

Nomlaki

WALTER GOLDSCHMIDT

Language and Territory

The Nomlaki (¹nōm,läkē) spoke a Wintuan language closely related to Wintu and Patwin—perhaps merely a divergent dialect of the same language the Wintu spoke—in the Penutian linguistic stock.* There were two major Nomlaki divisions, the River and Hill Nomlaki. The River Nomlaki lived in the Sacramento River valley in present Tehama County. The Hill Nomlaki occupied the foothill land to the west, extending to the summit of the Coast Range, in what is now Tehama and Glenn counties (fig. 1).

Most available cultural data come from Hill Nomlaki informants. According to them, the River Nomlaki were of two groups: the *memwaylaka* 'water north language' in the north, and the *puymok* 'easterners'. The Hill Nomlaki were themselves subdivided into dialects extending along the several creek drainages: *waykewet* (Redbank area); *waltoykewet* (north of Elder Creek); *nomlaka* (Elder Creek to below Thomes Creek); and *noykewet* or *kotayel* (Grindstone Creek). People from farther south were called *noymok* whether or not they spoke a related language.

At the time of first contact with Whites the Nomlaki probably numbered more than 2,000 individuals. Their numbers were heavily reduced during the first decade of contact and slowly dwindled thereafter. In the 1930s there were three rancherias of a half-dozen households each, the men serving as casual or migratory laborers. Aboriginal practices had already almost disappeared. In the 1970s only scattered descendants survive.

Prehistory

No stratigraphic archeological data in present Nomlaki territory is available to establish a succession of cultures,

*Nomlaki words printed in italics have been checked by Harvey Pitkin for conformity to the orthography he developed for Wintu (Broadbent and Pitkin 1964:21), which he estimates to be an adequate representation of the Nomlaki phonological system. This orthography has been modified by substituting *č* for *c*, and by the addition of *ʔ* and *X* (very likely the same phoneme). Vowel length was probably phonemic but cannot now be indicated since it was never recorded systematically.

but work to the south suggests a developmental sequence (Heizer and Fenenga 1939; Lillard, Heizer, and Fenenga 1939). Nomlaki culture belongs to the late phase of this sequence, as indicated by the following conforming evidence: flexed burial, burial accompanied by possessions of and gifts to the deceased, house form, clamshell disk beads, tubular magnesite beads, stone pipes with bone stems, bird-bone whistles, incised geometric designs, and acorn anvil.

Clamshell disk beads, tubular magnesite beads, and flexed burial are associated with the wealth complex of the Nomlaki. Clamshell beads were used as money; tubular magnesite beads were highly prized wealth objects; and flexed burial was associated with the practice of wrapping the corpse in a bearskin shroud, a Nomla-

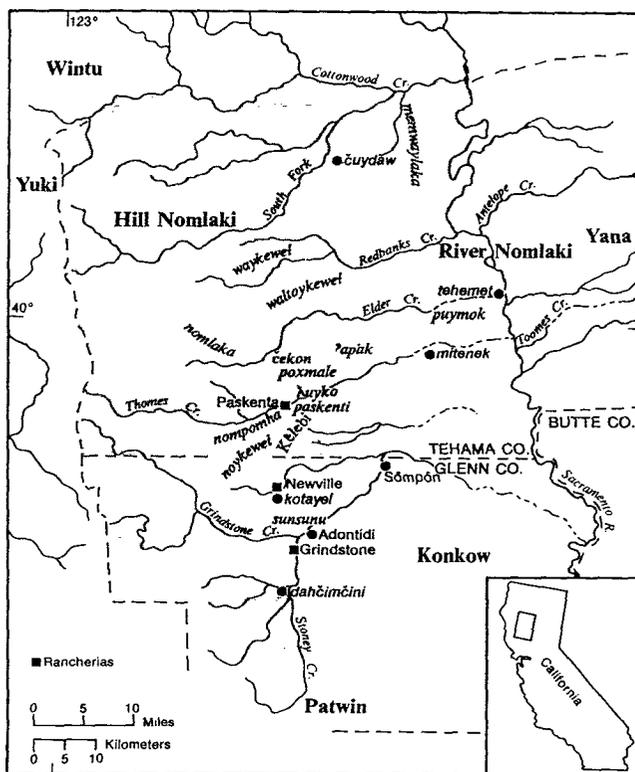


Fig. 1. Tribal territory with subdivisions, local groups, and a few important villages.

annual reports of the secretary of the interior in various dates between the years 1853 and 1864. Further materials on the area are available in Chapman (1921), A.W. Hoopes (1932), E.G. Lewis (1880), Pickering (1848), Powers (1877), Washington (1906), and Du Bois (1939).

