

UC Merced

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

The Yuma Indians

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0gm586ng>

Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 6(2)

ISSN

0191-3557

Author

Trippel, Eugene J

Publication Date

1984-07-01

Peer reviewed

The Yuma Indians

EUGENE J. TRIPPEL

The following article by Eugene J. Trippel originally appeared as a two-part series in the June and July issues of the Overland Monthly in 1889 (13[78]: 561-584; 14[79]: 1-11). Because of the valuable ethnographic and ethnohistoric information that it contains, the article is being republished here for the benefit of Journal readers interested in the native cultures of the lower Colorado River. To provide a more effective presentation, the original version has been reorganized into topical sections with appropriate subheadings added. Archaic terms or phrases today considered derogatory have been replaced with substitutes of equal meaning. Selected illustrations that appeared throughout the text in the original version have been consolidated into four figures and are offered with appropriate captions and text references. Except for minor punctuation changes, the narrative is otherwise as it appeared in 1889.

WHILE the habits, customs, and superstitions of the majority of Indian tribes are worthy of study there are none more interesting than those of the Yumas, who radically differ in many respects from all the others.

When searching [for] information concerning their history the writer has met with many annoying obstacles. Beyond the time of the late well known chieftain Pasqual, but little can be learned from the Indians themselves, owing to their repugnance to speak of the past. They are far more practical than imaginative. They care little for what has occurred — neither do they anticipate the

future. Their thoughts are occupied with the present, and that for them is sufficient. Their past is vague and unsatisfactory, as they have no system of transmitting their legends like the Pimas of central Arizona, who annually select several of their brightest youths to whom the gray-haired patriarchs recount the deeds and achievements of noted ancestors that fought and flourished far back in the vistas of time. "What is gone is dead," say the Yumas, "and why disturb the dead? Death is symbolical of sadness, and that is what we aim to forget."

It is, however, well substantiated that several missions were established upon the Colorado River by Catholic padres between 1686 and 1779, including Fathers Eusebio Francisco Kino, Jacob Sedelmeyer, Escalante [Escalante], and others. In January, 1774, Captain Juan Bautista Ainsa [Anza] of Spain, accompanied by several priests, visited the Yumas, and one of these priests, five years later, founded missions near the site of the present reservation which he named "La Concepcion." The Indians, not appreciating the divine nature of the new doctrines forced upon them, shortly afterwards massacred the priests, soldiers, and civilians, burned the buildings, and thrust the women and children into captivity to suffer the agonies of an existence that was worse than death.

The tribe next came into prominence during the exodus attending the California gold discoveries, when they became notorious through raiding the immigrant trains passing westward by the overland road. Their frequent murders and depredations finally reached a magnitude that necessitated the

building in 1851 of Fort Yuma, a military post situated upon the west shore of the Colorado, by General (then Major) Heintzleman, which was maintained by the government for many years thereafter. Under him, between 1850 and 1854, several battles were fought with the Yumas, led by the redoubtable Pasqual, who, as a tireless, daring, quick-witted leader, probably excelled the Apache chiefs Mangus, Cochise, and Geronimo. He lacked their opportunities, surrounded as he was by almost impassable wastes, otherwise he would be better placed in the annals of savage warfare than either of them today. From that period to the present the tribe has been at peace with the whites, their few disturbances being confined to raids upon their nearest neighbors, the Cocopahs.

The Yuma country embraces portions of San Diego County, California, and Yuma County, Arizona, and extends sixty miles above and fifteen miles below the Fort. The Mohaves bound them on the north, the Maricopas, Pimas, and Papagoes on the east and southeast, while their ancient enemies, the Cocopahs of Sonora, Mexico, bound them on the south. Formerly the Yumas considered the Arizona side of the Colorado River their home; but the establishment of a government reserve in 1884, comprising some 54,000 acres, tends to segregate them in San Diego County. Yet they are free to wander where they choose, live where they prefer, and do pretty much as they please; these privileges are seldom abused.

They occupy the lowlands exclusively, and reside within sight of the great river with which they are so closely identified. The climate is semi-tropical, clear, balmy, and dry, and though at times rather warm in summer, is exceedingly pleasant in winter. Their complete exemption from bronchial and pulmonary diseases, so prevalent among the majority of American tribes, is directly attributable to the magnificent conditions that prevail

throughout the year. Large game, such as bear, deer, and antelope, is scarce, but the smaller animals and birds are abundant. Seldom are excursions made to distant points, for they are in no sense migratory, preferring to inhabit their own section at all times. Perhaps the long continued hostility of the Cocopahs and Maricopas has much to do with their disinclination in this respect, but they have so thoroughly adapted themselves to their surroundings, finding within its limits material for most of their needs, that they would be discontented anywhere else.

As portions of the reservation are thickly wooded, fuel and building supplies are easily obtained. Much is sold to the whites at reasonable prices, and the money expended for calico and other necessities.

Fort Yuma, the reservation headquarters, is built upon the California side of the Colorado River, directly opposite the town of Yuma, Arizona, and about 180 miles from the head of the Gulf of California. It is situated upon a hill overlooking the confluence of the Gila and Colorado rivers, and comprises a number of commodious buildings arranged to form a quadrangle. Although several of the houses are falling into decay through disuse, the larger are kept in perfect repair, being devoted to government schools, dining rooms, and dormitories for such of the Indian children as choose to attend. Aside from the food, clothing, and education furnished these little ones, the Yumas receive no aid from the United States.¹

The view from this point is very beautiful, and extends for miles in every direction, until shut out by a girdle of barren mountains that gleam cruel and gray in the distance. The graceful Colorado, with its rapid muddy waters restlessly pushing onward to the ocean, carries upon its bosom steamers that ply from settlement to settlement, laden with cargoes destined for the expectant frontiersman. A solitary Indian guides his slippery cottonwood

raft towards his lonely rancheria hidden among the mesquite trees near the water's edge. In full sight is Yuma City, with its quaint, one-storied adobe structures, wide, sandy streets innocent of pavements, gardens filled with semi-tropical vegetation, and strange commingling of Mexican and Caucasian types, moving leisurely about in the listless manner peculiar to warm climates. To the southeast tower solemnly and majestically the smooth, high walls of the Territorial prison — a seeming menace to the liberties of those who stroll about its base so unconcernedly; while still beyond, the rippling Gila merges in the grand old stream that passes on its way with increasing volume. The serpent-like curves of the railroad follow the Gila, cross the Colorado by the massive bridge that spans it, and lose themselves in dense masses of undergrowth. To the south and west stretch Mexico's vast plains. The famous Castle Dome, a butte resembling an ancient fortress, looms up distinctly from the north, and the Chimney Peaks rise proudly in the northwest. Groves and thickets of many different shades of green lie east and west, and in these the smoke from scattered Indian villages curls slowly upwards. Indeed the entire scene is one of tranquil beauty, and when once seen will not readily be forgotten.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

The Yumas are tall and magnificently proportioned, and in point of physical perfection second, perhaps, to no other American tribe. The paucity of clothing leaves un concealed the graceful contour of powerfully moulded limbs, and straight, erect forms. Every motion denotes strength, agility, and endurance, while the swelling muscles indicate a development of which they may well be proud. Their faces, while pleasing, are not handsome, the dark brown complexions, high cheekbones, protruding lips, and broad countenances being relieved only by the keen,

bright eyes that light up the otherwise stolid and uncomprising features. The women are generally plump, especially when young, but degenerate with advancing years. They have a happy knack of balancing water ollas and other heavy weights upon the head when walking, which probably endows them with the upright figures and easy carriage that form so prominent a characteristic. The hands are small and the fingers have well-shaped nails, but the feet are enlarged and disfigured by tramping barefooted over the heated sand. They have fine and well preserved teeth, and seldom suffer from toothache. A few of the men possess scanty beards and moustaches, but the majority pluck out all hairs from the face.

DEMOGRAPHY

The Yumas are prolific as a race, there being extraordinarily few childless women among them. The families, it is stated, average three or four children each. Despite the impression to the contrary, they do not seem to decrease in numerical strength, but have made good the effects of former wars with the United States troops and Cocopahs, and the visitation of small-pox and other epidemic diseases that have swept many away. An official census taken thirty-five years ago [1854] reached 1000 souls, while a count in 1886 indicated 1137; and another in 1888 shows 1126 members. With a few years' exemption from infectious diseases the tribe will show a marked increase. Idiocy and physical deformities from birth are very rare. Unfortunately, however, many are afflicted with hereditary ailments contracted from the whites in early days. In Lower California, Mexico, forty miles or more from the reservation, are hot mud springs, which are much frequented by patients of this class, where, it is claimed, complete cures are often effected.

They are all good swimmers, using an overhand stroke, and bathe daily in summer.

curiously seamed and creased in every direction, particularly upon the sunken cheeks. His small eyes were bright, sparkling, and intelligent; every glance indicated a fiery, strong-willed temperament. Tall, commanding, and erect, except for a slight stooping of the shoulders, with the assistance of a stout cane he carried himself proudly and firmly. His age was unknown, but he must have been far advanced in years, as neither Indians nor Mexicans are living who recollect him as a young man. Indeed, his age was variously estimated from eighty to one hundred and five years.

His long administration was more than successful, and he is celebrated for the justice of his sentences, his unwavering impartiality to friend and foe, and his deep concern for the welfare and progress of his people. To him the present system of government is greatly due; for he devoted much thought to improving and formulating its principles, although it is probable that many barbarous practices were moderated by missionaries centuries before. Though strict, imperious, and exacting, in all his actions, he ably discriminated between right and wrong according to his own light, and consequently was universally respected and obeyed. Once after causing the flogging of a Yuma for drunkenness, he bitterly said, "I would rather see my people all dead than drunkards!" At another time an Indian burglar was captured in Yuma and consigned to jail. When the officials requested him to take the offender and punish him according to the tribal laws, the disgusted chief disowned the criminal for disgracing the tribe, and sent back word that he would be delighted if they "would throw the d — d thief into the river!"

As a warrior he was brave, cunning, and gifted with immense physical strength, and after the peace treaty with the whites frequently led his warriors against the Cocopahs. In these encounters he was more often victori-

ous than defeated, and so was held in considerable awe by his enemies. In illustration of the swiftness of his action and native diplomacy the following, which happened about nine years ago, may be cited.

A Yuma had been killed by a Cocopah in a private broil. Immediately upon receiving the news, Pasqual summoned his principal men to a council, and as a result a district captain, handsomely dressed and mounted upon the finest horse procurable, was dispatched to Colorow, the Cocopah chieftain, to demand that the murderer be turned over to the Yumas for punishment. The requisition was scornfully refused, and Pasqual, with one hundred and fifty picked warriors armed for battle, started southward to enforce his demand, peaceably if possible, by war should it become necessary.

The two chiefs, each surrounded by his constituents, the Cocopahs outnumbering the Yumas in the ratio of three to one, gravely argued the question in long speeches. Finding that he could not gain his point, Pasqual, despite the odds against him, was about to order preparations for a fight, when word was brought him by a runner that three Cocopahs had been waylaid and killed by Yumas near his villages. Without mentioning the fact to his enemy, he instantly withdrew to his own home, and shortly afterwards surprised Colorow with a present of the bodies of the slain Cocopahs, accompanied by a sarcastic message to the effect that they amply balanced the loss of the Yuma.

