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Some Wappo Names for People and Languages

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THE Wappo, a group of Indians located about one hundred miles north of San Francisco, had a fairly usual set of traditions for naming people. It is now too late to recover much information about their names—they have been mostly forgotten as have the people who were named. One aspect, however—their names for some of their neighbors—seems interesting enough to merit separate comment and justifies a brief review of some parts of their naming traditions.

The Wappo identified people by personal name, by kinship term, by where they came from, or by the language or dialect they spoke. It would appear that so many possibilities would make identifying either individuals or groups easy, yet there is no clear pattern of naming, and each method seems to fail in some way or other. One concludes finally that names were really rather rarely used, and their use was sometimes both improper and troublesome. This conclusion about names, and, perhaps, relationships is supported by such facts as that a half-brother and sister living only fifty miles apart, might remain unknown to each other, the relationship being finally discovered when the brother and sister find in conversation with each other that they claim the same father.

The avoidance of Wappo names is illustrated by certain taboos. For instance, the names of the dead were avoided. This taboo apparently applied to immediate relatives and particularly shortly after a death. This avoidance may have been less binding on unrelated persons who sometimes would not know that a death had occurred, and it was probably also less binding after some time had passed following a death.[1] Another taboo restricted the use of names of relatives by marriage. This taboo was carried over into English usage. Laura Somersal, perhaps the last Wappo speaker, was usually called "Laura" by her adopted son, but "aunty" by his wife. The use of kinship terms for relatives by marriage as well as others was certainly part of the solution to the naming problem, but not a very important one. While it was possible to be specific and accurate in using kinship terms, a great many relationships were simply passed over with general terms like "aunty" or "grandfather" or "uncle."

A final taboo is so amorphous that it should perhaps be ignored, but I think it was real to the Wappo. Apparently all females and probably many males could have several names bestowed by female relatives and female friends. These names remained the property of the named individuals who, if they were female, might give their names to children of their choice. Female names survived by inheritance.[2] For males, names tended to die with their bearers. These customs account for the preservation of a handful of Spanish female names first bestowed on infants baptized at the Mission San Francisco Solano

at Sonoma or perhaps at the mission at San Rafael. Among these we find *dóloris*, *fermí·na*, *keterí·a*, *marí·a*, and *tére·sa* (Sawyer 1964:175). No Spanish male names survive from the mission period. The taboo here is evidenced by the fact of secrecy for non-Caucasian names. No one knew what tribal names you might own and you might not tell them to anyone, or only reluctantly. Presumably one was informed by one's mother, or, more likely, grandmother when one was old enough to learn the tribal lore, or perhaps the person who had given you a name told you that you had received such a gift. These names were viewed as property, and to a certain extent, they and their bearers were thought to be endangered or insulted if a name became common knowledge.[3]. Moreover, the name one actually used was not necessarily one of these. The name used might be an informal nickname like "Geyserville Joe" or perhaps an English or Spanish name like Mrs. Laura Fish Somersal, in which the "Laura" is a shortening of "dóloris," "Mr. Fish," a translation of her father's Southern Pomo name, *ʔáhsan*, and "Somersal," the last name of her husband, Jim Somersal, a Pomo. All the Wappo I have known have always had an "American" name for use and one or more Wappo names which might be used or not. I could know their Wappo names only because I do not believe in the tradition. Non-believers seem to be taboo-free.

Some rather amusing and almost scurrilous names for males existed well into the twentieth century. These names appear to have originated as a result of the working of the system of name taboos, and they represent still another aspect of the taboos. Like "Geyserville Joe," these are names that were actually used. Here we have such gems as *káṭaʔhas* 'Mr. Vagina' and *mícʼe·hel* 'Turtle Ass'. These kinds of names are not really amusing to the Wappo. They are only names, although the Wappo are perfectly aware of their incongruousness. Such names seem to have been selected in order to direct the attention of the forces that produce

bad luck away from the namebearer. Although the names *tíše pi* 'Flatulent Lady', *yáwloʔmeťe* 'Devil Woman', and *hayuwáwʼpi* 'Albino Bitch' suggest that the men had no corner on the market in unusual names, the women do seem more often to have had pleasant names, such as *šintúpe·pi* 'Tarweed Quail Top Lady'— the *túpe* is the feather which marks the California male quail—or *hìlehuťóne·pi* 'Abalone Bangs Lady'.[4] The hairstyle "bangs" seems to refer to the lady rather than to the abalone, despite the fact that "lady" appears only in the suffix. Actually, the reference is more likely to the abalone pendants that ornamented the headdress worn by women in some of the dances. These pendants hung down in front of the eyes in a way designed to make it difficult to see what was going on. Raising the eyes was discouraged in certain dances.

