The Wailaki: Two Stories

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Preface

If you want to learn something about Indians ask an Indian not an anthropologist.
Tom Keter

In 2022, Jerry Rhode published a book titled *Southern Humboldt Indians*. Rhode's book admirably gathers and summarizes the existing ethnographic data, providing a non-critical historical summary of the information collected by early 20th century ethnographers.

What is now needed is a study to provide a contemporary review and critique of the original data, including an examination of the paradigm used to collect ethnographic data (salvage ethnology), of how the limitations of ethnocentrism or racial bias by the individuals working in the field might have colored the types of cultural data collected, and, more importantly, how they were interpreted.

Today, dozens of individuals of Wailaki descent still live in southern Humboldt, northern Mendocino, and southwestern Trinity Counties. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that there are alternative interpretations of the historical "story" that can lessen the barriers the Wailaki are currently facing in their efforts to gain tribal recognition. This paper aims to bring the Wailaki story up to the present. Numerous individuals living in the region today are direct descendants of the individuals who were interviewed by Goddard, Merriam, and the other ethnographers who worked in the region. The Wailaki have not disappeared, and in fact they retain significant knowledge regarding their past cultural history. There is another "story" to be told of their past by the Indian people living here today who proudly claim that they are Wailaki.

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* There have been some minor edits to the paper as result of additional information obtained since it was first published in January 2024.

Introduction

> ...acculturation has always been a matter of conquest... refugees from the foundering groups may adopt the standards of the more potent society in order to survive as individuals. But these are conscripts of civilization, not volunteers. (Stanley Diamond in *Victims of Progress* by John Bodly 1981)

I first realized, while working as an archaeologist on the Mad River Ranger District of the Six Rivers National Forest in the late 1980s, that there were problems with some of the ethnographer's conclusions related to the social organization and territorial boundaries for the southern Athabaskan speaking people who occupied portions of southeastern Humboldt, northeastern Mendocino, and southwestern Trinity Counties prior to the historic era.

This vast remote region is referred to by locals as the Yolla Bolly country[1] (Map 1). My archaeological field work was centered on the North Fork Eel River watershed and during the 1980s and 1990s I interviewed numerous individuals of Indian descent, as well as longtime residents from the region (TCC: Vol. 4[2]). The information and a review of the ethnographic literature led me to conclude that the term "Lassik," as used by ethnographers for the southern Athabascans living in this region, simply did not align with what people were telling me during my interviews.

It became evident that there was a huge gap between the way members of the local Indian community throughout the region perceived their cultural identity, as opposed to that documented in the ethnographic and historic literature. I found, without exception, individuals of Indian ancestry I talked to or formally interviewed who came from the Yolla Bolly country insisted that they were Wailaki, and not Lassik. Moreover, I later found in reviewing the field notes and papers of some of the anthropologists working in this region (for example Frank Essene and A. L. Kroeber) that they had classified some of their consultants as Lassik in their published ethnographies--despite the fact that these individuals had insisted they were Wailaki when they were interviewed. Subsequently, in 1991, I published an article questioning use of the term Lassik for the southern Athabascans who once inhabited my research area (Keter 1991).

The same held true when I later interviewed several individuals of Indian descent (including elders) that lived in the Garberville/Redway area, Briceland, and further west in

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[1] The Yolla Bolly country stretches north from Round Valley into southeastern Humboldt, and southwestern Trinity Counties. The term Yolla Bolly comes from the Nomlaki Wintun language and roughly translates as "high snowy mountains." It is a vast region of deep-cut canyons and steep almost-never-level terrain. It includes the highest mountains in the Coastal Ranges of California, the Yolla Bolly Mountains, with several peaks over 7,000' in elevation. The majority of the land in the Yolla Bolly country is federally owned and is managed by the Six Rivers, Mendocino, and Shasta Trinity National Forests (Green shading on Map 1).

[2] The Trinity County Compendium (TCC) is an archive by the author containing ethnographic, historical, and environmental data for southwestern Trinity County. This data is available at the Trinity County Historical Society in Weaverville. Much of this material, including homestead records, historical maps, census records, interviews, and published papers is also available on my web site solararch.org.

the headwaters region of the Mattole River. Despite the fact that the individuals of Indian ancestry living here today self-identify as Wailaki, anthropologists and historians still insist that because of the ethnographic record, these individuals are mistaken, and that they are actually Sinkyone, or that they are Wailaki who have moved here from the Round Valley Indian Reservation[3], or from areas directly to the east in the Yolla Bolly country, and that they moved into the area after the atrocities of the 1850s and 1860s that "wiped out" most of the local Indian population.

Given the close kinship ties, the shared language, and the cultural traditions that linked the native people throughout this region, it became clear as a result of my research that the ethnographic data recorded by early twentieth century ethnographers needed to be viewed from a more contemporary perspective. To paraphrase Sir Winston Churchill; history and ethnography are written by the victors. Therefore, it is historians and ethnographers who have written the "story" of the Indians who once lived here that is found in today's history and anthropology books[4].

The question of who writes history and who "owns" the past is more than an academic question for the Indians living in many regions of California. Indian tribes that are not already recognized by the federal government face an almost insurmountable barrier in their efforts to gain federal recognition. For example, a few miles east of Willow Creek, the Tsnungwe have spent decades seeking federal recognition. The ethnographers working in the region, excepting C. H. Merriam[5], failed to recognize the existence of the Tsnungwe and simply classified them as the South Fork Hupa; merely a southern extension of the Hupa tribe (Kroeber 1925, Wallace 1978: 164, Baumhoff 1958). Despite substantial evidence to the contrary (Keter 2009), the BIA and federal government continue to refuse to grant federal recognition based on the historical and ethnographic record.

Recognition by the federal government would empower the Tsnungwe to deal more effectively with numerous tribal issues (Keter 2009). These issues range from protection of their ancient village sites and sensitive locations related to their continuing cultural practices, to contemporary issues related to health, housing, and education. Tribal recognition is also necessary in order to deal more effectively with the various government agencies (local, state, and federal) affecting the daily lives of the Tsnungwe.

Efforts to challenge the historical ethnographic record are also being pursued in other regions of the state. In a book outlining the efforts of the Maidu of northeastern California to gain tribal recognition, *Quest for Tribal Acknowledgement California's Honey Lake Maidus*, Sara-Larus Tolley (1973) discusses the problems and barriers that both the ethnographic

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[3] During my work in the late 1990s and early 2000s with Wailaki elders, some of them referred to the Round Valley Indian Reservation as a "concentration camp."

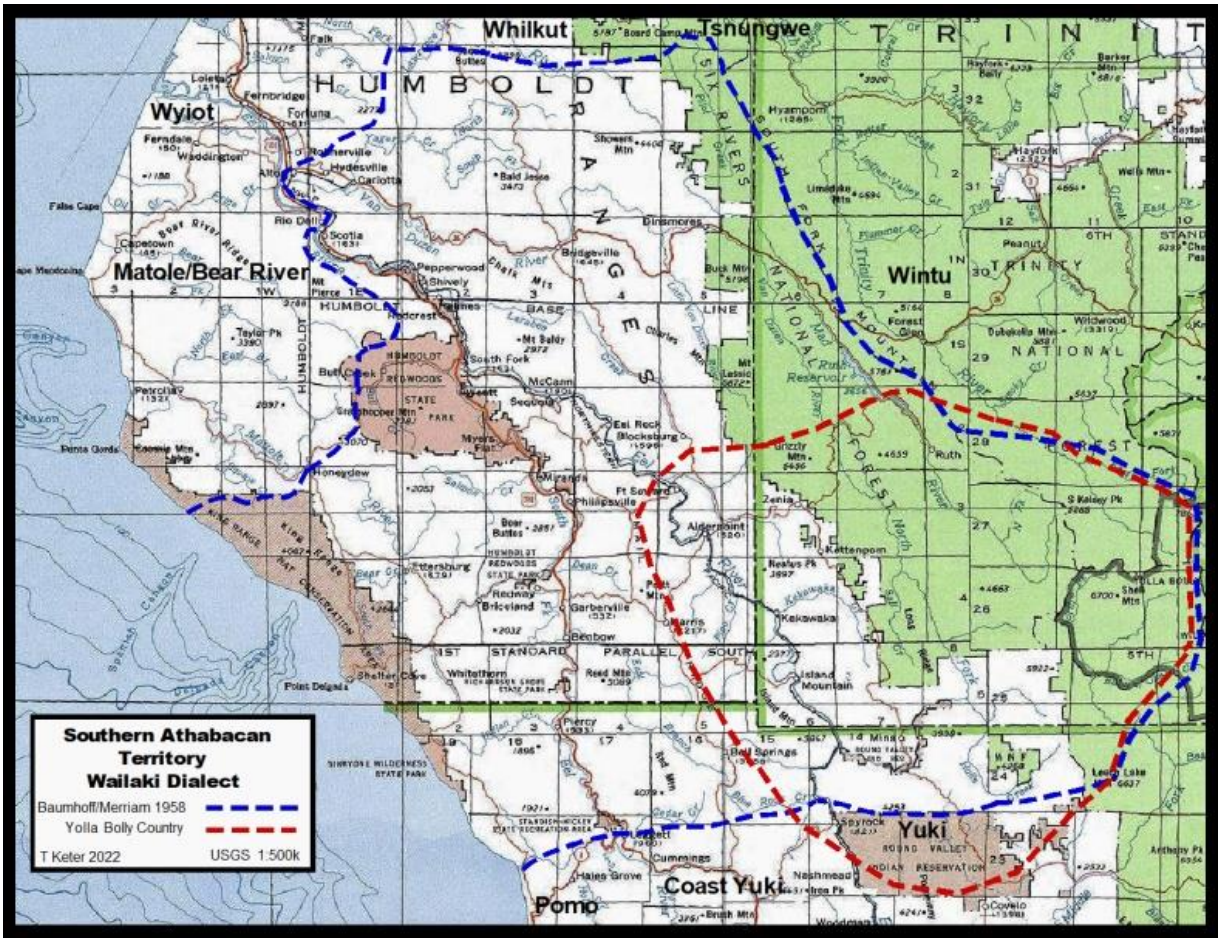
[4] That has started to change with the revitalization of the Wailaki culture over the last two decades. See for example Kayla Begay (2017) and William J. Bauer (2009).

[5] Merriam's hand-labeled map (Map 2-5) shows the Tsnungwe (upper center inhabiting the Trinity River Canyon to the south of the Hupa.

record and the archaeological record have caused the Maidu in pursuing federal tribal recognition.

Part 1 of this study provides an overview of the ethnographers "story" and a critique of the tribal organization and territorial boundaries for the southern Athabascans of the Wailaki dialect as currently documented in the ethnographic literature (Map 1).

Part 2 documents the Wailaki "story" or history as related to me over the last four decades from the direct descendants of many of the individuals interviewed by ethnographers during the first few decades of the 20th century.



Map 1
Southern Athabascan territory according to Baumhoff 1958
(T. Keter USGS map 2022)

Part 1
The Ethnographers Story

The Tlingit, Kwakiutl, Chinook, Pomo, Miwok never were actual cultural entities,
but only convenient conceptualizations ….of the facts of culture."
(Alfred Kroeber 1936 UCPAAE: Preface)

Chapter 1
The Southern Athabascans[6]

Little is known about the first people who permanently settled in what are now southern Humboldt, southwestern Trinity, and Northern Mendocino Counties; when they first arrived, the language they spoke, or where they came from. The archaeological evidence (based on the types of diagnostic artifacts and the sources of obsidian recovered from prehistoric sites), suggests that Wintu speakers from the east were visiting, or possibly even occupying portions of the North Fork/Mad River watersheds on a part-time or even a permanent basis for several centuries prior to the arrival of Athabaskan speaking peoples. The migration of the Athabascans into northwestern California about 800 years ago made up the final wave of immigrants into northwestern California (for a prehistory of the region see Keter 2022c).

In addition to archaeological evidence, there is also linguistic evidence that suggests that much of the region was claimed (or at least utilized to a significant degree) at one time by the Wintu. The names of some plant species and many place names (for example Kettenpom Valley and Hettenshaw Valley) within the Yolla Bolly country come from the Wintu language. Even the word "Wailaki" itself is a Wintu word meaning "north language." The word "Lassik" is also of Wintu or Nomlaki origin (Golla 2011: 80). Marriages between the two groups were common, and it is possible that this boundary may have been in a state of flux at the time of historic contact.

Dr. Victor Golla, who was a linguist at Humboldt State University (the name was changed to Cal Poly Humboldt University in 2022), and an authority on the Athabascan language, placed the Athabascan speakers of northwestern California into three linguistically related subgroups based on mutually understandable dialects (Map 1-1, Table 1-2). The Tolowa were the most northerly group. Their territory was centered on the coastal plain that

[6] At the *Athabaskan Languages Conference* held in 2012, it was decided that it would be better to refer to the Athabaskan/Athapaskan language family as the Dene language family, reflecting cognates in the language family for 'person' or 'people.' The origin of the term Athabaskan is Cree, and is the Cree place name [*ahðapaska:w*]for a lake in British Columbia. Participants at the conference, voted unanimously to change the name of future meetings to the Dene Languages Conference. According to linguist Kayla Begay (2017), who is of Wailaki descent, during this time of transition use of the terms Athabaskan and Dene can be used interchangeably, with a preference for Dene.

fronts the high mountains and deep canyons of the Smith River drainage near the California/Oregon border. To the south, the Hupa, and the Tsnungwe (Keter 2009) occupied portions of the Trinity River watershed, while the closely related Chilula and Whilkut occupied much of inland northwestern Humboldt County to the west of the Hupa , with most villages located along Redwood Creek.

Map 1-1
Language Families and Groups in Northwest California
(Kroeber 1925)

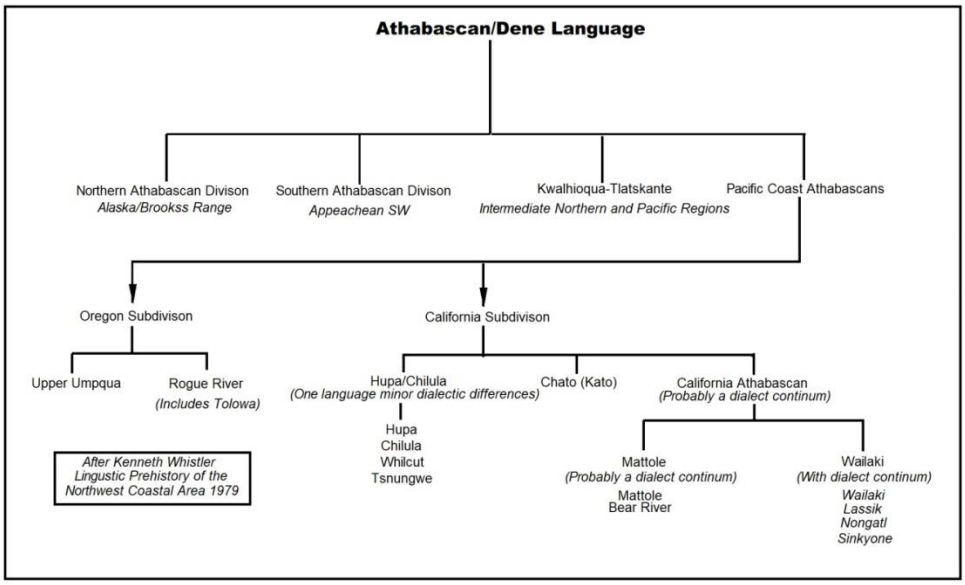


Table 1-2
Athabascan/Dene Language Family

The southern Athabascans occupied the coastal and inland region immediately to the south and southeast of Humboldt Bay where the Wiyot were located. Anthropologist Alfred Kroeber considered the Wiyot and Yurok to be the southernmost tribes within what he termed the Northwest Coast Culture Area. The Northwest Coast Culture Area (tribes sharing similar cultures despite linguistic differences) extends north from about the Humboldt Bay region, along the Oregon and Washington coasts, into southern British Columbia. The California Culture Area encompasses most of the remaining portion of the state to the south from about Round Valley, and to the west of the Sierra Nevada/Great Basin divide (Kroeber 1925).

The southern Athabascans living in southern Humboldt, southwestern Trinity, and northern Mendocino Counties during the ethnographic period are viewed by anthropologists as having cultures, and subsistence resource procurement strategies that were influenced to some degree by groups residing both to the north in the Northwest Coast Culture Area, and to the south in the California Culture Area. Interestingly, this divide between the two Culture Areas is also reflected in the archaeological record (see Keter 2022c), as well as the fact that Humboldt County, is roughly situated at the climatic divide between the maritime weather pattern of northwest coastal California, and the Mediterranean climate pattern of Cismontane[7] California (Keter 2022b).

Southern Athabascans speaking the Wailaki dialect were further subdivided, into four distinct, but closely related groups: the Wailaki, Lassik, Nongatl and Sinkyone (some ethnographers further subdivided this group into the Shelter Cove Sinkyone and Lolangkok) primarily based on differences in localized dialects (Table 1-2). Golla indicated that the Wailaki, Lassik, Sinkyone, and Nongatl dialects were mutually intelligible. According to linguist Pliny Goddard, the main difference in the dialects of these groups was related to the nouns employed, with few differences in verbs or in the roots of words.

Linguist Kayla Begay[8] (2017: 6) noted that:

> While four regional dialect groups are often used to describe the language--Sinkyone, Nongatl, Lassik, and Wailaki Elsasser 1978:191-192), Golla (2011) contends that divisions in general among "the Eel River Athabaskans are largely of Goddard's and Kroeber's making" and *"are based on external linguistic observation, not internal social attitudes."* [Emphasis added.]

[7] Cismontane California is comparable to Jepson's California Floristic Province and includes all of the state to the west of the Cascade/Sierra Nevada/Peninsula Range watershed divides. The Transmontane consists of the regions to the east of the divide: the Great Basin, Modoc Plateau, and the desert regions of the state.

[8] Dr. Kayla Begay is an Assistant Professor of Native American Studies at Cal Poly Humboldt. Her dissertation provides the first "phonological, morphological, and limited syntactic description of Wailaki, which is a cover term, used by many tribal descendants, for a dialect continuum also known as Eel River Athabascan/Dene" (Begay 2017: 1).

The Southern Athabascans
Speakers of the Wailaki Dialect

This study focuses on the southern Athabascans who were speakers of the Wailaki dialect. The Mattole and Bear River people spoke distinctly different dialects than the Wailaki, and there seems to have been more of a "cultural distance" between these two groups and Wailaki speakers[9]. In northwestern Mendocino County the Cahto (referred to as the Kato by Kroeber 1925, Baumhoff 1958, et al), were the southernmost Athabascan speaking group on the Pacific Coast. They inhabited the region centered on Long Valley and Branscomb and spoke a dialect that was very different from that of the other southern Athabascans. Moreover, the Cahto appear culturally to have had more in common with the Yuki and Northern Pomo.

It is unlikely that southern Athabascans classified by linguists as speaking the Wailaki dialect living here prior to the historic era ever self-identified as Wailaki, Lassik, Sinkyone, or Nongatl. Although the name collectively for their people has been lost, several individuals interviewed by the author suggested that it was some derivative of the word *ken'-es-ti* (personal communication: FCD, LH; also see Merriam field notes).

Ethnographer C. H. Merriam (1923: 276) believed that the word *Nongatl* (derived from the Hupa language) was used by all of the southern Athabascans of the Wailaki dialect to refer to their language; writing:

> In the course of my field work among the southern Athapascan tribes of California I have made particular inquiries about this word [Nongatl], and in several cases have had it given me without inquiry on my part. It proves to be a general or blanket name used by themselves for all the Southern Athapascan tribes, from Iaqua and Yeager Creek on the north to the northern border of Round Valley on the south, thus including the Athapascan Wilakke. Obviously therefore, instead of being restricted to a particular tribe or division, it is a supertribal name. *The Southern Athapascans say it is the name of their nation covering all the tribes between Round Valley and Iaqua.* (From the original. Emphasis added.]

As noted earlier, the word Wailaki is not Athabascan, rather, it is a Wintun word roughly translated as "north language." Wailaki oral histories suggest that the tribal name was first used at the beginning of the historic period, when the Indians still living in the region, and who were survivors of the "Indian Wars" of the 1850s and early 1860s, began to self-identify as Wailaki (personal communication: TT, FCD).

[9] This was also evident to the author during interviews with individuals of Wailaki descent--see Chapter 7 and Map 7-1.

Some variation of the term Wailaki[10] (Wi-lak-ke, Wylackies, Wry Lackers, Wylaks, Ylackas) was first used at that time by the newly arriving settlers, and in the local newspapers. The use of the term Wailaki by whites to refer to Indians in the late 1850s was not based on any discernable criteria related to cultural or linguistic differences or territorial boundaries. Rather, it was simply a racial category referring to all of the Indians living in the Yolla Bolly country and upper Mattole watershed of southwestern Humboldt and northern Mendocino Counties.

In the early 1860s, Chief Lassik (some newspapers used the name *Las-sic*) led a group of villages centered on the Blocksburg area (originally called Powellville) in an uprising against the newly arriving settlers (Keter 1990). Due to their strong resistance to white encroachment into their homeland, the Indians in the Blocksburg area began to be identified in the local newspapers as "Lassik's band" and soon the term "Lassik" (or Lassic) was being applied to all of the Indians living in the area centered on the Main Eel River from about Alderpoint north to Bridgeville, and in the northern part of the Yolla Bolly country[11]. By the mid-1860s, the terms Wailaki and Lassik (or some variation) were used somewhat interchangeably to refer to the Indians still living in this region.

According to local newspapers, Chief Lassik and his band were captured in 1862. The people, after spending weeks surviving in inhumane conditions (many dying of exposure, disease, or lack of adequate nutrition) on the south spit of Humboldt Bay, were eventually sent to the Smith River Indian Reservation. Shortly after their arrival at the reservation, many of them, led by Chief Lassik, escaped. After they returned to their homeland, local newspapers reported that "Lassic's band" had "terrorized" the settlers living in southeastern Humboldt and southwestern Trinity Counties (Keter 1990: 14).

Sometime in June or early July 1863, a group of settlers, some from as far away as Round Valley, attacked Chief Lassik's encampment near Fort Seward. This attack appears to have been led by Stephen Fleming, who by this time headed a group of mercenaries who were paid (presumably by local settlers) to kill any Indian that the U. S Army Mountaineer Battalion missed or could not find (Keter 1990, Genzoli and Martin 1961: 28). Chief Lassik and all of his men who were not killed during the initial attack on their encampment were captured and subsequently murdered (Keter 1990: 14).

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[10] William J. Bauer (2009: Preface) of Wailaki/Concow descent, who was born and raised in Round Valley, notes in his book *We were all like Migrant Workers Here* that he uses the term *Wailacki* taken from the tribal seal of the Round Valley Indian Reservation, rather than Wailaki: "in order to produce a book that will be understood by the Round Valley Indian Community." Although the term Wailacki is still not commonly used locally (see Begay 2017 for example) it is possible that will change in the future.

[11] By the end of January 1861, most of the settlers in Kettenpom Valley had left due to the cold winter and only John Fulwider remained. In February, Fulwider's house was robbed by Indians and he left the valley (*Humboldt Times* February 23, 1861) leaving it deserted, at least temporarily. Fulwider, it appears, was eventually killed by Indians along the Mad River where his bloody hat was found (Keter 1990: 7).

Early Ethnographic Fieldwork

As traumatic as the conflicts were between the Euro-Americans and the more northerly Athabascans groups (Hupa, Tsnungwe, Whilkut, Chilula) in Humboldt County in the 1850s and 1860s (Bledsoe 1885, Coy 1929), the depredations against the southern Athabascans were even more destructive and led to the near extinction of an entire people (Keter 1990, 1994a, Carranco and Beard 1981, Norton 1979). Anthropologist Martin Baumhoff (1958: 157) suggested the reason for the lack of ethnographic data for the southern Athabascans was "an accident in the history of ethnology" due to the fact that most ethnographers working at that time in northwestern California were primarily focused on the Hoopa, Yurok, and Karuk located within Kroeber's Northwest Culture Area.

This lack of ethnographic data for the southern Athabascans is, however, more than "an accident in the history of ethnology." Although Baumhoff (who never visited the region) wrote that "as late as the 1920s and 1930s there were a good many southern Athabascan elders still available to interview," that is simply not the case. The primary reason for the lack of ethnographic data is due to the fact that the vast majority of southern Athabascans born prior to the mid-1850s were murdered during the "Indian Wars" of the 1850s and 1860s by local settlers, vigilante groups, or the military. The "battles" that took place during the "Indian Wars" were little more than one-sided massacres of entire villages. Today these kinds of atrocities are referred to as ethnic cleansing.

The few survivors were rounded up and sent to Indian Reservations (Keter 1990, Carranco and Beard 1987). The Indian children whose parents were murdered in the massacres were usually kidnapped and sold into slavery under the California Indentured Servant Act[12]. Passage of this law resulted in the separation of a generation of many Indian children from their parents and adults from links to their extended families, their native languages, and their ability to take part in and share cultural traditions. U. S. Army Captain Thomas Ketcham operating from Fort Baker (located in the headwaters region of the Van Duzen River near Mad River Divide) reported (USWD 1897a: 982):

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[12] The ironically named *Act for the Government and Protection of Indians*, more commonly referred to as the Indian Indentured Servant Act, was passed in 1850 by the state legislature in the newly created state of California. The law provided a legal basis for the removal of Indians from their homelands. As a result of this law, the enslavement of Indian children, and in some instance adults, was legal in California until passage of the 13th Amendment in 1865.

The law provided that any "White person" could go before a local Justice of the Peace to acquire the legal right to indenture Indian children with no parents (who were often massacred and the children captured in order to sell). If the Judge was satisfied that no coercion occurred, the person obtained a certificate that authorized him to have the care, custody, control and earnings of an Indian minor, until their age of majority (for males, eighteen years, and females, fifteen years). In reality, little attention was paid to how Indian children were acquired and the kidnapping of children as a means to make money was common. Moreover, any citizen (white male) could apply to the local Justice of the Peace for the removal of Indians from lands that were in their possession (this included individuals squatting on tracts of public domain lands). If an Indian was convicted of violating any law that was punished by paying a fine, any white person, with the consent of the Justice, could pay the fine and court costs and in return the Indian was "compelled to work until his fine was discharged or cancelled."

> I have been informed that there are quite a number of citizens who intend, as soon as the snow goes off, to make a business of killing the bucks whenever they can find them and selling the women and children into slavery. It is supposed that they will make their headquarters somewhere in the neighborhood of Fort Seward, taking their captives to Long Valley, there selling them to certain parties for $37.50 per head, who put them in a covered wagon, to take them down to the settlements, and there dispose of them at very handsome profit.

One trader in Long Valley was said to have made $15,000 in one year.[13] The editor of the *Humboldt Times* (February 23, 1861) wrote in an article entitled *Apprenticing Indians*:

> "What a pity the provisions of the law are not extended to greasers, Kanakas, and Asiatics. It would be so convenient....to carry on a farm or mine when all the hard and dirty work is permitted by apprentices." [From the original.]

