

“Examining Archaeology Looking in, Looking back and Looking under”

October 18, 2014

On Saturday, October 18, 2014 Sacramento Archeological Society, Inc. celebrated Archaeology Month with a tour and three lectures at the Maidu Museum & Historical Site in Roseville, California. This event hosted by Maidu Museum was well attended by approximately 60 individuals from our membership and the general public.

The event was kicked off with a walking tour of the Maidu Historical Site lead by Dan Foster, archaeologist who with his brother, John recorded the site in 1983 (Foster and Foster, 1983) when it was surrounded by grassland and not houses. Dan pointed out to the group boulders that contained “rock art” documented by Payen (1959). He picked up soil from middens that had been exposed by gophers and showed bedrock mortar sites. Approximately 200 mortars have been identified at the site. Finally on the east end of the site Dan identified deep grooved “rock art” on boulder grouping. The function of these grooves remains an unresolved question. The stroll through the oak forest land with basalt boulders and a brook was very peaceful and pleasant. One could imagine village life here. After the tour Dan gave a presentation where he talked about rock art styles and showed pictures of rock art from various California sites.



Dan with rock illustrations



Group at boulders



Dan showing midden



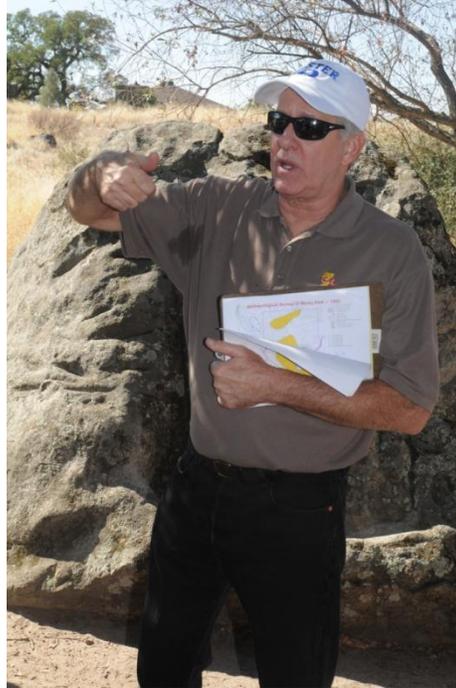
Observing bedrock mortars



Group walking through Maidu site



Rock art grooves



Dan explaining grooves

Next on the agenda was a talk by archaeologist, Gerrit Fenenga. He gave a comprehensive review of the contributions of California archaeologists in the early 1900's to the field of archaeology. Archeologists namely Jeremiah Lillard, Francis A. Riddell, Franklin Fenenga, A., R. Beardsley, and R. F. Heizer set the stage for orderly investigation of the prehistory. They established classification schema, standardized methods, and offered the cultural horizon concept for viewing archaeology. After systematic investigation of the central California regions of San Francisco Bay and Sacramento Delta two papers, "An Introduction to the Archeology of Central California" (Lillard, Heizer and Fenenga, 1939) and "Archaeological Horizons in Central California" (Heizer, 1939) laid the foundation for the organization of central California prehistory and introduced the concept of cultural horizons. A Manual of Archaeological Field Methods first authored by R. F. Heizer and published in 1949 is in its 7th Edition. It has been the leading guide for instructors and students in archaeology courses and field schools. This comprehensive guide provides an authoritative overview of the variety of methods used in field archaeology. Gerrit did a fabulous job relating the history of California prehistory investigation and Californians should be proud of the contributions that these local archaeologists made to the discipline.

The third speaker was archaeologist, John Foster. He reviewed his experiences as an underwater archaeologist. He highlighted several underwater investigations:

- Emerald Bay Underwater Park in Lake Tahoe where you can see a sunken "miniature fleet"
- Brig *Sterling*, sailing ship that sank in 1855 in the Sacramento River off J Street
- *Montebello*, a Union Oil Company tanker that was sank by a Japanese submarine on December 23, 1941 off the coast of California near Cambria

- Ahjumawi Lava Springs Park, the location of stone fish traps
- Cedros Island area in Baja where Ming porcelain from a Manila Galleon probably sunk during a storm was found. Neither the ship nor its pieces were ever located.
- 1699 Captain Kidd's pirate shipwreck in Dominican Republic which has been made into a Living Museum of the Sea
- *Nuestra Señora de Begoña*, a 1725 Spanish Merchant Ship wrecked at La Caleta de Caucedo in the Dominican Republic

John's most exciting find from these underwater adventures was a clump of silver coins. These coins had been stashed in a canvas bag on the *Nuestra Señora de Begoña*. Elements had destroyed the bag and the coins had congealed into a mass. After investigation it was found that they were minted in the new world and were undoubtedly contraband.