

Northern Valley Yokuts

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No large section of California is so little known ethnographically as the lower or northern San Joaquin valley. The lack of information concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this region is due to their rapid disappearance as a result of disease, missionization, and the sudden overrunning of their country by American miners and settlers during the gold rush years. Most of the native groups are now completely gone; the others are represented either by small remnants living among other tribes or by a few isolated survivors. It was too late to gather much useful information from the people themselves when the period of intensive study of California Indian populations began, so that most of what can be learned about them must be extracted piecemeal from the writings of explorers, military men, missionaries, and other early travelers. Unfortunately these accounts contain distressingly few details of aboriginal life. The scraps of information recorded in historical documents can in some instances be augmented by the slim and deficient archeological record.

Territory and Environment

Before the coming of the Whites, the lower valley was inhabited by the northernmost tribes of Yokuts Indians. Generally speaking, Northern Yokuts territory extended from near where the San Joaquin makes a big bend northward to a line midway between the Calaveras and Mokelumne rivers (fig. 1). The northern limit of their land, the dividing line between them and the Plains Miwok, has been a subject of controversy, with the dispute centering upon the classification of several of the northernmost groups (Chulamni, Yatchicumne, Tawalimni), variously identified as Yokuts or as Miwok (Merriam 1907:350-351). The best evidence at hand seems to leave little doubt that the Chulamni tribe, including its village called Yatchicumne (Yachik), was Yokuts while the Tawalimni were Miwok (Barrett 1908b:345; Kroeber 1908c, 1959a:3, 1963:237; Bennyhoff 1961:214). The crest of the barren and desolate Diablo Range probably marked the Yokuts's western boundary; to the east their country extended to the juncture of the broad plain of the San Joaquin with the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

The sluggish San Joaquin River, with its maze of channels, often abandoned to become sloughs, formed

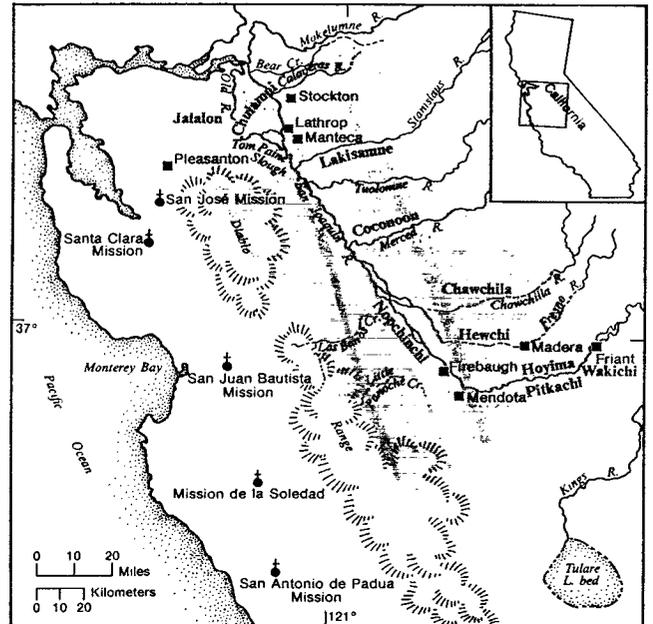


Fig. 1. Northern Valley Yokuts territory and tribal locations.

the core of the Northern Yokuts homeland. As the river, lined with natural levees, meanders northward, it collects a vast amount of water from its primary tributaries, the Fresno, Chowchilla, Merced, Tuolumne, Stanislaus, and Calaveras, which originate in the Sierra Nevada and feed one by one, at right angles, into the main stream. Extending back from the riverbanks, often for as far as the eye could see, were expanses of tule-choked marshes. Beyond the marshes lay level or undulating, virtually featureless plains, much broader on the eastern than on the western side. The west plain, situated in the lee of the coastal mountains, is more arid and furnishes not a single permanent stream. East and west, low hills, in irregularly disposed lines, border the plain.

Apart from the wetlands, which were heavily overgrown with tules and marsh grass, the natural vegetation of the valley floor tended to be sparse. In its original condition the plain formed a grassland, enlivened in the spring with many flowering herbs. Stands of trees remained restricted to narrow ribbons of sycamores, cottonwoods, and willows along stream courses and to groves of valley oaks in well-watered localities with rich soil.

In contrast to the rather limited plant growth, animal life was present in unusual variety and abundance, both in the water and on the land. The river and sloughs were well stocked with fish, mussels, and pond turtles; migratory waterfowl nested by the thousands amongst the tules. Immense herds of two large browsing animals—tule elk and pronghorn antelope—found ample forage on the plains and at the fringes of the marshes. The elk and antelope shared the plains with many smaller mammals and birds, including jackrabbits, ground squirrels, and quail. There was also an exuberance of insect life, particularly of mosquitoes, which bred in the standing water.

Though the climate as a whole can be characterized as mild and equable, summer days can become excessively hot, with temperatures rising to 100°F. and beyond. And the winter, the rainy season, can have cool or even bitterly cold days. The valley is semiarid, averaging 10-15 inches of rainfall annually.

Despite certain disadvantages, such as periodic flooding of the bottomlands, intense summer heat, and the ever-present annoyance of mosquitoes, the lower San Joaquin provided a favorable environment for aboriginal habitation. It is not surprising therefore that the ancestors of the historic Northern Yokuts (and populations before them) chose to settle there. The archeology of the northern valley is too imperfectly known to provide details regarding the time of entry and length of tenancy of the region by Yokuts, but what little information does exist indicates that they were relative latecomers.

Four archeological sites in the delta, a vast complex of islands and tule marshes where the San Joaquin and the Sacramento rivers meet, have produced materials that can almost certainly be attributed to Yokuts groups (Bennyhoff 1961:83). Articles of White as well as native manufacture occurred at three of the localities, proving their occupancy continued into historic times; no Caucasian-made objects turned up during the limited excavations made at the fourth. The native artifacts, though corresponding in a general way to those characteristic of the closing aboriginal period (Late Horizon, Phase 2) of the delta, form a cultural unit quite distinct from that found farther north on the Mokelumne and Cosumnes rivers in territory held by Plains Miwok Indians. Apparently the local differentiation of cultures had its beginnings in a previous prehistoric phase (Late Horizon, Phase 1) dating back beyond A.D. 1500.

Archeological findings from the west side tell nearly the same story. Excavations at habitation sites in western Merced and Fresno counties have revealed an artifact assemblage belonging to the Yokuts groups who inhabited this part of the valley into historic times (Olsen and Payen 1968:65-66, 1969:39-40; Pritchard 1970:45). These materials have been assigned to the interval between A.D. 1500 or 1600 and Spanish contact, 1800-1815. An earlier assemblage that shows close links

to the Late Horizon, Phase 1 complexes of the delta probably represents an antecedent stage of Northern Yokuts culture. So far, too little archeological work has been done on the eastern side of the San Joaquin, south of the delta, to tell much about Yokuts occupancy of this section.

One interpretation of the linguistic data supports the view that the Yokuts were comparatively recent arrivals in the northern valley, suggesting that they originally did not range beyond the main bend of the San Joaquin (Kroeber 1959:269-277). Then, starting about 500 years ago, pressure from Numic-speaking Monache from across the Sierra Nevada, who began to enter the San Joaquin drainage, caused tribes on the upper river, and perhaps on the Kings as well, to spread over the valley floor, mainly toward the north. Movement northward, a gradual process taking a couple of centuries, considerably extended the limits of Yokuts territory at the expense of Costanoans, Miwok, or both, who had hitherto occupied the country.

By the time Spanish expeditions began penetrating the interior of California in the early nineteenth century, the Yokuts had firmly established themselves in the northern valley, for the exploring parties reported encountering their settlements in the delta, along the San Joaquin, and on the main tributary rivers. Obviously they had prospered and multiplied because their villages are described as being well stocked with food and populous. No precise idea of the size of the aboriginal population of the region can be arrived at from the early Spanish accounts, but two estimates allow for an approximation. The first, based partly on figures culled from documentary sources and partly on analogy with stream-mile densities for known populations on the Merced and Kings rivers, placed the total at 25,100 (Cook 1955:49-68). Not counted were Indians living in the arid district west of the San Joaquin. The second calculation, established from an evaluation of available major food resources, resulted in a higher figure of 31,404 (Baumhoff 1963:221). Both estimates far exceed the 11,000 inhabitants enumerated previously for the entire valley (Kroeber 1939a:137) and the 18,000 for the Yokuts as a whole (Kroeber 1925:883).

The native population was not evenly distributed. Rather, it was clustered in a narrow strip of land bordering the San Joaquin and its main tributaries. A density of 10+ persons a square mile, equal to that anywhere in aboriginal California, has been computed for the waterways (Baumhoff 1963:map 7). By contrast, a density of only two or three inhabitants for each square mile is allowed for the plains. The overwhelming bulk of the plains people lived on the more hospitable eastern side of the river. To the west, the population, concentrated on semipermanent watercourses well within the foothills (Hewes 1941:125), was much sparser.

Subsistence

In their general mode of life, the northern valley tribes closely resembled the Yokuts groups occupying the southern half of the San Joaquin. Yet there were cultural differences. Part of these stemmed from the nature of their food supply. The northerners had greater access to two important dietary resources—salmon and acorns—than did their southern neighbors and, as a consequence, placed considerably more dependence upon these products. Other dissimilarities, as in religious practices, had their origin in influences emanating from the north.

Given their close identification with the river, it is not surprising to learn that the Northern Yokuts gained much of their livelihood through fishing. Salmon, mentioned in several historical accounts (Cook 1960:242, 260), must have been the most sought-after fish. Fall spawning brought great numbers of king salmon into the San Joaquin and its primary feeder streams; the same species frequented the San Joaquin and Merced again in the spring (Baumhoff 1963:174). There were other fish too. Huge white sturgeon ascended the main river (Rostlund 1952:map 3); and river perch, western suckers, and Sacramento pike, none with flesh of high quality, were to be found at all times of the year. Knowledge of the native techniques employed in capturing the various kinds of fish is very fragmentary. Reference is made to the use of small dragnets equipped with stone sinkers (Cook 1960:242). Another device that seems to have been utilized consisted of the bone- or antler-tipped harpoon (Bennyhoff 1950:312-316). This instrument could not have been wholly effective in the San Joaquin's frequently muddied waters. Fishing from tule rafts was probably practiced. Part of the catch was preserved by drying (Cook 1960:270).

Next to fishing, fowling must have been the most important source of flesh food. Geese, ducks, and other aquatic birds, present in almost profligate abundance, offered easy prey to the hunter, and their taking must have played a key role here as around Tulare and Buena Vista lakes in the southern valley. But, strangely enough, the written records contain no mention of their capture by the Indians. Spanish chroniclers took notice of the immense herds of antelope and elk, although they again made no reference to their killing and eating by the northern valley peoples. Big-game hunting probably constituted a marginal rather than an important subsistence activity.

The harvesting of wild plant foods was of prime significance. Acorns were gathered in quantity from the groves of valley oaks, ground into meal, and cooked in the usual form of a thick soup or gruel (Cook 1960:242, 264). Valley oaks do not grow in dense stands, but, because of their huge size and abundant crops, the yield of individual trees is prodigious, amounting to 300-500 pounds or more in a good year (Baumhoff 1963:165).

Tule roots, in unlimited supply, were also gathered and ground into meal. In addition, the Indians foraged for seeds. One variety, described as resembling rice, was cooked in the form of white loaves. Evidently the Northern Yokuts followed the widespread native custom of setting fire to the vegetation in an effort to improve the following year's seed crop (Cook 1960:242, 248).

Dogs were the only domesticated animals kept in aboriginal times. They may have been reared, as in other Yokuts tribes, primarily for eating. Captured wild animals, such as young deer, were occasionally raised as prized pets (Cook 1960:260).