Culture

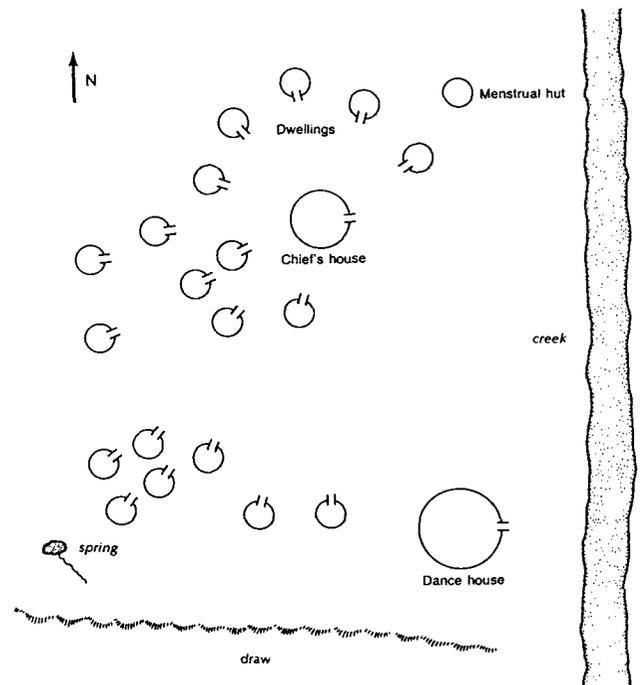
Social Organization

Daily life centered in a village (*kewet*) with a population of from 25 to 200 persons under the leadership of a chieftain (*čabatu*). His office was hereditary in the male line, although succession was subject to review by the men of the village. The village itself was a kinship group (*volkapna*) comprised of persons related in the male line together with their married-in wives (and a few outsiders, owing to temporary matrilineal residence). This kinship group was named and exogamous, and its members recognized kinship to any strangers who belonged to a like-named group. It was, therefore, a clan in all its major features (Goldschmidt 1948). Within the village-*volkapna* there was a series of separate families comprised of husband, wife or wives, and minor children. These families were the food-producing and food-consuming units, but they shared food resources with their fellow village members (and *volkapna* kin).

A diagrammatic sketch of the *volkapna*-village (fig. 2) shows that it centers on the chief's house, which is larger than the others, toward which the individual huts of the household face. The menstrual hut is away from the water source; the dance house (figs. 3-4), where one exists, is outside the central circle.

The kinship system, recorded by Gifford (1922:97-98; see also Goldschmidt 1951a:321), equates parallel cousins with siblings; mother's brother's son with mother's brother; father's sister's daughter with granddaughter. Father's brothers, mother's sister's husband, and stepfather are equated, as are mother's sister, father's brother's wife, and stepmother.

Cutting across these spatial kinship groupings was another division, with distinguished persons according to social status. An initiatory rite (*huta*) introduced a limited number of adult men into a secret society. The members of this group were persons of status, having a disproportionate measure of authority in public matters and having certain sumptuary rights, especially those of engaging in trade in wealth objects that were the specific goals of this class. This group also controlled most of the skilled crafts and professions, which gave them a special source of profit and social position. Members apparently commanded the respect of their fellow initiates and obtained special privileges by their brotherhood in the organization. The wealth objects recognized by the society included furs and shell beads, and the greatest desidera-



After Goldschmidt 1951a:318.

Fig. 2. Diagram of a village. The chief's house faced the stream, into which the men plunged after certain sweating ceremonials. Later houses were built near the spring, which was the source of water. The dance house was a postcontact addition, away from the remainder of the village. The menstrual hut was at the opposite end of the village from the water supply. The diagram does not represent a particular village but shows characteristic relationships.

tum was the pelt of the black bear, which served as a burial shroud. They were acquired in part by trade with neighboring tribes, the profit accruing to Nomlaki traders by virtue of enhanced value as the goods moved farther from their place of origin.

Little detail is available on either the mythic or ceremonial aspect of this group. Initiation involved an ordeal in which novices danced in a superheated semisubterranean dance house until comatose or nearly so. They also plunged into a cold stream after sweating in the ordeal. Initiates might acquire special powers (both ritualistic, such as divination, and practical, such as artisans' skills) as a result of visions obtained while comatose.

