



## WHO WE ARE

Tribal members of the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians are direct descendants of Chief Cabazon (pictured above), the leader of the Desert Cahuilla Indians from the 1830s until the 1870s.

When Anglo-Americans arrived in the 1840s, they referred to most of the native people in Southern California as Mission Indians. The name stuck, but the Cabazons were never really under the control of the Spanish mission system.

The Cabazons have a rich history that predates both the Spanish and Anglo arrivals in the region by thousands of years.

Our ancestors were primarily Cahuilla Indians. Cahuilla (pronounced Kah-we-ah) means "masters" or "powerful one," and 2,500 years ago these fiercely resourceful people learned to survive the blistering temperatures of the dry, unyielding land by digging wells. They devised creative methods for using local plant life such as acorns, mesquite and pinyon. And they built their homes (known as a kish) from reeds, branches and brush.

The Cahuilla were divided into two moieties or groups of clans: the Wildcat and Coyote. They were further divided into approximately a dozen patrilineal clans, each having its own name, territory and common ancestry.