There is, therefore, a good reason why the southern Athabascans are among the least studied people who inhabited northwestern California during the prehistoric period. It is due to the fact, as discussed in Chapter 3 that by the early 1900s when ethnographers first began to work in this area, the total number of southern Athabascan elders with any personal memories of the pre-contact period probably numbered less than a couple dozen.

[13]At $37.50 per individual that would have totaled approximately 400 Indian women and children (USWD 1897a: 897).

Chapter 2

The Recording and Interpretation of Ethnographic Data

Before discussing and critiquing the cultural data collected on the southern Athabascans, it is necessary to first provide a brief contextual overview of the principal ethnographers who worked in the region, their methodologies, and the theoretical framework (paradigm) used in their collection of ethnographic data. That is; when and where the ethnographers accomplished their fieldwork, who were the people they talked to, and what kinds of cultural data were (and were not) recorded. Understanding the theoretical framework and methodologies of the ethnographers who worked with the southern Athabascans in northwestern California is critical to understanding what types of information were collected and what kinds of cultural information may have been overlooked.

The cultural information provided by southern Athabascan elders to ethnographers in the first few decades of the 20th century was recorded over 50 years after the people speaking the Wailaki dialect had suffered the traumatic loss of their homeland, and had seen their numbers decline by about 95% to less than a few hundred people (Keter 1990). Essentially, the bulk of ethnographic data for this entire region was collected from fewer than 20 to 30 people who still had some firsthand knowledge of their cultures prior to the historic period. This lack of consultants made the ethnographers task to document the pre-contact culture of the southern Athabascans a formidable if not impossible task.

Principal Ethnographers who worked with the Southern Athabascans

Stephen Powers

The first systematic ethnographic field work in northwestern California was carried out by Stephen Powers in the summers of 1871 and 1872. In 1875, Powers was appointed by the Department of the Interior as a Special Commissioner to collect ethnographic data on the Indians of Nevada and California for the Centennial Exhibition of 1876. His work was first published in the San Francisco *Overland Monthly* magazine, and eventually as a book in 1877 under the title *The Tribes of California*.

Anthropologist Alfred Kroeber (1925: IX) recognized that because of Power's lack of formal training and his ethnocentric perspective: "[p]robably the majority of his statements are inaccurate, many are misleading, and a very fair proportion are without foundation or positively erroneous." Kroeber (1925: IX), however, also recognized that despite these shortcomings:

> ...for the broad outlines of the culture of the California Indian, for its values with all their highlights and shadows, he can still do no better than consult the book.

Powers passed through the Yolla Bolly country in 1871. According to his book, Powers travelled from Weaverville to Hayfork, then crossed over South Fork Mountain to the Mad River watershed, before passing through Hettenshaw Valley and continuing south on the Zenia - Covelo Trail to Round Valley (Powers 1977: 114-130). Powers was the first ethnographer to use the term *Wailaki* to identify the southern Athabascans living in this region, noting that (1877: 114):

> In the Winton language *wai* signifies "north," and *lakki* "tongue," hence "people." So these are the North People. But they do not speak a language in any way related to the Wintin; and are therefore another instance of a California tribe bearing a name given them by a neighbor.
>
> ...they have a Wintun name (their own name is Ken'es-ti), and there are names for two places, Ketten Chow and Ketten Pum...which are drawn from the Wintun language within their domain.

Powers was also the first ethnographer to identify the Lassik as a distinct "tribe." At the time of his visit, Powers found the term Lassik was already in wide use. He wrote that:

> The Las'-sik formerly dwelt in Mad River Valley, from the headwaters down [north] to Low Gap, or thereabout, where they bordered on the Whilkut. They took their name from their last famous chief (Powers 1877: 121).

Powers placed Lassik territory well to the east of the Main Eel River watershed; centered on the headwaters region of the Mad River watershed, and areas to the east of South Fork Mountain in the headwaters region of the South Fork Trinity River watershed. Even by the time of Power's visit in 1871, only a few individuals in southern Athabascan territory with knowledge of the pre-contact era were still alive. It is evident, given the following statement from Powers, that he never interviewed a person from what he classified as Lassik territory. Perhaps more unsettling is that Powers (1877: 122) seemed to have little empathy for the Indians he was studying, nor any concern for their welfare. Reflecting the attitudes of the time, Powers wrote of the Lassik:

> This predatory gypsy life (they subsisted largely this way, not having a right to any fishing-grounds), insured their speedy destruction by the whites. In 1871 it was said there were only three of them left; these had returned to the ancestral valley of Mad River, and were living under protection of the whites.

Fredrick W. Hodge

Anthropologist Fredrick Hodge edited and produced the *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico*; it was published in two volumes by the U.S. Government Printing Office,

the first in 1907 and the second in 1910. This was an effort to create an encyclopedic overview for all of the Indian tribes of North America. It has some very limited information (totaling less that two pages), including a discussion of territorial boundaries, of the Lassik, Sinkyone, and Wailaki. It appears linguist Pliny Goddard (discussed below) provided most if not all of the ethnographic data for this chapter.

Edward Curtis

Edward Sheriff Curtis began his career in the late 1800s as a photographer. After becoming interested in the study of North American Indians around the turn-of-the-century, Curtis was given a chance to pursue his interests when J. P. Morgan (one of the richest man in America at that time) offered him $75,000 to produce a series on the North American Indian of 20 volumes containing 1,500 photographs. Morgan was to receive 25 sets, and 500 original prints from Curtis as his method of repayment. In addition to Morgan, a number of other wealthy and powerful men eventually supported Curtis financially or politically. This included the railroad tycoons E. H. Harriman and Henry E. Huntington, steel magnate Andrew Carnegie, and a number of other prominent industrialists, as well as a number of government officials including conservationist Gifford Pinchot (Chief of the Forest Service until 1910, and later governor of Pennsylvania) who were also involved with the project at some point.

Between 1907 and 1930, Curtis published The *North American Indian* consisting of 20 volumes of narrative text with hundreds of photogravure images. The goal was to provide a complete study in one series of volumes on all of the Indian cultures found in North America. Each volume is accompanied by a portfolio of large photogravure plates. Theodore Roosevelt wrote the Foreword to the first volume, and allowed his name to be used for publicity purposes. Curtis's most significant mentor and travelling companion George Bird Grinnell (Gidley 1994: 181, Keter 2015: 13) was a world famous naturalist, editor of *Forest and Stream* magazine, and an authority on some of the Great Plains Indian tribes. Like most of the "natural historians" at that time, Grinnell viewed indigenous peoples, in contrast to "civilized" peoples, as part of a continuum, together with geological formations, and flora and fauna--i.e. they were part of the "natural world" and their "primitive cultures" a vestige of the past.

Anthropologist Franz Boas, established the first PhD program in anthropology in the country at Columbia University, and is considered the "father of American Anthropology." Boas was known as one of the most prominent and vociferous critics of scientific racism (Keter 2022: 3). The theory of scientific racism (also referred to as "biological racism"), contended that evidence existed supporting the hypothesis that differences in intelligence between "civilized peoples" and those from more "primitive cultures" were a result of racial factors. Essentially, somehow based on "brain size" and cranial morphology--people of color (including Indians) were smaller brained, and they were, therefore, "racially inferior" to what was termed "the superior race"--that of course being white Europeans.

Based on his extensive research of skeletal anatomy, Boas proved empirically that cranial shape and size were highly malleable and variable, rather than a racial trait. Further, he contended that differences in human behavior are largely acquired through social learning and culture (enculturation). Based on his findings, Boas introduced the concept of *cultural relativism* as being the prism through which to view the differences in behavior between human groups, and that cultures cannot be objectively ranked as higher or lower, or better or more correct: "but that all humans see the world through the lens of their own culture, and judge it according to their own culturally acquired norms." Today cultural relativism is a central tenet of anthropology.

Unlike Boas, however, Curtis like many people at the time--including some of the ethnographers who were working in the field -- viewed Indians as a vanishing race doomed to extinction; whose past was in urgent need of recording and documentation before they and their cultures completely disappeared. Mick Gidley (1994: 182): who authored a study and critique of the photographs taken by Curtis for the 20 volume set, writes:

> [Curtis'] 1904 picture of a line of Navajos...a picture actually titled *The Vanishing Race* - was selected as the key initial image in The North American Indian; its caption declared: The thought which this picture is meant to convey is that the Indians, as a race, already shorn of their strength and stripped of their primitive dress, are passing into the darkness of an unknown future.
>
> James Faris in his chapter "Navajo and Photography" in the book *Photography's Other Histories* (Pinney and Peterson 2003), published two of Curtis' photographs of the same Navajo woman (Images 2-1 and 2-2) and asked his readers the question: "Can you guess which one made it into Curtis' book?"

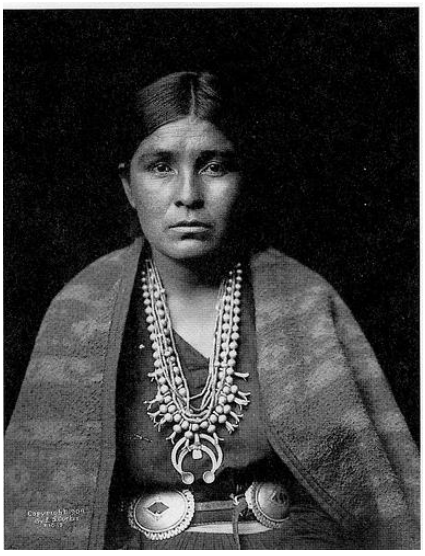


Image 2-1

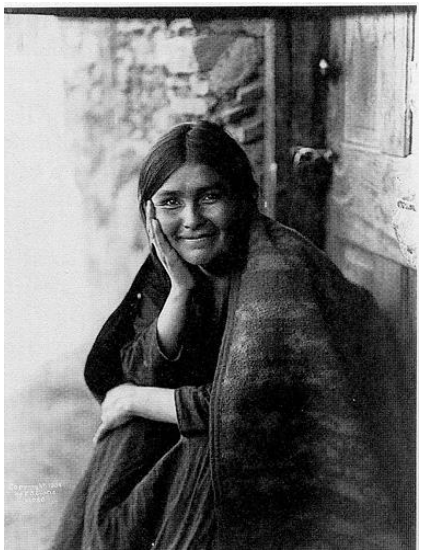


Image 2-2

(Curtis 1924 in Gidley 1994: 182)

Thus, Indians were seen by many Americans as a relic of the past, viewed from an almost nostalgic perspective. For example, many of Curtis' photographs were staged with historic items in the negatives erased from the final prints. Gridley (1994: 181) notes that this commercialism of a vanishing past could be profitable and shows that: "the entrepreneurial, even exploitative, aspirations of America's financial elites could be profitably applied to the North American Indian project."

As noted earlier, Curtis had begun his career as a photographer, but he actually spent little time working with the Indians recording ethnographic data for the project. Volume 14 of The *North American Indian* contained chapters on the Kato (Cahto, 15 pages) and the Wailaki (14 pages). The photos (Images 2-3a and 2-3b) in Volume 14 are dated the year the book was published (1924) and no information could be found to further identify the subjects than that included with the photos.

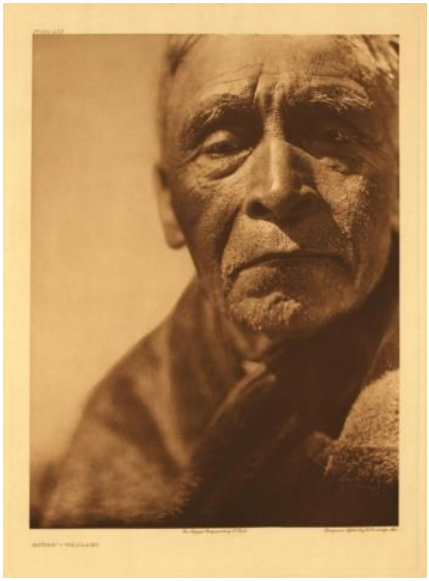


Image 2-3a
Curtis 1924: "Mintat – Wailaki"

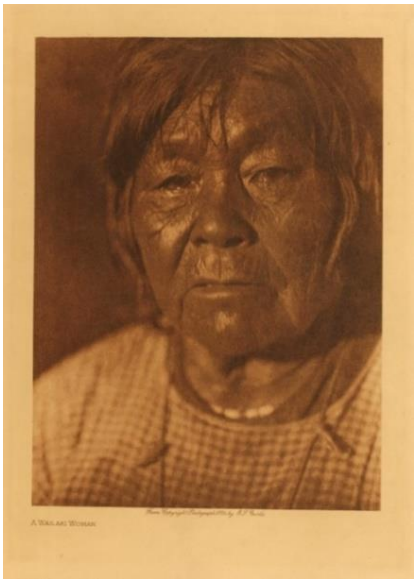


Image 2-3b
Curtis 1924: "Wailaki Woman"

It appears that although William Myers was one of the principal contributors to the 20 volumes series, Curtis gives little credit to him or the many other individuals who contributed to the project. In his introduction to the 1924 volume, Curtis writes that the fieldwork for Volume 14 was accomplished in the years 1915, 1916, 1922, and 1924, and briefly acknowledges Myers' contributions noting that:

> In collecting and preparing the material for this volume I have had the continued assistance and collaboration of Mr. W. E Myers.

Very Little information could be found on Myers, who started his career as a newspaperman. The Library of Congress website contains the following information on Myers.

> William E. Myers a former newspaperman became the single most important recruit. In later years Curtis frequently expressed his indebtedness to Myers' gift for languages and his ethnological assistance, but he did not publicly disclose that Myers was in fact the person responsible for the bulk of both the research and the writing of each succeeding volume of The North American Indian.

Unfortunately, no information was provided on the individuals in Round Valley who were interviewed. It appears Myers did interview some individuals of Wailaki descent taking notes in shorthand. The individual in the photo (Image 2-3a) has been identified by researchers as John Tip (personal communication David Heller, Ben Schill). Curtis also relied heavily on Goddard's and Powers' research on the Wailaki. Unsurprisingly the tribal boundaries as delineated for the southern Athabascans by Curtis (1924 14: 3-4) seem to correspond to those recorded by Goddard. Curtis notes that:

> The Wailaki group includes five sub-dialects, or what might be called five tribes, if only the people were somewhat more definitely organized on tribal lines. Farthest north of this group were the Nongatl, on the middle course of Mad river...South of them were the Lassik, on the upper course of Mad river, and on Eel river and its eastern affluents from the mouth of Van Doosen creek (the limit of the Eel River Wiyot) up to Kekawaka creek. Still farther southward were the Wailaki proper, on Eel river and its north fork, from Kekawaka creek to Yuki territory at Round valley. The Sinkyone territory lay west of the Lassik and Wailaki, principally on the lower South fork or Eel river. [From the original]

Alfred L. Kroeber

During the first half of the 20th century Alfred Kroeber (Image 2-4a) was considered to be the most respected and knowledgeable scholar of California ethnology. Kroeber's influence on ethnographers (among them many of his students) working in California during the first half of the 20th century, including the theoretical framework used for the collection of information and the analysis of ethnographic field work, cannot be overstated. Kroeber's hundreds of articles, reviews, and books (Julian Steward's 1962 bibliography listing Kroeber's work extends over 60 years and is 35 pages long) still forms the bedrock of California ethnography, and his theories on Culture Areas, Cultural Diffusion, and the Super Organic still reverberate in anthropological theoretical debates today.

Kroeber, who came from an upper middle class family of German descent, was raised in New York, and began attending Columbia University at the age of sixteen in 1892. He received an MA in English in 1897. While working as a teaching assistant he took a course on anthropology from Franz Boas. As a result, Kroeber became interested in the study of other cultures. In 1899, he accepted a fellowship in the PhD program at Columbia, and received his doctorate in 1901.

Later that year he received an appointment to the University of California, Berkeley, to establish an anthropology program. Kroeber, along with Pliny Goddard--fresh from Hoopa Valley (see below) were appointed instructors in the newly created Department of Anthropology. Phoebe Hearst, a regent at the university, and mother of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst, paid their $1,200 salaries for the next five years, as well as making significant financial and material contributions to the Museum of Anthropology, and paying for much of the fieldwork carried on by the university. In 1908, Samuel Barrett was awarded the university's first PhD in anthropology.

Kroeber, due to his position and influence within the anthropological community, was a driving force in the methodologies used to collect and organize ethnographic data on California Indians. He, in-turn, was influenced by his mentor Professor Boas and his ethnographic methodology used for collecting cultural data is referred to as *Boasian historical particularism*. This paradigm influenced the way Kroeber (and many others including his students) collected ethnographic data. The paradigm set forth the following criteria for the collection of data:

* Culture history could be separated both from the influence of individuals and the influence of time.

* The role of individuals in a society as the bearers of cultural change could be ignored. [This essentially inferred that cultural information provided by consultants that somehow varied from the "pure culture" of an ethnic group, as defined by Kroeber, could be disregarded.]

* The "carriers" of culture [Indian consultants] were of less interest than the information they could relate that was relevant to a reconstruction of the pre-contact aboriginal culture.

The methodology used for the collection of ethnographic data may help to explain why ethnographers at the time seemed to have displayed little or no interest in trying to document or understand how historic events were shaping and influencing the Indian men and women they interviewed. Nor did they seem to recognize the fact that many of these individuals were still striving to maintain their traditional belief systems and cultural values (Keter 2022).

This personal detachment from the individuals they were interviewing was due to the fact that the main interest of ethnographers and anthropologists was to study the pre-contact or "pure" aboriginal cultures free of outside influences. They seemed, for the most part, to express little concern for the people they interviewed, neither their present living conditions, nor their efforts to maintain their cultural identities. As Eric Smith notes (1990: 53) in his review on the methodologies employed by the ethnographers working in California to collect cultural data from Indian consultants at that time:

> Traditionally American anthropologists had paid little attention to the welfare of their subjects…… In general the federal government remained much more "activist" with respect to Native Americans than did academic anthropology. It employed anthropologists in the Soil

Conservation Service and the Applied Anthropology Unit of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Kroeber recognized that Indians with knowledge of the pre-contact period were quickly disappearing due to old age. Given this fact, he felt it was important, that ethnographers should focus on collecting as much information as possible from Indian elders regarding their knowledge of their pre-contact cultures and languages. During most summers in the first few decades of the twentieth century, Kroeber traveled the state practicing what he termed "salvage ethnography." This was little more than interviewing any elderly Indians who could be found who still had some knowledge of their cultures and languages prior to the beginning of the historic period.

In 1925, Kroeber published his monumental and influential *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Image 2-4b). Significantly, most of the ethnographic fieldwork used to write the book had been completed by 1920. The first and most in-depth chapters in the over 1,000-page book are on the Yurok. This was not only a result of Kroeber's extensive field work among the Yurok, but his theories related to Cultural Diffusion and the concept of Culture Areas.

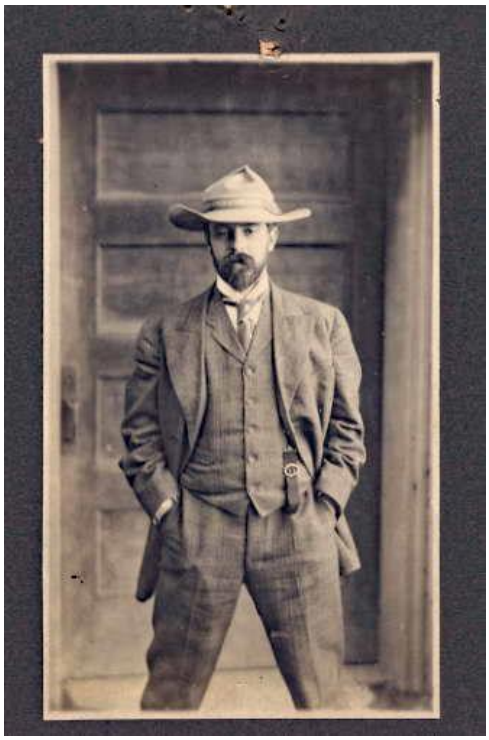


Image 2-4a
Alfred Kroeber c. 1927-1928
Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley

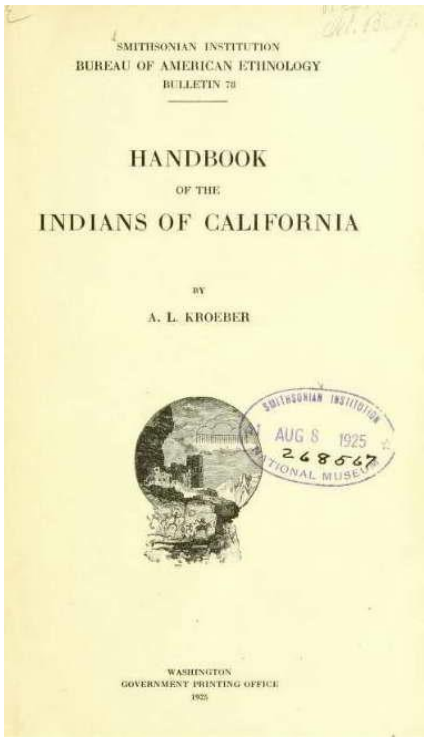


Image 2-4b
The Handbook first edition
Smithsonian Institution

Kroeber's Culture Area model, as noted earlier regarding the Yurok and Wiyot, was intended to demonstrate how cultures in close proximity share similar cultural traits despite differences in language. While his related theory of Cultural Diffusion posits that as

one moves further away from the "center" of a culture area, the differences in cultural traits with those at the center become more pronounced. The Yurok tribe, whose homeland was centered on the confluence of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers, was considered by him to be at the center or core of the California Northwest Coast Culture Area. Hence, Kroeber's personal interest in the Yurok.

In contrast, to the four chapters on the Yurok (97 pages), due to the lack of ethnographic data, Kroeber (1925: 141-158) only devotes 17 pages (two pages consist of photographs) to all six groups that he classified as the southern Athabascans: the (Kato (Cahto), Mattole/Bear River, Sinkyone, Nongatl, Wailaki, and Lassik. That brief chapter, in effect, summarized all of the relevant ethnographic data recorded for the southern Athabascans up to 1920.

Although later field work by Pliny Goddard, C. Hart Merriam, Gladys Nomland, Frank Essene, and a few others (see below) provided some additional ethnographic data, after the publication of the *Handbook*, the dye was cast and the names of the various southern Athabascan "tribes" as set forth by Kroeber (relying largely on Goddard), as well as the general outlines of their territorial boundaries became generally accepted as definitive by the academic community.

Pliny Goddard

Pliny Earle Goddard accomplished some of the most important linguistic and ethnographic studies on the Athabascans of northwestern California. Goddard was the son of a minister in the Society of Friends and completed his MA by 1896. He was sent to Hoopa Valley by the Women's Indian Aid Association in March of 1897, where he worked as a lay missionary. Eventually, Goddard developed an interest in ethnography and linguistics. He worked in Hoopa Valley until 1900, when he enrolled at UC Berkeley to study linguistics. He also studied linguistics at the University of Michigan, where he received his PhD in 1909. Its subject was Hupa grammar and it was one of the first PhDs in linguistics ever granted by an American university.

Goddard published a large body of work related to linguistic analysis--much of it on the Hupa language. Goddard used the International Phonetic Alphabet in recording Indian languages to permit analysis by linguists in the future.[14] Goddard eventually became conversant in the Hupa language, and was recognized as one of the preeminent linguists in the country at the time of his death. Although Goddard spent much of his time working with the Hupa, he also worked some with the southern Athabascans including the people he classified as the Sinkyone in the South Fork Eel River watershed, and the Wailaki

[14] The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was first introduced in the late 1800s by a group of French and English language teachers and linguists. It was based on previous efforts to come up with a better system of representing spoken language in writing that could be used regardless of the language being studied. The IPA is based on the Latin script, and uses as few non-Latin letters as possible. The IPA is designed to represent those qualities of speech and sounds in oral language, and the separation of words and syllables from all languages.

villages centered on the Main Eel River. Goddard's fieldwork consisted mainly of word lists, the locations and names of villages and geographic features, and the recording of some myths. Goddard's ethnographic data will be discussed in greater detail in the section below on tribal boundaries

C. Hart Merriam

C. Hart Merriam was a biologist-turned-ethnographer who began his ethnographic fieldwork in northwestern California in 1910. He continued working in the region until a few years before his death in 1942. Merriam was born in New York City in 1855. His father, Clinton Levi Merriam, was a U.S. congressman. He first studied biology and anatomy at Yale University, and received a Medical Degree from Columbia University in 1879. He practiced medicine for several years before giving into the urge to follow his desire to become a professional naturalist. In 1886, at the age of thirty, he took a positon as the first chief of the Division of Economic Ornithology and Mammalogy with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

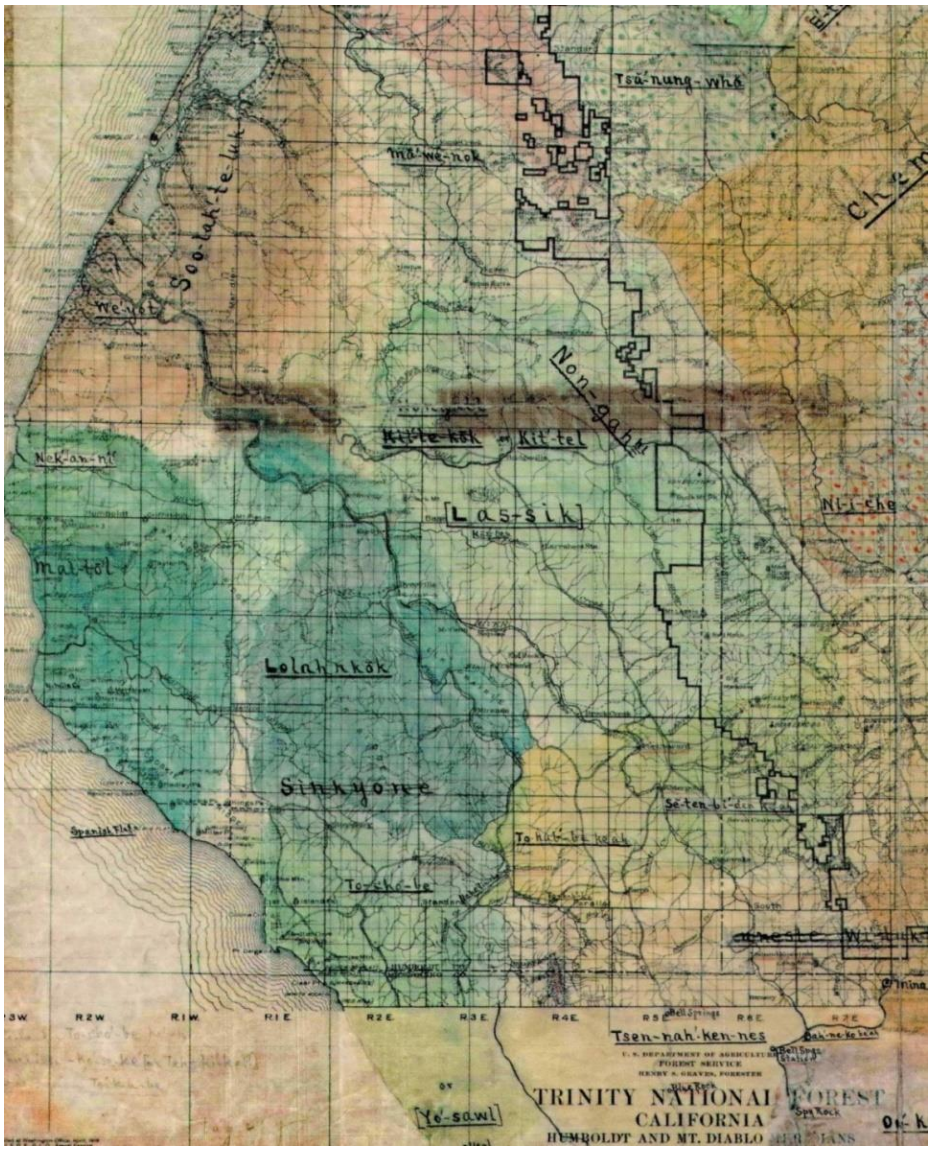
During this era, Merriam is best known for his fieldwork that lead to his development of the *life zones* concept still in use today. He was the first to note that changes in vegetation associations in the mountains of the west that occur with an increase in latitude at a constant elevation, are similar to changes in vegetation associations seen with an increase in elevation at constant latitude.

