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#### **Authors**

Benson, Arlene  
Edberg, Bob

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# On the Road to Goleta<sup>1</sup>

ARLENE BENSON  
BOB EDBERG

THE discovery in 1981 of a trunk full of material belonging to the American anthropologist, John Peabody Harrington, has elicited interest among California anthropologists for the ethnographic notes and personal papers it contained. Among the items found in the trunk were correspondence, news clippings, and other material that present insight into Harrington's career choices just as he was embarking on his life's work. It is the intent of the authors to describe this material and attempt to show how it sheds light on the forces that moved Harrington in the direction of American anthropology.

## DISCOVERY OF THE TRUNK

The trunk was discovered in the garage of the Robert E. Harrington house in Simi Valley by Ruth Dempsey, a grandniece of John P. Harrington and daughter of Arthur E. Harrington, who is J. P. Harrington's nephew. It had been stored for the last 12 to 40 years, unnoticed and unopened. The Harringtons believe this to be the steamer trunk that John took with him to Germany in 1905. When opened it was found to contain a jumbled mass of papers, filling the trunk to a depth of about one foot. These papers consist of both ethnographic data and personal papers, some dating from as early as 1894 and others possibly as late as the 1930s. Most of the material dates from 1902 (his senior year in high school) to the 1920s.

Several scholars who have worked with Harrington's notes were contacted in order to inventory the materials and evaluate the importance of the find to researchers. With the assistance and advice of Drs. Madison Beeler, Thomas Blackburn, William Bright, Pamela Munro, Travis Hudson, Kenneth Whistler, and Chester King, we were able to identify the following items of interest to linguists, anthropologists, and people of Chumash descent.

1. Approximately six thousand envelope-size slip notes in Ventureño Chumash. There are at least two informants, Simplicio Pico and a woman, probably Maria Antonia *Tumamait*. Principally vocabulary and grammar, there is also some information on place-names, ethnobotany, historical events, people in the Ventura region, shrines, sweat houses, myths, and other topics.<sup>2</sup>

2. Two packages of Yurok vocabulary on numbered slips (4061.1 to 6641, about 900 slips). The classification key to these slips indicates that some of the data were obtained from A. L. Kroeber and possibly another source as well.

3. A working manuscript of Tewa place-names (140 pages). This material appears to be the basis of Harrington's (1916) study of Tewa ethnogeography. The material is incomplete, starting alphabetically with "Abechiu People" and ending with "Rio Grande." The remaining portion of the manuscript was not found in the trunk.

4. A handwritten copy (in triplicate) by John P. Harrington of the 1814 Census of the Mission La Purísima Concepción (130 pages).

5. Portions of a handwritten manuscript (perhaps lecture notes) entitled "American Anthropology," evidently authored by someone other than Harrington (190 pages).

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Arlene Benson and Bob Edberg, Northridge Archaeological Research Center, California State University, 18111 Nordhoff St., Northridge, CA 91330.

All of the above-listed materials will eventually be delivered to the Smithsonian Institution. Elaine Mills is now working with the Yurok vocabulary slips for possible inclusion in the Harrington Microfilm Project. Janice Timbrook, Associate Curator of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, hand carried the Ventureño slip notes to the Smithsonian Institution early in August of 1982, where they will be stored permanently. These notes will be included in the Chumash section of the Harrington Microfilm Project. Copies of the Yurok and Ventureño notes were xeroxed before shipment to Washington so that this information will be more easily available to researchers on the West Coast. Individuals or institutions wishing to examine or xerox the copied material can contact the authors.

#### THE VENTURENO CHUMASH SLIP NOTES

Harrington's slip notes on the Ventureño Chumash deserve special comment. They are important for a number of reasons. The notes appear to be his primary field notes and are not edited copies. Harrington obviously intended them primarily for use in a dictionary of Ventureño Chumash (see Walsh 1976: 35, Ms. #3039). By coincidence, Dr. Kenneth Whistler, University of California, Santa Barbara, was compiling a Ventureño Chumash dictionary based on similar, complementary notes at the time the trunk was found. Dr. Whistler is currently organizing the new notes for inclusion in this dictionary. He has already compiled *An Interim Barbareño Chumash Dictionary* (1980).