Culture

Clothing and Adornment

What sort of clothing the natives wore can only be guessed, for early travelers failed to describe native costume. In keeping with the generally amiable climate and with California Indian custom, it must not have been very elaborate. Necklaces of marine shells were favored for personal adornment, with olivellas most preferred (Olsen and Payen 1968:10-11, 1969:5-7; Pritchard 1970:28). The shells were secured in trade from coastal tribes or picked up during excursions to the seashore.

Structures

The usual dwellings consisted of small, lightly built structures, covered with tule stalks, apparently woven into mats. An 1819 chronicler described the habitations he observed in a recently deserted village on the San Joaquin as "composed solely of the same tules, with their ends bent [*? dobladas sus puntas*] like those I had seen on



NAA, Smithsonian.

Fig. 2. Chulamni man with three lines tattooed on his chin. Lithograph (Choris 1822) based on lost watercolor by Louis Choris, 1816.

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the shores of the river and sloughs" (Gayton 1936:83). Archeological work has brought to light a few additional facts. Round to oval, hard-packed dirt floors, 25-40 feet across and sunk two feet below ground level, have been exposed at settlements once tenanted by Yokuts in both Merced and Fresno counties (Olsen and Payen 1968:38, 1969:36; Pritchard 1970:31-40). From the combined information it seems sufficiently clear that the shelters corresponded in construction and design to the single-family dwellings of the upper San Joaquin valley, the type being an oval framework of light poles pulled together at the top, to which was attached large tule mats. The elongated multifamily houses erected by some Southern Yokuts groups seem not to have been built. Within the community, the individual residences were scattered about, without any perceptible order (Gayton 1936:83). The arrangement differed in the southern valley, where houses stood in a single regular row.

Besides dwellings, there appear to have been two other kinds of structures—the sweathouse and the ceremonial assembly chamber. Comparable characteristics suggest that remains unearthed at an archeological site on Little Panoche Creek in Fresno County are those of an earth-covered sweathouse (Olsen and Payen 1968:36). Very likely each community possessed one or more of these typical buildings. Seen at the above-mentioned deserted San Joaquin river village was "a sweathouse of considerable capacity" (Gayton 1936:83). This may well have been an earth-covered ceremonial lodge of the Central California variety, for Spanish visitors to the native settlements habitually called such edifices "sweathouses." Actually the ritual chamber was built like the sudatory, but on a much more ample scale. Surviving portions of what must have been a large (84 by 93 feet) communal structure were found in a former Indian village on Los Banos Creek in Merced County (Pritchard 1970:32-35). The possible presence of the ceremonial earth lodge among the Northern Yokuts is of more than passing interest because of its close connection elsewhere in aboriginal California with a specialized cult system. No buildings for dances or rituals were constructed by the southern San Joaquin tribes.

Technology

Little concerning arts and crafts can be gleaned from the written records, and as far as is known, no ethnographic examples have survived in museums or in private collections to illustrate the kinds of articles manufactured and the technical processes employed. Basket weaving, native California's foremost handicraft, undoubtedly supplied a wide assortment of containers as well as other items. Carbonized fragments, preserved archeologically at the Los Banos Creek site, demonstrate knowledge of the coiling technique and of a peculiar sort of work in which a spiral foundation of tules was bound with string (Pritchard 1970:41-42). The latter has been reported only

for the Tachi of the Tulare Lake region, who used it in fabricating mealing trays. Various twining techniques must also have been utilized. Mats, too, were woven (Cook 1960:248, 250). The common material used for matting in the San Joaquin valley consisted of tule stalks.

Specimens dug from the ground show that local craftsmen fashioned a wide range of essential tools and implements from stone. For pulverizing acorns, roots, and seeds they made stone mortars and pestles. Wooden mortars may also have been used. Hand- and milling stones were manufactured, but with less frequency. Arrowpoints, knives, and scraping tools were chipped mostly from pieces of chert, jasper, and chalcedony, obtainable locally. Obsidian, an imported substance, saw only sparing use. Still other stone tools included simple hand-held hammers and choppers. Mammal bones supplied artisans with a second important raw material. Of the bone tools, the awl, used primarily in the manufacture of coiled baskets, occupied the most prominent place in the domestic kit. Earthenware vessels, prepared by Yokuts living in the foothills and possibly by a few valley tribes (Gayton 1929:249, fig. 3), do not seem to have been made; however, trade pieces occasionally reached the Northern Yokuts, for potsherds occur sporadically in their homeland (Olsen and Payen 1968:55-56; Pritchard 1970:17).

Travel and Trade

Rafts fashioned by lashing together bundles of tules provided the means of water transport (Gayton 1936:83). The light and buoyant watercraft probably served fishermen as well. Even though the nature of the country strongly favored movement from place to place by water, travel by foot was by no means neglected. Straight, beaten paths running through meadows and along riverbanks were observed by a Spanish exploring party on the lower Merced and Tuolumne rivers (Cook 1960:240).

The Northern Yokuts also journeyed into the territory of adjoining peoples. Well-traveled trails struck west into the land of the Salinan in the Coast Range (Gayton 1945:409). In historic times mounted Yokuts bands made regular visits to Monterey Bay in Costanoan country (Pilling 1950). Whether these excursions occurred in pre-Spanish times is uncertain.

Trade relations were maintained with other peoples. From the Miwok, the Northern Yokuts obtained baskets and bows and arrows; in return they gave dog pups (Barrett and Gifford 1933:270). Mussels and abalone shells were received in exchanges of goods with Costanoans. It is not known what the Yokuts bartered for these products.

Social Organization

No fragment of evidence bearing on Northern Yokuts social units has been preserved in the original chronicles; however, chances are strong that society, as elsewhere in

California, was built on the family. Too, there is reason to believe that the lower San Joaquin Indians divided the population into two interacting halves. Their association with fellow Yokuts to the south as well as with upland Miwok, both of whom possessed a totemic moiety system based upon patrilineal descent, render it likely that this form of organization prevailed among most if not all of them (Kroeber 1925:493).

A few random references to social usages are contained in the documentary sources. One custom—extending lavish hospitality to visitors—stands out. Guests were entertained generously and kindly, being warmly welcomed, provided with mats to sit on, invited to partake of food, and given presents (Palóu 1926:130; Cook 1960:248-250). The display of friendliness included the sprinkling of seeds over the arrivals by an old woman. Also alluded to is the familiar institution of the berdache or transvestite (Gayton 1936:81).

Political Organization

There were miniature tribes of 300 or so people. Any attempt at this late date to determine the correct number and designations of these local groups and to accurately fix their territories is beset with great difficulties. Even so, many of the tribes mentioned in the written records of the Spanish-Mexican period can be named and approximately placed (fig. 1). In the delta region, probably extending from the lower Calaveras River through the tule swamps west of the main river channel to Tom Paine slough, lived the Chulamni (including the Cholbones, the Nototemne, and the Coybos, mentioned in the early records). Farther south, a long stretch of territory, from about opposite the mouth of the Merced down to the big bend of the San Joaquin at Mendota, was held by the Nopchinchí. An area on the Stanislaus below the foothills and east of the main river was inhabited by the Lakisamni, including the Leuchas, a tribe thought to have lived around Manteca. Of uncertain situation is the lower valley of the Merced. A Spanish exploring expedition noted villages along the river, but the chronicler failed to list a tribal name (Cook 1960:248). The "Coconoon" reported in this general region in later times may have been a composite group, made up of fragments of several tribes. Below the Merced came the Chawchila, on the plains along the several channels of the Chowchilla, and the Hewchi, who held the north side, or perhaps both banks, of the lower Fresno. On the north side of the San Joaquin where it flows across the lowlands before turning north lived the Hoyima; on the opposite bank were the Pitkachi, and farther upstream, the Wakichi. Additional tribal designations are given in the documentary sources. Quite possibly some of these represent different names for the tribes mentioned above; others apparently refer to village sites or to the inhabitants of a particular place. Open to doubt is Kah-watch-wah, meaning 'grass nut people,' an appellation for a

local group said to have occupied the San Joaquin below the Pitkachi and around the towns of Firebaugh and Mendota (Latta 1949:14). This may well be a descriptive rather than a tribal name.

A headman guided each tribe; references to such leaders occur with some frequency in the early records. In some instances the Spaniards referred to a particular tribe or its main village by the name of its chief. A second office appears to have been that of messenger or herald (Cook 1960:249-250).

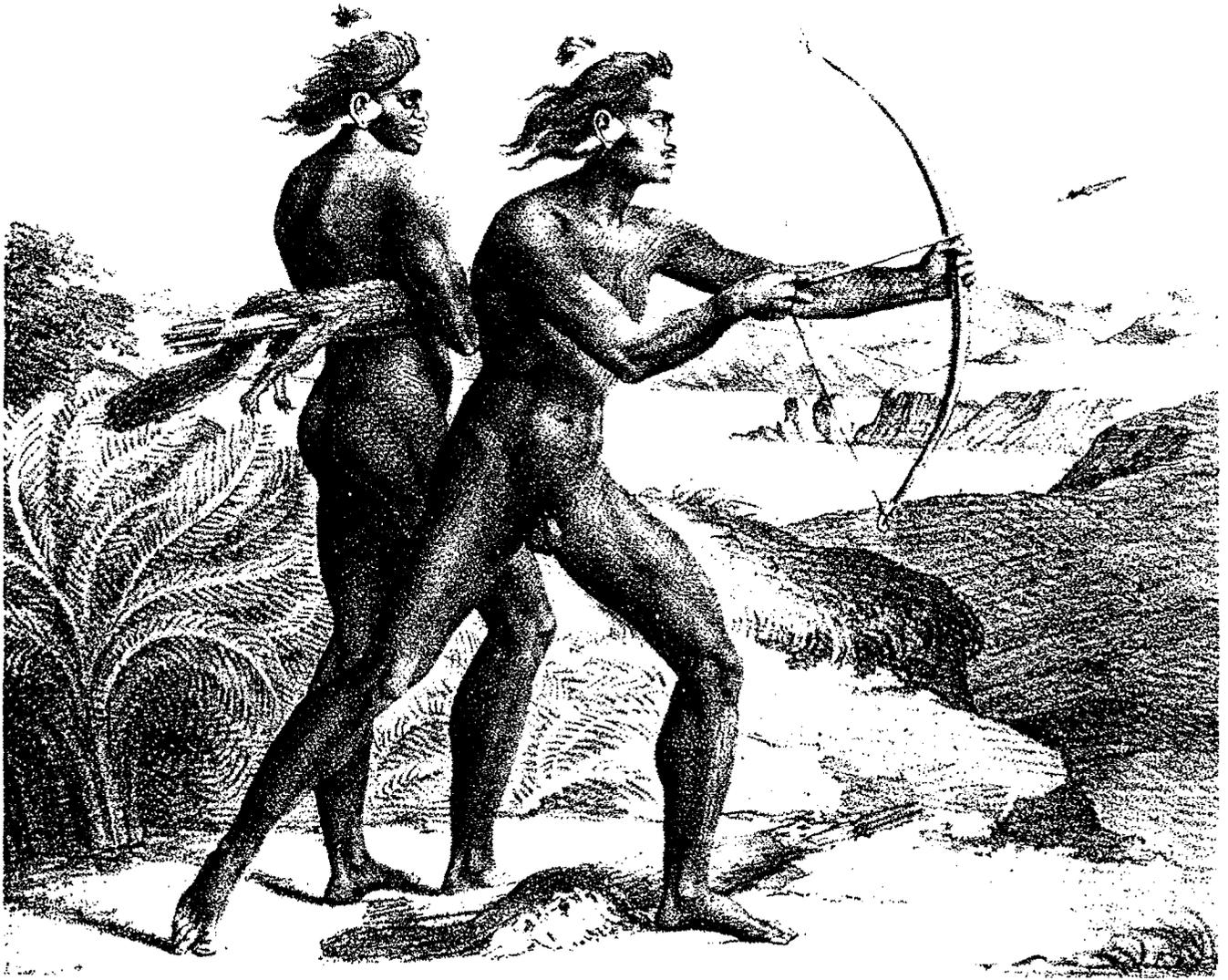
It is plain that most of the members of a tribe congregated in one principal settlement, and here the headman dwelt. Often this community bore the same name as the tribe. Thus, the village of Nupchenche constituted the main settlement of the Nopchinchí tribe and Pitkachi (Pizcache) that of the Pitkachi. Quick head counts and estimates, both subject to high potential error, place the populations of the cardinal settlements at 200-250 or more (Cook 1955:51, 1960:253-254). Smaller communities, some mere hamlets containing two or three houses, also existed.