Pasqual understood ordinary English, but spoke it as seldom as possible. He usually dressed in a heavy blue suit ornamented with brass buttons, which he wore in the warmest summer weather. He possessed great self-reliance, and carried himself with a dignity that betokened a thorough appreciation of his own importance. He adopted Christianity, and was baptized into the Catholic faith about a week before his death.

Sacred Eagle (*Spah-got-err*), the present ruler, popularly known by the Mexican name Miguel, became chief by the dying request of his immediate predecessor Pasqual, in May, 1887, because the latter's son would not accept the honor, for the reason that the dignity attending such an exalted position would prevent extensive commercial intercourse, and that he would be able to make more money as a private individual. Miguel, however, managed, with the assistance of his family, to make a living by selling cordwood, bows, arrows, pottery, etc.

He has well earned his distinction, for rising from the ranks to sheriff he became captain of a district, and several years afterwards was elected sub-chief, serving under Pasqual. He is but little over forty years old, is unusually tall and stout, has straight black hair reaching below the waist, and is always neatly dressed in a plain business suit, though he seldom wears a hat or shoes. Rather progressive than otherwise, he plainly lacks the nervous force, energy, and vitality of his famous predecessor, but he appreciates the advantages of the Caucasian over the Indian, and does what he can to elevate his people to that standard. He is not so popular as was Pasqual. He retains many of the ancient habits and customs, and believes much of the traditions and superstitions of the tribe. Yet he is faithful to the government officials, and forwards their work in many ways. He closely follows the laws adopted by Pasqual, and takes much pride in his rancheria, where visitors always receive a cordial welcome. His dwelling, in plain sight of the fort, is one of the most comfortable on the reservation. He speaks English imperfectly.

GOVERNMENT

The local government is identical with that of the ancient Aztecs in some respects. Indeed it is a question whether the one is not distantly connected with the other.

The *hon-ah-thal*, or head chief, is the principal officer, which position is filled at this writing by Miguel, now serving a second term. The *hon-ah-thal* is elected for one year, but when he is, like Pasqual, a good and popular man, he is re-elected annually thereafter as a matter of form, and thus holds for life should he so desire. But when all is said, he holds only at the pleasure of the tribe and until he gives dissatisfaction. At the annual council of prominent men his administration is either endorsed or condemned and action taken accordingly, for the position is not necessarily transferred or entailed from father to son. All important laws are promulgated by him, either in person or through the sub-chief, but they are not always implicitly obeyed. In such cases the matter is made a subject for discussion by his people at a solemn gathering, where his reasons are weighed and the effects of his decisions settled by arbitration — otherwise he is forced to concede the point or submit to instant dismissal. While he makes the laws he does not interfere with their execution, but leaves that to his subordinates, deeming such a procedure undignified, excepting in the event of their failure to act. He is the principal arbiter and settles most of the disputes, but is free at all times to refer such matters to the judges. Directly after his election he notifies the surrounding tribes, and expresses a desire to continue peaceable relations. They are also informed that should any of their members steal or commit depredations upon the Yumas, punishment will be meted out in accordance with the laws of the latter.

The *qua-pee-tahn-e-noc-ik*, or sub-chief, named *Mat-ah-mor-say* (Dirt), ranks next. He is supposed to confer with his superior upon all important questions, and is in a measure responsible for the doings of the chief. Should the latter die, he assumes the reins of government until an election occurs. He is adviser to Miguel, keeps him posted

upon current events, and casts a deciding vote when the judges disagree. In addition he is empowered to frame minor laws.

The sheriff, known as *sem-mah-dool-qua-oh-kie* (he who grasps invisible ants), acts in a capacity similar to our own sheriff, and is subject to the orders of the chiefs and judges. He usually enforces the sentences upon offenders and takes charge of their persons previous to trial.

Mah-wet-quo-moh-hahn (Grizzly Bear) and *O-rie-netch* (Silent Chicken Hawk) are the *ets-quit-z-kah-nahts* or judiciary, whose deliberations are held in a large shed especially devoted to their uses. When in session they squat upon the ground at one end of the structure, the witnesses and spectators grouping in convenient positions around them.

So far as can be ascertained the trials are limited to murder, theft, and drunkenness, all of which are punished with swiftness and extreme severity. Murder is punished with death by the club, arrow, or gun, at the hands of the sheriff; theft, by flogging with a blacksnake whip — twelve lashes for the first, fifteen for the second, and twenty-five for the third offense. On conviction the culprit is stripped, and his arms drawn high above the head and fastened to a tree. The sheriff then administers the castigation in the presence of a jeering crowd that congregates to witness the shame of the misdemeanant. Although the long, slender lash winds about the body raising great welts and drawing blood with every stroke, the quivering wretch, if a man, seldom makes an outcry, but bears the awful pain with a stoicism that is touching in its muteness. For each glass of intoxicating liquor drunk the drunkard receives three lashes for the first offense, which is increased for every subsequent dereliction.

A trial is a very simple matter and does not correspond at all with our views, so far, at least, as fairness to the prisoner is concerned. When brought before the chief by the district

police the accused is turned over to the judges, who examine the witnesses at their pleasure. He is never suffered to testify in his own behalf, but is sometimes allowed to question his accusers, and upon their evidence alone is his conviction or release determined. Differently from us, the prisoner is considered guilty until proven innocent, and so as a logical consequence his chances to escape punishment are exceedingly slim, he being unable to show mitigating circumstances through his personal testimony.

The foregoing are the general officials, but the tribe is divided into eight districts, each governed locally by captains elected for the term of ten years, who are responsible to the chief for the good behavior of their bands. Five of these are within or near the reservation limits, and three are located in Yuma County, Arizona, one above and two below Yuma City. The captains are assisted by thirteen police assigned the districts according to population.

TRACKERS

The tenacity and endurance of the trailers [trackers] is proverbial. They follow a "sign" with a sagacity unequaled by the bloodhound, and are often employed by the civil officers of the Territory to recover convicts escaped from the penitentiary. The exactness with which every leaf is scanned, every rock and bush examined, and the close scrutiny to which the soil itself is subjected, together with their rapidity of movement and the absolute accuracy of their inferences, is, to say the least, startling. Seldom do they miss the footprints, and then only when rains or violent sandstorms obliterate every trace. They are as skillful in hiding their own tracks as they are in uncovering the indications of others. The procedure on losing a trail is identical with that of a pack of well trained hounds. Starting from the last clearly defined depression, they circle about until it is again

found. Then jogging along at an easy gait with eyes fixed upon the ground they do not waver, despite discouragements of every kind, until the night has fallen or the fugitive is overtaken. They have a wonderful faculty for distinguishing the footprints of a particular horse or person from dozens of others. They carry a few mesquite pods, which constitutes, with an occasional mouthful of water, their only refreshment.

RUNNERS

The runners, whose duty it is to carry dispatches from one official to another, are selected from the swiftest and most hardy of the young and middle-aged men, and thus differ from the trailers [trackers], who may be of any age, provided they possess the requisite knowledge and experience. Instead of tracking criminals, necessarily much slower work, they keep their eyes fixed directly ahead away from the ground, and follow as straight a course as practicable. Their speed is also much greater and never slackens from a spirited trot. They do not rest until the objective point is reached, for should they do so even for a short time, stiffness of the joints results, and seriously cripples further efforts. During their trips they neither eat nor drink, although water is taken into the mouth, gargled, and ejected, but never swallowed. They travel nearly naked, wearing only the scanty breech-cloth, and a cotton handkerchief bound tightly around the head, which serves to keep the rebellious masses of hair in place. It is said that some have made as much as eighty to ninety miles between sunrise and sunset, and the writer personally attests the fact that they cover from sixty to seventy-five miles when circumstances justify extra speed — no mean performance when it is remembered that they travel under a burning sun, over heated sand and jagged rocks, through scraggy mesquite, thorny catsclaw, and sting-

ing cacti, along arroyas, and over lofty summits.

CHILDBIRTH AND CHILDREN

Previous to confinement, the Yuma mother constructs a rude couch of leaves and boughs some little distance from her village, where she is attended solely by women. The husband is not allowed to remain in the neighborhood, for if he is present, it is believed that the child cannot be born, and the father will become grievously ill. Child birth is accompanied with comparatively little pain, and is soon completed. During her sickness the mother is denied all food but an occasional drink of their cornmeal mush. In an astonishingly short time she is up and about her household affairs.

Should a [woman] die during confinement, the infant is usually burned or buried with her, whether born dead or alive, as it is considered guilty of deliberately causing her death. Sometimes when the woman is suffering severely several months before a birth, the infant is killed by the attendants stamping upon her body. With rare exceptions, and these due to considerable ingenuity and shrewdness on the mother's part in hiding it, a half-breed child is buried alive directly after birth.

The father is very proud when a son is born, but he receives the congratulations of his friends with an imperturbability that is almost amusing. A daughter, however, is not so welcome.

Children are not named until they begin to talk, when the immediate relatives are notified. Should it say something strange or comical, it is called by a corresponding title. Some Indians have several names, and take this opportunity to get rid of any they may be tired of, by bestowing them upon the child, who is forced to carry them until old enough to repeat the performance upon another victim.

Seldom do the Yumas punish their little ones by whipping, as a nod or a word is sufficient to insure obedience. A happier, more amiable, or better-natured lot of children would be difficult to find. They are bright, quick, intelligent, honest, and truthful, and under the careful and judicious training of the government teachers are fast learning habits of thrift and economy, which are already sowing golden seeds in the tribe itself.

Great pride is taken in ornamenting the papoose cases. These are narrow boards covered with a bed of soft bark upon which the papooses are tightly swathed in cloth, their hands held firmly to their sides. The top of the case is provided with a semicircular shade of basketwork covered with flannel or buckskin, elaborately garnished with beads, bells, small coins, bits of glass, or whatever else may strike the maternal fancy. A tiny pillow supports the head, and an additional piece of buckskin is fastened around the outside, tightly held in place with thongs. Uncomfortable though this may be, the infant seldom raises its voice in protest, but accepts the discomforts of the cramped position philosophically. The case is carried under the mother's arm, or the papoose is placed astride her hips or bustle. When otherwise engaged, she stands the case against a tree or hangs it over a limb, where it sways to and fro, rocked by the passing breeze.

FEMALE PUBERTY RITES

When a virgin enters upon the dignities of womanhood she is strictly secluded in her home for four or five days, during which period food is not eaten. The tribe is notified and gather about the hut, where they employ the time in passing coarse jests, playing on reed pipes, shaking rattles, and feasting, much to the pretended disgust and annoyance of the parents, who bid them begone. The grandmother, if she has one, is charged with

her safe-keeping and is held responsible for her utter seclusion.

It is said that the girl is laid upon a couch of boughs, over a number of heated stones, within a dome-shaped hut. Water is then thrown upon the stones and dense cloud of steam arises, completely enveloping her. After thorough steaming and when perspiring profusely, she is led to the river for a plunge, after which she is considered marriageable. I have, however, obtained no evidence personally that this custom obtains among them at the present date.