These slip notes also contain a significant body of data about Chumash living in the Ventura area during the early part of the twentieth century. Harrington recorded information about individuals, including kinship data, and it is possible that this information will give researchers more insight into the social organization of the modern Chumash.

More important, these notes can provide information crucial to Chumash people who are attempting to trace their ancestry.

As this article was nearing completion, the authors were contacted by Richard Olivas, whose family lived in El Rio (now part of Oxnard) at the time Harrington was working there. Olivas is assembling information about his family in order to apply to the Federal Indian Rolls. Olivas recently examined the slip notes in Bundle #62, many of which contain information about Ventureño Chumash living in the El Rio area, and found numerous references to members of his family. At the end of one of these slips appeared the following comment by Harrington: "The Indians here [El Rio] are not going to die out. *Mestizos siempre hay. No se acaban.*" Ironically, Olivas' presence in the room was the fulfillment of Harrington's prophecy.

#### HARRINGTON'S PERSONAL PAPERS

Among the personal items found in the trunk are lecture notes and class notebooks from Stanford and Leipzig Universities. Several newspaper clippings relate his activities in Germany and southern California from 1906 until 1909. Another item is the 1902 commencement issue of *The Meteor*, Santa Barbara High School's student publication. John Peabody Harrington was, of course, its founding editor.

Given below is a poem written by Harrington during his final year in high school that appeared in this issue of *The Meteor*. It expresses the thoughts and emotions of an idealistic and sensitive young man about to enter adulthood. The photograph of Harrington reproduced in Walsh (1976: 23) first appeared in the commencement issue of *The Meteor* (Fig. 1). "Goleta" is the metaphor Harrington chose to represent the adult world beyond his childhood home in Santa Barbara.

Perhaps the most interesting personal items in the trunk are the letters, for like his