The hereditary chieftain was expected to lead the people in their daily pursuits, to harangue them with respect to moral proprieties, and to hear disputes as they arose. Disputes were also adjusted by means of warfare and feuds. In the absence of legal authority, property played an important part in arriving at settlements. Wealth property was transferred to the offended party in payment for crimes, not as a result of an established system

ki's most valued possession. This wealth complex was in turn associated with the secret society and the pattern of occupational specialization. The evidence suggests that this wealth complex moved into the area from the south in late prehistoric times, and that it is part of that cult system of which the Kuksu of the Pomo is the best exemplar. These data support the historical reconstruction made by Kroeber (1923:306-309). The northward thrust that brought these elements did not involve conquest and population replacement but was accompanied by a gradual introduction of new population elements. It may have been associated with the spread of the bow and arrow. It introduced a fairly elaborate status differentiation in a formerly more egalitarian clan-village community system.

History

The Nomlaki were outside the orbit of the direct influence of Spanish missionary activity, though some indirect Spanish influence is indicated. In October 1808 Alférez (Ensign) Gabriel Moraga reached Glenn in Glenn County (Chapman 1921), within River Nomlaki territory. In October 1821 Luis Arguello and the diarist, Father Blas Ordáz (1958), crossed Glenn and Tehama counties. By this time the Indians told Arguello and Father Ordáz of White men who had preceded them. Arguello crossed the Coast Range, but it is doubtful that he penetrated Nomlaki territory.

In 1832-1833 the Ewing Young party crossed the area on a trapping expedition. Col. J.J. Warner described the decimated condition of the Indians of California:

The banks of the Sacramento river, in its whole course through the valley, were studded with Indian villages, the houses of which in the spring, during the day time were red with the salmon the aborigines were curing. . . . On our return, late in the summer of 1833, we found the valleys depopulated. From the head of the Sacramento to the great bend and Slough of the San Joaquin, we did not see more than six or eight live Indians, while large numbers of their skulls and dead bodies were to be seen under almost every shade tree, near the water, where the uninhabited and deserted villages had been converted into graveyards . . . (E.G. Lewis 1880:49).

This malaria epidemic of 1833 was the first serious blow Western civilization struck against the Nomlaki. Its worst toll was in the villages along the river; its effect on the Hill Nomlaki cannot be determined (Cook 1955a).

There is no evidence of direct contact between Whites and Indians until mid-century, though Dr. Charles Pickering (1848, 5:195), made contact with either River Nomlaki or Patwin in 1841 and L.T. Emmons (Pickering 1848, 8:258) was on the northern fringes of the area. Yet Goldschmidt (1951a:312) recorded informants' accounts

of raids and battles from this period.

By 1849 Tehama was a flourishing town and the impact of White civilization was felt by all the Indians of the northern Sierra Nevada and Coast Range of California. They were exploited as labor and were killed on the slightest provocation, real or imaginary. By 1851 settlers began to request that the Indians be segregated from the White population on a reservation. Others preferred to keep the Indians available for menial labor, for the principal economic asset was land and cheap labor was much in demand.

In 1851 a commission of three was appointed to make a series of treaties with the tribes of the central drainage, following a policy that was to get the Indians "down from their mountain fastnesses and place them in reservations, along in the foothills bordering on the plains." The treaties were accepted by the Indians but rejected by the United States Senate because, in the words of Congressman Joseph W. McCorkle of California, "the reservations of land, which they [the commissioners] have set apart for the different tribes of Indians, comprise, in some cases, the most valuable agricultural land in the State" (A.W. Hoopes 1932:45).

In 1852 Superintendent Edward F. Beale started the policy of establishing Indian reservations, and in September 1854 his successor, Thomas J. Henley, established the Nome Lackee Reservation on a tract of 25,000 acres in the foothills of western Tehama County between Elder and Thomes creeks.

The reservation was successful in that the Indians accepted its mode of life, learned farming and other crafts, and, according to accounts of the time, prospered. By 1856, with the threat of Indian retaliation dissipated, the settlers became covetous of the "magnificent farm of 25,000 acres" and brought pressure for its abandonment. The Nomlakis and other Sacramento valley Indians were literally herded over the mountain to Round Valley in 1863, the Nome Lackee Reservation having already been taken over by Whites. This was the Nome Cult Farm, the home of the Nomlakis' traditional enemy, the Yukis. There the sequence of conflicts was repeated and after several years a number of Nomlakis returned to settle in the foothills of their old territory, to secure a livelihood by working as farm hands.