Eventually, towards the end of the 19th century, Merriam, already recognized as one of the preeminent naturalists in the country, became interested in the field of ethnology. Initially, Merriam worked throughout the west interviewing Indians and recording cultural, linguistic, and geographical data. One of the reasons Merriam began to work with the Athabascans in northwestern California according to anthropologist Martin Baumhoff (1958: 157) was at the suggestion of Kroeber, due to the fact that the California Athabaskans at that time, were one of the least studied aboriginal groups in the state.

Merriam had spent much of his professional life working outside the state of California. For that reason, he was not as influenced by Kroeber's theories related to Culture Areas or Cultural Diffusion, as was nearly every other ethnographer working at that time in California. During his later years, Merriam lived in Marin County and spent summers driving the back roads of Humboldt, Trinity, Mendocino, and Del Norte Counties interviewing any Indian elders he could find who might have knowledge of the pre-contact era. Robert Heizer (1976: i) editor of *Ethnographic and Ethnosynonymic Data From Northern California*, a compendium of some of Merriam's unpublished field data for this region, noted that:

> Merriam clearly had a special aptitude for finding last survivors of tribes in some out of the way place...and by becoming friendly with them secured many data which would otherwise have not been made a matter of record.

Much of Merriam's largely unpublished data on the Athabascans, including extensive field notes, word lists, and a large collection of photographs (many of them now available online) are located on the UC Berkeley campus in the Bancroft Library. Merriam, given that one of his primary interests was geography, focused a significant amount of his effort recording village locations, defining territorial boundaries, and in the collection of word lists[15]. He also used maps--including those of several National Forests in California--to plot tribal boundaries. These maps included the names of the various tribes hand-labeled on the maps by Merriam (Map 2-5). A second important primary source is located in Washington D.C. where some of Merriam's hand-written journals and edited word lists are archived at the Library of Congress Annex.



Map 2-5
Merriam's hand-labeled map: Trinity National Forest 1920
Merriam Field Notes: Bancroft Library

[15] Merriam did not use the International Phonetic Alphabet like Goddard but his own phonetic system.

One of Merriam's consultants, Lucy Young, was one of the few individuals interviewed by ethnographers who had any memories of the ethnographic period[16]. Merriam, in fact, may have been the first ethnographer to interview her. On June 29 and 30, 1922 (some photos are dated July 1) he visited the Zenia area and interviewed Lucy Young and another local Indian man Yellowjacket[17].

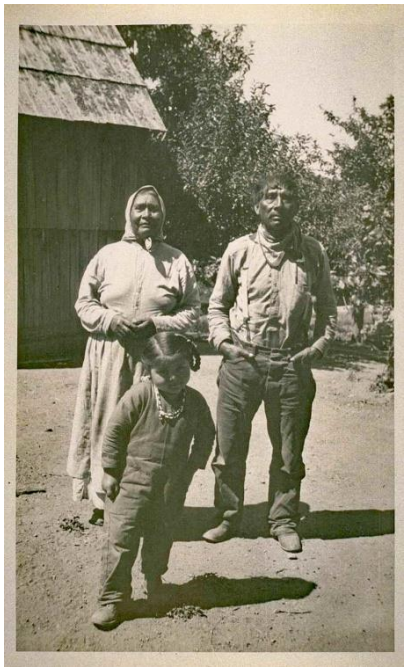


Image 2-6
Merriam caption: Mrs. Lucy Young with Yellowjacket of the Cheteg-ge-keah
July 1, 1922[18]
(UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library)

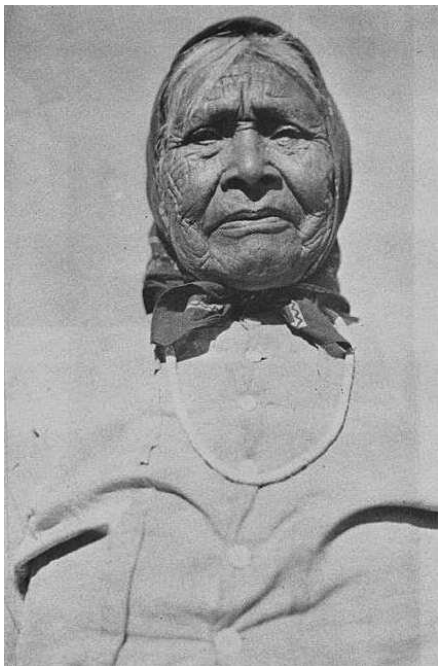


Image 2-7
Lucy Young
Round Valley
Summer of 1937
(Susman 1976)

It appears that Merriam spent very little time with Young, and Yellowjacket--primarily collecting some vocabularies, and a few hand-written field notes. Besides Lucy Young, and Yellowjacket, Merriam interviewed a number of other individuals in southwestern Trinity County including Nancy Doby (Essene and some other ethnographers spelled it Dobey) Fred Major, and his wife Mary Major.

Despite Merriam's large amount of field data, he published very little on this region (see, for example, Merriam 1923). As a result, Kroeber did not have Merriam's ethnographic

---

[16] Lucy Young was born in the *Sittenbidden* village located at Alderpoint in 1844 according to family records (personal communication TT; see Keter 2009).

[17] For a brief biography of Lucy Young see TCC Vol 2: B03, and for a brief biography of Yellowjacket also known as Jack French see TCC Vol. 2: B02

[18] Also in the photo is Marie Clark great granddaughter of Lucy Young. She is wearing a beaded necklace given to her by Lucy Young (personal communication TT).

data available when he published his *Handbook* in 1925. Merriam's lack of published data has probably contributed to the primacy of Kroeber's original work--especially related to the tribal names applied to the southern Athabascans and the delineation of tribal boundaries.

Frank Essene

Frank Essene was a graduate student of Kroeber's, and he was assigned the task of using the *Cultural Element Distributions* (CED) questionnaire devised by Kroeber to interview Indian elders living in Round Valley who might be able to provide information about their cultures prior to the historic era. The Cultural Elements Distributions (a perfect example of the use of the Boisean Historical Particularism methodology in the collection of ethnographic data) contained a list of hundreds of standardized questions regarding the names of villages, word lists, religious practices, hunting and fishing practices, kinship and affinal relations, etc., with the interviewer going down a long checklist to see if a particular "cultural element" was present. Essene undertook his field work[19] at Round Valley in the summer of 1938, where he spent a considerable amount of time interviewing Indian elders from several different linguistic groups on the Indian reservation; including individuals he classified in his study as Lassik, Kato (Cahto), Northern Pomo (*Kalékau*), and Yuki. His ethnographic fieldwork is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

Gladys A. Nomland

Gladys Nomland was a PhD. student of Kroeber's and the limited information she recorded on the Sinkyone was the result of two brief visits to the southern Humboldt County region in 1928 and 1929. As discussed in more detail below, she interviewed some of the same individuals--Sally Bell, as well as Jenny Young, and her husband Jack Woodman--who had been previously interviewed by Kroeber, Merriam, and Goddard. Nomland published the results of her fieldwork S*inkyone Notes* in 1935.

Being a graduate student, it is quite possible she was sent up specifically to interview a number of already identified "Sinkyone informants," since she did not interview anyone not previously interviewed by Goddard or Kroeber. Nomland (1935: 149) wrote the notation "Information unreliable" in her article following a short description of both Jenny Young and Sally Bell. Given the relatively late date of her two visits to the area, her lack of confidence in the reliability of her informant's statements was probably due to their advanced age (all were over the age of 90 when she interviewed them), as it appears that Goddard and Merriam did not note any similar difficulties when they interviewed these individuals two decades earlier.

[19] Essene's field notes are located at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, formerly the Robert H. Lowie Museum of Anthropology, UC Berkeley.

Amelia Susman

In the summer of 1937 Amelia Susman, a PhD student at Columbia University, was provided a grant by the WPA (Works Progress Administration) to travel to Round Valley to undertake field work at the Round Valley Indian Reservation for her PhD dissertation. Franz Boas was her mentor and helped secure the grant shortly after he retired. The famous cultural anthropologists Ruth Benedict (*Patterns Of Culture*, 1934) and Ralph Linton (*The Study of Man,* 1936) were her faculty advisors. Susman interviewed Lucy Young and several other Wailaki elders as well as Yuki, Pomo, Maidu and individuals from some of the other tribes who were living on the Round Valley Indian Reservation at that time.

There is little in the way of new ethnographic data, for the most part Susman summarized Powers', Curtis' and Kroeber's published articles and books. Susman's study *The Indians of Round Valley* (1976), however, is the only ethnographic study from this era that made an effort to document the horrendous living conditions faced by the Indians living in Round Valley at that time. In her paper, she documented the inadequate housing provided by the government, the poor medical care, and a lack of economic opportunity, as well as, the overt racism held by most members of the local white community against the Indians living on the reservation. As Susman (1976: 53) in her dissertation noted:

> "Relief" or "welfare" for the Indians is opposed by Whites. Even one of the more sympathetic White women said they do not feel that the county should be responsible for Indians since the government dumped them here.

Her dissertation was considered so controversial by Professor Linton that it was not published for almost 40 years[20]. Instead, Susman (who lived to the age of 106) was told by Linton to drop the project and to change her dissertation topic. In 1976 when her Round Valley dissertation was finally published Susman (1976: vi) wrote that:

> It was implied, or I felt that it was implied, that I might have been less than objective, that I had allowed my emotional reaction to the horrors I had heard from my informants and had read in old San Francisco newspapers and Bureau of Indian Affairs reports to color my presentation. Genocide and exploitation of native peoples to the point of slavery were not, I suppose, popular subjects in 1937.

Cora Dubois

Cora Dubois was born in New York and graduated with an M.A. in history from Columbia University where she took courses from Ruth Benedict and Franz Boas. She was encouraged by them to pursue a PhD in anthropology and moved to California where she

[20] See Keter 2022 for the reasons why it was not published in 1937.

enrolled at the University of California studying under Kroeber and noted anthropologist Robert Lowie. She received her PhD in 1932. In 1939, her study of the Ghost dance that originated among the Washoe, *The 1870 Ghost Dance*, was published. For the study, she visited a number of Indian Reservations in western Nevada, northern California, and western Oregon.

She visited Round Valley in 1937 and wrote about Big Head Cult, an offshoot of the Ghost Dance. The Big Head Cult and associated dance was brought to Round Valley around 1873. It appears that her visit to Round Valley was short and Wailaki Tip was the only Wailaki she interviewed. He provided Dubois with most of the information discussed in Chapter 4 on the movement of the Big Head Cult Dance from Round Valley north into the Yolla Bolly country and southeastern Humboldt County.

Martin A. Baumhoff

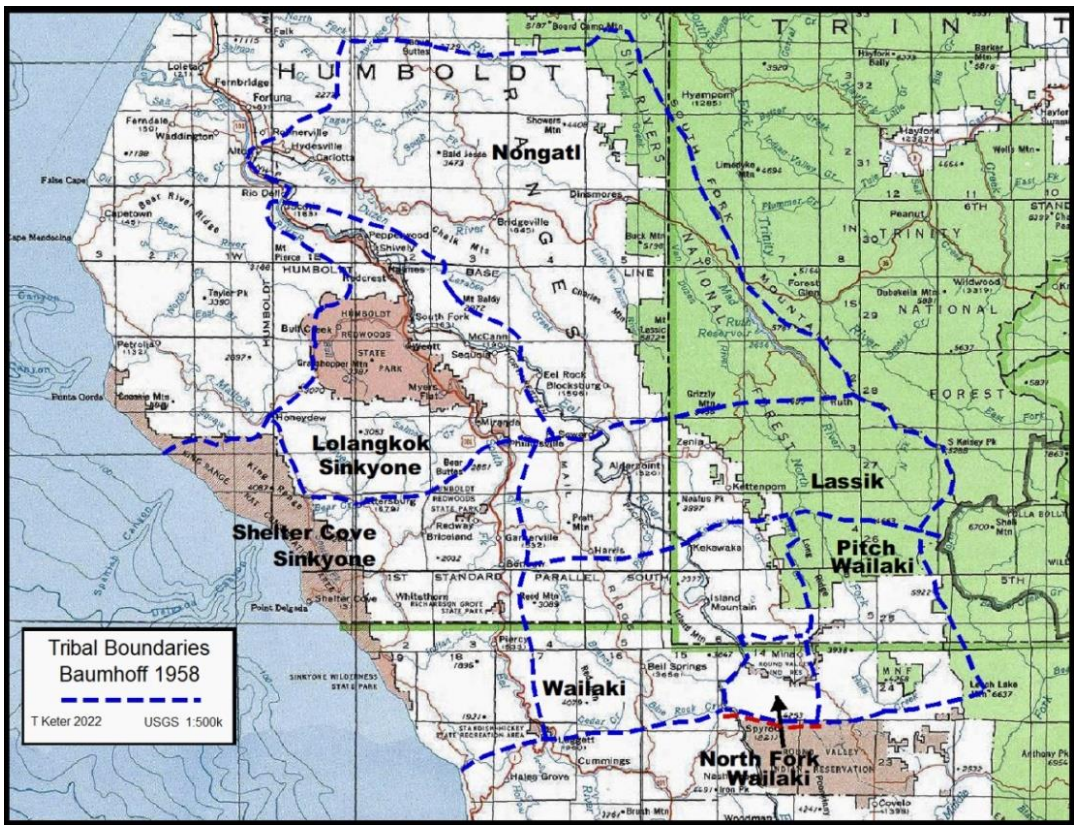
Martin Baumhoff was a student at UC Berkeley and published C*alifornia Athabascan Groups* in 1958 that was essentially his PhD dissertation. He was the first researcher to have full access to Merriam's extensive collection of largely unpublished field notes on the Athabascans. Kroeber and fellow anthropologist R. F. Heizer at UC Berkeley (two of the most influential anthropologists in California at the time) coauthored the Preface to Baumhoff's paper (1958: iii) noting that after the Smithsonian Institution approved Baumhoff's access to Merriam's field notes:

> ... Mr. Martin Baumhoff began his one year of investigation on September 15, 1955. After discussion, we agreed that the area where tribal distributions, village locations, and aboriginal population numbers were least certainly known--and also a field where the Merriam data were fairly abundant--was the territory of the several Athabascan tribes of Northwestern California. Under our direction, Baumhoff patiently assembled all the available material on these tribes, producing what is certainly the most definitive study yet made of their distribution and numbers.
>
> ...*We believe that the maps showing group distribution represent the closest possible approximation to the aboriginal situation that can now be arrived at.* [Emphasis added.]

In addition to Merriam, Baumhoff relied primarily on the field notes and publications of Kroeber, Essene, and Goddard; although he also references the work of Powers, Nomland, Dubois, and others who worked in the region. The study provides an analysis and critique of the strengths and weaknesses of the various ethnographers' data, including their published articles and unpublished field notes related to all of the Athabascan groups that inhabited northwestern California; including the aboriginal names for each group or "tribe," and the delineation of their territorial boundaries. It is notable, however, that Baumhoff did not undertake any further fieldwork, visit the area, nor did he interview any

additional southern Athabascans, or any other Indians still living in the region during the course of his research.

Baumhoff first made an effort to "reconcile" the often conflicting ethnographic data and geographical data; especially that between Merriam and Kroeber related to tribal names and territorial boundaries. He then produced a set of maps showing the territorial boundaries of the various southern Athabascans tribes, tribelets (Merriam's bands), and where possible, the location of village sites and other place names that had been recorded by the ethnographers. Today, most anthropologists accept the general conclusions of Baumhoff and his delineation of territorial boundaries for the southern Athabascans (Map 2-8), and simply reference Baumhoff's original 1958 article and maps when discussing the tribal organization of the southern Athabascans (see for example Elsasser' s map in the *Handbook of North American Indians* 1978: 191 Figure 1).



Map 2-8
Baumhoff's boundaries as outlined in his 1958 paper
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

The Collection and interpretation of Ethnographic Data

The method of collecting ethnographic data from the early 1900s to about the mid-1940s, as noted earlier, was often referred to as "salvage ethnography;" with ethnographers (especially students and associates influenced by Kroeber) interviewing any elderly

Indians who could be found who had some knowledge of their cultural history. Anthropologists of this era did not view native cultures as dynamic or flexible. Cultural variation based on individual preferences and beliefs was thought irrelevant and not recognized. Often, it is worth noting, ethnographers working in the field did not bother to determine the role within their cultures of the individuals they interviewed, and therefore what types of cultural information they might possess. Sometimes the information given to the ethnographers by consultants was ignored, or considered inaccurate or unreliable when it did not fit within the anthropologist's theoretical framework. For example, Kroeber, sometimes, discarded certain answers given by consultants that: "appeared to be 'unique' by assigning them to informant error" (Smith 1990: 62). As Eric Smith (1990: 62) in his Humboldt State MA Thesis noted:

> Kroeber maintained that the correlation coefficient to each tribal community had an 'expectable order,' i.e. that their order fit in with his assumptions about historical [i.e. cultural] diffusion. Each Pomo community...had to resemble more closely its adjacent neighbors than more distant communities; if not, Kroeber cleansed the data to meet this theory of historical diffusion.

Noted anthropologist Marvin Harris has discussed the concepts of *etic* and *emic*, and how these concepts relate to the collection, organization, interpretation, and presentation of ethnographic data. In his book, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory*, Harris (1968: 574) writes that etic statements are based upon "distinctions judged appropriate by the community of scientific observers." On the other hand, an emic approach to the collection and interpretation of ethnographic data is premised on the assumption "that between the actor and the observer, it is the actor who is better able to know his inner state."

The etic paradigm can be useful in the organization, interpretation, and presentation of ethnographic data in order to provide insights into the culture being studied, as well as for comparative purposes. Linguistics is one such example, where this approach can be useful, however, as noted in the Introduction, when the anthropologists "story" or conclusions regarding social organization, and the definition of territorial boundaries based on differences in closely related dialects, is considered to be definitive, it can cause problems for the individuals who are the direct descendants of the men and women interviewed by the ethnographers, and whose ancestors have lived in the region for generations.

Moreover, the data ethnographers recorded seems to be more of a "snapshot" or a synchronic description and overview of southern Athabascan social relations and territorial boundaries between the various "tribes" as they existed immediately prior to historic contact in the early 1850s. The Wailaki still living in the region, as documented in Part 2 of this study have another story of their past that presents a much more complex picture of their culture, and how flexibility in adapting to changing environmental conditions required that over time (diachronically), territorial boundaries had to be more flexible, and were primarily based on kinship, as well as a common interest to carefully manage the environment that the people depended on in order to maximize the productivity of desired subsistence resources.

Chapter 3
Southern Athabascan Wailaki Dialect Social and Political Organization

This chapter provides an overview and critique of the tribal organization and territorial boundaries, as documented in the ethnographic literature, for each of the tribes speaking the Wailaki dialect. Wailaki speakers, as noted in Chapter 1, were subdivided by ethnographers in to four distinct tribes: the Lassik, Nongatl, Sinkyone and Wailaki--each claiming a defined territory. Merriam, based on his own fieldwork, further subdivided the four tribes into smaller groups or sub-tribes (Table 3-1).

Dialect Group	Merriam tribes	Description
Sinkyone	Lo-lahn'-kok	Northern Sinkyone
	To-cho'-be	Southern/Shelter Cove Sinkyone
Nongatl	Kit-tel	Van Duzen River
	Nai'ai-chi	Bridgeville area
	Kuskatundun	Blocksburg area
Lassik	Set-ten-bi'-den	Alderpoint area
	To-kub-be	East Bank of South Fork Eel River
Wailaki	Tsen-nah'-ken-nes	Eel River Wailaki
	Bah'-ne-kut	North Fork Wailaki
	Che-teg-ge-kah	Pitch Wailaki

Table 3-1
Wailaki dialect Tribal Organization
(T. Keter 2023 after Begay 2017: 7)

Ethnographers recognized, however, that unlike most Indian tribes in North America, the southern Athabascans did not have well-defined tribal organizations based on some form of formalized collective political governance. Instead, ethnographers beginning with Kroeber defined the term tribe as it was related to southern Athabascan social organization as a grouping of villages with a dialect different from that of their neighbors. Kroeber coined the term "tribelet" to define the smaller grouping of villages that formed each tribe. Merriam referred to tribelets or groupings of smaller villages as “bands.” In his field notes on the southern Athabascans Merriam writes that:

> ...in winter families of each band were scattered along the river in small rancherias each consisting of four to seven families, mostly blood relations, living together in two to three houses. Usually there were seven to eight people to each house.

The Nongatl (Refer to Map 3-1)

The lower Van Duzen River Valley was one of the first regions of interior Humboldt County to have been settled by Euro-Americans. In 1850 the five Cooper brothers settled in the lower Yeager Creek valley just to the east of Hydesville. They established a ranch, and also built a sawmill and gristmill. In 1852, in order to market their farm products (including flour, butter, and pork), that were in great demand by the gold miners in Trinity County, they pioneered and blazed what became known as the County Line Trail (Keter 2013c: 11). The trail led east from the Eel River Valley, up the Van Duzen River canyon. It crossed over Showers Pass (at the head of the Van Duzen watershed), crossed the Mad River, and climbed to the crest of South Fork Mountain (the Mad River/South Fork Trinity watershed divide) before dropping down to Hyampom in Trinity County. At Hyampom, the trail then connected with the heavily traveled Humboldt-Hyampom Trail, as it headed east towards the gold mining centers in Trinity County (*Humboldt Historian* Jan-Feb 1980: 4).

By the mid-1850s with a pack trail to Weaverville now open, and as cattle and later sheep ranches (for example the Joe Russ Ranch) expanded their ranges further to the east towards Showers Pass and the Mad River country, all of the Indians still living in the lower and upper Van Duzen watershed were driven from their villages. The local whites then began an effort to kill all of the remaining Indian survivors hiding out in the mountains. By the early 1860s only a few of the Nongatl had been captured and sent to reservations--most were simply killed in one-sided massacres at refuge sites where they were hiding out in the mountains (Keter 1990, 2017). Notorious individuals like Hank Larabee (Raphael and House 2007: 167), who were known for their cruelty towards Indians, were responsible for the murder of dozens, if not hundreds of Indians.

The culmination of the conflict between the whites and Indians in Humboldt and Trinity Counties resulted in the "Two Years War." A. J. Bledsoe (1885) recounts this period of conflict in his book *Indian Wars of the Northwest* (see also Keter 1990). From early 1863 to the fall of 1864, the military took an active role in pursuing the few surviving Indians who were hiding out in the most remote inland regions of Humboldt and Trinity Counties (Keter 1990). During this period Board Camp Mountain, the upper Pilot Creek watershed, and the upper Grouse Creek region (all located within Baumhoff's Nongatl territory) was the final refuge for a substantial number of the Indians who had managed to avoid capture. Bledsoe (1885:240) wrote that Indian refugees:

> ...were in the mountains at the head of Pilot Creek, where they were almost inaccessible, and where they might elude the vigilance of pursuers until hunger compelled them to seek the more open country of the foothills.

The winter of 1864-65 marked the end of the "Indians Wars" in northwestern California and Bledsoe (1885:209) writes:

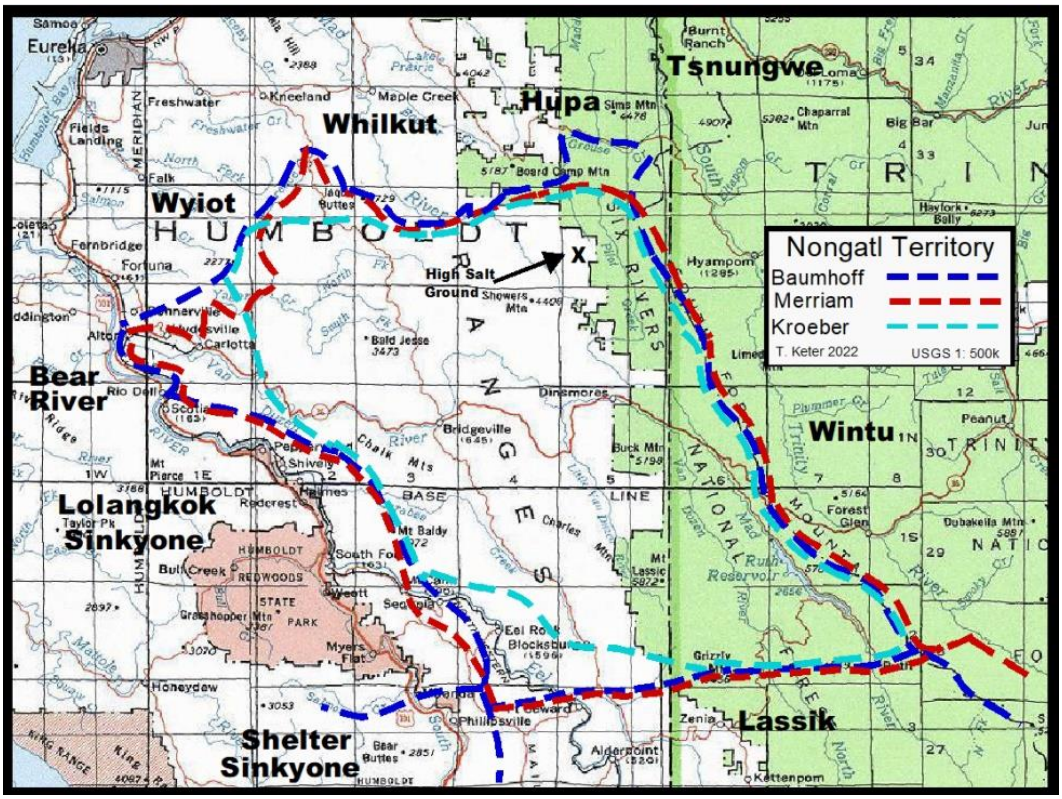
> In January 1865 Lieutenant Middleton, Company C, arrived at the Peninsula [Humboldt Bay] with a large number of prisoners, compromising the last of the hostilities in Trinity County.