Names in themselves were not identified as either male or female. This fits with the fact that women were the name distributors and purveyors. It fits well with the fact that the language rarely marks masculine and feminine. The third person, for instance, is *céphi*, a deictic that refers indifferently to "he's" and "she's" and "it's" in the immediate environment. When one wanted to specify sex one could add *méťe* 'woman' to some names, and elsewhere *méťe* was inserted following a noun in utterances when required. *méťe*, however, does not seem to have been really polite when used in names. If female was not specified, male was assumed, this in spite of the fact that the Wappo appear to have had matriarchal tendencies in their social organization. At least two female chiefs are recorded, and presumably there were others. However, the powers of female chiefs were limited to directing the activities normally carried out by women.[5] The term for female chief, female leader, is *k'ànih má·ya?pi*.

Sex distinction does enter into names via a pair of honorifics. Here, however, both the female and male can be specified. The suffix

-pi—compare the word for female leader, above—is a polite female marker surviving in kinship terms and in most personal names for women: *-yápi* 'younger sister'; *-cíhwaˑpi* 'sister-in-law', compare *-cíhwa* 'husband's or wife's brother'; *-ʔáchpi* 'younger brother's wife', compare *-ʔácha* 'any male cousin'; *-ʔéyk'aˑpi* 'daughter', compare *-ʔéyk'a* 'son, baby, child'; *-ʔékheˑpi* 'daughter's daughter', compare *-ʔékhe* 'daughter's son'; *-ʔéšeˑpi* 'daughter-in-law, son's wife, mother's sister's son's wife, son's son's wife, daughter's son's wife', compare *-ʔéše* 'son's daughter, son's son'; *-ʔéchpi* 'wife of a nephew, any female cousin, any niece', compare *-ʔécha* 'elder sister'.[6] The hyphens mark the fact that kinship terms are inalienably possessed, requiring the appropriate pronoun prefix in all their occurrences.

In the case of the honorifics, "male" is marked by the suffix *-has*. *-has* differs from *-pi*, though, in that it does not occur in any of the kinship terms, it is rare (whereas *-pi* occurs in most female names), and it seems not to be really serious. For instance, Coyote, whose name is homophonous with 'crazy', is called *húṭ'has*, literally 'Mr. Crazy'. The affix *-has* was used to personify a variety of people, things, animals, and birds in myths: *k'ék'has* 'fish-crane', *lélhas* 'Old Rock', *hínhas* 'Old Man Moon' (Radin 1929:151; 1924:48, 49, 100, 101). Its rarity and nonparallel applications may only be the result of the adequacy of the *-pi* suffix in solving the problem of specifying sex and the general pattern of the language in having special ways of designating femaleness when that seemed necessary. However, its lack of seriousness suggests the ribaldry of the names used by the men, while the female *-pi* does have the more staid tone of the names the women used. Whether this means that the women were treated with some deference or that only the men were valuable enough to be protected by names that would ward off the negative forces of a harsh world is impossible to say. Indeed, in 1976 it seems dangerous even to speculate about such matters.

An intermediate sort of solution existed in the tendency to identify people and groups of people by their geographical location. This not only meant that an individual might be marked as coming from a certain town or village, but more likely that he spoke the Indian language that had once been common there. As time passed, the old village names disappeared, and dialects and people began to be labelled with American names. From time to time, I have heard Mrs. Somersal refer to people as Hopland people—Napa, Cloverdale, or Ukiah people. In each case, she meant that the person spoke the kind of language or dialect which characterized each town at some past time, perhaps a half-century or so ago. The fact that these placenames catalogued dialect varieties was sometimes expanded by gloomy or at least negative lucubrations, such as "Them Napa people always drag their words."

The geographical pattern became important in a slightly different way in the late Western period, when many began to take as family names the family names of the owners of the ranches on which they lived. This custom accounts for the surprising proliferation of a rather small number of obviously non-Indian names in the Wappo area. I once commented to a local politician on my surprise in discovering that he bore a name that I had only known as a famous name among the Indians. My tactlessness in not recognizing that his was the famous name was greeted by a stolid and angry silence.

Some, and perhaps all, of the geographically located neighbors were identified as *-nòkh*, 'friends'. The Southern Pomo were the *wénnokh* lit. 'south friends'. The people from 'Goose Camp' were the *lókhnòmanokh*, and so on. Of course, these designations could only be used by people who were not part of the group being designated.

