THE POMO

THE Pomo are one of the best-known groups of California Indians — a prominence due largely to their residence in a region much employed as a playground by the population of the San Francisco Bay cities, and to their highly developed skill in the art of basketry. They controlled fully half of the area of Mendocino, Sonoma, and Lake counties, and a small detached territory in Glenn and Colusa counties.

On the coast they extended from a point about halfway between Ten Mile river and Fort Bragg southward nearly to Bodega bay, a distance of more than eighty miles. In the north the line coincided with the divides south of Ten Mile river, Tomki creek, South Eel river, and Rice fork, up to the ridge east of Clear lake, which it followed southeastward to a point nearly east of the foot of the lake. Here it pursued an irregular southwestward course to the vicinity of Asti, southeastward nearly to Glen Ellen, and westward to the sea, following the southern divide of Russian river. Entirely surrounded by Pomo territory was a small Yukian Wappo district on the south shore of Clear lake. A small detached Pomo territory lay on the eastern slope of the Coast range at the head of Stony creek, where its inhabitants jealously guarded a treasure in the form of a deposit of salt.

Within these boundaries are the sites of an immense number of villages and camps, a few of them inhabited at the present time, many more within recent years or within the memory of men now living, and a large number only in the misty past of tradition. Naturally not all, nor even a very large part of these villages, were ever inhabited at one and the same time. The contrary view would not only require the presumption of an aboriginal population many times beyond the capacity of the territory to support in a primitive state, but is incompatible with authentic traditions of the people and what we actually know of their movements within the brief historical period. The only early estimate of population on which any reliance can be placed is that given by the ethnologist George Gibbs, on the authority of United States Indian commissioner Redick McKee, who in 1851 estimated the people in Sonoma and Russian River valleys, on Clear lake, and on the coast from Fort Ross to San Francisco bay at twenty-seven hundred. This was only an estimate. When we remember that there are about twelve hundred living Pomo, it will not seem to err on the side of

exaggeration.

There are now about thirty Pomo villages, or rancherias as the local idiom has it, with populations varying from a mere family or two up to about a hundred persons. Only a dozen number more than twenty-five or thirty souls each. Of these, seven are in the valley of upper Russian river or adjacent valleys, centering about Ukiah; three are in the region of Clear lake; one is a coast settlement near the mouth of Garcia river; and one is on the headwaters of Middle fork of Gualala river.

Following the Government's abandonment in 1867 of Mendocino reservation as an unqualified failure, the Indians returned to their former haunts and took up their abode wherever they might by the grace of Providence and consent of the settlers, some on public lands, some on the private domain of ranchers for whom they labored in grainfield and forest and on the cattle range. In many cases industry and thrift have been rewarded with an accumulation that has enabled the people as a community to purchase the site of their village and enough agricultural land to support themselves entirely or in part. The Pomo and some other Indians of central California, after nearly two generations of struggling poverty without federal or state assistance, have begun to get on their feet, and they feel pride in their independence; and in recent years, beginning about 1915, the Government has been gradually supplying the less enterprising with small reservations. Unfortunately some of these lands do not seem particularly adapted to successful agriculture.

The word Pomo occurs in one of the dialects in composition with place-names to form the name of the local inhabitants, and it was first applied to all the members of this group by Stephen Powers in his *Tribes of California*. In the classification of Powell they constituted a linguistic family called Kuhlánapo, which term he derived from Kuhlánapo, the name of a band living on the south shore of Clear lake. The linguistic studies of Dixon and Kroeber, however, show the Pomo to be a division of the new Hokan family. Seven distinct, but plainly related, dialects are recognized.[1]

In a region some ninety miles in extreme length and sixty in width,

1 Native words in this chapter are in the Eastern Pomo dialect as spoken at Upper Lake.

especially where the topography is as varied as California's, we may well expect some cultural differences due to environment. This territory extends from the ocean across the Coast range and beyond Clear lake; and the surf-beaten shores of the Pacific, with their fish, mussels, seaweed, and marine mammals, and the dense, unbroken redwood forests on hillsides that rise steeply from the narrow coastal plain, necessitated an existence considerably different from that of people living beside an inland lake whose shallows furnished not only fish and fowl, but tules for garments and utensils.