Based on anthropologist Shelburne Cook's (1956) somewhat unreliable lower estimates, and Baumhoff's (1958) significantly higher estimates, the Nongatl population prior to the historic period appears to have been between about 3,300 and 5,000 people. Kroeber, in his *Handbook* (1925: 143), was only able to provide one-third of a page of information on the Nongatl, writing that: "[T]he census of 1910 enumerated just 6 [Nongatl]: there can be but few more."

Nongatl territory, as delineated by Baumhoff (1958), is centered on the Van Duzen River watershed and lower Eel River as shown on Map 3-1. The tribal/group boundaries as drawn by Merriam and Kroeber are also displayed on the map and discussed in the text below--they are included for comparison purposes--since their data on territorial boundaries provided the basis for Baumhoff's final maps.

Despite the fact that Nongatl territory, as delineated by Baumhoff (1958: Maps 1-4), comprised over 25% of the territory claimed by the southern Athabascans of the Wailaki dialect, as well as a quarter of the population, Baumhoff (1958:181) noted:

> Their culture is the least known of any group in northwestern California. Merriam evidently did not work in the area although he recorded a few of their words given him by George Burt's wife. George Burt was a Sinkyone, but his wife was born and raised near Bridgeville [Nongatl territory].



Map 3-1
Nongatl Territory
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

The word Nongatl is taken from the Hupa language and the word *noŋǵahl'* means "Athabascans to the south" (Golla in Elsasser 1978: 203). George Burt (Images 3-2 and 3-3); was classified by ethnographers as Sinkyone and he lived on the South Fork Eel River south of Dyersville, but his wife was from a village on the Van Duzen River and she was, therefore, presumably Nongatl. Burt was interviewed by several ethnographers see the section on the Sinkyone below for more information.

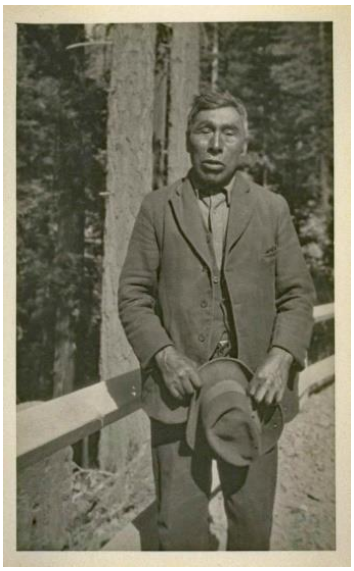


Image 3-2
George Burt August 22, 1921

Image 3-3
George Burt, wife, and child August 22, 1922

There are some unpublished data for the Nongatl recorded by Nomland from an unidentified consultant in 1928, as well a few notes that Frank Essene recorded at Round Valley related to the people who had once lived in the region around Blocksburg (Baumhoff 1958: 181). The ethnographic data recorded for the Nongatl includes a list of 18 village locations and their names recorded by Goddard in his field notes that were provided by George Burt's wife[21]. Given the lack of ethnographic data, not only for the Nongatl[22], but also for the surrounding Athabascan speakers that ethnographers classified as Wailaki, Sinkyone, Whilkut, Bear River, and Mattole makes the delineation of territorial boundaries for this entire region problematic.

Powers (1877: 124) in discussing the Indians from this region during his visit in 1872 wrote:

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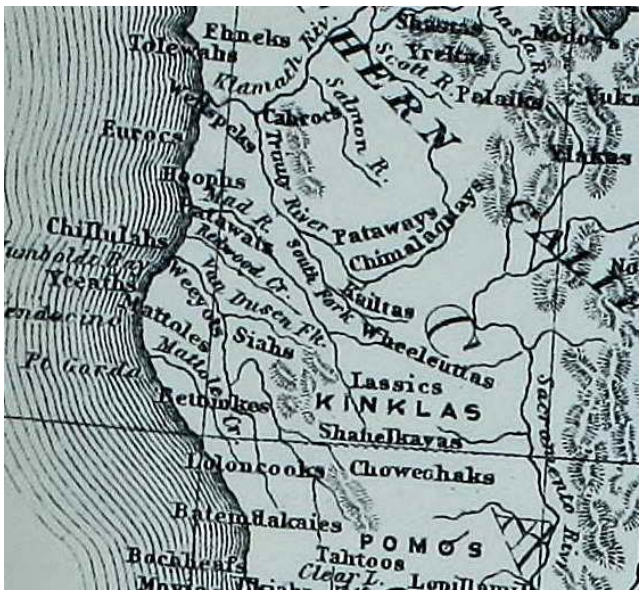
[21] There are also some notebooks that contain information provided to Goddard by Van Duzen Pete (see Rhode 2020).

[22] Jerry Rhode in his recent book *Southern Humboldt Indians* (2022) indicates that he had the chance to review the field notebooks of Gordon W. Hewes. This information has never been published. Hewes visited the area in 1940 while pursuing his MA in anthropology at Berkeley. Rhode (2022: 23) notes that:

> [Hewes] was fortunate enough to contact Nick Richard, who by then was the last living elder of his tribe. As a result Hewes's work contains brief but significant statements about the Indians of the Van Duzen area.

> The Wailaki [to the south] call the Sai'-az [the] Noan'-kakhl' ,,, [they] originally spoke Wailaki.
>
> ...As nearly as I could ascertain, the Sai'-az formerly occupied the tongue of land jutting down between Eel River and Van Dusen's Fork. They were all carried away to the Hoopa Valley Reservation, and had been so long dragged about between home, the Smith River Reservation, and this, that they were dwindled away to a most pitiful and miserable remnant, who could give no intelligible account of themselves. The only thing which can be stated with certainty is that they once dwelt somewhere on the east bank of Eel River (Powers 1877: 122) [From the original.]

On Bancroft's 1883 map (Map 3-4), the "Siahs" tribe (*Sai'az*/*Nongatl*) is prominently featured and it shows the group as occupying the lower Van Duzen River Valley.



Map 3-4
A section of Bancroft's Map
Native Races of the Pacific States: 1883

Kroeber (1925: 143) seems to have recognized the close links between the Nongatl and the other Wailaki dialect groups to the south writing the Nongatl "are scarcely to be distinguished from the Lassik, except for their adjacent range and perhaps some consciousness of their own separateness." Baumhoff (1958: 165) acknowledges the problem with defining a Nongatl territory:

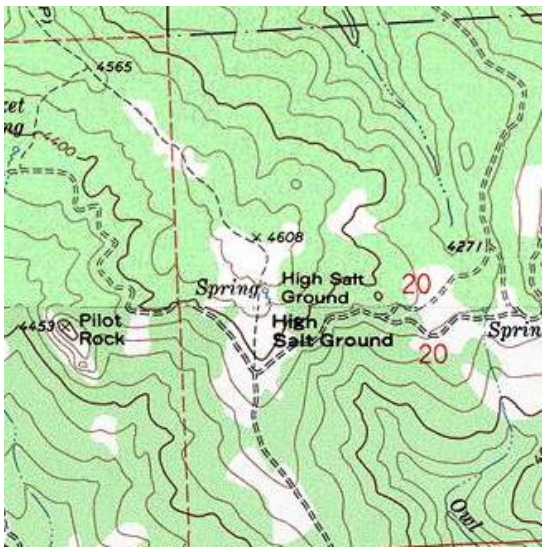
> This group is one about which least is known and this may be the reason why the map shows their territory as so extensive. It is very likely that data from a few good informants would show that the Nongatl actually comprise several distinct groups. There is a hint of this in Essene's account of Lassik war stories (1942, p. 91). He notes that the *Nai'aitci*, centered around what is now the town of Bridgeville, were distinct from the Blocksburg people. Both of these

> groups are placed within the Nongatl area. No doubt more detailed information than we possess would show that the area which we have labeled Nongatl was actually occupied by two, three, or even more distinct groups.

To add to the confusion, Merriam's hand-labeled map of territorial boundaries (Map 2-5)in contrast to Baumhoff's map (Map 3-1), shows the Lassik, rather than the Nongatl, as occupying a portion of the Main Eel River to the north of Dobbyn Creek, and the entire Larabee Creek watershed from Blocksburg north to Bridgeville, with the *sĕ-ten-bi-den ke-ah* (Baumhoff's and Kroeber's Lassik) occupying the region to the south of Dobbyn Creek, that Baumhoff has classified as Lassik territory.

The southern boundary for the Nongatl, as defined by Baumhoff, follows a fairly straight line from just west of Fort Seward east through Hettenshaw Valley at the watershed divide between the North Fork Eel and Van Duzen Rivers, to about Horse Peak on the crest of South Fork Mountain. Baumhoff's eastern boundary follows the crest of South Fork Mountain north from Horse Peak to Last Chance Ridge. At that point, rather than (intuitively) following Last Chance Ridge and Whiting Ridge (like those depicted by Merriam and Kroeber) that forms the headwaters divide between Grouse Creek to the north in the Trinity River watershed, and Pilot Creek to the south, Baumhoff extends the boundary a couple of miles further to the north into Hupa and Tsnungwe territory.

From the upper Grouse Creek watershed, Baumhoff's northern boundary drops to the west to cross Grouse Creek, and continues west to cross over Pilot Ridge well to the north of Pilot Rock, to the most northerly point of Nongatl territory at Iaqua Butte. It appears, however, the southern portion of Pilot Ridge near Pilot Rock, known as High Salt Ground (Map 3-5), was also claimed by or at least regularly visited by the Hupa, Tsnungwe, Whilkut, and the Chilula (Keter 1994b: 12).



Map 3-5
Pilot Rock is just to the west of High Salt Ground
USGS Board Camp Mountain/Showers Pass USGS 7.5', 1973

Goddard (1914) who worked with Chilula informants in the early twentieth century recorded a story from two different elderly Chilula regarding an event that happened just after historic settlement of the region began in about 1856 (Carranco and Beard 1981:78, Goddard 1914: 269, 351). At that time a number of Chilula were captured by the military and sent south via Humboldt Bay on a steamer to the Mendocino Reservation near Fort Bragg. They escaped from the reservation and headed north through unknown territory in an attempt to return to their homeland over 100 miles away. Traveling through Lassik territory, near the future location of Fort Seward, they were attacked by the Lassik and all but a few were killed. The ones who escaped returned to Chilula territory and a war party consisting of Chilula, as well as some Whilkut and Hupa (quite likely, as discussed in Part 2, relatives of those killed) was organized.

The Chilula consultants indicated that prior to setting off for Lassik country to revenge the killings; a war dance took place at the southern end of Pilot Ridge[23] near Pilot Rock--most likely High Salt Ground--a large open prairie with extensive views to the coast, Kings Peak, Coyote Buttes (Tuttle Buttes), Mad River Rock, and the Lassics Buttes. The Chilula made several trips south into Lassik territory and ambushed a number of Lassik camps killing several people before the "war" ended. As noted in Chapter 5, High Salt Ground was a known location where people from several different groups came together to trade adding further uncertainty on the boundary between the Nongatl and groups to the north in this region.

It is likely that the boundary (or more correctly the rights to visit the area in order to procure subsistence resources or for purposes of socialization) in this region separating the Nongatl, and to the north the Whilkut, Hupa, and Tsnungwe, may have shifted over time based on kinship affiliations and other factors such the availability and distribution across the landscape of desired subsistence resources (Keter 1994b).

From Iaqua Buttes the Nongatl boundary with the Wiyot to the west trends to the southwest following the watershed divide between the Van Duzen and the coastal streams that drain to the west into Humboldt Bay all the way to the mouth of the Van Duzen River. Baumhoff's western boundary between the Nongatl and the Sinkyone to the west extends southeast from the confluence of the Eel and Van Duzen Rivers following the watershed divide south to about Mount Baldy. At that point, it continues southeasterly~~,~~ crossing the Main Eel River a couple miles east of McCann, to a point to the west Mail Ridge (the divide between the Main Eel and South Fork Eel Rivers) and to the east of Phillipsville.

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[23] During the late 1970s, Six Rivers National Forest archaeologists identified and recorded numerous prehistoric lithic scatters on Pilot Ridge (4,500-4,800 feet in elevation). One of the most common artifacts identified were Borax Lake projectile points; dating from 3,500 - 8,000 BP. Today nearly 100 prehistoric sites located on the crest of Pilot Ridge and the adjoining Whiting and Last Chance Ridges have been recorded and are part of the Pilot Ridge/South Fork Mountain National Register Prehistoric and Historic District (Gmoser and Keter 1983). In the general vicinity of High Salt Ground archaeologists excavated a feature that was determined to be the remains of a structure approximately 5 foot by 5 foot that included a possible compacted floor, surrounded by three post holes. A sample from the site was carbon dated to about 8,000 BP. This date is one of the oldest dates ever obtained from the remains of a house structure in California (Keter 2022: 8).

The Wailaki, North Fork Wailaki, and Pitch Wailaki

In May of 1854, the Wailaki living in the North Fork Eel River watershed were the first native people living in the Yolla Bolly country to make contact with whites. Brothers Frank and Pierce Asbill, Jim Neafus, and a party of explorers from Petaluma, hoped to blaze a trail linking the merchants in Sonoma County with the gold mining towns in Trinity County. They crossed the North Fork Eel River near its confluence with Hulls Creek, and traveled north on a trail that followed the crest of Long Ridge before dropping down to the mouth of Salt Creek (TCC Vol. 2: Trail HTNF-12). They then followed the North Fork Eel River north to its headwaters at the southern end of Hettenshaw Valley. The Kelsey Party from Petaluma continued on to Weaverville, while the Asbills and Neafus spent the winter in Hettenshaw Valley hunting deer for their hides (Keter 1990: 4).

The newcomers immediately recognized the potential of the rich grasslands and oak woodlands as ideal for grazing livestock, and within a few years cattle, and later sheep, grazed the hillsides in the tens of thousands (Keter 1990: 20). The story of this conflict between the ranchers and Wailaki is recounted in *Genocide and Vendetta* by Lynwood Carranco and Estle Beard (1978, see also Keter 1990, 1994a). As with the Nongatl to the north, organized bands of local settlers attacked villages massacring most of the inhabitants, and after the villages were abandoned, the vigilantes sought out the refuge sites where survivors were hiding out in the mountains (Keter 2017).

Those Indians surviving the massacres, and those who were captured, were sent first to the Smith River Indian Reservation and later (after 1856) to the Round Valley Indian Reservation. Historian A. J Bledsoe (1885: 209) wrote that in late 1864 the last "wild Indians" in northwestern California hiding in the mountains of the remote headwaters region of the North Fork Eel Mad River/Middle Fork Eel River region were captured and sent to the Round Valley Indian Reservation.

As noted earlier, the word Wailaki is not Athabascan, rather, it is a Wintun word roughly translated as “north language.” Wailaki oral histories suggest that the tribal name was first used at the beginning of the historic period, when the Indians still living in the region who were survivors of the "Indian Wars" of the 1850s and early 1860s, began to self-identify as Wailaki (personal communication: TT, FCD). To add to the confusion over the use of the term Wailaki, it has been applied historically to two different groups speaking totally different languages, the Athabascan speaking Wailaki and the Penutian speaking Wintun Wailaki[24]. Merriam (1966: 47) recognized this conflict and problem with the ethnographic literature writing:

> The term "Wylakke," variously spelt as applied to an Indian tribe, has the disadvantage of ambiguity. Indians of the Wintoon stock south of the Northern Wintoon apply it to the Northern Wintoon, but the Northern Wintoon do not recognize it as a term for themselves.

[24] Today the Wintun Wailaki is a federally recognized tribe. The Grindstone Indian Rancheria of Wintun-Wailaki Indians was founded in 1907. The reservation is located in the upper Grindstone Creek watershed (east of Mendocino Pass in the Sacramento watershed) on 120 acres of land. The 2010 census lists 162 members.

Given the violent and genocidal history of the region, as with the other southern Athabascans, there is very little ethnographic data recorded for the Wailaki. Albert B. Elsasser (1978, Vol. 8: 192), editor of the section on southern Athabascans in the *Handbook of North American Indians*, wrote that: "Of all the southern Athabascans, the Wailaki present the most confusion, as far as names are concerned." Baumhoff (1958:167) noted that: "Kroeber was able to devote to them [Wailaki] only a little more than three pages in the *Handbook* and we know scarcely more today." As a result, the ethnographic data regarding the relationship as described by the ethnographers between the Wailaki who occupied the main Eel River, and the North Fork Wailaki and Pitch Wailaki, whose villages were located within the North Fork Eel River watershed are conflicting and not entirely clear.

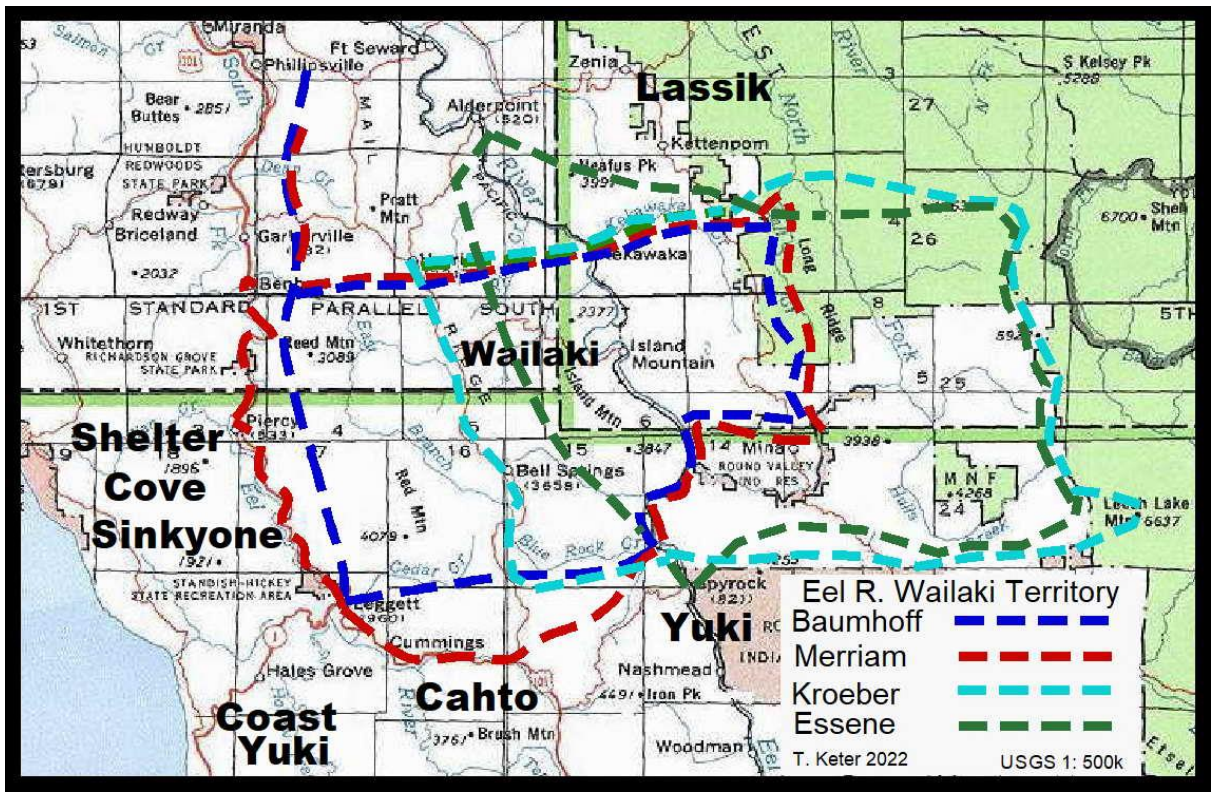
Goddard first visited the Main Eel River region south of Alderpoint in 1902 and again 1906, and published *The Habitat of the Wailaki* in 1923 based on his fieldwork. Goddard recorded the names for some of the creeks and geographical features, and the names of village sites situated along the Main Eel from about the mouth of Kekawaka Creek, south to the mouth of Blue Rock Creek. Goddard concluded that while closely related culturally and linguistically, there was some concept of separateness between the three Wailaki "tribes." At another point, however, Goddard (1924: 225) wrote that the Pitch Wailaki differed from the Eel River Wailaki "only in their adaptation to a habitat a little more arid and nearer the headwaters of streams where fish were less abundant."

Baumhoff, based on Kroeber's, Goddard's, and Merriam's data, divided the Wailaki into three separate tribes: the Eel River Wailaki, the North Fork Wailaki, and the Pitch Wailaki. In addition to Goddard's published papers and field notes, Baumhoff also used Merriam's field notes and maps for the Eel River Wailaki (Merriam recorded their name as *Tsennahkennes*) that outlined tribal boundaries and show some village locations.

Eel River Wailaki (Refer to Map 3-6)

Goddard spent several days recording village sites while traveling north along the Eel River from Blue Rock Creek north to the mouth to Kekawaka Creek. Interestingly, Goddard (1923: 108) wrote that north of Kekawaka Creek: "were the Lassik these people joined the whites in the extermination of the Wailaki. That they ever had any political bond with the Wailaki is improbable." This statement is, however, in direct conflict with Essene's ethnographic data for the Lassik and Wailaki. As discussed earlier, Lucy Young, Mary Major, and Nancy Doby[25] were all from the region delineated by Baumhoff as Lassik territory, and had extended kinship and social links with villages at Soldier Basin, the mouth of Hulls Creek, and in the Mad River region (for more on this subject see Chapter 6).

[25] Nancy Doby (*Tsen-nah-ken-nes*) was born near Island Mountain.



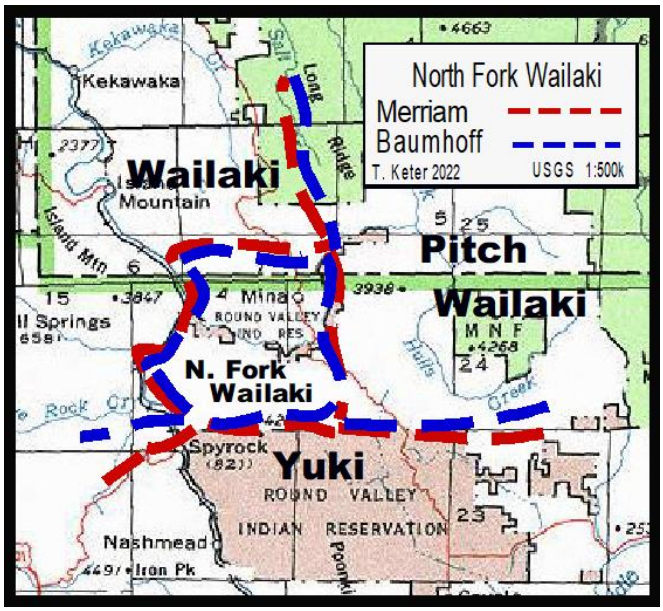
Map 3-6
Eel River Wailaki Territory
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

Baumhoff places the northern boundary for the Eel River Wailaki on a line extending in a westerly direction (ignoring the topography) from the confluence of Hoaglin and Salt Creeks (just to the west of where Salt Creek empties into the North Fork Eel River) west through Hoaglin Valley to a point just to the south of a Lassik village at Kekawaka Creek (Goddard classified it as a Wailaki Village). From there, Baumhoff shows the boundary continuing west to a point a couple of miles to the east of Benbow Valley--in the lower portion of the East Branch of the South Fork Eel River watershed. Merriam, however, extended the southern boundary west all the way to the South Fork Eel River at Benbow.

From just to the east of Benbow Valley, Baumhoff extends the western boundary of the Eel River Wailaki south to about Leggett where it meets Cahto Territory. Baumhoff's southern boundary extends about due east from Leggett crossing over the South Fork Eel/Main Eel River divide at about Bell Springs. From Bell Springs it drops down to about the confluence of Blue Rock Creek and the Eel River; the location of the most southerly Eel River Wailaki village. See the sections below on the North Fork Wailaki and Pitch Wailaki for information on the eastern boundary of the Eel River Wailaki.

North Fork Wailaki (Refer to Map 3-7)

The territory of the North Fork Wailaki at under 15 square miles (about 10,000 acres) is by far the smallest for any of the southern Athabascan groups. Baumhoff (1958: 168) relies primarily on Goddard's 1924 paper and field notes for the Eel River Wailaki. That paper also includes a short section with some limited information on the North Fork Wailaki. Referencing Goddard, Baumhoff (1958: 98), referred to them as the *sɛtandoñkiyahañ*. The North Fork Wailaki were called the *banikot* by the Eel River Wailaki (Baumhoff (1958: 109). Merriam referred to the people living in this area as the *Baneko*. According to Baumhoff (1958: 98), however; " Merriam was evidently somewhat undecided if they were truly a distinct group."



Map 3-7
Kroeber did not identify a separate North Fork Wailaki tribe
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

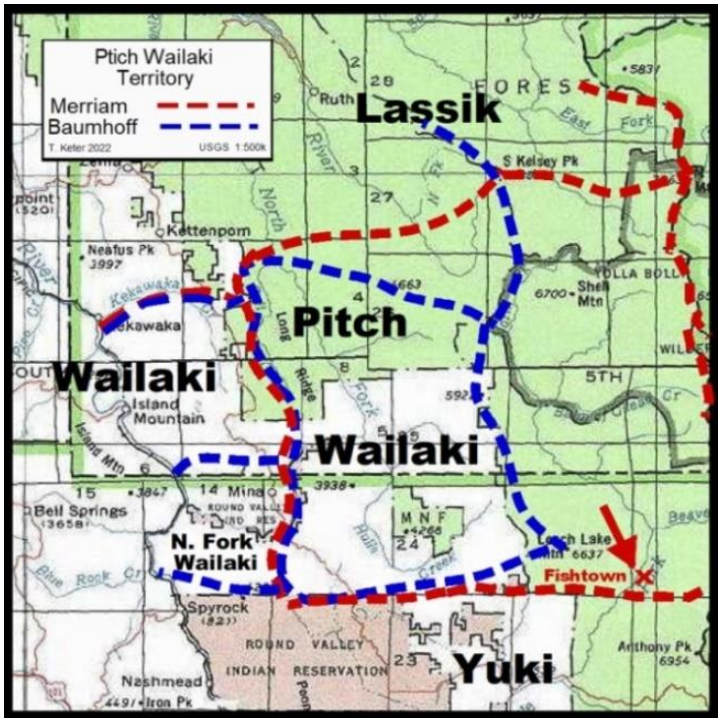
Their territory extended upstream in the North Fork Eel River canyon about five miles from its confluence with the Main Eel to the mouth of Asbill Creek--further upstream was Pitch Wailaki territory. Baumhoff (1958: 109) included Goddard's names for the only two villages located within North Fork Wailaki territory The villages were located on terraces along the North Fork Eel just over a half-mile and three quarters of a mile, respectively, upstream from its confluence with the Main Eel River.