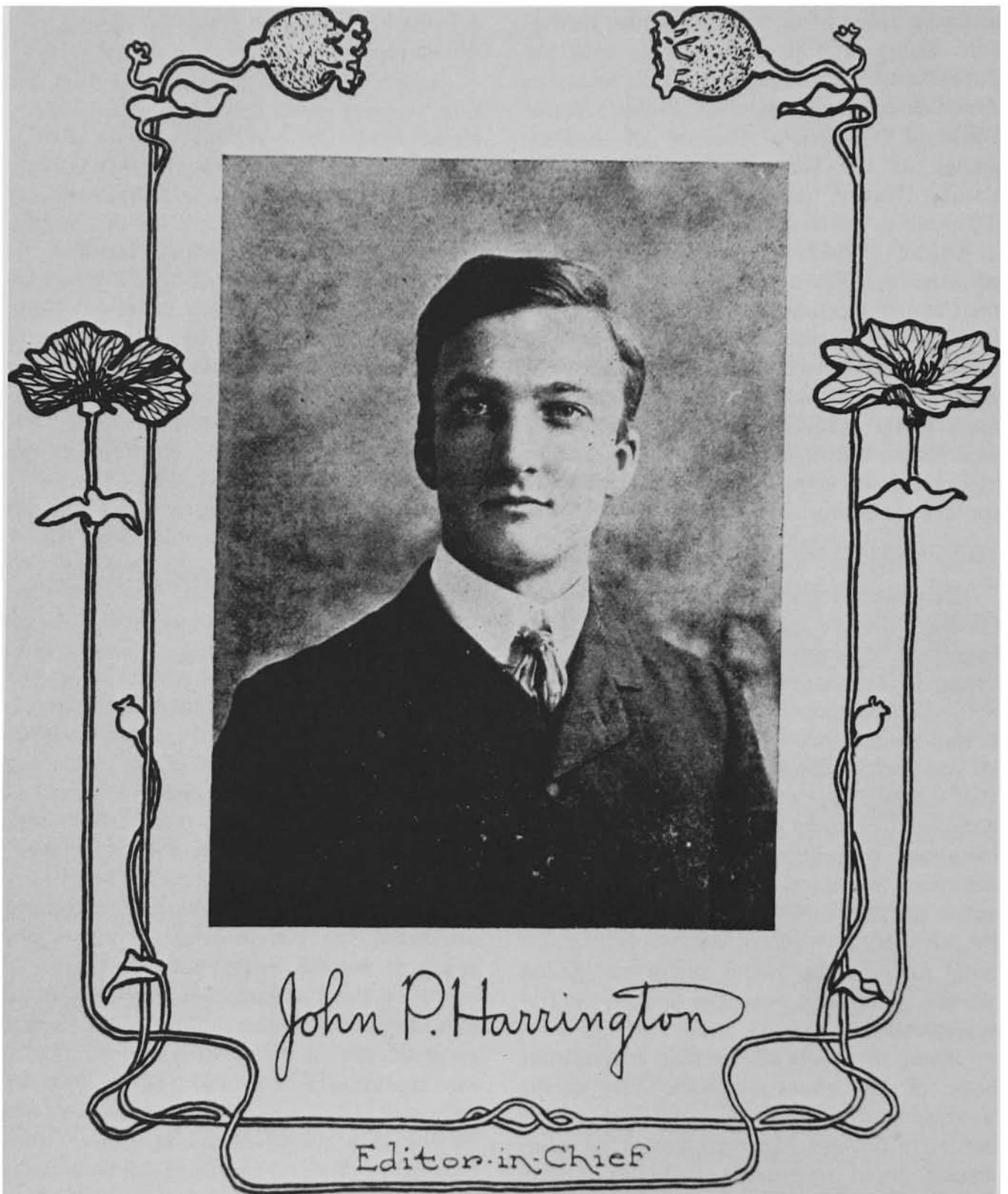


Fig. 1. Photograph of John Peabody Harrington from the 1902 commencement issue of *The Meteor*, Santa Barbara High School. Harrington was a senior at this time and the founding editor of *The Meteor*.

**All on the Road to Goleta****John P. Harrington**

I often stand, as the sun sinks low  
 And the sky is rich with a soft red glow,  
 And watch the people homeward go,  
 All on the road to Goleta.

Out to the west the road winds along,  
 And the people pass in a steady throng,  
 All on the road to Goleta.

Though they travel side by side, alas  
 How lonesomely the people pass –  
 Man and woman and lad and lass,  
 All on the road to Goleta;  
 How little each of the other knows,  
 How each like a ship through darkness goes!  
 All on the road to Goleta.

Our deepest thoughts are shared by none,  
 We must go each one by himself alone  
 And journey on and on and on  
 All on this road to Goleta –  
 And each one feels what none can share,  
 Sees a different glow, breathes a separate air,  
 On this selfsame road to Goleta.

“rimes” they reveal what was on Harrington’s mind at this time. In addition, they indicate the primary factors that influenced his decision to return to California to teach and his subsequent decision to become a full-time ethnologist.

In 1905, Harrington wrote a series of letters from Germany to his family in Santa Barbara. These letters will be discussed in detail below. Approximately eighteen letters, two telegrams, and application forms from a number of institutions reveal the career and educational options Harrington was considering from 1906 to 1909. These items provide information about Harrington at a crucial period in his life, a period for which relatively little published data exist.

After graduating from Stanford University in 1904, Harrington took a position teaching English at Hertsich High School for Boys in Leipzig, Germany. There he attended lectures at Leipzig University with the intent of obtaining a doctorate in linguistics. However,

soon after his arrival in Leipzig, Harrington decided to return to the United States. All of the above information appears in a single letter written to his parents and his brother Robert. This letter, which is referred to repeatedly herein, is dated May 1905.