Settlement

Most settlements, at least the principal ones, sat perched on top of low mounds, on or near the banks of large watercourses (Schenck 1926:132; Schenck and Dawson 1929:308; Cook 1960:242, 259, 285). The elevated positions helped to keep the inhabitants, their houses, and their possessions above the waters of the spring floods. A strong tendency toward sedentary life, fostered no doubt by the abundant riverine resources, was evident, with the same sites occupied for generations. Flooding posed the chief threat to a fully stationary existence. Rampaging rivers, swollen by melting Sierran snows and heavy rains, periodically overflowed their banks and drove the villagers to even higher ground. Disruption of community life also occurred seasonally when the local group broke up into smaller units for the harvesting of wild plant products. Generally, a handful of aged persons remained behind when the more active members went off to gather acorns and seeds (Cook 1960:251, 264).

War

Originally the Northern Valley Yokuts were not prone to warfare and the various tribes lived in peace with one another; however, petty hostilities did arise, as illustrated by the conflicts between peoples living on the San Joaquin and those occupying the shores of Tulare Lake (Gayton 1930a:59). Warriors painted their faces and bedecked themselves with feathers before entering an affray (Chapman 1911:19; Cook 1960:259). Their primary war weapon consisted of the bow and stone-tipped arrow, probably carried in a skin case (fig. 3) (Mahr 1932:365). Before commencing the battle, combatants hurled insults back and forth (Cook 1960:259). In Hispanic times, as missionaries and soldiers drew near a



NAA, Smithsonian.

Fig. 3. Chulamni men with bow, arrows, and animal skin quiver. Lithograph (Choris 1822) based on lost watercolor by Louis Choris, 1816.

village, its inhabitants often fled into the tule swamps and woods or took refuge in an inaccessible spot (Gayton 1936:83; Cook 1960:249, 250, 260, 263, 270), sometimes dismantling their houses and removing their possessions before abandoning the settlement. The general impression gained is that they were following a long-established native custom of retreating rather than fighting. Lighting fires to signal the approach of a potential enemy may also have been an aboriginal habit (Gayton 1936:83).

Religion

Not much is known, or perhaps can be known, about the lower San Joaquin Indians' religious beliefs and practices. Statements by members of bordering tribes suggest that they participated in two widespread Californian ritual systems—the datura and the Kuksu. Sierra Miwok

informants declared that their Yokuts neighbors on the Stanislaus had a ceremony centering around the drinking of a decoction prepared from the roots of the datura plant (Kroeber 1925:502); and a sketchy account of such a ritual, as followed by Valley Yokuts living between Madera and Friant, was obtained from a Monache Indian (Merriam 1966-1967, 1:68-69). The plant roots contain an alkaloid that produces stupor and visions. In the southern valley, young adults drank the mixture in order to gain various supernatural benefits (Gayton 1948, 1:38).

Evidence for participation in the north-central California god-impersonating cult, known as Kuksu, is not altogether satisfactory. Though the Miwok attributed many of their observances of the Kuksu type to their Yokuts neighbors of the adjacent valley (Kroeber

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1925:371), at least some of these came from a postcontact community near Pleasanton in Alameda county, which was made up of former San José Mission neophytes who included Coast Miwok converts (Gifford 1926a: 399-400). The Pleasanton settlement included Costanoans and Plains Miwoks as well as Yokuts. Their geographical position, between and in contact with tribes who followed the Kuksu (Kroeber 1925:371), and their building of large earth-covered structures of the kind in which the god-impersonating ceremonies were regularly held increase the likelihood that the Northern Yokuts had assimilated at least the essentials of the colorful and exciting cult. The Kuksu, probably the most vivid expression of California Indian religious life, did not extend into the upper San Joaquin.

Solemnities connected with the crises of life—birth, puberty, and death—almost surely figured prominently in the religion. But apart from the manner of disposing of the deceased, no information on these observances has been found. When a Northern Yokuts expired, his body was cremated or buried in a flexed position (Olsen and Payen 1969:39; Pritchard 1970:30-31). This difference in custom cannot be readily accounted for, though mixed cremation and burial was not exceptional in aboriginal California (Gould 1963:155-158, map 2). Inhumation was the usual practice in the southern valley, with cremation reserved for tribesmen who died away from home, shamans, and, among the Tachi, persons of any consequence (Kroeber 1925:499). Whether the lower San Joaquin peoples shared their southern kinsmen's obsession with death and mourning has not been determined.

Since shamanism was strongly developed in native California, it can be taken for granted that the various river tribes had their full quotas of practitioners who treated disease by supernatural means.

History

Contacts with Whites proved disastrous for the Northern Valley Yokuts. The sequence of events leading to their decline closely parallels that in several other parts of the state. First, in the Spanish-Mexican period, 1769-1846, there was a gradual erosion of the aboriginal culture, coupled with a progressive decline in population. Then came rapid and nearly total destruction in the years immediately following the American conquest of California and the gold rush.

For most of the tribes, their initial encounter with outsiders came in the first decade of the nineteenth century when Spanish expeditions began to actively explore the delta and lower San Joaquin valley. The explorations, by land and water, were accomplished by small, often poorly equipped parties (Cutter 1950:ii), composed of a few soldiers, an officer, and a priest. Indian auxiliaries, who acted as guides and interpreters, sometimes accompanied them. Usually, the Yokuts greeted

the soldiers and padres warmly, though now and then, warily, or even with hostility (Cook 1960:259). A few persons—old women mainly, an aged man or two, an adult in dying condition, or a sick child—were baptized in their native villages. These sporadic contacts affected the Indian manner of living only in a minor way, if at all.

The process of extinction and cultural breakdown commenced when the valley peoples were drawn into the mission system. As native populations in the vicinity of their coastal establishments became exhausted, the Franciscans gathered converts from farther and farther inland. Intensive proselytizing among the lower San Joaquin tribes began around 1805 and continued into the early 1820s. Sizable numbers of them were taken to the San José, Santa Clara, Soledad, San Juan Bautista, and San Antonio missions (Merriam 1955:188-225, 1968: 48-77). Whether the neophytes came willingly or by force is not always clear.

Compelled to work at strange tasks and subjected to the restrictive routine and severe discipline of mission life, many of the newly baptized Indians deserted and returned to their interior homes. Soldiers were regularly sent to bring them back. The pursuit of the runaways seems to have been motivated not so much by a desire to punish the fugitives and to keep them in subjection as it was to ward off their allying themselves with wild tribesmen in forays against the mission herds. For the fugitives had imparted to their unconverted brethren, along with other mission ideas and Spanish colonial ways, a taste for meat. Raiding parties—many organized and led by exneophytes—began to prey on the herds. Because of the ease with which horses could be driven off, their flesh became preferred (Heizer 1941b).

To offset the growing threat of the unchristianized natives as well as to convert them, proposals were put forth to extend the mission system inland (Beattie 1929, 1930). Several exploring expeditions were sent out to choose likely spots for the establishments. Yet, despite continued efforts by the Franciscan padres, supported at times by the civil authorities, the interior chain of institutions never materialized.

Disruption of aboriginal life did not end with the change of flag in 1822 from Spanish to Mexican, though the new government made no serious effort to penetrate the San Joaquin. Ranching was instituted at several points on the west side and at the delta fringes, but the rest of the valley remained in its pristine state. The hostility of the interior tribes and the increasing boldness and effectiveness of their horse stealing discouraged settlement beyond. As the Indians became hungrier for horse meat, they began to range farther and farther west and outlying ranches in Coast Range valleys became constant targets for their depredations. Dozens of retaliatory expeditions were sent out by local officials. These met with very little success: some natives were killed, a few villages were burned, but the thefts of livestock

continued unabated. Posses were organized by individual ranchers who had lost animals. Often these turned into slave-raiding parties, which brought back women and children to serve as laborers and domestics.

The Mexican period witnessed two events of importance for the northern valley tribes—a sudden and sharp drop in their numbers and the secularization of the mission establishments. Already the native population had suffered a progressive decline, due to the drawing off of converts to the missions and to European diseases against which they had little resistance. Decimation occurred in the summer of 1833 when a terrible pestilence swept the valley and claimed thousands of lives. So great was the catastrophe that entire communities disappeared and certain tribes were virtually wiped out. The disease, evidently transmitted by beaver trappers from the Columbia River, has been identified as malaria (Cook 1955a:303-308).

Under pressure from the outset of Mexican rule, the Franciscan missions, in 1834, became converted into ordinary parish churches, their neophytes freed from the complete supervision of the padres, and much of their lands released for other utilization. Many of the missionized Indians returned to their former homeland, though not necessarily to the precise villages or localities from which they had come. Some organized themselves into polyglot communities, made up of members of different tribes. Like the runaways before them, the exneophytes aided and abetted horse stealing.

Considerable tribal and territorial readjustment was set in motion. Surviving fragments of tribes amalgamated and boundaries shifted. By 1830, for example, the Miwok had acquired control of former Chulamni territory on the Calaveras (Bennyhoff 1961:319). Tribal movements had occurred earlier. In response to attacks on their villages by Spanish soldiery, the Leuchas who had formerly lived west of the San Joaquin crossed to a less vulnerable position on the east bank (Cook 1955:59).

Annihilation of the Indians came a few short years after the American conquest of California in 1846, largely as a result of the 1849 gold rush and its aftermath. While the northern San Joaquin was not gold country, thousands of prospectors bound for the southern mines passed through it, relentlessly pushing aside any natives in their path. After the initial upheaval, the rich soils of the delta and valley attracted many exminers to farming. As they filled up the district, the remaining Yokuts were driven off their hunting and food-gathering lands.

The process of dispossession proved relatively easy. The settlers forcibly ousted or murdered families or communities. Sometimes the tribesmen were roused to acts of resistance or retaliation, but they showed little tendency toward concerted opposition. Atrocities were committed by both Whites and Indians. The military failed to deal effectively with the problem.

With this situation at hand, plans for a reservation system were drawn up in 1850 (C.B. Leonard 1928). Bowing to the inevitable, the headmen of surviving groups signed treaties by terms of which they ceded all the land they owned or claimed (Heizer 1972). Only three Northern Yokuts tribes—Hewchi, Chawchila, and Pitkachi—were among the signers; a possible fourth, the Coconoon, seem to have been a composite political unit. For the land cessions, the government set aside fairly adequate reservations.

Pressure from the new state of California prevented the treaties from being ratified by the United States Senate. The rejection of the treaties left nothing for the unfortunate little tribes to do except drift about, scrabbling for a living as best they could, since they had already been moved off the surrendered land and White settlers had encroached upon the promised reservations. Some found refuge on ranches where they worked as laborers. Usually held in low esteem by their employers, who complained that they were shiftless and dirty, addicted to drink, and undependable, the Indians were poorly paid and housed and practically held in bondage. Finally, conditions became so bad that federal authorities took cognizance of the situation and set aside tracts of land for them, including leased acreage on the Fresno and the Tule River Reserve.