They established a number of settlements, chiefly along the edge of the foothills in western Tehama County. In the 1870s they adopted the Ghost Dance cult, which was introduced by Homaldo, probably a Wintu, and Lame Bill, a Patwin (Du Bois 1939). A later development known as The Big Head was adopted in the early 1900s, and both rites continued to be performed as late as the 1930s. By this time there were but three rancherias left (Grindstone, Newville, and Paskenta), with probably no more than a score of households identifying themselves as Nomlaki.

Data on the history of this area are available from the

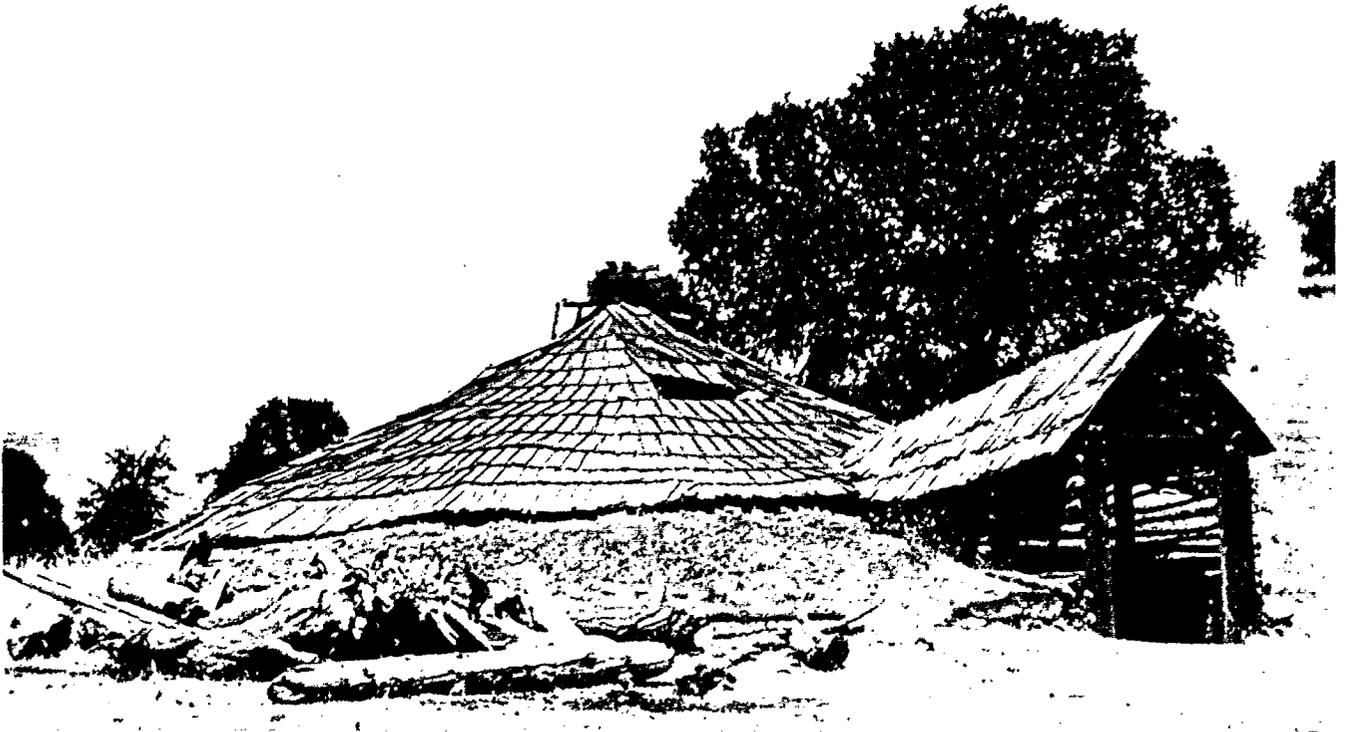


Fig. 3. A semisubterranean dance house at Paskenta. Photograph by Walter Goldschmidt, 1938.

of fines for specific criminal acts, but by negotiation between the two disputant parties. Wealth therefore played an important part, not only in the establishment of status, but also in the maintenance of law and order.

War and Trade

The cause of war was usually transgression of property rights or occasionally a murder growing out of a dispute over a woman. There was no clearly demarcated warrior class. It was not necessary to be a *huta* initiate to join the fight, but not all men engaged in warfare. Those who did fight underwent special practical and magic training, and it was said that cult members "uphold one another in a pinch" and called one another brother.

