

Golden Nuggets

APRIL 2007

Su' Cumn'e - the Big House

By Rick Bettis

SCHS Presents
Sage La Pena
Native Cultures
Of Northern California

Tuesday April 17, 7:00 PM
SAMCC



On Tuesday April 17, Sage La Pena, well-known cultural consultant, educator, ethnobotanist and herbalist, will give a presentation on the history and culture of the California Indians of this area. A member of the Nontipom and Wintu tribes, and a dynamic speaker, her insights are sure to be enlightening.

La Pena has studied California native cultures for more than 30 years. She has made presentations at many schools ranging from elementary to universities. Locally she has worked with the California State Indian Museum, the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and the Maidu Interpretive Center of Roseville. An accomplished craftsperson and artist, she is now associated with Pacific Western Traders in Folsom. She is noted for her knowledge of using native plants for food and healing and has a degree in ornamental horticulture and a master gardener certificate.

Her father, Frank LaPena, was the Director of Native American Studies at CSUS and is also a well known artist. Sage will bring local artifacts and a wealth of information to share. Please join us!

Ken Burns, Noted History Film Producer

Shares Stories from
"Sacramento Families & WWII"

Tuesday, April 24, 8PM
Community Center Theater
1301 L Street, Sacramento

Tickets \$50 by phone & credit card
866-773-2535 for SCHS Members

The park-like area between the Sacramento's historic City Hall and the new City Hall is appropriately named Su' Cumn'e Plaza. In the Miwok language Su' Cumn'e means "Big House", an early name for the Sacramento area. The commemorative plaque reads:

The Plaza is dedicated to the Native Americans who walked this land before us and inspired generations to carry on their traditions. From Placer County to Yosemite and Mount Diablo (Spirit Mountain) to the Sierra Range, the Miwok gathered to live, hunt and fish. Where you now stand was once a large village. Analysis of the artifacts uncovered here established that this location has been inhabited for the last 8500 years.

Indeed it was a "Big House" as it was reported that 75,000 artifacts and 45 human remains were found during construction.



Burden Basket sculpture
by Archie Held
Photo by Rick Bettis

The focal point of the Plaza in the 20-foot high bronze and stainless steel Burden Basket representation of the common baskets used by women. On the east and west sides of the Plaza are smaller sculptures titled "Sacred Bowl" and "Moon Bowl".

Sacramento Mayor Heather Fargo presided at the dedication of the Su' Cumn'e Plaza on August 12, 2005. Ironically the ceremony was within one day of the 116-year anniversary of the arrival of John

Sutter, whose treatment of the Indians some critics have likened to peonage. Mayor Fargo's respectful remarks were also in stark contrast to those of Peter Burnett, California's first governor. In his 1851 annual message Governor Burnett, reflecting common beliefs of the time, stated that "a war of extermination will continue to be waged between the two races until the Indian becomes extinct."

Provocative UC Berkeley professor of physiology Sherburne Cook used extensive bone and morbidity analysis to estimate California's native populations over time (*The Population of the California Indians, 1769-1970*, 1976). He placed the pre-contact native population at 310,000. Diseases brought by Europeans, for which the natives had no resistance, along with massacres and other violent deaths re-

duced the native population to an estimated 50,000 by 1855, and to approximately 25,00 in 1910. It then rose to 90,000 in 1970 and was near 700,000 in the 2006 U.S. Census estimate.

Advances since the 1970s stem in part from counter-culture movements, including the American Indian Movement, often remembered for its highly-publicized occupation of Alcatraz. But the era's most important legacy was legislation in the areas of civil rights and Indian sovereignty and self government. Over recent years California Indians have experienced a significant economic rebirth, partly due to the still controversial Indian casinos. Although problems such as fishing rights and protection of sacred ancestral lands remain, it appears that native peoples are on their way to regaining their place in the Su' Cumn'e.

Of Senators and Solons: Sacramento Baseball in the 1930s and 1940s By Alan O'Connor

Last month this newsletter reported the economic depression of the 1930s mirrored in the Sacramento Senators' baseball fortunes. The play of Earl McNeely was one of the decade's bright spots. Joseph Frank Demaree, a Winters native, was another. Although he only played for Sacramento from 1930-32, Demaree compiled a .332 batting average over six years as an outfielder in the Pacific Coast League. His major league batting average was .299 and included two all-star years with the Cubs and four World Series.

A new era began in Sacramento baseball when the team was purchased by the St. Louis Cardinals in 1936. The change started with the team name. The Senators had been informally called the Solons (an old term for legislators) since before World War I, but it now became the official team name.

The very next year the Solons placed first in the regular season standings for the first time since 1900! However, the Pacific Coast League (PCL) championship was decided by a playoff of the top four teams, and the Solons were eliminated in the first round. The next two seasons, 1938 and 1939, the Solons won the post-season tournament, but the rules had changed. With incredibly bad timing, the Solons won the post-season after the league had chosen to award the championship to the regular season's first place team. (That wasn't the Solons.) The playoffs were only entertainment for the fans—and additional money for the teams and the players.



Tony Freitas

The 1940s featured the best and worst in Solons baseball history. The best happened in 1942 when the Solons won the league championship with 105-73 record and a blazing finish. Down by four games, with five to go in the season, Sacramento won five in a row over the first place Los Angeles Angels including a sweep of the final double header to take over first place. PCL Hall of Fame pitcher Tony Freitas got the save in the first game and the win in the second to clinch the Solon's only PCL championship!

