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HANDBOOK
OF THE
INDIANS OF CALIFORNIA

BY
A. L. KROEBER
II

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Thus the entire tongue of land between the lower Cosumnes and Sacramento, as well as Grand, Andrews, Tyler, Staton, and Brannan Islands between the easternmost and westernmost channels of the Sacramento, have sometimes been assigned to the Maidu, Shierman Island and a tract to the southeast seem to have been Miwok, but there is some conflict of evidence as to the location of the line separating the Plains Miwok and the most northerly Yokuts in this locality.

The region from Michigan Bar to Plymouth has been variously claimed as Maidu, Plains Miwok, and northern Miwok. The whole northern boundary of the Miwok, in fact, is obscure, the North, Middle, and South Forks of the Cosumnes, as well as various compromises between these being cited by different authorities. The Middle Fork has been followed in Plates 1 and 37.

On the eastern front discrepancies are even wider, but slimmer down substantially to technical differences. The Miwok lived permanently as far up into the Sierra as the heavy winter snows permitted; in summer they moved higher; and no other people held residence between them and the crest. The Washo had admitted hunting and therefore camping rights almost down to Big Trees in Calaveras County. They may have enjoyed similar but unrecorded status elsewhere; and the same may possibly be true of the Mono. Very likely there were tracts that were jointly visited on friendly terms by the Miwok and their trans-Sierra neighbors. The "boundary" may therefore well have been shifting as amity or hostility prevailed. In this connection it may be noted that in the region of the headwaters of the middle and south Stanislaus the Miwok and Mono were on bad terms in recent times, while along the Merced they were sore at ease with each other.

On the south it is reasonably certain that Fresno River itself separated the Miwok from the Yokuts, except for a small tract below Fresno Plains where the Miwok held the southern bank of a northward bend of the stream. The exact location of the village of Hupatun is in doubt. The name is Yokuts; the location may have been on the Miwok side of the river.

As for the West, it has sometimes been assumed that the Miwok ranged as chief owners over the whole eastern and more fertile side of the lower San Joaquin Valley, but the evidence is nearly positive that this tract was Yokuts, and that the precise commencement of the first foothills marked the boundary between the two stocks. This is the line that has been followed in Plate 37.

Like Wintun, Maidu, and Yokuts, "Miwok" is not originally a distinctive tribal or group name, but the native word for people, plural of *minä*, "a person." The northernmost Miwok respond to the designation Koni, which is their Maidu name; and those of the extreme south are often known as Pohonichi, which appellation seems to be of Yokuts origin; whether connected with Pohono Falls in Yosemite is less certain.

Cañabla appears to be the name of both a Yokuts tribe on the plains and a Miwok village in the canyon of Chowchilla River, whose designation has been applied also to a larger Miwok group or division. It is scarcely probable that the same name was in use by both stocks in aboriginal times. The Americanist we shall have to be in a position to distinguish between ancient native names and more modern terminology adopted by the Indians in their relations with the whites.

CHAPTER 30.

THE MIWOK.

Geography, 442; culture, 445; material arts, 447; the Kusan religion, 449; other ceremonies and beliefs, 451; social practices, 452; totemic moieties, 453; marriage of relatives, 457.

GEOGRAPHY.

The Miwok comprised three territorially discrete groups: the Coast Miwok, the Lake Miwok, and the Interior Miwok. The first two have already been described. The Interior Miwok constituted by far the largest portion of the stock. With the Maidu on their right hand, the Yokuts on the left, Washo and Mono behind them, they lived on the long westward slope of the great Sierra, looking out over the lower San Joaquin Valley. A few, the Plains Miwok, were in the valley itself, where this is intersected by the winding arms of the deltas of the San Joaquin and the Sacramento. The bulk of the group were a true foothill people, without claims to the floor of the valley, and moving into the higher Sierra only for summer residence or hunting.

A primary cleavage of speech separates the Plains from the Sierra Miwok, exactly as among the Yokuts. The Plains speech is a little the nearest that of the Coast and Lake divisions in its forms as well as in location. The dwellers in the foothills followed three principal dialects, which in default of native names have come to be known as northern, central, and southern. The latter stands somewhat apart; the two former are similar to each other and evince some approach to the Plains dialect. There are some subdialects within several or all of these four idioms; but they are rather insignificant and may be disregarded.

The Sierra territory of the Miwok extended from the Cosumnes River on the north to the Fresno on the south. Roughly, the northern division held the drainage of the Mokelumne and Calaveras; the central, that of the Stanislaus and Tuolumne; the southern, that of the Merced and adjacent smaller streams. But there was some transgressing of these natural limits, as appears from Plate 37.