North Fork Wailaki territory extended north from the North Fork Eel River to the headwaters region of Wilson Creek that forms the watershed divide with Salt Creek. In the south their territory extended east from about the mouth of Blue Rock Creek on the Main Eel River to Updegraff Ridge. At this point, Updegraff Ridge trending east forms the watershed divide between the North Fork Eel and Middle Fork Eel Rivers. Their territory continued east along the watershed divide to the headwaters region of Asbill Creek. Immediately to their south was Yuki territory.

Pitch Wailaki (Refer to Map 3-8)

The Pitch Wailaki (Goddard also referred to them as the Salt Wailaki) referred to themselves as the *Che-teg-ge-kah* or Pitch Indians (Baumhoff 1958: 176). They occupied the North Fork Eel River canyon from about the mouth of Asbill Creek north to Salt Creek. They were also referred to as the Sand Eaters (*Si-yahng*), and the Eel River Wailaki referred to them as the *Che-teg-gah-ahng*. As noted earlier, Kroeber does not identify the Pitch Wailaki as a separate group on his map (see also Baumhoff 1958: Map 1).

Only one short monograph (Goddard 1923) has been published on the Pitch Wailaki. This paper was the result of a visit by Goddard to the North Fork Eel River watershed in August of 1922. Goddard, guided by Goodboy Jack who was from the Hulls Creek region, recorded 29 village sites during his survey (see Chapter 5). These sites were located in two general areas: along the North Fork Eel to the north of Hulls Creek, and on lower Casoose Creek a tributary of Hulls Creek.



Map 3-8
Note the location of Fishtown--it was claimed or visited by the Wintu, Wailaki, Yuki, and Baumhoff's Lassik whose boundary is shown far to the north
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

They recorded 15 sites along the North Fork Eel River north from the mouth of Hulls Creek for about two miles (Map 5-1). Goodboy Jack, however, was not entirely familiar with the area beyond that. For example, he indicated that there were a number of winter villages along Red Mountain Creek. Archaeological reconnaissance in the area (by the author) suggests this is unlikely; Red Mountain Creek is an extremely deep-cut drainage with few

places flat enough to even construct a single house pit--except at Red Mountain Fields a large flat with abundant water[26] that is located at about 3,000' in elevation . Baumhoff (1958: 179) bases his delineation of territorial boundaries and the names and locations of villages and features for the Pitch Wailaki primarily on Goddard's 1924 paper and field notes. The western boundary for the Pitch Wailaki runs along the watershed divide between the North Fork and Main Eel Rivers. In the north, it is bounded with Lassik Territory to east of Hoaglin Valley where Salt Creek meets the North Fork Eel River.

The eastern boundary for the Pitch Wailaki is not well defined, and there are conflicting ethnographic data on this subject. Baumhoff again relying primarily on Goddard's information placed the eastern boundary between the Pitch Wailaki and Yuki along the watershed divide between the North Fork Eel and the Middle Fork Eel Rivers. Goddard (1924: 218 Map 1), however, only infers the North Fork/Middle Eel watershed divide as being the eastern boundary on his map (which is incomplete and somewhat geographically inaccurate). Merriam extends the eastern boundary much further east, to include the entire upper Middle Fork Eel River watershed south to about Buck Rock within Pitch Wailaki territory. Immediately to the north of the headwaters of the Middle Eel, according to Merriam, the headwaters regions of both the South Fork Trinity River and the Mad River were located within Lassik territory.

Merriam's eastern boundary for the Pitch Wailaki is, however, in direct conflict with that of ethnographer George Foster (1944: 157) who worked with the Yuki in Round Valley in 1937. Foster concluded that the *Suksaltatamno m* (Nicely Shaped Pine Tree People) Yuki claimed the entire watershed of the Middle Fork Eel River north of its confluence with the Black Butte River. Some of this information is questionable, however, as Foster (1944:160) indicated that at the time of his study, all members of this Yuki subgroup: "have long been dead," and that, during ethnographic times, it was probable this region had only been sparsely populated.

According to Foster (1944:160), the *Suksaltatamno m* whose summer villages were located near the confluence of the Middle Eel and the Black Butte Rivers, had close relations with the Pitch Wailaki, who were sometimes confused with the Yuki, when consultants discussed the northern portion (headwaters region) of the Middle Eel watershed. Essene (1942: 56) noted that several of the Wailaki consultants he interviewed had indicated that the upper reaches of the Middle Fork were a kind of "no man's land," and that it was "held nominally by the Pitch or Salt Wailaki," but that the region was also claimed, in part, by both the Yuki and Cottonwood Wintu. Essene's map (Image 3-10) shows the headwaters of the Middle Fork Eel as being located within Wintu territory. According to Lucy Young,

[26] Red Mountain Fields was recorded by the author in 1994 (Keter 1994a, see also TCC: Vol 2. Homestead files: HA01, Site Record FS# 05-10-54-308). It is the location of one of the earliest homesteads in the region dating from the late 1860s. There is also archaeological evidence that the area was used intensively during the prehistoric period. Given its high altitude at about 3,000' it is not clear if this was the location of a winter village. Located at Red Mountain Fields during the early historic period, the Red Mountain House played an important part in the history of southwestern Trinity County and was the location of the Caution Post Office from 1901 to 1905 (Keter 1994: 40). In 1864, soldiers pursued a group of "Mendocino Indians" (probably Wailaki) who had been hiding out in the Red Mountain Fields area (Keter 1990).

people from her community at Alderpoint also fished and hunted in the area (see the Lassik section below and Chapter 6).

Perhaps this inability to define definite boundaries by ethnographers is only problematic due to western logic. As Foster (1944: 157) wrote: "[I]n the minds of the Indians exact boundaries were never known." Marriage between the Wailaki and Yuki was common and this may have led to confusion on tribal boundaries when Foster was interviewing Yuki consultants. Foster (1944:163) noted that the steelhead fishing was excellent on the Middle Fork Eel, and it is possible that Wailaki, Kroeber's Lassik (Merriam's *Sittenbiden*), Yuki and Wintu frequented some of the (especially more remote) high altitude resource-rich specific locations (for example fishing spots or for the collection of abundant plant resources like bulbous plants). Locations, far from home villages, where seasonally abundant subsistence resources would have also provided an opportunity for people from more distant villages to visit and socialize, to share information, to trade, and even to promote and establish kinship links through marriage (see Chapter 5).

One person of Yuki descent who archaeologist John Holson interviewed in 1980 stated that the Pitch Wailaki had a permanent fishing camp (*Ko-Sen-Ten*) on Fishtown Creek (Map 3-8) near or at its confluence with the Middle Fork Eel River (Holson 1980: 26, see also Kroeber and Barrett 1960: 176). Merriam (1976: 81) also recorded information on this site, noting that the word *Ko-sen Ten* was the "*Che-teg-ge-kah* [Wailaki] name for their summer fishing camp (called 'Fishtown') on North Fork Middle Eel River..." One of the Yuki interviewed by Holson also indicated the Yuki/Pitch Wailaki boundary was in this general area. Holson (1980: 26) concluded, "[t]here is significant evidence to indicate that Yuki fishing holes along this stretch of the Middle Fork of the Eel River were shared on an equal basis with the Wailaki."

Baumhoff (1958:176) shows the territorial boundary between the Pitch Wailaki with the Yuki to the south, as extending to the east from a point near Summit Valley along the head waters of Hulls Creek (Bluenose Ridge) to the North Fork/Middle Eel divide. It appears that Baumhoff relied on Goddard's 1924 map (1924: 218) to define the boundary in this area. As noted earlier, however, Goddard's map for this area is not very accurate from a cartographic perspective, as it does not fully define the upper Hulls Creek watershed. Merriam's southern boundary for the Pitch Wailaki continues much further to the east, to the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Eel River and the watershed divide with the Sacramento River near Buck Rock (Baumhoff 1958: 176).

Foster (1944: Map 1) places the southern boundary of the Pitch Wailaki with the Yuki well to the north of the boundary as defined by Baumhoff, and includes within Yuki Territory Hulls Valley and portions of the southern portion of the North Fork Eel watershed. Although Baumhoff dismisses Foster's northern boundary for the Yuki, this difference poses a problem since the Yuki also clearly claimed this area. It is more likely the area was utilized by both the Yuki and Wailaki who maintained close relations. Marriage between the Yuki and Wailaki was not uncommon, and Goddard (1924:219) identified two separate mixed Wailaki/Yuki villages in this area (see Chapter 5).

Lassik (Refer to Map 3-9)

The Lassik, as noted earlier, were sometimes recognized as a separate "tribe" in the local newspapers during the late 1850s and early 1860s , but were also commonly referred to locally as Wailaki, since both were generalized terms for the Indians living in southern Humboldt and southwestern Trinity Counties. Hubert Howe Bancroft published one of the first maps (Map 3-4) showing a "Lassics" territory in his monumental work on the history of California published in 1883: *The Pacific States of North America*: Volume 1. Bancroft's map (1883: 321) shows Lassik territory as being centered to the east of the Mad River watershed in the headwaters region of the South Fork Trinity River. It is not certain where Bancroft got his information, but the location of the "Lassics" on the map comports with Powers' definition about a decade earlier of Lassik territory.

In 1906, Goddard published a paper entitled *Lassik Tales.* He classified the Eel River canyon to the north of Dobbyn Creek as being within Lassik territory, although according to Baumhoff and Merriam, the region to the north of Dobbyn Creek is within Nongatl territory. Unfortunately, Goddard (1906: 133) does not provide the name of the consultant he interviewed, writing that:

> The nine tales, short and apparently fragmentary, given here were obtained in August, 1903, in the form of texts from one of few remaining Lassik Indians. The Lassik inhabited the country drained by Van Duzen and Dobbin [Dobbyn] Creeks on the east side of Eel River, Humboldt County, California.

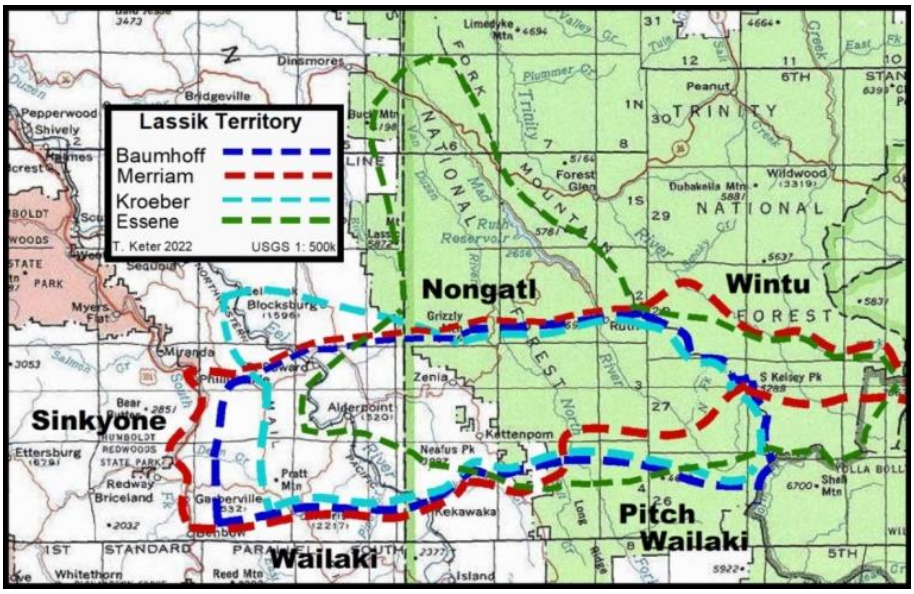
Goddard's unpublished material on the Lassik consists of little more than a single map that shows the location of 27 villages on the lower three miles of Dobbyn Creek (Baumhoff 1958: 180)[27]. Merriam (1976: 82), on the other hand, seems to combine Nongatl and Lassik territory, as he writes:

> Las-sik. Name in common use (from name of former chief) for tribe extending from east side of valley of South Fork Eel River easterly to Mad River and South Fork Mountain, and *from Yager Creek and Iaqua (north of Bridgeville) southerly on Mad River to within 2 miles of Ruth; on Van Duzen River to headwaters* (but not reaching Kettenshaw Valley)*;* on main Eel River from mouth of Larrabee Creek to Dobbin Creek; and reaching from the Lolahnkok [Baumhoff's Sinkyone) of Bull Creek easterly to the crest of South Fork Mountain.. [From the original. Emphasis added.]

Kroeber's *Handbook* (1925: 143-144) has just over a page of ethnographic data on the Lassik. He wrote the name the Lassik called themselves is unknown (Merriam recorded the

[27] Goddard also has four Lassik notebooks that contain material provided by Jim Wilburn Jr.; his Indian mother was named Mary who was James St. Claiborne Willburn Sr.'s first wife. Mary was from the headwaters region of Cottonwood Creek (Wintun territory) near what is today the Harrison Gulch Ranger Station (Personal communication John Elgin).

name *Sittenbiden* provided by Lucy Young--see Chapter 5). Unlike Goddard and Merriam, Kroeber includes the Eel River canyon from Dobbyn Creek north to about Eel Rock (north of Blocksburg), as being within Lassik territory. This inconsistency, in fact, highlights the problem with the conflicting ethnographic data regarding the delineation of territorial boundaries for the region: in this case, Chief Lassik is Nongatl according to Baumhoff and Merriam, and Lassik according to Kroeber. Kroeber, like Goddard, asserted that the Lassik appeared to have been "on more friendly terms with their non-Athapascan Wintun neighbors to the east than they were with the Wailaki." As discussed in Chapter 6, however, there are a number of examples in the ethnographic literature as well as contemporary interviews documenting the close kinship ties and cultural links between the ethnographer's Lassik and Wailaki.



Map 3-9
Map of Lassik Territory
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

A significant amount of ethnographic data regarding the Lassik tribe can be found in Essene's PhD dissertation published as *Cultural Element Distributions XXI: Round Valley* (1943). His fieldwork included approximately four days of interviews with Lucy Young, as well as a number of other Wailaki who were living in Round Valley, and who had ancestral links to the Yolla Bolly country. Besides the standardized questions (devised by Kroeber) listed on the Cultural Element Distributions (CED), Essene also recorded a short biography of Lucy Young that along with other cultural data obtained from interviews with some of the other consultants can be found in the Appendix.

The tribal boundaries as delineated by ethnographers for the Lassik are among the most problematic of all the southern Athabascans. Kroeber (1939:27) noted that, unlike many groups within the region, including the Wailaki, the boundaries for the group that he defined as Lassik did not seem "natural." That is, the boundaries did not seem to be based on logical topographic features such as a drainage divide or a narrow passage in a river canyon.

According to Baumhoff (1958: 178), the Lassik occupied the canyon of the Eel River from the mouth of Dobbyn Creek south to Kekawaka Creek. Baumhoff (1958 : 179) notes, however, that there is some disagreement between Merriam, Kroeber, and Goddard over whether the village at the mouth of Kekawaka Creek was Lassik or Wailaki. The Eel River Wailaki name for the village located there is *sko-den ke-ah*., while the Lassik (Merriam's *Settienbiden*) name for this village is *Sa-tahl-che-chobe*.

The territorial boundaries for the Lassik shown on Essene's map (Map 3-10) are very different from those of the other ethnographers, and show that the Lassik only held a short section of the Main Eel River near Alderpoint, with the Wailaki occupying the villages along the river beginning just to the south of Alderpoint, all the way south to Yuki territory.

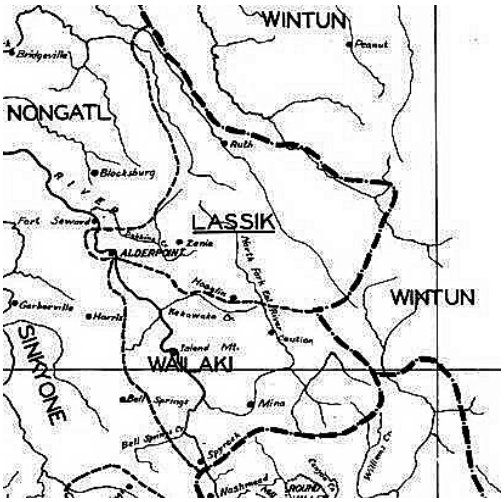


Image 3-10
(Essene 1942: Map 2)

Baumhoff places the southern boundary for the Lassik on a rather straight line from the East Branch of the South Fork Eel River near Benbow, east all the way to the Eel River, just to the south of the mouth of Kekawaka Creek. From Kekawaka Creek the boundary continues east crossing the North Fork Eel River at about the mouth of Salt Creek, and then continuing east to headwaters divide between the Mad River and the Middle Fork Eel River. There the boundary continues to the east generally following the watershed divide as it bends to the northeast to the South Kelsey Peaks region.

Baumhoff shows the eastern boundary for the Lassik extending north from South Kelsey Peak along the crest of South Fork Mountain to about Horse Peak with the Wintu immediately to the east. Baumhoff ruled out Merriam's eastern boundary that was located much further to the east, and that included a portion of the upper South Fork Trinity River watershed within Lassik territory. Essene's eastern boundary, however, like Merriam's, also extends Lassik territory much further to the east into the headwaters region of the South Fork Trinity River watershed.

The northern boundary for the Lassik, as delineated by Baumhoff (1958: 163: Map 3) , extends from South Fork Mountain (at or near Horse Peak) to the west on a fairly straight

line (not based on landscape features) crossing at the southern end of Hettenshaw V**a**lley, to Grizzly Peak at the headwaters divide between the North Fork Eel to the south, and the Van Duzen River and Nongatal territory to the north. The boundary continues roughly due west to the mouth of Dobbyn Creek on the Eel River. From there, Baumhoff (1958: 179) continues the northern boundary for Lassik territory west nearly all the way to the South Fork Eel River, to a point just to the east of Philipsville. Kroeber (Baumhoff 1958: 181), however, seems to be in agreement with Goddard, and extends Lassik territory further to the north to include the Fort Seward/Blocksburg area, that both Baumhoff and Merriam show as being within Nongatl territory.

The western boundary for the Lassik is even more problematic. Kroeber, Goddard, Merriam, and Essene have each plotted a very different western boundary for the Lassik. Given the inconsistent ethnographic data, it is clear that the boundary between the Lassik and the Wailaki varied greatly depending on the person providing the information, and quite likely, the ethnographer (Merriam, Kroeber, Goddard, Essene, et al) recording the information.

Essene's western boundary for the Lassik is also mystifying given the individuals he interviewed. Lucy Young provided Merriam with information that indicated the village at Alderpoint frequented the region to the west as far as about the historic Mail Ridge Road just to the west of Pratt Mountain--the watershed divide between the Main Eel and South Fork Eel Rivers (Keter and Heffner McClellan 1991: 23). Essene, however, draws the boundary between the Lassik and the Sinkyone to the west only a couple of miles upslope from the Eel River near Alderpoint. Given that the Eel River at Alderpoint is about 18 to 20 miles by trail to the east to the South Fork Eel River, where the ethnographer's Sinkyone villages were located--easily a full day's travel--this seems questionable. For a further discussion of the western boundary for the Lassik refer to the following section on the Sinkyone.

It appears that when Lucy Young gave boundary information to Merriam, Essene, and others, she was outlining the area utilized for procurement of resources for the people of her village: the *Sittenbiden*. It is likely that along its periphery it overlapped with adjacent groups to some extent. Lucy Young also indicated that a number of camping and resource procurement locations utilized by the *Sittenbiden* were located far beyond the boundaries assigned by the ethnographers. For example, she told avocational botanist Edith Murphey (a close friend--see Chapter Six) that her people stayed at a camp near Hoxie Crossing (T25N, R11W, Section 25 MDM) on the Middle Fork of the Eel River. She said that her grandfather was very old at the time and that he was carried there in a large burden basket (Edith Murphey notebooks). This location, as discussed earlier, is far to the south of Baumhoff's Lassik boundary in Foster's Yuki territory, Essene's Wintu territory, and Merriam's Pitch Wailaki territory.

There is also some evidence that the *Sittenbiden* traveled as far east as North Yolla Bolly Mountain in order to trade with the Cottonwood Creek Wintu (Baumhoff 1958: 229). Lucy Young also told Edith Murphy that North Yolla Bolly Mountain was considered to be a "medicine mountain" by the Sittenbiden. She indicated some individuals would travel to a

small dark lake[28], and that the waters of the lake were never still except when some would-be medicine man or woman entered them after a three-day fast. At the time the man or woman entered the water, if "those above" approve of the individual, the waters will calm. If the waters continue to move the person must consider themselves to be rejected.

The Sinkyone (Refer to Map 3-11)

By the early 1860s, a few settlers were already moving into southwestern Humboldt and northwestern Mendocino Counties resulting in numerous violent conflicts between the newly arriving settlers and the Indians. For example, a number of homesteaders had settled in the vicinity of the present town of Garberville. In early 1861, Indians attacked one of the homesteads in the area owned by the Sproul brothers. The Indians were driven off, but both brothers were seriously wounded. This incident was followed by an attack on a village near the present day location of Briceland where many Indians were killed and the rest driven off. The conflict between settlers and Indians in this region, as in the rest of northwestern California continued until late 1864. By that time, the army had rounded up the survivors hiding in the mountains and placed them on the reservation at Round Valley. As in the Yolla Bolly country, a few of the surviving Indians managed to remain in the area working on the larger ranches as domestic help, or beginning in the late 1860s tending and shearing the bands of sheep that grazed the rich grasslands and oak woodlands of the region (Keter 1989, 1994a).

The origin of the term Sinkyone is problematic given its lack of use in the local histories and newspapers (Bledsoe 1885, Coy 1929, *Humboldt Times* various editions) during the last half of the 19th century. Throughout the late 1850s and early 1860s, as noted earlier, the ranchers and settlers referred to the Indians (regardless of their tribal affiliation) living in southern Humboldt County as “Wylackie,” "Lassik," or to a somewhat lesser extent; "Nongatl" (Bledsoe 1885, Coy 1929, Keter 1990). It is also worth noting that in this region the federal censuses of 1900 and 1910 only used the terms Digger, Mattole, Wailaki, and Eel River tribes to classify the "race" of the local Indian population, although even these terms were used in an inconsistent and haphazard fashion by the enumerators[29]. As with the people living to the east in the Yolla Bolly country, by the time ethnographers began to work in southwestern Humboldt County and northwestern Mendocino Counties few full-blooded Indians were still alive who had survived the genocide of the 1850s and 1860s.

Jerry Rhode in his book *Southern Humboldt Indians* (2022) has provided an excellent in-depth overview of Goddard's research that comprises the most relevant data regarding the people Goddard identified as Sinkyone--including an in-depth discussion and summary of the unpublished ethnographic data from Goddard's notebooks and other documents that contain information provided by his consultants. The earliest documented use of the word

[28] There are four lakes in this area, North Yolla Bolly Lake, Black Rock Lake, and two small unnamed lakes--more accurately small ponds--just to the northwest of Black Rock Mountain.

[29] See for example the 1900 Long Ridge Census Schedule 1 Indian Population listing (TCC Appendix 3: 1900 Long Ridge Census) and the 1910 Mad River Indian population listing (TCC Appendix 3: 1910 Mad River Census).

Sinkyone appears in Goddard's 1903 field notebooks; and it appears that George Burt provided him with this information. George Burt was raised in a village called *Kahs-cho'-chin-net'-tah* on Bull Creek near its confluence with the Main Eel River and he was one of the few individuals in the area with any knowledge of the pre-contact period. Burt told him that the South Fork of the Eel River was called *Sin ki ko* (Goddard Sinkyone Notebook No. 1, 1903: 216).

Goddard seems to have worked very little with George Burt, as he is only mentioned on the first page of Goddard's field notes (Sinkyone Notebook No. 1, 1903). The rest of the notebook contains information provided by Jack Woodman and Briceland Charlie. It appears that Briceland Charlie was one of Goddard's most important and most cited consultants for this area. He told Goddard that *Sin ki k*ok was their name for the South Fork. Later, recorded in the same Sinkyone notebook, Briceland Charlie in an interview at Phillipsville on September 14, 1903, told Goddard that *sin ku na* was a term that "Blocksburg calls us" and Goddard wrote that Charlie "Says Wailaki every time for people south and east". (Goddard Sinkyone Notebook 1903, No. 1: 37, Goddard, 1903: 253).

Goddard visited the area again in 1908, and recorded in his field notes, that Briceland Charlie told him in referencing the people who lived to the east in the Blocksburg area (Goddard 1908: 494):

> [The] Non-gal call us sin kyo ni (sin-ke-nuk, Sin-ke-ni)
> [Goddard's parenthesis]
> We don't call that way
> [In the original: Goddard underlined "we don't']
> (Goddard, APS Reel #47, p. 494)

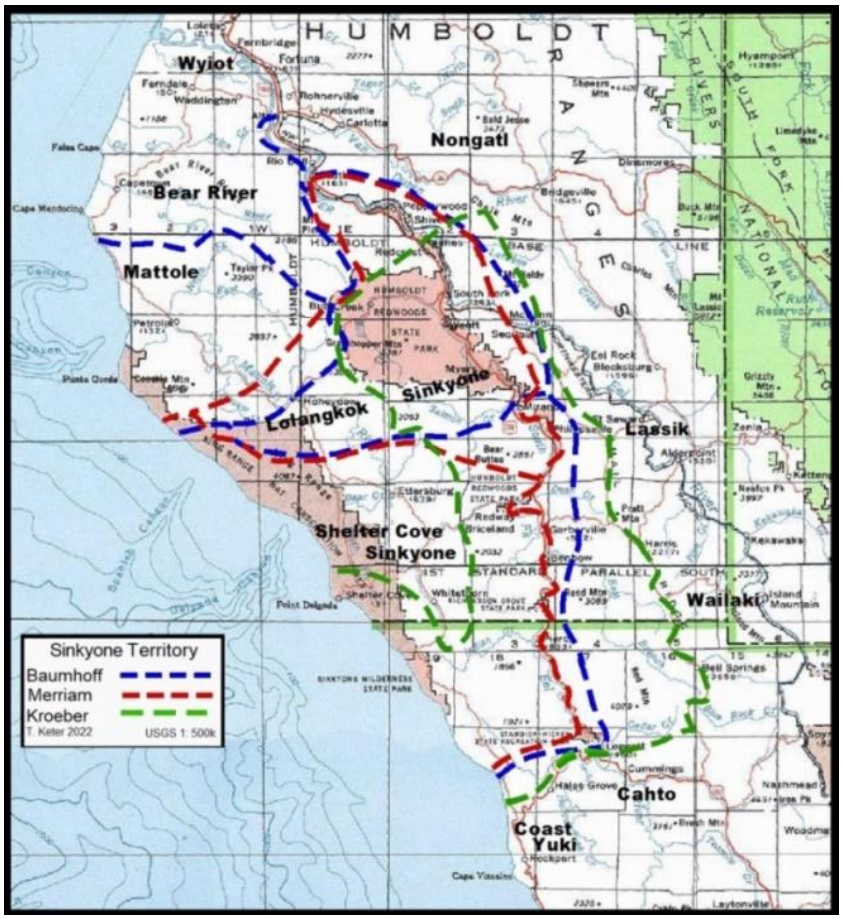
As local historian David Heller has written (personal communication), despite Briceland Charlie's information:

> Goddard wrote Sinkyone on the front cover of three of his four of his field note Notebooks, the fourth one in the series was labeled *Sinkene*.

