

A.L. Kroeber

**HANDBOOK**  
of the  
**INDIANS OF CALIFORNIA**

Dover Publications, Inc.

New York



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Published in Canada by General Publishing Company, Ltd., 30 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Toronto, Ontario.

Published in the United Kingdom by Constable and Company, Ltd., 10 Orange Street, London WC2H 7EG.

This Dover edition, first published in 1976, is an unabridged republication of the work originally published by the Government Printing Office, Washington, in 1925 as *Bulletin 78* of the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution.

*International Standard Book Number: 0-486-23368-5*  
*Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 76-19514*

Manufactured in the United States of America  
Dover Publications, Inc.  
180 Varick Street  
New York, N.Y. 10014



## CHAPTER 25.

### THE WINTUN: GEOGRAPHY AND CULTURE.

Territory, 351; divisions and dialects, 353; designations, 355; settlements, 355; wars, 356; numbers, 356; culture, 357; arts and customs, 357; the dead, 359; shamanism, 361; traditions, 362; dances, 363.

The Wintun, the first of the five groups of Penutian affinity to be encountered in this survey, were, both as regards numbers and territory, the largest nationality in the northern half of California, and, next to the Shoshoneans and Yokuts, in all the State. They were also one of the most important in the development and diffusion of customs. It is thus regrettable that they are less known than nearly all their neighbors. The account that it is possible to present here is little more than a series of miscellaneous items, introduced to shed some light on the status of the Wintun in comparison with the neighboring peoples. A more systematic description has been attempted only of the ritualistic aspects of their religion, which has been selected, as being central and probably primary in its region, to serve as a point of departure for a comparative examination of the whole central California cultus.

#### TERRITORY.

The territory of the Wintun is long from north to south and narrow from west to east. It consists, substantially, of the west side of the Sacramento Valley, from the river up to the crest of the Coast Range. In some parts, however, the Wintun had not fully reached or retained this natural boundary; in others, they had transcended it.

From the mouth of Feather River, or more likely from a short distance above it, up to the mouth of the Pit, the Wintun lapped over on the east side of the Sacramento in a fringe that averaged perhaps 5 miles wide. The exact limits of this belt are difficult to draw on any map that does not show contours in detail. In the south, where the valley is broad, the Wintun appear to have held the tule marsh that fringes the Sacramento. With dry land began Maidu territory. The marsh was permanently habitable at a few knolls or mounds, especially at the river bank; and it furnished a splendid seasonal hunting ground for ducks and geese. In the north, where the valley narrows, the Wintun seem to have owned its entire level floor, the authority of the Yana commencing with the rather abrupt foothills. In the intermediate region, about Chico, the exact eastern limit of Wintun occupation can only be surmised.



It has been customary to assign the whole east side of the valley to the Yana and Maidu. A civilized person inevitably thinks in this way: A narrow overlap across the river which makes the central topographical feature of the map seems arbitrary. We put our counties on one or the other side of the stream: Butte balances against Glenn, Sutter with Colusa, Sacramento with Yolo. But the Indian knew the land with the soles of his feet; he thought of it in terms of its actual surface, of its varying plant and animal population, not as a surveyed chart on which certain great structural traits stand out. The valley offered him one mode of progress, food, occupation, and materials to work with, the hills another; and the same difference existed between the long, reedy marsh and the solid plains. Thus it was almost inevitable that different nations should come to occupy each tract. It will be seen below that where diverse peoples did not suffice, a single nationality generally split into groups marked off from each other by distinctions of customs as well as dialect. On the other hand, the great river as a convenient political boundary meant little to the native because he had developed scarcely the rudiments of our political sense.

From the mouth of the Pit north, the Wintun, here turned hillsmen because there is no valley left, had penetrated farther east from the Sacramento. They held the whole right side of the lower Pit, including the lower courses of its affluents, the McCloud and Squaw Creek, up to the commencement of the big bend of the Pit, about where Montgomery Creek comes in; thus uniting with the Yana on the south side to shut off from the mouth of this lengthy stream the Achomawi who are so identified with its drainage as to be usually known as the Pit River Indians.

The uppermost 20 or 25 miles of the Sacramento, where it flows a tumbling course through a picturesque wooded canyon, were not occupied by the Wintun but by the Shastan Okwanuchu. The boundary between the two stocks was in the vicinity of one of the several Salt Creeks of the vicinity; probably the northern one.

West and southwest of this alien tract on the headwaters, the Wintun occupied a large, rugged tract outside the Sacramento drainage: the whole upper waters of the system of the Trinity, the greatest affluent of the Klamath. These holdings comprised all the territory watered by the main Trinity above Big Bar, with its numerous tributaries and forks; nearly the whole of the South Fork; and all the Hay Fork. In fact, the Trinity may almost be denominated a Wintun stream, the only other natives within its sphere being the Chimariko, Hupa, and New River Shasta, owning restricted areas on its lower reaches.

There are some statements to the effect that the Wintun had drifted across still another chain of the Coast Range, and lived on the very head of Mad River, scarcely 30 miles from salt water as the crow flies. This is entirely possible; but other reports assign the region to the Lassik or some related Athabascan group; and Mad River being in the main an Athabascan stream, the latter statements have been given preference in the delineation of the map.

Toward the south, in the region of the headwaters of the Eel, the main Coast Range served as boundary between the Yuki and the Wintun; but from here south, the heads of all the western tributaries of the Sacramento were in the possession of a variety of non-Wintun groups.

First, upper Stony Creek, above Little Stony Creek but not including this, was northeastern Pomo, these people being wholly surrounded by the Wintun except where the Yuki backed them behind the mountains.



Next, the beautiful Clear Lake basin, the source of Cache Creek, was also in possession of the Pomo, who lived here in two groups, perhaps representing distinct drifts of occupation.

Farther south, in part in the same basin, but mainly on upper Putah Creek, were the Coast Miwok, a little isolated group with all its nearest relatives to the south and southeast.

Then, and last, came the Wappo branch of the Yuki: in the hills on the headwaters of Putah Creek and the Sacramento affluents to the south, and on Napa River.

