

# Shingle Springs Rancheria Band of Miwok Indians



# Who we are, and where we come from

- We are known as the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians
- Our original name was Verona Band of Homeless Indians
- We are a federally recognized Tribe
- We are currently located in El Dorado County, and received 160 acres of land
- The SSR was purchased by the US federal government on DEC. 16 1916
- We are a small tribe with approximately 600 tribal Members, 50% of them being Children.
- We have an understanding that our ancestors were removed from our original lands in Sutter, Yuba, Yolo, Sacramento, Placer, Amador counties creates confusion today. Furthermore, our tribal name, the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians, adds to the confusion of our identity of our Nisenan, tribal lineage. However those aspects of the tribes history were beyond our control.
- The tribes aboriginal village sites and historical presence occupied the lands on the east and west banks of the Sacramento River, the confluence of the Sacramento and American River, the east and west banks of the Feather River, and various points along the Consumnes River to the crest of the sierra.



# Shingle Springs Territory map by county



# California Tribes are Like No Other

Out of all other states in the U.S., California is home to the highest population of people with Native American/Alaskan Native heritage.

There are currently 109 Federally recognized Indian Tribes in California. In addition, there are several non-federally recognized tribes and various dis-enrolled families petitioning for federal recognition.

There are about 100 reservations throughout the U.S.



# Ethnographic Studies of the Tribe

- Ethnographic studies of the Tribes aboriginal area began as early as 1874 with Stephan Powers accounts of aboriginal life and resources. Other early studies included those of Barrett, Dixon , Gifford, and Kroeber, Beals.
- The Nisenan were the southern linguistic group of maiduan language family. The Nisenan ( the word meaning “of our side” or “from among us”) occupied territory that included the drainages of the American Bear, Yuba, and the lower portions of the Feather River . The first linguistic data in Central California included Dana’s vocabularies of the Talatui on the Consumnes River, and Sama, Sek, and Pujune vocabularies in the nisenan territory.
- In general, ethnographic descriptions came from Nisenan People themselves. We survived murder, genocide, mission life and colonization of our homelands and our elders passed down their memories of those terrible times.

# White Incursion and the End of traditional Nisenan life

- It has been estimated that the population of pre-contact Sacramento Valley peoples was approximately 76,000. European contact would have a devastating effect on these numbers. Miwok territorial geography and their trade connections exposed them to European contact earlier than the Nisenan to the north. The Spanish began to explore Miwok Territory in the late 1700's, and established Mission San Francisco de Asis in 1776. The first Spanish expedition into plains Miwok Territory was led by Alferez Gabriel Morara in 1806. The mission system, primarily Mission San Jose de Gaudalupe, began to absorb inland Miwok peoples as early as 1811.

