

'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.

CONWAY, Ivan James

The Sacramento Bee

8-11-1991

CONWAY, IVAN

Of Sacramento August 6, 1991. A native of Covelo, CA, aged 69 years. Father of Ronald James and Cynthia Conway. Step-father of Patricia Jones, Jacqueline Taylor, Roger and David Hernandez and Andrea Cabrera. Brother of Vernon Conway. Grandfather of Daniel Matthew, Laura, and Brian Taylor, Floreine, Anthony, and Heather Hernandez, Joseph, Richard, and Anthony Cabrera, Somer DuRoff, Anthony, Lance and Dove Conway. Friends are welcome Monday, 1-9 P.M. and are invited to attend services Tuesday, 3 P.M. at the PRICE FUNERAL CHAPEL, (6335 Sunrise Blvd). Interment Wednesday, 2 P.M. at the MECHOOPDA INDIAN CEMETERY, Chico, CA.

725-2109

969-4665

WOOD, Martin Christopher
Lassen County Times
3-17-1992

**MARTIN
WOOD SR.**

Martin Wood Sr., 84, died March 10, 1992 at his home in Portola.

He was born Aug. 5, 1908 in Pulga, Calif.

Martin worked for the Western Pacific Railroad for 62 years and retired as a maintenance foreman.

He was a member of Maintenance of Way Union Lodge No. 1246.

Survivors include Nina Wood of Portola, daughter Irene Moser of Portola, sons Ernest of Doyle, Martin Jr., and Earl, both of Reno, Stan of Shingle Springs and Bill of Portola. Also surviving are his brothers William of Shingle Springs, Oliver and Ivan, both of Sacramento, sisters Jenni McCune of Shingle Springs, Adeline Meyers of Sacramento, Ella Raver of Oroville, Lottie Main of Doyle, 22 grandchildren and 20 great-grandchildren.

Services were held March 13 at the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints in Portola.

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.

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

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— Congressman George Miller

Ukiah Daily Journal

8-14-1992

page 2 of 2

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.

PETTEYS (CASNER), Rachel C.

Feather River Bulletin

6-30-1993

RACHEL C.

PETTEYS

Rachel C. Pettey, 95, died Tuesday, June 22, 1993, at Eastern Plumas District Hospital in Portola.

She was born March 23, 1898, in Camp Verde, Ariz. She had been a resident of Portola for the last two years, moving from Pala. She had lived in the Auberry area for over 60 years.

She had worked as a camp cook for PG&E for 15 years.

She is survived by her son, Glenn Petteys of Pala; her daughter Peggy Artz of Portola; her five grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Funeral services will be held at the Clovis Cemetery on Tuesday, June 29.

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

(reprint 3-25-2019)

REECE, Lorraine LaVaughn
The Sacramento Bee
4-26-1994

REECE, LORRAINE LOVAUGHN

In Sacramento, April 24, 1994, aged 62 years. A native American Indian born in Brush Creek, CA. Member of the Tyme Maidu Tribe of Berry Creek Rancheria. Survived by two daughters, Cleo Parent and Patricia Parcher, son-in-law, Joe Parent nine grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter. Friends are invited to attend visitation Today 5 to 9 P.M. at **SUNSET LAWN CHAPEL OF THE CHIMES**, 4701 Marysville Blvd, Sacramento, CA and attend graveside service Thursday, April 28, 1994, 2 P.M. at Tyme Maidu Tribe Cemetery, Berry Creek Rancheria, Oroville, CA.

McCORMICK, Velda Mae

The Sacramento Bee

5-20-1994

McCORMICK, VELDA MAE

Aged 58. In Riddle, OR on May 17, 1994. Survived by husband John McCormick, children, John David, Daniel, Debbie Gumm and Joyce McCormick. Memorial Services on Saturday, May 21 at 2 P.M. at Mt. View Funeral Home Chapel, Myrtle Creek, OR.

(503) 863-3148

Burial in Bald Rock Indian Cemetery, Butte County, CA