We are now close to San Francisco Bay, whose upper divisions, Suisun and San Pablo Bays, are only the drowned lower reaches of the united Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers. The flow, so to speak, here is west, instead of south; Wintun held all along Suisun Bay and along part of San Pablo Bay; the Suisun "Valley," and the Napa Valley to the end of tidewater, being theirs. On the map this is the farthest territory downstream accredited to them, and the divide between Napa and Sonoma Valleys has been set as their limit. There is, however, much doubt about Sonoma Valley, whose native inhabitants are extinct. The Wappo held its very head; but its bulk, according to some accounts, was Wintun; according to others, Coast Miwok. If the former are correct, the Wintun extended almost to Petaluma Creek, or to within a scant score of miles of the ultimate goal of the Sacramento, the sheer defile of the Golden Gate into the broad Pacific.

#### DIVISIONS AND DIALECTS.

Wintun speech is very imperfectly known, and its ramifications have been determined only in the rough. Three great areas of distinct dialect are clear, which may be described approximately as consisting of a central block in Glenn and Tehama Counties, and a northern and a southern in the modern counties respectively on those sides. Beyond this basic classification, information quickly fails us; but it is clear, both from fragmentary evidence as well as from the size of the tracts involved, that these, like the corresponding Maidu divisions, are areas of groups of dialects, not of single, uniform idioms. In other words, the basis of customary classification is different for the Wintun and Maidu on the one hand, and stocks such as the Athabascan, Yuki, Pomo, and Miwok on the other; and there is no reason to doubt that when the two former tongues are recorded with the same nice discrimination of petty differences that has been directed to the other languages, the same conditions of local diversification will become evident, and the abnormal extension of the Wintun and Maidu "dialects" will be seen to be more apparent than actual. It is probable that the true status of speech among both Wintun and Maidu will ultimately be found to approach somewhat that existing among the remotely allied Yokuts, where the number of slightly different dialects is great, but these fall readily into half a dozen obviously distinct groups.

The northern form of Wintun speech prevailed down the Sacramento to Cottonwood Creek and over the whole Pit and Trinity areas. From all the



evidence available, the language was remarkably uniform for a tract of this vastness, as it may justly be described under California conditions. But the very size of the territory precludes absolute identity of tongue. The Wintun of the McCloud and of the South Fork of the Trinity certainly never came in contact, possibly did not know of each other's existence. They must have been separated at least for centuries; and it is therefore impossible that every word and grammatical form in their languages should have been the same.

Cottonwood Creek is the boundary usually mentioned toward the central Wintun, and in default of any more precise knowledge has been so entered on the map. But the true line very likely followed the minor watershed on one or the other flank of the stream.

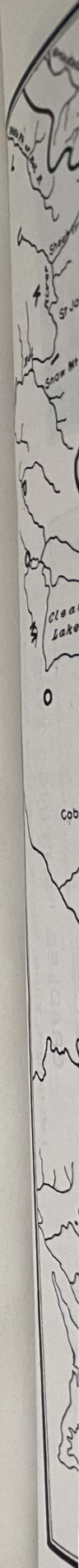
For the central Wintun one subdivision is known: that of the valley dwellers and the hillmen. But their dialects were not very different, and there may have existed equal or greater divergences between northern and southern settlements within the group. On the great map of the State, which alone shows the whole Wintun territory (Pl. 1), no attempt has therefore been made to indicate any internal demarcation.

Among the southern Wintun the cleavage between plains and hills continues, in fact is accentuated; and this block has therefore been represented not as a unit, like the others, but as consisting of a southeastern and a southwestern half. This gives, then, four instead of three primary Wintun languages and groups of people.

Both the southern dialect groups were subdivided; but the areas of these minor dialects are known in only two or three instances, which are recorded on Plate 37. The impression must be guarded against that these dialect areas were the only ones; from Knights Landing downstream usable data are almost nil, the Indians having disappeared.

The habitable sites in the Sacramento marshes were favorable places in winter, on account of the immense number of water birds which they drew, besides being in proximity to the salmon fishing in the main river. In summer the swampy plains were hot, malarial, and infested with swarming insects, while the hills were correspondingly attractive and productive. There was consequently much seasonal shifting of habitation. This can hardly have extended all the way from river to mountains: friendly people of diverse dialect may have visited each other freely, but if each had lived on the other's territory for half the year, they would have been a single nationality. The dialectic diversity between hills and valley, therefore, is evidence of the restriction of the regular movements of the separate communities to limited areas. The valley people evidently had their permanent villages on the river itself—that is, in the marsh belt—but appear to have left this during the dry half of the year to live on the adjacent plains, mostly by the side of tributaries. The upland people built their winter homes where the streams issue into the open valley, or in favorable spots higher on these creeks, and in summer moved away from the main water courses into the hills or mountains.