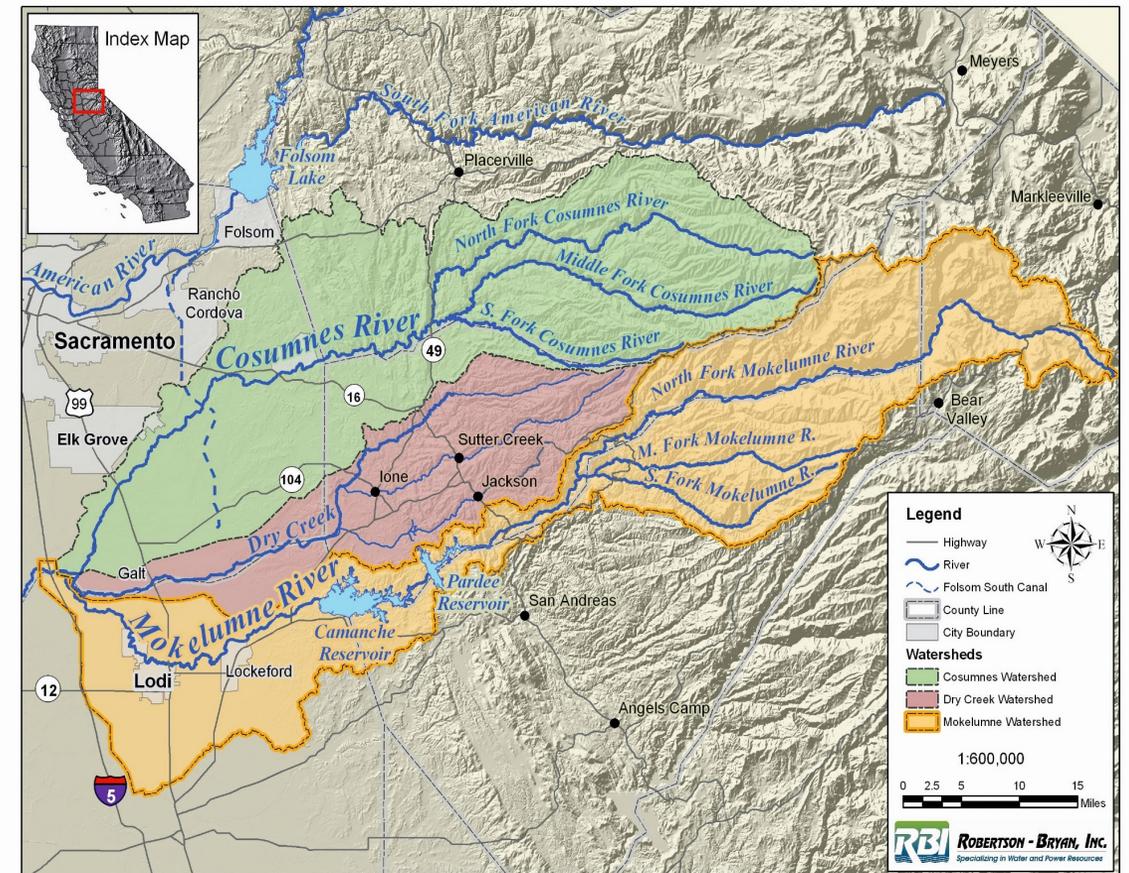


- The Nisenan largely escaped this dislocation, though Mission San Jose records indicate that in October 1836, four Nisenan from the village of Pusune were baptized. Pusune was a well established Nisenan Village located at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers, and the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians includes members from this lineage.
- During this time roughly 10,500 Natives from central valley and delta were absorbed into the mission population. Like the coastal natives before them many of these converts died of disease and hardship. American and british fur trappers, the first overland intruders into the area included the 1832 Jonathan Work expedition which introduced a malarial epidemic that ravaged the Central Valley in 1833. The Valley groups were harder hit than the foothill villagers since the disease is spread by mosquitos that inhabited the great central valley. Approximately one half, or 20,000.00, of the people inhabited the area died of this contagion or other disease. These included syphilis, which had spread from the mission system .

# Nisenan People & First Contacts

- **Gabriel Moraga Expedition 1806**

- One of the earliest documented encounters between Europeans and the Nisenan people is from the Diary of Fray Pedro Munoz who accompanied and wrote about the 1806 Gabriel Moraga Expedition
- According to the diary, on October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1806 the expedition came upon a group of native people along the Rio de la Pasion (the Passion River), currently known as the Mokelumne River. The expedition's Miwok guide could not interpret the language of this group.
- It is believed that at this point, the expedition turned back “due to a change of linguistic affiliation of the local Indians and resulting inserviceability of his interpreters. At this place, the Miwok language was replaced by Maidu.” (Dawson 1957)
- Nisenan people were also referred to as Southern Maidu. If it is true that the Moraga expedition encountered Nisenan/Southern Maidu speakers at the Mokelumne River in 1806, then it is possible that the southern boundary of Nisenan territory extended farther south than most ethnographers believe



