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The Journal of California Anthropology

Title

Cook: *The Population of California Indians, 1769-1970*

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Journal

The Journal of California Anthropology, 3(2)

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Publication Date

1976-12-01

Peer reviewed

REVIEWS

The Population of the California Indians 1769-1970. Sherburne F. Cook. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1976. 239 pp. \$12.75.

Reviewed by M. A. BAUMHOFF
University of California, Davis

This posthumous volume by S. F. Cook consists of six chapters treating monographically such topics as aboriginal population, population since 1860, vital statistics, etc. Each chapter could have been published alone and retain full usefulness. That this is so indicates Cook's devotion to fact, not considering spurious theory necessary where the subject is itself of interest. This typifies Cook's work throughout his career (at least in anthropology). He found the world interesting and was fascinated to find out what actually happened, and to discover ingenious ways of determining this. This is not to say he was antitheoretical. Anyone who sat in his undergraduate classes in physiology could immediately see his appreciation of the beauty of the systems he described. Nevertheless he was basically factual. He was famous, when I was an undergraduate, for having excavated an entire small archaeological site in Solano County (with A. E. Treganza), carrying it home in cardboard boxes, and separating it into its constituent parts before discarding it in his driveway. This story may not be true, but it typified his down-to-earth approach to science.

Cook's approach to demography was eclectic, no source was too humble for him. He says in the chapter on vital statistics (p. 104), "At the outset it must be clearly understood

that sources of numbers and figures are incomplete and are scattered through documents that were compiled through the last hundred years . . . Consequently we are obliged to use whatever is at hand . . ." Thus he is using what some would regard as poor evidence. In spite of this it seems clear to me that Cook's answers are nearly always the best available. I have had several occasions to check Cook's conclusions by using sources unavailable to him and he has always turned out to be right. It is interesting that in discussing U.S. Census figures (p. 113) he is able to say correctly that "it is also apparent that the populations as published for 1930, 1940, and 1950 are defective." The data of the Bureau of the Census, with all its statistical apparatus, is of lower quality than that of Cook, obtained simply from good scholarship.

Cook's final figure for the aboriginal population of California comes to 310,000. I doubt that it will be substantially revised on the basis of documentary material. Archaeologists may do some adjusting on the basis of site counts, but considering how many sites have been and are being destroyed it is doubtful that the revision will be extensive. The only estimates I would question are those given for the Channel Coast (Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties) and for the coast from there to the Mexican border: 18,500 and 20,000. My impression from looking at the archaeology of those areas and from talking to other archaeologists is that these are low estimates. But there will have to be a lot of detailed work before Cook can be seriously challenged.

There will be a basic conflict of opinion in anthropology between Cook's figures and

Kroeber's total of 133,000. This is a matter of importance—Kroeber's reputation and influence are such that his figures are apt to be taken uncritically as hard fact. The West Coast of the United States is one of the world's areas which is basic to theorizing about the nature of hunters-gatherers, paleolithic man if you will. Thus the population size and densities here are of fundamental importance. I have not seen in print that Kroeber ever gave approval to Cook's upward revisions but neither have there been denunciations. I think Kroeber would have been reluctant to accept them for reasons he gave in his *Cultural and Natural Areas*. "Only, if we accept 260,000, one quarter of all United States Indians were in California; and this seems unlikely enough. Shall we, then, assume that Mooney and practically all American anthropologists compute far too low?" One can understand Kroeber's reluctance. Nevertheless it seems to me that Cook will simply have to be accepted unless his sources are refuted in detail. I don't think that will happen soon.



The Conflict between the California Indian and White Civilization. Sherburne F. Cook. Berkeley: University of California Press. 543 pp. \$24.75 (cloth). \$6.95 (paper).

Reviewed by A.B. ELSASSER
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The timely publication of the late S.F. Cook's bibliography in a recent number of the *Journal of California Anthropology* should give a clear notion of his extraordinary qualifications for tackling the subject indicated by the

title of this book. Reprinted here are six essays, all long out-of-print or only reprinted in part after first publication between 1940 and 1943 in *Ibero-Americana* at Berkeley.

By about 1935, Cook was already an established physiologist, known to be interested also in historical documents concerning western American Indians. In looking back, one might suspect that a person with his background would have been almost necessary for the formidable work ahead, which was to reconsider and stabilize the picture of human demography in native California immediately before and after 1770. Certainly Cook was more than up to the task.

The six essays, titled *The Indian Versus the Spanish Mission*, *The Physical and Demographic Reaction of the Non-Mission Indians in Colonial and Provincial California*, *The American Invasion*, *Trends in Marriage and Divorce since 1850*, *Population Trends among the California Mission Indians*, and *The Mechanism and Extent of Dietary Adaptation among Certain Groups of California and Nevada Indians*, are all concerned primarily with demography—but the data Cook presents are by no means all statistical. It is difficult to conceive any method of approach to demographic problems that has not been taken up in one or the other of these essays. Dietary, disease, labor, sex, delinquency, crime and punishment, peonage and slavery, the Spanish or Anglo-American military presence, marriage and divorce, the problem of taste (i.e., the palatability of food)—all are considered as factors affecting Indian culture and demography from about 1770 to 1940. These data are brought together in such a way that the reader may feel that Cook has surely left no stone unturned in order to support his various theses. But he nevertheless did not stand still: where in 1943 he could agree with Kroeber's approximate figure of 133,000 for the aboriginal population of California before 1770, further work by him, summarized in a book on