

# CALIFORNIA STATE INDIAN MUSEUM

2618 K. STREET SACRAMENTO CA 95816



TEACHER'S GUIDE



## Teaching Respect For Native People

- Do present Native peoples as appropriate role models with whom a Native child can identify. *Don't single out Native children, ask them to describe their families' traditions, or their people's culture. Don't assume that you have no Native children in your class. Don't do or say anything that would embarrass a Native child.*
- Do look for books and materials written and illustrated by Native people. *Don't use ABC books that have "I is for Indian" or "E is for Eskimo." Don't use counting books that count "Indians." Don't use story books that show non-Native children "playing Indian." Don't use picture books by non-Native authors that show animals dressed as "Indians." Don't use story books with characters like "Indian Two Feet" or "Little Chief."*
- Do avoid arts and crafts and activities that trivialize Native dress, dance or ceremony. *Don't use books that show native people as savages, primitive crafts people, or simple trivial people, now extinct. Don't have children dress up as "Indians," with paper-bag "costumes" or paper-feather "headdresses." Don't sing "Ten Little Indians." Don't let children do "war whoops." Don't let children play with artifacts borrowed from a library or museum. Don't have them make "Indian crafts" unless you know authentic methods and have authentic materials.*
- Do make sure you know the history of Native peoples, past and present, before you attempt to teach it.
- Do present Native peoples as separate from each other, with unique cultures, languages, spiritual beliefs, and dress. *Don't teach "Indians" only at Thanksgiving.*
- Do teach Native history as a regular part of American history.
- Do use materials which put history in perspective. *Don't use materials which manipulate words like "victory," "conquest," or "massacre" to distort history. Don't use materials which present as heroes only those*



### *Native people who aided Europeans.*

- Do use materials which present Native heroes who fought to defend their own people.
- Do discuss the relationship between native peoples and the colonists and what went wrong with it. *Don't speak as though "the Indians" were here only for the benefit of the colonists. Don't make charts about "gifts the Indians gave us." Don't use materials that stress the superiority of European ways, and the inevitability of European conquest.*

Do use materials which show respect for, and understanding of, the sophistication and complexities of Native societies.

Do use materials which show the continuity of Native societies, with traditional values and spiritual beliefs connected to the present.

*Don't refer to native spirituality as "superstition." Don't make up Indian "legends" or "ceremonies." Don't encourage children to do "Indian" dances. Don't use insulting terms such as "brave," "squaw," "papoose," "Indian givers," "wild Indians," "blanket Indians," or "wagon burners."*

- Do show Native societies as living in a delicate balance with nature. *Don't portray Native peoples as "the first ecologists."*
- Do use primary source materials—speeches, songs, poems, writings—that show the linguistic skill of peoples who come from an oral tradition. *Don't use books in which "Indian" characters speak in either "early jargon" or in the oratorical style of the "noble savage."*
- Do use materials which show Native women, Elders, and children as integral and important to Native societies. Do talk about the lives of Native peoples in the present. Do read and discuss good poetry, suitable for young people, by contemporary Native writers. Do invite Native community members to the classroom. Do offer them an honorarium. Treat them as teachers, not as entertainers. *Don't assume that every Native person knows everything there is to know about every Native Nation.*

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*We wish to thank everyone who contributed to this guide, including Joann Helmich Lead Ranger,  
 Elsie King Sillespie, former Park Interpreter Specialist,  
 Lynda Austin SJ, graphics, and a special thanks to Dave Murray FA, editor.*

## About The California State Indian Museum and Your Tour

### Fees:

A nominal charge for 17 and older

School groups with a valid reservation are exempt from fees. All other groups must pay regular fees and will be admitted into the museum on a "space available only" basis. *Drop-ins and school groups without a reservation are not recommended.* Admission fees may be paid with cash, traveler's checks or a business/personal check. The state has no provisions for charge cards.



### Reservations For School Groups:

Reservations *must* be made for groups of 10 or more. Call Reserve America for school reservations. The number is 866-240-4655 from 8am-5pm, Monday through Friday. Due to heavy travel, the *worst* months for booking tours are April, May, and June.