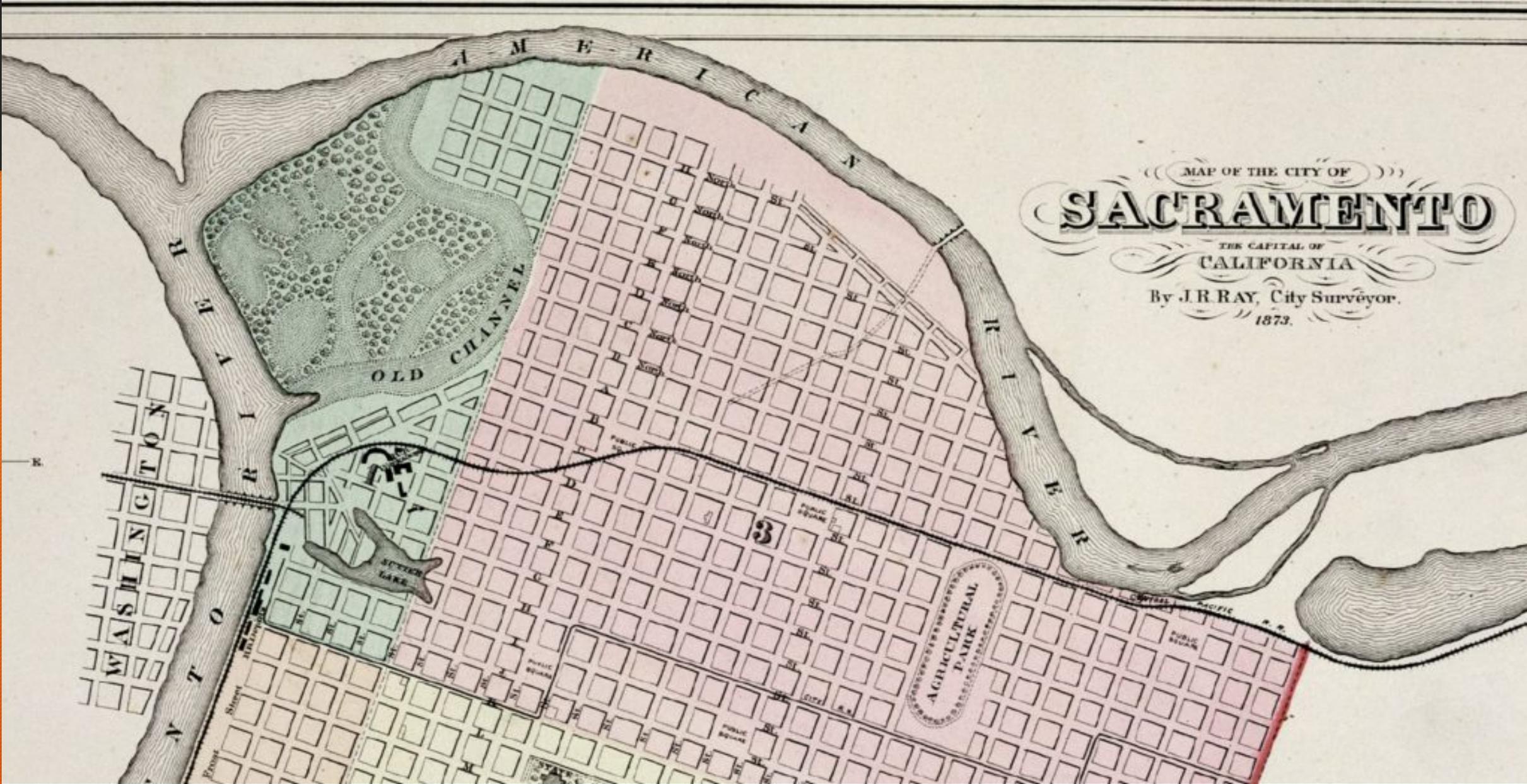
# Nisenan People & First Contacts

- **Jedidiah Smith Expedition to California  
1827 - 1828**
  - According to Smith's journal, on March 1, 1828 he and his group of trappers left their camp located on the Wild River (American River) to explore the confluence of the Wild and Buenaventura (Sacramento) Rivers. They came upon an "Indian Lodge" and its inhabitants.
  - The frightened inhabitants fled and Smith recounts in his journal that one of the children died of fright from this encounter
  - We believe this was likely the Nisenan Village of Pusune, located at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers