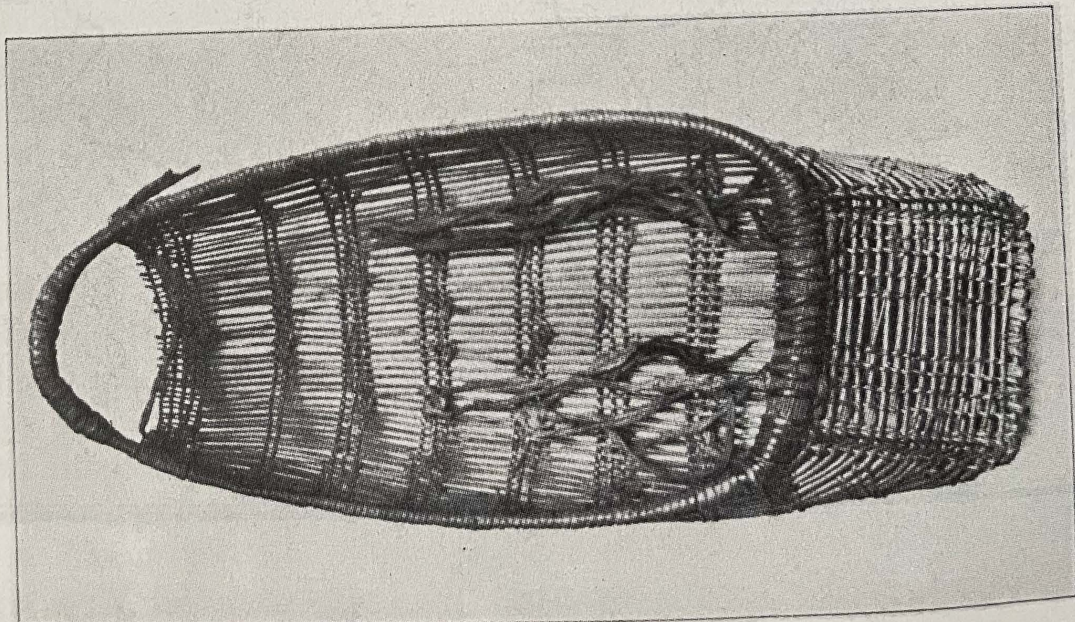
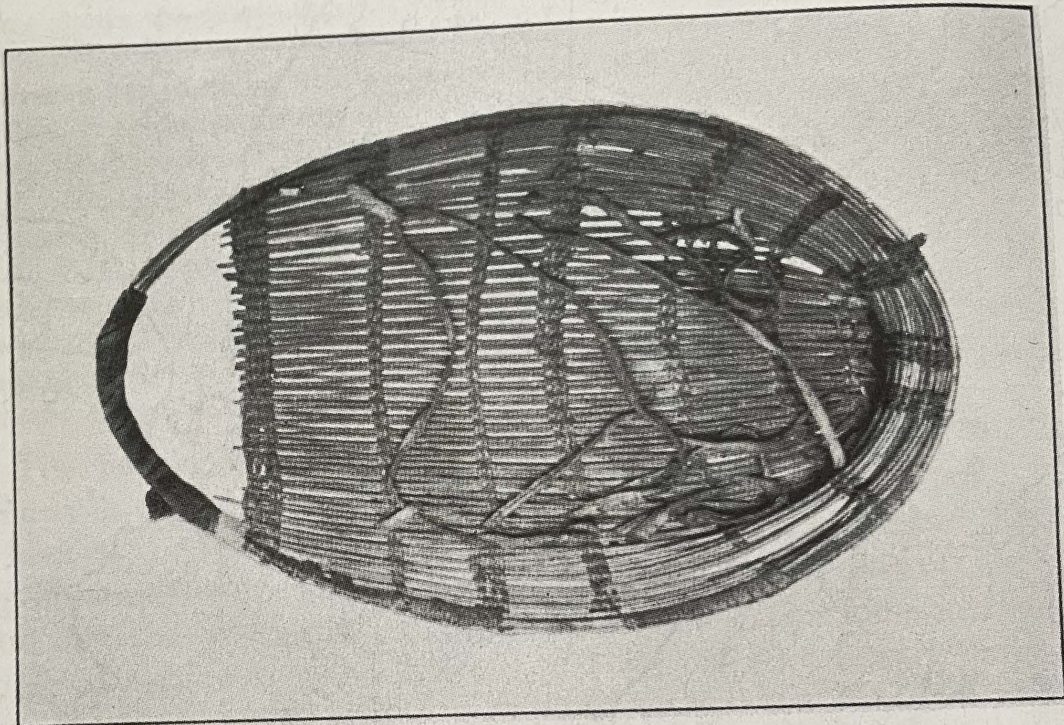
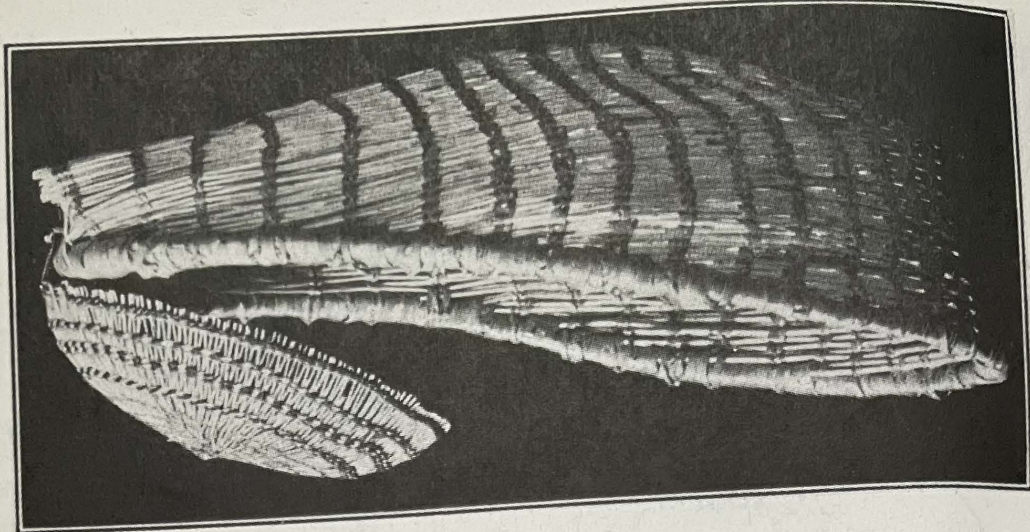
A distinction has often been made between a Wintun group proper in the north and a Patwin group in the south. This distinc-











**CRADLES, "SITTING" TYPE**

Left to right, Yurok, Wintun (Pomo type), Northern Wintun

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tion is based on the employment of these terms, in the dialects of the two regions, to denote "person" or "people." There is no doubt that in the north *win-tun*, or perhaps more correctly *win-tu*, is in use where the southerners say *pat-win*. The "Wintun" of this nomenclature seem to correspond rather closely with what are here called the northern and central divisions, the "Patwin" with the southeastern and southwestern. The terminology, being native, is likely to express a line of cultural cleavage of some consequence. It would therefore be desirable to follow, were it not for the confusion that might ensue from the use of "Wintun" to designate sometimes the entire stock and sometimes the northern half alone.

#### DESIGNATIONS.

The Wintun stock has sometimes been called Copehan in technical literature. This name is supposed to be derived from that of a village. Kope is grapevine in southern Wintun; but no settlement of this designation can be recalled by surviving Indians.