### Cancellations:

Call 866-240-4655. To leave a message call 916-324-7405.

### Adult Supervision:

Adult leaders are responsible for maintaining order inside the museum and on the grounds. All school groups must be accompanied by a *minimum* of one adult for every ten children. The State Indian Museum staff prefers one adult for every five to eight children.

**Very Important Field Trip Information on next Page**

## Very Important PLEASE READ:

The thirty minute time limit is strictly enforced. Fire code regulations for this building state that no more than 55 persons are allowed in the museum at once. Classes with reservations come in every half hour. **We absolutely can not accommodate more than one class in this museum at a time.**

Problems often happen at the gift counter when one class is intent on buying souvenirs and they run out of time. Another class will be waiting and can not come into the museum until the previous class exits. Please be aware of the time constraint and plan your visit accordingly. Also, **groups that are more than ten (10) minutes late will automatically forfeit their reservation.**

### Please Observe Our Rule of: *No Photography*

We are often asked why photography (including video cameras) is not allowed in this museum. Three reasons: 1.) Baskets and feathers will fade from the flash of cameras, 2.) Many of the photographs were donated by families and they have copyrights on them, and 3.) Many items are sacred to various Indigenous Peoples, and out of respect for their beliefs, we request no photographs be taken.

### Parking:

There is metered street parking around the park where the museum is located. Meters accept quarters only. Bus parking zones are on K Street and in front of Sutter's Fort on L Street. Bus parking is free.



### **Handicapped Access:**

The museum and the restrooms are accessible to wheelchairs. Restrooms are located outside and at the far end of the other adobe building on K Street.

### **Workers at our Museum:**

This museum is administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. It is operated by a combination of staff and docents. Docents are volunteers who are members of the Sacramento State Park Docent Association and are vital to the museum. They sell publications, run the gift counter, conduct off site museum programs and assist with all the special programs put on by the museum throughout the year.

Interested in becoming a museum volunteer? Phone 916- 324-0971 for information.



### **Gift Counter:**

The docent run gift counter offers a wide range of souvenirs that vary in price from 25 cent arrowheads and postcards to \$20.00 books. Proceeds from the gift counter go directly to the Sacramento State Park Historic Sites Docent Association, and are used for interpretive programs and museum support. Please be sure purchases are made within your allotted time in the museum.

## California Before the Europeans

For thousands of years, Native California Indians lived here in relative prosperity. Mountain ranges to the north, east, and south, and the Pacific Ocean on the west kept California isolated. An estimated three hundred thousand Indigenous people lived throughout California. About 120 different languages were spoken.

Under Indian stewardship and before Europeans arrived, great herds of elk and antelope ranged lush forests and grasslands. Salmon and trout filled the rivers. Waterfowl literally blocked out the sun when they took flight and grizzly bears and mountain lions roamed the hills. The Indians used over 500 plant species as food.

Trade played an important role in California. Trade routes were established thousands of years ago and can still be traveled. Every major highway in California was once an Indian trade route.

California's abundance provided ample material for food, medicine, home, clothing, and of course, baskets. Basket making was an established task for women. Generally, pottery was not used, and so their beautifully crafted baskets were necessary, and also presented as gifts.

For California Indian men, hunting and fishing was vital and done with respect for the animal and its unique place in nature.

Dances, songs and ritual were part of the lives of the California Indians, who had very strong spiritual beliefs. Dances were part of their religious ceremonies.

Each member of the tribe contributed something vital to their community. Grandparents were teachers and advisors, passing down history through story and legend. Parents provided the necessities, caring for children and elders, while children provided helping hands and laughter.



In the California State Indian Museum, three major themes are depicted; nature, spirit, and family. Most of the material on display is from the Northwest coast.

Exhibits feature an extensive basket collection, including the smallest baskets in the world, a redwood dugout, ceremonial regalia, fishing and hunting tools, and a display on Ishi, said to be the last survivor of the Yahi tribe.

