

RAMIREZ, Eugene Sherman  
The Chico Enterprise Record  
4-28-1960

## **Eugene S. Ramirez**

Eugene Sherman Ramirez, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Ramirez of Chico, died in an Oroville hospital Wednesday morning shortly after his birth.

In addition to his parents, the infant is survived by four brothers and sisters, Frankie, Jr., Grover Stephen, Lanora Rose and John George Ramirez and his maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Sherman Wilson of Chico.

Funeral arrangements are being completed by the Brusie Funeral Home and the time of services will be announced later.

RAMIREZ, Eugene Sherman (infant)

The Chico Enterprise Record

4-29-1960

## **Eugene S. Rameriz**

Funeral services will be conducted at the Indian Village Cemetery Saturday at 10 a.m. for infant Eugene Sherman Rameriz, who died Wednesday morning.

Final arrangements are being completed by the Brusie Funeral Home.

CLEMENTS, Mrs. Susan Slack  
The Sacramento Bee  
6-14-1961

## **Woman, 98, Dies In Chico Indian Village**

CHICO, Butte Co.—Funeral services for Mrs. Susan Slack Clements, 98, who died Monday in her home in the Chico Indian Village where she had lived for 56 years, will be held at 1 PM tomorrow in the Brusie Funeral Home.

Burial will be in the Mechoopda Indian Cemetery in Chico.

Survivors include a son, Bud Bain of Chico; two grandchildren, five great grandchildren and three great great grandchildren.

Mrs. Clements had been bedridden with arthritis for several years.

CONWAY, Isaiah  
The Sacramento Bee  
10-12-1962

## Isaiah Conway, Indian Herbalist, Dies In Capital

CHICO, Butte Co.—Funeral services for Isaiah Conway, 70, Indian herbalist, will be held at 2 PM tomorrow in the Brusie Funeral Home.

Conway was born in Chico in the Bidwell Indian Rancheria, a member of the Yukie tribe, part of the Maidu Nation.

For many years in Chico he was an herbalist along with his brothers, the late Jodie, and Dewey, who operated as the Arrowhead Indian Herb Company. In 1934 he moved to Sacramento and was in business there for himself until he died Wednesday in a Sacramento hospital.

He was the husband of Stella of Rio Linda, and father of Vernon of Citrus Heights, Ivan of Rio Linda, and Mrs. Juanita Simpson of Chico.

Burial will be in the Indian Village Cemetery.

NUCKOLLS, Alfred Eli  
The Chico Enterprise Record  
3-11-1963

## **Alfred Eli Nuckolls**

Alfred Eli Nuckolls, life-long resident of Chico, died suddenly last evening at Enloe Hospital of a heart attack following only four days' illness.

He was born on the Rancho, Chico, June 14, 1894. His entire life was spent in Chico and Butte County. His last employment was with Conway Herb Company, Chico.

Survivors include a son, Virgil N., of Scotia; a brother, LeRoy Nuckolls of Central Valley and a half-brother, Luther Clements of Tehama.

Funeral services will be conducted at the Timmons-Van Hook Funeral Chapel Wednesday at 10 a.m.

Burial will take place in the Indian Cemetery at the Rancho.

# THE SACRAMENTO BEE

LOCAL and SUPERIOR CALIFORNIA NEWS; EDITORIALS; FEATURES

## Modern World Drains Stronghold Of Rich, Ancient Indian Culture

By Ray Canton

John Duncan of Sacramento State College, who foresees the approaching death of the rich Maidu Indian culture of Northern California, has entered a strange, beautiful world in the wilderness.

It is a world of mythology and magic, dances and games, songs and stories and colorful, proud personalities. There also is a sadness casting its shadow over the mountains and valleys as the old culture, which has survived for thousands of years, struggles against the ways of the white man.

### Time Runs Out

"It is a foreign culture right in our own back yard," explained the 25 year old Duncan, who for nearly two years has made a study of it for his master's thesis in social science.

"In 10 years and surely by 15 it will all be gone. The reason is that the younger generations of Maidus, and by this I mean those under 60, want to be like white people and give up the native culture. It is the aged Indians who keep their old world habits and time is running out on them."

Duncan's specific study is Maidu ethno botany — how they utilized the plants in their environment. To obtain information he had to seek out the older natives to help him identify the plants and explain their relationship with the Indian way of life.



Lizzie Enos sifts flour which she ground by hand from acorns.

