

'Smoky' Jones weaves Indian spell

By Elaine Gray
Staff Writer

"Great World Maker, bless this area that great harmony may come here ..."

The Sacramento River's humid air swirling around him, Arthur "Smoky" Jones moved slowly in a circle and asked a blessing for the ground he danced upon. Then he wove an Indian spell for his listeners.

Jones, a 56-year-old Konkow Indian from Oroville, demonstrated arrowhead making, stone work and told tales Saturday as part of the Summer on the River Speaker Series sponsored by the

California Department of Parks and Recreation.

As Jones showed how Indians worked exclusively with stone tools, he pulled back a curtain of technology, of cars and TV sets, and gave his 35 listeners a glimpse into the rhythm of Indian life.

"The old people," as he called his ancestors, would spend a dozen hours making a bowl with stone tools, because the bowl would be handed down to a daughter and continue to be used for generations.

"They were stone age people who had no metal. Copper was beginning to be used, mostly for ceremonial things, but everything was based around stone."

As he talked and worked, Jones laughed often and shared bits of experience: "There's really just three categories of rocks, you know: soft, hard, and damn hard!"

Born and reared in the North Valley, Arthur Smoky Jones sold Chico Record newspapers on streetcorners at age 6, and graduated from Chico High School in 1953.

Since he was a boy, he has collected Indian artifacts and learned the old ways, and now he shares his knowledge and enthusiasm with schoolchildren and community groups, he said.

Jones and his wife live in Oroville and spend most of their time these days caring for his

elderly mother.

"One thing about Oroville, boy, there's lots of rocks," he said. With one stroke, Jones broke a sharp, glossy flake from an obsidian stone. He held up the beginnings of an arrowhead.

He said that aside from changing a spark plug or two, he is uninterested and unable to work on his car, but "set me in front of a pile of rocks and I can keep busy for days."

Equally mystifying to him is the way TV can "pick people up in New York, shoot 'em through the air and set 'em down in my living room. It's a miracle," he said. "I'm more at home with rocks."

After Jones demonstrated the crafting of arrowheads, hide tanning and shared a little Indian philosophy, he treated his listeners to tales of how trickster coyotes turn into falling stars and why bats have no friends.

For the bat story, Jones donned a homemade costume consisting of leggings and a shirt made from an antiquated beaver coat, a black cape shaped like webbed wings, and a startling black bat mask.

In a hypnotic, sing song voice, he told the story of why the bat, shunned by birds and animals alike, is condemned to have no friends but his own kind.

Two little girls, Shara Martinez, 10, and Jessie Reardon, 7, sat quietly at a table during Jones' two-hour talk, both were most entranced by the bat story, they reported afterward.

Jones told them, "The Indians were as different from one another as they were from the Europeans who came here. And they were just like people today. They had their problems, their arguments and laws and were deeply religious."

European explorers introduced metal and horses to the continent and forever changed the Indian way of life, he said.

"I can show you a little bit of this stuff, but there's nobody that can ever go back to the old ways," he said. "They are gone." ■



Konkow Indian Arthur Smoky Jones demonstrates the making of arrowheads using stone implements.

Feather River Bulletin

10-17-1990

Indian Days interests county

The first Northern Sierra Indian Days Oct. 12 and 13 in Quincy was called a success by Roxanne Burney, executive director of the Plumas County Arts Commission, one of the sponsors of the event.

Developed as "an annual celebration of Native American culture, showcasing a variety of traditional and contemporary arts and crafts, films and basket making, dance and beadwork," the two-day event celebrated the Maidu culture that has existed in the Plumas County area for at least 1,000 years.

Actor Gary Farmer made a guest appearance following the featured movie, "Powwow Highway," in which he played an Indian "who

has links with the almost forgotten Indian past."

Also shown was a documentary film made for Public Broadcasting Co. on the life of Bryan Beaver, a Maidu Indian.

Slide presentations in the Town Hall Theatre Oct. 13 included the history of the Maidu Indians by author Richard Burrill and the baskets of Maidu basket maker Lilly Baker.

An arts and crafts exhibit held on the courthouse lawn featured the work of many Indian artists from California. The many booths had silver jewelry, beadwork, leatherwork and other traditional Indian crafts.

Oct. 13 demonstrations included the basket making of Lilly Baker, Denise Davis and Rella Allan. Lorena Mix demonstrated her beadwork and Smoky Jones told the stories of his Maidu culture about the earth and the animals on the earth.

The two-day event culminated with "Drum, Dance, Whistle, song" which celebrated the diverse dance styles of many Indian cultures in North America.

Dances of the Central Valley Miwok, Modoc and Paiute of northeastern California, the Yacqui of southern Arizona, the Pre-Columbian Aztecs and the local Maidu culture were featured during the

program at Feather River College. The Northern Sierra Indian Days were sponsored by the Arts Commission, the Roundhouse Council and Feather River College. Funding was provided by the California Arts Council, Plumas County Chamber of Commerce, Plumas County Board of Supervisors and Feather River College.



Maidu story-teller Smoky Jones entertained an audience with stories of how San Francisco Bay was formed, what causes falling stars and other stories about the earth.

Santa Cruz Sentinel

3-6-1991

In Butte County, rescue workers searched a second day for for 6-year-old Amanda Shelton, who was swept into rain-swollen Concow Creek about 15 miles east of Chico. A companion, 12-year-old James Strawn, was also pulled into the waters but was rescued by a passerby.

Canyon dept. signs with Butte

By Tom Wright
Associate Editor

Increased available medical and fire services are available to residents and travelers through the Feather River Canyon as the result of a recent operational memorandum of understanding between Butte County Fire Department officials and the Feather River Canyon Volunteer Fire Department (FRCVFD).

The Butte County Board of Supervisors signed a "Mutual Aid Agreement" with the two fire chiefs, Mike Teater of the FRCVD, and Butte County Fire Chief Steve Brown Nov. 19 putting the agreement into effect.

Requests for mutual aid will be conducted by telephone between the dispatch centers of the two agencies, and tactical communications will be designated by the agency requesting mutual aid, according to the agreement. Each department will make one engine available to the requesting agency.

While the agreement encompasses the entire area of responsibility for the canyon volunteer department, the local fire company will only extend their services into Butte County to a region near Pulga inside the Butte County line, according to Teater. Teater's agency currently covers the areas bordering the Feather River Canyon Highway from the

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Plumas/Butte County line to Keddie, however, Teater admits that any request for aid from the Keddie area could take his volunteers up to an hour in response time.

"Ideally," said Teater, "our area should be reduced." He is concerned that cost of equipment maintenance and with his department's three vehicles being based deep in the canyon near, or at, Belden Town, the department's effectiveness out of the immediate canyon area is adversely affected.

