

STOP THE CASINO 101 COALITION

The Voice of the People

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February 8, 2010

The Honorable Larry Echo Hawk
Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

re: Greg Sarris, Chairman of the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria

Dear Mr. Echo Hawk:

Stop the Casino 101 Coalition ("STC101") is a grassroots organization located in Sonoma County, CA, which membership includes Native Americans. On behalf of myself and the Stop the Casino 101 Coalition (collectively "Petitioners"), we submit this letter to formally request that the Bureau of Indian Affairs ("BIA") review the information in this mailing, and if applicable, de-certify Mr. Greg Sarris as Chairman of the Federated Indians of the Graton Rancheria ("FIGR"). Mr. Sarris possesses no Native American blood, and specifically, no Coast Miwok and/or Southern Pomo blood, and thus is not qualified to be a member of the FIGR. The FIGR, reestablished by Congress in 2000, 25 U.S.C. section 1300n-1, consists of Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok Indians of northern California.

The information contained in this letter came to light over a period of several years as our organization investigated different aspects of a casino proposed by the FIGR. Because of the grave import of these facts, we believe that in fairness to the members of the FIGR and the community at large, your office should examine this data in a dispassionate fashion.

It is impossible not to sympathize with the circumstances of Mr. Sarris' birth. He was born in 1952 in Santa Rosa, California to an unwed 17 year old girl, Mary Bernadette "Bunny" Hartman, who died a few days later. His birth certificate lists Hartman as the mother but does not identify the father. The baby was adopted by George and Mary Sarris of Santa Rosa.

Mr. Sarris makes no claim of Native American ancestry on his birth mother's side. Rather, despite the uncertainty of his actual birth father, and despite the fact that

according to Mr. Sarris himself, his birth mother claimed a Mexican boy to be the father of her child¹, Mr. Sarris claims Native American ancestry on his birth father's side. In particular, Mr. Sarris asserts that his birth father was Emilio Hilario (1930-1983), who appears to have lived his entire life in southern California. More specifically, Mr. Sarris' entire claim of Native American ancestry rests on the maternal grandmother of Emilio Hilario (purportedly Mr. Sarris' great-grandmother), named, according to Mr. Sarris, "Reinette Smith Sargossa". The chart entitled "Genealogies of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, Tom Smith Family #17, #284, page 2 of 2", dated 8/7/99, and prepared by Sylvia B. Thalman, asserts that Reinette Smith Sargossa was "5/8 Coast Miwok/Pomo", and was the daughter of Tom Smith of Pomo and Coast Miwok ancestry, and Emily Stewart, resident of Tomales Bay who was 1/2 Coast Miwok. All were presumed to be natives of the Marin County and Sonoma County area.

Despite the lack of evidence, for the purpose of this analysis, let us assume that Mr. Sarris' birth father was Emilio Hilario

The historical record reveals that a Reinette Sargossa did exist, and that she was almost certainly the maternal grandmother of Emilio Hilario. However, Reinette Sargossa's maiden name was Stewart, not Smith, and her parents were born on the East Coast. Reinette Stewart Sargossa was born in 1881 - 1884, probably in Eureka, California. We turn now to the historical record of Reinette's family, the family of Joseph P. Stewart, a barber born in Pennsylvania.

The 1870 United States Census.

The 1870 Census reveals that Joseph P. Stewart, age 26, and his wife Emily, age 23, were living in Brooklyn in Alameda County, California. Joseph P. Stewart, a barber, is shown as having been born in Pennsylvania; Emily Stewart as having been born in Maine. They have two children: Amanda, age 4, and Emily, age 2.

The 1880 United States Census.

The 1880 Census reveals that Joseph P. Stewart, age 37, and his wife, Emily B. Stewart, age 32, were living on D Street in Eureka, California. Joseph Stewart, a barber, had been born in Pennsylvania; Emily Stewart had been born in Maine. They are living with their five children, including Amanda, age 14, Emily age 12, Mary (sp?) age 8, James H. age 6., and Bertha age 2 Reinette had not yet been born.

The 1890 United States Census.