Each fighter utilized special springs in which he bathed to gain special power or protection. There were two important practitioners associated with warfare: the seer and the poisoner. It was the business of the seer to determine the proper course of action and predict the outcome. The poisoners killed people by magical means. The actual conduct of war involved surprise attacks or short pitched battles.

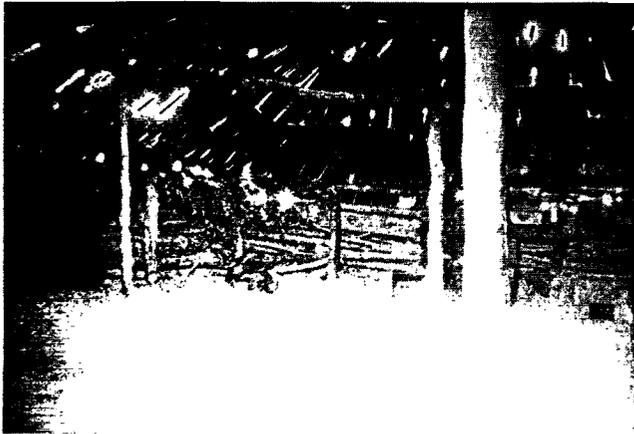
344 While warfare took place among the Nomlaki villages and especially between the Hill and river-dwelling Nom-

laki, their major enemy was the Yuki of Round Valley. An analysis of nine war stories obtained from the Nomlaki and the Yuki by three ethnographers (Goldschmidt, Foster, and Essene 1939) showed certain consistent themes. The figure indicates the number of stories using that theme. A small party is attacked (8) while camping (3), gathering (2), poaching (2), or trading (2). A woman or girl returns with the news (5), a war party is formed (7), and after a period of preparation (5) either a surprise attack is made (4) or a prearranged battle fought (2). The enemy is nearly wiped out (7) with little or no loss of life (2), scalps are taken (3), and a victory dance celebrated (4). Four of these accounts purport to refer to the last Yuki-Nomlaki conflict. These accounts always claim victory for the side of the teller and always place fault with the enemy. There is no individuation of heroes, although careful reference may be made to places.

Despite the small and integrated character of the Nomlaki community, differentials in wealth and power were clearly marked. Wealth consisted in clamshell disk beads, magnesite beads, and furs and hides, particularly the pelt of the black bear. Feathers, particularly of eagle and yellowhammer, were also prized.

Trade of various kinds played an important role in the Nomlaki economy. Because of a tendency toward occu-

pational specialization, a good deal of trade took place internally, individual families exchanging for or purchasing needed items, including food, from one another. The Hill Nomlaki acquired fish from the River Nomlaki in return for seeds and animals and also traded with the Yuki, who particularly sought salt. The Nomlaki were also a part of an exchange route extending from the Oregon border to San Francisco Bay, in which shells moved northward from the Bay region in exchange for skins, obsidian, and yew wood for bows. Some Nomlakis specialized in trading, a dangerous occupation. Clamshell beads served as medium of exchange and standard of value, though much exchange was direct barter. The beads were progressively improved to enhance their value as they moved farther from the source of supply. Trade and barter were clearly distinguished from gift exchanges, which also played an important social role, and occasionally took on a potlatchlike lavishness.



Dept. of Anthr., U. of Calif., Berkeley.
Fig. 4. Interior of semisubterranean dance house at Grindstone Rancheria. Photograph by C. Hart Merriam, May 1923.

Games

Aside from songs, dances, and storytelling, the Nomlaki had a wide variety of games. Among the sports they enjoyed were kick races, in which a buckskin ball was relayed by three players to a common goal, hockey (*weta*), in which a quoitlike loop of rope was flipped with a stick, and shinny (*kutla* or perhaps *kuḵa*) in which teams of six or seven played with wooden balls struck by sticks. They had foot races, jumping, shooting, and throwing contests, and wrestling. There was also a variety of gambling games, including the hand game (*kenil*), which was a guessing game, a multiple-stick guessing game (*bohemečehu*), and dice games (*tedela* and *tela*) played by women.

NOMLAKI

Religion

To the Nomlaki, the world of reality and the world of the supernatural were inseparable, so that even the most practical undertaking was circumscribed by elaborate ritual inspired by the religious ideas with which the act was invested. Hunting, trading, warfare, and the *huta* were only a few of the Nomlaki activities that carried ritual restrictions. Every important phase of the individual life cycle required the proper ceremony to insure spiritual purity and strength of the principles involved.