The area he covered included the boundaries of the entire Maidu tribe from Chico, Butte County, to the crest of the Sierra Nevada, down the Cosumnes River and over to the Sacramento River.

Early in his study he traveled to various areas on

weekends and holidays. Then last February he moved his wife, Rosalind, and two sons, Tom, 3, and Byron, 1, to a cabin at Big Bend on the Feather River about 25 miles north of Oroville, Butte County. There they lived among the Indians who are scattered

throughout the pine forest country at an elevation of about 2,000 feet.

Their nearest neighbor lived a half mile away. When Duncan traveled to remote places or stayed away all night at a Maidu ceremonial, he left his wife with a gun and shepherd dog for protection against a possible intruder.

"I would guess there are less than 100 Maidu scattered about the area where I lived," said Duncan, who now is teaching in Bald Rock, Butte County, and continuing his study.

"The ones living in the area are the older Indians who have retained their traditional beliefs and live in a completely different world. The younger Indians have left to live like the white man and return only for the ceremonials. But they do not speak the Maidu language and do not know much about the traditions."

### The Right Time

Duncan found that information on native mythology and songs was the most difficult to obtain.

He said some of the older Indians are bitter and unwilling to talk to a white man on any subject. Others are merely shy.

Some are cooperative, Duncan said, and want their proud traditions recorded for posterity, but it has to be at the right time of year and they



TUG O' WAR

An ancient, fading culture in California's own back yard is typified by the festive flower dance, left, performed by young Maidu Indian women in native costume. They represent the younger generations of Maidus who, influenced by the white man's world, are engaged in a cultural tug of war with their proud, tradition minded seniors like Daisy Baker, right.



Bryan Beavers, who was educated to become a shaman or witch doctor for the Maidu tribe, examines petroglyphs carved by his ancestors. Beavers is an expert in Indian music and folklore.

# Lure Of Modern Word Has Impact On Rich Heritage Of Maidu Indians

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have to be in a good mood.

The old Maidus believe summer time is for hunting and not for sitting around telling stories. They believe winter nights are the times when stories should be told.

Superstition is another barrier. One day Duncan asked an older Indian to tell him the story of the coyote, which to them is the cause of most of the irritating things in the world. The man was reluctant. He said talking about the coyote would bring rain when it was not needed. But finally he yielded and talked. The next day it did rain. The Indian told Duncan he never would tell him another story until winter when rain was expected.

## Master Story Teller

One summer afternoon Duncan, a husky six footer, was walking along a little trail near the intake dam of the Feather River. The trail, which few people travel, is surrounded by a forest of laurel wood, dogwood, little black oak, ferns and wild ginger.

Soon he crossed a creek and stepped into a grassy knoll surrounded by apple trees. Then he saw a white man's log cabin with the rounded Indian top design. It was the home of his bearded friend, Bryan Beavers who, as a youth of 15, was educated to become a shaman or witch doctor for the Maidu tribe but who soon switched to working in the logging industry as did most of the Indians.

Beavers has a vivid imagination, Duncan found, and is a masterful story teller.

He sang haunting, centuries old Maidu songs while Duncan recorded them. Later they talked about Maidu civilization.

Of the many stories Beavers

told him that night and on other occasions one of the most colorful is about the spicebush.

"In the beginning Wonome (God) made it so that if a man wanted a wife, he had only to pick a branch of spicebush and take it to bed with him. In the middle of the night the stick would turn into a woman who would thenceforth be his wife," Beavers recounted.

"However, the Henwykano (the devil) spoiled this nice arrangement. He needed a wife and so proceeded to cut some spicebush. But instead of taking only one stick, he cut a huge bundle of them promptly and retired.

"In the middle of the night he was awakened by an intolerable tickling. He reached around the whole bunch of new wives, but as soon as he did so, they turned back to sticks, thus punishing him for his greed.

"A man should be satisfied with one at a time. Ever since then, no one can get a wife that old way."

One of Duncan's best contacts on Indian lore and the use of plants is Mrs. Lizzie Enos of Clipper Gap near Auburn, Placer County.

"Like Beavers, she is a marvelous singer and story teller," said Duncan. "If the culture had continued among the young she would have taught language, botanical lore, music, story telling and basketry. She has a brilliant mind."