The Shasta knew the Trinity Wintun—the only ones they were in direct contact with—as Hatukwiwa or Hatukeyu; the Chimariko called them Pachhuai or Pachawe. The Yuki named the Nomlaki Titkaieno'm, but seem to have lacked any generic designation for the stock. How the Maidu, Yana, Achomawi, Athabascans, Pomo, and Costanoans called their Wintun neighbors is not known.

#### SETTLEMENTS.

The names and locations of some 60 sites inhabited by the Wintun are known, mostly in the northern part of the southwestern and southeastern areas. These are shown in Plate 34. Their grouping into political communities such as have been established for most of the Pomo territory can unfortunately not even be attempted.

Tawaisak, on Little Stony Creek, is a Pomo, not a native name.

Kotina, north of Cache Creek, is also not aboriginal. It appears to be the modern Indian adaptation of Cortina, the name of a chief, later used for his group, and then applied to a valley and a stream, or rather three streams. Whether this chief was simply labeled "Curtain" by the Spaniards, or whether his native name suggested this familiar word to them, is not known.

Many of the village names appear with the ending *-hlabe*; but this appears to be a suffix or added word, not a part of the name of the place.

The inequality in distribution of sites on Plate 34 reflects the incompleteness of knowledge, not any notable unevenness of occupancy.

A number of Wintun group names have been reported, but these nearly all refer to directions and boil down to merely relative designations like those used by the Miwok, the same people being northerners and southerners to their several neighbors. Where the directional terms fail to appear, elements like *ol*, "up" or "above," enter into these shifting designations.



Among the names are: Waikenmok, Waikosel, Wailaki (applied to themselves as well as to the Athabascan division on whom the name has crystallized in American usage). From *vai*, "north."

Nomlaki, Nomkehl, Nummok. From *nom*, "west."

Normok, Norelmok, Norbos, Noyuki, Nuimok. From *nor*, *no*, "south."

Puimok. From *pu*, "east."

Of similar type: Olposel, Chenposel, Wilaksel, Daupum-wintun.

Other cited names are those of places outright: Napa, Liwai-to, Yodetabi (for Yodoi-hlabe). Probably of this class are Suisu-n, Karki-n, Tole-n, and Ulula-to or Ula-to, which appear to have been important villages in extreme southern Wintun territory, in the vicinity of the modern similarly named places; and a few others in the same region: Malaka, Sone-to, Ansak-to, Aklu-to, Churup-to, and Puta-to. Puta or Putah Creek has generally been derived from Spanish *puta*; but the ending *-to* (compare Napa-to) is native. Either the Wintun of a place on Putah Creek accepted the Spanish epithet or the Spaniards put their own interpretation on a native place name.

Places in the north were Waidal-pom, at Ydalpom; Tsarau, at Stillwater; Paspuisono, at Redding; Hin-pom, probably at the mouth of Slate Creek; Tayamnorel, at Trinity Center; Tientien, at or below Douglas City; Haien-pom, at Hyampom. Wini-mem, "middle river," and Pui-mem, "east river," do not denote tribes as sometimes stated, but the McCloud and Pit Rivers.

In Central Wintun territory Paskenta is probably named from a native settlement. The word means "under the bank."

A few terms seem to be group names formed on localities; as Topaidi-sel, from Topai-dihi; and Lol-sel, the "tobacco people" of Long Valley east of Clear Lake. Designations of this sort are parallel to the Pomo group names ending in *pomo* or *napo*.