## California State Indian Museum Exhibits



### Acorns:

Acorns provided a staple, nutritious food for California Indians. Throughout most of the state each fall, oak trees produce plentiful crops of acorns. After preparation, acorn flour is high in fat, protein, and carbohydrates.

The entire family helped with the fall acorn harvest. Together, they collected acorns in burden baskets and carried them back to their homes to be dried and then stored in specially prepared acorn granaries.

Women used a mortar and pestle to grind acorns into flour. Some women used a bottomless basket, called a hopper-mortar, set on a flat stone. In southern California, women attached hopper-mortars to a round stone with asphaltum, a kind of tar. In other parts of California, women sat on large boulders and pounded acorns in the mortar holes hollowed from the rock. Periodically, acorn meal was collected on a sifting tray to separate finer meal from larger pieces, which needed more pounding.

Acorns contain tannic acid, a bitter tasting chemical which has to be removed from the meal before it can be eaten. After milling, acorn meal was carefully spread over a sand leaching pit and leached with water



until the bitterness was gone. Then it was removed from the leaching pit. Now, the consistency of bread dough, it was ready to cook.

Women prepared the acorn flour as soup, mush, and a kind of bread. To make soup or mush, small round stones were heated in a fire until red hot, and then added to a basket of water- thinned dough. Constant stirring kept the stones from burning through the basket or scorching the soup as it cooked.

Today, in many parts of California, you can still see where Indian women of the past pounded seeds and acorns on the boulders. A community mill, as they are called, can be visited at Chaw'-se, near Jackson, at Indian Grinding Rock State Park.

## **Baskets and Basket weavers:**

*Basketry:* Baskets were essential because most of the California Indians did not use pottery. Even the few tribes who had pottery made much greater use of baskets. In every tribe, women wove the baskets.

The Native Californians used baskets as pots, pans, and serving dishes, for holding water, milling and parching acorn flour, and for storing tobacco. They made burden baskets for gathering acorns and other seeds, and for collecting plant materials used in making more baskets. Baskets were woven for baby cradles and to be given away as special gifts. Women wore specially woven baskets as hats.

*Gathering:* Basket makers used to tend many locations for future harvesting in a form of plant husbandry that was neither recognized nor acknowledge by non Indian people. Basketweavers watched for the right time to gather their materials. As each plant came into its season, children joined their elders in the gathering and



processing. They prayed and thanked the plants for providing them with materials. Basket materials were never gathered, wasted or used improperly.

*Processing:* After the harvest, materials must be processed and dried before a basket can be started. Many hours are spent cleaning, stripping and splitting the stems, shoots, and roots. Some materials are dyed to achieve the desired color.

*Weaving:* Baskets were made using both the twined and coiled methods of weaving. The main tools used by weavers were an obsidian knife and a bone or antler awl. Weaving a basket usually took a long time, often from several months to a year or longer. Preparing food, caring for children, and other daily tasks always came first. If the woman had a headache, was sick, or felt ill tempered toward someone, tradition forbade her to work on her basket. For many women, weaving was a very private and personal task. When the basket was completed, other weavers were asked to inspect it, so that the basket maker could continue improving her skills.

*Designs:* Basket designs varied from one maker to the next, but most were variations of patterns typically found in nature. Figures of animals, feathers, arrow-points and plants were common. Gift baskets often featured people as a theme.

*Materials:* These varied by location within California. The most commonly used materials were willow, sedge, deer brush, bull-pine, bracken fern, buck brush, big leaf maple, bear-grass, and redbud. Basketweavers often use a combination of peeled redbud for a light background, unpeeled redbud for the rust patterns and dyed fern root for the black patterns.

*Ornamentation:* Feathers from woodpeckers, flickers, mallards, larks, and quail

were used in the past. Originally, they used beads made from clam-shell, abalone, and dentalium, but glass beads were used as soon as they became available from European traders.

***Basketry today:*** The art of basket weaving has been revived, and what was true in the past is true today. Modern baskets use feathers that can be legally collected from the more common birds. Unfortunately, changes in the modern California natural environment, such as fences to allow grazing and farming, prevent the tending of the plants and make many raw materials difficult to locate and harvest. A very real danger is gathering pesticide-poisoned plants.