## Native Affairs

Mrs. Enos is thrilled each spring when her younger relatives leave the white man's world and gather with the old Maidus for the annual flower dance in Janesville, near Susanville, Lassen County. The dance is performed by the women in their native cos-

tume to celebrate the arrival of wildflowers.

Several times a year Bald Rock is the site of the picturesque bear dance and grass games, and again the young people join the older ones for the affairs.

When the bear dance ends in the afternoon, the men choose sides and play grass games until the sun sets. The women make acorn mush, a Maidu delicacy comparable to ice cream, cook venison and serve strong coffee throughout the games.

Generally six men play on each side. One side is given a black bone and a white bone. While holding a bone in each hand, one player at a time hides his hands in the grass and shuffles the bones. One man on the other side must guess in which hands the white and black bones are located.

If he guesses correctly his side receives one of the six counters, which each team is given at the start. Victory is obtained when one side wins all the counters. Then another game begins.

When these affairs are over the young return to the white man's world and the others go back to their dwellings in the remote areas where there is no plumbing, electricity, automobiles and other modern conveniences.

"These old folks are the last of a heritage in California which dates back 7,000 or 8,000 years ago," said Duncan. "Through the years theirs has been a rich life. And now, as in centuries past, they adapt beautifully to their environment.

"The Indians had a playground until the white man made a workhouse out of it. And now the younger generations of Indians have chosen the workhouse."



## 23 School Students Of Butte County Make Special Trip

Last year Big Bar School at Pulga, of the Golden Feather Union School District of Butte County, paid a visit to Injun Jim School in the Feather River Canyon.

This year Mr. Quilter of the Concow School asked if both Big Bar and Massila Valley school pupils and their teachers Miss Maas and Mrs. Peterson could visit this year because of the informative visit of 1963.

Twenty three students and the two teachers arrived Tuesday morning March 3, at Injun Jim School as guests of its first, 2nd and 3rd grade students and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Leiby, teachers.

The outside drill and flag salute came first, then classes joined for patriotic songs led by each Injun Jim grade. This was followed by the regular teaching subjects.

Mrs. Peterson's group sang "What Do We Do In Our School" and "My Pet."

Miss Maas' group presented a game: "Great Granny's Glasses." Injun Jim second graders then gave a choral reading entitled "The Monkeys and the Crocodile" and 3rd graders played the game The Lad and the North Wind. They had made their own props.

Miss Maas had brought cookies for everyone during the snack period following which the entire primary groups played a game The Fire in the Forest, and so ended a very happy and busy activity day for all three schools and their pupils.

Feather River Bulletin  
3-12-1964

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## The Work of Mrs. Bidwell

### Time Has Done Much to Change Chico's Indian Village

By JOYCE BARKLEY

(Enterprise-Record Women's Editor)

The Little White Mother, as she was affectionately known, would look with disbelief if she could drive up West Sacramento Avenue towards the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and see what time has done to her little Indian Village.

The Little White Mother, more familiarly known as Annie K. Bidwell, wife of Gen. John Bidwell, founder of Chico, would certainly have to look long and hard before she would recognize the little rancharia on which she had lavished so much time and love during her lifetime.

Even after her death in 1918 her love for these Indian people continued by way of the provisions she had made in her will for their welfare.

Time has changed a lot since those years when General Bidwell carved a city out of a bit of wilderness and his wife brought culture, compassion and Christianity to fellow towns-

men and Indians of the area.

When Annie K. came to Chico following her marriage in 1868, she was charged with the care of the Mechoopda Indians by her husband. The Indians were brought from as far away as Durham to the village, the little rancharia that was a part of the Rancho Arroyo, Bidwell's ranch.

Historians have noted that Mrs. Bidwell took her responsibility seriously. She taught her charges to sing, to cook, to sew and to read by means of charts and pictures.

The Indians were encouraged to speak in English and today's Indians are as fluent in speech as anyone.

S. E. Wilson, who lives on the rancharia and is one of the decendants of the Indians named in Mrs. Bidwell's will, recalls hearing that the first school house was built more than 80 years ago and was first used as a sewing school for the Indian girls and women.

He said a sweat house adjoined the cemetery. This building was used mostly by the men, but on occasion the women were permitted to use it during their dances.

Next to the sweathouse was the famous Indian Church that attracted artists from far and near until it burned about three years ago. Many paintings and sketches of the church hang in Mid-Valley homes.