#### WARS.

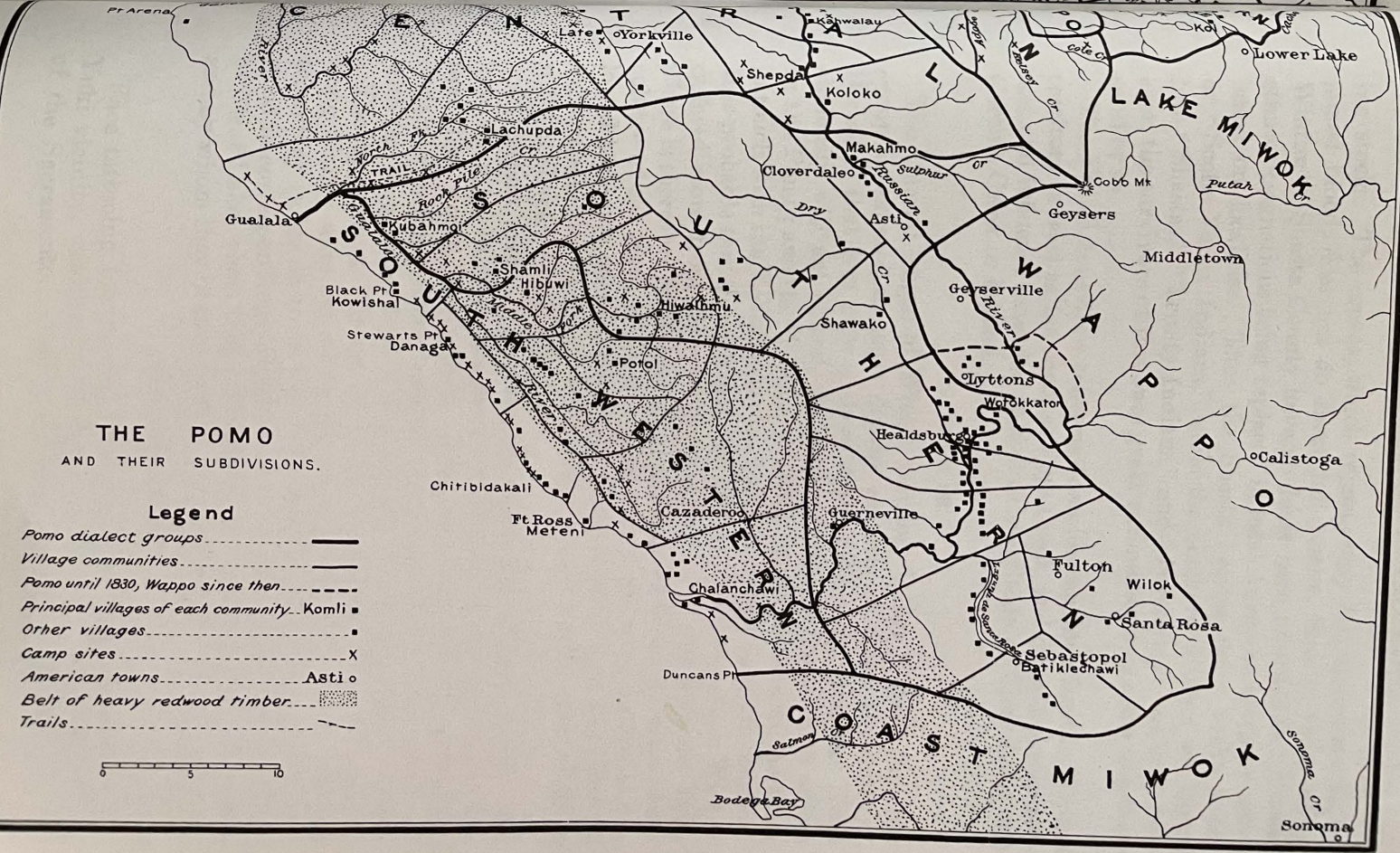
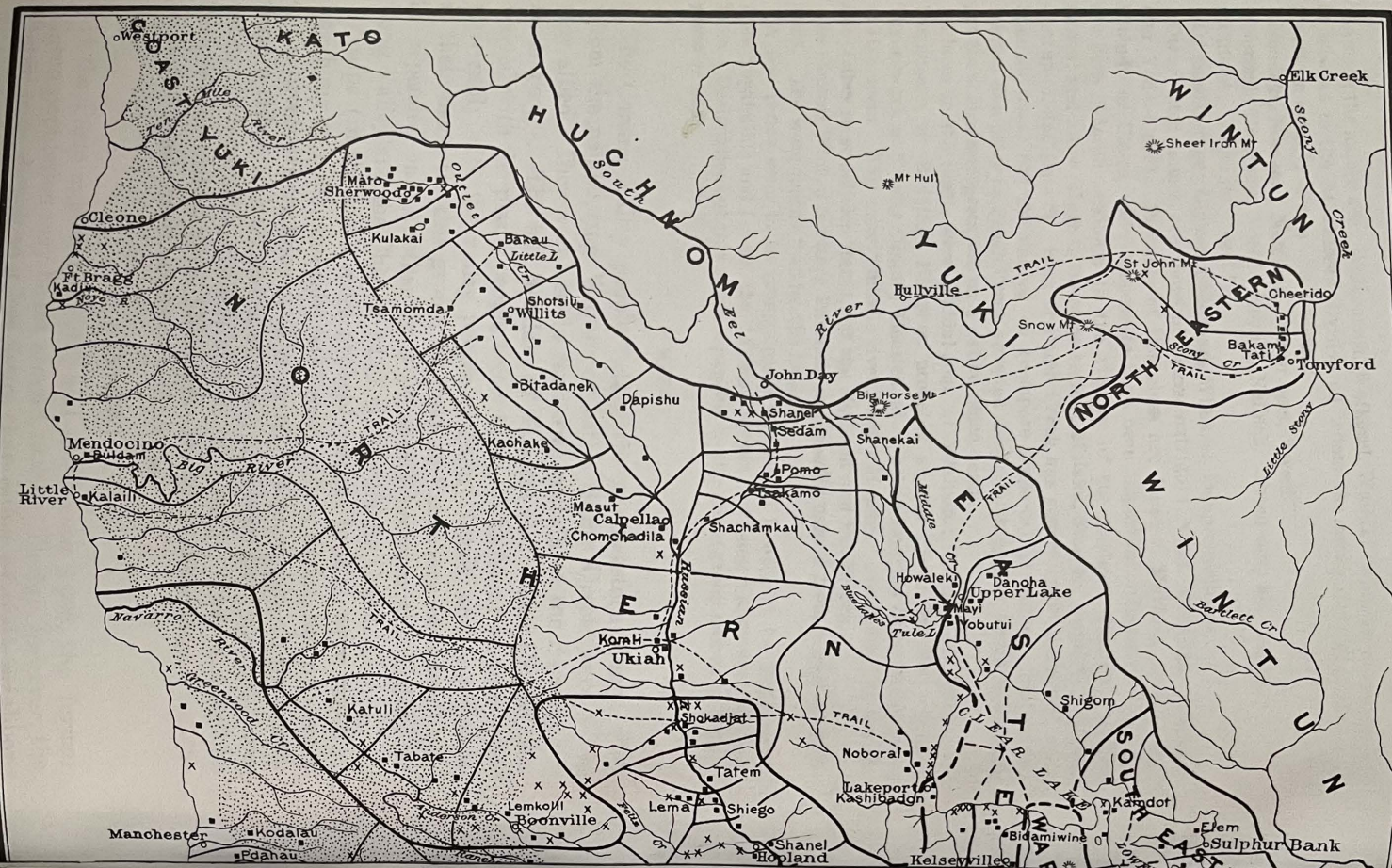
The Cortina Valley people fought the northeastern Pomo, with whom the neighboring Wintun of Little Stony Creek were probably allied. They were also in feud with certain of the Sacramento River people. The hill Nomlaki of Thomas and Elder Creeks also warred with the plains people below them. The latter in turn were unfriendly with the valley people of Stony Creek and southward, if their name for this group, No-yuki or "southern enemies," may be depended on. Another feud prevailed between the Lol-sel of Long Valley and the Chenpo-sel of middle Cache Creek.

Scalps (in the south more probably whole heads) were taken in war, hung on poles, and celebrated over with a dance, but no details of the procedure are known. The Trinity Wintun, like all the northwestern tribes, took no scalps, and may therefore have made the war dance of preparation in place of that of victory. They are said to have fought with slings. This seems to be a mountaineer's accomplishment whenever it occurs in California.

