

## **The First People of the Fair Oaks Bluff Area**

### **Overview**

Fair Oaks sits on a fraction of land that was occupied for at least 5,000 years by a native people, the Valley Nisenan, who thrived here until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the arrival of the Hispanics, Europeans and other explorers beginning in the late 1500s, and the following waves of non-native peoples, came diseases, destruction of traditional food sources, slavery and genocide. By about 1890, the population of Nisenan, as with most California Indians, had been nearly decimated. The few survivors worked on farms and in mines and clung to remnants of their culture. Today their descendants treasure the timeless knowledge and methods of their past and teach them to their children, and the study of their heritage has become part of the elementary school curriculum.

### **Early History**

There is fragmentary evidence that there has been continuous human occupation of what is now California for 12,000 or more years. It is unclear how these first inhabitants reached California, whether by land bridge from Siberia or on seafaring vessels that followed coast lines from Asia, but it was likely at or near the end of the last ice age, which also occurred about 12,000 years ago. At that time, due to glaciation, the Pacific Ocean was about 300 feet lower than it is today. The four familiar northern Channel Islands off Southern California today, for example, formed a single, mountainous landmass 13,000 years ago, and evidence of human activity there dates from approximately that time period. It is not clear whether these early inhabitants migrated to this landmass from the mainland, or if they arrived on the island range first, then migrated to the mainland. As the glaciers melted over the next several thousand years, populations shifted inland with the rising coastlines.

California Indians in general did not construct major structures that withstood the test of time, as did their contemporaries in other parts of the world, like the Incas or Aztecs. Nor did they practice agriculture or domesticate animals (except for dogs) to any significant extent. They lived in simpler housing and smaller but probably denser communities than other Native American groups. Overall, their population was relatively high compared to the other states. They had a simpler culture, with no written language. They were diverse linguistically, though there were six distinct groups throughout California. They had a strong oral 'literature' of interests and wisdom, and valued rich social customs which were handed down through the generations.

The first occupants of the American River drainage area lived in an environment much different from what we know today. Prehistorically, the Sacramento Valley was a tidal marsh covered by tule reeds, willow, rushes and a great variety of other river vegetation. This dense and varied vegetation provided a rich habitat for many animal species, from the tule elk, antelopes, black bears, grizzly bears, deer, and wildcats to small rodents such as gophers, wood rats, and squirrels. The river banks sheltered large numbers of beavers and river otters. Waterfowl included ducks, geese, cranes, herons, pelicans, and swans. The uplands, away from the marshland and where the foothills of the Sierras begin (and where Fair Oaks now lies), teemed with quail, mourning doves, flickers, woodpeckers, roadrunners, hawks, owls, eagles, turkey vultures, and even condors. At least 26 species of fish lived in the American River, most notable of which were the salmon, sturgeon, chub, tule perch, sucker, and trout.

The earliest of the people in this area were mostly hunters of the large herds of deer, antelope and elk found in the river drainage areas. Their hunting implements (projectile points) were large and heavy, formed from slate, chert and obsidian. Eventually, the predominant method of acquiring food shifted from large mammals to a fishing economy. Projectile points became smaller and lighter, designed for use on an arrow shaft.

The word "Nisenan" (meaning "from among us; on our side") was used as a self-designation by the southernmost of the three groups of Maidu Indian Tribes who lived near the Yuba and the American Rivers. They occupied the area from the eastern side of the Sacramento River to the 3000 foot level of the Sierra Nevada. Their territory extended from the Bear and Yuba Rivers on the north to the vicinity of the Cosumnes River on the south, and included the entire American river drainage area. The largest group of Nisenan lived along the north side of the American River.

Though they have no written record of their past, archeological studies show that the Nisenan lived in villages near the banks of the American River, which they called *Kum Sayo*, ("Roundhouse River") since about 3,000 B.C. Forty archaeological sites have been recorded on the banks of the American River from its mouth to the junction of the middle and south forks, now inundated by Folsom Lake. These sites vary from large villages to bedrock mortar sites (grinding holes in the natural bedrock). A permanent village called Yolimhu was located on the south side of the American River, just south of where modern Folsom is located.

For thousands of years, the Nisenan learned to live with the variable nature of the American River as it drained the Sierras. They knew and harvested the seasonal plentitude of the wildlife and were able to

move their camps to avoid the extremes of the summer heat or winter floods in the valley. Through time, the location of the river would shift and villages would be moved to new areas near the water.