The entire central portion of the main Pomo area is a succession of valleys, mostly rather small, through which flow Russian river and its tributaries, and in the north Outlet creek. These valleys, dotted with oaks and separated from one another by the rolling hills characteristic of California, form a third Pomo cultural area in which products of the soil and game in the hills played a major part, and fish, except at certain seasons, a minor one. Across the mountains in the Sacramento river drainage is a fourth area, that of the Stony Creek Pomo, who, surrounded by alien people, Wintun on the north, east, and south, and Yuki on the west, were not more isolated from their own people geographically than socially, a condition arising out of feuds that resulted from their defense of the salt-beds against plunder.

In an area notable for its uniform excellence in the art of basketry, the Pomo women were, and are, preeminent, both in perfection of workmanship and in artistry of form, color, design, and external ornamentation. There are two classes of baskets, made by fundamentally different processes: the twined, which are made by true weaving; and the coiled, or wrapped, which are made by sewing. The Pomo make both kinds, the coiled being superior to the twined.

Twined baskets are made for such strictly utilitarian usage as the gathering, preparation, and serving of food; but coiled baskets are more often designed for quite other purposes. They are made for containing valued trinkets or the paraphernalia of shamans, or for gift articles, and not seldom the maker toils in a spirit of pure artistic joy without a utilitarian thought. It is baskets of this kind that the Pomo ornament with red feathers (*ta*) of the redhead woodpecker and green feathers (*kíhlim*) from the heads of mallard ducks, inserting the quill-ends so skilfully that the rounded sides of the finished object are like the swelling breast of a bird. Originally these two feathers, and the crest-

feathers (*hei*) of the valley quail, were the only kinds used. Sometimes the basket is completely covered with the red or the green feathers, sometimes they are scattered in tufts or patches. The beautifully curving quail-feathers are used alone, inserted one here and one there, or sometimes in a close row about the edge of a basket on which feathers of another kind have been incorporated. More recently the Pomo have employed the feathers of several other birds, as bluebird, yellowhammer, lark, jay, and in fact almost any of the smaller species, and they so arrange them as to form particolored designs. A further refinement of ornamentation is sometimes provided by the use of clamshell beads, and less frequently of magnesite beads.

These coiled baskets are of many shapes, which are rather difficult to classify. One may mention the elongate, boat-shape basket;[2] the round-sided basket, with the opening smaller than the greatest periphery; the flaring-sided basket with its greatest periphery at the edge of the opening. Examples of this last type are much used as containers of dry food. This classification is necessarily of the roughest; one could assemble a dozen baskets of either type, and find no two of them more than approximately alike in shape.

The basis of Pomo coiled basketry is slender willow shoots, which in groups of three for the best baskets, or singly for inferior ones, are coiled to the worker's left (the movement is in the direction of the hands of a clock) and wrapped closely with a fibre which passes around the upper coil and through an awl-hole pierced in the fibre wrapping of the lower coil. Thus each coil is so closely united to its successor that a water-tight vessel is the result. The perfection of the basket depends on the narrowness of the wrapping material, which regulates the fineness of the stitch, on the closeness of the wrap itself, on the regularity of the coils, and on the taste displayed in form and ornamentation. The wrapping, or sewing, material is *kohúm,* which is obtained from the