The Nomlaki world was animistic. "Everything in this world talks, just as we are now—the trees, rocks, everything. But we can't understand them, just as the White people do not understand Indians." In such a world all inanimate things had to be treated with circumspection, although the inherent power of some things was far greater than that of others. People likewise had special, inherent powers; the economic and social activity of each person was believed to be determined by a talent that was supernaturally acquired. The phrase "it is given him" was used for most manifest talents, and was offered as rationale for the differences in human abilities and achievements.

It is very difficult to disentangle aboriginal religious perceptions from those with Christian influences: the single reported origin myth is clearly a syncretization. The Nomlaki apparently had a concept of Supreme Being, as did their neighbors to the north and south. There were three forms of spirits: (1) *les*, which was variably glossed as 'shade, shadow, ghost', which dwells within and animates the living; after death, the *les* may be helpful or harmful; it may remain near the grave or go to the afterworld; (2) *holowit* is a ghost, an evil supernatural manifestation; (3) *yapaytu* is a supernatural manifestation whose precise nature could not be determined. There was also a variety of supernatural beasts, such as the mythical *wukwuk*. Modern informants more frequently paint these characters as devilish pranksters bent on mischief rather than as fearful beings doing harm; yet it was recognized that they occasionally killed people. The Nomlaki had a concept of heaven and expectation of an afterlife, but the characteristics are not clear.

Springs and hallowed places (*sawal*), usually inhabited by a spirit, had powers for good and evil and were of great importance to shamans, warriors, hunters, gamblers, and specific craftsmen. Some springs were said to be good; others were considered bad. They were inhabited by various spirits, who might harm a person who should not be there or benefit the visitor entitled to their powers. Each spring was visited by the person interested in its particular power, and such visits increased his luck, purified him, and strengthened him for his endeavor; a person might not visit a *sawal* to which he did not have a specific right. The afterbirth and the navel cord were

buried most frequently at the hunting *sawal*. A gambler might visit a gamblers' *sawal* to insure luck and success for a son. The body of an eagle from which the feathers had been removed was buried at a special spring.

Though the world of the Nomlaki was peopled with unseen spirits having wills of their own, and nature in its many manifestations was animate, the Nomlaki were not helpless before these powers. They could influence the course of supernatural events by the use of prayer, magic, and charms. Practical acts were surrounded with special incantations and other ritual, and restrictions on behavior served to protect the Indian against these unseen forces.

• SHAMANISM Sickness and death were caused by the intrusion of a foreign substance. This malignant object was thought to be visible and tangible, and the cure of disease lay in its proper extraction. The "pain" might be introduced into the body because of some breach of conduct (for example, "fooling with a menstruant woman") or because of the work of a magic "poisoner."

Poisons were concocted from different things. One informant claimed that dried rattlesnake fangs were the strongest poison and that lizards and bullfrogs brought about "slow consumption." Actual snake poison, which might be rolled in earwax, was said to have been used. Hummingbirds were also used for poisoning, and according to legend this bird was considered a great doctor.

Shamans acquired their powers through a rigorous initiation, the nature of which is not known. They cured by sucking out the "pain" that caused the illness; shamans could also cause illness by "throwing" pains into a person. They were thus adjuncts to warfare. Little is known of aboriginal shamans for they were replaced by the Bole doctor, who rubbed the pain from the body instead of sucking it. He did not produce a visible pain, and operated by entering a trance induced in part by smoking. This type of shaman is a historical innovation associated with the Bole-Marú cult.

The seer (*lahit*) had the power of foretelling the future. The profession was important in warfare and presumably other activities. He had no curative powers.

• CEREMONIES The Nomlaki did not have an elaborate ritual calendar. Aside from the *huta* and the puberty dance, the only known aboriginal ritual involving the community was the spring dance (*ʋltepomčono*). One Nomlaki described it as follows:

When everything is all very green, when winter is over and everything is warm and the sun is coming north, then the birds holler witwitwit, the people begin to ask, "Why can't we play a little?" Then they send word to their close neighbors that they are going to have a dance. The people ask the chief before they can give the dance, and if he agrees he will get out early in the morning and tell all the people to go hunting, fishing, and so on. He will name off the people for the various jobs early in the morning while they are outside listening.

The meat is brought to the chief, who gives each person some to be brought back prepared in the evening. Everybody gets some. At about five in the evening they start to dance . . . This is a spring dance, a play dance, a home dance. They don't gamble. It is held inside the sweat house. . . .