WOMEN'S NAMES

The names given the women would seem to stamp their supposed inferiority; for some are known as the "Coyote," the "Buzzard," the "Frog," the "Owl," etc. In exceptional cases pretty names are conferred upon the handsome belles, like the "Corn Tassel," or the "Flowering Tree."

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

The marriage ceremony is one of the most ingenuous among the many observed and generally occurs during the season when the mesquite beans are ripening.

When the choice of a young man has fallen upon a maiden he, feigning timidity, approaches her father, saying very humbly, "*Ne-e-ko sen-yah-ak thou-noo yah-vah-oh!*" (Father, give me thy daughter for a wife!)

The parent with pretended indignation orders him to depart. As soon thereafter as practicable, the suitor, after previously ascertaining that his sweetheart's parents are comfortably out of the way, gaudily decorates himself with feathers, beads, and paint, visits her, and plumply pops the question with all the airs and graces of which he is capable.

If willing she makes no reply but sits with downcast eyes and modest expression as though in shame, and subsequently arranges to retire some little distance from her village.

As soon as she retires she builds a scanty brush shelter, which is unostentatiously occupied with her by the accepted husband during the following night. This completes the ceremony, and thenceforth they are considered man and wife.

These secret tactics are adopted through fear of the gibes and sarcastic comments of their unmarried associates, who would, if aware of the approaching nuptials, spare no pains to make life, for a time at least, absolutely miserable to the wedded couple; for this, owing to the sensitiveness of the Yumas to ridicule, could easily be accomplished.

In case the maid objects to her wooer's advances, she emphatically refuses them in language so forcible and unmistakable that he instantly withdraws.

Presents are seldom, if ever, tendered the parents, but cloth, beads, and similar articles, are often given to the girl. Very early marriages, although not frequent, occur at times; boys of thirteen and girls of eleven have been known to marry. The children, however, reach maturity much earlier than the whites. Inter-marriage between blood relations is prohibited by the laws of the tribe.

Few Yumas have more than one wife, and those so blessed are esteemed especially fortunate, for the jealousy of the first wife almost invariably interposes an insurmountable barrier. Still, when an Indian desires an additional spouse, the wife and the aspiring rival settle the difficulty by resorting to clubs, fists, fingernails, and teeth, using these weapons energetically and to good effect. The features of such a battle for such a purpose between two desperate women can be more easily imagined than described. Should the wife prove victorious her antagonist is ignominiously driven from the rancharia with the assistance of the ungallant husband; but in the event of the other woman's winning, she is promptly taken into the family, and her

wifely rights are thenceforth never questioned.

Sexual indiscretions are neither punished nor looked upon as particularly improper. While some Indians object others do not. If a husband discovers that his wife frequents a neighbor's rancharia too often to suit his notions of propriety, he simply bids her to leave him, whereupon she retires to the habitation of the Indian with whom she has associated, or to the village of her parents — this constituting a divorce. Either of the parties is free to marry again at pleasure.

When a wife desires a divorce she notifies her husband, who never endeavors to interpose obstacles of any kind, through feelings of pride. He rarely complains of the woman's fickleness, for this would bring upon him the contempt and derision of the tribe, but bears the humiliation in dignified silence, and finally wipes away the stain by obtaining another bride to fill the vacant place at his camp-fire. It is optional with the husband to support the children or compel the divorced woman to do so. In any case the children, if of tender years, remain with the mother. Boys, if old enough to decide intelligently, may elect to abide with either parent, but the girls without exception go with the wife. Any reason, however superficial, may be made sufficient cause for such separation. Divorce does not affect the standing of either in the estimation of the community. A woman, despite social irregularities of every description, is considered virtuous until led astray by members of other races or tribes, when she is looked upon as disgraced. She then virtually becomes an outcast, and her presence thereafter is tolerated as a matter of charity, and not of right. For all that, there are many such among them.

The retaliatory doctrine, "an eye for an eye," frequently admits of curious applications. An instance occurring not long since amply illustrates the observance of the prin-

ciple, as well as the matter of fact methods of the Yumas. Two families, who long lived near each other in perfect harmony, became seriously entangled in their domestic relations through the father of one of the families becoming enamored of the mother of the other, and managing in the absence of her own husband to alienate her affections. The wronged [husband] and [wife], learning of this through their children, retaliated by acting similarly. This state of affairs continuing to the discomfort and annoyance of the remaining members of the families, the injured husband complained to the presiding chief to whom he told the entire story at the same time pointing out the complications that followed. After due consideration the chief ordered the husbands to exchange wives, the children under this ruling to remain with their respective mothers. This accomplished, harmony was again restored. Usually in such cases the children are well cared for by the new father.

DEATH OF PASQUAL

All the Colorado River tribes cremate their dead. Burial is not practised save when the necessary fuel cannot be procured in the immediate neighborhood. The corpse is carried to the funeral pile as soon as the breath leaves the body. The ceremony is made deeply solemn and impressive, and the whole tribe is expected to attend, especially if the departed had been a person of consequence. The cremation of Pasqual, last year [1888], differs from all the others only in the number of participants, and may therefore properly serve as a description of the customary usage.

Several days previous to the celebrated chieftain's death, after it became known to a certainty that the end was near, the aged Indians of both sexes selected an open space facing his residence and excavated a V-shaped hole seven feet long, three feet wide, and three feet deep, in which dry poles were

arranged along the sides slanting upwards and outwards. Between them a bed of inflammable twigs and brush was heaped to the surface and covered with larger billets of wood built up horizontally for an additional foot or two. Upon this the body, tightly wrapped in heavy canvas, was laid, and short thick pieces of wood arranged upon it until a total height of seven feet was attained. To the pyre was added the personal effects of the deceased to accompany his spirit wherever it might go.

The tribe meanwhile gathered about him and wailed in concert, keeping up an incessant series of shrieks and cries that were heart-rending in the extreme. The disconsolate and grief-stricken faces were stained with tears; regret and despondency were plainly depicted, and speeches were delivered ending in the moaning refrain, "Pasqual! Pasqual!"

Two splendid horses, gaudily caparisoned in red and blue flannel and waving feathers, were led to deep holes dug near either side of the body. After being killed with axes they were disembowelled, thrown into the graves, and covered with dirt, to insure their carrying the good old chief in his future wanderings.

Several young men, strangely dressed in curious cloaks and cowls of many colors and holding bows and arrows in their hands, stepped forward. Grasping Pasqual's gun, a much prized treasure, by the way, one of them fired it into the air, to notify the Great Spirit that a Yuma had commenced his journey to Paradise. Instantly another applied the match, and tongues of fire darted heavenward, enveloping the remains in a shroud of seething, spluttering flame.

The crowd squatting in a circle around the pyre watching the proceedings with undisguised interest, now seemed moved by uncontrollable excitement. Springing to their feet they separated into two bodies, the men on one side and the women on the other, to allow the passage of the spirit between them. Breaking from the ranks they threw their

most valued possessions into the flames. Strips of calico, pottery, weapons, sacks of flour and mesquite beans, playing cards, beads, and trinkets of every description, followed each other in rapid succession. Several men and women denuded themselves of their clothing piece by piece until they stood naked to the breech-cloth. A daughter of the dead man, carrying a child in her arms, walked around the fire, and holding a bundle of arrow-weeds to the blaze, touched the infant's cheeks, to prevent the deceased from haunting it. A tall brave, nearly nude and provided with a sharp knife, cut off more or less hair from the relatives in accordance with the degree of kinsmanship, each softly muttering invocations. The medicine-men, with their hair pulled over their faces, tore a large cotton cloth into small fragments and made another pile of the pieces, which they burned. In fact every individual seemed actuated with entirely different motives, known only to himself.

An increased impetus seemed given the mourners, for their sobs now rose to screams, yells, and shrieks, blending in an indescribable chorus that taxed the fullest capacity of their lungs. They moved about singly and in squads, each preoccupied with his own sorrow. When ever the fire burned low it was quickly replenished with fuel. The awful smell of burning human flesh rising to the nostrils did not tend to dissipate the strange and at times disgusting features of the ceremony, which lasted for eighteen hours or more.

After all had been consumed the ashes were raked into the pit and covered in such a manner as to prevent the discovery of the spot unless special search was made. Pasqual's residence and remaining belongings were burned, so that no traces were left behind to remind his subjects of their late ruler, on the principle that reminiscences thus awakened would bring increased regret and sorrow, and so, complete forgetfulness is best. This idea is

carried to the extent of moving the villages themselves a short distance from the scene.

As it is believed that the spirit when leaving the body is extremely minute, and requires several days to grow sufficiently to admit of its recognition by the gatekeeper of Paradise, the immediate relatives abstain from food for three days and bathe many times daily.

The indiscriminate destruction of property at cremations is a source of constant poverty. They consider nothing too valuable for sacrificial purposes, which feeling is gratified by purchasing food and clothing from the stores to be ultimately burned. The dead must be provided for though the living starve.

AFTERLIFE

Cop-lah-pahl, the Yuma Paradise, is named from an elaborately ornamented post of great height that marks the boundary between the present and future worlds. One of the medicine-men emphatically declares that he has seen it while conversing across the border lines with friends gone before. It is located south and west of the reserve, and includes portions of southern California, Lower California, and Sonora, Mexico.

A man of commanding appearance is stationed near the post, who inquires the name of the dead that seek admission. If satisfied, he directs each to that portion of *Cop-lah-pahl* where live his former relatives. This region is so extensive that overcrowding is impossible. The lands are covered with grass and vegetation of every kind. Corn, melons, beans, etc., grow prolifically without cultivation. Numerous streams of clear cold water irrigate the fields, pastures, and forests, and the extremities of heat and cold not existing, the temperature is always pleasant and constant. Game and fish are everywhere found, and when weary of singing and dancing, the [men] pass away the time in angling, trapping, and hunting, using the weapons and

appliances that had been consigned to the flames at their cremation ceremonies.

Old people on entering this Eden are instantly made young. There are no quarrels or dissensions, diseases or troubles. Work is unnecessary and death unknown. The women and children appear exactly as when alive. There are no discriminations as to rank; chiefs and other officials are not countenanced, and all Indians are socially equal, although those who had filled official positions on earth are pleasantly recognized. The wicked as well as the good are admitted. Sin is sufficiently punished by death, which levels both classes, making them thenceforth incapable of doing wrong. The personal and family relations and former customs and habits continue unchanged. All live happily forever, undisturbed by the Great Spirit, whose influence for good or evil no longer extends over them. None but Indians are admitted, and each tribe is assigned separate districts. It is not known what becomes of the Caucasian and other races, but their company is neither expected nor desired.

CREATION MYTHS

As already mentioned, it is very difficult to obtain data concerning the traditions of these people, owing to the natural antipathy to discuss such subjects with the whites. The writer procured the following at the expense of much labor and time, from several of the oldest medicine-men in the tribe, who, spurred to cast aside their unreasoning prejudices by the glitter of sundry silver coins were finally induced to impart their ideas through the kindly services of Interpreter Charlie, who unfortunately has since died.