2 Sir Francis Drake landed at Drake's bay in 1579, and among the gifts brought by the awe-stricken and worshipping natives was food in baskets "made of Rushes like a deep boat, and so well wrought as to hold Water. They hang pieces of Pearl shells, and sometimes Links of these Chains on the Brims.... They are wrought with matted down of red Feathers into various Forms." (Quoted by Barrett, *The Ethno-Geography of the Pomo and Neighboring Indians.)*

long, white, subterranean stalk of *kip* (sedge). With the aid of tooth and thumbnail these stalks are split from end to end, and the halves are coiled and stored in the work-basket. When they are to be used they are moistened, and with the same implements of Nature are separated into fibres of such thickness as the work in hand requires. It is this sedge fibre that produces the white background of Pomo baskets. Designs are produced by overlaying this with an additional wrapping of a colored fibre. The commonest overlaying material is the central core of the rhizomes of *tsiwish,* the rush *Scirpus maritimus,* which grows abundantly in the shallows of Clear lake and to a lesser degree in swampy localities throughout the interior. These cores are dyed brown or quite black by submergence in black mud for varying periods. A quantity of ashes is sprinkled over them before they are covered. Besides brown and black and the basic white, dull red is the only color found in Pomo baskets. This is secured by the use of the bark of *disaí,* the redbud, which appears far more in twined than in coiled baskets.

The majority of the strictly utilitarian baskets of the Pomo are produced by several variations of twining, in which the warp, or upright elements, are almost always willow shoots, *tsubáha. The* weft, or horizontal elements, likewise are willow in the coarser forms, such as rough burden-baskets, winnowing baskets, and platters. In the finer forms the weft materials are mainly those used for the wrapping in coiled baskets: Carex for the white foundation, Scirpus for black overlay, and redbud-bark for red. Less important are the roots of the digger-pine and various willows for the white foundation weft, and the root-fibres of bracken, made black by boiling, for the overlay. In some of the large twined cooking vessels, the entire shoots of redbud, not merely the bark, form the weft.

All this finer work is performed by women, and the basketry manufactured by men is limited to the coarsest forms, such as traps for fish and game and open-mesh conical baskets used in carrying wood. These last are more commonly made of oak shoots. The better-made burden-baskets of the open-mesh type, as well as all the close-mesh, are the work of women.

Pomo clothing was of the simplest kind; in fact, the men ordinarily were stark naked. Women wore short kilts of shredded tules, which hung in a thick mass of fringe about the thighs. Sometimes the skirt was made of deerskin or cougar-skin, and among the Coast Pomo

shredded redwood-bark was common. By both sexes rabbit-skin robes were worn for their warmth, and for protection in rainy weather there were armless, knee-length capes of shredded tules (*Scirpus robustus*). Hats were unknown, and feet and legs were habitually bare.

The hair of men flowed loose or was gathered in a knot on the crown of the head, and that of women was either loose or arranged in a knot at the back of the head. Some women now tattoo the chin with two vertical lines flanked by a horizontal line running from each angle of the lips, but this is said not to have been an ancient practice. On ceremonial occasions both men and women wore cleverly made ear-ornaments of woodpecker-feathers, quail topknots, and beads, and painted their faces red. Necklaces consist of disc-shape beads cut from clam-shells, and cylinders of magnesite. One hundred of the thickest clam-shell beads were the equivalent of twenty dollars, or one perforated cylinder of magnesite two and a half inches long. These magnesite "coins" were made by the Pomo themselves, and are now referred to by all other tribes of the region as "gold," the clam-shell beads passing as "silver." They are as beautifully symmetrical as if turned on a lathe. The manufacture of clam-shell beads still flourishes.

The primitive house in the lake region was shaped like an inverted circular or elliptical bowl. The basis of the framework consisted of a number of willow poles ten to twelve feet long and two inches in diameter at the butts, which were implanted in a circle. They were secured in place by several horizontal courses of oak hoops, to which the poles were lashed with grapevine, and the tips were drawn nearly together so as to leave a smoke-hole at the peak. This framework was covered with willow or oak shoots applied horizontally, and then thatched with a single thick course of round tules (*Scirpus lacustris*), which reached from the ground nearly to the top. Finally a course of triangular tules (*Scirpus robustus*) was applied around the top in such manner as to shed water very effectually. In some cases two or more overlapping courses of round tules were applied. In any event, each course was held in place by horizontal poles, which were lashed to the frame underneath. Some of these houses were partially subterranean, the excavation being about three feet deep. In diameter they varied from ten to thirty feet, and they contained from one to four fires, according to the number of married children living with their parents. Throughout the rest of the interior, in localities where rushes were not