The dance group included two drummers, two singers, one person to call the dances, from two to six male dancers, and as many female dancers as were available. They dressed behind the drum; the singers stood in front of it, and the timekeeper in front of them with a split-stick rattle in his hands. There is a leader who "dances the girls out" of the dressing place one at a time toward the end of the dance. This is the strenuous part (Goldschmidt 1951a:364-365).

The Nomlaki had a rich store of tales. These generally were in the form of animal stories that explained the acquisition of cultural forms, such as the origin of fire or the existence of natural phenomena, such as the form of buttes. In them Coyote (*sedet*) was frequently a buffoon-hero. They are rich in imagery of death and revival and of the fabulous and not infrequently take on a ribald character.

Life Cycle

During pregnancy, both the woman and her husband were under special restrictions of a "sympathetic magic" nature. Old women served as midwives; the father was expected to cut the navel cord, which he buried at a spring to bring the child luck. Nicknames were given at birth, regular names somewhat later; but these names were not used by relatives. Children were disciplined by elders other than parents, sometimes by severe whippings.

Girls were confined at the onset of the first menses, attended by a girl who had recently undergone her puberty ceremony. They were under many restrictions, which were ended with a puberty ceremonial (*yowena*). It was a major festival, often lasting several days, involving feasting, dancing, singing (with many ribald songs), and closing with the girl and her attendant painted and resplendent in clothing and decoration, teasing the young men and enjoying being the center of attention. Although they were not confined at subsequent menstruations, women were subjected to numerous restrictions, as were their husbands.

Marriage (the ceremonial nature of which is not known) was generally arranged by the parents and involved temporary matrilocal residence and a period of bride service. Polygyny was permitted but was rare and limited to the wealthy. Marriage appears to have been easily dissolvable and could be terminated by mutual agreement. A man who left a woman without cause was expected to give presents to his wife's father, and neither was to marry for another year. The children remained with the woman.

The dead were buried in a round hole, tied in sinew rope and wrapped with a bear hide. Burial was immediately after death; mourners wailed through the night, stopping at sunrise. The possessions of the deceased were burned; a second burning of possessions took place a year later, and this released the widow from mourning and allowed her to remarry.

Subsistence

The Nomlakis lived entirely on natural products: their chief foods were acorns, grass seeds and tubers, deer, elk, rabbit and other small game, birds, and fish. The Nomlaki practiced a kind of transhumance, with each village moving to its own special area in the mountains each summer, though the base villages were not entirely abandoned.

Hunting was done either by lone individuals or in groups. All men hunted, but there were outstanding hunters and specialists. They used the bow and arrow, a knotted mahogany club, nets, snares, slings, and traps. The valley people used slings for killing birds. Deer were driven into sinew nets with 18-inch mesh, rabbits into fiber nets with 1 ¼-inch mesh, quail into or under nets stretched horizontally over poles and dropped on the feeding birds. The deer nets were about 6 feet high and made in 10-foot units; about 10 were stretched across a natural gap, the fence extended outward with a tule rope that turned the animals. Nets were privately owned. Rabbit nets were about 4 feet high and extended as much as 300 feet. Grasshoppers were also driven into a concentrated area and the grass fired. Deer and elk were also taken by running them down in relays. Bears, especially grizzly bears, were sought for their pelts. The killing required the work of specialists in the difficult art.

Boys were taught to hunt and given progressively better bows as their skill improved. A boy was prohibited from touching his first kill of any one animal; it was taken by an older person to the hunter's family for them to eat. Hunting restrictions were placed on a man whose wife was pregnant or menstruating.

Fish were taken by hand, with nets, by means of fish poisons in stagnant pools, with traps, and (on the Sacramento River where salmon were important) in weirs and with harpoons.

At least eight varieties of acorn were consumed. Some oak trees were private property. Diverse seeds and tubers were gathered by women, usually working in groups. They used a seed beater to dislodge ripe seeds into their baskets. Clover was important as a green because it provided the first fresh food in the spring. The diet was supplemented with various wild fruits and berries, pine nuts, and mushrooms. A kind of red clay was mixed with oat seeds or acorn meal and baked as bread; salt was obtained from stream banks in the spring. Tobacco was used if discovered wild; it was not cultivated.

Technology

The tools and weapons of the Nomlaki include: sinew-backed bow of imported yew or local juniper, a two-piece arrow with flint or obsidian point, flint or obsidian-bladed spear, elkhide armor, harpoon, stone and bone knives, a knobbed throwing stick of California mahogany, slings, nets of various kinds, and a wide variety of snares and deadfalls.