The nearly 50-mile stretch of state Highway 70 has long posed serious concerns for immediate medical aid to accident victims, as well as inadequate fire protection to



Golden Feather Volunteer Fire Company Chief Jim Giles of Concow, left, has supported the efforts of Feather River Canyon Volunteer Fire Department Chief Mike Teater since the new department's conception more than two years ago. Giles also supported the recent mutual aid agreement between Teater's company and Butte County.

structures, but without a tax-based protection district, services have been limited to support from Greenville or Quincy until two years ago when the canyon department formed.

Since its conception however, the department has been kept to a limited level of service due to the lack of funding, and Teater views his fire company as participating in a support role for other responding agencies rather than the lead in some responses.

During the past year, the department responded to 62 calls involving vehicular accidents, hiking mishaps, fires, household-type injuries, suspected heart-attacks and personal injuries to visitors to the area.

In cases of medical aid, Teater's volunteers are directed to stabilize a victim, to await the arrival of ambulance or helicopter medical technicians to transport victims to Quincy, Greenville or Oroville/Chico-area hospitals.

Feather River Bulletin

2-12-1992

Canyon Chatter

By Dorothy Wilson, 283-2906



V.F.D. NOTES

The Canyon Cook Book is ready to be compiled. Over the winter, many recipes were gathered, and now it is time to meet and "get it together." A date, Feb. 25; time, 2 p.m. and a place, Woody's Hot Springs, have been arranged, and anyone interested in working on such a project is welcome to attend. To let folks know ahead what direction things are going, reportedly the book will have a cover, a cover page, a basic map with the variety of wonderful name-places and a short "story" about the canyon and the V.F.D., as well as recipes. It is also hoped that some local artistry, such as sketches, poems, etc. can be worked in. So, gather those recipes and art, and join the members on Feb. 25 to add

your ideas and skills and enthusiasm.

At last week's drill, Randy Glass of the Golden Feather V.F.D. in Concow was a fascinating guest instructor. His subject was the science of structure fire, focussing on basic methods of attack, safety precautions and breathing apparatus. Since it was only an extended two hour drill, a lot of ground was covered lightly, but the members so enjoyed it, and learned so many little things that it is hoped that Mr. Glass will return for more drills. Randy also happens to be the new owner of the Feather River Canyon news a publication serving the western canyon, and the area from Jarbo Gap to Yankee Hill.

CRYSTAL SPRINGS

Jerry and Roberta Savard joined

members of their family an the family of the bride in Reno to share in the wedding of their youngest son Daniel and Traci Ann Turner last December. It must have been Daniel's month, for he was also made representative of the west coast through his job with Safety Clean. We certainly offer our best to the new couple.

INTERESTING PROJECT

PG&E has been very busy over the last few weeks at the Belden Powerhouse, installing a drainage pipe for the tunnel where the penstock leads into the mountainside. It was really neat to watch the helicopter and ground crews coordinate the setting of the pipe last week, of course one the day it tried to storm.

This town for sale



Pulga, a town with a turn of the century history, and 10 permanent residents is up for sale.

Pulga resident Faye Baker Winfield chats with real estate salesman, Ray Vindhurst, who is trying to sell the tiny town.

Nestled near the North Fork of the Feather River, in a heavily wooded glen, approachable by a road that would make a mountain goat nervous, the tiny town of Pulga is for sale — and the first person with \$550,000 can have it.

In its heyday, shortly after William H. King established the town around the turn of the century, Pulga was a raucous little community.

A pool hall, bars, a restaurant, a post office, a general store and a school edged the town's lone paved street.

Cabins and small houses crowded the creeksides.

Heavy, rough-hewn, stone retaining walls along the road still speak of the town's railroad background.

Pulga's history was also tied to mining. Records say there were four mines within the confines of the community, including two jade mines, a silver mine, and what is described as a "limestone mine."



Flowers bloom in the May sunshine.

Over the years the community has dwindled.

The pool hall, once the scene of drunkenness and murder, has become the attractive, comfortable home of an accomplished artist, who dreams of seeing the town become an artists' colony.

Many of the houses and cabins have simply vanished into the woods.

The general store/post office is long closed. Ivy now creeps over the window ledge where townspeople once collected their mail.

The population has shrunk to about 10 and about the same number of cabins and houses remain intact.

Coming to Pulga was a combination of accident and circumstances for at least some of the townspeople.

Earl, who doesn't want his last name printed so his ex-wife won't find him, essentially stumbled into Pulga.

Earl and his current wife arrived from Arizona just over a year ago.

Oroville Mercury Register

5-23-1992

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For two months they looked for a place to live. Earl had never been to Pulga but he had seen it listed on the map.

"We met a lady, who said, 'I just happen to know a lady that owns a place in Pulga.' So we headed here and ended up here. We would rather have been some place else for some reasons, but for other reasons we like it here."

Like many of Pulga's residents, Earl and his wife aren't paying rent for the house they share. They have arranged an exchange of caretaker and repair services for the right to live there.

At the end of a dead-end road in a town where the entire population couldn't crowd a walk-in closet, you'd think that crime and traffic wouldn't be concerns, but Pulga is, after all, well, different.

"We were here for what two months, and our neighbor up here got slashed up by the fellow that lived over here," said Earl while pointing to a small house across the street.

"Yeah, with a sheetrock knife," chimed in Daran Ruikka, another Pulga resident.

As Ruikka and Earl dismantled the shattered remains of a wrecked car Ruikka owns, they talked about the bloody details.

"Yeah, slit him on his neck up here, almost sliced his throat, big old scar across here, big gash over here, all over, down on his legs. Cut him up good," said Ruikka, locating the victim's wounds on his own bare chest with a finger.

It took 300 stitches to close the wounds, according to Earl.

Dave Cook, the victim of the attack, still lives up the street from the empty home of his assailant. The attacker is in jail, but everybody is expecting him back in the not too distant future.

From his point of view, despite the vicious attack he suffered, Pulga is where he wants to be.

Cook, who has lived in the tiny town for three years, said Pulga offers "freedom...freedom for



Despite being the victim of a horrendous knife attack, David Cook wants to keep his home in Pulga.

myself and my children."

He said the mountains, the river, and the rest of the natural surroundings give his children things they can do, rather than being "restricted to the malls and all that other BS."

Standing on his porch in the May sunshine, vivid scars across his chest and arms are permanent reminders of the July night his neighbor cut him up, but Cook isn't particularly concerned his attacker will soon be out of jail.

"I've already made a resolution with him. He was just tweaked out on silly drugs," explained a remarkably understanding Cook.

