

San Joaquin County Historical Museum

11793 North Micke Grove Road
Lodi, California 95240
Phone: (209) 331-2055 or 953-3460

March 6, 2006

**Contact: Robin Wood, museum education coordinator
at 331-2055 or 953-3460**

Precious Cargo exhibit opens at San Joaquin County Historical Museum

Beginning March 22, the San Joaquin County Historical Museum will unveil a special traveling exhibit, "Precious Cargo: California Indian Cradle Baskets and Childbirth Traditions."

The exhibit, created by the Marin Museum of the American Indian, will be at the county historical museum in Micke Grove Park south of Lodi until July 23.

A special Exhibit Opening Reception will be held March 23 at 5:30 p.m. The reception is open to the public and will feature a guest speaker, wine and appetizers. Tickets cost \$15 and can be ordered by calling the museum at (209) 331-2055.

"Precious Cargo" represents four years of research and fieldwork with California Indian peoples on their childbirth and child-rearing traditions. The exhibit features cradle baskets made by 30 weavers commissioned to recreate the intricate designs characteristic of their tribal region.

The cradle is a symbol of one of life's most significant moments. It is also the center of an important array of traditions observed by the mother, father, relatives and whole villages. Many of the traditions may be described today as folk medicine or purely spiritual practices important to the California Indian families.

Through the intricately woven cradle baskets, artifacts and photographs, the exhibit tells the intimate story of California Indian beliefs and traditions of childbirth and

child rearing. The exhibit explores fertility beliefs, rituals performed to help assure an infant's survival and spiritual practices intended to mold the child into adulthood.

This special exhibit is available for viewing during regular museum hours from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. The museum is located in Micke Grove Park south of Lodi, off of Armstrong Road, approximately one mile west of Highway 99.

The museum will also be celebrating the exhibit with a special Gathering of the Peoples on May 20. This event will celebrate Native American culture with authentic dancing, storytelling, tool demonstrations and basket weaving. This event will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For more information, call the museum at (209) 331-2055 or (209) 953-3460.

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