## Excerpt from Smith's journal:

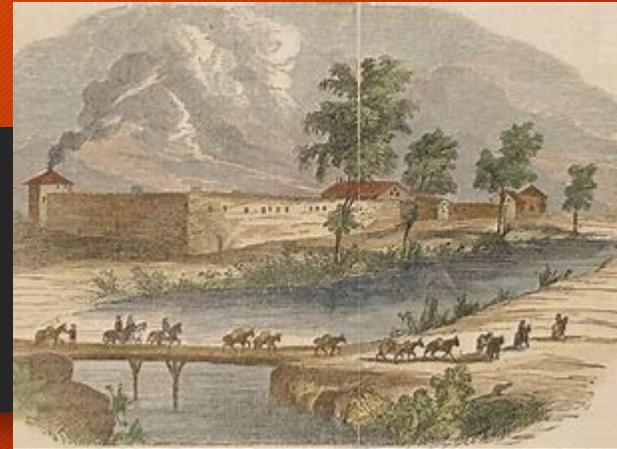
March 1st 1828 I went in company with the trappers down to the confluence of Wild River and the Buenaventura which was about 2 Miles from camp. The Buenaventura still continued about 300 yards wide and came from the North maintaining the appearance of which I have before spoken. The Mountain on each side about 30 Miles distant. In going down Wild River we came suddenly on an indian lodge. Its inhabitants immediately fl[e]d. Some plunged into the river and some took a raft while some squaws ran down the bank of the stream.

We galloped after them and overtook one who appeared very much frightened and pacified her in the usual manner by making her some presents. I then went on to the place where I had seen one fall down. She was still laying there and apparently lifeless. She was 10 or 11 years old. I got down from my horse and found that she was in fact dead. Could it be possible, thought I, that we who called ourselves Christians were such frightful objects as to scare poor savages to death. But I had little time for meditation for it was necessary that I should provide for the wants of my party and endeavor to extricate myself from the embarrassing situation in which I was placed. I therefore to convince the friends of the poor girl of my regret for what had been done covered her Body with a Blanket and left some trifles near by and in commemoration of the singular wildness of those indians and the novel occurrence that made it appear so forcibly I named the River on which it happened Wild River. To this River I had before that time applied a different name.



MAP OF THE CITY OF  
**SACRAMENTO**  
THE CAPITAL OF  
CALIFORNIA  
By J. R. RAY, City Surveyor.  
1873.

# Land Grants / Sutter



- The Mexican government allowed a small number of other nationals to settle, apply for Mexican citizenship, and so become eligible to receive land grants. John Sutter established a fort in 1840, on a land grant that he named New Helvetia, on the south bank of the American River in the Valley Nisenan Territory. Sutter engaged in cattle ranching, fur trapping, wheat farming and other agricultural pursuits and also developed a grist mill, sawmill ( in the foothills at Coloma), and tannery. Much of of his labor was supplied by local Indians, whose services he contracted for with the local chiefs.
- One effect of Sutter's role on Nisenan society was the disruption of family life, particularly by his supply of Indian children to land owners. Child Slavery, which was outlawed under the term 'indentured servitude". Nisenan traditional life was also impacted by settlers taking indian women as consorts and wives, including John Sutter, and a number of his employees. It was under these conditions that the 1846 census of New Helvetia territory recorded 2,768 Nisenan and Miwok People.