It is but fair to explain that no two of the medicine-men tell exactly the same story. While differing in details, the different versions, however, indicate a common origin, colored, perhaps, to a greater or less extent by

the individual imagination of the narrator. It is more than probable that their own crude versions were modified and enriched by the teachings of the Catholic padres who lived and labored among them more than a century ago. But it cannot be denied that there is much of beauty in their simple and picturesque accounts of the genesis of life.

The several medicine-men are also priests by virtue of their office, thus appropriately ministering to both the physical and spiritual needs of their clients. They are aged men, grave and dignified in deportment, and are always treated with profound courtesy and respect. They are not elected by the tribe, but are believed to serve by divine command transmitted through visions.

Standing near the camp-fire, they recount dreams in which, they claim, the Great Spirit relates the wondrous story of his works. The deity is supposed to appear to the sleeper in various guises, but more frequently as a mountain that slowly advances and converses in a low but distinct voice. The priests narrate these things with spirited gestures and a rude eloquence worthy of a better cause. In some instances it is possible that these venerable imposters really persuade themselves into believing that they are telling the truth; so far as their hearers are concerned their sayings are accepted in good faith, and without question.

The Yumas recognize two deities — *Coh-coh-mak* and *Thouts-e-pahts*. While revered, they are not feared, for the reason that their influence does not extend to the future heaven, their power lasting only upon earth. *Coh-coh-mak* is the mightier of the two, and makes his home in the air and sky. He changes his form at will, and often appears as a giant, dwarf, animal, insect, mountain, or whatever shape he may see fit to assume when desiring to visit his children. Ages hence he will die, and leaving his body behind him buried in the ground, will take a single stride upwards into the clouds, never again to re-appear either on

earth or in spirit land; but until the occurrence of this event all nature will flourish.

Thouts-e-pahts is blind, and is in consequence compelled to dwell far down in the center of the world. He rarely meddles with the creation of living things – that being the special duty of *Coh-coh-mak*, who never errs in judgment or design – but when he does he makes sad blunders, as may be seen from the ridiculously webbed feet of the waterfowls and beaver.

Before the creation, these gods dwelt amiably together in the center of the earth, beneath the great volumes of salt water that covered it. *Thouts-e-pahts*, desiring to ascend to the surface to reconnoiter, was directed by his associate to open his eyes when passing through the water, as otherwise he would not be able to see his way. Following this advice, he became permanently blinded by the salt water, and fell back, shrieking and denouncing *Coh-coh-mak's* treachery. In due course of time, becoming reconciled, they jointly lifted the mountains until the tops projected as islands. Leaving *Thouts-e-pahts* to support the immense weight, *Coh-coh-mak* swiftly rose and the waters gradually receded, leaving behind a waste of mud and clay. He made his appearance some miles north of the Needles, California, the great rocks that form so prominent a feature in the magnificent scenery thereabouts, representing his feet and hands.

The unfortunate *Thouts-e-pahts*, deserted by his fellow deity, and helpless from loss of sight, remains within the earth, doomed for eternity to uphold his weighty burden. Earthquakes are caused by his shifting to a more comfortable position. A gigantic frog, named *Mah-hog-oo-vets*, remains with him, and occasionally saunters forth to bring back news of what is happening in the outer world.

Taking some moist clay and rolling it forwards and backwards in his hands, *Coh-coh-mak* carefully fashioned the legs, arms,

body, features, and complete semblance, of a miniature man and woman three inches high. Blowing about him, he dispersed the waters, and the tiny images, until now devoid of animation, became alive. Rapidly growing they attained their present stature in four days. Touching the breast, back, and sides of the man he named the cardinal points, East, West, South, and North. Seeing that his people needed fresh water and food, and not knowing how to supply them with these necessities, he drew into his stomach some wind, which had been cooled by a prevailing frost, but decided that it was not good food. Greatly disappointed at the result of his unsuccessful experiment, he bade the man and woman remain where they were until his return. With a single stride he passed many hundred miles to the north, where he found a long smooth stick. This he drove deep into the earth, but found no good water, and trying a second and third time, forced it deeper with each attempt. The last venture more than exceeded his expectations, for on withdrawing the stick a mighty stream gushed forth forming the Colorado River. In the vicinity he found corn, melons, pumpkins, and squash, which with some water carried in the palm of his hand he brought to the mortals who so anxiously awaited his coming.

Up to this time there was no heaven, no sun, no moon, and no stars, and the darkness was profound. Realizing the necessity for light, *Coh-coh-mak*, having several hearts, plucked one of them from his breast and threw it to the north, but it fell at his feet. Again he cast it to the south and to the west, and each time it returned. Finally in exasperation, flinging it to the east, he commanded it to "sit down," when it immediately became fixed and is now the sun. *Thouts-e-pahts*, giving one of his hearts, furnished the moon, but these not proving sufficient, *Coh-coh-mak* looked around him, and seeing numerous lights shining in the ground grasped them, and

throwing them away into the sky created the stars.

Satisfied with this, he moulded birds from the foam of the Colorado, which by now was swiftly surging past on its way to the ocean. Fish were made from his saliva; the larger fish on being placed at the bottom of the river ungratefully swam onward to the sea, but the smaller kinds still remain. Horses, sheep, goats, and all living animals, insects, and reptiles, were also formed from saliva, and life was put into each of them by breathing upon the spittle.

He then constructed a male and female of every race of mankind from clay, gave a name to each pair, and scratching the surface of the earth at various points, placed some of the whites in the east, others in the west, and all the Indian tribes in the center, each and every sect occupying a distinct portion of the world. The Yumas were assigned to the east bank of the Colorado River in what is now Yuma County, Arizona, the deity designating as their boundaries Castle Dome on the north, the northern portion of the Cocopah Indian country on the south, the present site of Gila City on the east, and the river itself on the west.

The land proving unproductive owing to the salt that thoroughly impregnated it, *Coh-coh-mak*, upon hearing the complaint of his children, caused the river to overflow, which it has annually done ever since. After two days the water subsided, and vegetation of every description sprang up spontaneously. The trees and bushes though covered with the greenest of leaves lacked flowers, and so, perspiring water of different colors, notably blue, red, purple, pink, and yellow, the Great Spirit passed his hand over his body, and flipping the perspiration upon the plants, commanded the beautiful and fragrant flowers to appear.

The Caucasians, they say, obtain their knowledge and better information from

books, while the Indian, lacking this essential possession, cannot help his ignorance in many things. *Coh-coh-mak* presented the former with a curiously shaped stick, with which they wrote in the sand. When the Indians demanded a like gift they were refused, and this accounts for their inability to read and write. In partial compensation, however, they received a knife, ax, and bundle of rags; but the whites commencing to cry, the gift was taken away and given to the latter to appease their childish grief. Without the writing stick the Indian cannot reason concisely and clearly, and the whites with all these advantages make the most of them in use and resulting benefit, while the Indian is set at a disadvantage.

Indignant at the injustice of the Great Spirit, the Yumas set about manufacturing such articles as were absolutely needed from what they could find in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Breaking off willows and arrow-weeds they made bows and arrows, and endeavored to make bowstrings from the fiber of mesquite bean pods, but these lacking the requisite strength were discarded. With sharp flints, in lieu of axes and knives, they made short clubs with which they killed a deer, and the sinews from the animal admirably answered for the purpose. Finding themselves naked on account of losing the bundle of rags, the women modestly constructed short kilts such as they still wear.

Another explanation of the difference between the Indians and Caucasians, believed by some, is that both races were formerly identical, similar in color and general appearance, speaking the same language and using the same weapons and agricultural implements. One dark night a number of them, after a serious disagreement and altercation, stole the mutual property and decamped with it to the north. From this loss the Indians never recovered. They attribute their dark complexions to their living where the earth's

crust is ever warm, the idea originating in all probability from observing the gradual change in the color of their pottery when under fire. The Caucasians are fair-skinned because they have long lived in a cool country.

Coh-coh-mak sometimes resides in caves in the Castle Dome or Chimney Peak mountains, which are often visited by members of the tribe, who assert that the footprints of the gods are plainly visible at the entrances. Certain clouds are especially sent by him to spread contagious diseases at irregular intervals, the reason being that were there no sickness the rapid increase of population would eventually overcrowd to such an extent that all would die.

In the beginning thunder was smoke floating noiselessly in the air. The Great Spirit, not liking the silence, rolled a massive rock about, causing a deep, rumbling sound, which he transferred to the smoke. Thunder is the parent of fire, as is evinced by its close proximity to lightning. The mountains and everything thereon were given to other tribes by him, which accounts for the fact that the Yumas live upon the bottom lands. Willow, mesquite, and cottonwood trees were donated solely for their own use with the exception of the flowers which were reserved for the whites. All animals were able to converse at one time, but the dog, fox, and coyote, became such great tattlers, exposing the misdoings of the individual Indians at every opportunity, that *Coh-coh-mak* grew angry and caused the skin to grow over the nose and mouth, thus effectually silencing them.

TIME AND UNIVERSE

The Yuma year and its subdivisions, excepting a single very awkward error in the counting, is for all practical purposes quite sufficient for their needs. The year (*ma-dan-ga*) is divided into twelve moons of twenty-eight days, thus providing but 336 instead of 365 days. The first three months of the year,

each beginning with the new moon, are called the cold moons (*hel-ah-at-soruk*); the next six are designated by their respective numbers, viz., fourth, fifth, and so on, and the last three are known as the wind moons (*hel-ah-met-hah*). It so happens that their present new year commenced July 15th, throwing, oddly enough, mid-winter into mid-summer. Reckoning must have first begun in December, for the reason that December, January, and February, are the coldest, while September, October, and November, are the stormiest months.

The day comprises eight subdivisions. The first fourteen hours, beginning at 4:30 A. M. and ending at 5:30 P. M., are divided into seven parts of about two hours each. The first (*yah-spak*) is called the rising sun; second, (*en-yah-pilk*), warm sun; third, (*yah-to-org*), noon or high sun; fourth (*yaj-yoosk*), afternoon or declining sun; fifth (*yah-nah-vaug*) designates the interval between afternoon and dusk; sixth, (*yah-el-tah-kah-nah-voc*), night. The remaining ten hours complete the eight subdivisions.

The approximate time of night is guessed from the position of certain three stars of the Great Bear constellation, called *A-mau*, and the accuracy with which the time is told is remarkable. The hour of the day is guessed with equal certainty from the position of the sun. The new moon is called the "dead moon," and when full it is known as the "big moon."

The world is considered flat, entirely surrounded by water, and immovable. The sky revolves like a panorama around the earth once each day, carrying with it the sun, moon, and stars, which are firmly fixed. As the moon is opposite the sun, their successive appearances cause the day and night. The portion of the sky that happens to be underneath the earth serves to support it. The idea, in fact, is that the sky is a hollow sphere within which the earth as a plane remains stationary, the former revolving about it. The

sky is believed to be a man; the earth is his wife, and water is their child.

