

# THE PATWIN AND THEIR NEIGHBORS

BY

A. L. KROEBER

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PUBLICATIONS IN ARCHAEOLOGY  
AND ETHNOLOGY

Volume 29, No. 4, pp. 253-423, 6 figures in text, 1 map

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS  
BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

1932

studies of Patwin culture and speech, as first fruits of which there have appeared two papers on social organization and houses.<sup>4</sup>

How limited a picture of Patwin life these publications aggregate, is however clear from the chapters on the Wintun (including the Patwin) in my recent *Handbook of the Indians of California*.<sup>5</sup> This meagerness is particularly unfortunate, because as Dixon<sup>6</sup> was the first to suggest, and as had been more or less assumed and in part corroborated since, the most important ritual cult of central California, the spirit-impersonating secret society or Kuksu Cult,<sup>7</sup> seems to have had its most active development among the Patwin.

It appeared desirable, accordingly, to get further knowledge on the Patwin, and in the summers of 1923 and 1924 their present settlements were visited. These had shrunk to one on the river near Colusa, and four in the hills, at Rumsey, Cortina, Stonyford, and Grindstone (Elk creek), the last two in former Pomo and Wintun territory.<sup>8</sup> A family or two remain in upper Cache creek drainage. The population was under 200, perhaps barely 150, and no individuals were found whose ancestral home was south of the vicinity of Rumsey in the hills or more than a few miles below Grimes on the river. The southern half of the Patwin group has thus become wholly extinct. This fact should be given weight in comparative studies; although not unduly, since the survivors in the north seem to feel themselves as having been rather near dialectic relatives of the southerners, and all evidence points to so close a cultural resemblance between northern hill and northern river Patwin that the southern Patwin may be expected also to have affiliated strongly.

The surviving Patwin had their permanent habitations in three north and south belts. The first of these lay along the Sacramento on both banks.<sup>9</sup> (See large map.) Prime requisite for a town was a knoll sufficient to preserve the inhabitants from winter inundation.

<sup>4</sup> *Functional Families of the Patwin*, UC-PAAE, 13:235-258, 1922, and *Patwin Houses*, the same, 20:159-171, 1923.

<sup>5</sup> BAE-B, 78, chap. 25, 26, 1925. Cited, *Handbook*.

<sup>6</sup> *The Northern Maidu*, AMNH-B, 17:119-346, 1905.

<sup>7</sup> The designation "Kuksu Cult" was coined by me to designate the whole cluster of central Californian rituals characterized by more or less secret societies which initiate and impersonate spirits. The name was chosen because Kuksu is one of the most widely enacted personages of this set of rituals. It proves to be somewhat unfortunate because among several tribes there are Kuksu and other societies. Gifford has used the term "god-impersonating cult," which however seems to over-emphasize the idea of divinity.

<sup>8</sup> Barrett, *Ethno-geography*, 290-292, lists several other sites as still occupied in 1903-1906.

<sup>9</sup> The Wintun, Wintu, Maidu, and Nisenan also occupied both sides of the stream wherever they held a stretch of it. See section below on this point.

cially in hill country. Usually, therefore, the village was but an incident in the history and consciousness of the tribelet. The latter was the functioning unit.

The presumption that the Patwin political organization was like that of their neighbors is borne out by all the data secured. Ordinarily, data on political structure are difficult to get. Most Californian informants think in terms of places, and indiscriminately list dozens of "rancherias"—that is, spots inhabited at one time or another—within what can have been the territory of but one or two tribelets. Occasionally an informant thinks of tribal tracts or their main settlements, but this mostly when it becomes a question of people at a distance. Only now and then can an informant be brought to organize his knowledge and to subordinate detail to the larger unit. In general, in this north central California area, the best index seems to be afforded by the dance house. Settlements with a dance house appear to have been the residences of head chiefs of tribelets; those without, to have been subordinate to these centers. The older Indians usually know without hesitation whether a village had a dance house. Some errors may have crept into the record by use of this indication, through post-Caucasian settlements having built dance houses or long abandoned settlements having had theirs forgotten. But on the whole the criterion checks well with the scattering other sources of information.

#### RIVER PATWIN TRIBELETS

The river Patwin (see large map) comprised three dialect groups, which may be called those of Colusa, Grimes, and Knight's Landing, or the Koru', Sāka, and Yo'doi districts. The last group is extinct, the first nearly so. The centers or "capital towns" of tribelets were as follows, the order being downstream, and settlements lying all on the west bank of the Sacramento unless the contrary is specified.

#### *Colusa Dialect*

1, K'eti', on the site of the present Princeton. This must have been at the very boundary of Patwin territory (see large map), because Tutu and Tsaka, variously placed from less than a mile to 4 miles upstream, are said to have spoken Maidu. K'eti' spoke the same as Colusa.

2, Ts'a', three miles below Princeton.

3, Wa'itere, two or three miles above the present Katsi'l or "Colusa rancheria" which lies seven miles above Colusa.