The Nomlaki made no pottery. In basketry, they occasionally made twined forms but more frequently three-rod coiled forms. These baskets were used for cooking, eating, storage, carrying, and diverse purposes. Rabbit-skin blankets were woven, and cradleboards that gave support to the infant's buttocks but left the legs free were also used. Clothing was chiefly of hide, men wearing a breechcloth, women skirts of decorated deerskin. Inner bark was also used for clothing. Elkhide sandals, but not moccasins, were worn.

Structures

The village headman had a house with centerpost (*ælkel*) that served not only as his residence but also as men's house and focal point of village life. Other houses (*lačikel*) were constructed of bent saplings tied with vine and thatched. The menstrual hut was constructed in the same manner. Woven granaries were also used. A much larger structure, the dance house (*tur*) is a semisubterranean, multipost structure with sod roof. In postcontact times it was associated with the introduced Ghost Dance cult, but aboriginally a smaller one had been used for the secret society initiation.

Synonymy

The linguistic family here called Wintuan was customarily called Wintun (or Winton) in the past, with three divisions labeled Northern Wintun, Central Wintun, and Southern Wintun. Kroeber (1932a:253) suggested that more convenient designations could be based on the word for 'person' in the three languages, yielding respectively Wintu, Wintun, and Patwin. He then sometimes referred to the Nomlaki as "proper Wintun" and pointed out that for Barrett (1908) they were the "Northerly Wintun." When the Nomlaki are called Wintun or Central Wintun, then their subdivisions may be labeled Hill and River Wintun rather than Hill and River Nomlaki (Kroeber 1932a:253, 256, 355; Goldschmidt 1951a:314). The term Nomlaki derives from the River Nomlaki name *nomlaka* 'west language', referring to those Hill Nomlaki on Thames Creek whose own name for themselves was *nomkewel* 'west people'. These plus the neighboring *waltoykewel* were the main components of the "Nomlaki" of the Round Valley Reservation, who had been removed from the Nome Lackee



Dept. of Anthr., U. of Calif., Berkeley.

Fig. 5. Performer at a Big Head Dance (of Bole-Marú) representing the Big Head, a male spirit. He wears a skirt of frayed willow bark, flicker quill headbands, and a headdress of wands tipped with California poppies while carrying musical sticks made of elder. Photograph by C. Hart Merriam, Grindstone Rancheria, May 1923. Figs. 6-7 were taken at the same occasion.

Dept. of Anthr., U. of Calif., Berkeley.

Fig. 6. Performer dressed as a female spirit, wearing a headdress with a red cloth visor and flicker quill bands behind, a cloth skirt and belt, and white feather collar.

Dept. of Anthr., U. of Calif., Berkeley.

Fig. 7. Two performers near the flag pole, wearing frayed willowbark skirts and white feather headdresses and carrying music sticks.



Fig. 8. Jeff Jones. Photograph by Walter Goldschmidt, 1938.

Reservation (Kroeber 1932a:265; Goldschmidt 1951a:308-311). From this usage, the term Nomlaki was extended first to refer to all those groups here called Hill Nomlaki (Hodge 1907-1910, 2:79; Goldschmidt 1951a:303, 314), and then, as here, to refer to the speakers of all dialects of Central Wintun, both Hill and River. Alternative spellings include Noamlaki, Nomee Lacks, Nome Lackees, Numleki (Hodge 1907-1910, 2:79), and Nomalackie (Round Valley Cultural Project 1974). Other names for the Nomlaki include Tehama, from the non-Indian town on the Sacramento River (Hodge 1907-1910, 2:79; Goldschmidt 1951a:243), and Titkaieno'm, the Yuki name for them (Kroeber 1925:355).

Sources

The Nomlaki have been described in detail in a single monograph (Goldschmidt 1951a:303-443), based on research in 1936. In this work, Goldschmidt sought to reconstruct aboriginal culture rather than to understand the social behavior of the surviving remnant, though for some matters, notably religious sentiment, he recorded current behavior. Archeological investigations in the area (Treganza and Heickson 1969) have confirmed those aspects of the reconstructed culture that are amenable to archeological preservation. This is somewhat remarkable in that the data were obtained from informants who had not themselves participated in aboriginal culture and Goldschmidt (1971:3) credits this to the quality of mind of his chief informant, Jeff Jones (fig. 8). Kroeber (1932a) devoted a few pages to the Central Wintun (Nomlaki) in his study of the Patwin. Data on the Nomlaki are included in general works such as Kroeber (1925), Gifford's (1922) study of kinship, Curtin (1898), Powers (1877), and Pickering (1848).