kizh have an oral tradition of storytelling. Because of this, their traditions and culture continue to be passed down from generation to generation. With these stories, Toypurina lives on in the hearts of her people. Although her rebellion against Spanish rule was not successful, she has never been forgotten by them. The Kizh people recognize Toypurina's role as a warrior. She fought to protect her people from the oppression forced upon them by the Spanish Empire's army and the cruel mission system.

Today, Kizh tribal members continue to fight their own battles to obtain federal recognition by the United States government. They wish to reclaim, at least in part, some of their ancestral land and to recognize the significance of Toypurina's life. She was an influential leader of the Kizh during a time when women across Europe and the newly formed United States lived under the rule of men.

The goal of the Kizh Nation is to correctly represent Toypurina and all women who have served their countries and made important contributions to history. They wish to see that these women are recognized for their courageous acts, no matter the period or part of the world they lived in. The Kizh Nation would also like to correct misinformation and to be recognized by California and the United States.

As Nadine Salas, daughter of the late Chief Ernie Salas of the Kizh Nation/Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians, said: "We were here, and we are still here."



IN HONOR OF TOYPURINA

In 2011, during the building of the Fedde Sports Complex in Hawaiian Gardens, California, workers unearthed Kizh ancestral bones in what was once a Kizh village. The bones were repatriated, or returned, to the Kizh Nation, and a tribal ceremony was held in 2014 to replace them in their burial site. A sculpture of Toypurina was commissioned to mark their location. Sculptor Rick Hill created the bronze bust of Toypurina based on photographs of her direct female descendants. A traditional turkey feather cape covers her shoulders, and she wears shell beads around her neck. The sculpture was installed at the site later in 2014 to honor Toypurina and the Kizh people who were forced to sacrifice their culture and way of life.

Discussion Questions

1. If you lived a long time ago, what Kizh activity would interest you the most? Why?
2. How is the natural environment of California different today from when Toypurina lived in that area?
3. If you had known Toypurina when she was your age, would you have been friends with her? Why or why not?
4. How do you think Toypurina felt when she was asked to lead a revolt against the Spanish?
5. The arrival of the Spanish padres and soldiers caused many problems for the Kizh people. What is one suggestion for dealing with those problems that you would share with Toypurina if you could talk to her today?
6. What qualities did Toypurina have that made others choose her to lead the revolt?
7. What do you think would have been the hardest thing for Toypurina when she was helping plan the revolt? Why?

8. How would you help resolve a conflict between two groups that have different languages and cultures?

9. Los Angeles County is the ancestral homeland of the Kizh Nation/Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians. In what ways can Kizh people living today reclaim some of their ancestral practices?

Meet the Author and Illustrator

Leslie Stall Widener is an author and illustrator who is passionate about drawing, painting, and writing stories for children. The first picture book she illustrated, *Chukfi Rabbit's Big, Bad Bellyache*, is a Choctaw trickster tale about a very naughty rabbit. Animals are always her number-one favorite subject to illustrate.

Leslie enjoys reading and writing about historical people, places, and events. She finds that researching one subject often takes her in unexpected directions, giving her new ideas for stories.

The writing and illustrating of *Toypurina: Woman Warrior* was like a treasure hunt, with many dead ends and redirects before Leslie found what she needed to tell this story.

During Toypurina's lifetime, the information about her was recorded by padres at San Gabriel Mission or by Spanish officials. There is only one previously published book about her, *Toypurina: The Joan of Arc of California*, written and published by the Kizh Nation in 2013. The story is told from the point of view of their Kizh ancestors. The authors wanted to correct the misinformation that has been written about the life of Toypurina and to see her recognized as an important figure in the history of the Indigenous people of this country. The Kizh Nation/Gabrielẽno Band of Mission Indians continues to seek their own tribal recognition by California and the United States. Leslie would especially like to thank Timothy Poyorena-Miguel of the Kizh Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians.

Leslie lives in McKinney, Texas, with her artist husband, Terry Widener. She serves as the Native Fund Chair for We Need Diverse Books (diversebooks.org) and belongs to the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. She is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and a registered Choctaw artist. Find her at www.lesliestallwidener.com.

Credits

Cover Illustration by
Leslie Stall Widener & Ivan Pesic

Title Page Illustration by
Leslie Stall Widener

Text Illustrations by
Leslie Stall Widener / 3, 4, 7, 14, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29
In Courtesy of Leslie Stall Widener / 32

Voices in History is a Core Knowledge Biography Series that encourages young readers to learn about real superheroes in history. As a result of acts of extraordinary bravery, ingenuity, strength, and determination, these people made a difference and changed the world. Perhaps their remarkable stories will inspire young readers to become the superheroes of the future.

Core Knowledge Voices in History™

These books are suitable for readers aged 8 and up.

ISBN: 978-1-68380-943-2