#### NUMBERS.

If the Pomo aggregated 8,000 and the Maidu 9,000, the former Wintun population may be set around 12,000. To-day, however, the Wintun have shrunk to a less figure than either of these neighbor-

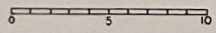




**THE POMO AND THEIR SUBDIVISIONS.**

**Legend**

- Pomo dialect groups ————
- Village communities ————
- Pomo until 1830, Wappo since then - - - - -
- Principal villages of each community - Komli ■
- Other villages - - - - -
- Camp sites - - - - - X
- American towns - - - - - Asti ○
- Belt of heavy redwood timber - - - - -
- Trails - - - - -





ing stocks. The census, which reports only 710, more than half of mixed blood, does not do them full justice, because many of the Wintun of Shasta County have no doubt been returned as "Shasta," ethnic designations being replaced in local American usage by names based on localities. Thus the Shasta become the "Yreka tribe," or "Scotts Valley Indians," while the northern Wintun are turned into "Shastas," "Trinity Indians," and "Hayforks." At best, however, the survivors of this once great nationality may come to a thousand or so.

The Franciscans drew converts from identifiable places in Wintun territory at least as far north as Puta Creek, and direct Spanish contact and influence extended to about the latitude of Clear Lake, say Cortina Creek or beyond.

#### CULTURE.

The unusual length of Wintun territory brings it about that this group is exposed to most diverse contacts of social environment. Divisions that live only a short day's walk away from the Hupa obviously will not observe the same customs as those which adjoin on the Pomo; and the Wintun bordering on the Achomawi and those in touch with the Yokuts can have had few specific habits in common. It is probable that the northern, the central, and the southern Wintun differed more from one another than the Pomo did from the Yuki. There is therefore little theoretical justification for a discussion of the culture of the stock as a whole; and such a summary method is followed here only because the available information is so scant that its segregation into three or more bodies would render each of these without shape or coherence.

In certain respects, however, the continuity of basic speech may have operated in favor of a more considerable uniformity of civilization than would be expected. Thus, northern Wintun mythology certainly inclines to the "creator" type that elsewhere is associated with the occurrence of the Kuksu religion which they did not follow.

The uppermost Wintun on Cache Creek and those in near-by Long Valley were cut off by the long canyon below them and the secondary range on their east from the bulk of their kinsmen, and stood in correspondingly closer intercourse with the Miwok and Pomo of Clear Lake, whom they influenced in several traceable particulars, and by whom they in turn were no doubt affected.

#### ARTS AND CUSTOMS.

Face tattooing for women, which seems to reach its acme in the Yuki vicinity, was practically lacking among the southern Wintun of the Sacramento. Ornamentation of the breast or stomach was



more common. In the north the northwestern style of three lines or bands down the chin was in vogue.

The southern house was of the dance-house type, earth covered and dome shaped, at least in the valley. In the hills the conical bark house, and perhaps thatched structures, were in use. The Trinity Wintun used the bark dwelling. The custom of those in the upper Sacramento region is unknown.<sup>1</sup>

Among foods may be mentioned pounded and sifted manzanita berries, cooked; a cider made from the same; and young clover herbage, eaten raw. The inner bark of trees was sometimes resorted to in the hungry time of early spring. All these foods had a much wider distribution than Wintun territory.

Wintun basketry possesses little that is distinctive. In the north it is of the overlaid twined type characteristic of the border region of Oregon and California. On the McCloud the shapes and pattern arrangement are more nearly of Achomawi than of Yurok-Hupa type, as might be expected; along the South and Hay Forks of the Trinity, no doubt the reverse.

The southern limit of all-twined basketry among the Wintun is not known, but can not have been far from the boundary between the northern and central divisions.

In the central group, and among the northerly members of the southern one, baskets were, in a generic way, of Pomo type, but without most of the distinctive traits of the ware of that people. Among the Wintun bordering on the Pomo, as well as those of the extreme south, western influences were stronger. Feathered baskets have been reported from Yodoi on the Sacramento.

The Pomo type of baby carrier prevailed through southern Wintun territory: it is found without material modification on the Sacramento River. The central type is not known, but is likely to have been similar. In the northern group, a crude, shallow form of the sitting cradle was used, flatter even than the Shasta one; but carriers rather similar to the Pomo ones also occur. (Pl. 35.)

<sup>1</sup> Southeastern and central Wintun buildings in the Sacramento Valley were earth covered, elliptical rather than round, and uniform in construction, but of four sizes and functions: the dance house, *hlut*, about 50 feet in length; the sudatory, *chapa-kewe*, larger than the dwelling, and slept in by unmarried men and sometimes by their elders; the living house, *kewe*, 20 to 30 feet long; and the menstrual house, *kula*, up to 20 feet in diameter. There was but one dance, sweat, and menstrual house in a settlement, the first two in proximity at either the upstream or downstream end of the village, the latter at the opposite end. All buildings normally faced east—riverward—but the dance house also had a rear exit. Roof entrance and ladder are not mentioned. The dwelling was shared by several households, each with recognized floor space. There were no partitions, but there were raised bed scaffolds, and a common mortar hollowed in a log lying transversely at the rear, corresponding in position to the drum in the dance house. Summer camping was under rectangular brush roofs, without walls. See McKern, Patwin Houses, in bibliography.



The tule raft was used on San Francisco Bay and no doubt in the marshes all along the Sacramento.

Fishing in the northern streams is often from a scaffold out over the water; but this is simpler than among the Yurok and Shasta, and for spearing rather than netting.

The salmon harpoon runs to three times a man's length; and forks at the end, with detachable points, as in all the northern half of California.

The villagers on the Sacramento used decoys to attract ducks, then scared them into nets. The decoys are said to have been carved and colored, but this was scarcely the way the California Indians exercised their fingers, even in pursuit of a practical object. Models made of bound rush stems, possibly with ducks' heads set on them, are more likely.

Money came from the west, that is, the Pomo. Of late years the shells have been traded, and even the river Patwin know how to round and bore them. In the old days, it is said, only finished beads came in. Beads were counted, not measured. The reckoning was by units of 80 in the south. The thinnest disks were rated 80 to an American dollar, good beads 80 to 4 dollars, exceptionally thick ones 5 to a dollar. This is a quadruplicating count: 320, 80, 20 to 4 dollars. As the latter amount is the fee for each ceremonial initiation or degree, it perhaps represents a native unit of valuation, or at any rate evinces a southern Wintun inclination to reckon by fours.

The northern Wintun must have had and prized dentalia.