### People Along The River:



***The Dugout:*** These Native California boats were made by the Yurok from fallen redwood logs. Small, controlled fires were lighted on its upper surface, allowed to burn for a while, and then the charred wood was removed. This was done repeatedly until the wood was about three inches thick. The final shaping was done by pounding on elk-horn wedges with stone mauls, much as chisels and hammers are used today.

The boat displayed in the museum was used on the Klamath River for about seventy years until a storm damaged it. It sat in a back yard for perhaps another sixty years, until its owners donated it to the museum. It is eighteen feet long and four feet across.

***Gambling Games:*** Traditional California Indian gambling games were popular everywhere. Men and women had their own separate games. The game's excitement

was not confined to the immediate players. Spectators bet against each other or against a player's guess. Being a gambler was considered a profession that brought wealth and honor to the family. A great deal of time was spent practicing the game and seeking spiritual power for aid in the contest. Fortunes could be won or lost.

*Trading:* Through trading, every family benefited from the resources of the world beyond their tribal lands. Trading regularly took place from person to person and village to village. Although individuals rarely traveled outside their own territory, items were passed from tribe to tribe over hundreds of miles.

Some items that were traded throughout California were dentalium (tooth) shells from Washington and Canada; the shells of abalone, mussel, olivella, Pismo clams and tar from the coastal tribes; obsidian from the volcanic regions of the Modoc Plateau, the Owens Valley, and southeastern California; salt from Mono Lake and the Pacific Coast; and dried trout and salmon from the rivers where they were caught. Other natural resources received through trade were pine nuts, acorns, chert, quartz, flint, and soapstone. Some crafted items included arrow and spear points, hides and baskets.

Modern travelers use the ancient trade routes wherever they drive in California. All the roads across the Sierra Nevada and other mountain ranges follow Indian trails.

*Money:* Among the people of northwestern California, dentalium shells larger than one and a half inches were used as money. They were kept in carved and painted elk-horn purses by the men, and worn as necklaces by the women. Dentalium is only found in deep water around Vancouver Island in British Columbia and was traded south through intervening tribes.

*Tobacco and Pipes:* Tobacco is not harvested wild, it is a carefully cultivated plant.

The use of traditional tobacco is still an important activity. The

types of tobacco used are very strong and carry a religious

meaning. Medicine women smoke while curing their patients and most medicine

people use tobacco as a necessary part of religious ceremonies. Pipe stems are made

of manzanita or yew wood. The bowls are carved from soapstone. Shorter pipes are

used most frequently, while longer pipes are reserved for ceremonial purposes.



## Ceremonies or Dances:

*Brush Dance:* This particular dance deals with healing children, and it lasts for three

days. If a child is sick, his/her family might decide to hold this dance. They hire a

Medicine woman (who received her curing powers from a female relative). She will

conduct the Brush Dance with the help of people who have gathered together for

support.

*Jump Dance:* This dance is usually held in late summer or early

fall, and is performed as one of the ceremonies dedicated to

renewing the world and protecting people from harm. It can last for

up to ten days. Its purpose is to make the world right by warding

off calamity and disease. The ceremony is performed only by men, and the regalia

used in the ceremony is made and handled only by men. The person who creates the

regalia is regarded with great respect by everyone, bringing honor to his family and

village.



*White Deerskin Dance:* This ceremony is held in alternate years and lasts ten to sixteen days. They dance at a different sacred site each day. This dance assures a bounty of wild crops and an abundance of salmon, while preventing floods, earthquakes, and pestilence. It also purifies people and solidifies the world.

*Flower Dance:* When a young girl is ready to take her place in adult society, she goes through the Flower Dance ceremony. Among the Hupa, this ceremony lasted ten days. The older women advise her of proper conduct, and the young lady purifies herself with fasting, prayer, and daily baths in the cold river.

### **Traditional Dance Regalia-Women:**

Women and girls have their own dances, but they also participate in the men's dance ceremonies.