The subsequent vicissitudes of the northern San Joaquin tribes duplicate those of the majority of native Californians. In the 1970s their representatives live scattered among Whites or other Indians. Most have lost their identity, and it is only by hard search that a few can be found. The survivors live generally in obscurity and poverty on the fringes of the White society.

Synonymy

Only a relatively small number of village names have been recorded. In the following list (based on Kroeber 1925:484-486; Schenck 1926:137-141; Cook 1955:51, 67, 1960:283, 289) the villages are arranged by tribe. Tribal names are given first in the anglicized spellings used by Kroeber (1963:237), but with *ch* for his *t*. Next, and in italics, are the Yokuts pronunciations of the tribal names, where known, as provided by Geoffrey Gamble (personal communication 1974). After these are some major variant names from older sources.

Chulamni, *čulamni*, Chulamne, Cholbon,
Cholovomnes, Nochochomne, Nototemne.
Yachik (near Stockton)
Wane (near Stockton, just below landing)
Pescadero (on southwest side of Union Island, a mile
or two northeast of Bethany)
Jusmites
Tugites
Tomchom (name of chief)

Nopchinchí, *nop^ht^hin^thⁱ*, Noptinchi, Noptinte,
 Nupchenche.
 Cheneches (probably opposite mouth of Mariposa
 Creek, north of Los Banos)
 Malim (upstream from Cheneches)
 Nupchenche
 Catucho
 Copicha (opposite mouth of Chowchilla)
 Tape (near or just south of great bend of San
 Joaquin)
 Lakisamni, *lak^hisamni*, Leuchas.
 Lakisamne
 Leuchas
 Pitemis (Aupimis)
 East side of San Joaquin, from vicinity of Manteca to
 just below mouth of Merced, tribal name unknown
 or uncertain.
 Cuyens
 Mayem
 Bozenats (probably name of chief)
 Taitones (may be larger unit, including more than
 one village)
 Aplagamne (may be larger unit, including more than
 one village)
 Lower Merced, tribal name uncertain.
 Chineguis
 Yunate
 Chamuasi
 Latelate (on south bank)
 Lachuo (on south bank, west of Latelate)
 Chawchila, *č^hawč^hila*, plural *č^haweč^hali* (also recorded
 as *č^hawšila*, *č^hawešali* and as *č^hawsila*, *č^hawešali*).
 Shehamniu (on Chowchilla, apparently at edge of
 plain, some miles below Buchanan)
 Halau (at Berenda)
 Hewchi, *hewč^hi*, plural *hewáč^hinawi*, Heuchi.
 Ch'ekayu (on Fresno, four miles below Madera)
 Hoyima, *hoyima*, plural *hoye'yami*, Hoyma.
 K'eliutanau (on creek entering San Joaquin from
 north)
 Moyoliu (above mouth of Little Dry Creek)
 Pitkachi, *p^hit^hk^ha^thⁱ*, plural *p^hit^he^hk^ha^thⁱ* or *p^hit^ha^hk^ha^thⁱ*.
 Pitkachi (Pizcache)
 Kohuou (near Herndon)
 Weshiu (on slough)
 Gewachiu (downstream from Kohuou)
 Wakichi, *wak^hiyč^hi*, plural *wak^he^hyáč^hi*.
 Holowichniu (near Millerton)

Sources

The very meager body of knowledge about the Northern Valley Yokuts is furnished primarily by Spanish military men and missionaries who preserved glimpses of the life and customs of the groups with whom they came into contact. In the early nineteenth century small parties of soldiers made frequent forays into the San Joaquin valley to seek converts and mission runaways, to find favorable sites for an inland chain of missions, and to pursue and punish horse thieves. The commandants of these little expeditions and/or the priests who accompanied them kept diaries or made reports. None of the accounts is very illuminating ethnographically, but taken together, they provide a fund of useful information on tribal and village names, locations, and numbers. The majority of the documentary sources have been made easily available in translation (Chapman 1911; Palóu 1926; Gayton 1936; Cook 1960). Data on the placement of tribes and villages and the aboriginal population have been assembled from the written records (Schenck 1926; Cook 1955; Bennyhoff 1961).

Further facts may be contained in the replies made by padres at 19 of the Franciscan missions to a questionnaire on native customs distributed by the Spanish government in 1812; however, because the neophytes at any one establishment were drawn from different tribes, speaking diverse languages, none of the material can be with confidence attributed to the Northern Valley Yokuts. Copies of 18 of the padres' answers, known as *Preguntas y Respuestas*, are contained in the Santa Barbara Mission Archives (Geiger 1949, 1953). Transcripts of the documents made in 1877 are available in the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Most of the replies have been translated and published singly; they have been treated as a whole only by Kroeber (1908a).

Due to the early decimation of the native dwellers of the lower San Joaquin, it was not possible for later ethnographers to fill out the deficiencies of the contact-period documentary sources. A few vocabularies exist, from which the linguistic affiliation of the various northern tribes can be established (Kroeber 1907, 1908c, 1959a, 1963). The Chulamni vocabulary recorded by A. Pinart in 1880 at Pleasanton is reprinted in Merriam (1955:133-138) accompanied by a discussion of its identification, with references to the literature. For prehistory, there is a general summary pertaining to the northern valley (Schenck and Dawson 1929), a few detailed reports for the west side (Olsen and Payen 1968, 1969; Pritchard 1970), and little else.

Foothill Yokuts

ROBERT F. G. SPIER

The Foothill Yokuts are a group of about 15 named Yokuts tribes who occupied the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada from the Fresno River southward to the Kern River (fig. 1). A further division into Northern Foothill (including the Chukchansi, Dumna, Kechayi, and Gashowu of the Fresno and San Joaquin river drainages), Central Foothill (including the Choynimni, Chukaymina, Gawia, Yokod, Wikchamni, and Yawdanchi of the Kings, Kaweah, and Tule river drainages), and Southern Foothill (primarily the Palewyami of the Poso Creek drainage) has been customary (Kroeber 1925; Gayton 1948). Problems of tribal synonymy do not loom large, but the enumeration of tribes is complicated by extinctions, the substantial independence of small groups of people, and confusion from the marked differences between singular and plural forms of tribal names. Kroeber (1925:478-482) has named at some length the

tribes of the foothills, and later authors have substantially agreed with him in their names and locations (Swanton 1952:523-525).

The several Yokuts tribes have sometimes been called "subtribes" or "tribelets" in order to reserve the tribal label for all the Yokuts. However, there was no Yokuts nation or any overarching political unity of these tribes within recorded times. The number of the Yokuts tribes, perhaps as many as 50, and the marked differences between peoples only a few miles apart make it unlikely that close alliances existed. This unusual situation, in the California context, is discussed briefly by Kroeber (1925:474-475). The distinctions between groups were most obviously linguistic and territorial; the people of one group spoke a distinct dialect of the Yokuts language and were the denizens of a particular place. Cultural differences were on a grosser scale, as between northern

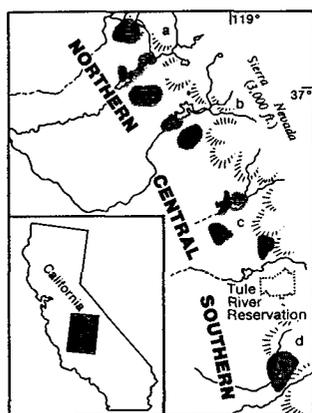
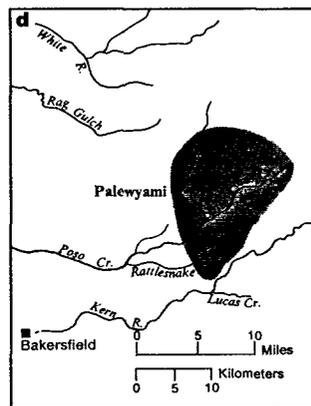
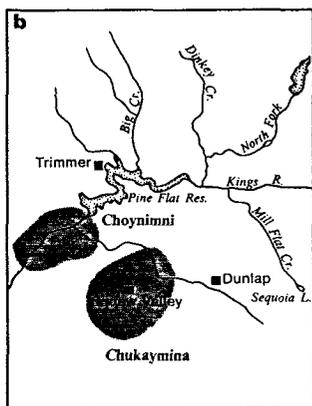
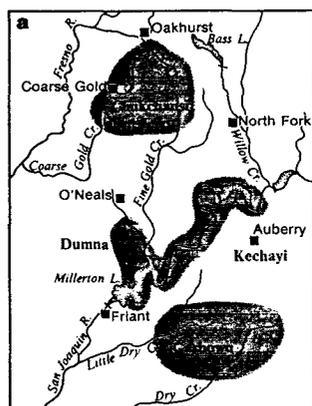


Fig. 1. Tribal territory including: a, Chukchansi, Dumna, Kechayi, and Gashowu tribes; b, Choynimni and Chukaymina tribes; c, Gawia, Wikchamni, Yokod, and Yawdanchi tribes; d, Palewyami tribe.



and southern foothill peoples or between the foothill and valley Yokuts. It is possible to offer a generic cultural description that applies, with only minor exceptions, to all the Foothill Yokuts.

The individual identity of each Foothill Yokuts tribe is based primarily on residence in a recognized territory, use of a dialect of the Yokuts language, and practice of a way of life slightly different from that of its neighbors. Of these differences, the territorial one is most obvious and the others less clear. Each tribe inhabited one or several villages that were collectively central to the tribal lands. That is, the areas around these villages were considered to be home and to be exploited more or less exclusively by their residents. It appears that generally the territory of a tribe lay within one or two drainage systems, with creeks or valleys forming the stems along which villages were located. It must also be recognized that major rivers, such as the Fresno or the San Joaquin, were often nominal boundaries between tribes. However, the division of Foothill Yokuts tribes into Northern, Central, and Southern groups (a classification of questionable native origin) clusters tribes that fall within a major river drainage, so the boundary effect of rivers was probably more potential than real.

Most of the Yokuts identify more strongly with their individual tribal name or with that of the home village than with the generic Yokuts entity. The tribal names are not necessarily translatable, but the village names often refer to a plant or other physical feature of the location.

Even though intertribal marriages were frequent, at least in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and some involved alliances with non-Yokuts peoples, there still existed a strong tribal identification with the father's group. It is difficult to say whether the tribe or the village was the paramount unit of affiliation, but it was probably the tribe. People did move from village to village during a lifetime but remained within the tribe except for outmarriages by the women.

The unity among Yokuts tribes was not so strong as to preclude extra-Yokuts relations locally. The Chukchansi, northernmost of the Foothill Yokuts, had close alliances with the Southern Sierra Miwok, so much so that there is confusion about the tribal affiliation of some border villages. The Central Foothill Yokuts came into increasingly close contact with the Monache in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Environment and Territory

The Sierra Nevada foothills rise, in 15 to 25 miles, from the San Joaquin valley floor (300-400 feet above sea level at its eastern edge) to elevations over 6,000 feet. Although the major streams generally flow westward or southwestward, their tributaries are irregular in direction and reflect a disorderly arrangement of ridges and valleys.

The rivers have cut few deep gorges so that it is feasible to follow the streams, too swift for navigation, on foot. This habitat includes two major life-zones: the Upper Sonoran, from 600 to 3,300 feet; and the Transition, from 3,300 feet to 6,200 feet. Above the Transition zone lay the more difficult environment of the High Sierra, which had few resources and did not encourage settlement. Most settlements for the Foothill people were between 2,000 and 4,000 feet. Thus a short journey afoot took an individual down to the San Joaquin valley floor or up through the coniferous forests. This close spacing of markedly differing zones broadened the scope of readily available resources.