The 1890 Census is not available because the records were destroyed in a fire in 1921. A so-called "census substitute", the Los Angeles City Directory for 1888 to 1890 shows Joseph P. Stewart in 1888, working as a barber in Leon Bineuad's barber shop on S. Brooklyn Street near Figueroa. That the family had moved to Los Angeles is later confirmed in subsequent census rolls.

¹ *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*, p. 141

The 1900 United States Census.

In 1900 we find William and Amanda Strange, husband and wife, living on Buena Vista Street in the city of Los Angeles. Amanda matches with the Amanda Stewart living in Eureka in 1880; in the 1900 Census she is 35 years old, her father's place of birth is listed as Pennsylvania and her mother's place of birth is listed as Maine. Also living in the Strange household are Reinette Stewart, age 19, and Alice Stewart, age 17. As with Amanda, for both Reinette and Alice, Pennsylvania is listed as the father's birthplace and Maine is listed as the mother's birthplace. The age of Amanda coincides with the earlier records. The inescapable conclusion is that Amanda's younger sisters were living with the family.

Emily B. Stewart is shown as age 52, widowed and living in Port Hueneme in Ventura County (north of Los Angeles) with her son James H. Stewart, age 24. Emily B. gives her parents' birthplace as Canada. Again, the birthplaces and ages of Emily B. and James H. shown are consistent with the Joseph P. Stewart family history going back to 1870.

The 1910 United States Census.

In 1910, Arthur and Reinette Sarrgossa, husband and wife, are living in Los Angeles County with their two children, Juanita, age 7, and Albert, age 2. Also shown as living with the family is Emily Stewart, listed as mother in law. Again, Emily's place of birth is listed as Maine and Reinette's father's birthplace is listed as Pennsylvania, consistent with the 1870 and 1880 census records for the Joseph P. Stewart family. Emily Stewart's age is listed as 59.

The 1920 United States Census.

In 1920, Arthur and Reinette Sarrgossa are still living together as husband and wife, and are still in Los Angeles, now with three children, Juanita, age 16, Albert age 11, and Evelyn, age 8. Evelyn's age is consistent with a 1911 birth year which is the birth year of Emilio Hilario's mother as shown on the U.S. Social Security Death Index. Also listed in the Sarrgossa household is Emily B. Stewart, age 73, listed as "Grandmother in law". Emily B.'s birthplace is listed as Maine. Reinette's father's birthplace is listed as Pennsylvania, and her mother's is listed as Maine. This is consistent with the census rolls for the Joseph P. Stewart family beginning in 1870. Arthur's birthplace is listed as Florida.

The 1930 United States Census.

In April, 1930, Evelyn, age 18, is shown living in Los Angeles as husband and wife with a man named Emiliano Hilario, who immigrated to the United States in 1927. Evelyn's age is consistent with a 1911 birth year and with the age of the Evelyn Sarrgossa shown in the 1920 census. Evelyn's birthplace is listed as California, her mother's birthplace is listed as California, and her father's birthplace is listed as Florida. Emilio's place of birth is shown as the Philippines, which is consistent with the record and Mr. Sarris' public statements. Because the 1940 census details will not be released until 2012-2013, from here we must turn to other public records.

Immigration Records and the California Birth and Death indices.

The Seattle Passenger and Crew Lists, 1882-1957 show Emiliano Hilario entering the United States from the Philippines on July 4, 1927. Both the Social Security Death Index and the California Death Index show Irvine, a community near Laguna Beach, CA, as his last residence. Both the California Death Index and the Social Security Death Index provide more than adequate proof of the Hilario family line, including the birth of Emilio Hilario. That Evelyn Sarrgossa was the mother of Emilio Hilario is indisputable. This is supported by Emilio's birth record showing "Sarragossa" (a common variant or misspelling of "Sarrgossa") as the mother's maiden name. The death indices place Emilio, Emiliano and Evelyn all in the Laguna Beach area prior to their deaths. This is consistent with Mr. Sarris' public statements that the Hilario family lived finally in Laguna Beach, CA. The birth dates shown in the death records are consistent with earlier records on file.

The man Greg Sarris claims to be his birth father, Emilio Arthur Hilario, was born on June 1, 1930, in Los Angeles. Eight years later, the Evelyn and Emiliano had a second child, Arturo Victor Hilario, also born in Los Angeles.