4, Katsi'l the former, less than a mile below the present Katsi'l reservation, is said to have had a dance house, but this may have been post-Caucasian.

Sôma, two miles below modern Katsi'l, somewhat off the river. This is not certain as an independent unit.

5, Tatno, two or three miles farther down, perhaps two miles above Colusa.

6, Koru', in Colusa city, which takes its name therefrom. This was the most important community within the dialect or district, and built a weir across the river.

7, Kukui, one and one-half miles below.

Some miles downstream was the southern boundary of Kukui and of the Colusa dialect. Kapaya ("stream") at the mouth of Sycamore slough, still belonged, according to one account, although a war tradition given below makes the Ko'doi (12) people settle here temporarily. On the east side, however, Nopba ("eat deer") at Meridian, and Hopoba somewhat above, both upstream of Sycamore slough, were small settlements that spoke the Grimes dialect; whose main towns follow.

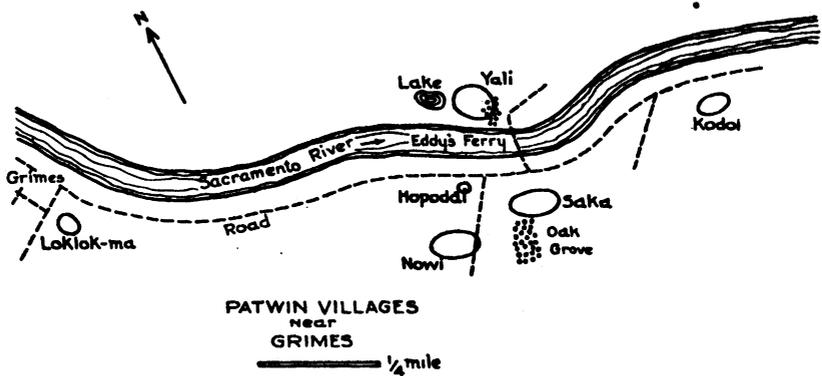


Fig. 1. Former River Patwin towns in the vicinity of Grimes.

### *Grimes Dialect*

8, Lo'klokma-ti'nbe, in the southern outskirts of Grimes, was the first settlement with a dance house<sup>20</sup> (fig. 1).

9, Nōwi(-dihi),<sup>21</sup> a mile below.

10, Sāka, almost coterminous with Nōwi, little more than 100 yards separating them, at Eddy's ferry. This was the second weir town of the Patwin, and the metropolis of the dialect. It had two dance houses.

11, Yali, directly opposite on the east bank, is said once to have been larger than Sāka, but appears to have decayed earlier.

12, Ko'doi(-dihi), a mile below Sāka, on the J. Brown place. Important in myth. This makes five independent towns within about two miles of river frontage (see sketch map in figure 1).

<sup>20</sup> Here were born the wife of one of my informants, her mother, and the latter's father, indicating mixed patrilocal and matrilineal residence.

<sup>21</sup> Suffixes like -dihi, -sel, do not disturb the accent, which remains, unless written otherwise, on the penult of the stem. But -labe seems to draw the accent one syllable toward itself.

sites from about three miles above Rumsey to five or six miles below Guinda, and then mentioned Imil ("blackberries") and Sūya as the only two possessing dance houses. They are barely two miles apart.

21, Above Rumsey, Cache creek valley turns into canyon, so that when Lopa and Tebti (confluence) are encountered some miles up, the latter at the mouth of Bear creek, a new tribelet is perhaps involved, which probably owned some miles up Bear creek.

22, Up Bear creek Barrett gives Suku, which I recorded as Sukui, two or three miles above Sulphur creek and the main settlement of the Sukui-sel, the proper Bear creek tribelet. The head of Bear creek is specifically assigned to the Chuhelmem people of the head of Stony creek drainage; which is plausible enough in view of the continuity of the valleys.

Above Bear creek, Cache creek once more flows through a canyon, which seems to have been uninhabited, neither Barrett nor I obtaining names of settlements.

23, Toward the mouth of Bartlett<sup>26</sup> creek, a mile and a half below it, Barrett refers to a village of which he did not record the name. This is probably the Kuikui mentioned to me by a Long valley informant as on Cache creek a couple of miles below the mouth of Bartlett, at which stood a settlement Opi. This stretch looks like the seat of a tribelet. Next above it on Cache creek drainage were the three Lower Lake or Southeastern Pomo tribes<sup>27</sup> and the Lake Miwok. The Pomo tribelet on the island of Elem, owning Sulphur Bank, was called Mol-sel ("black-willow people") by the Patwin, whence Powers' Makhelchel.<sup>28</sup> The Lower Lake island (Koi) Pomo were known to the Patwin as T'ul-sel.

24, On Bartlett creek, at the mouth of Long Valley creek, was Tebti. Helu'supet or Helu'sapet, downstream within two or three miles of Cache creek, seems to have been a settlement of the Tebti-sel.

