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Latta: *Handbook of Yokuts Indians (second edition)*

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without mercy or compensation which reduced the native population from 150,000 to 50,000 in fifteen years—by disease, the bullet, exposure, and acute starvation. Cook states further that since the debacle of the 1850's, the California Indian has been subject to oppression by the dominant White race, so that any normal life in the American community, urban or rural, was substantially impossible (p. 94). Heizer notes that the failure of the U.S. Senate to ratify the 18 Indian treaties which would have given reservation status and protection to California Indians in 1852, because of local White opposition in California, led to wanton destruction of Indian humanity and most of its native culture.

The tragedy of the California Indians was that they received neither compassion nor understanding from the invading Euro-American immigrants who took their lands. It is also tragic that in the years since contact, the indigenous peoples have been effectively prevented from contributing to present day California life and society because of deeply ingrained racial prejudice. Neither the ecological adaptation nor the life ways of the California Indians had meaning to the new arrivals, perhaps due to the powerlessness of the indigenous people. If Indians are now gaining political power, it is often at the cost of losing their Indian identity. As Heizer summed up:

Europeans destroyed or radically altered much of the environment and introduced by force or precept very different ways of conceiving the relations of man and nature. Ancient and efficient ecologies were disrupted before adequate and sympathetic records could be made that would promote understanding of what must have been a whole series of different integrated native philosophical systems [p. 653].

The record of California aboriginal culture, as presented by anthropologists, is the contribution of this *Handbook*. It is an important book.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This volume can be ordered from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington D. C. The stock number is 047-000-00347-4.*



***Handbook of Yokuts Indians.* Frank F. Latta.**  
Second edition, revised and enlarged. Santa Cruz: Bear State Books, 1977, xxxi + 765 pp., 183 photographic illustrations, \$20.00.

Reviewed by ROBERT F. HEIZER  
*University of California, Berkeley*

This second edition of the *Handbook of Yokuts Indians* is 478 pages longer than the first edition which was published in 1949, and is based on field research carried out by Latta since 1920. New material offered includes a review of Spanish exploration of the San Joaquin Valley, and a much expanded survey of the 63 tribes identified by Latta. The northern San Joaquin Valley and the little-known west side of the Valley are fully discussed in this edition. Typical chapters (e.g., on trade, dress, houses, foods, hunting, basketry, etc.) all are expanded in greater detail than in the earlier edition. Two personal documents (the word-for-word recording of life histories) by Pahmit (a Dumna male tribal member born about 1830) and Yoimut (a Telumne woman) are invaluable. Yoimut's story is the only one known to me which approaches in length and detail those remarkable autobiographies of Pomo women published by Elizabeth Colson several years ago. A considerable number of new photographic illustrations have been added to the second edition.

There is such a wealth of detail, much of it presented in the words of Yokuts Indians who were born long before the Gold Rush, that it can be said that the authenticity of these Yokuts data may be the most reliable for that

of any tribe in the state.

Latta, despite the fact that he never received formal training in ethnographic recording, is truly (as Kroeber wrote of him in 1948) "one of those rare beings—a natural-born ethnographer." C. Hart Merriam was another natural-born ethnographer, but he failed to publish any significant quantity of the voluminous data he gathered from about 1910 to 1935. Stephen Powers was also a natural-born ethnographer, but one whose research did get published in 1877 in his famous *Tribes of California*. What Latta learned and has now published for the largest of all California tribal groups may be equalled only in time by the works of Kroeber and the posthumous publication of J.P. Harrington's records on the Chumash.

The index is excellently done; there is no bibliography for the reason that the author is reporting data secured by himself and presenting them as straight ethnography. We are all in Latta's debt for this outstanding contribution to California ethnography and ethnohistory.



*The Chemehuevis*. Carobeth Laird. Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1976. xxviii + 349 pages, 2 maps, \$15.00 (hardback), \$8.95 (paper).

Reviewed by CATHERINE S. FOWLER  
*University of Nevada, Reno*

*The Chemehuevis* is an example of a phenomenon all too rare in North American Indian ethnography: a solid, rich, descriptive work coupled with sensitive, humanistic analysis and interpretation. Too frequently in our quest for "science" we may achieve the former alone. Occasionally we also see the latter but yearn for the strength in descriptive evidence that alone will sooth our academic consciences. In this volume, there is room for both, and

given the expressive talents of the author, both are so carefully interwoven that neither detracts from the other. Rather, both blend to such a degree that the monograph is as much engaging as it is informative.

As Harry Lawton notes in his foreword, Carobeth Laird's academic and analytical training comes largely from her early association (and it is perhaps best called that) with John Peabody Harrington, the obsessive and obsessed genius of American Indian linguistic field recording. She was married to Harrington from 1916 to 1923 and for most of those years travelled with him from camp to camp in the western United States recording what he passionately perceived to be dying languages and cultures. Mrs. Laird's humanism, we suspect, comes from her own nature as well as from her deep, personal relationship with George Laird, a Chemehuevi whom she met on the Colorado River Reservation in 1919 and the man who would become her true life partner. Those who have read with pleasure Mrs. Laird's vivid account of her "Harrington years" in her *Encounter with an Angry God* will know more of the relationship of these three people and of the author's capabilities and qualities. It is George Laird who was the principal consultant for the present work.

*The Chemehuevis* is a semantically based study, derived from Mrs. Laird's admittedly incomplete field notes (some were lost over the years) obtained from George Laird between 1919 and 1940, the year of his death. Mr. Laird had grown up on and near the Colorado River Reservation, the son of a jack-of-all-trades from Tennessee and a daughter of Black Turtle, leader of a local Chemehuevi band. Since his mother died when he was a small child, Mr. Laird's Chemehuevi education came principally through participating with others of his age in the remnants of old lifeways now being reshaped by reservation conditions. In addition, he spent a year caring for a dying man who painstakingly taught him to speak a