Cook said there are no drawbacks to living in Pulga.

It just requires you to "learn to survive it, to deal with it."

But what about living in a city?

"That's a whole 'nother rat race. At least here you know the rats when they come at you."

Pulga is not just history and violence.

For Dorothy Ruikka, Daran's wife, it is a haven of puppies and fruit trees.

Bearing fruit trees, including apples, cherries, nectarines, and peaches, dot the town and blackberry thickets abound.

Oroville Mercury Register

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"It's quiet, peaceful. It's just like we have our own little town here. We're so far out of town that it is nice but we're so close to town that it is also nice," she said.

While she has become converted to Pulga, she didn't start out that way.

"I've never lived like this before. I was nervous. I was really nervous because I am used to Chico, I'm used to a town where all my friends are in town. I settled in quickly," according to Dorothy Ruikka.

"It doesn't take long to get the city out of people," Earl added.

Daran Ruikka, despite Pulga's remote location, bristles at the suggestion Pulga is "the boonies."

"This isn't the boonies. If you have electricity and your toilet flushes it's not the boonies," he said.

For Faye Baker Winfield, an accomplished artist from Arizona, Pulga is a place of refuge.

The woman, whose life would make a good soap opera script, complete with deathly ill family members and convoluted family relations, has decorated her home with her own art.



The sign on a rail-side shed is one of the few places where the name Pulga can be seen.

Story and photos By Roger H. Ayworth



Ivy now grows from the window of the former Pulga Post Office.

Richly colored and subtly-lit paintings adorn the walls of the comfortable homes she has made for herself and her husband.

Now Winfield has a dream to make the tiny community an art colony.

She said the only problem is money and right now she doesn't have enough to cover the \$550,000 asking price.

Ray Vindhurst, the Paradise real estate salesman who is listing the town for sale, said setting the price for the land was not a matter of rigid formula.

The four heirs who own Pulga were offered "\$300,000 cash seven or eight years ago" for the 62 acres.

The \$550,000 figure came from the heirs.

"They set the price and it's hard to argue with because who knows what a town is worth," said Vindhurst.

The prospective sale of the town has its handful of residents concerned.

The Ruikkas say they don't know for sure what will happen when their home is sold.

However, Dorothy Ruikka says she is afraid it means they will have to leave.

And Cook, despite his knife wielding neighbor, makes no secret of his opposition to the sale.

The salesman claims to have already had some nibbles about the property.

One came from an American Indian woman who hopes to get federal Bureau of Indian Affairs money to set up an Indian center on the land.

Feather River Bulletin

7-8-1992

Bull Riding

Riders endure violent convulsions aboard 1,000-pound beasts, and that's why writers have voted this the most dangerous of all sports.

Bucky Gramps of Cottonwood was the winner in a field of 14 with a score of 71. His prize money was \$391.88. Also taking money were J.J. Myers of Lovelock, 70, \$235.12; and Ray Hardy, 69, \$156.75.

Ukiah Daily Journal

8-14-1992, page 1 of 2

California Indian tribes given greater power

By **CLYDE WEISS**

Journal Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The House on Wednesday voted for a bill to create a commission to study California Indian funding inequities and federal status problems.

The measure, which also establishes a formal federal relationship with the 125 Maidu and Miwok Indians who make up the Auburn Rancheria in Placer County, was approved by a voice vote. It now goes to the Senate.

Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez, chairman of the House Interior Committee and sponsor of the bill, said the establishment of an Indian commission and the granting of federal "acknowledgement" or recognition to the Auburn tribe are meant to make up for "sins of the past."

Speaking on the House floor Tuesday when the bill was introduced, Miller said the commission would develop a report within 18 months of its first meeting that will become "a blueprint for the future of California Indians."

"The bill puts the tribes at the helm and empowers them to come up with new ideas to achieve funding equity (with tribes in other states) and to resolve the plight of unacknowledged tribes," Miller said.

Currently, there are about 100 recognized tribal groups in California and about 47 that are not. Unrecognized tribes are not entitled to participate in federal Indian programs.

Representatives of seven unacknowledged tribes would join with Indians representing seven federally recognized tribes on what will be called the Advisory Council on

California Indian Policy. Two other, non-voting members representing the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service also would sit on the unpaid panel.

Charles Miller, employed by the Concow/Maidu tribe as coordinator of its Mooretown Rancheria in Oroville, praised the Interior Committee chairman for attempting to correct long-standing inequities.

But the Mooretown spokesman, who has been involved in crafting the legislation, expressed concern the bill could lead to the recognition of more tribes without a concurrent increase in federal funding to support Indian programs.

"If you're just throwing more people into a sinking ship, everybody suffers more," he said.

Also, he noted that federally recognized tribes, including the Concow/Maidu, preferred a commission weighted on their side. But congressman Miller wanted the commission to represent both recognized and unrecognized tribes equally, and "what the chairman wants, the chairman gets," Charles Miller said.

In explaining the need for the legislation, the Martinez lawmaker recited a tragic history of the California Indians, now distributed among so-called rancherias.

In 1851, Miller noted, the federal

The bill puts the tribes at the helm and empowers them to come up with new ideas to achieve funding equity (with tribes in other states) and to resolve the plight of unacknowledged tribes.

— Congressman George Miller

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government negotiated treaties with 18 California tribes. In exchange for certain benefits, including livestock, clothing, education and a guarantee to 8.5 million acres of land, the tribes were to relinquish all rights and title to their vast tribal lands.

"Because of pressure from the California delegation," he said, the "Barbour Treaties" were never ratified by the Senate. Yet "the Indian land was taken anyway, leaving the tribes homeless," he added.

Homelessness, hunger, disease and extermination reduced their numbers from more than 100,000 in 1851 to just 15,000 in 1890, according to a paper prepared by Rep. Miller's office.

Congress tried to remedy the situation in 1906 by purchasing land and establishing rancherias for the homeless tribes. But in 1953, Congress adopted an assimilation policy and began terminating federal responsibility for the tribes.

In 1970, President Nixon dec-

lared the termination policy a failure and Congress began to restore some of the tribes to their earlier "recognized" status. Others, such as the Auburn Rancheria, are still hoping to gain recognition, either through the courts, the Bureau of Indian Affairs or Congress.

At the same time, the tribes want Congress to correct an inequity that leaves them with less federal funding than tribes in other states.

California has 4.14 percent of the federally recognized Indians in the country, according to a 1990 BIA inventory, yet received just 1.86 percent of the federal funds directly allocated to the 12 BIA area offices that year, according to Rep. Miller's office.

Rep. Miller contends the state should have received \$37.7 million in 1990 instead of the \$16.9 million it got. That discrepancy amounts to 55 percent below the state's "fair share," he said.