In this letter, Harrington wrote that he had been advised that two and a half years of study would be required before taking the doctoral examination at Leipzig University. It should be pointed out that Harrington, a high school senior in 1902, graduated from Stanford University in 1904. According to Walsh (1976: 10) “he managed to graduate with an A.B. degree at the head of his class in only two and a half years.” Harrington was elected to Phi Beta Kappa in 1905 (Walsh 1976: 10). Imagine how galling it must have been for a young man with Harrington’s ability to be told that he must wait two and a half years to take an examination. His impatience is clearly expressed in the following statement: “I must settle on something quick and attack it with vehemence” (Harrington to family, May 1905).

We learn in the same letter that Harrington considered applying to Columbia University and apparently went so far as to request information from this institution. An envelope mailed from Columbia University to Harrington in Leipzig was found in the trunk. However, Harrington was captivated with Leipzig University, which he believed to be the finest school in the world. This sentiment is expressed often in this and other letters to his parents. Furthermore, Harrington had been completely won over by the “German method” of education.

I have perfected my studies in Germany. More than that, I will have gained the German method, will know how to go ahead . . . . I shall hardly be able to estimate the educational value of study in Germany . . . . I am very glad I came. I have done exactly right [Harrington to family, May 1905].

An American named Leonard who was also studying at Leipzig informed Harrington that it was possible to prepare for the examination while teaching in the United States, and Harrington immediately decided to apply for a teaching position at Santa Barbara High School. He began his campaign for the job by asking his brother Robert to place announcements about his German teaching position in three Santa Barbara newspapers. Although he was not hired by his alma mater, Harrington eventually took a position at Santa Ana High School where he taught until 1909 (Walsh 1976:10).

In another letter written to his parents from Leipzig (June 17, 1905), Harrington informed them that Professor Julius Goebels had been relieved of his teaching position at Stanford University. This was a terrible blow to Harrington, for he apparently had been counting on using his friend's influence in furthering his own career. Among the items in the trunk are two autographed publications by Goebels, whom Harrington obviously respected and admired.

The last of the six letters in the trunk written by Harrington to his family from Germany is dated October 15, 1905. After his decision in May to seek a teaching position in the United States, his letters settle into a consistent pattern of detailed descriptions of the country, the people, and the food (his mother appears to have been concerned about his diet). He took "walking tours" through the German countryside and traveled to Sweden with an American friend, Louis Elmquist, where the two sponged off Elmquist's relatives. His letters express delight with Germany, its people, and its history.

The only sour note is his complaint of the inconvenience of the German library system. The following excerpt is also from the letter to his family dated May 1905.

I am sorely disappointed with the library here [Leipzig]. After the fifth vain attempt

to get books I finally succeeded Monday. I find that there are a great many *common* books which they don't have! I thought that I would see what they have on American by way of curiosity. They have just one (1834) American grammar in the whole library [Harrington's emphasis].

Mute testimony attesting to his frustration are the bundles of hundreds of bibliographic slips from the University libraries of Leipzig and Berlin, found in the trunk, which document his efforts to review nearly every book then available which contained American anthropological and ethnographic information.

#### CORRESPONDENCE TO HARRINGTON

Harrington received two letters from acquaintances while in Germany that were present in the trunk. The first, from Homer Martin, a teacher at Santa Ana High School, requests information about expenses for a student living in Germany, where Martin planned to travel. The letter, short and formal, suggests that Martin was not a friend and that he contacted Harrington as a result of Harrington's application for a teaching position at Santa Ana High School.

The second letter is interesting for a number of reasons. It was written by Edward K. Putnam<sup>3</sup> in Palo Alto, California, shortly after the great San Francisco earthquake.

This last week has been a hard one for us, for the same earthquake destroyed the church, the arch, the new gymnasium and library and damaged many of the other buildings. One student, named Hanna, was killed. As the work buildings remain, the university will open in August as usual.