25, Up Long Valley creek, some five miles more or less, at A'li-ma-ti'nbe, were the Lol-sel, as the Tebti-sel called them. In return the Lol-sel called them Tse'npol-sel.<sup>29</sup> Lol means tobacco.

26, Up Bartlett creek, three miles from Tebti according to some accounts, six miles and in Indian valley according to others, was LoLi, said to have had a dance house.

27, South of Cache creek, in Morgan valley, which drains into the Putah, was a separate Patwin tribelet, one of whose settlements, perhaps the principal, was Wa'i-taluk. The Tsenpo-sel of Tebti called them Wor-pa'ntibe.

28-30, On Stony creek drainage there were at least three Patwin tribelets. The uppermost centered at 28, Tshel-mem or Chuhel-mem, on Indian creek above Ladoga; later at Kabal-mem or Kabel-mem. Below Ladoga was 29, Edi' (Edi'-La, Edi'-Labe). Little Stony creek belonged to a third tribe, whose principal settlement was at 30, Ba'hka(Labe), not far from the mouth of Indian creek,

<sup>26</sup> Locally and on some maps, Bartlett creek is known as Cache creek. The outlet of Clear lake, which carries much the most water, is however entitled to the name, and the long but thin tributary is here called only Bartlett creek.

<sup>27</sup> Gifford, Pomo Lands, map, p. 79.

<sup>28</sup> Ch. 23. He inclines to consider them Patwin.

<sup>29</sup> Powers, 219, gives the Ol-po-sel, Chen-po-sel, and Wilak-sel ("upper," "lower," and "plains" people—the last word means literally "land") as on Cache creek in order downstream, and the Chenpo-sel as in enmity with the Lol-sel (p. 221). His three terms may refer specifically to true tribelets or generically to groups of them in areas. I heard a Guinda informant use Chen-sel, "stream people," of the people of her part of Cache creek as a whole; a Bartlett creek man called them Wu'lak-sel.

with Kula'(-La, -Labe) some miles up as a second village; also Dikikala'i, downstream from Bahka, inhabited later. All three of these last sites are said to have had dance houses (perhaps not synchronously), but the authority of the head chief at Bahka was acknowledged. Wor-sel, "south people," was used either for all three tribelets by themselves, or more specifically for the Tshelmem one; the others were spoken of sometimes as E'di-sel and Ku'la-sel.<sup>30</sup>

In the first foothills fronting the plains, between the foregoing hill tribelets and the river Patwin, groups were fewer. The known ones are again listed from south to north.

31, South of Cortina, Yakut, on Sand creek, was perhaps independent.

32, Near Cortina creek, the modern settlement is at Let(-Labe), "squirrel." Before about 1883, the central site was Wa'ikau, on main Cortina creek, whence the tribal name Wa'ikau-sel.<sup>31</sup> One informant mentioned Kotu, "mushroom" (whence Indian Koti-na, Spanish and American Cortina),<sup>32</sup> one and a half or two miles upstream from Waikau, as the main village before Waikau. Salt creek and Mountain house seem to have belonged to the Cortina tribelet.

33, There is no information, and perhaps was no other group, until the vicinity of Sites, east of Chuhel-mem and Edi. Here a tribelet had its center at Pone (Poni-La, Pona-La), on Grapevine canyon or road, three or more miles north of Sites.

34, Another tribe seem to have been the Potba-sel of Potba(-Labe), at a spring in a gully, half a dozen miles north of the last. Beyond were Wintun.

#### SALT POMO

The same scheme of grouping into tribelets appears to apply to the neighbors of the Patwin: the Northeastern or Salt Pomo, the Valley Maidu, probably the Wintun.

The Northeastern or Salt Pomo<sup>33</sup> of upper Stony creek constituted one people, with its center at Bahkamtaṭi, Patwin To'ro-di-La, near Stonyford. The Patwin called them No'min-sel or To'rodi-sel.<sup>34</sup>

#### WINTUN TRIBELETS

Stony creek below these Pomo was Wintun (see large map). There were probably several tribelets in the stretch down to where the stream turns east and breaks through the hills into the plain. I was

<sup>30</sup> There were mentioned people east across from Ladoga toward Sites, although Midus(-Labe) lies on Indian creek between Tshelmem and Edi; the latter perhaps as a synonym of Kula-sel, since Mitsawis(-Labe) is on Little Stony creek. Another informant denied dance houses or tribal identity to the two settlements, and attributed Ta(-Labe), two miles east from Midus, to the Edi-sel.

<sup>31</sup> Barrett, *Ethno-geography*, 296, says that the Waikau people came there from Sites (Pone, no. 33).

<sup>32</sup> This seems a doubtful etymology.

<sup>33</sup> Barrett, *Ethno-geography*, 239-245.

<sup>34</sup> This disposes of my tentative classification of them into two or three tribelets, *Handbook*, 232, map pl. 36.