SUPERSTITIONS

Yuma superstitions are many; the few following will serve as fair samples: With rare exceptions they strenuously object to being photographed, for they believe the accuracy of the pictures [is] due to something taken from them whose loss will soon cause death. Many will not allow themselves to be viewed through field-glasses, as they imagine their nakedness is exposed notwithstanding their clothes. If a dead person had in life been accustomed to share the food of his relatives, the latter, during feasts and other ceremonies, set apart a portion for burning, for fear the deceased would otherwise upbraid them in dreams for their selfishness. The smoke of the sacrifice is consumed by the shadow of the dead. For the same reason death and kindred subjects are seldom mentioned, and the names of the departed pass the lips under no circumstances. The woodpecker is never killed, because the slayer will immediately be stricken with blindness. Children are often frightened into good behavior by allusions to a birdlike ghost resembling a monstrous owl, called *Toh-kah-lot*, capable of inflicting awful calamities upon the disobedient. The dead sometimes communicate with the living through an owl's hooting. The bird itself is the pulse or heart-beats transferred temporarily, and comes at night to convey good or bad news. Whatsoever happens, whether natural or accidental, must soon be duplicated. For instance, if an Indian dies, two more will follow; if it rains, two rainy days may be expected; and should the wind blow hard, there will be two days of storm. On seeing an eclipse, they believe the planet sick and trying to sleep. Should it not awake, the Colorado River would dry up and bring sickness and death upon them, and so the tribe assembles to clap hands, shake rattles, and shout, to

assist it and indirectly themselves out of the predicament. Shooting stars are messages from *Coh-coh-mak*, communicating to the Indians the death of one or more white men.

SHAMANISM AND HEALING

There are but four or five medicine-men among the Yumas, and the shrewdest of these act also as priests and narrators of traditions. They are aged men, gifted with a low cunning that frequently assists them out of dangerous predicaments. Physically they are thin and bony with wrinkled skins hanging in folds like parchment. Their snuffy, artful faces are lighted by beady eyes, and the long gray hair is wrapped tightly upon the head and bountifully covered with greasy mud from the Colorado River. Ordinarily their clothing differs but little from their neighbors', but during the harvest and cremation ceremonies they bedeck themselves with bits of cloth, feathers and other trinkets. They claim appointment from the Great Spirit who appears in dreams, and the tribe, accepting their fabrications as true, interposes no objection.

The methods of Fast Boat, as taken from his own description, will serve to illustrate the practices of these individuals. Several years ago a relative became seriously ill with fever. During the ensuing night a prominent mountain of the neighborhood approached in a dream, and told him that the power of locating diseases by the touch would be granted him thereafter. Then bidding him blow upon the patient to cool the fever, the shadowy mountain disappeared. On obeying the instructions the afflicted man was cured, and Fast Boat was received with all the honors of a successful medicine-man.

The sick, when permitted to eat at all, are allowed the very simplest food. They are compelled to submit to the roughest handling from the medicine-man, who excitedly rolls his patient to and fro in frantic endeavors to discover the point of disease. The relatives,

sitting upon their heels around the hut, are ordered to maintain absolute silence, as noise of any kind would break the spell. No medicine is given, but in some instances roots and leaves are chewed and expectorated upon the sufferer. Severe pain is attributed to the presence of sticks, as, for example, when the physician supposes that the heart is affected, he loudly ascribes it to two sticks pushing upwards from the stomach to the heart. Sucking with the lips upon the stomach is resorted to to soften the hard, stick-like substance, for only when this is accomplished will the patient recover. Rapid touches upon the breast draw out the pain in case of pneumonia, and deafness through physical weakness is aided by blowing in the ear. Touching, slapping, expectorating, blowing, and massage, associated at times with monotonous chanting, unearthly howling, and an occasional swaying dance, complete the usual course of treatment. Recovery under such circumstances is very doubtful. The debt in the event of recovery is liquidated with blankets, horses, money, and other possessions, but nothing is forthcoming should the patient die.

But the practitioner's bed is not one of roses, for the Yumas have an inexorable law that demands the life of the medicine-man who makes three false predictions in a family or nine in the tribe as to the death or recovery of his clients. Upon passing the limit in either case he is visited by a male relative of one of the patients, who asks why he prophesied incorrectly. If the explanation is not satisfactory he is quietly murdered with a mesquite club, and nothing is said by the remainder of the tribe. Should it happen that his last patient has no relative, a council of the officials is called, after which the medicine-man is led away, never again to appear upon earth.

With this alternative staring them in the face, it is possible that these gentry sometimes

take care that death *shall* follow when they so prophesy, for upon the correctness of their prognostications depends not only their influence, but their lives as well.

It may be said incidentally that smallpox in 1878 carried away nearly three hundred Yumas, and measles in 1887 sadly depleted the number of their children. These periods proved particularly disastrous to the medicine-men, and the office frequently went begging for occupants.

WITCHCRAFT

Witchcraft undoubtedly finds credence among them, but it is questionable whether they believe in it so implicitly as the Pima Indians. Still when an individual is accused his chances to escape death are very small. When misfortunes come upon a family, such as disease, loss of property, or sudden death, it is taken for granted that some evil-minded person has deliberately bewitched them. Without the slightest warning of his impending fate, the unsuspecting person upon whom suspicion falls is quietly accused, tried, and convicted, by a secret council convened for that purpose. Subsequently, when playing or conversing with his comrades, the chosen executioner armed with a club, noiselessly creeps toward him, and with a couple of well directed blows ends his earthly career.

FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

When possible three distinct celebrations are observed annually, called the Mesquite, Harvest, and Mourning festivals. The first named is purely for pleasure, enjoyment, humor, and frolic, and attends the gathering of the ripe mesquite beans, the Yumas' chief article of food. The second is a festival of rejoicing when the harvest of their farms is great, and involves, also, reminiscences of the dead. The third is exclusively devoted to grief, sorrow, and lamentations for the loss of

relatives and friends who have been cremated during the year.

Like all other vegetable products the mesquite crop varies in quantity, proving greater in some years and less in others. In the former case it is made a matter for universal congratulation, and about the latter part of June, when the bean is thoroughly ripe, the outlying districts are promptly notified of the date of the ceremony through fleet-footed runners. When sufficient have assembled, a large open shed is built, and at sunrise each morning the young and the old of both sexes wander into the mesquite groves, where they fill huge baskets with the beans. These are brought to the shed, and prepared by first discarding the useless seeds, saturating the edible pods with water, and burying the sticky masses in the ground. In a day or two they are taken up, much shrunken and almost solidified, and stacked in piles beneath the shed. When enough is gathered for winter storage, a light brush fence is built around the building, and the bundles of beans are removed and piled in different parts of the enclosure, in sets for each district represented.

In the evening an Indian possessing a powerful and sonorous voice takes his station in the now empty structure. About him the old men arrange themselves; then come the younger people, and finally the third and outer row is formed by the women. The singer chants a monotonous ditty, wherein he humorously criticises the individuals present, each being called by some part of the mesquite tree, or else he draws comparisons between it and them. For instance, taking a crooked bean and holding it aloft, he calls out to a bowed and withered woman: "This, old mother, is as crooked as thou; the outside of the pod is as dry as thy skin; the fibers, coarse as thy hair; and the beans within, like unto thy teeth in color."

The Indians also amuse themselves by dancing, singing, frolicking, or at games, and

many are the marriages that follow the love-making of the young men and women during the merriment of the happy festival. On the last day the participants collect outside the frail fence, and at a given signal dash through it towards the bean piles, each seizing as many bundles as possible, and at the same time good-naturedly endeavoring to prevent his neighbor from getting his share. This, of course, means total destruction to the fence and building, but that is part of the programme, and they shoulder their bundles of beans and depart for their respective homes.

If the harvest is abundant, the chief or some other prominent personage summons the tribe to a prearranged point, and bids them bring as much corn and as many pumpkins, melons, and squashes as possible. This generally occurs about the middle of July, and twelve days and nights are devoted to the festivities. After all have congregated at the rendezvous the farm products are assorted and stacked in great heaps, from which every one may at any time help himself when hungry. No work is done, and the days are passed in games, feasting, and other amusements. When night falls the old people build fires, and gathering around them indulge in lengthy pow-wows or talks. In these they agree upon the date of mourning for the dead, who in life participated in the joyous harvest feasts because the Great Spirit had so commanded, and because the custom had been universal from time out of mind. This settled, the civil government and all the attending conditions existing in the tribe, including its prosperity, reverses, and necessities, are gravely discussed, and suggestions are offered with a view to further the mutual interests. Then, too, the dreams of the veterans are dismally chanted and their probable influence upon future events carefully considered, the medicine-men, as usual, being the most forward of the prophets. In these conferences the young

take no part. When the provisions are consumed the festivities abruptly end.

During full moon, and in the autumn, when the plants are slowly dying, the mourning festival, the saddest of their ceremonies, is held, to last without cessation through four days and nights. All attend as it involves weeping for relatives, friends, and acquaintances, who have died during the year. If it happens that the scarcity of provisions prevents them from holding the "grand cry," to which surrounding tribes are invited, they defer until more prosperous seasons when supplies are ample. Though delayed for months after the proper time, it is never neglected.

A large brush shed is built upon a cleared spot. To the supports, highly colored rags are fastened that flutter in the breeze. Handsomely decorated bows, arrows, and pottery, and strings of beads, are hung here and there, while from every available portion of the roof and sides, trinkets, clothing, food, and knives, are suspended. These are contributions of relatives and friends and are not only intended as marks of respect, but are also destined to be burned to provide for the needs of the departed in paradise. Similar presents are donated by visiting members of other tribes. Festoons of red and blue calico hang from the roof, while numerous slender poles are planted in the ground from which white and red pennants float.

The exercises are opened with harangues by local orators, who feelingly allude to the virtues of the dead, the mourners squatting around outside. In the center of the building stand the presiding chief and his assistants, the medicine-men and the near relatives, some of the latter wearing white gowns, with red, cowl-like caps, elaborately feathered and beaded, and carrying long reeds in their hands. The medicine-men are also strangely arrayed, and undoubtedly act as directors. The leader wails dismally and the refrain is

caught by the crowd, swelling and falling from hundreds of throats like wind souging through a chasm or waves beating upon the sand. This is continued by those sitting some distance away, sounding weird and uncanny, but displaying withal true sorrow and heartfelt anguish, the hot tears welling down the furrowed cheeks of the aged or the smooth skins of the younger people. Then sinking it dies away into total silence. The leader again resumes the wailing dirge-like chant, and the celebration proceeds as before. Tearful speeches are delivered at intervals.

An imposing feature is the formation of opposite lines of Indians, who in the day-time march to and fro over the open ground. One group is provided with grotesque clay images, as hideous as the ancient stone statues of Central America, fixed upon poles and carried high in the air by young [men]. An old [woman] walking backwards casts handfuls of corn upon the images, thereby invoking the Great Spirit's blessing upon future abundant harvests.

Horses are slaughtered and eaten. At night the families assemble around campfires, the dense smoke of which, rising in clouds on high, spreads like a sable coverlet. Passing from fire to fire, [old women] remind such of the mourners as have ceased lamenting from physical weariness, of the dead, and by appealing to their sympathies, never fail to cause fresh demonstrations. Other [women] walk about and console the wailers by touching them with tiny clay dolls, thus keeping them mindful of the fact that children will again be born to fill the places of those who have gone. The older individuals seem to mourn more constantly than the younger, who appear at times to consider the monotonous proceedings as something of a bore. Yet the sight is touchingly pathetic in its very simplicity.