The inequity is caused by the historically small tribal land base and the fact that the Bush administration "refuses to recognize" many California tribes, Rep. Miller charged.

The funding inequity, acknowledged by the BIA's deputy area director in Sacramento, Mike R. Smith, would be one of the issues examined by the commission set up by Rep. Miller's bill.

Maidu Indians have a long history in Butte County

LONG BEFORE BUTTE was a county and Paradise was a town, a bountiful land of oak groves, marshes and lakes co-existed with the local Maidu Indian population. Flocks of geese and ducks darkened the sky, antelope, elk, coyote and even the mighty grizzly bear foraged along the valleys, forests and canyons.



by
Frank
George

Rivers and streams remained swollen with fish for thousands of years, each filled with migrating salmon as well as the native trout, perch and suckers.

Food and shelter were easy to obtain by the Indians of the region, who were neither warlike or overly industrious. Naked and free, the first California natives lived out their lives in a relatively small area.

Then a white man named Gabriel Moraga ventured into the Maidu country in 1808. He was followed by trappers in the 1820s and 1830s, who preceded a potpourri of miners, representing nearly every ethnic group on Earth.

The gold-hungry itinerants inundated the Hoolupai tribes of Oroville and swarmed the Eskimos of Butte Creek. Even the mighty Konkau that lived in Concow Valley were overwhelmed and engulfed.

Konkau chief Captain Busche became a scout for Lt. Ulysses S. Grant and later General Grant after his tribe was moved from their lands to Round Valley Reservation in Mendocino County. Captain Busche's grandson, John Clarke, said Busche was always against retaliation against the whites, saying they were after gold, which had no value to the Indians.

As soon as the shiny metal was gone, Busche reasoned, the Caucasians would go with it. If the Konkau were patient, they'd get their land back.

The Maidu nation had numbered somewhere between four and nine thousand before the whites came. They co-existed in distinctive clans and tribes, each with its own language or dialect, bravest of each band. His word was law, although he did consult a council.

JOHAN CLARK WAS a descendent of Busche's. Clark said there was no need for game laws because the Maidu shot only enough game to feed their families. They lived largely on

vegetation and made a non-intoxicating cider out of manzanita berries.

The indigenous numbers were patronizingly referred to as "Diggers" by the first immigrants. But in truth, they did very little digging for food, other than for a small portion of their diet and only when it was in season.

"In the old days, there were lots of warehouses in Oroville," one old tribesman told Donald P. Jewell, author of 'Indians of the Feather River - Tales and Legends of Concow Maidu of California.' "There weren't many Indian whores. You'd have to go to Sacramento for them, and then they weren't California Indians. Maidus like their women to be fat."

Village populations ranged from a few families to a few hundred people. Unfortunately for them, the disparate groups did not communicate well with each other, preventing any organization or group action against the whites.

Although many settlers were friendly and supportive of the Indians, there was a strong element that wasn't. An editorial in the Nov. 29, 1856 Butte Record most likely typifies their contemptuous viewpoint.

"A more miserable race of beings can hardly be imagined than the Indians in this neighborhood," the piece reads. "Now that they are induced to quit their old habits of living together in rancherias and gaining a subsistence by hunting and fishing, and depend in great measure upon the charity of whites for food and shelter, they are not only rendering themselves miserable, but are an eyesore to the community..."

Even Chico founder Gen. John Bidwell was looked upon with disdain by the local tribes.

The general did protect them from the disasters of reservation life, but he was known to use harsh disciplinary tactics on the Indians he employed.

He kept a whipping post on his 22-thousand-acre Rancho Chico, rich valley land purchased with Sierra gold mined by Native Americans for subsistence wages.

Bidwell's wife, Annie, seems to be fondly recalled by the Indians for her genuine love and concern, but she tried to convert them to the Presbyterian faith and was never comfortable with the ceremonial roundhouse that the natives had built on the property.

TEHAMA COUNTY Native American Bud Baine once said the Indian shack town on Bidwell's ranch was so crowded, "you'd step right out of your shack into somebody else's."

In the brochure handed to visitors at Bidwell's Mansion, the general is described as a philanthropist, with "those qualities of the human mind and spirit as ... enlightenment, generosity (and) concern for the well-being of humanity."

Baine paints a different picture of the general, saying "Bidwell, he was a bad one."

As the Maidu tribes were forcibly removed from their ancestral homes, public outcry resulted in the *Rancheria Act* of 1884. In June of that year, James T. Grubbs gave 80 acres of his Butte County holdings to a small local clan.

The settlement began with four small cabins and was called "Mooretown Rancheria." The original families and their descendants lived there for half a century and in 1915, the Bureau of Indian Affairs purchased an

80-acre parcel for 53 Konkaus, who were even named on the census list.

But the California Rancheria Act terminated 34 tribes around the state, including those who populated the Mooretown Rancheria. A class action suit was filed in 1979 and on Dec. 22, 1983, Mooretown and 16 other rancherias were reinstated.

Now a tiny fragment of the old lands is being reclaimed by the Maidu. Through a Housing and Urban Development grant, the rancheria (which is now located in Oroville) has purchased a 35-acre tract on the corner of Lower Wyandotte and Ophir roads in Oroville.

A community center that will house a Head Start program, a

tribal library, a cultural center and a youth center is planned for the new reservation, as is a tribal round house and ceremonial sweat lodge.

The Maidu probably aren't about to revel in their fortunes, however.

"After a snowfall, it the snow stays on the boughs, it will soon snow again," an old legend states.

Information from Donald P. Jewell's "Indians of the Feather River - Tales and Legends of the Concow Maidu of California" and Mooretown Rancheria literature was used to compose this column. Frank George is a feature writer for the Paradise Post.

Paradise Post
Jan 1994

Ishi's real name discovered?

By Sally Mau

smau@chicoer.com

25 YEARS AGO

Ishi's real name discovered?

For more than 80 years, the world has called him "Ishi." That wasn't his name, but a label put upon him by Euro-Americans.

A long-forgotten essay has been uncovered that may contain the Tehama County Indian's real name, but the people of the world will never twirl it over their tongues.

During a symposium Saturday in Oakland, Bay-Area naturalist Kurt Rademacher announced he discovered an unpublished essay written by Ishi's physician and friend Saxton Pope, which contains what could be the Indian's real name.

However, Rademacher says he will not release the name out of respect for the Indian, who refused to give his name to anyone — except, perhaps, Pope. ...

Ishi, popularly labeled the last of the Yahi Indian tribe, was discovered in a slaughterhouse near Oroville in 1911, near starvation. He was eventually whisked away to San Francisco to become the focus of anthropological study until his death from tuberculosis in 1916.