Putnam told Harrington that he was glad to hear from him regarding his work and plans, and hoped that the letter he had enclosed would help Harrington. Could this possibly be a letter of recommendation for the teaching position Harrington sought?

Subsequent correspondence to Harrington

(from 1907 until July 16, 1909) is addressed to him at his residence in Santa Ana (1414 Main Street) or at Santa Ana High School. The first is from his friend Elmquist, who had obtained a job teaching in Chicago (Elmquist to Harrington, October 6, 1906).

### THE KROEBER TELEGRAM

Early in 1907, Harrington received an undated telegram from Alfred L. Kroeber offering Harrington a position on his staff. We learn of Harrington's refusal in a letter from G. A. Dorsey,<sup>4</sup> dated March 29, 1907. Dorsey stated: "I am not at all sure that you have acted wisely in declining Dr. Kroeber's offer." Dorsey then revealed that Harrington planned to travel to Chicago and wrote: "I will do everything in my power to make your sojourn here pleasant and profitable." The purpose of the proposed trip is not mentioned.

Harrington's letters to Kroeber are on file in the Kroeber papers at the Bancroft Library in Berkeley. Several refer to Kroeber's job offer and reveal that Harrington was having great difficulty making up his mind whether or not to take the job. It is clear that he admired Kroeber and did not want to offend him. Ultimately, Harrington declined. When the authors asked Arthur Harrington why he thought his uncle declined the job offer, he replied that it was probably because his uncle wanted more freedom than the position with Kroeber would have afforded. Certainly Harrington would have been overshadowed by the reputation of Kroeber and this must have been a primary concern on Harrington's part, if not the deciding factor. Years later, in one of the last letters Harrington wrote to Kroeber, a mellower Harrington recalled this episode and commented that he probably had made a mistake in not accepting the position.

### OTHER OPTIONS

Apparently Harrington had some second thoughts about returning to Germany once he

had settled in Santa Ana. The trunk contained several documents that indicate he was seriously considering graduate work at Columbia University or the University of California, Berkeley. There are blank application forms for admission to the graduate program at Berkeley, as well as an application form from Berkeley for a scholarship for graduate study.

An empty envelope postmarked October 5, 1906, indicates that something, possibly his transcript, was mailed to Harrington from the Office of the Registrar at Stanford University. A letter from Columbia University written June 13, 1907, reveals that Harrington had requested information regarding entrance examinations and had asked for announcements from a wide variety of departments, including biology, classical philology, geology, mathematics, modern languages, philosophy, economics, history, psychology, and anthropology.

### LETTERS PERTAINING TO ETHNOGRAPHY

By 1907 Harrington had apparently focused his interests on ethnography, for he began receiving letters in response to questions about various native American Indian groups. The first of these letters is from J. W. Abbott. In his letter (dated June 22, 1907) Abbott gave Harrington instructions for reaching a reservation 45 miles from the Grand Canyon.

On June 24, 1907, Mrs. M. S. Woods, of Los Angeles, wrote Harrington concerning Indian dialects in San Diego County. Mrs. Woods wrote: "I am glad you seek to have the Indians preserve their dialects. It was a most stupid idea some of our race had in trying to destroy the Indian tongues." Mrs. Woods included the address of Charles F. Lummis, suggesting that Harrington contact him. Lummis was then editor and publisher of *Out West* magazine and the major force behind the founding of the Southwest Museum.

Apparently, Harrington had sent inquiries in several directions, for on July 5, 1907, P. E. Goddard, University of California, Berkeley, responded to Harrington's questions concerning research among the Karok. Goddard told Harrington that this was Kroeber's "territory," and wrote that "unless Prof. Kroeber feels like turning the Karok over to you, I would advise work with the Wintun."

Finally, in a letter postmarked from Mesa Grande, California, dated July 7, 1909, Mary B. Watkins invited Harrington to attend the last "eagle dance" on September 17 of that year, adding that "a phonograph would aid you wonderfully in making records."