The exact boundaries of the Miwok are still a matter of controversy at many points, especially as between the Plains division and the adjacent Yokuts Wintun, and Maidu of the delta, all of whom are practically extinct.



and is always planning a merited but dark punishment. Therefore they are rarely uttered expressly, he mutters his feelings about; with the consequence that those whom he hates soon have equal or greater cause for hating in return. There must be a subtle pleasure in publicly dishonoring and threatening a foe, who may suspect but cannot know that he is meant. But the satisfaction thus obtainable is an equally extraordinary one, and obviously peculiar of a people not given to keeping grievances alive by cherishing them than to ending them by an open appeal to the nobler violence that springs from indignation.

The *K'alea* seems to be made in connection with this *Pota* ceremony. The *Aiyetme*, named from *aiye'a*, the signs of a girl's maturity, is an adolescence ceremony, as is also clear from the fact that the dancers are called *kichame*, from *kichau*, "blood." There are four of the men, painted with red streaks down the face, but they wear no feathers or costume. At present the dance is a short performance and about the drum in the assembly house, and evidently a part of larger ceremonies that have other purposes. Originally, however, it was made for the girl, and probably over her as she lay for four days in a trench dug in the floor of her home.

The Miwok are said to have held that there was no after life; but this is a white man's superstition about them. One of their favorite traditions, which they share with the Yokuts, relates the visit of an aboriginal Orpheus to the western or northern country of the dead in pursuit of his wife.

SOCIAL PRACTICES.

Cremation of the dead was the usual but probably not universal practice of the Miwok.

Widows singed their hair off and pitched the face. In the southern districts the pitch was put on over smaller areas. The levirate was observed, but perhaps not invariably.

The annual mourning ceremony included dancing as well as wailing, culminated in a burning of property, and ended with a ritual washing of the mourners by people of the opposite totemic moiety. Rude lay figures were made and burned for people of rank.

Chieftainship was a well-defined and hereditary affair, as is shown by the passage of the title to women, in the male line. In the central division there were head chiefs, *toko hayapo*, whose authority was recognized over considerable districts; *echato hayapo*, chiefs of villages; and *euchi* or *tucape* (*liuca*, "speak"), who were either the heads of subsidiary villages or speakers and messengers for the more important chiefs. A born chieftainness, and the wife of a chief, were both called *mayenu*. The husband of a born chieftainness was usually

her speaker; the latter had authority after her husband's death until the majority of her son.

It is evident that concepts of rank were fairly developed, and it is regrettable that more is not known of this interesting subject.

TOTEMIC MOIETIES.

With the Miwok we encounter for the first time a social scheme that recurs among several of the groups to the south: a division of the people into balanced halves, or moieties, as they are called, which are totemic, and adhesion to which is hereditary. The descent is from the father, and among the Miwok the moieties were at last theoretically exogamic.

The totemic aspects of these moieties are refined to an extreme tenderness, but are undeniable. Nature is divided into a water and a land or dry half, which are thought to correspond to the *Kikua* and *Tunka* moieties among the people. *Kikua* is from *kiku*, water, but the etymology of *Tunka* is not clear. Synonyms, though apparently only of a joking implication, are *Lotasana* and *K'osituna*, "frog people" and "blue jay people"; or the contrast is between eagle and deer, or coyote and blue jay. All these terms apply to the central and southern Miwok. The northern division uses a word formed from *walli*, "land," in place of *Tunka*; and the animal equivalents are not clear. There is also some doubt as to the form which the scheme takes among the northerners, some accounts denying its existence, or that the individual's adherence was determined by descent. It is apparent that the northern Miwok are institutionally as well as geographically on the border of the moiety system.

There are no subdivisions of any sort within the moieties. Associated with each, however, is a long list of animals, plants, and objects; in fact, the native concept is that everything in the world belongs to one or the other side. Each member of a moiety stands in relation to one of the objects characteristic of his moiety—a relation that must be considered totemic—in one way only: through his name. This name, given him in infancy by a grandfather or other relative, and retained through life, refers to one of the totem animals or objects characteristic of his moiety.

Nor is this all: in the great majority of cases the totem is not mentioned in the name, which is formed from some verbal or adjectival stem, and describes an action or condition that might apply equally well to other totems. Thus, on the verb *hausu-s* are based the names *Hause* and *Hanche*, which connote, respectively, the meaning of an awakening bear and the gaping of a salmon drawn out of the water. There is nothing in either name that indicates the animals in question—which even belong to opposite moieties.

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