The Public Statements of Greg Sarris.

These records could be dismissed as merely coincidental but for the utterances of Mr. Sarris himself that reveal unequivocally that this is not two families with superficial similarities but is instead one family, the Joseph P. Stewart family, with records dating back 140 years. In his public statements about his paternity, Mr. Sarris mixes fact with conjecture. For example, the record is devoid of any suggestion that Evelyn and Juanita, the eldest Sarrgossa girl, were born and raised anywhere other than Los Angeles. Mr. Sarris states, again in Mabel McKay, that Evelyn was from Sonoma County.² Also in Mabel McKay, he describes his version of how Evelyn Sarrgossa met Emiliano Hilario as follows:

"(Violet) 'So how did your grandmother meet your grandfather?'

(Sarris) "She (Evelyn) left here (Sonoma County) to go live with her sister Juanita³, in L.A. She met Grandpa (Emiliano Hilario) there. He'd only been off the boat a year or so."⁴

This statement is important for it confirms the existence of Evelyn's sister Juanita in Mr. Sarris' claimed paternal line and it confirms that the Arthur Sarrgossa family shown in the 1920 census is the family connected with Emilio Hilario. In naming Evelyn's sister Juanita, Mr. Sarris has provided evidence in his own words that this is not two separate families we are discussing. It is the same family line of Joseph P. and Emily B. Stewart that has now been conclusively traced back to the 1870's, one that has no Coast Miwok or Pomo blood.

² *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*, p. 139

³ Emphasis mine

⁴ *Mabel McKay: Weaving the Dream*, p. 142

Indeed, the historical record is devoid of any other Reinette Sarrgossa at all in the appropriate locale and time frame.

The 1920 Census is essentially conclusive in and of itself. There can be no real dispute but that 8 year old Evelyn Sarrgossa is the future mother of Emilio Hilario, Mr. Sarris' claimed birth father. And here is Evelyn, living with her mother Reinette, whose own parents are shown as being born in Pennsylvania and Maine, and also with her maternal grandmother, Emily B. Stewart, who is shown as being born in Maine. It goes without saying that it is highly unlikely that any members of the Pomo or Coast Miwok were having children in Pennsylvania or Maine by the 1840's, nor does Mr. Sarris claim this in any of the many public statements he has made regarding Emilio Hilario. He claims only that Evelyn's place of origin was the Sonoma-Marin, CA area.

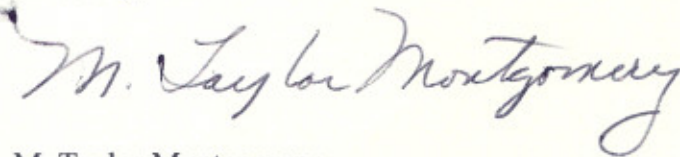
Over and over again, the record shows a family line easily traced. Perhaps there was an Emily Stewart in Tomales Bay who was ½ Coast Miwok, perhaps not. Regardless, the record is clear: it was a distinctly non-Indian (or at least non-Coast Miwok or Pomo) Emily B. Stewart of Maine who was the great-grandmother of Emilio Hilario, the man Greg Sarris claims to be his father.

Greg Sarris' purported paternal grandmother was not the granddaughter of the Reinette or "Nettie" Smith whom the FIGR genealogical chart claims to be 5/8 Coast Miwok/Pomo. If that person ever existed, she was not the mother of Evelyn Sarrgossa.

Mr. Sarris has claimed membership in the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR) upon a bloodline that is not supported by the historical record. Under the Graton Rancheria Restoration Act, Mr. Sarris does not qualify for membership in the FIGR, and is certainly not eligible to hold the position of chairman. We therefore ask that he be de-certified as Chairman.

Included with this letter is a CD with various pertinent records showing the Stewart/Sarrgossa/Hilario lineage. Should you have any questions about this, please feel free to contact me at 707-548-4756.

Sincerely,



M. Taylor Montgomery

/mtm

cc: The Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Interior
The Honorable Diane Feinstein, United States Senate
The Honorable Barbara Boxer, United States Senate
The Honorable Lynn Woolsey, U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California
Ms. Andrea Lynn Hoch, Legal Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor

Bcc

Enclosure: CD