abundant, the thatch was grass, which was applied in numerous courses. If neither rushes nor grass were at hand, earth-covered houses were constructed. The Coast Pomo built low, conical houses of redwood slabs, both wood and bark, which converged at the top of a forked central post. These were the permanent or winter homes.

In summer the people moved from place to place, camping under rude brush shelters, the sole purpose of which was to protect them from the sun.

The sweat-house was practically subterranean. In the centre of a circular excavation two or three feet deep and about eight feet in diameter was erected a heavy forked post, from the crotch of which stout rafters radiated to all points on the edge of the pit, except on the south side, where a narrow opening was left. The timbers were thatched with brush, a layer of long grass, and a thick coat of earth. Heat for the sweating was provided by a fire inside the hut, most of the smoke finding its way out through the door. After remaining inside as long as possible, perhaps half an hour, the men would come out and, either after cooling off for a few minutes or without delay, plunge into the water. Very rarely women sweated with the men. Ordinarily they did not use the sudatory at all, but bathed in lake or stream.

Household furnishings and utensils were of the simplest. Mats made by stringing tules on a series of parallel threads served as mattresses, skins as blankets. Similar mats were spread on the earthen floor to receive food at mealtime. Vessels for storing, cooking, and serving food were various forms of basketry.

The tule was extremely useful to the Lake Pomo, furnishing clothing, shelter, bed, and occasionally food. It did more than that: it gave them a fairly serviceable boat. This was of the type known as the balsa, and was simply a boat-shape bundle of dry rushes, which with care sufficed to keep the boatman out of the water. Sometimes, however, he preferred to ride it astride with his legs in the water. One advantage the balsa had, in addition to ease of construction — it was positively non-sinkable. These craft were as much as twenty feet in length.

In common with nearly all California tribes the Pomo found their most dependable vegetal food in the nuts of various species of oaks that abound in almost every part of the state. Acorns of black oak, live-oak, and post-oak were eaten in the form of mush; those of the valley oak were used for bread, never for mush. Acorns still form a not

inconsiderable item in the Pomo diet. They are gathered in the late autumn, usually from the ground, though some men climb into the trees and pick them, preferring them when thus obtained. Each family generally gathers enough to fill two very large open-mesh baskets, in which they are stored after drying in the sun. The acorns are shelled as needed by cracking them one by one on a stone, and are pulverized in a stone-and-hopper mortar to about the fineness of cornmeal. The meal is then spread out on a bed of sand, and water, either cold or heated, is repeatedly poured over it until the bitter tannic acid is leached out. In removing the meal from its bed of sand, the palm of the hand is pressed down on it, and the meal, with more or less sand adhering to it, clings to the hand. A little water carefully poured over it removes the sand, but leaves the rather sticky meal adhering to the hand, to be scraped off into a basket.

Acorn soup, or mush, is made by mixing meal and water in a basket and boiling it by means of a number of heated stones. The mixture must be carefully stirred to prevent the stones from burning the basket. No salt is used, and the result in a distinctly unpalatable dish. It is not particularly disagreeable; it simply does not taste like food.

For acorn bread the meal is not ground quite so fine. The Upper Lake Pomo mix with water red earth from a certain hill about three miles from the town of Upper Lake, and add it to the dough. In the middle of the afternoon a fire is built in a baking pit, and when it is well heated, the bottom is lined with ash leaves, on which the dough is spread in cakes about four inches thick. It is covered with ash leaves, grass or brush, hot stones, and finally earth, and bakes over night. The red earth is said to have somewhat the effect of yeast; without it the bread is not regarded as eatable. Some of the tribes occasionally bake acorn bread in pans on the stove. It looks dubious, but the flavor, especially when salt is added, is not unpleasant.