The fact that *míše wal* survived as a name for the Russian River Wappo, or some group of them between Geyserville and Healdsburg,

may depend on the contrast between -nòkh and wál. wál is the Wappo word for 'enemy'. The name míše·wal must have been very confusing to the Wappo, suggesting as it does an unfriendly relationship between two of their own groups. Their etymology was, of course, a folk etymology. Callaghan (1965:94, 153) has míṣṣewal/míṣṣowal for 'Alexander Valley' in Lake Miwok. The subentry míṣṣowal ʔáaṭaw 'the Santa Rosa language (Wappo)' appears to mean that the Lake Miwok called the Wappo language the Alexander Valley language. The many Miwok words containing wáli 'area, space' may have no connection, and Catherine Fowler believes míṣṣewal/míṣṣowal to be borrowed in Lake Miwok. Whatever the origin, the absence of occurrences of a root míš- in Wappo together with the semantic problem of -wal, make it virtually impossible that míše·wal could be an originally Wappo word.

In addition to names from places, villages, and ranches, the Wappo recognized a few major categories, superdialects, that they used as names for people coming from a variety of places which might be associated with large areas rather than with single locales. These were the language titles they gave to themselves and some of their neighbors, groups which included many villages and speakers of many dialect varieties. Here the language was characterized by the way it sounded. Moreover, the fact that people were identified by their speech, by the way they sounded, is rather explicit.

One language group, perhaps Miwok, "almost like the Bodega Miwok but from around Lower Lake," was called the ʔonaʔčíhiš literally, 'people talk name-marker čhíh like', ʔon-(n)a-ʔ-čhíh-iš. Mrs. Somersal said that the speakers of this language used a lot of š's and č's. Catherine Fowler has suggested that Bodega Miwok, with its many occurrences of c, is more likely than Lake Miwok in which ṣ is common but č rare. However, Mrs. Somersal is adamant that the name in her dialect

describes people from around Lower Lake. The ʔon is 'people', the plural of k'á 'person'. na- is one of a variety of affixes from nán 'mouth'. Translating nán here as 'talk' stretches it pretty far in the direction of an unusual specificity. ʔ, the name-marker, is difficult in that there are three varieties of the prefix derived from nán: na·-, nah-, and naʔ-. However, the occurrence of a ʔ following a morpheme used as the first element in a name is not unusual: ʔunuʔcáwa 'toyon' plus hól 'tree' becomes ʔunuʔcáwaʔhol, name for the Geyserville Rancheria. It is possible, also, that this ʔ is identical with the vocative marker ʔ, as in ʔáya 'father'-ʔáyaʔ 'Father!' For names to include a vocative marker seems possible or even likely. The -iš occurs as part of a substantial number of nouns; it occurs only rarely as part of a verb paradigm, and then only perhaps as a denominal. The -iš is nicely presented in ʔóniškhiʔ 'became people' and lùliš lúl'iʔ 'play the flute' lit. 'flute play'. The meaning 'like' is obviously a compromise.

The Eastern Pomo from around the north end of Clear Lake were called the ʔonaʔk'óy'iš 'the people who crush or knead their words'. Just exactly what this meant is again not clear. The idea of talking with a mouth full of either mush or rocks, while known to English, is not very helpful in Wappo. The root k'óy'- occurs fairly frequently: pihk'óy'siʔ 'crush with the feet', ʔohk'óy'eʔ imp. 'knead!' Most suggestive of all, perhaps, is the noun-verb phrase ʔòkel k'óy'iʔ 'translate, interpret'—ʔókel is 'word'. The idea that the Wappo viewed translation as essentially word crushing is characteristic of a rather extensive interest in language that was once part of their culture. Of course, it is possible that the ʔonaʔk'óy'iš acted as translators between the Wappo and some of their more distant neighbors.

Another Wappo name for the Southern Pomo, the wénnokh, ʔonaʔcíliš is a more satisfying example. This seems to describe people who talk with a "tune, the tune they carries." The description suggests that the

Wappo recognized that Southern Pomo was a tone language. Compare Wappo *cíl* 'a ringing sound', *cílmiʔ* 'rings, as of bells', and so on. Conversely it suggests that Wappo itself was not recently a tone language.