# Nisenan People and Sutter

- In 1839, John Sutter, with a group of Hawaiians arrived in Nisenan Territory at a location along the American River about 3 miles above the confluence. Today it is known as Sutter's Landing
- Sutter exploited the Hawaiians and the Nisenan for slave labor and used them to build his fort, maintain the lands, and recruit new workers
- Sutter engaged in slave trade, utilizing the native people of the region, which included the kidnapping and selling of women and children
- Many of my relatives and ancestors were at Sutter's Fort as laborers, "wives", foremen, and soldiers (Sutter created an Indian garrison)
- The arrival of Sutter and the settlers that followed, drove the Nisenan people from our homelands as village sites were abandoned and/or destroyed
- The Nisenan population was also devastated by the diseases that European settlers brought with them as they entered the region
- When gold was discovered in 1848, the gold rush hysteria caused the mass destruction of nisenan territory, natural resources and traditional way of life

- American military authorities present in California from 1846 operated to support the needs of American and Mexican residents, who exaggerated the dangers of Indian raids and demanded that the California Indian population be controlled. Though Indian peoples turned to livestock raiding for subsistence when the Mexican- American war disrupted their traditional economies, slave raids by whites exacerbated the conflict. In one situation in July 1847 , three whites attacked a maidu community sixty miles north of what was now Fort Sacramento. Thirty -seven Maidu people were taken as slaves and thirteen Indian People were killed.

# Indian Policy

- The federal government's Indian policy developed during this period was created to protect settler interests. Indians were required to be attached to a rancho or be otherwise "employed". They were required to have a passport or they could not travel in their own homelands. White landowners could restrict access of Indians to land they had traditionally used. Their legal recourse was through Sutter, who was appointed the first federal Indian subagent in California in 1847. His position as their representative conflicted with his own interests. For instance, when the measles epidemic ravaged his regular work force that year, he pressed "wild" Indians into service. When the Nisenan near the fort held an increasing number of their ceremonies, probably in response to the epidemic, Sutter, fearing a disruptive influence, burned their dance house down.

# Gold Rush



- Circumstances became incrementally worse for the Nisenan in 1848 when gold was discovered at Sutter's sawmill in Coloma (the Nisenan village of Koloma) on the South Fork of the American River.
- Trying to profit with the discovery of gold , Sutter procured Indians for mining operations as far away as Sonoma county. Other white settlers, such as John Bidwell of Rancho Chico some ninety miles northwest of Sacramento, followed Sutters lead.
- Many non-Indian miners so disliked the competition that by 1849 they had driven Indian miners out of the central mining district after a period of some conflict, Sutter did not know how to deal with the situation

- Organized white military campaigns during this period were more often massacres than actual battles.
- In response the California Legislature passed in 1850 “ An act for the Government and Protection of the Indians.” Known as the Indian Indenture Law, it established a variety of procedures for the control of the Indian population. It permitted native children to be indentured, if they were orphans or with their parents’ consent, until the girl children were fifteen and the boys eighteen. Unattached adults could be arrested on vagrancy charges and auctioned off as laborers. The act served agricultural interests by including penalties for the firing of grassland ( a grasshopper hunting technique) and for livestock theft. Indians had little legal recourse because they could not testify against whites.
- In 1851 in an effort to implement United States federal Indian policy in California, three federal commissioners worked throughout the state to negotiate treaties with California tribes. The first two treaties were negotiated with Indian people in March and April on the Mariposa and San Joaquin Rivers. Unfortunately, the treaties were never ratified because in part of opposition by the ranchers who would not be able to access Indians for cheap labor , had the treaties been ratified. Failure of these negotiations left Indians dependant on white society into the twentieth century.