Other vegetal foods were the various small seeds so commonly used in the form of parched meal, or pinole; buckeyes and hazelnuts; berries of the California laurel and manzanita, as well as huckleberries, elderberries, and blackberries; roots of the cattail (*Typha*) and the core of young tule shoots (*Scirpus lacustris*). On the coast seaweed was an important food.

Waterfowl were captured in great numbers by means of a hemp net stretched between two poles in places where they were wont to

pass at dusk on their way from the feeding grounds. The net was about a hundred feet long (twenty fathoms as the Indians measured) and ten to twelve feet high, and the birds became entangled like fish in a gill-net. Geese and coots were killed by means of the sling (*bishík*), the thongs of which were deer-sinew, and the part that held the missile, deerskin.

Deer were killed with bow and arrow, either by single hunters or by a party using the drive-and-ambush method. Another way was to hang a strong hemp noose in a narrow deer-trail at the height of a deer's head, the end of the rope being attached to a yielding sapling or to a drag. Pits and deadfalls were not employed by the Pomo. Black bear were hunted with bow and arrow, but few had the hardihood to attack the grizzly-bear.

Fish were taken in nets, traps, and with spears, never with hooks. In the interior both seines and dip-nets were used; on the coast there was a specialized form of dip-net with which the fisherman, standing in the surf, scooped up whatever the incoming tide brought to him. Traps of three types are still seen. The one used in connection with weirs is a cylindrical basket from six to ten feet long and as many inches in diameter, with a flaring mouth. *Buhál,* the second type, is roughly conical, from four to six feet long and thirty inches in diameter at the opening, inside of which is a circle of converging splints to permit the entrance but prevent the escape of fish. The warp is dogwood (*buhál-ahai*) and the weft oak. The third type of trap is used in shallow, muddy water, where it is not difficult to imprison fish by clapping down over them a conical, wide-mouthed, open-mesh basket, and remove them at leisure through a hole in the top of the trap.

The principal fish available to the interior Pomo were salmon, suckers, trout, a species called locally "black-fish," and a species known to the Pomo as *hich*. Large quantities of black-fish are still dried and stored away for the winter. The fish are split down the back, and after the removal of backbone, entrails, and head, they are hung on pole racks to dry in the sun for about two weeks, after which they are placed in a smokehouse, where they are thoroughly cured.

Grasshoppers were secured by burning the grass and then collecting the roasted insects.

The Pomo were not at all bellicose, and their experience in war was wellnigh limited to feuds, usually transient, between bands, the

common cause being violation of territorial rights to the detriment of food and game supplies. Thus, the Upper Lake villages Danokha (Danó-ha, mountain water) and Hóalek were always hostile to Shigóm, a village on the northeast side of the lake, and they occasionally fought with Kuhlanapo (Kuhlá-napo, water-lily village), which was situated in Big valley at the south side of Clear lake. The people of Khabenapo (Habí-napo, rock village), also in Big valley, were sometimes at enmity with Kuhlanapo. The unfriendly relations of the northeastern Pomo, on Stony creek, with others of this group have already been mentioned. In the generation before the settlement of northern California the Lake Pomo never made a friendly visit there. When they required salt, they stole it. They made annual journeys to the coast at Bodega bay for the purpose of securing clamshells, which the Coast Miwok never begrudged them.