*Regalia:* The rope in this display is made from goose down and feathers. The headdress is made from bear fur. The dance belt is made from shell beads, sometimes abalone, or leather. Necklaces were made from shells, pine nuts, madrone berries, and glass beads. Their dresses were made from deerskin, and sometimes dance aprons of shell and pine nuts were worn. Their hairpins are made of feathers and decorated with shell beads. Since the late 1800's calico cloth dresses, skirts, and blouses have been worn in dance ceremonies.



### **Traditional Dance Regalia-Men:**

Men and boys wear regalia for specific dances and ceremonies. Men are usually the

main dancers and often wear the most elaborate dress.

**Regalia:** Flicker feather headbands are worn with feather plume sticks in a hair net.

A feather dance-cape extended to the knees. Eagle and goose feathers are used for the crown. Necklaces are made of shells, pine nuts, and glass beads. Dancers hold a feather guide and wear bone and wood whistles around their necks.



## Music, Songs and Musical Instruments:

There was music for healing, hunting, gambling and war. There were lullabies and love songs. Many songs were prayers. Musical Instruments included foot drums, bone and wood whistles, clapper sticks, rattles, flutes, and musical bows.



## The Family:

This group of photos does not depict just one individual family, but rather the whole "Native American Family." These photos show different events at different times.

## Honored Elders:

Each year California Indian Elders are recognized for their ongoing contributions to continuing Indian culture. The photo collection on the wall is of those Elders, begun in the year 1978.

## Tools:

*Bows and Arrows:* Several tools were employed in manufacturing bows and arrows. Shaping the bow was done with an obsidian flake and a scraper made from the leg bone of a deer. Abrasive stones and pieces of scouring rush were used for a fine finish on both arrows and bows. Arrow straighteners were of two types: a perforated type made of manzanita, maple or stone, and another type consisting of a single piece of steatite with a groove.



*Chipping Tools:* Tools made from elk or deer antlers were used to make arrowheads. A large flat piece was removed from a core piece of obsidian, flint, or chert hammer stone. An antler tool was used to press off small chips to arrive at the basic shape. A smaller antler tool was used for fine pressure flaking in the finish work and side notches. These stones are so sharp, a pad of buckskin protected the hand while knapping arrowheads.

*Obsidian:* All California Indians used obsidian (volcanic glass) with the sharpest points and edges for arrows, spear points, knives and scrapers. It was traded by people for thousands of years. Chert, quartz, flint and petrified wood were also used in making points, scrapers, and tools.

*Quivers:* One kind of quiver was used for storing the arrows in the owner's home. On hunting trips a quiver of fox or otter skin was carried.

*Fishing:* Nets, traps, spears and hooks were used.

*Hunting:* Traditionally, it was only men who hunted and fished. Before major hunting expeditions ritual purification ceremonies were observed. Men kept their

hunting tools in the sweat lodge, women and children were not allowed to handle these items. The nets, woven traps, and carrying baskets case were crafted by men. Oftentimes, one man in the made the net, and he rented it out to the other men when wanted to use it.



in this  
tribe  
they

**Glass Beads:** All the glass beads, large or small, came from the glass factories of Europe. The small seed beads (named because they resemble small seeds) came from Venice, Italy, or Czechoslovakia. Early fur trappers and traders brought the beads to the Native Americans for trading purposes.



### Ishi:

This display of artifacts and pictures show us a little about a man who came to be known as Ishi. He is thought to be the last member of his tribe, the Yahi, who were slaughtered by soldiers in the later part of the 1800's. Ishi means "man, or a person", or "one of the people" in the Yahi language. Ishi's real name will never be known. Some 20 years after the massacre, in 1911, surveyors discovered his camp. Ishi walked out of the hills and into the town of Oroville.

Undoubtedly, Ishi anticipated death as a result of his arrival in an enemy world, but almost miraculously, he was befriended by T. T. Waterman and Alfred L. Kroeber, two anthropologists from San Francisco. For the next five years, Ishi lived at the museum in San Francisco, where thousands of visitors watched him chip arrowheads, shape bows, and make fire by his age-old techniques. He was especially loved by the school children who were drawn to him by his kindness, patience, and

forgiving nature.