Tribal boundaries among the Foothill Yokuts were somewhat vague. Streams formed the axis of tribal settlement as often as the boundary. In the Northern Foothill area tribal locations were disrupted by the activities of the Mariposa Battalion in 1851 (Eccleston 1957). Finally, the Yokuts tribes often gathered together or shared ranges during certain seasons of the year (Gayton 1948, 2:159).

Subsistence

The subsistence of the Foothill Yokuts was based on hunting and gathering with fishing as a supplement. Deer, quail, and acorns were prominently mentioned by informants. Beyond these mainstays there were many sources of food: pine nuts, ground squirrels, rabbits, wild oats, manzanita berries, ducks, trout, mussels, and wasp grubs among others. Importantly, the distinctive feature of subsistence was not a dependence upon one abundant resource, but the omnivorous character of the diet. As Kroeber (1925:523-526) has pointed out this diversity gave protection against famine as all these sources were unlikely to fail simultaneously.

Deer were killed with the bow and arrow following still-stalking, driving (sometimes with fire), or an ambush from a booth at a permanent waterhole. Deer disguises, using head, antlers, and skin, are reported as having been used by all Foothill Yokuts except the Chukchansi. There is no evidence for the trapping of deer.

Quail were taken by extensive trapping and by shooting them as they roosted in trees. The quail traps called for substantial community effort, as reported among the Chukchansi. A fence, like a miniature stockade, was made of sticks closely set in the ground and extending upward to a height of a few feet. Noose traps, powered by a bent stick under tension, were set in openings in the fence at intervals of 20 to 50 or more feet. The ground-feeding quail would attempt to walk through these openings rather than fly over the obstacle across their path. These fences, reported as having been as long as a mile, yielded a good supply of birds when regularly patrolled.

Acorns were gathered from the ground and shaken from trees, some of which were claimed as private property. Green acorns were peeled with the teeth and sun-dried; they kept longer in storage than acorns gathered dry, up to five years. Dried acorns had their shells cracked by being placed on a pitted anvil stone and struck with a hammerstone (fig. 2). The dried acorns were pounded into a meal in a bedrock mortar located near the village or habitation. (These granite outcrops with deeply worn holes serve today to identify the locations of aboriginal residence sites.) The acorns to yield a day's supply of meal were usually pounded at one time. The resultant meal was then leached to remove the bitter tannic acid, using either a sandy basin on the ground or one elevated on a platform of small sticks (R.F.G. Spier 1956). Acorn meal was baked into cakes but more commonly was cooked into a mush using a basket and heated stones.

Salmon were taken by spearing along the major rivers in the fall. They were eaten fresh and strips of flesh were sun-dried for storage. Other fish were caught using weirs of stones or willows across a stream with a basket trap or sack in the small opening. Fish were driven into the weir by wading about or the use of a brush drag (Powers 1877:376). As intermittent streams dried up during the summer, fish were stupefied in the resulting pools by poisoning them with pounded buckeye fruits. In the same context fish might also be caught by hand or scooped ashore with baskets. Salmon fishing was primarily a man's task, while fishing for smaller fish and for shellfish involved women as well. There is little evidence to indicate marked ownership of fishing places; the major streams on which they were located were often tribal boundaries so probably some sharing took place.



NAA, Smithsonian.
Fig. 2. Eda Ichow cracking acorns on soapstone anvil. Photograph by Click Relander, 1938-1939.

FOOTHILL YOKUTS

Culture

Technology

Before the coming of Europeans the Yokuts had no use of metals. Their stone working, both chipped and ground, was primarily in obsidian (partly from the east slopes of the Sierra Nevada), granite and quartz (available locally), and soapstone (from sources in the foothills). Ethnographic studies came too long after contact to record much of stone working in the making of cutting tools; metals had taken over the scene. However, the making of mortars and pestles of granite and of acorn anvils and stone-boiling stones from soapstone continued into the twentieth century.

The Foothill Yokuts bows were both plain (self) and sinew-backed, often from mountain cedar (juniper) and strung with sinew. Length was from three and one-half feet to about five feet with the shorter bows being backed and broader. Evidently neither bow had any substantial reflex curve. Though a Chukchansi informant supplied a description of the making of a sinew-backed bow, the bulk of these bows were obtained from the Monache (Gayton 1948, 1:73). Powers also reported a trade in bows (quoted in Gayton 1948:73).

Arrows were composed of a stone point, a wooden foreshaft, and a wooden or cane shaft in varying combinations. In some wooden-shafted arrows the shaft itself was pointed and heat-hardened. Cane arrows regularly had wooden foreshafts or points. Stone points were attached to a foreshaft. All arrows were regularly feathered. Evidence conflicts on the nature of war arrows, which may have been more or less lethal than hunting arrows. Kroeber (1925:530) suggests that war arrows lacked stone points, but Gayton (1948, 2:219), writing of Central Foothill Yokuts, clearly states the opposite.

Stone arrow points are regularly described by Kroeber and Powers as "flint." There is no reason to find this literally true as the Foothill Yokuts seem to have made wide use of obsidian and quartz for this purpose. Obsidian is said to have been obtained by trade from the Valley Yokuts of Tulare Lake who, in turn, must have obtained it from elsewhere; Gayton (1948, 1:73) suggests the Coast Range. Other obsidian came semifinished from the Eastern Monos (Owens Valley Paiute) (Gayton 1948, 2:219).

Crafts among the Foothill Yokuts were completely simple except for basketry. In this circumstance they did not differ greatly from many California tribes.

Tanning of hides was rudimentary. Beyond simple scraping and working of the skin there was use of deer brains, cooked or moistened, to produce an oil tan. Ashes assisted in the dehairing of skins. Long strips of scraped rabbit skins were twisted or allowed to twist as they dried, resulting in a furry rope that was woven into a blanket. Tanning was commonly done by men.

The looped-stick mush stirrer was a characteristic domestic implement that continued to be made and used,

at least to 1950, by those Indians who still stone-boiled acorns. The implement was formed from a single stick bent back on itself to form a small loop (about five inches in diameter); its overall length was about 30 inches. The artifact seems to be shared by the Yokuts more with peoples of Nevada than with other Californians.

Both wooden bowls and wooden mortars (fig. 3) are attributed to the tribes of the northern foothills (Aginsky 1943:407; Kroeber 1925:528), but they evidently did not loom large as household goods since baskets and bedrock mortars were abundant.

Pottery of a utilitarian nature was made by the Central Foothill Yokuts tribes. There is a questionable report of pottery among the Chukchansi of the Northern foothills (Aginsky 1943:458), but elsewhere it was evidently absent. The distribution of the craft suggests that it reached the Yokuts by way of the Monache (Western Mono) from the Eastern Mono of Owens Valley (Gayton 1929:250). The ware was sand-tempered (often naturally), substantially undecorated, and usually formed of concentric coils smoothed upon their neighbors. The products were mostly bowls with flat bottoms, flaring straight sides, and slightly incurved rims. Small bowls and tubular pipes, for tobacco smoking, were hand modeled. The craft was entirely in the hands of women, but not all women knew it.

Basketry of good quality was made by all the Foothill Yokuts although Kroeber (1925:532) considers that of the northerners to be inferior. Both twined and coiled baskets were made with the former technique employed



NAA, Smithsonian.

Fig. 3. Woman pounding acorns in an oak mortar and open-end basket hopper. Photograph by Click Relander, about 1938-1939.

for openwork products, such as sieves, winnowers, and cages. However, a generic cooking basket was produced by close twining. The coiled baskets placed slightly more stress on appearance than did the generally utilitarian twined products. Finish was better, decoration somewhat more elaborate, and the types included those made as gifts or for display. Gayton (1948, 1:18-19) illustrates seven types of twined baskets and nine types of coiled baskets; in her tabulation, those of the Wikchamni and Michahay pertain to tribes of the central foothills. Basketry patterns tend to be horizontal on baskets, or circular in the instance of trays, and prevailing of simple geometric forms (steps, zigzags, triangles) in bands or zones, although anthropomorphic designs were also used (fig. 4). Kroeber (1925:533) offers a series of Yawdanchi designs and related comments. Coiled baskets, most notably the "Tulare bottleneck," also called a "treasure basket" (fig. 5), and gambling trays are characteristic of Foothill Yokuts. Only in the late nineteenth century was the technique of coiling employed to a significant degree by the Valley Yokuts.

Cradles for infants were a special and changing category of basketry. Evidently the common form of the past (in the early nineteenth century?) was built on a Y-shaped foundation formed by a forked stick. The frame had several crosspieces or a cross-lashing and was often padded with a tule mattress (Kroeber 1925:fig. 48d; Gayton 1948, 1:86). This style gave way before one after a Monache model, which was a flat trapezoid of vertical parallel sticks twined laterally. The cradle had a hoop or band of similar twined work that extended forward over the infant's head. On top of the hoop might be added a twined sunshade. The sex of the cradle's occupant was indicated by the decorative pattern on the hoop and the back of the cradle. There is some confusion about the correlation of markings with the sexes: Kroeber (1925:536) found parallel diagonal lines on a boy's cradle and zigzags on a girl's, as did R.F.G. Spier (1954:117, 121); Gayton (1948, 2:188) reports that zigzags marked a boy's cradle and diamonds a girl's. One is led to conclude that the idea of marking was widespread but that the marks themselves were locally variable.

Cordage was made from milkweed (*Asclepias*) fiber rolled into a two-ply string by action of the palm on the bare thigh. Hemp or dogbane was used to make another fine string. Rough cord or rope was twisted from the inner bark of willow.

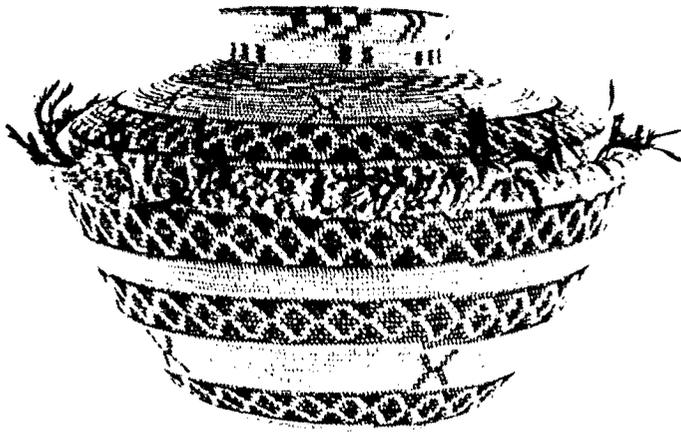
From cords were made carrying nets and the tumpline with which these nets, carrying baskets, and some cradles were carried on the back. The carrying nets were produced by a knotting technique. The tumplines and similar belts that supported breechcloths and aprons were made by sewing back and forth through a series of parallel, twisted cords. Gayton (1948, 1:83-85, fig.13) has illustrated some of these techniques in detail.

SPIER



Title Insurance and Trust Company, Los Angeles.

Fig. 4. Woman coiling a basket with multiple foundation of grass. The basket with anthropomorphic designs contains a bone awl. Photographed on Tule River Reservation about 1900.



Lowie Mus., U. of Calif., Berkeley: 1-70524.

Fig. 5. Coiled "treasure basket" with rattlesnake design. Decorated with quail topknot feathers and red wool yarn around the shoulder. Height, 17 cm; collected about 1900.

Rabbit-skin blankets, prized as warm bedding, were made locally and derived from trade with the Monache. Skins of other small animals and some birds (ground squirrels, ducks, quail) were similarly treated, but each blanket was made solely of one kind of skin. When intended for blanket use, and this was the prime use of rabbit-skins, the animal was skinned by removing the skin as a tube. From the scraped and dried tubular skin was cut a long strip, around and around the tube. These strips were twisted and allowed to double back on themselves, producing a four-stranded furry rope. The ropes, laid out parallel, were sewed across through the twists. There is some question about the use of a frame to suspend the twisted ropes while being sewed, but in any case the frame was not a true loom and the technique was not true weaving (Gayton 1948, 1:81-82).