## Housing

The Nisenan built their villages on natural knolls near running water or permanent springs. Village sizes ranged from as few as three to as many as one hundred or more dwellings. Smaller villages may have clustered around a large village with a headman who was empowered to call on neighboring villages on matters of mutual concern.

In a permanent village, a meetinghouse or "*Kum*" (coom) was usually the center of community life. *Kums* were only in larger villages, or were shared by a group of small villages. They were conical and approximately fifty feet across, partly dug into the ground (up to three or four feet), built with heavy oak beams and covered by layers of bark, earth, tules, sticks, twigs and dirt placed over the framework. Smoke from a fireplace, built in a depression in the middle of the earthen floor, would escape through an opening at the peak of the cone-shaped roof. The thickness of the walls made it comfortable all year around. In some areas, smaller *kums* were used as winter homes.



This *Kum*, or "round house" is on display at Indian Grinding Rock State Park

The *Kum*, or "round house", had many uses. It was where ceremonies were held and visiting guests were housed. On winter nights, stories were told. Animal characters were prevalent in Maidu myths, and stories of "Trickster Coyote" were particularly prominent. (Some have found these coyote tales to be exceptionally funny and very bawdy.).

Temporary shelters provided protection against the long and hot valley summers. In the lower elevations, these were dome-shaped huts of pole frame covered with tules or brush and earth, called a *hu*. In other areas, farther up in the foothills, the temporary summer huts were conical shaped shelters made from thick rectangular slabs of tree bark. These usually opened to the east to catch the morning sun and provide shade in the afternoon.



A recreated temporary home, called a *hu*, can be visited at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

Another type of structure, the sweathouse, or *temescal*, was also found in some areas. A “sweat-house”, similar to a *kum*, was an excavation in the earth, to the depth of six or eight feet, arched over with slabs split from logs. These slabs were covered to the depth of several feet with earth. These lodges had a narrow entrance, with steps leading down and into this subterranean cavern. The door was closed and no air was admitted except from a small aperture in the roof, through which escaped the smoke of a fire kindled on the floor in the centre. The fire filled the cavern with smoke and heated it until the perspiration rolled from the men’s bodies in streams. The sweat-house was an institution of daily use, and it entered into ceremony indirectly as a means of purification, possibly to rid the body of scent in preparation for hunting excursions. It was the assembly place of the men and their sleeping quarters for about half of the year.

### **Life in the villages**

Residents of each village cared for the land around them and maintained a spiritual connection with their river habitat, practicing conservation, harvesting plants and animals selectively to ensure continuing healthy populations. From late fall to early spring Nisenan gathered together in their villages. As the Earth awoke in spring, many villagers would migrate to the foothills to search for food and to trade with other tribes. The Nisenan living in the valley would trade foods and goods with the Nisenan living in the hills, as each area had a different set of natural resources. For example, roots for baskets, fresh water mollusks, and salmon from the lower part of the valley would be traded for rabbit-skin blankets, bear meat and manzanita berries from the higher regions.

Food was plentiful for the Nisenan people. They hunted, trapped, and were also expert fishermen, known for their effective fishing nets. Salmon and other fish were also often speared or caught in a small weir, or trap, in the river and dried for winter use. To collect the fish the natives sometimes used small boats made by lashing together tules or by hollowing out logs. Large-scale harvesting of salmon and other migrating fish provided a dependable source of food and allowed for increased populations along river banks. Examination of skeletal remains by archeologists indicated low infant mortality and greater adult longevity.

The Native women gathered a variety of plants for food and medicine. As with many California tribes, the center of the Nisenan diet was the acorn (*ooti*). Fresh acorns were harvested by using long sticks to knock them out of the oak trees. The women gathered them in large burden baskets and stored them in granaries until the acorns were needed for food. To prepare the acorns, the women split the shell off the

acorn with a hand stone called a mano, then used an elongated pestle to grind the acorn kernels into flour (or meal) using one of the many mortar holes that had been worked into a massive slab of bedrock (called a grinding rock). These grinding rocks were often located next to the river. (You can still see evidence of their labor in the grinding rocks located below the Folsom Power House, and at several other points along the American River.) The tannic acid in the acorns was leached out by spreading the ground meal over pine needles which had been laid over sand. Cedar or fir boughs were then laid over the meal, and hot water was poured over all. The acorn meal was supplemented by seeds, roots, berries, fruit, worms, insects, and the meat from small mammals, deer, elk, antelope and shellfish, as well as the fish. Cooking was usually done by dropping hot stones into stews or porridges held in tightly woven baskets. Meats were usually roasted in a pit oven.