Another word to be included in this small set is the Wappo word for themselves, *ʔonaʔcáṭis*. Naturally they are easier on themselves than on their neighbors. Where their description of the various Pomo groups always verges on ridicule, their designation of themselves seems downright flattering, 'the people who talk openly, who speak the truth'. Mrs. Somersal further defines *ʔonaʔcáṭis* by saying that they are " . . . outspoken; they don't care what they say, even if people are hurt, they say it." There is an overtone of bragging as well as of being crudely and almost cruelly truthful. We lose here the clear characterization of the sound of the language, although such may have been there originally. In part this shift from the pattern of the other names is paralleled by the change from the suffix *-iš*, a nominal derivational element to the *-is* that is probably to be identified with the causative verb suffix. The root *cáṭ-* occurs in a few other words, none really very helpful in establishing the meaning of this root: compare *hucáṭiˑlaʔ* 'Watch out!', *mayʼhucáṭiˑtiʔ* lit. 'self head' *cáṭ-*, imp. 'watch out for yourself!, be careful!'; or *kʼaˑhucáṭis* 'a person who is smart or intelligent'; and finally, *káwaˑyuʔ hucàṭis* 'a wild horse'. *káwaˑyuʔ*, of course, is from Spanish *caballo*.

I am encouraged to believe that the kind of name that labels a people and a language by the way the language sounds was less limited in Central California than it appears here from my three or four examples by the fact that George M. Foster (1944:161A) reports a Yuki name for the Little Lake Pomo, *nukónimi* 'the fast talkers'.[7]

Although there are a few other names for tribes, none has the consistency and pattern of this group of Wappo words.[8] It is regrettable that other names have not survived, but in any case the number would not be very large. There are only five or six languages on the Wappo perimeter, and the Wappo seem to have been inveterate stay-at-homes—excluding, of course, the summer trips to festivals and dances and the water—any water. Clear Lake was certainly one of the places they were fond of visiting. That would account for the inclusion of the Eastern Pomo at the north end of Clear Lake, people whose land was not contiguous to Wappo land. As far as I can determine, the Somersal family has lived around Geyserville from the time of the American Revolution and probably from long before that.

All in all, these language names would be treated as sound-descriptive phenomena despite the uncertainties of *kʼóyʼ-* 'to knead' and *cáṭ-* 'to brag, to tell the truth [?]'. Wappo does not have any great store of sound-imitative items, however, and the names stand out as unusual vocabulary grouped around a single concept. Their existence seems to be a response to the ordinary need for identifying people, perhaps a mild reaction to the inadequacy of the personal name patterns. Moreover, they do not appear to be neologisms. The Wappo probably used these words as names without any conscious awareness either of their sound-imitative quality or their parallelism as a group. Perhaps these were, if anything, only kinder versions of *húṭʼhas*, *káṭaʔhas*, and *míčeˑhel*, half-serious labels designed only to keep their bearers from being really unrecognizable or unknown.

As semantic items, they reverse a common order of languages named after people—Danes speak Danish; Swedes speak Swedish, and so on. In a way the Wappo preserve the pattern which makes language and person the same—as if we are indeed what we speak: Italians speak Italian; Burmese speak Burmese; the *ʔonaʔcáṭis* speak *ʔonaʔcáṭis*. The Wappo appear to have named people after their languages, at least some of the time. The easy procedure of identifying the person and

his language with the place from which he comes—for better or for worse—was certainly an ordinary procedure among the Wappo, as among others.[9] But the unifying themes that exist most compellingly in all of these names are the trace of taboo and the aura of mock seriousness that pervades the entire system.

The name-creating mechanism viewed without reference to specific peoples has a variety of possible guiding features, including (1) the sex of the child or the desire on the part of the family—usually the parents—for a girl rather than a boy or vice versa (the sex of the name giver may also be involved); (2) the time of birth; (3) the place of birth; (4) specific naming traditions of any particular group within any larger group; (5) the realization of the uniqueness of the child—possibly evidenced by unique names; (6) the protection or aggrandisement of the child by names that are either good or bad, grand, or simple to the point of ugliness; (7) the naming or not naming of the child after specific individuals; (8) the use of names that are identifiable only as human traits or human names; (9) the use of translatable names reflecting various aspects of the exterior world; and finally (10) the fact that names could be secret. The Wappo to a greater or lesser extent observed one, three, five, six, seven, nine, and ten. Names were given by females and were marked for sex, but for girls only and in a somewhat questionable way—the phenomenon may be recent. Place was marked in some cases. Names were mostly unique, and the child was, if anything, denigrated by his names. At best one could only hope for a reasonably pleasant name, nothing really grand. If one were named after an individual, that individual was presumably long dead, and the recycled name was bestowed by a female who had some control over the name. Chances are one's name was probably that of some non-human thing in one's world. Finally, it was secret.

