

The Maidu

The Maidu (MY doo) of central California lived in the Sacramento Valley and the Sierra Nevada. They built their villages near rivers and waterfalls, and on hills and mountains.

Maidu beliefs honored the natural world. The Maidu believed that everything in nature was alive. They worshiped the lakes, rocks, waterfalls, and other things in their environment. The Maidu also had great respect for animals. They held special dance ceremonies to honor grizzly bears and rattlesnakes.

The Maidu believed that a creator named World Maker made the world and everything in it. Each year, the Maidu made offerings to World Maker. They hoped that in return World Maker would give the Maidu enough food and rain for the coming year.



This Maidu belt is made of feathers, beads, and woven cotton. Maidu men wore decorative belts like this one during dance ceremonies.

Find Out You can learn more about the beliefs of Indians in your area by visiting a local Indian museum or museum website.

1. What animals or things in the natural world were important to the beliefs of Indians in your region?

2. What ceremonies did local Indian groups hold to show their respect for nature?

3. Research a ceremony held today by a California Indian group in your region. What or whom does the ceremony honor? What traditions does it include?