All the Wintun used their terms of solar direction freely on the most trivial occasion. "North of you" or "west of the door," would be spoken where we should say "behind" or "to the left." The tribes of northwestern California follow the same usage, except that they think in terms of water: "Downstream," "toward the stream," and the like, with the absolute direction changing to accord with the drainage of each locality.

#### THE DEAD.

In general, the Wintun buried the dead. This is established for the northern division; for the Nomlaki of the central group; and at least for the northern members of the southern Wintun, of valley and hills alike. The groups near upper San Francisco Bay, and some of those in immediate contact with the Pomo, may have cremated.

The precise customs in the extreme rite are not known; but the Nomlaki and the people about Colusa hunched the body, wrapped it with strings of money, bundled it in a skin—a bear skin if possible—and then wound it around and around with ropes. The grave, which was dug with sticks, was undercut toward the west. The body was dropped in, not lowered, then pushed with rods into the little cave.



The earth was slowly stamped down to the accompaniment of wailing songs. Property was buried with the dead in large quantities, and, in some regions, burned near the grave. Altogether the public ritual of burial and mourning was showy and slowly elaborate, and thus in some ways approximated a substitute for the anniversary burning of the Maidu and southern tribes, which the Wintun knew but did not practice. This statement holds without qualification for the southwestern and southeastern divisions. The central group, and those in the north about Redding, are said to have postponed the burning of property for a month or two after the funeral, a practice probably to be interpreted as an approach to the Maidu custom of annually holding a communal burning of valuables in commemoration of the dead of the year.

The native motive for the destruction of property was pure sentiment rather than a desire to equip the dead. People who did not sacrifice all the belongings of a relative were looked upon as having more regard for falling heir to his valuables than for him and his memory. This seems to be a powerfully rooted idea among all the California Indians. So far as magico-religious concepts enter into the burial or burning of property, they appear to run along the line of not retaining any object that might bring about the return of the dead person, rather than a desire to provide for his spiritual existence, although the Maidu are reported as specifying the latter purpose.

Somewhat similar are the motives that crop out in the universal taboo of the name of the dead. Fear of calling the ghost no doubt existed, at least here and there; but primarily the name was not spoken because its utterance would shock the family. For this reason a nameless reference, if direct enough to be unmisunderstandable, was almost as much to be avoided. No one who has even seen the effect produced on a group of Indians by the well-meant ignorance of a white man who inquires after a relative who in the meantime has died, or by any allusion to the parents of old people, can doubt that their sensibilities are roughly and deeply wounded. It is as when among ourselves the dead are spoken of slightly or with condemnation; the only difference being that the Indian, feeling far more keenly or morbidly than we, regards any reference at all as an outright slight. Hence the unforgivable nature of the offense if there is the least suspicion of its having been intentional; and among natives, who know native custom and its strength, the breach can not well be other than deliberate. On the other hand, the names of the dead are freely spoken by those not related to them, at least to white men, if only the Indian has confidence that the information will not be allowed to go farther, and is sure that no other native can overhear



him; which confidence would not be in him if he seriously feared that utterance of the name would call the ghost. Knowing that uncivilized nations believe in souls and follow magical practices, we are often inclined to rush to the conclusion that all their actions are influenced by these preconceptions, and to divest these people of some of the profoundest and most common human emotions.

Burial was in little graveyards not more than 100 yards from the houses of the living, and often in the village, perhaps in front of the dance house. The reason assigned for this proximity is prevention of grave robbery. Ordinary people would not touch anything that had been in contact with a corpse; but certain shamans were reputed so powerful that they had nothing to fear, and were likely to be tempted by the valuables underground.

Widows applied pitch to their close-cropped hair and their faces during the entire period of mourning.

#### SHAMANISM.

The southeastern Wintun, like the Pomo, recognize the transfer of shamanistic ability. Among the hill people, they say, each doctor acquires his own power; but among themselves, a man sometimes receives, not only knowledge or amulets, but the actual shaman's faculty, from a brother or relative.

In the north, shamans are "finished" in a dance held in the sweat house at night. Older doctors suck the novices' bodies clean; then call the *yapaitu* or spirits, who enter the neophytes and render them temporarily unconscious or maniac.

The disease-causing "pains," as the Yurok or Shasta or Maidu call them in speaking English, are named *dokos* by these Wintun, which word means flint or obsidian arrow point. The Yuki hold very similar beliefs. The *dokos* are evidently spirit missiles, and can be extracted, through sucking, only by a shaman who has a spirit stronger than the one which dispatched the death-dealing object. It is specifically stated that the *dokos* are sent into human bodies by benevolent but offended spirits; or by inherently malignant ones; or by such as are controlled by an evil-minded shaman. The sun, stars, clouds, salmon, coyote, dog, wolf, and sucker are all shaman's spirits; the first three benignant, the last three particularly powerful to bring death.

The were-bear shamans exercised their powers chiefly to destroy those whom they disliked. When in the form of the animal, they had the faculty of drawing their victims to them. Grizzly bears were not eaten.

Charm stones were hunting amulets, as among all other California Indians who recognize them. An American, finding one in a slough—they are almost always found in or near water—gave it to a Colusa



Wintun. An older Indian carried it away on the ground that it was too dangerous an object to have about, and then, in order to retain undisturbed possession for himself, pretended to have lost it. The old fellow was a constant fisherman and goose hunter, and the stone was known to be of value in attracting game. This incident, in addition to the instances already on record, should dispose of the tenacious but utterly unfounded interpretation of these artifacts as sinkers. They were undoubtedly often suspended; but a charm can be hung as well as a net weight. There is no evidence that any recent California Indian ever made one of these objects; but since they looked upon them as magical, it is quite possible that their prehistoric shapers manufactured them for magical use also.

#### TRADITIONS.

Wintun mythology is represented in the available records by a series of tales of very unusual form, apparently obtained in the region of Redding or above. The chief deity and creator is *Olelbis*, "he who is above," or in literal idiom "up-in-sit." He makes streams, game, clouds, mountains, acorns, and shells, or sanctions their production, and reobtains water after its abduction. Daylight, fire, and flint are all secured from their chary possessors by theft, which is obviously a favorite mythic motive. A world fire is recounted. The existing human race supplants the first people, who are endowed with animal or natural attributes. Coyote causes death and is its first victim; but the antithesis between him and the creator is vague. Much in the world is brought about through the power of beings who are direct personifications: Water women, Flint, Fire-drill child, Old man white oak acorn, Wind, the Cloud dogs. There are many episodes in all this to suggest the mythology of the Sacramento Valley Maidu; but again, much of the essential spirit of the systematized traditions of that people is lacking.