### THE MADSEN LETTERS

Among the most recent letters in the collection are three written by P. Madsen, who apparently had taught high school in Santa Barbara. The letters are dated June 3, June 9, and July 14, 1909. In the first letter, Madsen, who was then farming near Fresno, thanked Harrington for suggesting that he (Madsen) apply for the teaching position about to be vacated by Harrington at Santa Ana High School. It is also apparent that Harrington had not yet made up his mind about career pursuits and had asked Madsen's advice. Madsen replied as follows:

I have always thought that a person with your disposition and your talents should not content himself with an ordinary high school position. The number of people born with the investigating spirit is very small compared with that of the common drudge like myself, as well you know, and they ought not be sacrificed but have every encouragement for further development. From what little I have seen of high school work I do not believe there is much chance for special study. The salary may seem quite attractive to you; you probably get more now than you would get for a good while in a university. But one must sometimes beware of the money consideration. My own case might illustrate what I mean. I worked, as perhaps you know, good

many years in shoe factories in S.F. I never liked such confined, automatic work very much, and never felt that it was going to be my life work, but for years I made good wages at it and so kept on. How much better it would have been had I torn myself away years before and gone to the university or done something else that I really liked. You like high school teaching very much also, you tell me. Well, in that case you ought to stick to it, but try anyway to ask yourself this question: Do I like the work well enough to keep on with it indefinitely. If you do, well and good, if you don't—better break away from it the sooner the better.

Harrington seems to have taken Madsen's advice, although one can only speculate whether or not Harrington would have arrived at the same decision without Madsen's letter.

### VALUE OF THE PERSONAL PAPERS

Four excellent publications can provide the reader with a wealth of information about Harrington and his work: Mathew Stirling's (1963) obituary of Harrington, brief biographies by Catherine Callaghan (1975) and Jane McLaren Walsh (1976), and Carobeth Laird's (1975) delightful narrative of her life with Harrington. Little, however, has been said of Harrington's early years, which were to determine the course of his later work. The personal items in the trunk found in the Dempsey garage begin to fill this void.

In addition to the correspondence are bundles of notes Harrington made while in Germany. These notes and his letters reveal that Harrington already was exercising his ethnographic skills; he was collecting ethnographic data on the German culture. The trunk contains class notebooks kept by Harrington at Stanford and Leipzig, and there are notebooks and letters dating from high school and back as far as his grade school days in Pasadena. All of this material reveals to a greater or lesser extent the forces that contributed to the shaping of this country's most



prolific and probably its greatest ethnographer.

### NOTES

1. The title of this article is based on the title of a poem written by John Peabody Harrington during his senior year in high school. As will be explained later, this title seemed appropriate because the authors are primarily concerned with those factors that influenced Harrington's career goals.

At the time Harrington wrote this poem, Goleta was a small town several miles west of Santa Barbara. It is now a heavily populated city. In prehistoric times, the densely populated Goleta Slough was the center of the Chumash culture along the Santa Barbara Channel. Harrington was later to become the principal ethnographer to record Chumash culture. Among the items discussed in this article are several thousand additional ethnographic notes on the Chumash that were recently discovered.

2. Since the ethnographic notes collected by Harrington began to appear in print, the Chumash people have been experiencing a cultural revival. Travis Hudson, Curator of Anthropology at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, believes that Harrington's work among the Chumash is the key factor in this revival. Hudson and Associate Curator Timbrook are preparing a display with the theme "The Chumash Today," which will attempt to show how Harrington's work has provided modern Chumash with a link to their own past. Among the items to be included in this display are ethnographic notes written by Harrington, possibly some from this very trunk.

3. Edward K. Putnam was an Instructor of English at Stanford University at this time.

4. George Amos Dorsey was Head Curator of Anthropology for the Field Museum of Natural History from 1898 until 1915.

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