# Verona !

- Major Pierson B. Reading explored and surveyed the Sacramento River, he identified a town at what was later known as Verona on a map dated 1849
- The town was established of course near a Nisenan Village which is the ancestral home of the original members of the Shingle springs Rancheria Band of Miwok Indians.
- Verona became a diverse community of cultural backgrounds, including Nisenan, Portugese, Japanese, East Indian, African American, Korean, Chinese, and Hawaiian origins. A settlement of California Indian, Hawaiian and Chinese formed on the banks of the sacramento River in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that thrived for years.



- John Sutters expedition included ten men and woman who came from the Hawaiian Islands.
- The Native Hawaiians, along with the Nisenan from the Sacramento Valley constructed the New Helvetia settlement.
- John Kapu married a Nisenan woman who was daughter of Nisenan Headman. By marrying into the Hawaiian monarchy, California Indian women could protect their property and their children during a tije when the kidnapping and stealing of Indian children to become slaves was very common. John Kapu and his Nisenan wife and children were among those forced to march into Round Valley in 1863 during the Maidu Trail of Tears, however they where able to make it back.

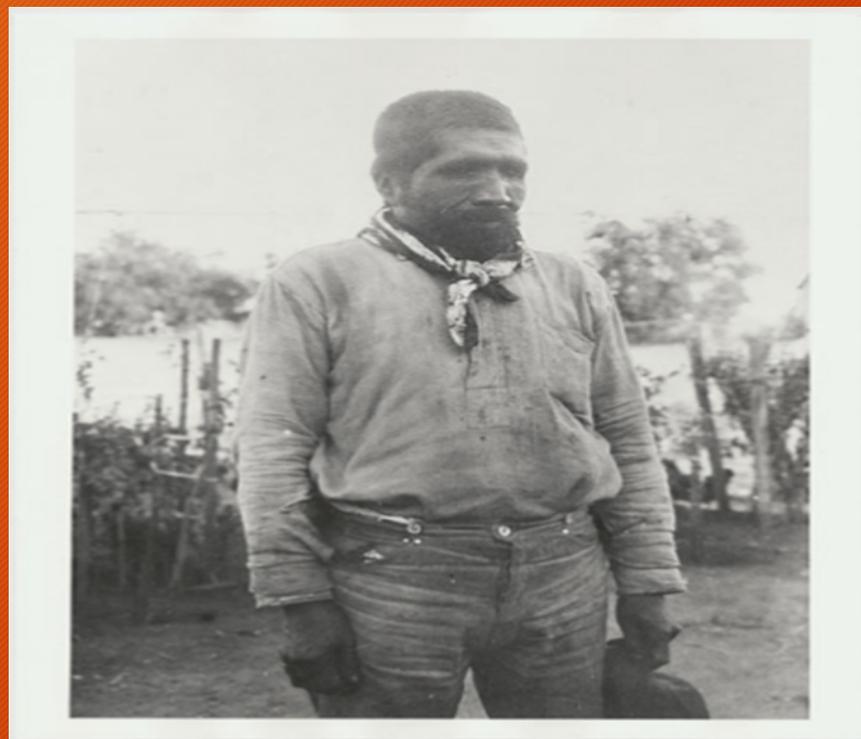
- Most local Indians were eventually left to their own devices, living in isolated parts of the country, attached to non-Indian farms and households, and until the 1860's vulnerable to enslavement. Indian women, apparently considered less of a threat than men, were allowed to do little subsistence gold mining. They were also, however especially prey to sexual attack. They employed a number of measures to ward off such advances, such as filth. Some women, however were forced by poverty to become prostitutes. Others formed permanent relationships with non-Indian men, which in turn the Nisenan and Miwok marriage and family life suffered.
- By 1860 - the Indian population of Sacramento County was reportedly 251 people, in Placer County only seven Indians. The Indian population was disproportionately young and male. Less than seven percent of the population was over forty. Most of the approximately two dozen male and female Indians living in Sacramento City were servants and under twenty one years of age. Individuals and groups of others lived throughout the rest of the country attached to households and ranches and were enumerated as servants, day laborers, field laborers and herders. The white flooding of the labor market left Indians primarily occupied at domestic and subsistence labor.