The Pomo have the typical gambling games of the region. *Duwé'gha,* the so-called grass game, is played with four pieces of wildcat-bone, two of which, marked with string wrappings, are called *pakó* ("wrapped"), the others, *yáhmi.* Twelve tally-sticks are held by an umpire, who passes them out as the points are gained, the game being won by the party that secures the entire twelve. The players sit facing each other, and on each side are two leaders, each of whom has a marked and an unmarked bone, which he conceals in separate bunches of dry grass. The players of that side which is having its inning sing, and the two principals hold one hand in front and one behind, each hand containing a bunch of grass in which is concealed a bone. Each of the other two leaders, after considerable delay in which he exerts all his powers to read his opponent's thoughts, indicates by a dramatic gesture and the exclamation *we*! or *tep*! whether in his opinion the marked bone is in the right or the left hand of the player opposite him. If one guess is wrong and the other right, no tally-stick is paid, but the one correctly guessed is "killed," that is, he is out of the game for the remainder of that inning. The other, who is incorrectly guessed, again conceals the bones, and his opponent tries again. A second failure means the loss of a tally-stick, and continuation as before; but success is rewarded by change of inning. If in the first instance both guesses are failures, two tally-sticks reward the successful side; if both are correct, the inning changes at once. Wagers of considerable value are laid.

In the game *yótso* each of two players holds a bundle of the dry

stalks of *kápula* (locally called bitterweed), six or seven inches long and sixty to seventy in number. He whose inning it is separates from his bunch any number at random and conceals them from his opponent, who guesses either *yet*, indicating one, *pun*, two, *ship*, three, or *to*, four. If the detached group contains a number divisible by four, the correct guess is to; otherwise it is the number remaining after division by four. A correct guess is rewarded by the tally-keeper with a single stick, and failure results in the other player receiving a stick.

The woman's dice game, *kadaíi,* is very popular. The *kadaíi* are six half-round pieces of willow about eight inches long, all marked alike on the rounded side. These are cast downward and forward upon a piece of deerskin, and one tally-stick is gained if they lie evenly divided, while two points are scored if all face one way. No other combinations count. Two women play at this game, with betting on the side by numerous women spectators as well as by the contestants themselves. So long as a player scores, she continues to cast.

Pikó was a shinny game in which the ball was a piece of bone from the knee-joint of a deer, and the stick a straight club without the usual crooked end.

There was also a form of the widespread hoop-and-pole game, in which a wooden hoop was either rolled on the ground as a mark for wooden javelins, or was tossed through the air and caught on a stick.

The village was the political unit. So far were the Pomo from even the beginning of tribal organization that in no case had they a name for the inhabitants of a territory larger than a village; and in all cases the villagers were named simply as the people of that settlement. Government, to use a term scarcely justified by the facts, was mildly paternal. The head of each family group, consisting of parents, their descendants and children by marriage, and dependent collateral relatives and retainers, was a chief. It follows that except in the very smallest communities there were more headmen than one; and of these patriarchs one by common consent held the position of principal chief. These men constituted the governing body, and their duty was to take thought of the general welfare. Though they lacked punitive powers, except those of a moral nature, they were charged with the responsibility of policing the village and particularly of maintaining order at public celebrations, which they accomplished, like any paterfamilias, by the authority of rank and custom, rather than by physical force. Perhaps their most im-

portant duty was that of mediation to prevent bloodshed, by offering or accepting payment for damage inflicted. The head chief occupied a position somewhat analogous to that of an honorary president, a social figurehead without political power. His principal function was to represent the community as host on ceremonial occasions, and to preside over the celebration itself. Every morning he was expected to address the people with precepts and admonition. In council with his fellow patriarchs he expressed his opinion of the best course to pursue in affairs of public concern, but the acquiescence of all was essential. The position of family chief passed from father to son, or in lieu of a son, to a brother.

Women at childbirth were assisted by midwives, whose principal care was to keep the patient warm, and sometimes to give manual aid to the infant. The umbilical cord was severed with a stone knife and buried with the placenta. The infant was bathed at once and wrapped in a soft tule garment.

The child was not named until it was old enough to recognize its name, that is, from two to three years, at which time the father, having selected the name of some relative of his not too recently deceased, delivered a speech in the presence of his own and his wife's relations and formally bestowed the name. At the age of four or five years the child's ears were pierced with a deer-bone awl by its mother without any formality or assembling of relatives, and so long as the wound remained unhealed, the child received no hot food, lest the ears decay.