Sham fights on horseback and on foot occur, to illustrate the proficiency of the

deceased warriors in battles, which are exceedingly interesting as dramatic delineations of savage warfare. The native weapons are deftly handled, and the spectators become intensely excited as one or the other proves victorious, their shouts blending with the awful whoops of the combatants. At four o'clock in the morning of the fourth day the building is fired from the four corners simultaneously, and while burning the mourners consign their wearing apparel and most of their personal property to the flames, leaving the women with girdle and kilt of bark and the men completely naked save the breechcloth.

MUSIC

The Yumas delight in music of every description, and often sing low, weird, but harmonious songs in concert. Some voices are very sweet, and show a marked improvement with proper training and cultivation, as is seen in the correctness and beauty of the hymns rendered by the government school children. The older people, oddly enough, sing more willingly by night than by day — perhaps because many of their games are played and much of their merrymaking is done after sunset.

They make but two instruments, a flute and a rattle [Fig. 2]. The former is twelve to fifteen inches long, and is made from reeds that grow abundantly along the river banks. It is hollow, has but four holes, renders four notes, is operated by blowing through the end instead of the side, and is manipulated like our piccolo. In the hands of an expert it gives forth a soft purling melody. The young men are addicted to playing it before the wick-ups of their sweethearts, by whom it is duly appreciated. The rattle is a wild gourd, or calabash, partly filled with smooth pebbles, and a wooden handle affixed. It is used to accompany their songs. The women frequently purchase jewsharps [Jew's-harps],

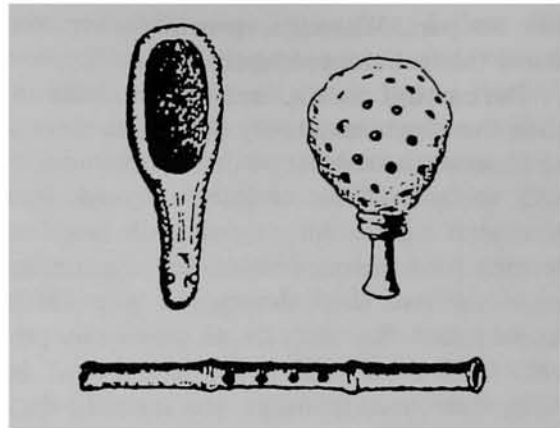


Fig. 2. Musical instruments; top row: combination scoop-and-rattle, gourd rattle; bottom: reed flute [original illustrations].

and are skillful at drawing the vilest sounds from the detestable instrument. They are carried suspended from a long string of beads passed around the neck.

GAMES

Faro is to us what *toh-toh-oh-tho-yeh-buk*, the stick game, is to the Yumas, and many evenings are pleasantly passed around the camp-fire unraveling its intricacies. The bets are arranged by covering each coin with another of equal value, and spreading them in pairs on the handkerchief of a trusty referee, whose decision is final. It is played by eight persons, four on a side, who squat opposite each other in a kneeling position. The challenged party take[s] the initiative by receiving four black and four white sticks, apportioning one of each color to the respective members. A short string is fastened around the middle of each stick, and hiding them under a cloth, unseen by his opponents, every player ties the sticks to his wrists, and withdrawing rapidly, folds his arms, still keeping them concealed. Then, accompanied by the spectators, they unite in the musical cry, "*oh-oh-kah-ah-vah! oh-nah-veh-oh-nah!*"

and finish abruptly with "ha-ha-ha-ha!" meanwhile bowing their heads nearly to the ground. Immediately their opponents answer, "say-oh-a-ah! say-oh-a-on!" ending suddenly with "ho-a-ha!" The latter, one after another, signify their readiness to guess upon which of the adversaries' wrists the colored sticks are fastened, by rubbing the palms, clapping hands, and pointing one finger to indicate the choice of white, and two when meaning the black. The sticks are then uncovered, and if the player has chosen correctly he takes both sticks, receiving in addition a counter from a pile of fifteen that had been previously placed between the contestants. This is continued until he errs, when a partner takes his place. When all the sticks are in the possession of the challengers, the sides change places, the game ceasing only when one side has obtained the fifteen counters. The winnings are divided in proportion to the number of counters held by each of the victors.

Oh-toor, the pole game, is very popular. It requires two light poles from twelve to fifteen feet long, and a small hoop bound with rags, called *kep-a-choor*. Two players, grasping the poles, run swiftly after the rolling hoop thrown by one of them, and attempt to cast the pole through the hoop. This requires quick sight and dexterous manipulation.

Cha-tah-sah, played by as many as twenty at a time, is one of the most exciting of their sports. The participants are provided with long curved willow sticks, nicely smoothed and stripped of bark. The crook at one end is made by bending the wood when green to the requisite curve and tying it in place until completely dry, when it permanently retains the desired shape. These sticks are light but strong, and well adapted to the purposes for which they are made. The ball consists of tightly rolled cloth of the size of a large walnut. The method of playing reminds one of our own "shinney." Sides are chosen and the ball tossed into the center by an ancient

enthusiast who acts as umpire. Upon the signal, each player frantically endeavors to force the ball over the enemy's line, the goals being about three hundred feet apart. The clashing of sticks, shouting of spectators, and rapid dodging of the contestants — who are closely watched by their wives and sweethearts, and encouraged with applause or shamed with derision according to the expertness or clumsiness of each — the half-naked players arrayed in clinging undershirts and breech-cloths, showing smooth rounded limbs and hardened muscles, the bright calicoes of the excited women and children, and the waving feathers of the male spectators, make it a lively and picturesque sport.

A peculiar football in which they much delight requires two wooden balls, similar to those used in croquet, but considerably heavier, placed ten feet or so apart upon a line in front of the two players. Discarding all superfluous clothing, they run towards the balls assigned to them, and forcing the toes of one foot into the sand under the ball, throw it as far ahead as possible. In this manner they cover the allotted mile, victory falling to the one who first lifts the ball over the goal. As footgear is dispensed with, injudicious kicking would prove a painful experiment. It is against the rules to touch the ball with any portion of the body save the feet, under penalty of forfeiting the game.

The women are inordinately fond of assembling in groups and tossing painted sticks into the air. If the marked side appears uppermost, the thrower wins; if otherwise, she loses; and according to her luck collects or pays the amount wagered.

Horse and foot racing, wrestling, kicking, and swimming matches, and many other athletic sports find ardent votaries among them. Card games resembling the Mexican *monte* are common, and are played with modern cards and decks of their own manufacture. Both sexes are inveterate gamblers,

and every game is played for valuables. They do not hesitate to bet their beads, money, clothing, horses, or whatever else they possess, and individuals are often beggared by a single race.

ADORNMENT

Until quite recently the men paid little attention to clothing, but limited their wardrobes to narrow strips of bright-colored cloth passed between the legs and under a string tied around the waist, the ends dangling at random before and behind. Owing to the protests of the authorities of Yuma City and the efforts of the government officials at the Fort, they have, like the women, been induced to wear clothing more nearly approaching civilized ideas. At present many dress in jean overalls and undershirts bought at the stores — occasionally several of each are worn at the same time. Queer combinations are often encountered, such as the donning of a breech-cloth and a discarded stove-pipe hat, a pair of pantaloons without further accessories, or a solitary undershirt. Shoes and hats are seldom worn, although rude sandals of hide and cotton handkerchiefs are at rare intervals made to do service in their stead. Bead necklaces and wristlets are popular. The cartilage of the nose is pierced and nose beads inserted. The children of both sexes wear earrings suspended from several holes cut in the ear. The coarse black hair is arranged in long rolls, and treated with the sap or gum of the mesquite tree, which is supposed to be a sure preventive of baldness, and infallible in maintaining the shining condition so highly prized by them. If long and glossy, hair has a certain commercial value, and the [men] often buy it from needy companions to add to their own by splicing. Great pride is taken in the possession of the glistening rolls, and their loss entails the deepest mortification. At times the head is thickly plastered with a greasy, reddish mud, called *e-mat-tho-a-thou*,

procured by digging in the hillsides, which facilitates the cleaning of the scalp and also the extermination of vermin. Feathers are plucked from the breasts of water-fowls and fastened in the hair, where they flutter with every movement. All are tattooed across the forehead with zig-zag marks, wherein charcoal dust or dark clay is used instead of india ink. Both sexes elaborately paint the face with yellow, crimson, white, black, and green pigments.

Although more modest than the men, the [women] wear costumes of so scanty a nature as to bring a blush to the cheeks of those observing them for the first time. The favorite dress, when in their villages, is a kirtle of two apron-like pieces, each sufficient in length to encircle half the body. These are made of the inner bark of the swamp willow, and fall from the waist to the knees, being held in place by a twisted girdle resembling soft cording. The bark is prepared by cutting into strips of the requisite length, an inch or so in width; and softened by pounding with rocks and working in the hands, making a durable and comfortable garment. Immense bark bustles are worn, upon which the papooses are often carried sitting astride. Otherwise the body is completely nude. When absent from home, calico of startling colors is wrapped around the loins, reaching nearly to the ankles, and another piece of cloth tied about the shoulders falls to the ground.

The hair, worn shorter than the men's, is brushed straight down the back, and is cut in bangs across the forehead on a line with the eyebrows. The chin is tattooed in parallel lines with numerous tiny dots between, the raised surfaces plainly showing the foreign substances inserted beneath the skin. The [women] do not use nose-beads or feathers, but affect all the other ornaments in vogue among the [men]. The eyes are frequently elongated with charcoal, presenting an extremely odd appearance. Some few wear

handkerchiefs arranged like a turban, and only the *ah-koy*, or old women, tie sandals to their feet.

AGRICULTURE

The agricultural arts are of the simplest kind. As the rainfall is totally inadequate to the successful cultivation of crops, they are compelled to rely upon the annual inundations of the Colorado River, which, like the Nile, overflows its banks at stated intervals, usually during May, June, and July. It sometimes happens, as in the present year, that the rise is not sufficient, and when this is the case the harvest is a total failure, and the Yumas are to that extent seriously crippled, and forced to extra exertions to keep from starving. Ditches are rarely "taken out" by them. When it is done the work is subsequently dropped through lack of ambition and necessary knowledge, as few are worth their salt at canal construction when working for themselves, although they do well if personally directed and controlled by the whites, who employ them upon the extensive enterprises of this kind now progressing rapidly along the Gila River in Arizona.

Open spots are selected along the Colorado, so situated as to be liable to the overflows, and to some extent cleared of brush and stubble by burning. After the subsidence of the inundations, holes are dug in the moist earth with sticks to a depth of eight or ten inches. Seeds are thrown on the bottom, and the holes filled to the surface to save and utilize the moisture as long as possible. The irregular plots of land are roughly fenced with brush to keep out straying cattle and horses, and nothing further is done until the products ripen, when they are harvested. No uniformity is practiced in planting in rows. The seeds are deposited where the digging is easiest, and the plants therefore appear everywhere and anywhere in the most curious combinations, and in a manner calcu-

lated to bewilder the mind of the average civilized husbandman.

The harvest is practically limited to melons, squash, pumpkins, corn, and beans, about all that the Yumas can raise with their [current] knowledge.