— *Chico Enterprise-Record, March 30, 1994*

Chico Enterprise Record

3-30-1994

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Hundreds evacuated in Butte fire

Blaze north of Oroville burns 3 homes, jumps Highway 70

By Bob Blattner
Bee Staff Writer
and Leslie Layton
Bee Correspondent

OROVILLE - A wind-whipped fire tore through up to 1,000 acres of grass, brush and timber north of Oroville Thursday, forcing evacuations and resisting the efforts of at least 550 firefighters backed by water-dumping air tankers and helicopters.

While no lives were reported lost, at least three houses, a mobile home and 10 to 15 outbuildings were destroyed and a dozen or more additional homes were threatened in the blaze. Highway 70 was closed as flames jumped the four-lane roadway.

At least 300 residents from the small town of Concow and the Yankee Hill area were evacuated in the face of the fire, which ranged north and east across steep terrain about 15 miles northeast of Oroville, 75 miles north of Sacramento in Butte County.

Capt. Steve Dale of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection estimated that the

blaze would be contained by 6 p.m. today and controlled by 6 a.m. Saturday.

Within three hours of being spotted at 1 p.m., the blaze covered 300 acres, closing Highway 70 from Pentz Road, north of Oroville, to Highway 89. By Thursday evening, Caltrans officials said the highway through the Feather River Canyon could remain closed for up to two days.

Dozens of drivers parked along Pentz road, watching columns of black smoke rise from the other side of the Feather River canyon and waiting for relatives to arrive from evacuation areas in Concow.

Frantic parents had tearful reunions with about a dozen children who were stranded during the afternoon in Concow, due to the closing of Highway 70. The children arrived by bus at the main shelter at Spring Valley Elementary School at 7 p.m.

On the bus was Jason Ashby, 12, who said he was scared when he saw the smoke curling over the ridge toward his house in Concow.

Please see FIRE, page B7

Fire: Boy, 12, drives younger sister to safety

Continued from page B1

There had been a family emergency and he had been left alone with Tiffany, his 4-year-old sister.

He said he piled her in the family car and eventually managed to drive to the Concow School pool, where his two brothers were swimming.

Carolyn Smith, grandmother of the four children, awaited them nervously while they waited first at the pool, then at a forestry fire station.

"I've been sick all day long," said Smith, a Concow resident. "The boys were at the pool and they wouldn't let me up there. I was just sick."

Smith admitted that the adults seemed a lot more upset than the children. "They act like they had fun," she said.

"Actually, it was kind of cool," said Shane Ashby, her 10-year-old grandson.

Saddie Nishitani, Golden Feather Union School District administrator, stayed with the stranded kids, most of whom were at the Concow pool after a summer school session.

"It was a long, exciting day," Nishitani said.

After the fire began, about a dozen children aged 5 to 13 whose parents weren't available gathered at the pool.

"They just tried to keep kids there because they decided it was the safest place to be," Nishitani said. At 2:30 p.m., the group was evacuated to the Jarbo Gap state fire station and later bused to Spring Valley school.

"At first they were kind of upset," she said.

All residents along three roads - Shuman Road, Sunset Canyon Road and Skycrest Drive - were evacuated, said forestry depart-

ment spokesman Bob Brennan. He said he had no idea how many people live along those roads. Nor could he say what would happen to residents scattered in isolated dwellings in the path of the fire.

"There's a lot of folks who live in a house on the end of a road," he said. "I hope they've made their houses defensible."

By 10 p.m. Thursday, Butte County sheriff's deputies had begun allowing the evacuees at Spring Valley school to return to their homes. The process moved slowly, as the deputies would not allow residents to leave without an escort.

"We're making sure that they'll go back to a safe home," said Sgt. Carl Simmons of the Butte County Sheriff's Office.

The fight against the fire escalated steadily. By late Thursday, 46 engines, nine bulldozers, 550 firefighters, three helicopters, five air tankers and 10 water tenders were enlisted in the fight.

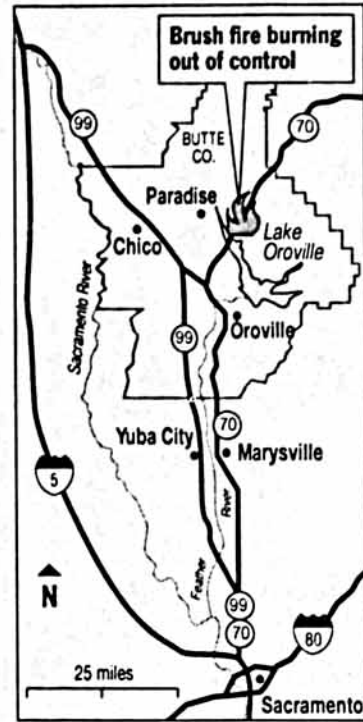
Several other fires burned in Northern California Thursday, as if giving notice that this fire season will be as severe as experts have feared.

In El Dorado County, a small brush fire near Folsom Lake and El Dorado Hills burned about 25 acres, according to forestry information officer Mike Smith.

Smith said that a portion of Lake Oak Estates was evacuated but that residents were soon able to return. There were no injuries.

At 6 p.m., Highway 193 was closed at Highway 49 because of a grass fire that had consumed about 150 acres by late Thursday and was still not contained.

The fire was reported at 4:30 p.m. near Chili Bar, and within minutes it raced its way up about 1,500 feet, skirting the perimeters



of rural communities Kelsey and Garden Valley.

Ridgetop homes were threatened as the fire came within 40 feet of some.

Capt. Roy Buchmiller of the Garden Valley Fire Department stood in front of a home that came close to being destroyed.

"The airdrop saved this home," said Buchmiller of the air tanker that dropped fire retardant directly on the house. "When we got here, (the fire) was 100 feet away."

The owner of the house, Rich Marzec, said he was just glad that he had cleared brush around it, an effort that Buchmiller said saved the home.

State officials reported two firefighters were injured. One suffered a knee injury and the other heat exhaustion.

"Some structures were threatened by the fire, but right now the threat has diminished," Smith said.

Bee staff writers Chris Bowman, Oscar Hidalgo, Nancy Vogel and Graeme Zielinski and Bee correspondent Taylor Flynn contributed to this report.

The Sacramento Bee
4-21-1995

Tribe set to build community center

By Leslie Layton
Bee Correspondent

OROVILLE – The Concow Maidu Indian tribe announced Thursday the start of construction on a \$6.7 million complex that will provide the formerly landless Butte County tribe with its first community center.

Before a groundbreaking ceremony at the complex site southeast of Oroville, Concow Maidu leaders said construction on the community center and 50 houses has been slated to begin May 1.