The little church was first built on the south side of West Sacramento Avenue and it is said Mrs. Bidwell went there to preach before she attended the Presbyterian Church for its regular services.

It wasn't long after Mrs. Bidwell began her work with the Indians that they asked her to perform the baptismal, marriage and burial services. In 1879 she was ordained a minister of the Presbyterian Church.



... Thelma Wilson, secretary of the Mechoopda Indian Band Association that handles the business of the Indian Village ... discusses some of the problems of the Mechoopdas. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. S. E. Wilson of 620 W. Sacramento Ave., and is a teacher ...

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Apparently the Mechoopdas were encouraged in their native crafts. Each July 4 they held a fair in the church where they displayed their baskets and beadwork and exercises were held in the adjoining grove where they sang, danced and their brass band played.

In 1882 the church was moved across the street. There it stood until destroyed by fire.

Of interest, too, is the fact that the Indians eventually came up with strictly Americanized names. The reason for this, according to Wilson, was that the white settlers, writers and employers of early Chico were unable to pronounce the native names and so they dubbed the Indians with the names of their employers or some common name.

As the times changed so did the Indians.

On April 17, 1955, the Chico Rancheria Indians met in the little church to organize a committee to investigate problems such as boundary lines of property belonging to the Indians and the funds from a parcel of unused land, referred to as "the 14 acres" on the south side of West Sacramento Avenue.

This committee was to report at a May 22, 1955, meeting. Serving on the committee were Sherman Wilson, chairman, Luther Clements, Ihah Conway Juanita Simpson and Genevieve Aranda.

This group, in trying to deter-

mine the legal status and meaning of their village, became the basis for the organization of the Mechoopda Band of Indians of Chico Rancheria.

This group was at work to implement Public Law 85-671, which was approved Aug. 18, 1959, which provides that Indians who hold formal or informal assignments on each rancheria (about 42 in the state) named in the law, or the Indians of such rancheria, or the Secretary of the Interior after consultation with such Indians shall prepare a plan of the distribution of the assets of each rancheria.

It was decided that Indians of the Chico Rancheria who were eligible for distribution of assets would be those who were beneficiaries or descendants of beneficiaries listed in the will left by Mrs. Bidwell.

The organization sent out information to all those who might be eligible. It drew up a constitution and bylaws with a general council as the governing body. It is still at work administering rancheria affairs.

The preamble states: "We, the members of the Mechoopda Band of Indians of the Chico Rancheria, in order to improve our tribal organization and prepare ourselves for assuming more fully our obligations as citizens, do ordain and establish this constitution and bylaws."

"Membership is open to all persons of Indian blood living on March 1, 1958, whose names appear on the list of beneficiaries in the will of Mrs. Annie E. K. Bidwell, and all children born to members of the Mechoopda Indian Band, including children born to beneficiaries named in Mrs. Bidwell's will, even although such beneficiaries were not living on March 1, 1958."

On Jan. 7, 1962, articles of association of nonprofit association were listed under the name of Mechoopda Band Association. The village was divided into 46 lots or shares of stock. Three lots, one including the cemetery, were declared as community property.

Since some of the beneficiaries are not living on the Rancheria, some of this property has been sold.

Fourteen acres, on the south side of Sacramento Avenue, has been acquired by Chico State College. A street, Rancheria Drive, has been put through the middle of the village on the north side.

Earlier in the spring of this year graders and trucks invaded the village. Natural stream depressions were filled, building materials came in by the load.

The Indian Village of Annie K. Bidwell's day is no more.

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... The Indian Village Church is no more. A few years ago it burned, and on its ashes is rising a new era. The church, long a favorite subject of area artists was also the gathering place of Mechoopda Indians, first as a place of worship, and in more recent years, as a meeting place to discuss Indian affairs ...



... The gate stands open to the Indian Cemetery at Mechoopda Rancheria ... Headstones and few flowers mark the graves of both recent and long dead Indians. The cemetery is probably the only real landmark left of the Indians who were the charges of Mrs. Annie K. Bidwell many many years ago ...

Instead there is a four apartment building, constructed by Al Weinrich, housing college students on the new street. On the Sacramento Avenue side Benoit Realty is putting up another apartment building.

Near the railroad track Mrs. Juanita Simpson is building a new herb store to be topped by a couple of apartments. Several houses are being torn down.