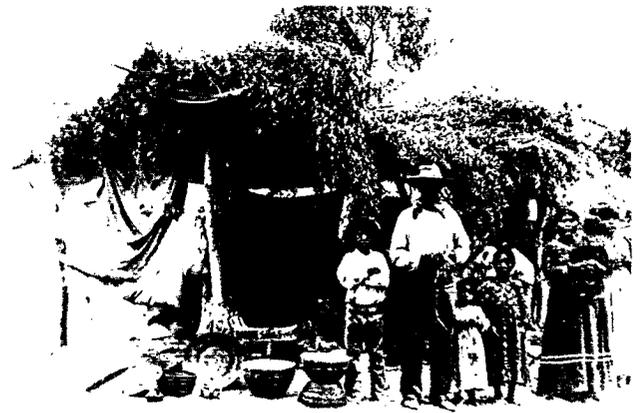
Structures

The structures of the Foothill Yokuts included: a conical dwelling (fig. 6) in at least two forms, a flat shade or



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

Fig. 6. Chukchansi brush house on China Creek near Fresno Flat. Photograph by C. Hart Merriam, Sept. 1902.



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

Fig. 7. Wikchamni ramada, or sun shade, on the Kaweah River near Lemon Cove. Photograph by C. Hart Merriam, Aug. 1902.

ramada (fig. 7), a sweathouse, and a hemispherical shade (grinding booth) (fig. 8).

The conical houses were 12 to 15 feet in diameter with a height slightly less than that. The floor might be excavated to the depth of a foot but was otherwise unmodified. The framing, of two-inch poles set into the ground and brought together at the top of the house, was strengthened by three circumferential hoops tied on the inside. In the central foothills the top of the frame had an interior ring that defined the smoke hole. The Chukchansi technique was unusual; they tied their framing pieces together at the apex, without a ring, and left a hole over the door as a smoke exit. The exterior of the house was covered with a thatch of local materials (such as tarweed or pine needles) and/or with slabs of pine or cedar bark held in place with encircling lashings (according to the Chukchansi). The Yawdanchi are reported as having used tule mats as the house covering, a Valley Yokuts trait (Kroeber 1925:522).

The doorway was sometimes equipped with a small overhanging rainshed (as among the Chukchansi) and closed with a hanging mat. Inside the door by a distance of several feet, which placed it substantially under the overdoor vent or the apex smoke hole, was a small fire. It was mainly fed by a long log, gradually pushed in through the doorway. Back from the fire were beds of pine needles on which people sat and slept with their feet toward the fire.

The flat shade had five posts, one at each corner and one in the center, set into the ground with their tops connected by smaller poles and sticks to form a base for piled brush. The structure was about 10 by 15 feet and 7 feet high. The ground beneath was not specially treated but became hardened with use. The shade was built in the vicinity of dwellings as a shaded outdoor living and work place and occasionally a hot-weather sleeping place. Such shades were often used as the sole dwelling when away temporarily from the home village during the summer. (Summer rains in the foothills are exceedingly

rare; rains from thunderstorms fall sporadically in the higher Sierra.) Powers (1877:513) observed a Chukchansi mourning ceremony held on a ground bounded on three sides by a row of these shades that served as camps for the celebrants.

The sweathouse came in two forms according to its size and the locality. The northern Foothills Yokuts, as reported for the Chukchansi, built a circular structure (18 feet in diameter, up to 8 feet high) with a low conical roof. The floor was excavated to several feet below grade and a frame of heavy oak timbers erected. Roof beams of saplings held a layer of brush, which was then covered with earth. The doorway was in the lower portion of the roof wall with the fire close inside. A smoke hole was left at the top of the roof. There is some question about the presence of a central post to hold up the structure. Logically there must have been one, but it is not mentioned in Gayton's account, which instead notes the possibility of use of the Miwok four-post design (Gayton 1948, 2:186). However, the four-post design was for the Miwok earth lodge, not their sweat lodge (Barrett and Gifford 1933:200-206).

The Central Foothills Yokuts had two forms of sweathouse. The smaller (about 15 feet diameter) was circular and had a center post. In many respects it seems like that of the Chukchansi, lending support to the supposition of a center post in the northern structure. The larger sweathouse (about 20 feet in major diameter) was more elliptical and had two main posts supporting a short center beam. Against the beam and the forks atop the main posts were radial poles reaching beyond the edge of the excavation to form rafters. On these a haphazard layer of sticks was laid to support brush and earth. The doorway was not closed but its location, side or end, is uncertain. There was no smoke hole but the fire was just inside the doorway, which doubled as a smoke vent (Gayton 1948, 1:60-61).

Foothill Yokuts sweathouses used only the heat of the fire; no heated stones or steam was employed. The men, with women and children excluded, sat close along the walls and talked or sang while they sweated. Each sweat was followed by a plunge into a nearby pool or stream. Late afternoon was the time for a favored predinner sweat, but a morning session was added if time permitted.

The sweathouses, between sessions, were warm places to relax in cold winter weather. Women evidently went into the houses for this purpose when no men were around; there was no absolute taboo on their presence in the structures. These were merely men's places. Men and boys might sleep in the sweathouse when quarters were crowded at home. Young, single men regularly stayed at the sweathouses. Any village would have one or two sweathouses that were quasi-public structures. They were built, usually at the instigation of the chief and always with his permission, by a group of interested men. One

established no special right by building a sweathouse but had made a civic gesture.

The hemispherical shade was a light, temporary structure built by women for shelter from the sun. A half-dozen flexible poles were set in the ground along a semicircular arc and their tips drawn together and tied. Loose brush or mats were placed on these poles to shade the work place. A shade of this type, sometimes called a grinding booth, was set up over the granite outcrops where bedrock mortars were located (fig. 8).



Lowie Mus., U. of Calif., Berkeley.

Fig. 8. Mary Pohot working at a shaded bedrock mortar. Photograph by Anna H. Gayton, April 1925.

Settlement

There was little organization to Foothill Yokuts settlements. Although Kroeber (1925:522) reports that the Yawdanchi of the central foothills built their houses in rows, there is no evidence of such regularity elsewhere. People built their houses according to individual choice without even consistency as regards door facing. If two houses belonged to one larger family then the doors would face each other. The location of modern houses on the sites of traditional villages, such as the Chukchansi village at Picayune, suggests that formerly houses were built 100 or more feet apart but within view. Sharing of springs, bedrock mortars, sweathouses, and swimming places would tend to hold people within a small area. However, the modern population of a place like Picayune is perhaps one-fifth of that in the early nineteenth century. If the area of the community even approaches that of the past, the density will be much lower and give a spurious air of spaciousness about the settlement.

Transport

Travel among the Foothill Yokuts was on foot and loads were carried on the back. Women often made use of a

twined conical burden basket that was stiffened with soaproot juice and equipped with loops for the attachment of a tumpline. A carrying net was also used with the tumpline. Men did not seem to have employed these carrying aids.

Rivers were crossed by swimming by those who were able. A breaststroke was widely employed by the Yokuts and evidently learned during the instruction and toughening of young boys and girls at adolescence (Gayton 1948, 1:104, 2:266). Those unable to swim and household goods were taken across on rafts made of two logs lashed together. The raft was pushed by a wading man if the water was shallow, otherwise by two swimming men. At least the Northern Foothill Yokuts also made use of a basket boat that was coiled, flat-bottomed, and as much as four feet in diameter. This basket, pushed by a swimming man, ferried babies and small goods.

Clothing and Adornment

The general pattern of dress among the Foothill Yokuts included a garment worn at the waist from puberty on. Older men might go naked as suited their convenience. Both men and women made some use of a deerskin breechclout that was long enough to have the end, front and rear, hang over the supporting belt as a short apron. Chukchansi women are reported to have worn a two-piece skirt (instead of the breechclout?) with a grass front and a buckskin back (Kroeber 1925:519). The shoulders of both sexes, in inclement weather, might be covered with an animal skin that had been tanned complete with fur. The cape's overlapping front sometimes was held in place with a skewer. Also the rabbitskin blanket, primarily used for bedding, gave protection in cold weather.

Footgear was not habitually worn by either sex in any season. Rude moccasins were made at one time, but informants' accounts of their construction are vague. They seem to have been little more than a hide wrapped around the foot and secured at the ankle by thongs. Moccasins of better quality were imported from the Eastern Mono on the other side of the Sierra Nevada. Sandals, consisting of several layers of sole-shaped pieces of hide, were fastened on with thongs. Of whatever kind, foot coverings were for hunting and travel purposes and women may not have worn them at all.

Men's hair was worn long with a part in the middle. At work or when hunting the hair might be held with a string at the nape of the neck. The hair was also confined by a turbanlike net in order that it might be dressed for ceremonial occasions. Women's hair was likewise worn long. The hair of both sexes was singed short during periods of mourning.

Tattooing, by charcoal rubbed into cuts, was common among Foothills Yokuts women, rarer among men. Most frequently tattooed was the chin, from the corners of the mouth toward the rear and downward. Additionally women might have designs continued down the throat

onto the chest and abdomen. Both men and women in the central region sometimes had a mark on the inside of the lower right forearm that was related to the situs of the wearer's supernatural power (Kroeber 1925:520-521, figs. 45, 46; Gayton 1948, 1:69-70).

Piercing of the earlobe by men was reported as having been done in the distant past. The nasal septum was pierced, but there is some conflict between authorities as to who did it. Probably both men and women had the option.

Gayton gives the essentials of ceremonial garb as a feather headdress and feather skirt. Additional ornaments of feathers, beads, skins, and rattles are shown in sketches of shamans and dancers (Gayton 1948, 1:68, fig. 8).

Life Cycle

The life cycle was essentially simple in that it recognized only common and major steps in life.

• **BIRTH** From the definite onset of pregnancy the expectant mother observed several food taboos: on meat, salt, hard or dried foods. (The meat and salt taboos were common in all circumstances of ritual hazard or abnormal status, such as in mourning, shamanistic performance, and ritual preparation for a hunt). Her activities were not substantially restricted until an easing of work in the final days before delivery. The prospective father observed the meat taboo and refrained from deer hunting, gambling, and tree felling.

The birth itself occurred in a dwelling, although reports of an earlier use of another, special structure are to be found. The parturient was assisted by her mother, her sister, an aunt, or her mother-in-law. No man or childless woman was allowed to be present except that a male shaman might be called in instances of difficult delivery. There were some older women who possessed supernatural powers enabling them to ease a birth. Occasionally a child was born away from the house, at trailside, without assistance. This circumstance was not considered extraordinary although remembered.

On birth the baby was taken by an assisting woman, the cord cut about two inches from the abdomen and tied with sinew. The baby was washed in a basket of warm water, then wrapped in old deerskins. The cradle for the first child was made by the paternal grandmother after its birth. With the advent of the Monache-style cradle, which took longer to make than the older Y-framed type, the cradle came to be made in advance of the birth. Presumably its decoration had to wait until the birth had taken place in order to be sex-appropriate.

Disposal of the umbilical cord and afterbirth was variable locally and among regions. The Chukchansi of the northern foothills buried the cord, put it in an anthill, or hung it in a tree. In the central foothills one found that the cord was thrown in the river or buried in an anthill. In general there was thought to be a connection between

the mode of disposal and the continuing welfare or disposition of the child. The anthill location assured industry. The river protected against stomach illnesses. The tree, a young and vigorous one being chosen, assured the growth of the child.

The child was named within a few days or weeks of birth. The name was conferred by the paternal grandmother or another senior paternal female and was customarily that of an older relative in the male line. While some names lack meaning, others denote objects, animals, or acts. The name was used in direct address and reference from early childhood on through life. An exception to continued use of the name was imposed by the taboo on the name of the dead. When a person's namesake died another name was taken or one already recognized came into exclusive use.