Grinding Rock in Sailor Bar Park

## **Culture**

The Nisenan were known as excellent basket weavers. The women gathered tule, willow, redbud, sedge roots and bracken fern to create their baskets. The baskets were used to gather food, catch fish, cook acorn mush, carry their babies, and store tools and supplies.

Beads made from abalone and olivella shells from the Pacific Ocean are found at all early sites, indicating trade with coastal communities. Obsidian used for arrow heads indicated trade with tribes from the north, where the volcanic glass was abundant in certain areas.

The material culture was based on many of the plants and animals that the people used for food and fiber as well as for medicine, utensils, dress and decoration. Clothing was minimal for the Maidu in the moderate climate of the Sacramento Valley. In the summer the adults wore shredded willow bark or tule skirts. During the winter, they added blankets or capes made of woven rabbit fur for warmth. They also made feather cloaks which were renowned for their beauty.

Native California people sought balance in all aspects of life – physical and spiritual. Balance was believed to lead to the well-being of the individual, the extended family, and the tribe. The value of give-and-take, or reciprocity, was important in achieving his balance. In most groups, the individuals and villages made offerings to the creator and earth spirits. In return, they expected a favorable relationship between themselves and the natural elements. They hoped for access to game animals, wild foods,

favorable winds, sufficient rain, fertility, and so on. This give-and-take principle also formed the basis for economic relationships among individuals, extended families, and neighboring villages.

Each group jealously guarded its territory and resources. Trespassing and poaching were serious offenses. They were the principal causes of conflict that would erupt from time to time among the groups. The village chief, whose rank was hereditary, mainly provided a moral influence for the tribe, for custom and common consensus ruled the village. In this way, the Nisenan lived for thousands of years before the Europeans and other foreigners appeared.

### **European influence in California**

It is estimated that there were 300,000 Native Americans in California before the Europeans arrived. The period from about 1500, when the first explorers, hunters and trappers arrived, to 1769, when Spain established the first mission in San Diego, marked the beginning of Western influence in California. Spanish colonization created a catastrophe of huge proportions for the Native peoples of California. According to some interpretations of events, the Spanish planned not only for their Franciscan priests to convert Indians to Christianity, but also to reduce the many free and independent Native societies into a mass of slave laborers. They established a chain of twenty three missions in California that resembled Caribbean plantations. By decree of Spanish law, Indians were baptized. After baptism they were called neophytes and removed from their villages into areas near the missions, where they were put to work.

At the missions, the Indians were closely controlled. Neophyte children were removed from their families at the age of five or six. They were locked in barracks and watched by colonists who wanted to teach the children without interference from their parents. Indian girls were locked up when they weren't working or attending church. They were freed upon marriage, but if they lost their husbands they were once again locked up in the barracks. Adults were made to work without pay. Soldiers and padres whipped, jailed, and punished with additional work any Natives who did not seem to accept Spanish authority. They were taught Spanish and were forbidden to speak their native language. Women and children were not excused from this harsh treatment. (One Indian neophyte reported "we were always trembling with fear of the lash".)

The missions were only supposed to last for ten years, which the Spanish crown felt was long enough to convert the Indians into Christian slaves. In fact, they lasted about sixty-five years. Between 1769 and 1836, about 80,000 California Indians were baptized and turned into laborers for the Spanish empire.

Many Native “converts” resisted Spanish rule. The most common way was through passive resistance. Many refused to learn Spanish, or pretended they could not understand commands given in Spanish. Or they would deliberately do their work slowly and poorly – a fact that can be seen today in the construction of some of the old missions. Some Native American women who were sexually assaulted and impregnated by Spanish soldiers practiced abortion or infanticide. They did not want to give birth to children of the enemy, thereby providing a new generation of slave labor for the colonists. Many Native people tried to flee the missions, but because of the difficulties that resulted (recapture, disease, no place to go) only about ten percent – or eight thousand – actually escaped.