Nine of the 46 lot holders have sold their properties. They are Mrs. Dolores Sylvers McHenry, Homer Sylvers Sr., Elmer N. Aranda and Jimmie Durant, all of Chico; Edward N. Wilson Jr. and Lewis Wilson and Harold Wilson, all of Ukiah, Carl Delgado of Clearlake Park and Mrs. Genevieve Aranda of San Francisco.

Indians who were named in the lot distribution are Carl Delgado, Dolores Sylvers McHenry, Raymond Sylvers, Donald Sylvers, LeRoy Nuckolls, Alfred Nuckolls, Homer Sylvers Jr., Luther G. Clements, Lillian Stubblefield, Darwin Nuckolls, Barbara Beasley, Marie Van Syckle, Earl Clements, Ruth Payne, Bud Bain, Luther L.

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Clements, Ivan Conway, Virgil Nuckolls, George Aranda, Elmer Aranda, Homer Sylvers Sr., Vernon Conway, Thelma Wilson, Harriet Ramirez, Jimmie Durant, Norma Ramirez, Frances Potter, Marvin Wilson, Maynard Nuckolls, Edward Wilson, Bernice Rogers, Joyce Drenon, Donna Rickard, Juanita Simpson, Mary Pomeroy, Jon Azbill, Kenneth Azbill, Eva Pierce, Genevieve Aranda, Henry Azbill, Sherman Wilson and Jodie Lee Conway, plus the three community property lots.

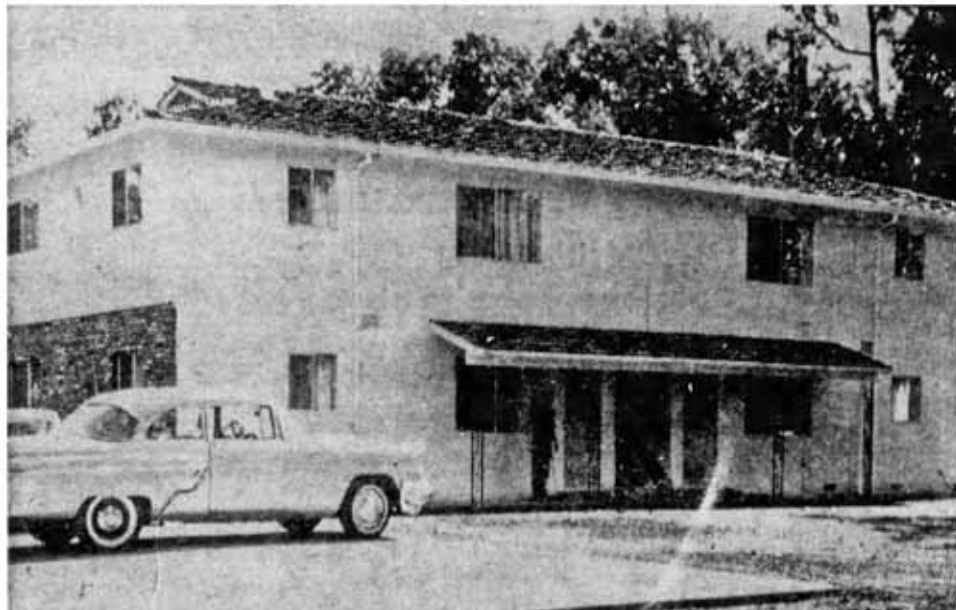
There are four homes occupied by Indian families and several dilapidated buildings in the rancheria bound by First Avenue, Mechoopda Street, North Cedar Avenue and Sacramento Avenue.

The Little White Mother would have difficulty recognizing the little Indian village. Most of the Indians are gone, old landmarks like the little church have disappeared. The little cemetery is still there though.

Now the Weinreich apartments are filled with college students, Mrs. Simpson's herb business will soon get going in the new modern building. Other apartments and other businesses will be rising from the ashes of a bygone era.



... Customers who have been getting their Indian herbs at Conway's Store will soon be buying them at a new location. Mrs. Juanita Simpson, who has operated the business at the Indian Village since 1954, is building a new structure at the corner of West Sacramento Avenue and North Cedar Street. The Conway family has been in the herb business for some 30 years ...



... This past year has seen many changes at the Mechoopda Indian Village. One of the changes is this new apartment house on Roncheria Street. The building was built by Al Weinreich, Chico builder and houses college students. Pictured under the roof of the porch is the apartment house manager, Fred Gauer, a recent immigrant from Germany ...