• **PUBERTY** Puberty was recognized in girls by the onset of the menses at which time the girl was made to observe a bland meatless diet. No segregation occurred, and the girl was required to use a scratching stick instead of her hand. The girl might be betrothed, though not irreversibly, at puberty; marriage would take place some years later. The future husband and his mother came as guests of the girl's mother bringing gifts to the girl. In exchange the visitors received gifts of food. The youngsters were urged to accept the arranged marriage, but no return of gifts was made if it did not take place eventually.

Adolescents of both sexes were toughened by nightly swims during the winter. The youth was roused from sleep three times during the night and sent forth to get wet. Persons of strong character continued to take at least one nightly swim after reaching adulthood. A daily swim, at daybreak, was a part of everyone's normal personal hygiene.

From early adolescence onward children were instructed in the useful, sex-appropriate arts by their parents. Older people, or those without children, often taught stories, songs, moral behavior, and etiquette.

• **MARRIAGE** Marriage among the Foothill Yokuts properly took place only between those who were not demonstrably related in any degree. Even unions between distant cousins were objects of scorn. In the northern foothills, as among the Chukchansi, marriage was additionally regulated by the custom of moiety exogamy.

Preliminaries to marriage often went back to the betrothals resulting from interfamily visits at the girl's puberty. If the girl accepted the gifts brought by a young man and his mother, she made a substantial commitment to marry him at some later time. The intended groom and his family usually took the initiative, but a girl might indicate to her parents some young man in whom she took an interest. The gifts constituted, effectively, a bride price, and there was some grumbling if the gifts were not returned should the girl refuse to marry. On his part, the young man incurred a serious obligation to marry if he

should sleep with his intended. He also was obliged to hunt for his prospective parents-in-law's table when affairs had reached this stage. A temporary or trial marriage had been established, but it was terminated at a rather indefinite time among the Central Foothill peoples. The northern tribes seem to have celebrated the marriage with a little feast for which food was furnished by both families, the only persons present.

Patterns for postmarital residence seem uncertain and variable. The visits of the betrothed husband, the frequent lack of a definite celebration of the marriage, and the probable residence of the pregnant young wife at her mother's house all contribute to this picture. Eventually the new family lived with the husband's parents or in their community.

Plural marriages occurred in which a man had two wives at a time. While both wives might be in the same village, they usually lived separately or in different settlements. No formal ranking of wives occurred, but favoritism was manifest in the division of time and support between them. Only exceptionally was a marriage of one woman to two men reported, in this instance in the central foothills.

Divorce was discouraged by the pressure of relatives but could occur on the volition of either party. Grounds for divorce included infidelity (especially of the wife), barrenness combined with refusal to countenance a second wife, improvidence, sloth, garrulousness, slovenliness, and general incompatibility. The wife with several children was left in possession of the house and its furnishings. The wife might return to her parental home with very young children. Older children sometimes went to either grandparental home. The stepchildren were thought to belong to the second marriage of the parent who retained them. There were few fixed rules governing property and children involved in a divorce, but the details were settled, case by case, by the affected families.

Remarriage of divorced and widowed individuals was permitted. The custom of the levirate was reported as common among Central Foothill Yokuts but denied as occurring among the Northern tribes. The sororate was found rarely, only among the Central groups. In each instance the bereaved person did not remarry until some time after the spouse's death.

• **DEATH** When a death was impending the relatives in other villages were summoned by the moiety chief's messenger. The funeral was delayed, but not more than a few days, until the relatives assembled. The corpse was washed and dressed, usually by a female relative, and the bereaved wept over it. Professional corpse-handlers (whose character and occurrence remain obscure) joined in the lamentation and prepared the funeral pyre or dug the grave. Cremation was supplanted by inhumation, evidently in response to Whites' urging, during the mid- or late nineteenth century. There were indications that both practices were known aboriginally in Foothill terri-

tory. Following cremation the bones and ashes were gathered in a basket for secondary burial. In both disposal practices valuable goods, primarily baskets and beads, were placed with the dead to be destroyed or buried.

Mourning was conducted both privately and publicly. The private ceremony might follow immediately on a death, as among the Chukchansi, or several months later, according to Wikchamni sources. In the north private mourning accompanied the disposal of the dead, while the southern ceremony marked the end of deep mourning. Women singed short their hair in mourning, its shortness being in direct proportion to closeness of relationship to the deceased, and often pitched the face and chest on which dirt accumulated. Men did comparatively little to make obvious their grief. Meat was taboo to mourners, as was participation in public ceremonies.

A mourning ceremony, held at various intervals despite its label as "annual," was the occasion of public mourning for the dead and of the release of mourners from their restricted status. Testimony about the frequency of this ceremony is vague and often contradictory. It may have been annual when tribal life flourished several centuries ago and become intermittent in recent times. Some Northern Foothills informants suggested that it was held for each death at the request of the bereaved family. The extensive preparation and great expense of the ceremony make this individualization seem improbable. Yet Powers (1877:383-391) attended part of a major ceremony held for the deceased sister of a chief. The generality seemed to call for a ceremony every year or two, held for several families.

Organization of the ceremony was by the bereaved families in conjunction with the chief and his messenger. The families collected food, goods for gifts and trade, and money. Word was sent through the chief's messenger, a fortnight to three months in advance, to intended participants. A temporary camp, consisting of shelters around a dance plaza, was constructed. Preparations were substantial as this was a major occasion, bringing together hundreds or even thousands of individuals from several Yokuts tribelets and possibly even non-Yokuts tribes.

The duration of the ceremony was approximately six days and nights, with emphasis on events of the evenings. The first days saw the arrival of guests; and activities included games, footraces, and dancing. Gambling also took place but was conducted away from the ceremonial site. The mourners might not participate in any of these activities until ritual washing ended their mourning status.

The middle of the ceremonial period saw the performance of the *huhuna* Dance, in which specially endowed costumed male dancers found money that had been hidden in the dance area. When all the money had been found the dancer was struck down supernaturally by a shaman of the host group. The dancers were carried



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

Fig. 9. Women playing a gambling game with walnut dice (see also "Southern Valley Yokuts," fig. 9, this vol.). Photograph by C. Hart Merriam, near Fresno Flat, 1902.

senseless to one side where host spectators laid strings of money over them and wept. Soon a shaman of the dancers' tribes revived them and "shot" down the attacking shaman who was, in turn, revived by one of his fellows. The dancers kept the money except that paid to the accompanying singers. The shamans were paid by their respective chiefs. The entire performance lasted a day (Gayton 1948, 1:68, 127-128). The *huhuna* Dance seems to have been most characteristic of the Central Foothill Yokuts. It is reported for the Kechayi of the Northern Foothills but not among the Chukchansi. However, the Chukchansi accounts were disorganized and fragmentary and the dance may have been present prior to recent cultural disintegration.

A shamans' contest was a common part of the mourning ceremony, more frequently than the *huhuna* Dance; such contests also occurred on other occasions. Shamans of one tribe were paired, as opponents, with shamans of another tribe. The contestants paraded onto the dance plaza from opposite ends and ranged themselves in two facing rows. Each shaman had a fire in which he smoked the basketry tray that he used to catch magical "shot" from the sun. At a signal each shaman caught his shot from the sun and then directed it against his opponent. He did this repeatedly until his rival fell or he himself was brought down. Fallen men were carried to a shade where each was revived, whether by his direct opponent or by another shaman is not clear. As the contest between the last pair ended, the host chief caused money and gifts to be collected from his people and given to the chiefs of the performing shamans. This donation was accompanied by tears from all present. Evidently some strings of bead money were given directly to shamans as they lay unconscious.

There was some belief in trickery accompanying the revival of fallen shamans. If not properly treated the shaman might die in a few days or a month and improper treatment might be deliberate. Also a shaman might be left unconscious on the grounds that he could not be cured. Rivalries and enmities between chiefs and associated shamans were deep and bitter (Gayton 1930).

The mourners had been crying at intervals during these days, as befitted their status. On the last day or next to last day, the mourners were ceremonially stripped and washed. Their hair was cut and they were clothed in new garments provided by the washers. The host chief declared, in one of his many speeches throughout the ceremony, that their mourning was ended and called for rejoicing. A feast, social dancing, and games followed to terminate the ceremony.

Throughout the mourning ceremony two principles were operant: reciprocity of relationships and payment for services. The Northern Foothill Yokuts world was divided into two parts that interacted. Each tribe had two major social divisions—moieties—in which membership was hereditary (Gayton 1945). Among other reciprocal duties that the moieties bore toward each other were those connected with the mourning ceremony; each moiety washed the mourners of the other. In practice the moiety divisions had intertribal equivalence and the host and guest tribes were also considered to stand in a similar reciprocal relationship; such intertribal relations were found in the absence of moieties, as among the Central and Southern Foothills people. The tribes with which such interactions existed were traditionally linked, as were certain lineages (within each moiety) paired intertribally with other lineages.

In the mourning ceremony singers, dancers, shamans, messengers, managers, money lenders, and washers were all compensated for their services. Most of the money and goods came primarily from the mourning families and secondarily from their tribesmen. Payment did not in all instances mean a profit: for example, the washers furnished the washing baskets and the new clothing for those washed. This reciprocity was considered an even exchange. The lending of money and exchange of goods was a pronounced feature of the ceremony among the Central Foothill Yokuts.

Social Organization

Lineages, with membership inherited in the paternal line, were found among the Foothill Yokuts. Each lineage had a totem (common totems: Eagle, Falcon, Dove, Crow, Magpie, Bear, Cougar, Bluejay, and Rattlesnake) that gave potential strength and wisdom to members of the group (Gayton 1945:415). The totem was treated respectfully by its followers and should be redeemed (ransomed) by them if brought in dead or alive by a hunter of another lineage. Respect was also shown the totems of other

lineages within the moiety (if this social unit were recognized) or to the totems collectively of the moiety when constituent lineages were lacking.

Tribal offices, primarily of the chief and the messenger, passed within the lineages from father to son. Noninheriting children often used the title although daughters could not transmit it to their children. (In the disturbed social situation of cultural collapse it was found among the Chukchansi that the title of messenger was assumed by a woman, but she was deemed unable to transmit the title, hence to be the last of a line.) Specific lineages were also the source of quasi-official functionaries who performed ceremonies for general tribal benefit. These specialists attended to the increase of the acorn crop and to the prevention of rattlesnake bite, among other activities.

Gayton offers a map and a list of occurrence of patrilineal lineages among Yokuts and neighboring tribes. All the Foothill Yokuts tribes under discussion, except possibly the Gashowu, for whom adequate data were lacking, are shown to have had these lineages (Gayton 1945:419).

Moieties occurred less frequently than lineages among the Foothill Yokuts. Only the tribes of the Fresno, San Joaquin, and Kings river drainages are believed to have possessed this dual organization. The Central Foothill Yokuts of the Kaweah and Tule River areas and the Southern Foothill Yokuts of the Kern River drainage had only lineages.

The animal world, in totemic reference, was divided between the moieties: the *tʰoxelyuwič* or *tʰokʰelyuwič* (western, downhill, downstream) and the *nuʰo-wič* (eastern, uphill, upstream). Through assignment of his lineage totem, inherited patrilineally, to a moiety, the individual's membership was determined. The collective lineage totems, numbering 6 to 16 in the various tribes, were those of the moiety and were treated with some respect by all members of that group. Each moiety had its own chiefly lineage, Eagle for the *tʰoxelyuwič* and Coyote for the *nuʰo-wič*, which became by extension the general totem of the moiety. The Eagle lineage also provided the tribal or community chief (presumably the same individual as the moiety chief). The chief's assistant, called a messenger, came from the Dove lineage of the *nuʰo-wič* moiety, thus preserving the principles of reciprocity and balance.