Another form of resistance was to fight the Spanish. Some raided the missions, presidios and even the herds of the domesticated animals. Sometimes mission Indians would torture or kill the padres if they got the chance (the deaths of two by poisoning had been recorded). There were several uprisings by the Indians at the missions.

After the Mexicans won independence from Spain and the Mexican Republic was created in 1820, the padres were no longer able to force Indians into labor. As Indians left the missions, they found a greatly changed land. Many were deprived of their prior lands or found the landscape had been greatly changed due to ravages of grazing by the domestic farm animals introduced by the settlers. Mission farming had squeezed out native plants, and many California Indians were not able to live off the land in the way they had before the Spanish came.

Weakened by their dire situation, the Indians could not very well protect the little they had left, and they had no resistance to the new diseases brought by the Europeans. Devastating epidemics were responsible for destroying the majority of Native California peoples in contact with the Spanish colonists. By the time the missions finally collapsed in 1836, about one hundred thousand Indians had died.

### **European influence on the Nisenan and the American River area**

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, European items had been traded to the Indians of the American River drainage area by neighboring native populations, and from 1769 to 1839, explorers and trappers from different European groups made scattered contacts with the local Indians on the American River. In about 1808, explorer Gabriel Moraga reached the American River and found the Indians there to be hostile. He thus named the river “Rio del las Llagas (river of sorrows)”.

More knowledge of Western culture and ideas, and a fear of capture and enslavement, were brought to the Central valley by natives who had escaped from the missions. With this knowledge, strong opposition from tribes in the Sacramento and American River areas blocked any further advances of the missions from the San Francisco area, so the missionization of the Nisenan never actually took place. However, because of the interaction with the natives who had escaped from the missions and with the Spanish soldiers who pursued them (along with the livestock they may have stolen) or raided the area in attempts to find converts for the missions, the Spanish language became a unifying characteristic among the various tribes who spoke different languages.

In 1827, Jedediah Strong Smith, fur trader and explorer, was the first American trapper to reach the American River. He explored the same areas of the riparian forest that are today's American River Parkway and the bicycle trail that bears his name. He held an uneasy relationship with the Indians of the area, but he reported the area's fortune in furs to the Hudson Bay Company. The company sent out trappers, who in turn brought diseases against which the natives had little immunity. Perhaps the most significant occurrence during this period was the malaria epidemic which reached the Central Valley in 1833 and was estimated to have caused a seventy-five percent reduction in the native population of the Central Valley, leaving 20,000 persons dead. In addition, measles, smallpox and other diseases to which the Indians had no resistance, wiped out more than half of the California native population before they had even seen a white settler. Some tribes and villages virtually disappeared from the face of the earth, some by their own hands in fear of the white invaders.

The destruction of the California Indians by diseases opened the way for Western influence in the Sacramento Valley as the Nisenan and other natives could no longer guard their land. Previous forms of leadership in the tribes had been disrupted, and some tribes resorted to hunting half-wild horses and mules, and raiding stock from California ranches. Some retreated farther into the foothills.

The most significant phase of Western influence in the area began with the arrival in 1839 of John Augustus Sutter, an educated, well traveled and well connected man with a complex background who caught on quickly to the importance of "putting up a good front" to all, including the Native Americans that he encountered. Through dubious but effective dealings with Mexican officials, he was able to obtain a land grant of fifty thousand acres in what is now called the Sacramento Valley.

His arrival at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers was met by several hundred hostile Natives. Their charge on Sutter's small party was met by a deafening roar of canon fire, not aimed at

them, but powerful enough to halt the charge and stun the natives. This was a form of “posturing”, by Sutter, which played into the Native’s fighting style.

Sutter’s thunderous arrival helped enlist the Indian population as his “allies”. Natives built the fort and made up much of his army and his labor force. They were his most trusted “employees”. Sutter reportedly did not enslave the natives like the Spanish missionaries did, as he gave “payment” directly to the “Big Man Chief” of each rancheria or tribe that supplied him with laborers. The wages, however, consisted of clothing, beads and other baubles, and Sutter, according to one account, locked up the natives each night so that they couldn’t escape to their tribal homes. He managed to gain trust with the natives by “paying” for the land on which his fort was built. Sutter did have a few troubles with the natives, but for the most part it was a peaceful working relationship with them. By 1846, over 300 Indians were harvesting wheat for Sutter. Within three years, however, diseases and the onslaught of gold miners and settlers further decimated the Valley Nisenan population on the American River.