- Newspapers from the nineteenth century suggest that many whites were fascinated by the “exotic” ways of American Indians. Still most local accounts characterized the Nisenan and Miwok disparagingly. Most California Indians were referred to as a group and called “Diggers.” This racist term was in part a comment on Sacramento Valley Indian Food gathering techniques.



INDIAN RITES—Graveside services were held in East Lawn Cemetery yesterday for six persons whose bodies were buried in the Kadema Indian village near the American River at Watt Avenue. The bodies were disinterred to make way for a new subdivision. Mrs. Lillie Williams places a burial offering of abalone shell and clam shell beads upon the caskets. Looking on are left to right, Mrs. Virginia Heltzel, Sharon Campbell, James Adams and Judy McDaniel. Bee Photo

# Blind Tom



# 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- During the twentieth century a number of researchers explored Nisenan and Miwok traditions. C. Hart Merriam was one of the first to follow Powers into Nisenan and Miwok Territory
- Most of the researchers who wrote northern California Indian peoples were affiliated with the University of California's (at Berkeley) Department of Anthropology.
- Kroeber authored The Valley Nisenan, published in 1929 and written primarily with the help of Tom Cleanso, an elderly blind Nisenan of about 70 years of age. His brother Mike Cleanso worked for Sutter.
- Cleanso was the last inhabitant of Kadema. He was impoverished and depended on local hop field owner and friends and relatives, in the Indian Community living Sacramento. Yet he reportedly managed at times to travel several miles on his own in Sacramento.

- The work with Cleanso was unique because the traditional Valley Nisenan communities had disintegrated by that time as people were pushed out by development or sought land base in the Rancherias, that were established in the 1910's and 1920's

# Modern History of the Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians.

- The Tribe and its members are descendants of Nisenan Indians that inhabited the central part of California for thousands of years until contact with the Europeans. Against this historical backdrop, in 1916, a special Indian Agent, Mr. John Terrell, working for the Department of the Interior conducted a census of Indians living in depressed conditions along the Sacramento River and in and around Sacramento. Upon identifying their needs, Mr. Terrell set about trying to acquire land for these “homeless” Indians in El Dorado, California, which is now the Shingle Springs Rancheria.

- Finally in 1920 under the authority of the Homeless Indian Acts of June 21, 1906 and April 30, 1908, Mr. Terrell was able to obtain a deed for the 160-acre Shingle Springs Rancheria for the use and occupancy of the Sacramento-Verona Band of Homeless Indians.
- On March 11, 1920 the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs accepted the trust title to a 160-acre parcel of rocky, uninhabited land in El Dorado County.

# We are survivors!

- Without a doubt my people, the Nisenan, are the people of the valley. The 19<sup>th</sup> Century was a hard time and my elders survived.
- The Tribe should not be questioned about who they are and where they come from.
- My Tribe and its peoples were the original scientists, and were true geniuses, as people we have many roles as men and as woman.
- The Nisenan people are alive and well we are thinkers, dreamers, Dr's, feather keepers, bow makers, basket weavers fisherman, and singers . The Nisenan people discovered how to weave a water tight basket!
- Baskets are everything. When your born your put in basket, we cooked our food in a basket, and when you die, your in a basket.
- We have a relationship to the waterways of this region, a relationship with the land and all it has provided and what it still offers.

# Relationship with Delta

- We have a relationship with the Delta, as it provided everything we needed. We used the delta for hunting, fishing, gathering food, basketry materials, housing materials, clothing materials.
- The Delta is a heart of the Region that has sustained the numerous plant, animal and human resources, since time immemorial. The Tribal people of this area have and will always continue to be stewards of these resources for the communities that they represent, as well as the communities that live in these resourced areas.
- Fire was important for the health of the region for all the resources in the area.

Quesitons ????