"It's been a long time in coming," said Sharon Arnold, the tribe's program director.

The Tribal Community Center, funded by a 1992 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and

Urban Development to the Mooretown Rancheria Concow Maidu Indian tribe, will be built on 34.7 acres at Lower Wyandotte and Ophir roads.

The complex will include a 7,500-square-foot community center that has been designed to resemble the Maidu's traditional roundhouses that served as meeting and ceremonial centers. It also will include 50 houses that will provide tribe members with low-income rental housing.

The Concow Maidu, the largest of the remaining Maidu tribes, today has 1,095 members, said Marijane Brown, tribal administrator. The tribe was landless for more than 30 years after losing recognition by the federal government in 1961, as well as its land near

Feather Falls.

The Concow Maidu regained its tribal status under the law in 1983. In 1992, the tribe purchased the land where the complex will be built with part of the HUD grant. Two years later, the federal government placed the 35 acres in trust for the tribe, a step that had to be taken before development could begin.

Brown said the community center, which will be completed in November, will help renew interest in Maidu traditions and culture. Beside housing a Head Start program and youth and health centers, it will also provide space for Maidu language classes and a museum that will feature the Maidu's trademark basketry and other artifacts, she said.

San Francisco Chronicle

7-4-1995

**CREEKSIDE LOT. \$900 down,
\$115/mo. Lake Wilenor, Butte
Co. Owner. 916-343-3140 eves**

Note: Concow Lake was previously called Lake Wilenor

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2-21-1996

FILM CREWS

Everyone is talking about the television movie that is being filmed at the western end of the canyon, at Concow. The film will be a retelling of the Ruby Ridge episode involving the FBI and the Weaver family. Randy Quaid and Laura Dern are said to be the actors, and the Jarbo Gap area is obviously the staging area for much of the equipment and necessities.

Oroville Mercury Register March 1997

Fiddlin' around in Oroville

The week of March 30th through April 5th will bring a wealth of country music to town with the arrival of fiddlers from throughout the state.

California State Old Time Fiddler's Association will hold its 30th Annual Northern Regional Fiddle Championships on April 4 and 5 at the Municipal Auditorium.

With the competition comes plenty of free entertainment as fiddlers play at stores and restaurants all over Oroville in preparation for the big event.

Fiddlers are expected to pour into the area beginning Saturday to set up their motorhomes around the Municipal Auditorium.

Once there, many will begin jamming along the levee or out in the parking lot along Montgomery and Myers streets.

Others will play at different locations across town.

The contest begins at 4:15 p.m. Friday, April 4, and continues at 8 a.m. Saturday, April 5, at the auditorium.

An old-time country dance is set for 7:30 p.m. that Friday. Tickets are \$4 for dance only, and the competition concludes at 11 p.m. on Saturday.

General admission is \$6 for each event with a package deal of \$15 to view all three events.

Children under 12 are admitted free when accompanied by an adult, and discount rates are available for seniors and CSOTFA members.

For information on the schedule of events, call 533-7950 or 589-4844.



DAVID C. NELSON/MERCURY REGISTER

Concow resident Ray Giles brings tradition and jammin' music to the California State Old Time Fiddler's Association championships to be held in Oroville April 4-5.

Concow fiddler is still playing hoe-down music

Ray Giles, age 84, began playing when he was just 10-years old.

By Rick Longley
Mercury Register Staff Writer

Concow resident Ray Giles has kept a family tradition of music alive for nearly seven decades by playing the fiddle for fun and profit.

At almost 85, Giles said he grew up playing instruments with his parents and siblings — from the time he was 10 — and he hasn't stopped.

"Pretty near the whole family was musical in one way or another," he said. "My mother played the organ and my dad played the string banjo — even my sons played the organ and my brothers played banjo or guitar."

That musical ability brought the Giles family some extra income during the 1930s while the family band "The String Busters" played once a week on a Poocatello, Idaho, radio station.

Giles was born in Arkansas in 1912, but his father was a "gypsy type person" who decided to take the family all over the country.

And while the band did not bring in a lot of money, it did allow the family to perform at picnics, dances and other events.

Giles said his favorite style is "definitely old time hoe-down music." He

does not play anything classical or modern in nature.

His love of old country music brought him to play with the California Old Time Fiddler's Association almost from its beginnings.

Founded by Grant Spangenberg back in the early 1940s, the association has brought fiddle lovers to the north state for decades, and Giles has played at many of its competitions.

Giles noted he has several trophies for his efforts — "more than a lot of people."

But he admits that while everybody likes to win, not everyone can, so they "all have to accept whatever comes their way."

Giles said he enjoys competing but wryly says he doesn't get up on stage "because I think I look good."

The fiddler adds he likes to jam with people on the levee behind the Oroville Municipal Auditorium during competitions just as much as he enjoys playing with two or three friends at his home.

When asked his favorite song, Giles named the *Tom Sawyer* waltz, an old square dance tune, as his choice along with a lot of other people.

This year, recovery from surgery may put Giles on the side lines during the 30th Annual Northern Regional Fiddle Championships in Oroville, but the fiddler hopes to be recovered by competition time on April 4th and 5th.

If that's the case, fiddle lovers may catch a Giles performance at the Municipal Auditorium — they'll have to wait and see.

Maidu set out to prove who they are

By Victoria Metcalf
Staff Writer

What would you do if someone asked you to prove you are who you say you are?

Show them your driver's license?

Dig out your birth certificate?

That's not good enough. At least when the federal government is concerned.

And the federal government is concerned in this case. It is requesting members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu to not only prove who they are as individuals, but to prove they are a legitimate Native American tribe that has always existed in the Quincy, Meadow Valley area.

And that's not easy. But it's a challenge members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu have taken up. It's a goal that has become important to the tribe because those members want federal recognition and equality with other recognized Native American tribes that goes along with it.

Two Quincy women, one a member of the American Valley Mountain Maidu, the second only a member in the sense of her relationship to the group, and her extreme interest in Native American people and their culture, and her marriage to Heyden Hedrick, a member of the tribe; have set out to prove historically of the tribe's existence.

"Vivian and I are doing a one

on one," JoAnn Hedrick explained about the three-year research process she and Vivian Hansen have undertaken.

That research process has taken them through the files of Plumas County newspapers just as far back as they exist, through the files at the Plumas County Museum and through any documentation, books, records and other sources they believe might have a scrap of evidence about the existence of the American Valley Mountain Maidu people.

"We work on it all the time," Hedrick said about the pair's commitment to the project.

And with the completion of all the research they are doing they are hoping first to have enough valid documentation to convince the federal government their people have always existed in this part of Plumas County. They are also planning to put all their information together in one book.