The initiation of young children of both sexes was a feature of the Kúksu ceremony.

A girl at her first menses was secluded in the family house behind a tule-mat curtain, where she was attended by her mother. The usual taboo of meat was observed. At the recurrence of her courses she was not expected to retire.

When a youth and a girl had agreed to marry, the young man broached the subject to his father, who, if he favored the match, went to the girl's parents with the proposal; for without their consent the marriage could not take place. Nothing was said about the amount to be paid for the girl. If they agreed to the match, a time was set for the wedding, usually five or six days later, and on the appointed day the people assembled in the bride's house, where, the young couple sitting side by side, the youth's father delivered a speech, in which he called

the people to witness the transaction, and in conclusion handed to his son's father-in-law shell money of the value of twenty-five to fifty dollars. This her parents kept, and the people soon departed. Sometimes there was a feast.

At first the newly married couple lived with the wife's people, and after a time they had the privilege of joining the parental household of the husband.

Either partner might abandon the other for any reason whatsoever, the children remaining with their mother. If a wife left her husband within a few months after marriage, the money paid for her was necessarily returned. Discovering his wife in adultery, a man might either treat the affair with indifference, or severely beat and cut her, sometimes even biting off the end of her nose, and then of course abandon her. A woman had the choice of ignoring the delinquencies of her husband or returning to the home of her parents.

Cremation was generally practised. As soon as the death-wail was heard, all the villagers flocked to the house to join in the lamentation, and many gave presents of beads to the bereaved, the total value of these contributions sometimes reaching two or three hundred dollars. Relatives immediately washed the corpse, painted its face, and clothed it in clean garments, and cremation usually occurred on the following morning; but in rainy weather there was sometimes unavoidable delay for lack of dry fuel. Meantime the covered corpse remained in the house, and the family lived and slept there as usual. The body was borne by men not relatives of the family to the funeral pyre, which was built over a trench eighteen to twenty-four inches deep and a little longer than the corpse. On the pile food was placed beside the body, and the fire was kindled. As the flames rose, all the clothing and other personal articles formerly used by the deceased person were thrown into them, as well as some of the valuables contributed by sympathizers on the preceding day. Not infrequently the family was left quite destitute after a cremation. Until all was consumed, the people stood about and wailed, and on the following morning the earth from the excavation was pushed back over the ashes. Sometimes the unconsumed bones were buried in a basket. Slain warriors were burned without removal of their accoutrements or paint.

Bereaved men and women cut the hair close to the skull, and women mourning for a favorite child smeared over their clipped hair,

in a broad band across the top of the head from temple to temple, white clay, which they renewed from time to time during their period of mourning, that is, usually a year.

The dead were believed to travel southward to an unnamed country, and in order to prevent the ghost from haunting its former abode a bit of *bakó* (angelica-root) was burned at the house during the four nights after a cremation.

There were two kinds of healers, those who sucked out the disease, and those who administered medicine. The power of the "sucking doctor" was acquired only by dreaming, not by training or bequest, and never by very young men. For six months after the dream in which this power was conferred, the dreamer abstained from meat. In his treatment of disease he used no rattle and little singing, although sometimes he partially hummed and partially grunted an air. The fee was two or two and a half dollars for each visit, regardless of the ultimate fate of the patient.

The healing doctor, who used herbs in addition to songs and the rattle, transmitted his knowledge little by little to some relative whom he regarded as fitted for the profession. From all others he guarded his secrets most carefully. His treatment usually lasted four, sometimes five, days, and his fee of shell money and property to the value of forty or fifty dollars was collected in advance. If the patient succumbed, half of the amount was restored.