Some of these artifacts may have come from Ishi's camp, and some belong neither to Ishi or the Yahi, but are of the type they used. Some of the arrowheads were made from bottle glass while Ishi lived at the museum. He passed away on March 25, 1916, from tuberculosis.

#### **The Smallest Baskets in the World:**

In the Pomo case near the basket making materials are the miniature baskets. Each basket, including a baby carrier, is amazingly detailed. But these are not the smallest. The smallest baskets are the ones inside the small plexiglass box. Those three are the size of a *grain of sand*. Behind the plexiglass box is a photograph of these baskets, taken under a magnifying glass, showing their unbelievable detail. The object in the photograph is the eye of a needle, which was used for a comparison.

The three baskets were made by Mable McKay, a Pomo Medicine Woman. You can read her fascinating life story in the book, "Weaving The Dream" by Greg Sarris.

#### **Central Valley Regional Indian Museum/Room:**

This exhibit focuses on the Indigenous People of the Central Valley. It shows a variety of interesting facts, from fishing and hunting and the tools used, to the gift of Tule which once carpeted the Valley's wetlands.



#### **California Sesquicentennial Exhibit:**

*Discovery, Devastation, Survival:* This exhibit shows the impact of the Gold Rush upon the California Indians, how it impacted their culture, and how they survived it's devastation.

## Study Questions

### 1. *Women-Tradition in a changing world:*



A. \_\_\_\_\_ were used as diapers in the old days because they were soft and easily washed.

B. \_\_\_\_\_ was ground into a powder and used the same way as talcum powder is used today.

### 2. *Trails of Trade*



A. Where did the Indians get shell beads?

\_\_\_\_\_

B. Name two kinds of shells used by California Indians.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

3. *The Hunt:*

A. What was the sling used for?

\_\_\_\_\_

B. California Indians caught trout, steelhead, catfish, salmon, and many other fish.

They used \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

to capture the fish.

4. *Ooti (Acorn) Preparing the Meals:*

A. What was one of the main plant foods used by the central California Indians?

\_\_\_\_\_

B. A \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ was used to pound acorns,



5. *The Baskets:*



A. Name two basket materials used by California Indians.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

B. The world famous feather baskets were made by what tribe?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. *People Along The River:*

A. Name the material Yuroks used for making their boats.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

B. What kinds of materials did northwestern California Indians use to build their houses?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

7. *The Singers, Women's Regalia & Men's Regalia:*

A. Name two materials California Indians used in the ceremonial and dance regalia?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ b. \_\_\_\_\_