Written records of the Maidu people only exist since the time of the white man's appearance into what is now Plumas County.

Drawn by prospects of mining adventure, and later as support services to the miner's, whites brought in a new and much varied way of life to the Native Americans who had called the mountains home since human inhabitation began.

Records — pre-white man settlement — were kept in the

Maidu's own way, through story-telling that was passed down through generations. Unfortunately, written records are considered more valid, making it difficult for members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu community to collect information further back.

And even if the stories could be counted as valid research, the white man's interference with changing the Native American culture, especially encouraging them to give up their language and adopt English, made it increasingly difficult for the stories — those that told about the existence of the tribe and its history — to pass from the old generations into the next. The language barrier in a way cut off one generation from the next.

And for a time, thanks to the white man's influence, many of the Native Americans were discouraged from looking back and learning about the old ways. They were encouraged to adopt the new ways and look to the future.

Going back, finding the roots of their ancestors or at least the proof of it that the federal government will credit, means rebuilding their own culture.

To do this, Hedrick has been familiarizing herself with the language of her husband's people.

Learning the Maidu words helps build a solid base for making their findings more meaningful.

In doing their research, the pair of local women have combed the files of old newspapers. This information gives them accounts about the skirmishes various tribes were

still having with one another, Hedrick said. That information is useful in that it uses at least the white names for the tribes and puts them in this location at that particular date.

Census reports also have a place for Native Americans, yet Hedrick said they are not complete.

Census takers in the 1800s counted the men, giving their names, but when it came to their wives the Maidu word for woman was used instead of a name.

"As a genealogist, do you know how hard that is to trace?" Hedrick asked.

And there is physical history the pair has visited, recorded and collected.

Early photographs taken of the Maidu have been collected validating the people's existence in the area.

And then there are the archeological sites — where burnings were held, or where bear dances took place.

Explaining about the importance of the burnings, Hedrick said that following the death of a Maidu, that person's name was not mentioned until a burning was held.

During a burning, all the possessions of the deceased were brought and put into a pile. What could not be sold or traded, was then put into another pile and burned.

Once this process was completed, that person's name was once again mentioned by his people.

In seeking more evidence of the early Maidu, Hedrick and Hansen have visited Stivers Cemetery, also known as the

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Indian Cemetery on Chandler Road.

There a number of the names match up with the records and other bits of evidence the women have located in recording their local history.

Through their information gathering, Hedrick talked of what they learned of the American Valley Mountain Maidu and their dealings with whites in the early days.

"You have no idea of the graft that went on," she said about what she learned through records.

"I have documents that make you just want to set down and bawl."

And much of what Hedrick calls graft was in connection with the whites taking away what little land the Maidu did accumulate.

"It's hard to prove you're Indian when they've taken everything away from you," she explained.

"We have to prove who we are," put in Don Ryberg

administrator for the American Valley Mountain Maidu. "And not too many groups of people have to do that."

"What we want is equality," he explained.

Members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu are meeting Saturday, March 21 at 11 a.m. at the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Quincy to discuss their case.

Members of the tribe — about 500 of them — are asking the federal government to recognize them as a legitimate tribe.

As a legitimate tribe, members will receive benefits available to other Native Americans who have been recognized under the federal process.

Although members do receive medical benefits through their adopted situation with the Concow Maidu tribe, they want to also be eligible for special grants and loans made available to other recognized tribes.

How California's Native Americans lost out

By Victoria Metcalf
Staff Writer

In their struggle for federal recognition, members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu are prepared to go it alone.

While suggestions of legislation that will help unrecognized members of the California Native American population achieve federal status are bandied about by state and federal legislators, members of the tribe aren't counting on their help.

Anytime the Native American people join together in an attempt to promote themselves, representatives put up a smoke screen of assistance, stated Don Ryberg administrator for the Yahmonee Maidu of the Si Lom Koiyo — the Mountain People of the American Valley.

While his tribe is soliciting support, he said they are not counting on it.

The concern Ryberg is voicing appears in the final reports and recommendations of the Advisory Council on California Indian Policy, dated Sept. 1997. That committee, appointed in 1992 to investigate Native American issues in the state, has sent its finding to Congress.

"The reports of the Advisory Council focus on the contemporary and continuing effects of the federal government's unjust and inequitable treatment of the California Indians," the report

states.

"Not injustice isolated in time or effect, but a pattern of injustice that stretches across the better part of two centuries and threatens to enter a third. Not injustice based on ignorance or inadvertence, but injustice that has been acknowledged, documented and studied by the federal government — then to a large extent ignored."

Loaded with this knowledge, Ryberg's tribe has come up with its own approach in seeking recognition.

"We don't want to go in with the poor me attitude," Ryberg explained about the tribe's attempt to gain federal equality with landed tribes throughout the United States.

And that equality represents a chance of more federal funding and programs already available to tribes who have been granted their own lands.

"We just want equality," Ryberg has stated numerous times in his pitch to see his people gain just that.

"We don't want to just cry the blues, because that don't get us nowhere," he explained in his own way about past failures he's seen from other groups.

"That's old stuff. That's never worked in the past."

But through this chosen strategy Ryberg said, "We're not door mats either. We are a proud people."

What Ryberg and his group of American Valley Mountain

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Maidu people — those who originally lived in the areas from Meadow Valley, through American Valley to possibly as far as Sloat, and west to about the Greenville Wye — are doing is completing the footwork and paperwork required by the federal government in initial steps to being considered as a legitimate Native American tribe in California.

In that process, the names of high powered attorneys aren't being tossed about, and large amounts of funding haven't been made available through either public or private sources. Members are doing the work themselves. Funding is coming from their own pockets.

And in taking the process one step at a time on their own, members of the tribe have to date written a tribal constitution as required by the federal government, gleaned information about the tribe's historical existence in the area they are claiming they have lived in, and are on the verge of initiating the nomination process for electing officers for the tribe.

What members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu are attempting to do, is part of a movement in California by members of unrecognized Native American people. Currently, California has the largest population of Native Americans of any state, and of the some 300,000 reported, 75,000 from 80 tribes are

unacknowledged by the federal government.

And nationwide, the American Valley tribe is just one of 139 tribes seeking federal recognition.

These are not new tribes. These are tribes of Native Americans who have been passed over, ignored and forgotten in the federal scheme of events concerning the development of California.

One question seems to come to the front concerning this issue of California's Native American population — why were they treated differently than Native Americans throughout the United States?

Historically as the U.S. developed and land was opened to whites, Native Americans were traditionally given land — often connected with reservations — and their own rules and regulations with which they were governed.

But California's development differed.