The Southern Wintun equivalent of *Olelbis* is not known, except that the hawk *Katit* is said to have been opposed by Coyote, and when he had yielded to him in the matter of death for mankind to have laid the *Equisetum* rush *sohi* in the path of Coyote's son at the burning of property for the dead. The rush turned into a rattlesnake, which bit the young man as he ran; and when Coyote wished to reverse his law, *Katit* refused. A world fire is told of; but this idea is Pomo and Yuki as well as northern Wintun. The attribution of the origin of the earth to the turtle, which dived through the primeval sea, is a bond of affinity with the Maidu, with whom many more may be expected.



## DANCES.

An adolescence ceremony for girls has been definitely reported only from the northern Wintun, and even there details are lacking. In general, this rite seems to wane in proportion to the development of the Kuksu cultus which is discussed in the following chapter.

The war dance and shaman's dance have already been commented on.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> W. C. McKern, *Functional Families of the Patwin* (see bibliography), distinguishes (1) the household; (2) the *sere* or paternal family, a lineage of kin reckoned in the male line only; (3) the family social group, consisting of a headman and those who acknowledged his authority, viz, his wife, descendants, brothers and their wives and descendants, and young men recently married into the group and not yet returned to their natal one; but excluding older female members living in their husbands' homes and young male members still living in their wives' homes. Names, ceremonial objects, and household utensils were hereditary in the *sere*; strictly personal property was buried or burned at the owner's death.

The chief usually succeeded his father, sometimes a brother or uncle, but always a relative within the *sere*; an unqualified son might be passed over in favor of a more distant relative on his father's death, by agreement of the older men of the community; once in office, he could not be deposed. He consulted formally with the headmen of the family social groups (who evidently corresponded to the lesser chiefs or "captains" of the Pomo and the "town chiefs" of the Yuki) but made his own decisions and was not disobeyed; the dissatisfied left the community. His house stood in the middle and he wore only holiday attire. He is said to have assigned "picking grounds" annually to each family according to its needs, divided all larger game among the family headmen, directed communal hunts, and fixed the first day of fishing. He authorized the holding of the *Hesi* ceremony and gave a ritual name to each initiate. Councils were held, with sweating, in his house; gambling on ceremonial occasions took place in it; he was buried in it and it was then burned.

Each *sere* possessed an esoteric ritual, plus individually inherited charms, which qualified one or more of its members for certain religious, official, or trade functions. Thus the *hlapeta* family fished with the *hlapi* seine; the *chapentu* built salmon dams; the *chakotu* netted ducks; the *kapitu* flaked arrow points; others netted geese, made salt, made feathered or oval baskets or woodpecker crest headbands and belts. Nonmembers of these families were not prohibited from following the same occupations, but specialization and success went with the family medicine. Official and religious families, on the other hand, were monopolistic and provided the *chapatu* or *Hesi* fire tender; *koltu* or song leaders; *holwatu* or *Sika* drummers; *yaitu* or ritual shaman and instructor; *K'aima*, *Sika*, *Loli*, *Toto*, and *Kuchu* dancers; and the *maliomta* or shamans, who were taught by older relatives to influence the spirits. The chief, the war leader, the *chimat*u or *Hesi* manager, the *moki* or *Hesi* head, attained their positions through merit and not because of family charm or ritual. The strict rigor of patrilinear inheritance in these functional families was frequently modified by adoption of unrelated individuals of special aptitude or qualification.

Something of this type of organization would seem to have existed also among the Pomo, since it explains many of their statements; and in some degree among the Maidu and perhaps other groups; and it is evident that further studies along the line of this one will have to be made before the precise relation of the Kuksu organization and rituals, as described in the next chapter, to native society becomes clear.



more than 100 souls. It did not possess distinctive speech, a number of such tribes being normally included in the range of a single dialect. Each was obviously in substance a "village community," although the term "village" in this connection must be understood as implying a tract of land rather than a settlement as such. In most cases the population of the little tribe was divided between several settlements, each presumably consisting of a few households more or less conjoined by blood or marriage; but there was also a site which was regarded as the principal one inhabited. Subsidiary settlements were frequently abandoned, reoccupied, or newly founded. The principal village was maintained more permanently. The limits of the territory of the group were well defined, comprising in most cases a natural drainage area. A chief was recognized for the tribe. There is some indication that his elevation was normally subject to popular approval, although hereditary privileges are likely to have limited selection to particular lineages. The minor settlements or groups of kinsmen had each their lesser chief or headman. There was usually no name for the tribe as such. It was designated either by the name of its principal settlement or by that of its chief. Among foreigners these little groups sometimes bore names which were used much like true tribal names; but on an analysis these generally prove to mean only "people of such and such a place or district." This type of organization has been definitely established for the Wailaki, Yuki, Pomo, and Patwin, and is likely to have prevailed as far south as the Miwok in the interior and the Costanoans or Salinans on the coast and inland to the Maidu and Yana. In the northeast, among Shasta, Atsugewi, and Achomawi, there are reports of chiefs recognized over wider districts, which would suggest somewhat larger political units.

The Yokuts, and apparently they alone, attained a nearer approach to a full tribal system. Their tribes were larger, ranging from 150 to 400 or 500 members, possessed names which do not refer to localities, and spoke distinctive dialects, although these were often only slightly divergent from the neighboring tongues. The territory of each tribe was larger than in the region to the north, and a principal permanent village rarely looms up with prominence.

The Shoshoneans of Nevada, and with them those of the eastern desert fringe of California, possessed an organization which appears to be somewhat akin to that of the Yokuts. They were divided into groups of about the same size as the Yokuts, each without a definite metropolis, rather shifting within its range, and headed by a chief possessing considerable influence. The groups were almost throughout named after a characteristic diet: thus, "fish eaters" or "moun-