Freitas had a 26-year pro baseball career, including the years from 1929-32, 1937-42 and 1946-50 with the Sacramento Senators and Solons. He played in the first PCL

night game in 1930; five years later he was with the Cincinnati Reds at Crosley Field when they played in the first major league night game on May 23, 1935.

He posted a 19-13 record in 1931, but was best remembered that year for being jailed for speeding from Marin County to Sacramento in his 1929 Model A. (He had a few prior speeding tickets.) Buddy Ryan convinced the judge to release Freitas to pitch against the San Francisco Mission Reds. After posting a 5-3 win, he returned to Marin to finish his 5-day sentence.

Freitas pitched for the major league Philadelphia Athletics under manager Connie Mack in 1932-33. His famous teammates included Mickey Cochrane, Jimmie Foxx, Lefty Grove and Al Simmons. During this time he also played against many stars of the American League including Yankees Lou Gehrig and Babe Ruth, "I looked at Ruth at the plate and couldn't believe I was seeing him." Freitas struck Ruth out, later recalling, "The fans gave me a big hand and Ruth doffed his cap to the rookie on the mound."

Tony Freitas' 342 minor league wins are the most ever by a minor league left-hander. During his 16 years in the PCL, Freitas had nine 20-win seasons and a lifetime earned run average (ERA) of 3.11. He was inducted into the PCL Hall of Fame in 2003.

The 1943 Solons team was practically dismantled and plummeted to last place with the worst ever PCL record of 41-114. This led to the end of the team's association with the St. Louis Cardinals and the sale of the Solons to the Sacramento Baseball Association, a group of local businessmen. Sacramento Union Sports Editor Dick Edmonds was instrumental in the formation of the Association. Edmonds died in 1946, and the baseball field was renamed Edmonds Field in his honor. The Solons finished fifth in from 1944-46 and seventh in 1947, but the 1948 season was worse. Not only did the team finish last, but Edmonds Field burned to the ground in July, forcing the team to play on the road. The final year of the decade brought a new Edmonds Field, and a much improved team that moved up to third place.



One of the mainstays of the late 1940s Solons was Joe Marty, a multi-sport star at Sacramento's Christian Brothers High—where the baseball field is named after him. Marty was an outfielder for ten seasons with a lifetime PCL batting average of .309. He played for the San Francisco Seals from 1934-36, often along side Joe DiMaggio and Lefty O'Doul. His .359 average won the 1936 PCL batting title. He played for the Chicago Cubs during the 1937-39 seasons, batting a lofty .500 in Cubs' 1938 World Series loss to the Yankees. Winters slugger and onetime Solon Joseph Demaree was Marty's teammate that year. Marty played part of the 1939 and all of the 1940 and 1941 seasons with the Philadelphia Phillies. After serving in World War II from 1942-45, he returned to the Solons in 1946 and continued to play through 1952.

Right Around the Corner!! MAY 11TH - SAMCC OPEN HOUSE

It's coming! The Sacramento Archives and Museum Collections Center's Open House has a lively theme planned for this year—"The Sounds of Sacramento." The event will feature River City's rich history of music and sounds in all its forms. DJ 'Joey D' will spin some memorable tunes and the very popular group, Th' Losin' Streaks will perform live. The ever-entertaining history fair is also back. A big turnout is expected. So, mark your calendar!

Donations Wanted for the Silent Auction!
A silent auction will help underwrite the cost of the Open House. SCHS is supporting the event through this auction. Items, such as tickets to musical and theatrical performances, books, wine, restaurant and store gift certificates, food baskets, guided tours, Sacramento videos and CDs, garage band music, and other memorabilia are being sought. If you can help us with a donation, please call 916-264-7073.

History Lesson

History is the sum total of things that could have been avoided. —Konrad Adenauer

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GOLDEN NUGGETS

Pat Turse, Editorial & Layout
Email newsletter@sachistoricalssociety.org
Contributions Deadline: 15th of month

Please deliver by April 3, 2007!

Out & About

Date	Time	Event	Place & Contact
April 7 Saturday	10:00 AM	Guided History Walk by Bill Mahan	Old City Cemetery 10th & Broadway Sacramento, CA
12 Thurs	6:00 PM members' opening gala	Hearst Castle in Sacramento Opening Gala SCHS members who join the California Museum may attend gala with a guest. See 30 treasures from Hearst Castle, hear the Royal Jazz Orchestra, taste wine & hors d'oeuvres at the gala. Just don't miss this exhibit!	California Museum 10th & O Streets Sacramento, CA 916-651-0936 www.californiamuseum.org
13 Fri	10:00 AM public opening		
17 Tues (moved up one week)	7:00 PM	Native Cultures of Northern California Sage LaPena Native Californian Ethnobotanist, Poet and Teacher	SAMCC, 551 Sequoia Pacific Blvd., Sacramento, off Richards Blvd. and Interstate 5 916-264-7073
24 Tues	8:00-9:30 PM	Ken Burns: Sacramento Stories of WWII SCHS members by phone reservation only! Sacramento stories from Burnett Miller, Burt Wilson, Earle Burke, and Robert Kasiwagi preview Burns upcoming PBS show.	Community Center Theater 1301 L Street, Sacramento Tickets, \$50 for SCHS members 866-773-2535