FOODS

The scrubby mesquite trees (*algaroba* [*Prosopis*] *glandulosa*) that abound everywhere provide an abundant supply of very acceptable food. The long pods, something like our own string beans in size and shape, ripen about the end of June, and are either eaten from the tree or are hoarded for the winter. If allowed to hang upon the trees, they dry sufficiently in the sun to be picked and stored without further preparation. The seeds are useless, but the pods contain a juicy, sugary pulp that is exceedingly nutritious. When ripe and fresh they are pounded in mortars, mixed with water until of the consistency of mush, and greedily eaten. Another way is to dry and crush the pods to powder, and with the addition of water make a sort of flat unleavened cake, which is cooked over heated stones. It becomes very hard and can be kept for years, and is used by dissolving in water. The screw-bean, another variety of mesquite, is quite as valuable and is similarly prepared.

Curious granaries for storing mesquite beans are erected by every industrious family. A platform about six feet square is constructed upon high poles. Upon this a perfectly round shell, varying from three to five feet in diameter and from two to four feet in depth, made of arrow-weeds tightly twisted and interwoven, is fastened, and the top nicely sealed with mud to preserve the contents intact. They are located some distance from the villages towards the base of mountains, where the mesquite is most abundant, and extraordinary precaution is taken to prevent

the depredations of cattle, horses, and coyotes, who are as fond of the bean as the Indians themselves.

The seed of the sacaton grass found along the river bottoms is ground, worked into a dough, and then dried in the sun. Corn is boiled, parched, and powdered in *metate* stones and made into mush, or the meal is kneaded and baked as bread and *tortillitas*. Pumpkins and squash are either boiled or dried. Wild berries and certain fruits from the numerous cacti are eaten.

Many fish are caught with hooks or nets in the Colorado, the principal being salmon [improbable], carp, suckers, and humpback. They are cooked by roasting over coals, boiling, or enveloping the fish in moist clay and baking in a covered pit heated with hot stones. When finished the clay is broken away taking the skin with it and so prepared the fish is delicious. Fish are also dried and stored.

These Indians are inordinately fond of sugar, candy, pies, cakes, and sweetmeats, which are purchased from the whites. Beef entrails and beef heads are eaten. Moles, gophers, chipmunks, wood rats, jack and cottontail rabbits, small birds, quail, wild ducks and geese, and land tortoises diversify the bill of fare. The tortoises, by the way, sometimes weigh as much as twenty pounds and closely resemble the diamond-back terrapin of the East, but they differ in being found roaming over heated deserts and miles from water.

Pork is seldom tasted, and chickens and eggs never, although the Indians raise the latter for sale. Milk is much disliked.

Of their two manufactured beverages that called *ak-tza-oo-yark* is the most important. Wheat grains thoroughly ripened are lightly roasted over charcoal until they turn to a bright brown color, after which they are ground into fine powder and dissolved in water. It has a pleasant taste and is much

relished. Occasionally, though seldom, it is allowed to ferment before drinking. Dried mesquite beans are also so prepared, save the roasting, and the drink is called *e-yah-oo-yark*. No intoxicating drinks are made. Whisky or the Mexican *mescal*, is very acceptable to them, as it is to all other Indians; but they seldom procure it, owing to the stringent laws against the sale.

DWELLINGS

It has been explained that the Yumas are segregated into districts. These are further subdivided into villages, which in turn are made up of dwellings. The villages are composed of families and near relatives, who keep together being quite clannish in their domestic arrangements. Owing to the mildness of the climate the dwellings are crudely put together. Nevertheless, when an Indian desires to build, the assistance of friends is solicited and always cheerfully granted. There are [three] kinds of houses, each devoted to particular purposes.

The winter house is built upon four or six cottonwood poles partially buried in the earth. The tops are notched, crosspieces inserted, and the roof and sides neatly filled in with interlaced twigs, brush, and saplings placed upright. Dirt is thrown upon the top and adobe mud sometimes plastered over the sides. The roof is slanted downward towards the rear to carry off rain, and the front is commonly left open without doors or other protection save what is afforded by a tattered blanket. The interior is not divided into rooms. When the weather becomes more than ordinarily chilly a fire is built upon the ground and after raking the ashes away the individuals discard all their clothing and bury themselves in the warm sand, thereby amply protecting themselves from the cold.

As it is customary to ignore the aged and feeble, the parents who are too decrepit to be of use are driven from the homes of their

children. They instantly busy themselves in constructing low, conical dwellings of willow saplings stuck into the ground and brought together at the top. The exterior is covered with mesquite branches until fairly tight, and a small semicircular aperture cut through. These rookeries are situated in the midst of palo verde, ironwood, mesquite, and willow groves upon the lowlands near the Colorado, and close to their farms and rancherias. The sites chosen are often picturesque as well as secluded.

The homes are infested with multitudes of curs which plainly show the presence of coyote blood. The Indians own few domestic animals and these are confined chiefly to horses and dogs.

MANUFACTURES

They are wo[e]fully deficient in the arts, and are compelled to purchase most of their clothing and other necessaries. Prominent among their few industries is the making of pottery, many of the pieces evidencing artistic taste, correct judgment, and unlimited patience in construction and subsequent ornamentation.

Porous clay of a reddish color is obtained near the base of certain mountains several miles from the reserve. After being softened with water, it is made into long ropes an inch thick, by rolling in the hands, when the ends are brought together in a circle. These are placed upon a flat, smooth stone, and gently patted with a wooden paddle until smooth, meanwhile shaping with the fingers, the light hammering equalizing the thickness. The utensil is built up with the addition of roll after roll similarly prepared, the length and diameter of each depending, of course, upon the size and form of the vessel. This completed, the outside is smoothed and glossed by vigorous rubbing with the moistened hand and fingers. Red or yellow paint, made by reducing to powder a soft rock found in the

vicinity and treating with water, is applied in intricate but regular designs [Fig. 3]. When thoroughly dry, firing is accomplished by placing the vessel upon two stones over or near a hot fire of mesquite coals and slowly turning until finished. The color fades appreciably during the operation.

Ollas, water-jugs, bowls, pitchers, cups, and other articles, are made in numerous forms, shapes, and sizes, and some with lines as true and perfect as those of our own manufacture [Fig. 3]. The curves are graceful and uniform and cannot but excite admiration. Being sufficiently porous to allow the seepage of water they are splendidly adapted to the heated climate, for the rapid evaporation keeps the contents cool. Consequently these vessels are in demand, and many are sold at fair prices.

Considerable ingenuity is exercised in moulding and baking tiny clay images of men and women, and, though somewhat grotesque, these reflect creditably upon the artistic perceptions of their makers. Natural hair is fastened around the top of the head, hollowed out for the purpose, and they are carefully dressed in exact imitation of the Yumas themselves, the fabrics and bark used being identical. Not infrequently groups of figures are made upon a single base, and many are disposed of to passing travelers. The manufacture of pottery is left exclusively to the [women].

Every article is ornamented by painting in angular designs, often to excellent effect. Curves are seldom drawn, the style being limited generally to straight or broken lines, angles, and dots, and with each a new and original idea is depicted.

The most useful household inventions are mortars and pestles, or *metates*, with which they grind mesquite beans and corn. Both are made from hard rock, the mortar being grooved to prevent the meal from scattering. The pestle is a heavy, smooth elliptical stone,

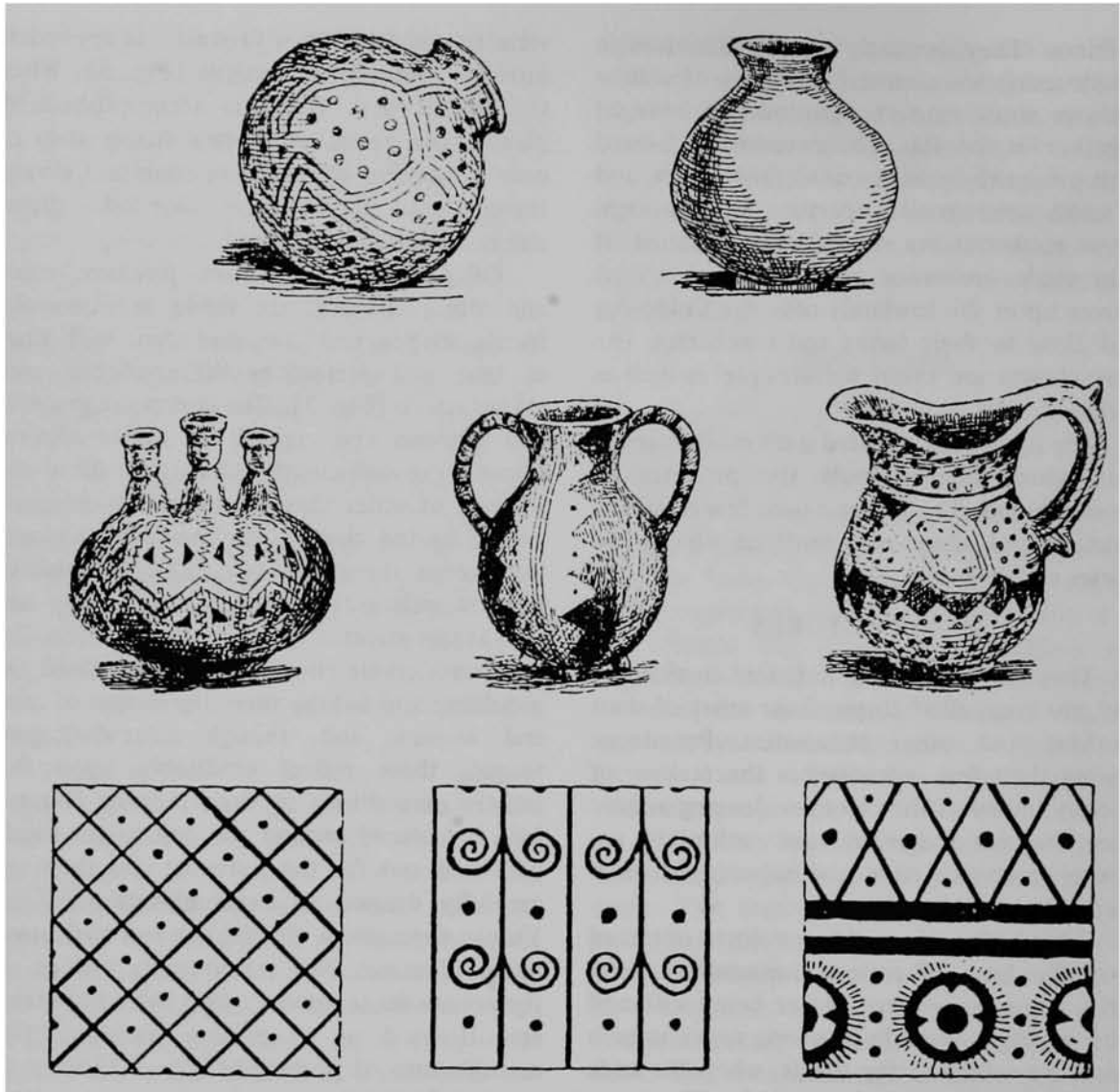


Fig. 3. Ceramic vessel forms and decorations [original illustrations].

and exactly fits the groove. At times a tree stump is hollowed, buried in the ground, and serves for a mortar.