Kroeber also interviewed Sally (sometimes spelled Sallie) Bell (Image 3-12) and George Burt in 1902. In a paper Sinkyone *Tales*, he published in 1919, Kroeber acknowledged the lack of ethnographic data for the entire region. It should also be noted that Kroeber's generalizations in discussing the Sinkyone territorial boundaries were more focused on providing support to substantiate his theories on Cultural Diffusion and Culture Areas rather than on delineating tribal boundaries.

> The present writer has carried on no investigation among the Sinkyone, except inquires put during a day or two in the course of a trip made in 1902 from Humboldt Bay to the head waters of the Eel River…concerning the general ethnological status and relations of the then practically unknown and nearly extinct Indians geographically intermediate between the two distinct native cultures represented by the Hupa [Northwest Coast Culture Area] , and the Wailaki of Round Valley [California Culture Area]. (Kroeber 1919: 346)

The ethnographic data and the accompanying map outlining tribal boundaries for the Sinkyone contained in Kroeber's influential *Handbook* (1925: map inside the front cover) relied primarily on Goddard's work before 1920, and led to the general acceptance of the Sinkyone as a single "tribe" in the ethnographic literature and histories of the region. Not everyone, however, agreed with Kroeber's conclusions. As noted earlier, Merriam, whose background was in geography, was less influenced by Kroeber than most of the ethnographers working in northwestern California at the time. Merriam thought that Goddard had "coined the term" himself to refer to those people living along the South Fork Eel River, for which the southern Athabascan name is *Sin-ke'-kok.*



Map 3-11
Sinkyone Territory
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

On one of his annual summer trips north from Marin to Humboldt County Merriam interviewed two of Goddard's consultants Sally Bell[30] and George Burt. Merriam (field notes) wrote that they "did not acknowledge the tribal label "Sinkyone," and that during his

[30] Sally Bell had lived in Briceland for about 30 years. She had been raised by settlers at the Needle Rock Ranch. At the time she was interviewed, she was married to Tom Bell, a Coast Yuki, and they were living at Four Corners (see Chapters 5 and 6 for more information on this subject).

work in southern Humboldt County he had never heard an Indian use the tribal name "Sinkyone." In his paper Ethno-Geographic and Ethno-Synonymic Data from Northern California Tribes (1976) he wrote:

> Sinkyone. Name applied by Goddard to tribe on Bull Creek and South Fork Eel River and extending southwest to coast (including the Lo-lahn-kak and To-cho-be ke-ah). Doubtless derived from Sin-ke-kok, the name of the South Fork of the Eel. The Bull Creek Lo-lahn-kak and Briceland To-cho-be ke-ah tell me that there never was any such name as applied to any tribe or band. Goddard may have coined it from Sin-ke-kok, the name of the river (South Fork Eel).

Image 3-12
Sally Bell and Tom Bell at Needle Rock Crossroads
(Also known as Four Corners)
August, 1923 (C. H. Merriam Bancroft Library)

Merriam's interview with Sally Bell in 1923 led him to conclude that:

> To'-cho-be-keah is their own name and the Lolahnkok name for the tribe (and village) in the Briceland region (between the South Fork of the Eel and the coast). It is used also in a larger sense for all bands speaking the same dialect from the west side of the South Fork of the Eel River (in the Garberville region) to the coast. The Set'tenbi'den [Lassik] call this group Yis-sing'kun-ne. The name of the group is pronounced To-cho'-be ke'ah by the Lolahn'kok and Taw-chaw-be-ke'ah by themselves (Merriam in Baumhoff 1958: 185). [From the original]

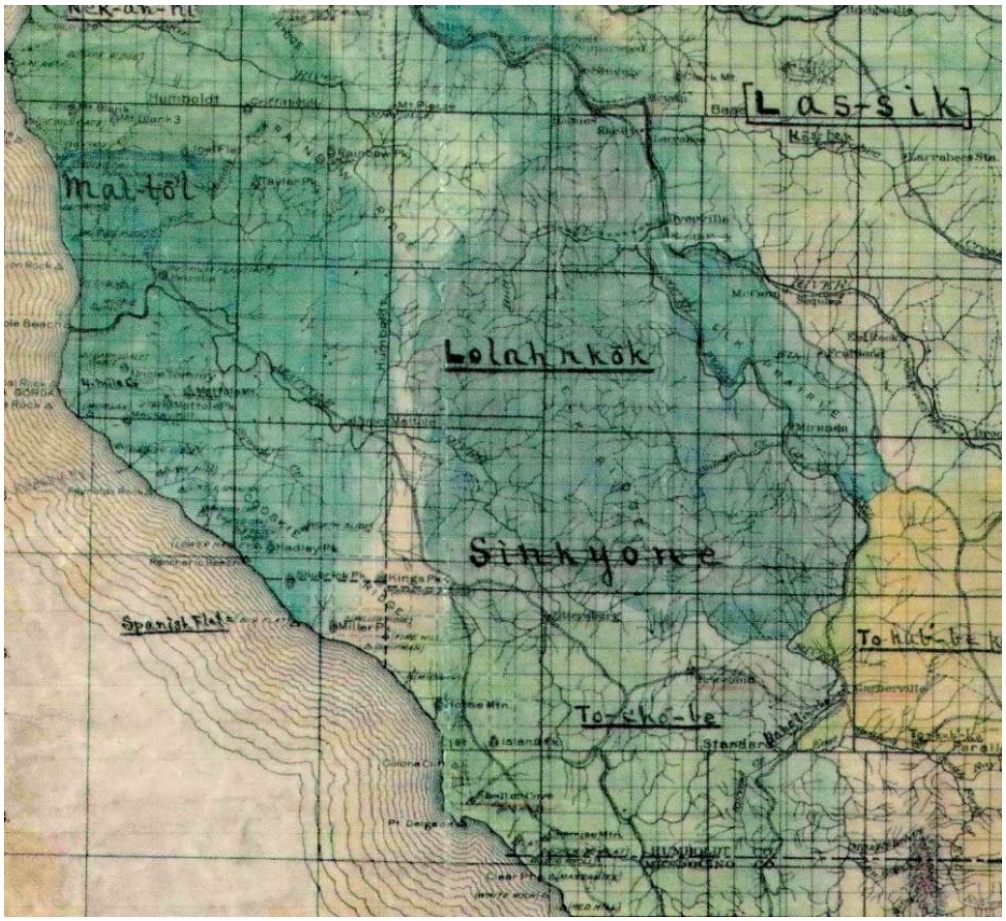
According to avocational linguist Ben Schill (personal communication), he learned, while discussing the subject with Humboldt State (now Cal Poly Humboldt) linguist Victor Golla,

that *Ke'ah* means people, and *To-cho-be* was the name of a large village in the Briceland area. Roughly translated To-cho-be (*t'o cho be*) means "big water dell" or possibly "big prairie dell" as the word *be*, according to Golla, means a gentle valley, swale, or dell.

Over 30 years after Kroeber first published the *Handbook of the Indians of California*, it was Baumhoff (1958: 184) who further subdivided the Sinkyone into the two separate tribes writing that:

> On the basis of Merriam's linguistic evidence the Sinkyone have been subdivided into a northern group, called the Lolangkok [Merriam's *Lolahn'kok*] after the native name for Bull Creek, and a southern group, called Shelter Cove [Merriam's *To-chó-be*], after a sheltered spot on the coast midway between the Mattole and [Coast] Yuki boundaries.

At the Bancroft Library on Merriam's hand-labeled map (Image 3-13) outlining the various territorial boundaries for the southern Athabascans, he crossed out the term Sinkyone, and wrote in "Lolahnkok" for the northern portion of the region and "To-chó-be" for the area to the south and west.



Map 3-13
Merriam's hand labeled map Bancroft Library
(Trinity National Forest 1920)

Ben Schill *(Redwood Times* March 11, 2008), who has spent years studying Goddard's linguistic data for the southern Athabascan Wailaki dialect, provided the following possible origin of the term Lolangkok used by ethnographers.

> …I understand the word *kok* to be the suffix for creek or river. As in *Sink-ke-kok*, the name the original inhabitants of this area had for South Fork Eel, or *Lo-lahn-kok* their name for Bull Creek. So, quite possibly there was no actual tribe called the *Lo-lahn-kok*. But maybe it was descriptive for a group of people or villages that inhabited the land where the *Lo-lahn-kok* flowed. I do know Wailaki are buried in the Bull Creek cemetery.
>
> I have friends and neighbors who trace their descent from Daniel and Ellen Sutherland. Ellen was Sally Bell's sister. These people around Briceland were called the *to-cho-be-keah***.** Ask anyone of them and they will tell you they are Wailaki.

Baumhoff (1958: 185) published the names of six tribelets or groups of villages within Lolangkok Sinkyone territory, but was not able to map them. The village names, some of their locations, and place names are primarily based on Goddard's and Merriam's field notes. The territorial boundaries for the Sinkyone as delineated by Baumhoff, Merriam, and Kroeber are the most divergent and conflicting of all the southern Athabascan groups. Kroeber has only identified the Sinkyone as a single tribe and extends Mattole territory much further south, to include the upper Mattole watershed and the coastal strip from Spanish Flat, south to about Telegraph Creek located just to the north of Shelter Cove. Baumhoff's boundaries (1958: Maps 1 and 4) more closely follow those outlined by Merriam, while Kroeber's eastern boundary between the Sinkyone and Wailaki lies much further to the east; along the watershed divide between the South Fork Eel and the Main Eel River (Bell Springs Road roughly follows along this divide south of Alderpoint Road).

Baumhoff (1958: Map 1) plots the western boundary bordering Bear River/Mattole territory as following the watershed divide between the Eel River and the headwaters of the Bear River and Mattole River watersheds beginning at about Scotia, as watershed divide trends to the south, and then to the west. Baumhoff then shows the boundary between Sinkyone, and the Mattole, as dropping down from the divide to the west to cross the Mattole River near Honeydew. From there the boundary with the Mattole to the north continues due west to Spanish Flat on the coast.

Baumhoff places the southern boundary of the Lolangkok at a point about three miles east of Spanish Flat at Oat Hill on Telegraph Ridge (the divide between the Mattole River and Spanish Creek). From this point the boundary with the Shelter Cove Sinkyone extends south along the watershed divide towards North Peak, before heading easterly crossing the Mattole River and the South Fork Eel River, to about Miranda. There, the boundary extends to the east a few more miles to meet Nongatl territory.

Baumhoff shows the Shelter Cover Sinkyone as occupying the Pacific coastal region south from Spanish Flat to the mouth of Usal Creek. From the mouth of Usal Creek, Baumhoff extends the Shelter Cove Sinkyone boundary east to a point just to the east of Leggett, where it abuts Wailaki territory (just to the west of Little Red Mountain).

Baumhoff's eastern boundary, for the Sinkyone, as noted in the sections on the Wailaki, Lassik, and Nongatl, is located a few miles to the east of the South Fork Eel River, but not as far east as the watershed divide with the Main Eel River (like that of Kroeber). Rather, Baumhoff shows the boundary running roughly parallel to the South Fork Eel River, a few miles to the east, north all the way to a point east of Miranda, where it adjoins the southeastern boundary of the Lolangkok Sinkyone. From there, the eastern boundary for the Sinkyone, as noted in the section above on the Nongatl, continues to the northeast crossing the Eel River east of McCain, to Mount Baldy. From there it continues northwesterly crossing lower Larabee Creek, and then follows the watershed divide between the Eel River and Van Duzen River northwesterly to Scotia.

Conclusions

It is clear after reviewing the ethnographic literature that ethnographers based their generalizations for the southern Athabascan people on a very limited foundation of empirical data--provided by less than a couple dozen people in a region that had been inhabited for generations by thousands of people living in hundreds of villages and communities. As a result, the methodology (paradigm) used for the collection of data by ethnographers (salvage ethnography), as well as their generalizations regarding social organization and territorial boundaries (that vary considerably for each ethnographer), need to be viewed from a more contemporary perspective. I found the direct descendants of the men and women the ethnographers interviewed have a different story of their history and of who they are as a people. That is the story presented in Part 2.

Part 2

The Wailaki:
The Rest of the Story

> It has always been a mystery to me, how Kroeber could possibly…tell us so much about all the Indians of California. Such a tremendous task, particularly since communications were much slower in that era….Specifically, I wonder how he was able to correctly identify and classify a people--Wailaki/Keh-nehs-tah/Ko'ell or whatever they called themselves... I find it unfortunate that his work is like a "bible" or an unshakable truth in the eyes of some persons. (Personal communication with Wailaki elder Fred Coyote Downey summer of 1995.)

Chapter 4

As noted in the Introduction, I first realized in the early 1990s that there were problems with some of the ethnographers' conclusions related to social organization and territorial boundaries for some of the Athabascan speaking groups inhabiting northwestern California. At that time, I published an article questioning the use of the term Lassik to classify as a "tribe" the southern Athabascans who had lived in southeastern Humboldt and southwestern Trinity Counties during the ethnographic period (Keter 1993a).

More recently, I have been working with individuals of Indian descent living in southwestern Humboldt and northwestern Mendocino Counties centered on the South Fork of the Eel River watershed and the headwaters region of the Mattole River, all of whom, without exception, claim to be of Wailaki (or part-Wailaki) ancestry. Despite the fact that some of the Wailaki elders I have talked to can identify specific relatives interviewed by the early 20th century ethnographers, and have family members buried in local rural cemeteries (I have visited one such cemetery near Jewett Creek with over a dozen graves.)[31] Anthropologists and historians, however, still insist that because of the ethnographic record, these individuals are mistaken and that they must be Sinkyone, or that they are Wailaki from the Round Valley Indian Reservation, or they are Lassik from further to the east in the Yolla Bolly country of southwestern Trinity County, and moved into the area after the atrocities of the historic period "wiped out" the local Indian population.

Over the last several decades, numerous individuals who claim Wailaki descent have been interviewed by the author and other researchers. It is clear from these more contemporary interviews and publications that today the continued shared cultural beliefs, traditions, social interactions, and familial relationships among and between members of the greater

[31] Rhonda Hardy (personal communication) has compiled a list of 55 individuals of Wailaki descent who are buried in the Briceland Cemetery.

Wailaki community, provide a unifying force that helps to maintain strong cultural connections with their collective past.

Their spiritual connection with the land where they were born and where their ancestors are buried still reverberates throughout the Wailaki diaspora today, but it is not found in the ethnographies and histories of the Indian people still living in this region. As a result, there is a need for a more contemporary critique and review of the existing historical and ethnographic literature in order to provide a more nuanced interpretation and understanding regarding the social and spatial relationships that existed between and among the southern Athabaskan people inhabiting this region during the ethnographic period.

This effort is more than an academic exercise for the local Indian people who self-identify as Wailaki. For example, today, as discussed in greater detail below, one of the problems the Wailaki face in organizing relates to seeking tribal recognition by the federal government. It is not Wailaki history, or the input provided by local individuals of Wailaki descent that is the major determinant used by the federal government in granting tribal recognition, but that of the anthropologists and historians of today who still view the region and the people living here through the 20th century ethnocentric lens of Kroeber, Goddard, et al.

A word about the Nongatl

As noted in Part 1, there are virtually no ethnographic data regarding the group ethnographers classified as Nongatl. As a result, information regarding the cultural ties during the ethnographic period between the Wailaki dialect speakers to the south and the Nongatl rests on nothing more than guesswork. All of the people of Wailaki descent that I have talked to were unfamiliar with the region north of about Blocksburg (the watershed divide between the Van Duzen and Eel Rivers) and there was no one who claimed any ancestral links to the people who inhabited the region outlined by ethnographers as being Nongatl territory.

It is likely that by the late 1850s or early 1860s whatever kinship, linguistic, and cultural links existed between the more southerly groups of southern Athabascans and those to the north (Nongatl territory) had been severed, essentially because of, as noted in Chapter 3, the genocide (ethnic-cleansing) of an entire culture and people (see Chapter 7 and Map 7-1 for more on this subject). Given the lack of both ethnographic and contemporary data, it would only be further conjecture to map or discuss the links between the Nongatl and those speaking the Wailaki dialect to the south.

Historical background

Prior to the Gold Rush, much of interior of northwestern California remained relatively isolated from the ongoing historic settlement, and the resulting destruction of the

aboriginal way of life taking place in California immediately to the south in what was Spanish territory, and after 1821, became part of newly independent Mexico. The few visitors to northwestern California at that time included Russian and American fur traders and hunters working along the Pacific coast. Further inland, a number of parties of fur trappers in search of beavers, including large expeditions from the Hudson Bay Company headquartered in Washington and Oregon passed far to the east of the North Coast Ranges traveling south through the Sacramento Valley on their way to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada and French Camp. One of the few exceptions to this isolation included the 1825 Jedidiah Smith Party passing through Wintu, Hupa, and Tsnungwe territory while traveling from the Sacramento Valley to the mouth of the Klamath River on northwest coast.

Recent research by the author suggests that it is also likely that a few parties (sometimes referred to as brigades) trapping beavers worked in the high country of the Yolla Bolly mountains in the 1820s and 1830s (Keter 2013a, 2013b). It is also possible that a Hudson's Bay party of trappers led by John Work and Michel LaFramboise passed through Wailaki territory in 1833, and that earlier that year the Ewing Young Party may have traveled from Mendocino County up the South Fork Eel River to the Pacific coast at the mouth of the Eel River (Keter 2013a, 2013b).

The isolation of the people inhabiting the remote Klamath Mountains and interior North Coast Ranges changed dramatically in 1848 with the discovery of gold near Douglas City on the Trinity River. Along with the discovery of gold in the Sierra foothills at Sutter's Mill that same year, the resulting "gold fever" not only in the eastern United States, but throughout the world, resulted in the California Gold Rush of 1849. Almost overnight California's non-native population exploded--growing from about 15,000 in 1848 to 224,000 in 1852. This invasion of miners quickly led to the disruption and destruction of aboriginal settlements throughout the mining regions of northern California.

Given that there was no gold in the interior region of the North Coast Ranges it was not until May of 1854 that the Wailaki living in the North Fork Eel River watershed first encountered Euro Americans. Brothers Frank and Pierce Asbill, Jim Neafus, and a party of explorers from Petaluma, hoped to blaze a trail linking the merchants in Sonoma County with the gold mining towns in Trinity County. As noted earlier, they crossed the North Fork Eel River near its confluence with Hulls Creek, and traveled north to Hettenshaw Valley. The Kelsey Party continued on to Weaverville, while the Asbills and Neafus spent the winter in Hettenshaw Valley hunting deer for their hides (Keter 1990: 4).

The prospectors traveling east through the Bald Hills region[32] of northwest California from coastal Humboldt County, and those heading north from Sonoma County through the Yolla Bolly country to the mines in Trinity County immediately recognized the potential of the

[32] Just inland from the redwood belt of the northwestern California coastal region lays a narrow band of mountains--the Bald Hills--dominated by oak woodlands and open grassland prairies. This region stretches from about Schoolhouse Peak in Redwood National Park--east of the town of Orick--south for about a hundred miles to Round Valley in Mendocino County.

grasslands and oak woodlands dominated by nutritious perennial bunch grasses (which also provided a substantial portion of the Wailaki diet) of the Bald Hills for the grazing of livestock (Keter 1989).

By the 1860s, a number of ranchers had moved into southern Humboldt County and to Round Valley--despite the valley being set aside by the federal government as an Indian Reservation. The settlers moving into the region had little regard for the property rights of the aboriginal groups and viewed them merely as impediments to establishing their ranching operations. When the Indians began to resist the ranchers, the result was, more often than not, violent and bloody retribution against the nearest Indian encampment whether they were guilty of anything or not. Referring to the Round Valley region in 1856, Special Indian Agent J. Ross Browne who investigated living conditions on Indian Reservations (including Round Valley) noted; "what neglect, starvation, and disease have not done, has been achieved by the cooperation of the white settlers in the great work of extermination" (Hammond 1959: 19, Miller 1975: 8).

As noted in Chapter 1, the period from 1860 to January of 1865 was marked by numerous confrontations between the Indians and the military and local settlers throughout much of northwestern California. In southern Humboldt and southwestern Trinity Counties the conflict between the newly arrived settlers and ranchers climaxed in 1862 resulting in the "Two Years War" (Carranco and Beard 1981, Coy 1929, Keter 1990, 1994a). At that time the "California Volunteers and Mountaineers," a military unit commanded by military officers and made up of local volunteers due to the lack of military personnel as a result of the Civil War, was active throughout the region (U. S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion* records, 1897: no.105: 254-256)

Many of these volunteers were local settlers and backwoodsmen who knew the Yolla Bolly country well, and had a special enmity for those Indians who had managed to avoid being killed or captured. Organized bands of local settlers[33] attacked villages massacring most of the inhabitants except children who were captured and sold at Long Valley (located at the end of the wagon road from the Bay Area). As noted earlier, Laytonville became a center for the selling of Indian children to wealthy families in the Bay Area. After all the villages were abandoned, the military and vigilante groups sought out refuge sites (Keter 2017) where the last survivors were hiding out in the remote Yolla Bolly Mountains (Keter 1990).

As a result, by early 1865 nearly all of the Indians who had inhabited the Eel River watershed were gone (Keter 1990). Many were killed by the military and armed bands of settlers, others died of disease, while most of the survivors were sold into slavery or taken to Indian Reservations (primarily to Round Valley although a few Wailaki were sent to the Hupa Reservation). By January of 1865, it was reported that "Lieutenant Middleton, Company C arrived at the Peninsula [Humboldt Bay] with a large number of prisoners, comprising the last of the hostilities in Trinity County" (Bledsoe 1885:209). Only a few survivors remained in the mountains and Bledsoe (1885: 209) noted that they were "too

[33] Walter Jarboe lead a paramilitary group--the Eel River Rangers--from Round Valley that was responsible for the killing of hundreds of Indian men, women, and children in the Yolla Bolly country to the north of Round Valley (Carranco and Beard 1981: 84-97).

few in number to be feared or avoided."

A few Wailaki who had managed to survive the pogroms of the 1850s and early 1860s managed to remain in the Yolla Bolly country working for local ranches, often moving to Round Valley as they got older. That is the reason so many of the elderly individuals (like Yellowjacket, Mary Major, Nancy Doby, and Sam and Lucy Young) interviewed by the ethnographers came from the more remote Yolla Bolly country directly to the north and were living in Round Valley in the 1920s and 1930s .

During the 1850s and 1860s there were few white women living in the area. Mrs. George Burgess who moved to Zenia in the late 1850s lived there for three years before seeing another white woman. The only other white women living in this region were Mrs. Pitt White[34] and Mrs. Charlie Fenton (TCC Appendix 6: I# 186). As a result, marriage between white men and Indian women was common and many of the residents of this region today are the direct descendants of the first settlers who moved into the region**.** It appears that no full-blooded Indian man married a white woman--there was one instance of an Indian man, Augustus Russ, marrying a black woman[35]. Appendix 2 contains a copy of the original Homestead application filed by Russ in December of 1908, for a 160-acre homestead entry directly south of the original Russ homestead. There is a large amount of correspondence on this matter in the hard copy file (TCC Vol. 3: IF02)--including a copy of a handwritten letter dated August 11, 1910 from Russ to: "The Forester" Washington D.C. (at that time Henry Graves). Eventually, Russ filed for this tract a second time under the Indian Allotment Act in his daughter's name, Mabel Russ (age 7), and after strenuous objections by the Forest Service--who questioned whether Mabel Russ qualified under the act as an "Indian' – it appears that all 160 acres were approved.

One consultant interviewed in 1985 by Six Rivers National Forest Anthropologist Kathy Heffner McClellan--a 96 year old Wailaki man (TCC Appendix 6: I# 378) stated that:

> My father tell me that when white men make all Indians go to reservation, us Wailaki said 'hell no!' ...It not so good in some ways because white man while he

[34] Pitt White, his wife, Prudence, and their children moved onto the ranch in about 1875. It was one of the earliest ranches to be established in this part of southwestern Trinity County (Robb 1978: 16). This was a large ranch and it even had its own blacksmith shop (Carranco and Beard 1981: 212). No estimate could be found on the number of sheep Pitt White ran, but it was surely in the tens of thousands.

[35] Irene Willburn Stapp (TCC: A6: I#444: 1981) indicated her great grand uncle Hiram (Hi) [Willburn] went back to Texas twice in 1860s. On one of these trips, he returned with two of the Willburn's former slaves--now freedmen, and a young black girl named Rose (her family name was not found). Irene Stapp remembered being told that at that time she was a baby that the men were her uncles. The men worked at chores around the Willburn homestead in Hettenshaw Valley and they lived in the bunk house.

Rose, who was first married to Ed Berry (or possibly Berri) and had a child, May Berry by him. Rose later married Augustus Russ (part Wailaki). In 1910, Russ under his seven year old daughter Mabel's name applied for a 160 acre tract under National Forest Indian Allotment law (TCC: IF02 Map 4: T4S, R8E, S9 HBM) directly south of the original Augustus Russ homestead (TCC: HA08) in Section 4. Records are unclear, but it appears that the tract was finally listed.

> hate us, he take our women. My father says all the men sad because our women were forced to live with white men. We lose a lot of Indians like that. [From the original.]

The 1880 southwestern Trinity County Long Ridge Census (TCC: Appendix 3: 1880 Census) contains a number of entries for Indians and those with half-Indian blood. The Census lists mostly single men or married couples with few if any children (Keter 1994a). Many of the Wailaki men living off the reservation in the Yolla Bolly country worked on sheep ranches, where they excelled at shearing sheep, and shepherding flocks in the mountains during the summer. Many of the Wailaki women worked on the larger ranches as domestic servants. Also, during the summer and fall, some of the married women took supplies every few weeks to their husbands who were up in the high country tending bands of sheep (a band of sheep numbered about 1,500 to 2,500).

For example, in the 1880s, Charlie Fenton (TCC Appendix 3: 1880 Fenton Ranch Census records), whose ranch was located near the confluence of the North Fork Eel River and Main Eel River, employed a large number of Indians. The 1880 Long Ridge Census lists "Fenton, Chas" as "Single;" his occupation was recorded as "Sheep Farmer." Following his name is a list with a notation by the census taker that "all of this list of Indians are in charge of Fenton and work on his sheep ranch" (Keter 1994a: 33). The Census records listed sixty-two Indian men, women, and children as living in what were quite likely several encampments on Fenton's ranch[36] (one encampment was located at a former village site on Hulls Creek in Hulls Valley). The Census list did not identify any tribal affiliations (Keter 1990, 1994a, TCC: Appendix 3; 1880 Census Rolls Long Ridge and Hettenshaw Valley).