### **The Gold Rush Era**

In May of 1847 an Indian scout led a group of white men, including the carpenter James Marshall and other Indians out of John Sutter’s Fort in Sacramento. Sutter had hired them to locate a sawmill site in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountain in order to supply the increasing needs of growing settlement and development in the Sacramento area. Along the way they met the Nisenan Indians who were residents of the region. The Nisenan and Marshall respected each other. The small party made its way deeper into the foothills and up along the American River to a Nisenan village called *Cullomah*, which is a Maidu Indian word meaning “beautiful vale.” This area was near the geographic center of the Nisenan territory.

It was decided that the area around this village was an ideal location for a sawmill, so the Indian scout and the carpenter surveyed the area and recorded it as a place they called Coloma. The Maidu Indians living there acted kindly toward Marshall, and helped him with the work of building the sawmill. Marshall hired the Indian men to clear the land and cut wood, and probably hired the women to help with the cooking. It was while the Indians were digging a millrace for the sawmill that the first “color”, or piece of gold, was discovered, possibly by an Indian, in January 1848. The nugget was shown to Marshall, who then knelt down along the bank of the river and began washing the dirt. He also found gold. Once the word spread, the California Gold Rush was on!

The Nisenan were among the first to feel an impact of the Gold Rush. Already weakened by the epidemics of 1833 and 1847, and with their native lands overrun, the Nisenan could offer little resistance

when in 1848 Sutter began using them as a labor force for his mining operations. This practice was followed by other settlers and ranch owners throughout the region that had hired some of the Natives. Most of the California Indians who worked the placers during the first stages of the Gold Rush had earlier worked on the ranches. The owners of these ranches left their lands to seek fortunes in the gold fields. When they did, they took their Indian workers with them.

Soon after, California Indians joined the gold rush on a large scale. Indians from many different tribes found work as miners. It is estimated that there were 4000 Indians working the gold placers of California, along with 2000 whites, by December 1848. Most of the Indian miners worked for mining companies or individual miners who hired them. They had a good reputation as hard workers, and usually made their employers wealthy – though they were paid only with food, clothing, blankets and supplies for their efforts.

Other Indians set out to stake their own claims. Some of the Indians traveled to Placerville, and others went farther south into the foothills, where more gold was discovered. This began a new gold rush of people from many nations to what became known as the Southern Mines. Many of the Indians and other new arrivals hired on with the Stockton Mining Company, which was owned by a rancher from Stockton.

Indians were often cheated when they traded, but eventually they learned about weighing their gold and demanded fair values. However, the white traders found another way of cheating the Indians. They created the “digger ounce”, a two ounce weight instead of the normal one ounce weight. (Some whites labeled California’s Indians “diggers”, a derogatory term that reflected what the whites felt was the “inferior” culture of the Indians who lived off the land and dug wild roots as part of their food source - never mind that the whites themselves were digging for their treasure!) While many traders and miners believed it was acceptable to cheat Indians, some to an outrageous extent, others felt it was wrong. As the Indians learned more about trading, they became more careful who they traded with and tried to end the cheating without bloodshed.

Whole Indian families, with children, parents and grandparents often lived in the gold fields. Men, women and the older children dug for gold and panned the dirt using their native baskets and wooden bowls. The younger children would pick out the gold while others would bring in another load of mud and gravel to wash. Some of the children were born in the mining camps. The families lived near the new gold mining towns and traded in the stores, but they were not always welcome in all of the businesses. When they left the gold fields, some returned to ranches or moved to larger towns, where they took wage-earning jobs.

Others simply returned to their own people, and using their hunting and gathering skills, traded their animal skins or food items in the gold mining towns.

While most of the Indian miners who worked in the gold fields were native to California, including the Nisenans, many came from other parts of the United States as well. They became the “Indian Forty-Niners” who joined in the Gold Rush of 1849, many coming in the same manner as other forty-niners – by ship or overland routes. They worked claims all along the Sierra Nevada, and some encouraged their families back east to join them. Towns emerged from these communities, like Oroville, and some Indians remained to start new lives there, while others returned to their own territories outside of California.