B. Name two musical instruments used by the California Indians:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_



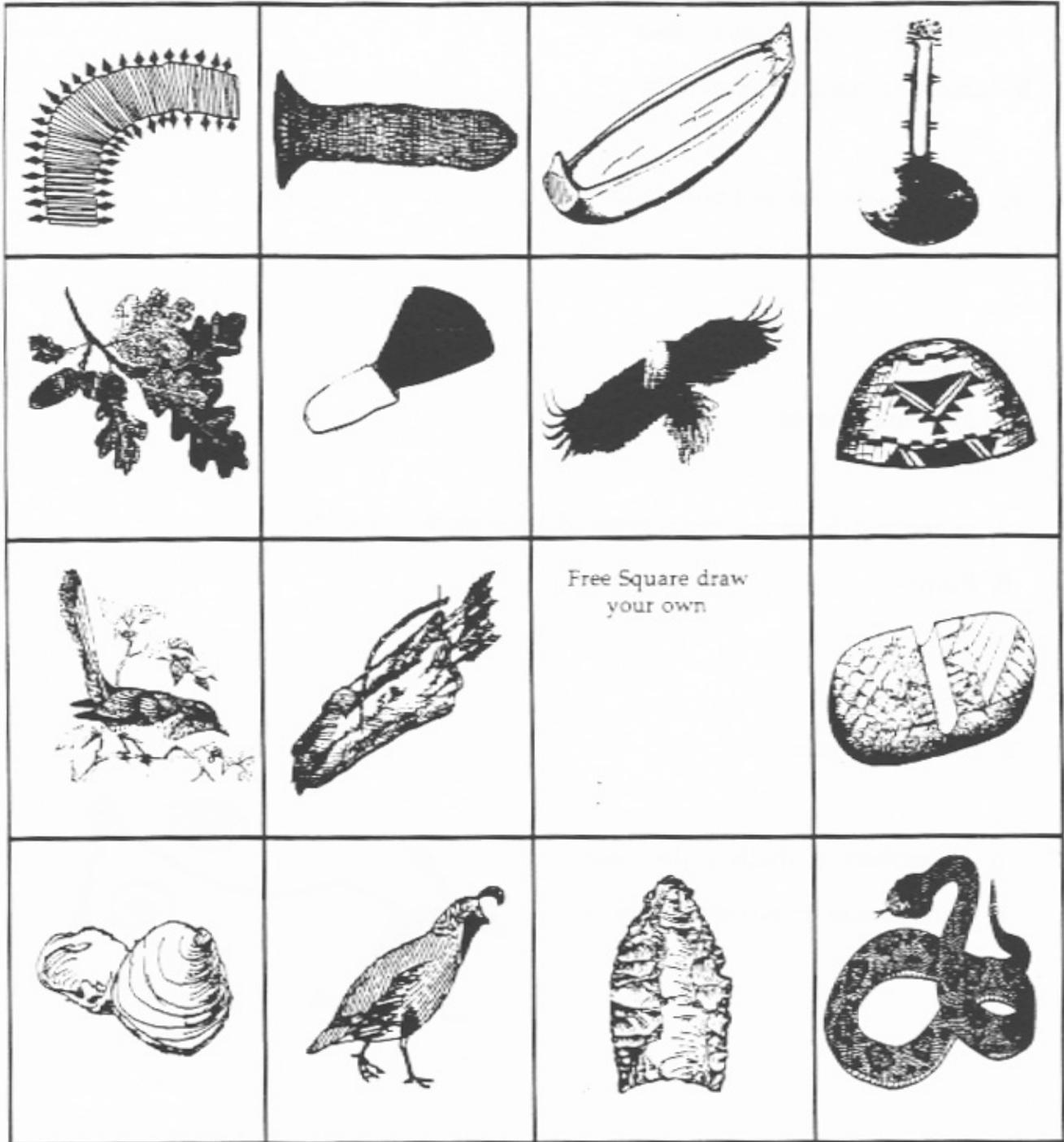
Answer Key

1. A. rabbit skins  
B. soapstone
  
2. A. by trading with coastal tribes  
B. abalone, clam, or dentalium
  
3. A. throwing stones and mud balls  
B. nets, toggles, traps, spears, hooks
  
4. A. acorn  
B. mortars, pestles
  
5. A. a. redbud b. fern c. bear-grass d. pine roots e. willow  
B. Pomo
  
6. A. redwood logs  
B. redwood, cedar
  
7. A. a. feathers b. shells c. deer skin  
B. a. clapsticks b. whistles c. drum



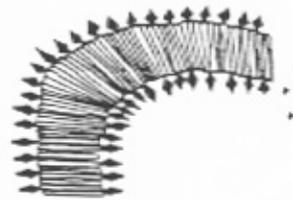
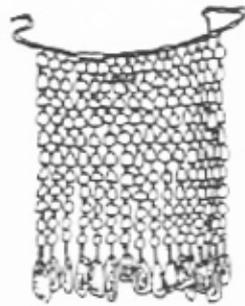
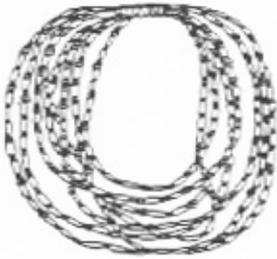
# Museum Bingo

Use your detective skills to look for what is pictured below. Each picture is of something interesting found in the museum. If you cross off four in a row, you have a BINGO!



## Museum Scavenger Hunt

Find the pictured objects in the museum. Write the name of the object on the line below the picture.



# Ancestral Map of California



Map of Downtown Sacramento  
 (Shows only main streets)

