

Chico Area Archaeological and Cultural Tour

June 10-11, 2006

On Saturday, June 10 and Sunday, June 11, 2006 ten Society members journeyed to Chico, Centerville, and Oroville area for an archaeological and cultural tour. Dr. Georgia Fox and Adrienne Scott, Curator started the tour by introducing the **Archeological Lab at Chico State University**. This facility is dedicated to teach the process of creating a museum exhibition. The current exhibition "Gifts from the Earth" illustrates concepts of Ethnobotany with a look at many different plants originating from around the world.

Next Archaeologist, **Dr. Gregory White**, awed us with his finds from Northern California. He talked about his most recent excavation of a cave near Red Buff. At this site he found positive evidence of human life in the cave dating to more than 4000 B.P. Dr. White will be leading three excavations this summer for which volunteers are needed. For more information contact Dr. White at GWhite@csuchico.edu

In the afternoon we had a change of pace. History of the area was the topic for a tour of **Bidwell Mansion** and **Patrick Ranch**. At the "Patrick Ranch 4th Annual Threshing Bee and Far Equipment Display" we were fortunate to not only observe the old method of threshing wheat but also we had the opportunity to talk with Native Americans from the Mechoopda Tribe. They had dance regalia, provided acorn soup and illustrated native temporary lodging.

On Sunday the Honey Run Covered Bridge was the first site to visit. This bridge was built in 1887, washed away by a flood and then rebuilt in 1896. This picturesque bridge in Butte Creek Canyon is the second longest covered bridge in California. Up the road from Honey Run Covered Bridge is the Coleman Centerville Museum. There we enjoyed learning about the Maidu, pioneers, the gold rush, and the Chinese. Butte Canyon was a booming area in the last half of the 19th century. Gold was removed by every possible method: panning, digging, hydraulic mining, tunneling and finally dredging. The Indians, Chinese, mountain men and miners whose population numbered in the 10,000s have all passed into time. The canyon is now quiet and peaceful.

Butte County Pioneer Museum in Oroville extended the groups focus on the history of the area. Two floors in the museum house artifacts from the century of pioneer settlement. If you are visiting Oroville, take time to delve into the past in this richly displayed museum.