California historically

If gold had not been discovered in the state in 1848 — just a short time before the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo between the U.S. and Mexico — things might have gone differently for the area's Native American population.

In the treaty, the U.S. gained 70 million acres of land in what is now California. And according to the Advisory Council, California Indians had aboriginal

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title to that land.

"Although the United States initiated efforts to investigate and resolve the Indians' claims, these efforts were thwarted by the discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the subsequent influx of thousands of Anglo-Europeans, hungry for California's mineral wealth and its vast fertile valleys, who immediately clashed with the Indians."

As California was admitted to the union as a state two years later, any attempts made by Native American groups were further delayed or resisted.

By 1851, the U.S. was negotiating 18 treaties with what was estimated as one-third to one-half of the tribes in California, and those were never ratified. If ratified, 8.5 million acres would have been made available to Native American settlement.

According to the Advisory Council, not only were the treaties not ratified, but they were sealed and not acknowledged by the government until 1905 — 54 years later.

Without the treaties, California Indians with the exception of Mission Indians with Spanish land grants and those housed on four existing reservations that seem not to have been adequate to address the population's needs, became homeless.

To worsen the condition of the California Native American, in 1887 the General Allotment Act opened up parts of the four reservations and further depleted their lands.

And with these circumstances population records show a rapid decline. In 1851, a population of 100,000 Native Americans were conservatively estimated in the state. By 1890 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs showed a population of just over 15,000.

"Indian people were forced off their land, relocated away from populated areas, and often served as a source of indentured labor for the largely white population," according to the Advisory Council report.

By 1905, when the Senate opened information on the 18 unratified treaties from 1851, Congress passed legislation setting up a study of the Native Americans entitled the Indian Appropriation Act.

Under that act, C.E. Kelsey

investigated Indian settlements "between the California-Oregon border and Mexico."

The result of those studies was that between 1906 and 1910 funds were provided to purchase small amounts of land in central and northern California, and restored to some of the California Native Americans resulting in the rancherias.

While the rancherias only affected some of the state's Native American population, they did serve more of the population.

But by 1944, what the federal government created, it began to take away through proposals within the Bureau of Indian Affairs to reduce the rancheria system. By 1958, Congress had targeted 41 rancherias for termination, according to the Advisory Council.

What these two movements did through the BIA process which provides funding to Native Americans based on land holdings, was to build up the funding process to some of the state's Native American population involved with the rancherias, then strip it away as it reduced the number of rancherias.

This action was not permanent, however. By the late 1960s California's Native American population filed suit against the federal government, and ultimately 27 of the 38 rancherias were restored, according to the Advisory Council report.

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Also during the last part of the 1960s, the Indian Self-Determination Policy was established and California Native Americans of all status — federally recognized, terminated and unacknowledged — have been seeking to "reverse the effects of inconsistent federal policies and institutionalized federal neglect..." according to the Advisory Council's findings.

The four main categories these groups are dealing with, as applying to each group, include equal treatment in funding under the BIA system; restoration of federal recognition and services; implementation of federal acknowledgment; and eligibility of non federally recognized California Native Americans.

And because of this lopsided accountability of Native Americans by the BIA, California receives far less federal funding than neighboring states with lower totals of Native Americans but more land base.

For instance, Native

Americans in Idaho, Washington and Oregon receive \$144 million in federal funding annually, compared to California's \$25 million, Ryberg said he has learned.

Along the lines of federal funding, in 1994 it was reported that Sacramento's per capita funding was \$700.30 compared to BIA-served Native Americans who received \$1,310.51 in funding according to an American Indian Studies Council report from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Health care funding for the state's Native American population is also 30 to 40 percent less than nationwide figures, according to the UCLA report.

The bottom line, according to the report is, "When compared to non-California reservation Indians, California Indians have higher rates of poverty, lower household income, slightly less education, less post-secondary education, and higher rates of unemployment."

American Valley's Maidu

But looking at the members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu, they have never fit in anywhere in the federal recognition and funding scheme.

According to the federal government, members of this tribe do not exist.

And they are not alone. Of California's Native American population of over 300,000, the BIA recognizes only 58,000 — those Native Americans affiliated with a tribal land base, according to Ryberg.

While members have gained federal health care allotted to recognized tribal members through the adoption process with the Concow Maidu of Oroville, they are not eligible for other services and advantages, according to JoAnn Hedrick, one of the tribal background researchers for the American Valley Mountain Maidu, and the wife of one of the tribal members.

What Native Americans who have a land base and are counted under the BIA system receive includes options for housing assistance, grant eligibility, health care and education benefits and certain protections.

Members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu have fallen short when it comes to claiming a land base. Although they can easily trace themselves to the early days of Plumas

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County's gold rush, they have never been granted any land tracts.

And although the rancharia exists in Indian Valley, that land belongs to the Maidu who have lived and continue to live in that area. The American Valley Mountain Maidu are a separate tribe and must find its own land, according to Ryberg.

While Ryberg and members of the tribe work with Forest Service representatives to locate a suitable land base on public lands, no clear amount has been determined.

Ryberg said the exact location and the amount of land allotted — if approved — is up to the federal government.

Another consideration that the American Valley Native Americans are counting on is the trend toward allowing Native Americans to affiliate themselves with their tribe without exactly living on the land base.

Many of the estimated 500 American Valley Mountain Maidu do not live in this area. Ryberg lives in Grass Valley

although he was born in East Quincy and considers the area his home. He said when he was growing up his father had to leave this area to find employment.

And that is often the case with most of the state's Native American population. They cannot remain on their tribal land base — if there is one — and earn a living.

Currently, task forces such as the Advisory Council and the UCLA group are encouraging the BIA to eliminate its strict adherence to counting on those Native Americans who are on or near their land base.

"...And should count all members of unrecognized tribes who meet eligibility standards under the 1988 amendments to the Indian Health Care Improvement Act."

These groups are encouraging the BIA to use census figures when counting the Native American population.

Members of the American Valley Mountain Maidu are meeting Saturday, March 21 at 11 a.m. at the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter Day Saints in Quincy to continue discussions.

In considering what the tribe will gain if it receives federal recognition, Ryberg said his tribe is not interested in exstablishing a local gaming casino.

For one thing the tribe does not have the financial backing, but that is not the reason why the tribe is seeking recognition, according to the members.

When asked if the members of the tribe will gain financially from previous years of neglect by the federal government, Ryberg said there is no back reimbursement of money available through the process.

What would be made available and what is important to the tribe, is what it is eligible for in the future.

"Our main interest is in cultural preservation," Ryberg explained.

"We want back what's left and re-establish the rest," he said about the old ways and traditions.

"Hopefully it's not lost forever," he said.