

## The Martin-Suisun Historic Park

by T. Clyde Low

The Martin-Suisun Historic Park is being developed by the Martin-Suisun Historic Park Association for the people of Solano County as a whole, although the site is within the boundaries of the City of Fairfield, the owner of the land. It is located in Suisun Valley between Cordelia and Rockville and directly across from the campus of Solano College at 4015 Suisun Valley Road. It occupies three acres adjacent to the stone mansion of pioneer settler Samuel Martin, which has been a local landmark since it was built in 1861 on the former site of Francisco "Chief" Solano's adobe during the Mexican rancho period.

The site contains vestiges of an ancient spring which attracted the Suisun Indians to settle here 4000 years ago. A religious rock with pecked cup shapes and an extensive bedrock mortar complex are evidence of their occupancy. The landscape contains fine examples of native oaks which provided them with acorn supply, the main staple of their diet. The Suisun Indians lived here until the year 1810 when the Spanish military destroyed the village and moved the survivors to the Bay Area missions.

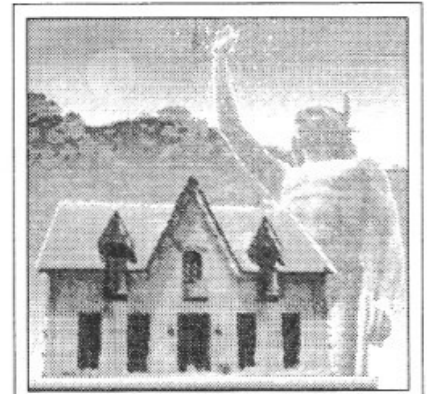
The park program will include planting an arboretum of native plants with emphasis on the plants used by the Indians for food, fiber and medicine. Samples of harvested items and handicraft products derived from them will be displayed. Pathways will be laid out to the planted areas and the ancient monuments. A Suisun dwelling will be constructed to complete the context of the Indian way of life. Tours and lectures for visiting groups will be the primary activity of the Association members.

The educational program will include publications and displays not only on the prehistoric Indian presence, but also on the Mexican mission occupation of the area as a branch farm of the Sonoma mission from 1824 to 1835, and the following rancho period from 1836 to 1850, when Chief Solano and later General Vallejo owned the Suisun Rancho. It will cover the agricultural history of the area as exemplified by the farm operation of Samuel Martin and his descendants from 1850 to

1967, when the farmland was sold to the Solano College District.

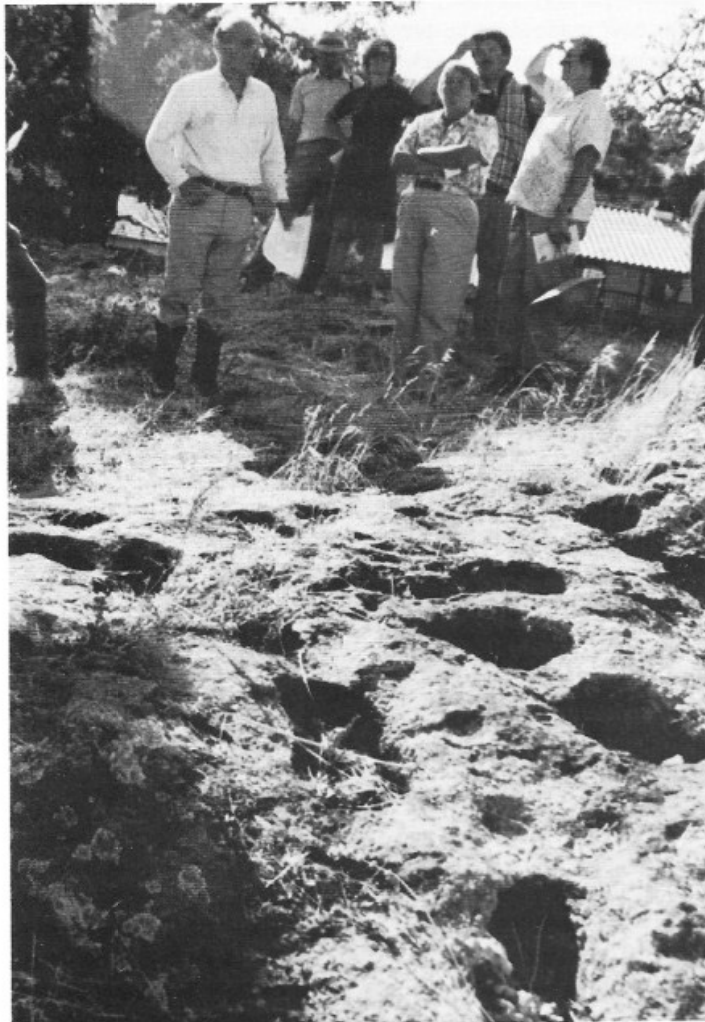
In 1977 the Martin house and surrounding archaeological site were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in recognition of the cited historic facts and the architectural work of Julia Morgan in remodeling the building in 1929. The Martin-Suisun Historic Park Association members spearheaded the successful public campaign from 1989 to 1991 to preserve the historic site from destruction by residential subdivision.

The Martin-Suisun Historic park Association is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. It has no paid staff and depends on volunteers to accomplish



MARTIN-SUISUN HISTORIC PARK ASSOCIATION

its goals. For information on how you can help, write to the Association at Post Office Box 273, Fairfield, California 94533-0027, or call (707) 864-1305.



A tour group visits the bedrock mortar at Martin-Suisun Historic Park. Surrounded by acorn bearing oaks, the rock contains more than one hundred holes. Acorns were a staple of the Patwin diet.