Handsome baskets without handles are made from willow shoots, so deftly constructed as to hold water, and ropes or cords of long native grasses are made.

The weapons of the Yumas are few. Willow or cottonwood bows tightly whipped

with sinews and having stout strings of the same material are used [see Fig. 4 for decoration designs]. The reed arrows are tipped with triangular points of glass, iron, or flinty stone [Fig. 4], chipped to the desired size and poisoned by dipping into putrid flesh. The shafts are feathered in two or three rows [Fig. 4]. A club resembling a potato masher is made of palo verde or mesquite wood [Fig.

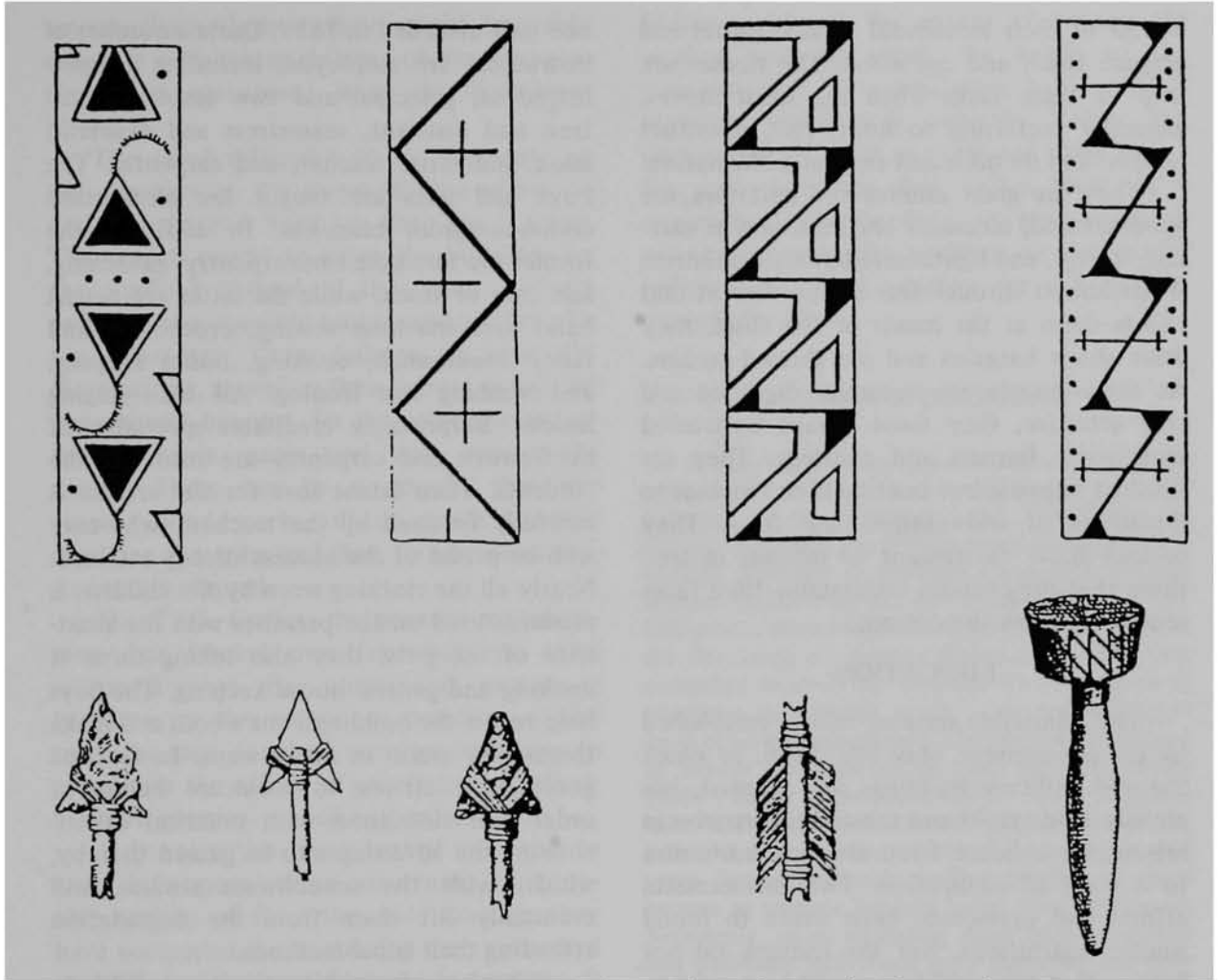


Fig. 4. Depictions of weaponry. Upper: painted designs on bows. Lower: glass, iron, and stone arrowpoints, arrow fletching, and war club [original illustrations].

4]. [It] is grasped close to the head instead of at the end of the handle, and is used by the public executioner as well as by the warrior, each handling the weapons mentioned with expertness. Very few possess firearms. Weaving and working metals are not understood.

INDUSTRY

Some are good workers, and find employment in sundry capacities with the people of Yuma and vicinity. Several of the men earn

fair wages as deckhands upon the Colorado River steamers, and make their services desirable in the local gardens. A few [women] scrub floors and do plain washing for families, but beyond these accomplishments their knowledge of modern requirements does not greatly extend. The majority, however, while away their time in idle pursuits. The women are not considered so important or useful as the men, and are treated with a rude, if contemptuous, civility. They assist in farming,

attend to their household affairs, gather and prepare food, and cut wood. The sterner sex help at these tasks when the spirit moves, generally preferring to hunt, fish, construct houses, and do odds and ends of a like nature.

They are great mimics and imitators, are good-natured, incessant laughers, and as careless, happy, and lighthearted as little children. While honest through fear of punishment that awaits them at the hands of the chief, they drive sharp bargains and are shrewd traders. As these people are naturally dignified and very sensitive, they must always be treated with strict fairness and courtesy. They are finished beggars, but confine their requests to donations of old clothes and food. They seldom show excitement or interest in anything that they cannot understand, their faces remaining blank throughout.

EDUCATION

The admirable training school established by the government, May 6th, 1886, to which the old military buildings are devoted, has already made rapid and substantial progress in raising the children from absolute barbarism to a state of civilization. Two unsuccessful efforts had previously been made to found similar institutions, but the Indians did not believe that their children could be taught to read and write the language of the whites, and consequently refused to allow them to attend. United States Inspector Purcell eventually overcame the scruples of the late Chief Pasqual, and succeeded in so interesting him as to the feasibility of the proposition that he agreed to send sixty children the first year if certain conditions were complied with.

The twelve buildings, comprising separate school-rooms and dormitories for the sexes, refectory, kitchen, laundry, sewing rooms, teachers' quarters, hospital, and physician's quarters, are neatly furnished, scrupulously clean, and present a homelike, if somewhat martial, appearance. Eighty boys and fifty-

one girls attended in 1887. Quite a number of instructors are employed, including a superintendent, principal and two assistants, matron and assistant, seamstress and assistant, cook, industrial teacher, and carpenter. The boys and girls are taught the elementary common-school branches. In addition, the former are instructed in carpentry, gardening, and care of stock, while the latter are taught hand and machine sewing, crocheting and fancy needlework, cooking, house keeping, and washing and ironing. All take singing lessons. Surprisingly creditable specimens of needlework and carpentry are made by the students. Their latent love for the artistic is carefully fostered by the teachers, who may well be proud of the success already attained. Nearly all the clothing worn by the children is manufactured on the premises with the assistance of the girls, they also taking turns at cooking and general house keeping. The boys help repair the buildings, cut wood, and make themselves useful in many ways. In fact the government strives to inculcate habits of order and cleanliness with practical experience of the advantages to be gained thereby, which, with the schoolroom studies, will eventually lift them from the degradation attending their tribal methods.

It has been found altogether impossible to reform the adult Yumas, who retain their ancient customs from sheer force of habit. "What was good enough for our fathers is certainly good enough for us," they say. The desired result will indirectly be accomplished, however, through the present generation, who will transmit the teachings of civilization to their descendants.

The students are provided with plain but healthful food, and with all the necessary educational appliances. Corporal punishment is avoided; for patience, gentleness, and judicious praise are far more effective. The children are very ambitious to excel in all their undertakings and great is the rivalry displayed

among them. Indeed they would favorably compare with white children of the same ages (seven to seventeen) were the conditions identical.

The chief difficulty to be overcome by the teachers is the universal disposition to destroy whatever they lay their hands upon. They much prefer to enter the buildings by the windows instead of the doors, and are prone to innumerable other eccentricities of a like character. These failings are gradually disappearing, as well as their former saucy and impertinent bearing. To the astonishment of their parents many read and write quite nicely. There can be no doubt that the present good work will do much towards elevating the tribe and that, too, before many years have elapsed.

Dr. P. G. Cotter, the government physician, has treated over four hundred cases within a year. His unqualified success is breaking up the pernicious practices of the medicine-men, for the Yumas are beginning to appreciate the efforts of government to alleviate their physical as well as mental defects.

It is not within the intent of this paper to enter into speculations concerning the probable destiny of the tribe, but although they have succeeded in maintaining their numerical strength for the past thirty or forty years, it would appear that their existence as a united people is seriously threatened. Until recent times their country was virtually ignored by the whites, who erroneously believed that Arizona and southeastern California were deserts incapable of sustaining life. This impression has since been proven totally incorrect, as is now attested by the flourishing Yuma gardens, productive ranches, and extensive irrigation enterprises in progress along the Gila River. Government land is preempted at an unprecedented rate, and the hitherto unoccupied valleys are rapidly filling up. In due course of time the constantly increasing population will encroach upon the outskirts of the

Indian ranges to the extent of forcing the weaker race to adopt the habits of the stronger and by assimilation to lose their identity, which will naturally follow the destruction of tribal customs and traditions — the only influence that unites them. It is especially fortunate that the government is already preparing the younger generations by judicious practical training for the coming struggle for life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It may not be inappropriate here to describe the method of collecting and collaborating the data embodied in the preceding pages. The Yumas are extremely reticent about their personal affairs, and it became necessary to approach them with extreme caution. Discovering that the meager abilities of the interpreters were altogether insufficient to cope with the translating of abstract subjects, the writer was compelled to study the language for the purpose of supplying the missing words — an undertaking in itself of no mean magnitude. The notes were gathered at various times during the past eighteen months [1888 - 1889] as circumstances permitted. Frequent visits were made to the various districts, where the principal men were interviewed again and again, and every fact subsequently verified by two or more persons at separate hearings before final acceptance. Necessarily, many interesting items from loquacious and unreliable individuals were discarded and only those retained that could be thoroughly substantiated.

Captain Charley, or *Zoo-mitz-con-neh*, meaning "He who keeps straight," was the most intelligent and useful of the interpreters. His recent death will greatly complicate further research among [these] interesting people. Acknowledgement is hereby gratefully made to Messrs. Emil Riedel, Dr. J. H. Taggart, Dr. P. G. Cotter, Hon. J. H. Dorrington, O. F. Townsend, and others, for valuable aid and many courtesies extended while collecting material and information.

NOTE

1. Since the above was written, the government wisely decided to issue rations to such of the tribe as are too old and infirm to provide for themselves. Such Indians now receive food allowances weekly [original footnote].