The moieties were nominally exogamous, but genealogies show less than total observance of this mandate. Perhaps 70 percent of marriages were exogamous.

Moieties played their most important role in the reciprocation of the annual mourning ceremony. As this ceremony involved a host tribe and a guest tribe, with customary pairings observed, the moiety service was rendered across tribal lines as well as moiety lines. When no moieties were present, each tribe as a whole was a reciprocant, either mourner or guest.

Political Organization

Chiefs were preeminent among tribal officials. Each tribe had several chiefs, usually at least one in each of its villages. No individual chief was paramount and in matters affecting the whole group called upon his fellow chiefs for concurrence in his judgment. A chief's status derived from his lineage totem (Eagle), his office, and his wealth. Although chiefs were called upon to contribute heavily to communal undertakings such as the seasonal round of ceremonies, were obliged to feed the poor, and were expected to offer hospitality to visitors, they also had special sources of income. When a chief was invited to bring a shaman or a special dancer (such as a *huhuna* dancer) to a ceremony he was paid as an inducement. (He might have to pay the dancer, but usually the dancer received the bulk of his compensation from audience contributions.) People who had received alms often gave the chief small gifts when their lot improved, even if only temporarily.

Eagle down was an important ingredient in religious activities and much sought after. Only a chief could approve the killing of an eagle. The carcass was bought by the chief from the hunter and then the down, leg bones, and tallow were sold to those persons wanting them.

Because he entertained visitors the chief was a focal point for trading. All persons entering the tribal area went first to the chief's house to state their business. The chief's wealth made it possible for him to buy and then retail a trader's wares.

The chief's executive powers were limited. He set the dates for events on the ceremonial calendar. He gave permission for revenge killings, but only after consultation with other chiefs and senior men. He was not a war leader although he did engage in intertribal negotiations.

The messenger was the right-hand man of the chief, without whom the chief could not function. This office, tenanted by someone from the appropriate lineage (Dove), saw to the execution of the chief's errands and orders. The messenger brought news of a coming event and told the people to make appropriate preparations. The messenger was involved when a family decided to end their formal mourning period with a ceremony, which must be sanctioned by the chief. The messenger was a source of intelligence for the chief and commonly his confidant. It was generally believed that a messenger was also a shaman and therefore capable of going everywhere unmolested. In fact, it seems that messengers did pass quite freely without molestation. This office had its perquisites, mostly the fees paid by the recipients when carrying news or information. Gayton (1930) suggests that at times the chief and messenger could form a predatory pair and enrich themselves at public expense.

Religion

The uniting of all Foothill Yokuts, or even the people of one tribe, in the worship of a commonly recognized deity was not found. Yet religious feeling—a sense of awe and a recognition of the supernatural world—was common. All adults had some experiences (primarily hallucinatory) that paralleled, in a minor way, those leading to shamanism. Many people felt that they had, usually as a result, some minor grant of "power," that is, supernatural assistance, that would aid them personally or could be turned to social benefit (such as locating game animals or alleviating minor ailments.) There were daily acts of both commission and omission that would avert harm and bring good fortune.

The shamans and those whose experiences approached the shamanistic derived their powers from spirit animals comparable to those recognized as lineage or moiety totems. These creatures were the supernatural counterparts of living animals and shared many attributes. A person who had had repeated and vivid dreams about these conventional sources of supernatural assistance would turn to established shamans for information, interpretation, and possibly instruction. There was no formal organization of shamans.

In the northern foothills the drinking of a datura infusion was part of an annual spring cleansing and curing ritual. Participants fasted for six or more days before the event and for a similar time afterward. They paid an old man to prepare the weed for them to drink. The hallucinations induced made it possible for the drinkers to see the sicknesses from which they or others suffered and to brush the illness off for removal and burial. Datura was recognized as a potent substance and a possible source of death by the Choynimni. They were especially reluctant to drink it other than in the spring (Gayton 1948, 2:150-151). The Wikchamni of the central foothills had a more elaborate observance. The dietary restrictions preceding drinking were longer, as long as two months, and the postevent restrictions likewise longer. The principal drinkers were adolescents who engaged in this once-in-a-lifetime event in quest of good health, long life, and possible supernatural information, but adult men might repeat participation annually to acquire additional supernatural power. Although they drank as a group, each participant had his own blanket, drinking basket, and two senior women as sponsors. The women took care of their ward as the infusion rendered him unconscious; after an initial coma of 12 to 18 hours, the participants could become active and run away or injure themselves. Drinkers had revelations of causes of illness, sources of individual power, and the evil doings of malevolent shamans. They could share this information only with those family members, often most of the

kindred, who had likewise fasted. Recovery from the occasion was signaled, after 12 days, by a small feast held by families of participants (Gayton 1948, 1:120).

Datura was also used as a poultice on serious wounds and as an anesthetic, internally, after a short fast, in cases of fractures.

The Ghost Dance of 1870 made a considerable impression among the Northern Foothill Yokuts and, slightly later, among the Central Foothill Yokuts, from whom it diffused to Valley Yokuts and in the direction of the Chumash, via Fort Tejon. The introduction from the Paiute came to the Monache of the North Fork of the San Joaquin River in 1871. Missionaries from here conducted a series of small dances along the foothills to the south. These activities resulted in two major dances, one at Saganu, a site on the North Fork of the San Joaquin River in Monache territory, and the other in Eshom Valley, on the headwaters of the North Fork of the Kaweah River. At the former were gathered people from the Northern Foothill Yokuts and the Monache of local and central foothill origin. The Eshom Valley dance about 18 months later, in the fall of 1872, attracted tribesmen from the Monache of this area, the Central Foothill Yokuts groups, and some from the Southern Foothill Yokuts and Valley Yokuts.

Local dances were held throughout the region with diminishing frequency for the next several years. By 1875 the Ghost Dance had been abandoned and the revival of 1890 failed to penetrate the region even though news of it must have reached the Yokuts through their Monache neighbors. Gayton (1930a) has written a special study of the Ghost Dance in this area in addition to its mention in her ethnography of the Yokuts and Monache (1948, 1:131, 2:152, 174, 203).

Twentieth Century

In the mid-twentieth century the aboriginal culture of the Foothill Yokuts has been greatly changed by more than 100 years of contact with Europeans. Isolated individuals still use parts of the native diet, such as acorns; some still make baskets (fig. 10). However, native housing has been replaced by European-style structures, native foods generally by store-bought foods, native clothing by manufactured clothing, and so forth. The social structure has crumbled so that the offices of chief and messenger mean virtually nothing, if recognized at all. People are vague and unsure about moiety and lineage affiliations, even when phrased in totemic terms.

Although some Foothill Yokuts may be residents of the Tule River Indian Reservation, east of Porterville, most live in hamlets or isolated dwellings scattered through their traditional territories. In a few instances, exemplified by the Chukchansi community of Picayune, near Coarse Gold, there remains a recognized Indian



NAA, Smithsonian.

Fig. 10. Cecile Silva (*yame'sut*) coiling a basket. Photograph by Geoffrey Gamble, June 1974.

community on the site of a precontact settlement. The Picayune community together with that near Oakhurst had an estimated population of 112 persons in 1950 (Tax and Stanley 1960). However, modern reservoirs, such as Bass Lake and Millerton Lake on the San Joaquin River, Pine Flat Reservoir on the Kings River, and Lake Kaweah on the Kaweah River, have inundated important areas of native inhabitation. The points at which rivers reach the plains are attractive both as dam and dwelling sites, with the modern use obliterating the old.

The number of people has dwindled to half or less that of the pre-White period, and scattering has made these survivors even less apparent. Precise figures are impossible to secure, but the Chukchansi in 1950 were close to 150 individuals based on genealogical data. However, Chukchansi informants gave counts as low as seven, considering as true Indians only full-blood Chukchans in their own generation. The Wikchamni of the Kaweah River claimed a precontact population of 5,000 but had been reduced to 40 when Merriam (1966-1967, 3:409) visited them in 1902. Parallel circumstances probably occur in other Foothill tribes.

Modern Foothill Yokuts live in the style of poor Whites in the same region. They are irregularly employed, often as agricultural labor, and welfare payments loom large in their economy. The older people, usually women, receiving public assistance are often the focal point of an extended family.

Synonymy

The general name Yokuts derives from the Valley word for 'person' or 'people', but most of the Foothill tribes said *may(i)* or *tʰaʔatʰ(i)* instead.

The following list of Foothill tribes is arranged according to the anglicized spellings used by Kroeber (1963:237), except that his Gawya and Wükchamni are here Gawia and Wikchamni. The second items in each entry are the pronunciations in Yokuts, first in the singular form and then in the plural, as provided by Geoffrey Gamble (personal communication 1974). After these appear some of the major spelling variants from earlier sources.

Ayticha, *ʔaytičʰa*, *ʔaye-tačʰi*, aiʔkitca, Kochejali.

Bokninwad, *pokʰninuwat*, *pokʰenwati*, Bokninuwad.

Choynimni, *čʰoynimniʔ*, *čʰoyeñmañi*, Choinimni, Choe-nim-na, Chainimaini.

Chukaymina, *čʰokʰoyemniʔ*, *čʰukʰaymina*, Chukaimina, Cho-ke-min-nah, Chokimauves.

Chukchansi, *čʰukʰčʰansiʔ*, *čʰukʰatniša*, Shukshansi, Choockchances, Chukchancy.

Dalinchi, *taʔlinčʰi*, *taʔelnaši*.

Dumna, *tumna*, *tumaʔniša*.

Gashowu, *kašowuʔ*, *kašwuša*, Kosh-sho-o.

Gawia, *kaʔwiya(ʔ)*, *kaweʔyayi*, Gawya, Kawia (not to be confused with the Takic-speaking Cahuilla).

Kechayi, *kʰečʰayiʔ*, *kʰečʰeʔwali*, Ka-chi-e.

Kumachisi, *kʰumačʰisi*, *kʰumecʰwati*.

Palewyami, *pʰalewiyami*, *pʰalewiyami*, Paleuyami, Padeuyami, Peleuyi, Paluyam, Pal-la-a-me, Paloyama, Pal-lah-wech-e-am.

Toltichi, *tʰoltʰičʰi*, *tʰoleʔtʰačʰi*.

Toyhicha, *tʰoyxičʰa*, *tʰoyeʔxačʰi*.

Wikchamni, *wikʰtʰamni*, *wikʰatʰmina*, Wükchamni, Wukchumni.

Yawdanchi, *yawtančʰi*, *yawetčʰani*, Yaudanchi, Yaulanchi, Yawedentshi.

Yokod, *yowkʰot*, *yuweʔkʰati*, in other dialects Yokol, i.e. *yowkʰol*, *yuweʔkʰali*.

Sources

Based on field research begun during the middle 1920s, Gayton (1948) is the most recent full-scale study of these people, with at least half devoted to Foothill peoples. Kroeber (1925) devotes four chapters to data gathered two decades earlier. Latta (1949), the result of 25 years' work by a skilled amateur ethnographer, emphasizes Valley rather than Foothill Yokuts.

Specialized studies with substantial bearing on the Foothill Yokuts include Newman (1944) on languages and Gayton and Newman (1940) and Rogers and Gayton (1944) on myths. Gayton also published papers on pottery making (1929), chiefs and shamans (1930), the Ghost Dance of 1870 (1930a), social organization (1945), and culture-environment integration (1946).

Two historical accounts of early Indian-White contacts are available for the Northern Foothills. Bunnell (1911) has passed through several editions. The diaries of Eccleston (1957) concern the Mariposa Indian War of 1850-1851. The foothill territories of most Yokuts received little attention, from a historical view, because they lay beyond the southern limit of the gold rush country, which was roughly the line of the San Joaquin River.