Despite the catastrophic events that had decimated the Wailaki some efforts were made by the survivors to maintain their cultural identity. In about 1873, the Indians living in northern Mendocino County, southern Humboldt County, and southwestern Trinity County, embraced the Big Head Cult, an offshoot of the Ghost Dance Cult that had originated a few years earlier among the Washoe living near Lake Tahoe. Ethnographer Cora Dubois who did field work in Round Valley in 1937 interviewed a number of individuals; including a Wailaki man: John Tip. He provided her with information on how the Big Head Cult Dance first came to Round Valley, and how it then moved north into the Yolla Bolly Country and southeastern Humboldt County. The Big Head Cult feathers associated with the dance first traveled from Round Valley to Horse Ranch on the Eel River near Island Mountain, then to Fenton's Ranch (near the mouth of the North Fork Eel). Then over a period of months, the feathers were first taken to Bill Woods' ranch, then to the Jewett ranch[37], Garberville,

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[36] The 1880 Census rolls records twenty-two Indian married couples on the Fenton Ranch. Of the total marriages, only seven couples had any children. Of the fifteen couples with no children, only two couples were above childbearing age, and may have had children who were no longer living in the household. Most couples were between the ages of seventeen and forty, with many in their twenties and thirties. The total number of children was 13 or an average of .65 children per married couple

[37] In the early 1860s, Woods married Clowie, a full-blooded Indian woman (Carranco and Beard 1978: 181). At about the same time Enoch Jewett married an Indian woman named Belle Fenton (Eureka Times Standard December 23, 2005) this would explain the reason the dances were held at these locations.

Burdick's Creek, and finally to the dancehouse (*yi-tco*) at Blocksburg. Dubois (1939: 119) writes that:

> At Blocksburg (Lassik) the feathers were sold to two men, Waielthlele and Sedibinta, who were said to be half Hayfork Wintu and half Wailaki. Their names are definitely Wintu. Captain Jim stayed in Blocksburg some ten days to teach the dance to the new owners. He then left, but in a month he was called by the new owners to accompany them to Hayfork. After two or three weeks in Hayfork they were taken on to "Weaver" [Weaverville].

It is worth noting that despite the lack of documentation in the ethnographic literature, especially in the more remote regions of Wailaki territory, cultural activities including: dances, traditional healing and religious practices, and the cooperative collection and distribution of subsistence resources between the various extended families of Wailaki descent still living in the area continued well into the 20th century (Keter 2017). Dances were held in Hulls Valley at a location (most likely at an old village site) on Charlie Fenton's Ranch (Keter 1994a), and in Round Valley (dances there were held by a number of tribes). In the North Fork Eel River watershed, a dancehouse (30' in diameter) was constructed in the late 1890s or early 1900s in the vicinity Raglan Flat (Image 4-1). It was still being used by local Wailaki into the first and possibly second decade of the 20th century[38].

Image 4-1
30' Diameter Dancehouse--the entrance faces to the east
(T. Keter 1989)

[38] This protohistoric site CA-TRI-991H was recorded by the author in 1983; see Keter 2021. Lee Stapp provided the information regarding the age and use of this feature.

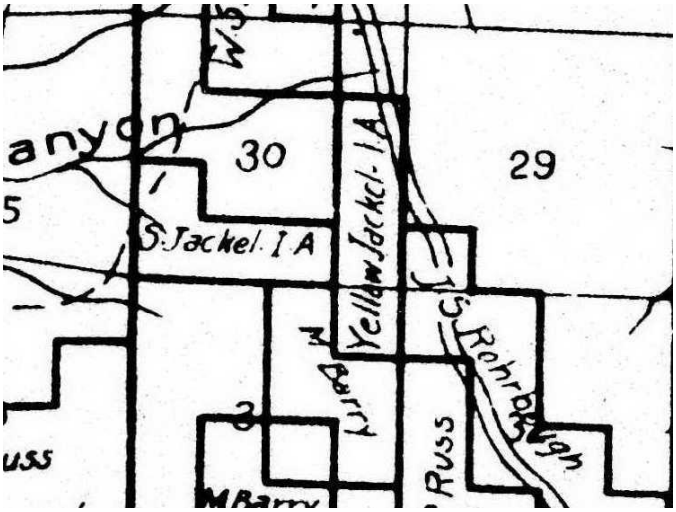
In January of 1985, anthropologist Kathy Heffner-McClellan interviewed a 96-year-old Wailaki man living in southwestern Trinity County. He told her that:

> ...that Indians built round houses or dance houses on ranches owned by the whites if a lot of Indians lived on the ranch. Charlie Fenton, in Hull's Valley, is where his family lived along with other Wailaki. They had three dance houses on this ranch. They lived there because the men worked for Charlie Fenton, they herded his sheep, took them to summer on South Fork Mountain and brought them back in the fall. Indians would not build a dance house on white men's ranches unless they worked and lived there and that there was more than 1 or 2 Indians.
>
> ...we had dances any chance we could get, even on white man's holidays like 4th of July and Christmas. The one everyone liked best was in the spring it was a coming out dance. And of course when the medicine man called one, we always danced.
>
> *All of us Indians danced together, our best friends were the Yuki but we liked to dance with the Nomlaki too because all our dances and songs and dance outfits were almost the same.*
>
> Our dancehouse always were big, real big, not like the Yuki's. Ours was always big because we had lots of Indians at Charlie Fentons and our dances everybody come to. They always have center posts and most always had lots of center posts. Because if it big, it needs those center post to hold everything up.
>
> When everyone from all around come to these dances, they all camp around there for days. A dance, even a doctor dance, has to have lots of people at it.
>
> YellowJacket, yeah I knew Yellowjacket. He worked in sheep too. He was raised by white man [Jack French] from little boy. He liked to be by himself. Sometimes he come to dance and stand and watch but he never dance while I was there and I was a young one who liked to dance; so I was at all the dances. I'd travel up to two days to get to Indian dances, white man dance too but that wasn't until later in time when white man let us in to dance. They'd let half breed in their dance because most their kids are half breed but not us wild injuns as they call us that like to dance in round house. Las dance I dance in was about 1920. [Emphasis added--minor editing for clarity--from the original.]

One of the reasons for the relatively large number of Wailaki living in the Yolla Bolly country in the late 19th century and first few decades of the twentieth century was due to the fact that Indians (or individuals of part Indian descent) could acquire 160-acre tracts of public domain lands under provisions of the General Allotment Act of 1887 (Map 4-2). In 1905, the Trinity Forest Reserve was established. Shortly thereafter, in 1906 Congress

passed the National Forest Homestead Act of 1906. Under this law, individuals were permitted to homestead 160 acres of National Forest land if the tract met the regulations as set forth in the new law.

Later, in June of 1910, a similar law, the National Forest Indian Allotment Act, was enacted that also permitted Indians to patent National Forest lands. As a result, of these laws, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries numerous individuals of Wailaki descent (and those of part-Indian ancestry who qualified as "Indian" under the law) filed for 160-acre tracts of federal land throughout the Yolla Bolly Country[39]. See Appendix 1 for a map and listing of these tracts located within the North Fork Eel River watershed north of Hulls Creek.



Map 4-2
1915 Trinity National Forest Map showing Yellowjacket's
and his wife's Sally Jacket's Indian Allotments (I.A. on map)
(TCC Appendix 2: Map 28)

Today, many of the descendants of these extended families (for example, Duncan, Willburn, Stapp, Stillwell, Hoaglin, Davis, Russ, Asbill, Major, Dooby, and Young) remain within their homeland region or live in Round Valley. As historian, Walter Robb (1978: 340) noted in his history of southwestern Trinity County; "Indian blood runs deep in Southern Trinity County to this day." Had they lived elsewhere in California that might not have been the case, but in the Yolla Bolly country so many white men had taken Indian wives that their children were largely accepted in the white community on the strength of the ties to their fathers. This fact may help to explain why so many from of the first generation of children born in the Yolla Bolly country chose to remain.

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[39] The TCC: Vol. 2: *Indian Allotments folder* contains copies of the applications for 18 tracts of land applied for under these two laws in the North Fork Eel River watershed north of Hulls Creek. There are more tracts where title was granted as some records are missing--including those for the two Indian Allotments that were acquired by Sally Jacket and Yellowjacket.

Chapter 5

The Collection of Ethnographic Data: A contemporary critique

While individuals of Indian descent still living in southwestern Trinity, southern Humboldt, and northern Mendocino Counties today consider themselves collectively to be of Wailaki ancestry, the more contemporary anthropological literature and histories of the region still focus on linguistic differences as documented by ethnographers (the etic), in defining the Lassik, Sinkyone, Nongatl, and Wailaki "tribes" and delineating their respective "tribal" territories (see for example Rhode 2022). This emphasis in focusing on differences in dialects among the people they interviewed in order to delineate territorial boundaries has resulted in the current state of affairs; with anthropologists and historians questioning the claims of individuals of Wailaki descent whom they regard as Lassik or Sinkyone.

Much of the ethnographical data that ethnographers and historians reference in order to question the claims of contemporary Wailaki regarding their ancestry are based primarily on the information provided by ethnographers like Goddard (1923: 93) who noted that;

> The northwestern portion of California contained a large number of fairly small tribes, each with a very limited range of territory. The primary cause of this diversity would appear to be the many small valleys separated by mountain ridges. Even the valleys of the larger rivers are often subdivided where they narrow in canyons. There appears to have existed between the tribes universal hostility, so that each tribe was confined to a particular territory except for hostile excursions. It appears that the women and many of the men would pass their entire lives within the limits of a small valley and the surrounding slopes and ridges, which furnished the range for acorns and other wild vegetable foods and which were also the hunting territory of the tribe.

As will be seen in the discussion below, the assertions regarding the relative isolation of the speakers of the Wailaki dialect due to their constrained geography, and that "[T]here appears to have existed between the tribes universal hostility" is demonstrably false. What is needed is a more appropriate term than the word tribe with its political connotations when describing the social organization and territorial relationships that formed the basis of southern Athabascan society, culture, and worldview. It is proposed, therefore, that social organization revolved around and was centered on communities.

A community consisted of a larger village or a group of villages associated through affinal relations and shared geography. For example, several extended families occupying several small villages (Merriam's rancherias) might share a section of river and the more mountainous terrain surrounding their community. Goddard (1923 108) estimated the average size of a village for the Wailaki living along the Main Eel River south of Alderpoint varied from about fifteen to thirty people, and from sixty to a hundred for a larger village.

The hundreds of southern Athabascan Wailaki speaking communities formed a complex web of linguistic, cultural, social, and environmental relationships that stretched across the region. This network of social relationships between various villages and communities was flexible in its structure, and as affinal relations between communities changed and evolved over time, new alliances were formed based primarily on the realignment of social relations (marriage and familial ties, personal conflicts, trade), or possibly in some cases, the need to adapt to changing environmental conditions that might affect the ability to procure desired subsistence resources from traditionally productive locations. The need to share and coordinate in the ecological management and the procuring and utilization of desired subsistence resources across their homeland region made good relations and cooperation among neighboring communities essential.

People felt and shared a strong connection with a particular place, and villages were often named for nearby geological or environmental features. For the southern Athabascan Wailaki, with no serious threats from outside groups, higher levels of political organization beyond that of family and community were simply not needed. This complex web of ever-changing social relationships existing between and among communities during the ethnographic period is not reflective of the ethnographer's synchronic classification of strictly defined territorial boundaries based on minor linguistic differences. For example, the concept of a "Lassik tribe" defending a particular territory or a "boundary" remaining static over an extended period-of-time is unlikely. Communities gathered for celebrations, shared common traditions and spiritual beliefs, and established formal bonds through marriage and extended kinship relations. What emerges from a more contemporary view of the ethnographic data is of a shared common world-view in which villages and communities were organized based on the people's relationship to the land, to their resource base, and to each other through extended families.

Communities: Cultural and Social Relationships

Among the factors that helped to maintain and strengthen the cultural and social bonds between individuals and among Wailaki-communities were:

Linguistic Relationships

The need to communicate effectively was essential in order to settle disputes and to maintain good relationships between extended families, neighboring communities, and more distant communities. If effective communication did not take place, it might lead to violence or war.

As discussed in Chapter 1, it was common for inhabitants of villages and communities located near the villages of other linguistic groups (especially the Yuki and Wintu) to speak more than one language, and the field notes of ethnographers have numerous references by their consultants to individuals being able to speak to or understand their neighbor's

language. Marriage customs, as discussed below, also tended to encourage the need for bilingualism, as men sought a bride outside their local community

Spatial Relationships Between Communities

Speakers of the Wailaki dialect shared a common worldview and trade relationships, ceremonial ties, and a vast network of affinal relations connected communities. Where one lived and to whom one was related had more to do with establishing and maintaining close ties between individuals and in relations between different communities than with any larger political entity.

The affairs of a village, each with its own headman who had some limited authority, were usually influenced by one or more powerful extended families, these families usually possessed and maintained cultural regalia and often claimed the more productive locations where desirable subsistence resources were located. Communities held in common the immediate area surrounding their villages and certain traditionally productive hunting and gathering areas. Many locations with productive subsistence resources including more remote seasonal gathering areas (oak acorn groves, plots of tobacco, basketry materials like hazel and bear grass), or important fishing locations were owned by families or claimed by communities. In many instances, however, relatives from other villages were welcome to hunt and gather there when they were in need.

Anthropologist Mark Tveskov (2007: 433), in his study of contemporary social identity among the Athabascans native to southwest Oregon, notes that in the late 19th to early 20th century, anthropologists working in the region who interviewed Indian elders, noted that like the southern Athabascans:

> ...Individual households—rather than villages, clans, or chiefdoms—served as the fundamental political, social, and economic unit. Households actively maintained this independence despite being linked into webs of cultural, political, and economic social relations that started with groups of households within a village and associations of villages within a local area, but that included more far-flung networks of trade and intermarriage *that stretched across and beyond the entire region*. [Emphasis added.]

The gathering of families from more distant communities provided opportunities to socialize and to share and strengthen cultural bonds. Also important at these gatherings, as discussed below, was the sharing of environmental information regarding where and what desirable resources were available (or not available) for procurement. At some of the larger seasonal gatherings, more prosperous households often confirmed their social identity, rank, and hierarchical status by organizing and directing the gathering and sharing of desired resources by sponsoring or participating in gift giving or feasting rituals.

The literature and interviews suggest that it was routine for related villages or people from several different communities to camp together during the spring and summer months (sometimes for extended periods of time) gathering plant materials, or to fish or hunt. Sometimes during a hunt, this time of year fifteen to twenty men from different villages or communities would drive deer into snares (Loeb 1932: 88).

On the upper North Fork Eel River, the village of *Seltcikyo'k'at'* (red rock large on) during the summer joined with the village of *Setatcaikaiya* that was some six or seven miles downriver to coordinate resource subsistence procurement activities (Goddard 1923: 101), and on Horse Creek (a tributary of Hull's Creek) there was a waterfall where fish were harvested each season by three distant villages (Goddard 1923: 224).

It was also not unusual for villages or communities to host dances or "Big Time" celebrations that might bring together people from more distant locations. Goddard noted, that at one village located along North Fork there was a *yi-tco* (dance house), measuring about thirty foot in diameter with an eighteen foot high center post. In *Wailaki Texts* Goddard (1923a: 126-129) recorded a story about this dance house from his consultant Wailaki Jim (a member of the Willburn extended family) that begins: "Dance house is built they say, far south. They are about to complete the circuit, they say. He is about to invite us they say."

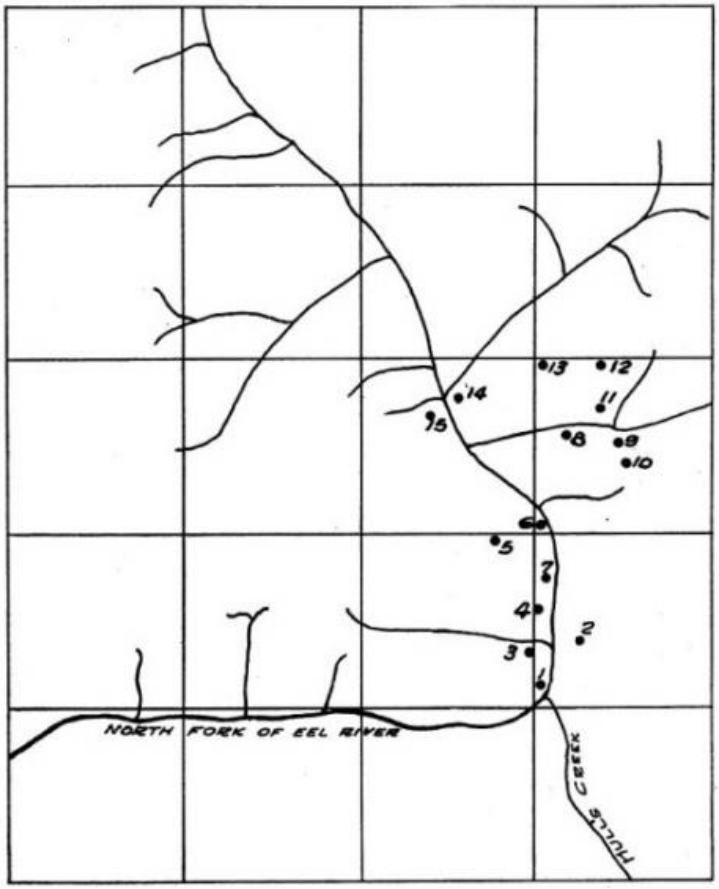
In 1922, Goddard traveled up the North Fork Eel River canyon, from just to the east of the mouth of Hulls Creek, recording village sites along the river with a 70-year old Wailaki man--Goodboy Jack--who had been born in the region east of Hull's Creek near Horse Canyon. Goddard recorded village sites from the mouth of Hulls Creek, north along the river for about two miles, but Goodboy Jack was not entirely familiar with the area beyond that. In the summer of 1996, the author visited the sites numbered two to seven recorded by Goddard (1924) on his map (Map 5-1)[40]. Most of the sites appeared to have been well above the 1955 and 1964 flood[41] levels as they still retained fair to excellent integrity (Keter 1992: 9).

Nearly all of the housepits identified by Goddard on each of these sites were still visible--quite possibly as a result of limited public access--since they are located on private property. At the time that I visited the sites recorded by Goddard the property along the

[40] At the time of my visit a team of archaeologists from Sonoma State and Sacramento State were excavating Goddard's site 1 located on BLM lands. I managed to "wander" (trespass) up the river canyon on private land for half a day. Following Goddard's map and verbal descriptions, I easily relocated all of the sites for about two miles up the river canyon from the mouth of Hulls Creek.

[41] In 1964, a catastrophic event, the "Christmas Week Flood" occurred resulting in severe damage to the North Fork of the Eel River and its tributaries. Heavy snows followed by warm and heavy rainfall caused flooding throughout the North Coast Ranges. In the North Fork region, the flooding severely impacted the stream channels. The damage to fish habitat was severe and resulted in almost destroying anadromous fish populations. A study for the California Department of Water Resources (Brown and Ritter 1971:25) noted that erosion from the storm: "was most severe in the eastern section of the Eel River basin where the North and Middle Forks of the Eel River were fed by runoff from the steep westward facing slopes."

river was owned by the Flying AA Ranch. Since then the ranch has been sold and the new owners have renamed it the Travis Ranch--its original name[42].



Map 5-1
These are the sites Goddard visited in 1924 on the North Fork Eel River
Goddard 1924: Map 2

[42] The Travis brothers, John, Frank, and Al, were sheepshearers from Forestville in Sonoma County and in 1895 bought a 2,500 acre tract of land located to the east of the North Fork just above its confluence of Hull's Creek. Much of the land for this ranch was originally owned by Pierce and Frank Asbill who acquired the lands in the 1860s. By the late 1880s, George White owned most of the parcels of land in the area (TCC Lowden 1894: map A2: 05)).

It was said that the Travis brothers were the first ranchers in the region to import white-faced Herefords. They brought in 1000 white-faced Herefords from Ukiah in 1895. Brothers Frank and Al took the most active part in running the ranch and immediately began to buy any of the 160 acre sized homesteads in the area that came on the market (Herbert et al n.d., Appendix 5 ms08). They also fenced these parcels to make access to public rangelands difficult for the smaller 160 sized homesteaders. Unable to make it on a 160 acre homestead without some use of public lands, the smaller ranchers were forced to sell to the Travis Brothers at rock bottom prices. By the time the last Travis brother died in 1940 the ranch was 14,000 acres in size and with 1,500 head of cattle, stretched along both sides of the North Fork of the Eel River from Hull's Creek north for several miles (Herbert et al n.d.: Appendix IV:5). The only access to the ranch was by pack trail until sometime in the 1940s (Southern Trinity County Files #:53).

In a paper presented to the Society for California Archaeology at the 1996 Data Sharing Meeting in Chico (Keter 1996), I discussed the possibility that one of these sites may have been the location of a *Yi-tco.*

> Goddard's Site 5 (*taltcasin*): Identification of this site is somewhat problematic since it only approximates the description provided by Goddard. The site is situated on a large oak flat and adjacent meadow well away from the river (about 1/3 mile) with no water (in July) nearby. It does not appear to be a village site and no midden or house pits were identified. In addition the number of artifacts on the site when compared to the other sites is very low. It is significant that Goodboy Jack and Goddard did not identify this as a village site. It was, instead, identified as the location of an earth lodge the pit of which was 30 feet in diameter. The center post was said to have been 18 feet high....Goodboy Jack remembered going into this house when he was a small boy. Messengers had been sent out to invite people from a distance of two days' travel, *and Indians from the Main Eel River and from the north were present*.
>
> Given the relatively large area of this flat as compared to the other sites visited, and the generally up and down steepness of the local topography, it appears to have been an ideal location to assemble a relatively large group of people. {Emphasis added.]

Image 5-2
Large Flat that appears to be Goddard's site five on his 1924 map
(T. Keter 1996)

Another large *Yi-tco* was located at Blocksburg and served to host communities from as far away as Kekawaka and Mina (Goddard field notes). As noted earlier, in about 1878, this dancehouse hosted the Feather Dance (Bighead Dance).

Affinal Relations and Exogamous Marriage

The interactions and relationships between communities (and with adjacent groups like the Wintu and Yuki) correlated most directly with family. Kinship links and affinal relations provided the mechanism for socialization and in establishing strong bonds between communities that were critical factors in maintaining good relations. Coordination and cooperation in obtaining subsistence resources and participating in celebrations were further enhanced by this extended family network. An extended family is considered to include two or more generations living in a single household and as Heffner McClellan (1988: 29) writes:

> Indian family affinal relations are structurally open and assume village type characteristics. They can include several households representing significant relatives along both vertical and horizontal lines where they are responsible for each other.

Marriage enhanced social interaction and community-to-community attachments. People from different communities gathered for celebrations to share common cultural traditions, and to establish or maintain formal bonds through marriage and kinship relations. This gathering of communities brought together people from many different regions containing a wide diversity of resources. Marriages were usually arranged by the fathers who would propose such a union out of friendship. An exchange of gifts between the two families would then ensue (Curtis 1924: 29-30).

Marriage was prohibited among blood relations on both sides of the family and exogamous marriage (marriage outside of one's home village) was preferred. It was common for marriages to take place between more distant Wailaki villages and communities. Avocational linguist Ben Schill (personal communication) wrote that he found:

> Looking at the few family records that were collected at the advent of interviews [by ethnographers], it becomes obvious that intermarriage taboos meant that parents were often from areas considerably distant. Sally Bell's mother [was] from Garberville area, [her] father from the coast.
>
> One Bull Creek informant (Polly Po) was married to a Mattole, and George Burt [from the village at Bull Creek] was married to a Nongatl from Bridgeville [on the Van Duzen River].

The prohibition on marriage with even distant relatives often made it necessary to marry into neighboring groups (Yuki, Wintu, and Cahto). Strong ties were felt with all relatives, and members of an extended family were obligated to support any relative in feuds (Susman 1976: 6). Susman (1976: 12-13) noted that one consultant referring to the importance of large extended families to the Wailaki told her that: "ordinarily they 'think a whole lot of relatives'."

There is virtually no information on the Wailaki regarding marriage customs (Elsasser 1978: 196, Essene 1942: 64). Most marriages were arranged by purchase or with an exchange of gifts between families. According to Essene, however, his consultant indicated that the exchange of gifts was very one-sided, and that it could take a young man up to three years to accumulate enough money (wealth) to buy a bride.

Usually a couple would live with the wife's family (matrilocal residence) until the birth of their first child, and then they alternated with the husband's family (patrilocal residence) until the birth of their second or third child. At that time, the couple would build their own home usually in the man's village. If this was indeed the common practice, it is clear that strong attachments and affinal relationships would be established between the wife's and husband's respective in-laws and extended families. Susman (1976:12-13) wrote that:

> A man might marry two or more sisters, the second during or after, the lifetime of the first, providing he was a good husband and his relatives-in-laws approved of him. Relatives-in-laws out of one's own generation were regarded as blood relatives and one behaved accordingly. Sometimes a man would live with his wife's parents, or visit them frequently, and a woman often found her mother-in-law 'like another mother'....

Although only documented in interviews by Essene, it appears that the levirate (a custom whereby a man is obliged to marry his deceased brother's wife) and sororate (this custom obliges a woman to marry her deceased sister's husband) were common. Between the Wailaki and Wintu socializing, intermarriage, and trade were especially common and close relations were maintained between the Wintu from Hyampom and the Hayfork Valley region as well as with the Cottonwood Wintu, and many of the southern Athabascans interviewed by ethnographers were also part Wintu. For example, Chief Lassik was half Wintu and this, in fact, appears to have been his Wintu name, apparently his Athapascan name was *T'asu's*. Furthermore, Lucy Young (Chief Lassik's niece) was one-fourth Hayfork Wintu; the mother of her Wintu husband Sam Young , who was from Hayfork, was half Wailaki and half Wintu (TCC B03: 5), and Essene's (1942) primary consultants Mary Major was half Wailaki and half Wintu, and Bill Dobbin's mother was also half Wailaki and half Wintu.

The Hayfork Wintu and perhaps the Cottonwood Wintu visited portions of southern Athabascan territory on a regular basis. Several place names well within what is considered southern Athabascan territory are Wintu (Penutian) words. For example, Hettenshaw Valley and Kettenpom Valley are anglicized from Wintu words.[43] Powers (1877:117) indicated that *hetten-chow* denotes camas valley, *ket'-en* refers to a species of Camas, and *hetten-pum* means camas earth.

[43] Baumhoff (1958:175 Map 2-8) notes that the Lassik (Merriams' sit-ten bid-en) name for Hettenshaw Valley is *ken-tes'-tung* and that it is in sit-ten bid-en or "Lassik" territory. On his map, however, (Baumhoff 1958: Map 1) Baumhoff has placed Hettenshaw Valley in Nongatl territory.

