

It's near sunset as Alvino Siva threads his way across a hillside near San Timoteo Canyon between Redlands and Beaumont.

This place is all chaparral, sage, silence. Crows flap to their night roosts, flying over a field where an unmarked grave rests.

There, Alvino Siva believes, lies a relative whose life bridged California's old and new worlds more than 150 years ago.

He was Juan Antonio, a Cahuilla leader from the Santa Rosa Mountains whose choices branded the 1840s and Southern California's future.

From the hillside it's easy to look into Juan Antonio's era, when people who spoke Spanish or English already were filling the region.

1845, Rancho San Bernardino: The protector

Newcomers to the San Bernardino Valley saw the Lugo's fine horses or 6,000 cattle grazing. Many came to buy. Others came to steal.

The Cajon Pass was a gateway for Indian raiders from the Colorado River, Arizona and as far away as Utah. They killed people who got in their way, as did immigrant outlaws and bandits.

The Lugos wanted a security force and they found it in Juan Antonio and his warriors.

While the San Bernardino area's Native American cultures and leadership already were beginning to unravel, Juan Antonio was a strong contrast: a commander from isolated Inland areas where Cahuilla ways still held power.

Alvino Siva believes that the Mountain Cahuilla people sent Juan Antonio to the San Bernardino Valley to survey the newcomers' fighting power.

Juan Antonio realized that there were already too many newcomers, and more arriving, Alvino Siva says, so the leader decided that the best tactic would be to work with the immigrants.

"I think he could see into the future," Alvino Siva says.

So, Juan Antonio protected the Lugos and the San Bernardino Valley for the next seven years. That allowed the settlements to grow.

1851, San Diego: The revolt

After repeated dangers — and Juan Antonio rescues — the Lugos tired of the hazards. They sold their rancho to the Mormon pio-



Courtesy of San Bernardino County

The Lugo family was rich with Mexican land grants, which Juan Antonio protected from and outlaws.

neers who would build San Bernardino County. But first, the newcomers would face their biggest threat.

The Luiseño and Cupeño people of northern San Diego County were so enraged over attempts to tax them that Antonio Garra, a Cupeño, began gathering rebels to destroy all new settlements, including Los Angeles.

The Mormons quickly built a fort in San Bernardino. Fearful rumors spread that Juan Antonio would join the revolt.

"He decided against it," Alvino Siva says. "He told the man, 'It's too late' . . . There were way too many Europeans here now."

Juan Antonio captured the rebel. The Americans executed Garra in what is now Old Town San Diego.

1852, Temecula: The treaty

The Americans then seemingly rewarded Juan Antonio for his loyalty. They signed a treaty that promised area Native Americans land from the San Gorgonio Pass south to Warner Ranch in northern San Diego County.

Juan Antonio had "thought that by playing along with them, that we might be treated just like anyone else," Alvino Siva says. "But it didn't work out that way."

Juan Antonio moved to a village called Saahatapa in San Timoteo Canyon.

And as he waited there, the U.S. gov-

ernment failed to ratify the treaty.

1861, San Bernardino: 'No more of this'

As settlers moved into the treaty lands, friction between the Cahuilla people and the newcomers increased. Roaming cattle destroyed Cahuilla plant foods.

A San Bernardino newspaper reported that Juan Antonio told a judge: "My people are buried all around, killed by white men. I shall take my people

After the missions

The mission system fell apart in 1834, and soon Spanish governors, and the Mexican leaders who followed them, began granting huge chunks of California land, called *ranchos* to powerful citizens. Rancho boundaries often were vague, which led to another takeover when Americans arrived in force during the Gold Rush. The Americans often claimed land, sued and won, or sued in prolonged battles that depleted rancho finances and forced land sales.

Mexican ranchos with present-day cities and coun-