Divisions arose within the Indian communities. Some chose to participate in the mining frontiers, and others did not. Entire families split over the issue. Those who resisted the gold fever, called conservatives or traditionalists, feared that their people would lose their traditional cultures and skills. Some began to fight the miners who were intruding on their land. The violence escalated between whites and Indians, and groups of miners set out to exterminate the Indians living in the areas where they were mining. Despite the violence and the warnings of the elders, many Indians continued to work the mines. Eventually though, as the gold began to pan out, they did begin to leave the gold fields. They returned to their people or their former jobs on the ranches. However, the gold rush had changed the cultures of the tribes, as they could now use their gold to buy trade goods, which began to replace their traditional cultural tools, clothing and food items.

When miners moved into an area, they altered the land in major ways as they began extensive mining operations along the river bars and surrounding hills. This usually resulted in extensive erosion and pollution in the areas that the Indians had occupied for centuries. Native communities began disappearing as the peaceful hunting and gathering cultures were almost immediately overwhelmed as traditional forage areas and ancient milling sites became the scene of mining and commercial activities. Whether they realized it or not, the Indians helped to alter their own lands forever. As the placer deposits became well worked and the mining companies started to use new technologies, the Indians were left with few areas to mine with their pans, rockers, and long toms.

New white miners coming into California brought a negative attitude towards all non-U.S. citizens, especially the Indians. They often protested against the use of Indian miners. More troubles began between the white miners and the Indians, and soon violence erupted again. In one case, a group of white miners from Oregon attacked a Nisenan village on the American River. They injured some of the Indian

women and shot some of the men. The native warriors soon attacked a group of Oregon miners and killed five of them. A subsequent clash resulted in several Indians being slaughtered at Coloma. When James Marshall protested “the atrocious deed”, the Oregon men threatened his life. Events such as these increased up and down the state after 1850, and this led the California Indians to give up the mining frontier.

For the next ten years, conflicts between the natives and the settlers resulted in the further destruction of the natives and their villages. Soon Indians found themselves hunted like wild game by unruly and aggressive immigrants. A series of state laws passed in the mid 1850s virtually enslaved Indians and practically made it legal to kidnap Indian children as laborers. Negotiations for treaties and reservations were attempted but failed to protect the Indians from the violence of the U.S. citizens. Most attempted to survive the best they could on their own, withdrawing to remote areas, but the violence against them continued.

By 1859, the entire Indian population of what we know as Sacramento, El Dorado, and Placer counties was estimated at only 3,500, and for probably the first time in their history the remaining Nisenan were faced with starvation.

### **Post Gold Rush Era**

The California Indians that survived the devastation of these years also endured a great deal of cultural change. From 1870 to 1890, efforts were attempted by some natives to restore their culture, but with intermarriage among the Indian groups becoming common, the old ways were modified or forgotten. By 1900 less than 18,000 California Indians survived, and they were deeply demoralized by their losses and the hunger, poverty, homelessness, unemployment and discrimination which followed. Eventually Native leaders emerged to work toward improving their communities, and they partnered with concerned California citizens to secure small reservations called rancherias.

California Indian children, as in other areas, were shipped off to government boarding schools for the purpose of assimilation. One result of this action is that these children met other Indian children from different tribes and developed a sense of identity as Indians – not just as members of their own tribes. This identity formed a “pan-tribal consciousness” which gave birth to “pan-Indian” reform groups. These groups worked to better the lives of all Indians by seeking reform in laws governing independence, civil rights, water rights, housing and education. In the 1970s and 1980s, as millions of new homes were built in California and Indian burial sites and tribal areas were dug up, the efforts of these groups also led to

passage of Federal Laws requiring that all federally funded museums return Indian remains to their tribes of origin.

### **Native Americans Today**

The importance of the Nisenan Indians to California history, too long overlooked was indeed great. Today, more and more people are proud of whatever Indian heritage they may have. It is time to recognize, honor and preserve what we know of these people and their valuable cultures that were so tragically disrupted. To that end, State Parks officials are working with tribal groups on plans for a major state museum of Indian culture and history to be built in West Sacramento. The location will overlook the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers, and it will be called the California Indian Heritage Center.

Hundreds of American Indian people have contributed to the planning a development of the beautiful and recently opened Maidu Museum and Historic Site in Roseville. The displays there bring to life the story and culture of the Maidu-Nisenan, as well as many other tribes. There is much to learn from their culture and history, and it is hoped that this look into the past will provide a path to move forward in an enlightened way to provide a better future for all.