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NOTES

1. That the taboo was an areal phenomenon, as was much else in Wappo culture, is suggested by such facts as that a Pomo once told me that a relative was called "old basket sticks" after his death. His name had been homophonous with the name for the willow tree commonly used in basket making. My principal Wappo informant, Mrs. Laura Fish Somersal, is half Southern Pomo, so that there is always a possibility that she has been influenced by her Pomo knowledge in describing the Wappo part of her heritage. However, the influence of Pomo on Wappo is evident in many aspects that cannot be attributed to any single individual, and Mrs. Somersal has evidenced a good awareness of the necessity of keeping her two languages apart.

2. Note that the tradition of female name control encourages a situation in which some names must be unmarked for sex and assures us of the extinction of many purely male names. A woman could create a new name, but it is unclear to what extent the supply of names consisted of names passed on and names newly created. My feeling is that new names have been more common recently and that they may have been less so in the past. The taboo on the names of the dead, of course, suggests that names would not be easily recyclable. Since the names were almost always rather descriptive, it is not clear today whether any of the Wappo names were popular and could be used at one time of more than one person. Such a pattern would be automatically denied by the idea that a name was a property, that it could be given but not shared. Yet Mrs. Laura Somersal gave an uncle's name to the son of an American friend. Graeme Fitzwilliam McDonnell became *hálapi·ta*; the language and source of the name are in the Pomo spoken around Hopland.

3. Mrs. Somersal always referred to my language work with her as "he's taking my language," as if she herself no longer owned her native language once she had taught it to me.

4. Slang names and some of the somewhat derogatory names may have been popular creations. They may represent the only contribution of the men to the naming tradition, but there is no way

now of knowing for sure that the creation of these was not also limited to the women of the group.

5. Driver (1936:212). In his discussion of names (1936:205-207), Driver finds little evidence to support the claim I have made that the women were primary in the naming traditions. I prefer my version because of the surprising survival of only female Spanish names from the mission period. Driver finds the great difference between men's and women's names to lie in the fact that men were more frequently named after "inanimate objects," as for instance, "conical basket," "necklace," "dark sticks," while women more frequently had descriptive nicknames such as "laughing," "potato bug," "flat head," and "wrinkled face." Driver should be consulted for his long list of names and for his classification of name categories. In descending order of frequency, these are: land animals, aspects or conditions of persons (nicknames), inanimate objects, birds, plants, actions, fish, and natural forces.

6. Calling the suffix -pi an honorific may be less than realistic. It is probably identical with the -pi which occurs in the following forms: helpipól' 'ashes', lit. 'fire from dust'; mèyhínawela·pi 'from San Francisco', lit. 'water other side from'; kòlapiméy 'grape juice', lit. 'grape from water'; lùcě·pipól' 'cigarette ash', lit. 'tobacco from dust'. Here the -pi means 'from' or 'belonging to'. Since the roots in most names are not really translatable it is impossible to know whether a name like č'ákpi 'blackbird woman' (Driver 1936:205) is literally 'belonging to blackbird' or 'from (the) blackbird', but in any case the Wappo speaker must always have been aware of the fact that this female suffix was homophonous with the one that meant 'from' or 'belonging to'.

It is important to note that Driver has men's names with -pi and women's names without it. In the case of such names as ?awet'úlpi 'potato valley woman' the name probably originally meant 'from potato valley', for otherwise we must assume that a woman's name was passed on to a male child complete with its suffix -pi 'woman'. We could, of course, speculate that originally women were mostly identified by where they came from or to whom they belonged. The evidence for the former seems somewhat likely. However, we should also note that the -pi may not have been obligatory a

generation ago. Driver lists hayuwáw''white dog' as a woman's name without the -pi. I have only been given the name with the -pi.

7. Nukónimi is interesting as being not merely a borrowing but a complicated borrowing. Either the pattern of naming people from the sound of their language is borrowed by the Yuki from the Wappo or the Yuki translated a Wappo name into Yuki. Both solutions imply mutual intelligibility, i.e., bilingualism between the two very different languages. kóni is a Yuki word for 'language, words', and Yuki does not name tribes by the way their language sounded.

8. The méye·nokh, for instance, are the Coast Miwok from Bodega Bay. Although this term may consist of the word for 'water', méy plus -nòkh 'friend', it is more likely méye 'sweat', plus -nòkh 'friend'. Perhaps the méye·nokh either shared sweathouses or played sweathouse gambling games with the Wappo. This explanation verges dangerously close to translation error, however, since the Wappo did not associate the word "sweat" with what we call sweathouse activities.

9. I was first made aware of the relation of sound description to tribal names by comments of M. R. Haas. The preceding discussion is offered as an addition to her information about the phenomenon.

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