Certain men and women are said to have possessed the ability to transform themselves into grizzly-bears, or rather to exercise the strength, agility, and ferocity of that animal by putting on a suit made of a bear-skin. In this state they roamed the country, slaying and robbing whomsoever they encountered, whether friend or foe; but their preternatural powers departed from them instantly with the removal of the bear costume. In this conception we see plainly an application of the very common belief that in former ages, and to some extent even now, all animals were simply human beings clothed for the moment in fur or feathers, which could be removed at will like any garment, leaving the man naked of his special faculties as well as of clothing. His powers as a beast or a bird resided absolutely in his coat; without it he was ashamed and helpless. The Pomo believe firmly in the former and recent existence of these bear-doctors, as they are called in the local vernacular, and relate highly circumstantial accounts of their activities.

The Indian imagination is not particularly inventive, and when firmly held traditions are not plainly mythical it is usually safe to credit them with a modicum of fact. It is highly probable, though not susceptible of proof, that certain men actually on occasion wore bear-skin suits for the sake of the bear-like qualities to be gained thereby.

The Pomo had two principal ceremonies, called in the Eastern dialect Kahlúikak-he ("ghost dance") and Kúksu-he. Kúksu, a supernatural identified with the south, is an important personage in the mythology of the Pomo, the Wintun, and the Maidu. The name appears as the word for south in the Northwestern Maidu dialect. Performed as incidents in the course of either of these ceremonies, or separately at any time of the year, were numerous dances, all of much the same character although in each a different kind of animal or other being was represented. Some of the dances of the Upper Lake Pomo were:

Hóhowa-he, in which the dancers cried *"Ho ho ho ho!"*

Kalímatôta-he, "thunder dance."

Yáya-he.

Kunúla-he, "coyote dance."

Shakó-he, "pierce dance," in which the performers pretended to pierce their abdomens.

Pubúma-he.

Kakúma-he.

Lóle-he.

Nóhahlúikak, the so-called fire dance, in which the performers placed embers in their mouths and exhaled forcibly, causing the embers to glow brightly.

Some of the dances named by the Central Pomo were:

Yó-ke, "south dance."

Kílak-ke, "monster-bird dance."

Shúkin.

Lehúye.

Hóho-ke.

Shná-bate-ke, "head big dance," the name referring to the large mass of feathers worn as a head-dress.

Lâli-ke, "crazy dance."

Hiuwé-ke.

Cháni-ke.

Súl-ke, "condor dance."

Sonwéra.

Practically all of these have been so long obsolete that it is impossible to secure any clear information regarding them.

The ghost dance was never attended by females, nor by males not yet initiated into the tribe. It lasted four days, and the last night, which was entirely devoted to dancing, was followed at dawn by the purification of all individuals and ceremonial objects to the accompaniment of songs. The officials, as in the Kúksu ceremony, were two song-leaders, the master of the hollow-log drum, two fire-keepers, and two who gave the signals for starting and stopping the songs and dances. The village chief was merely the public host, and had no function as a ceremonial priest. The dancers personated spirits of the dead, and all their acts and words were, so far as possible, the opposite of what would be expected of a living person. Their naked bodies were grotesquely painted in red, black, and white, and each wore a net-cap, a net filled with white down, an upright bunch of feathers, and a band of yellowhammer-quills extending from the forehead down the back. The purpose of the ceremony was the health and well-being of the people.

The Kúksu ceremony, as mentioned above, refers to the supernatural being identified with the south. He was personated by several performers, whose most notable feature was a large bunch of red-painted feathers completely concealing the nose and mouth. This represented the large red nose of Kúksu. The ceremony lasted six days, on the first, fifth, and sixth of which children were initiated into the tribe by making two incisions in the back with a piece of shell. This was done by an old man selected for his age, health, and benevolence, all of which characteristics it was hoped the initiates would thus acquire.

The majority of Pomo myths recount the ludicrous adventures and the miraculous deeds of Coyote, the trickster and wonder-worker. As elsewhere in the interior of California, Coyote was one of the two creators, his companion in Pomo mythology being Lizard.

"The Pomo"
From
The North American Indian: Volume 14
by Edwards S. Curtis