

NATIVE CALIFORNIA GUIDE

WEAVING THE PAST & PRESENT



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EDITION
2000

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near and far than they can respond to.

The old L.-P. mill grounds are now being used by an agricultural group to experiment with various techniques for the local environment.

3 miles N of Elk Creek on Hwy. 162 (W of Interstate 5), right at the confluence of Elk Creek and Stony Creek. Campsites at the Stony Creek Reservoir.

STONESTONE CREEK RANCHERIA

Box 63, Elk Creek, CA 95939

PATWIN

PATWIN BANDS, the southernmost of Wintuan peoples, occupied the west bank of the Sacramento River, the "river people", and the dry eastern slopes of the Coast Range, the "hill people"—from near Suisun Bay in the Sacramento Delta. Their territory extended from dense marshlands at the base of Sutter Butte (Maidu country) to dense marshlands in the south and were part of the Pacific Flyway for migrating birds. This is good for birds, but then, as part of the river floods in winter (and before again at the June Sierra melt-off), making permanent homesites impossible.

The riverine environment gave much to the people in the way of materials for weaving—so much that they traded switches, roots, and rushes for cordage to other tribes. Baskets were exceptionally strong, with distinctive designs unlike their neighbors'. The diet was fish, fowl, deer and elk, bulbs, berries, and seeds collected from large grain fields.

As a river people, they made tule reed boats, some up to 20 feet long. Sod-covered roundhouses served as ceremonial sites for the dances that are seen today as *Hesi*, or *Kuksu* (p.24).

The influx occurred early, causing the epidemics so fully described along the Sacramento River. Juan Gen. Mariano Vallejo was among the first Spaniards. He selected as intermediary and overseer an Indian particularly skilled at people-manipulation, one Solano, who encouraged slave-taking and other coercive actions. Vallejo made him a prime assistant, calling him "Chief", but there was resistance and several major protests by the people at this insult to

CORTINA RANCHERIA

Patwin (Wintun) (1907) Colusa County

For its first 60 years, 17 miles of dirt road and several gates (one locked, at the entrance to an intervening ranch), would get one to Cortina. It was not recommended as a place to visit. In 1986, the Wright brothers, Edward and Amos, along with a few farmhands, had lived here alone for decades. (See p.70)

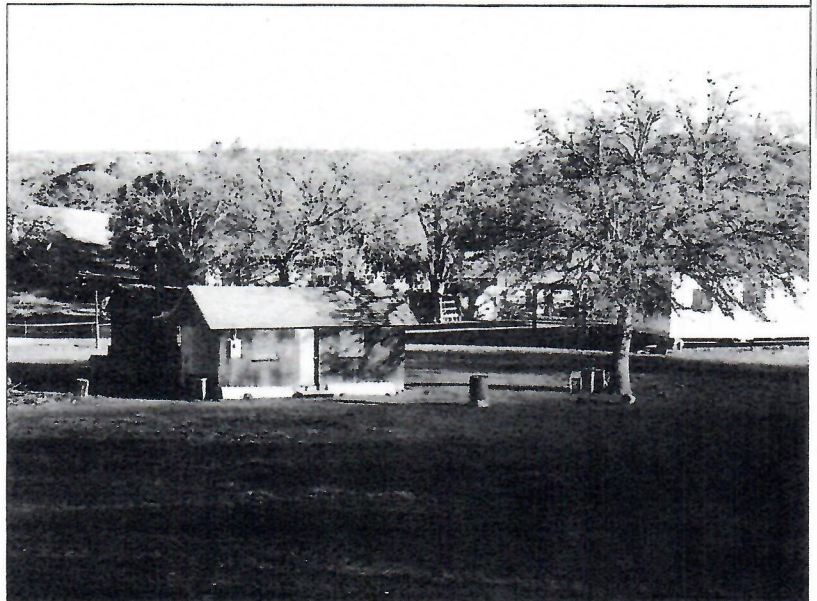
Earlier, however, this dry and inhospitable place was home for many more. It had one salty well, no electricity, two tiny clapboard houses, a tiny sweathouse,

and, a long time ago, a dancehouse. There is no way for food to be grown here—it must be brought in, except for the chickens and lots of squirrels. It's too dry even for deer. But things have changed.

In the early 1990s, in preparation for more new residents, a new well was dug with solar panels to run the pump. A new \$40,000 prefab meeting house and tribal hall was brought in. New streets were built and paved in an oak-leaf cul-de-sac design. An easy access road to Highway 20 was opened. Then a cluster of neat, substantial homes were built, and the former isolation ceased. The residents who work in nearby places can easily reach their destinations, and several are involved with Patwin tribal dancing.

It's still rather remote, but from the ridge above the center, there are vistas of Mt. Shasta (northernmost Wintu country), Mt. Lassen, and the sharp crags of Sutter's Butte.

PATWIN



These clapboard one-room houses were once the homes of two elder Wright brothers, before a recent government project which brought housing, public services, and paved roads to the Cortina Rancheria. (dhe, 1998)

PASSING THOUGHTS: When Amos Wright first heard of the new plans, he wasn't happy to have his many years of solitude disturbed. A possible advantage of such remoteness is that it is old, traditional land where near-total isolation can keep a culture alive. But, how is a culture to survive if only old men practice it and no families can share it? Continual isolation is death on tradition.

38 6 mi. W of Williams on Hwy 20, turn S 2 mi. onto Walnut Dr., 1 mi. to Spring Valley Rd. and R 7 mi. into the Rancheria.

CORTINA RANCHERIA

P.O. Box 7470, Citrus Heights, CA 95621-7470

continued