It is also worth noting that, according to Lucy Young, the Wintu were the only outside group invited to the Hazelnut Ceremony held in the fall on South Fork Mountain. Merriam (1955: 12) concluded that this may be evidence of a former southward extension of the Hayfork Wintun into the Eel River region (see also Keter 2022c regarding possible archaeological evidence), or more likely, given their close affinal links, they were invited to visit the region to gather resources and to attend social gatherings. Essene in his *CED* (1942: 72) recorded the following information from one of his consultants (possibly Mary Major or Lucy Young).

> Camas called *kos* (N. Wintun, *kĕ'ttĕn*) ceremony held in June or July every year; lasts for 4 days; dance takes place outdoors in a circular brush enclosure during the day time and late into the night; men and women dance abreast or in [a]circle; dancers wear yellowhammer headbands, deerskin aprons, bead necklaces, faces and breasts are painted black and white; everyone gorges on camas root. Informant thought this was the most important ceremony of Lassik. [From the original.}

A large celebration--the Acorn Feast--was held each year in the fall. Neighboring villages and more distant relatives would be invited to the sponsoring village. After the feast, the remaining acorns would be divided among those who attended. This sharing also served to distribute an abundant crop from one village to those relatives and villages that may not have had an abundance of acorns that year. Another big time or celebration was held at a village on the upper Mad River where salmon (or possibly steelhead) provided the bulk of the food for the celebration. Several other locations where temporary camps were established for these large gatherings have been documented by ethnographers including Essene (1942: 84).

In the south where Wailaki and Yuki territory met, marriage between the two groups was common and it was not unusual for inhabitants of Wailaki and Yuki villages in this area to be related and to speak both languages. Goddard (1924: 219) identified two separate mixed Wailaki/Yuki villages in the Hulls Creek watershed where both Wailaki and Yuki were spoken. One of these villages identified itself closely with the Wailaki and the other with the Yuki.

During the summer of 1874, A.G. Tassin, a reporter for *Overland Monthly* magazine, was employed as a scout for the U.S. Army operating out of Round Valley. His orders were to explore northern Mendocino and southern Trinity Counties and issue a report "upon the peculiarities and resources of the country, its early history, and probable future" (Tassin 1874: 25). Tassin (1884: 7) noted that the Yuki and Wailaki had close trade relations, and probably because of intermarriage and kinship ties supported each other in disputes and wars. Tassin (1884: 7), in one of his articles published in *Overland Monthly*, noted that north of Round Valley in the Hulls Creek region:

> One village identified itself closely with the Wailaki and the other with the Yuki. In both instances, the villages were located along the edges of Wailaki/Yuki territory. One of these villages was on Jesus Creek

> [Casoose Creek]. At this village both Wailaki and Yuki were spoken. The Yuki and Wailaki also had trade relations and, probably because of intermarriage and kinship, supported each other in disputes or wars.

Goddard (1924: 219) in discussing the boundary between the Wailaki and Yuki in this area noted that:

> East of Main North Fork, beyond a high ridge, is the valley of a considerable creek which flows into Hull's creek. This stream is called by the Wailaki *tc'i'afikot*. It is known to the white people as *kesus* creek and is spelled on the Forestry service map, Casoose. Goodboy Jack pointed out the place on this stream where a Mexican once lived. His name was, no doubt, Jesus. On this creek lived the *tc'i'ankot kiyahafi*, who were said to be "mixed Wailaki and Yuki" and to have used both languages. Their affiliation, however, was with the Wailaki, not the Yuki. [In the original]

In 1985 Six Rivers National Forest anthropologist Kathy Heffner-McClellan interviewed descendants of the people who once inhabited the Hulls Creek Valley region. They claimed that Hull's Valley and Summit Valley had always been Wailaki territory. As the lineage of these individuals was developed, it was revealed that they were related to the Wailaki from the Main Eel River, and from the village at Soldier Basin (as noted earlier, this village located on the North Fork Eel was considered to be in Lassik territory by the ethnographers). Some of the people interviewed, however, claimed that Hull's Valley had been half Yuki and half Wailaki during the ethnographic period.

Environmental Relationships

The concept of a tribe traveling throughout a well-defined territory based solely on differences in dialect, as delineated on ethnographer's maps, in pursuit of seasonally available resources is overly simplistic. Communities were linked not only through kinship, a common language, and shared customs and beliefs, but also the need to collectively maintain and coordinate the ecological management of the environment and the procurement of desired subsistence resources across a region about the size of the state of Delaware. Some of these subsistence resources could only be secured in the mountains, or at locations far from their home villages. This made good relations and cooperation between different villages and communities essential.

Further inland, with fewer marine and aquatic resources available for procurement, many of the communities inhabiting the Yolla Bolly country practiced a form of what has been termed the seasonal round-- also referred to as transhumance. This subsistence strategy involves movement of family units to locations over a day's journey from their home villages in order to procure subsistence resources as they become seasonally available. Year-to-year

strategies varied depending on environmental conditions that might affect the distribution and availability of various resources.

The need to secure desirable resources sometimes involved a journey across territory also claimed by or shared with other families or communities--or sometimes with outside groups (for example the Yuki and Wintu in the headwaters region of the Middle Fork Eel River) who might also be seeking the same resources. It is clear from individuals like Lucy Young , as documented in Chapter 6, that people sometimes travelled to more distant locations in extended family groups for purposes not only of procuring desired subsistence resources but also to socialize and trade.

Families who left their home villages on a seasonal basis might spend a substantial amount of time in the spring and summer at one location if it was particularly rich in desired resources (for example bulbous plants and greens in Kettenpom valley). It is also possible that some people remained in their river villages the entire summer (for example the elderly), or that occasionally entire families may have returned to their permanent village for some period of time (for example to store resources that had been collected at their spring and summer camps). Spring, summer, and fall were times of plenty. Essene (1942: 84) writes that:

> The usual pattern is for each family to go by itself though several families may be together for weeks at a time. The men hunt deer and squirrels, the two most important game animals. Grouse, quail, black bear, elk, porcupine, etc., are also hunted but not a primary source of food. The women gather clover, roots, seeds, berries, and hazelnuts. "People live high then."

Traditional Ecological Knowledge[44] (TEK) formed the basis for the management of the land in order to maximize the productivity of desired resources. As anthropologist, Henry Lewis points out (1983: 75):

> ...to successfully forage for plants and animals, people must understand the seasonal availability and regional distribution of the plant species used by them as well as those consumed by the animals they hunt. They must also understand the life histories and adaptive strategies of the resource animals hunted and the predators with which they compete. Thus, for a people to depend upon a few, mechanically simple tools to obtain a livelihood, they must have a broadly based and detailed knowledge of the environment they exploit.

The seasonal round brought people together to access desirable resources in a wide diversity of habitats and ecosystems. Examples of TEK management practices include the

[44] The term TEK came into widespread use in the 1980s by anthropologists and ecologists to recognize the profound environmental knowledge and deep insights that aboriginal peoples have acquired over generations regarding the management of natural resources critical to maintain healthy and productive ecosystems.

use of anthropogenic fire. While limited ethnographic data exists for the Wailaki, there are a number of references to burning. Essene (1945: 55) writes that the Wailaki regularly used fire to keep their territory clear of underbrush in order to make it easier to hunt and to travel. One of his consultants indicated that much of Trinity County was open prairie prior to the contact period (see also Keter 1997, Keter 1995).

There were a number of other reasons that burning took place. For example, to drive deer (Goddard (1923: 122), for collecting grasshoppers (Curtis 1924: 25), and after collecting acorns the area was burned so that disease was kept down and the ground was cleared of undergrowth (including immature pines and Douglas fir) for easier collecting in the future. It was also commonplace to burn the area immediately adjacent to a village. Burning was also employed to improve the quality of basketry materials by encouraging the growth of young pliable shoots (personal communication Kathy Heffner McClellan, anthropologist, Six Rivers National Forest). One consultant (Lee Stapp 1981) noted that when he was young there was very little brush in the area (the Yolla Bolly country), but by the time he got through school small pines and Douglas fir were scattered all through the understory of the larger oak trees (Keter 1995).

Other TEK management practices included the pruning of plants to promote growth (like tobacco, hazel, or bear-grass), and fishing practices that prevented overfishing. Effective communication and cooperation across the ethnographer's strictly defined tribal boundaries was needed for scheduling in the procurement of many subsistence resources. This coordination also provided for the coming together of communities at certain times of the year for socializing, to participate in celebrations, and to establish and maintain formal bonds between various communities through marriage, and kinship relations. These seasonal encampments also provided an opportunity for families and individuals to share environmental information about where desired resources were available (or not available) for procurement. Conversely, for certain subsistence resources, there was a need for extended families and communities to coordinate and schedule visiting a particular location at different times in order to not over exploit a resource.

What emerges from a more contemporary perspective in reviewing the earlier ethnographic data, along with more recent interviews, is a common worldview held by the Wailaki based on the management, coordination, and sharing of the finite subsistence resources that were available in the region. This cooperative existence was centered on the people's relationship to the land, to their resource base, and to each other through extended families.

Trade

Maintaining good relations and establishing political alliances with more distant communities and with more distant groups like the Wintu and Yuki, provided a means to acquire desirable goods like obsidian or salt not available locally (Keter 2023). Kinship links facilitated trade, and marriage was an important means to establish and maintain good trade relations. Ben Schill (personal communication) notes that in his research

centered on the South Fork Eel River region he has learned of three locations where trade between people from a number of linguistic groups met.

> I have heard of three locations for trade fairs attended by the local Indians. One was at Pilot Rock [most likely at High Salt Ground] ...I was told that by a Hupa (one of the Peters sisters). One was at Stewart's Gap near North Yolla Bolly. I was told that by Ray Patton of the Hayfork Nor-El-Muk. One was at Cahto Peak [Cahto homeland] at Laytonville and that came from Louis Hoagland's great grandmother [Wailaki].

Trails

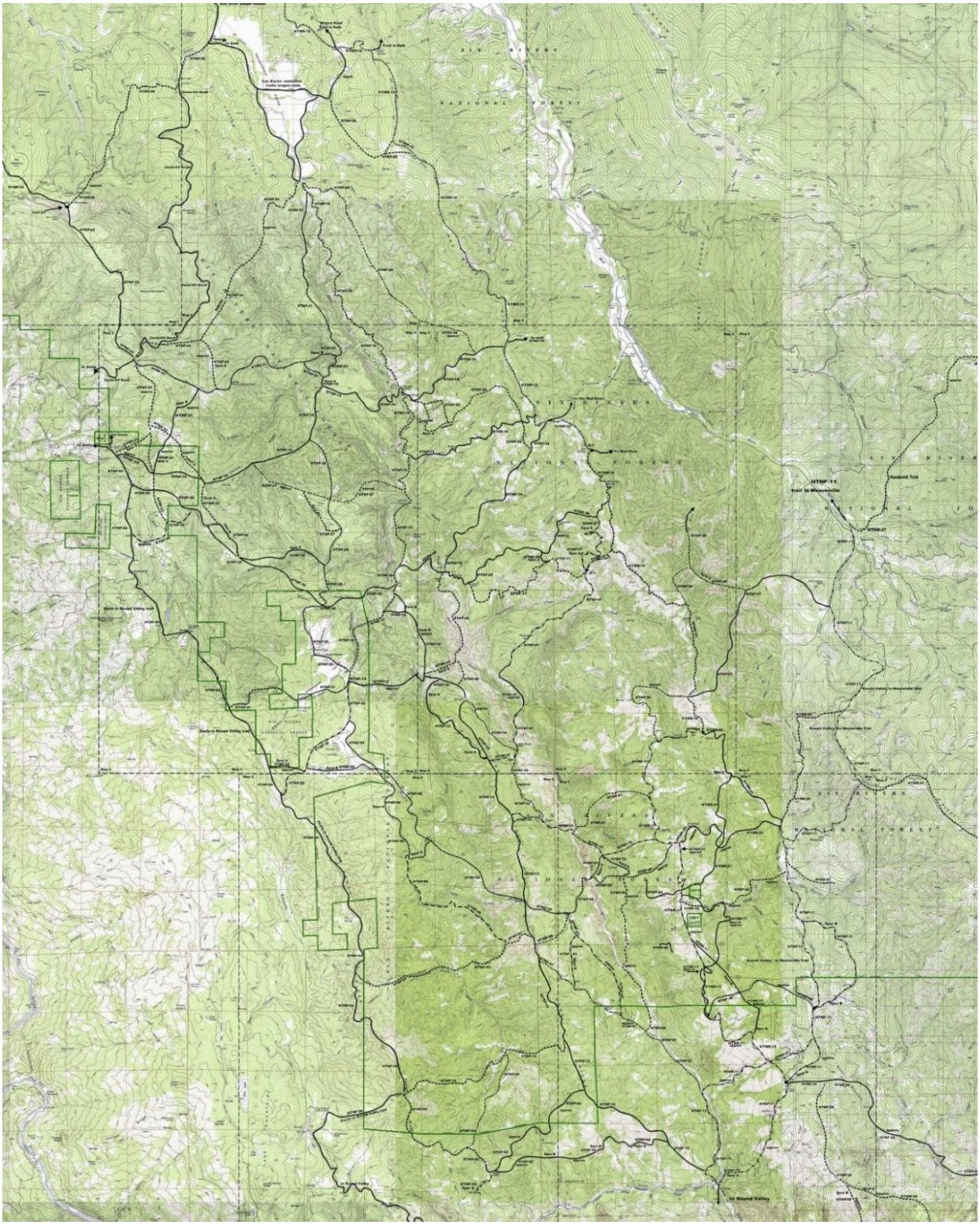
Long before Euro-Americans arrived in northwestern California, the aboriginal peoples living in the region had created a complex network of trails. They were used to facilitate the hunting of game, to provide access to areas where subsistence resources were collected, for access to religious sites, to connect villages with more distant communities, and to facilitate trade, communication, and social interaction between peoples throughout the region. Thus, during the prehistoric era, trails provided much the same function to their users as modern roads and freeways provide societies today.

A life-long resident of Hettenshaw Valley, Lee Stapp in an interview with the author in 1981 (TCC Appendix A6: I#448) noted that:

> Most of the trails in the North Fork Eel River watershed which the homesteaders used were old Indian trails. This system of trails connected many of the homesteads and made travel easier in the rough canyon country of the North Fork.

There are virtually no references to trails in the ethnographic record. However, given the relatively dense population of this region (one of the highest in North America), and the large number of upland prehistoric sites recorded over the last two decades on and adjacent to the Mad River Ranger District of the Six Rivers National Forest (Keter 2023c), it is clear that a complex network of trails traversed the entire region (see also Supernowicz 1990).

In a study of historic trails within the North Fork Eel River watershed, as plotted on Map 5-3, I recorded 56 trails (Keter 1997b: 3, TCC Vol. 2 Historic Trails). Although in many instances paved roads, dirt roads, or 4wd trails now overlay much of the old trail system, I personally hiked and mapped many of the remaining trails. Many are overgrown, but many of the blazes remain (some were re-blazed by the Forest Service in the 1950s and 1960s) making following the routes easy; a few of these old historic trails are still maintained by the Forest Service. Although conclusions regarding whether a particular trail may date to the prehistoric era are risky--based on a number of variables including: the physical lay of the land, the location of prehistoric sites, and the location of perennial water sources (few and far between in the hot dry summers), it is likely that most of the historic trails in the region (for example the Mad River Ridge Trail [FS# 05-10-54-119], the Long Ridge Trail [05-10-54-172], and Jones Ridge Trail [TCC Trail: HTMR-31]), date to the prehistoric era.



Map 5-3
Historic trails plotted and recorded for the North Fork Eel River watershed
(TCC Appendix 1: USGS Historic Trails Base Map)

Given the mountainous topography of the North Coast Ranges, with sharp well-defined ridgelines, numerous deep cut drainages, and sections of creek and river canyons that are impassible on foot, many of the earliest trails in the region likely followed old game trails. In view of the large number of archaeological sites that have been recorded along watershed divides and trending ridgelines (for example Long Ridge, Mad River Ridge, Pilot Ridge, Eight Mile Ridge, and the crest of South Fork Mountain), it is clear that trails not only linked villages to the locations of seasonally available subsistence resources, but also provided the physical links to more distant villages that helped to maintain social and trade relations. Trails, therefore, were an important and significant cultural feature of the prehistoric landscape (Keter 2022c). Powers (1877: 119), after visiting the area in the 1870s wrote:

> Time and again I have wondered why the trails so laboriously climb over the highest part of the mountain... [W]hen the whole face of the country is wooded alike, the old Indian trail will be found along the stream, but when it is somewhat open they invariably run along the ridges, a rod or two below the crest.
>
> ...The California Indians seek open ground for their trails that they may not be surprised by either enemies or by cougars and grizzly bears, of which beasts they entertain a lively terror.

In reality, trails dating to the ethnographic period can be defined more accurately as "travel corridors." There were no blazes and few if any trail markers (there were at various locations on some trails in northwestern California "arrow trees" --for good luck--and other markers of some sort, but they were for the most part only meaningful to the local populations). Over decades a trail route might vary somewhat in places, for example on broader ridges where there were multiple alternatives to travel in a given direction, or as the result of natural events like erosion and deadfalls.

Although Goddard, Merriam, and Kroeber maintained people never traveled far from their home villages, that is not the case. A network of trails linked people throughout the region and marriages were often arranged between families from more distant communities. Moreover, the need to acquire desired subsistence resources also necessitated some travel at certain times of the year (especially for inland communities), as did the need to trade for items not available locally, or to participate in cultural activities like religious ceremonies or dances. Refer to the section in Chapter 6 on Lucy Young's trip in the mid-1930s from Round Valley to South Fork Mountain with her husband Sam Young, and botanist Edith Murphey for more on this subject.

Conflict and War

Unfortunately, the ethnographic data concerning conflict, war, and violence like the rest of the information for the southern Athabascans are also lacking. It appears, however, that

Goddard's claims of "universal hostility" and territorial boundaries strongly defended by for example--the Wailaki "tribe" against the Sinkyone "tribe" or Lassik "tribe"--are not supported by the limited ethnographic data. As noted earlier, the ethnographers' generalizations were recorded from individuals whose families and villages by the early 1850s had already been affected by the violent disruption of their traditional cultures. This would have affected both affinal relationships and the traditional links with other villages and communities. It also appears that consultants interviewed by ethnographers (using the methodology of Boasian Historical Particularism) were not queried on their social positon within a village, and thus the kind of information that they might have (or not have) regarding their cultures.

As Tveskov (2007: 433) notes in discussing the Athabascans of southwestern Oregon:

> ...in the late 19th to early 20th century, anthropologists who interviewed American Indian elders from the region were struck by the extent that individual households--rather than villages, clans, or chiefdoms--served as the fundamental political, social, and economic unit. Households actively maintained this independence despite being linked into webs of cultural, political, and economic social relations that started with groups of households within a village and associations of villages within a local area, but that included more far-flung networks of trade and intermarriage that stretched across and beyond the entire region.

Begay (2017:6) points out that among the southern Athabascans:

> As in many areas of northwestern California, considerable multilingualism likely existed between groups that shared borders, intermarriage, trade, and good sociopolitical relationships with one another.

The most detailed account of a war or violent intergroup conflict in this region can be found in a paper authored by Kroeber: *A Kato War* (1928). Kroeber (1928: 36-37) wrote that:

> What began as a quarrel between specific Kato and Yuki tribelets, came to involve further groups of each people and the Wailaki; went on to challenge the Pomo; and finally resulted in an invitation to a whole series of coast settlements to fight it out. Evidently old grudges were dragged up after the fighting had got well into the blood. The line-up in part ran across ethnic relationships. The Yukian Huchnom sided with the Athabascan Kato against the Yuki: Athabascan Wailaki groups seem to have been sided with both the Kato and the Yuki; Athabascan Sinkyone and the Pomo joined the Coast Yuki against the Kato. {From the original.]

It is clear from Kroeber's paper that old grudges (perceived or real) are what initially lead to the violence and conflict--rather than the defense of any tribal territory or boundary dispute. It appears that extended kinship links across several groups and the resulting

obligations by relatives to the individuals involved in the original disagreement are what exacerbated and expanded the conflict to ultimately involve nearly every group in northern Mendocino and southwestern Humboldt Counties.

A review of the ethnographic literature suggests that war and violence often occurred for seemingly (to the modern reader) irrational reasons (much like those of today), rather than over any conflict or dispute regarding the violation of a particular territorial boundary. For example, Essene recorded from Lucy Young the details of a violent incident that took place when she was about six or seven years old (about 1851 or 1852). Her half-brother *Tĕ'ĕlĕ* who was about 11 years old went fishing with another boy of about the same age. They took dip-nets with them to catch small trout and suckers in the Eel River. Young told Essene (1942 90-91) that:

> Some hours later the young boy came running back to the village. He gasped that Tĕ'ĕlĕ had been killed by the Kĭkĭwŭkŭk. (The Kĭkĭwŭkŭk were Wailaki who lived about eight miles south of Alderpoint, on the Eel River.) A war party went in pursuit of the Kĭkĭwŭkŭk killers but the latter escaped. ΘĕlyĭΘ [who was Tĕ'ĕlĕ's father] had his choice of blood revenge or blood money. He took the latter. A war with the Kĭkĭwŭkŭk would have been very awkward because some of the Lassik were related to them...The blood money for a boy was the same as that for an adult. Kĭkĭwŭkŭk agreed to the payment of blood money and had the debt paid within a year.

In this case, the murder appears to have been a seemingly senseless event. It is also indicative of how many disputes were settled without resorting to a conflict that could have resulted in bloodshed-- in this case because of the close the familial links between the two villages. Essene (1942: 64) also recorded that one Lassik consultant (whom he did not identify) told him that:

> Her mother's brother killed his bride of two months because she did not follow him to the village of his blood relatives after the initial period of matrilocal residence. His family knew he was in the wrong, scolded him for this and other crimes. Yet they immediately jumped to his aid when the bride's family came to avenge her death. During the feud that followed at least 3 people were killed. The first white men who came in contact with the Lassik killed most of the Lassik men and incidentally ended the feud. [From the original.]

This story again shows the importance of familial links and how individuals despite their personal opinions were obligated to support their relatives in conflicts--even as in this case when they the felt that the individual they were obligated to support was in the wrong.

Territorial boundaries as conceived by the southern Athabascans consisted of a much more complex set of variables than simply that of a tribe aggressively guarding their borders like a small nation state. Moreover, the accounts by consultants given to ethnographers regarding inter-village and tribal relationships is a synchronic overview of social relations

as they existed at the end of the ethnographic period, or in some instances during the early years of the historic era. Imagine if at some time far in the future historians presented a synchronic view of the relations between the United States and other countries at the end of WW II. They would conclude that Americans had very good relations with China and Russia, and had very bad relations with Germany, Italy, and Japan. However, despite the carnage of WW II with the firebombing of cities, the mass genocide and ethnic cleansing, and the use of the atomic bomb to kill hundreds of thousands of people, a synchronic view of the relations between these countries only a few decades later would conclude that relations between the United States and China and Russia had deteriorated to the point of conflict (the Korean War, the Vietnam War), and that Germany, Japan, and Italy were among the country's closest allies.

Some of the bloodiest conflicts during the late ethnographic period that took place in the Yolla Bolly country were recorded by Essene in the Appendixes of his CED (see also Rhode 2022: 39-40). See, for example, Essene's notes regarding a violent and very bloody conflict between the *Sittenbiden* living at Alderpoint the *Nai'aitci* living to the north that were classified by the ethnographers as Nongatl. The *Nai'aitci* were described by ethnographers as a small war-like group living in the Bridgeville area. Essene (1942: 91) wrote that according to one of his Lassik consultants the *Nai'aitc*i numbered fifty to sixty individuals, that they had no permanent villages but lived in the hills, and that they "lived by raiding the Blocksburg Nongatl, Lassik, Wailaki, Hayfork, and Cottonwood peoples."

Again, this does not appear to be about disputes over territorial boundaries. Rather, one possible explanation for the "war-like" activities of the *Nai'aitci* was due to the fact the village at Bridgeville and villages in the adjoining region along the Van Duzen River were among the first in inland Humboldt County to have been affected by white encroachment as the people living there were driven from their villages in 1850 or 1851 (see Chapter 3). As a result, the *Nai'aitci* may very well have been a refuge group hiding in the mountains having been displaced from their home village or villages along the Van Duzen River (see Keter 2017).

Given the genocidal actions by Hank Larabee and other ranchers and settlers against the Nongatl as noted in Chapter 3, it would have been much safer to attack other Indian groups in order to survive in the mountains rather than the well-armed settlers. Whatever the explanation, prior to the historic period it is unlikely that a group of 50 to 60 individuals living in the hills survived for any length of time by raiding other Indian groups. This is simply not a viable means to subsist--especially given the cold snowy winter weather in the hills and mountains (as noted in Chapter 3 it was the arrival of winter and the resulting hunger that drove the last surviving Nongatl hiding in the headwaters region of Pilot Creek to surrender).

Although it is probable that there were occasional violent conflicts regarding the defense by a village or community of some portion of their territory --for example a good fishing spot or productive oak grove--it is likely that the claims to territory by communities would have shifted over the decades in response to a number of variables: including changing village and community alliances, realignment of kinship relations, or because of changes in

the environment that would have affected the procurement of desired subsistence resources. From a practical standpoint, the need to manage the environment in order to maximize the productivity of desired subsistence resources required some form of communication and cooperation between villages and communities at a more regional level than simply that of a small portion of a watershed.

Chapter 6

The Lost Generations

By the late 1800s, an effort to assimilate Indians into American society became government policy and efforts were made to suppress and extinguish Indian culture, language, religion, and world-view. In June of 1872, John L Burchard, a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, took over as the new Agent of the Round Valley Indian Reservation. His main goal was to "civilize the savages" by forcing them to become members of the Methodist Church. Thus, they had no choice but to renounce their culture and accept white social values and religious dogma. In order to further isolate the Indians, Burchard required all Indians leaving the reservation to obtain a signed pass, and any Indian found off the reservation without a pass was forcibly returned by the military (Carranco and Beard 1981: 325).

Rafaella Susan Hoaglin Wantt[45] was born in 1908 and grew up on the Round Valley Indian Reservation in Covelo. Before she was old enough to go to school, there was a boarding school for the Indian children there and a separate school for the white children. The Indian boys didn't want to go to school so they set it on fire. Wantt said that:

> They sent them away to Oregon. That was their punishment. Then they built the school up again. Twice they did it. Some of my relation was in on it. They didn't want to go to school. They had to work. They didn't just go there and sit around all day. They had to go out in the fields and work. They thought that was terrible. They didn't have to do that when they were home. They thought if they burned the school down, they wouldn't have to go.

When she was old enough to go to school, Wantt went to what they called the "White school" in town. She remembered that it was a long walk. She said the Indian children dreaded going to school there. Wantt told the interview that she got sick so she didn't attend school there much.

> The white children were so horrible to them. My aunt would get in a fight every day with the girls. They had an outdoor toilet, and the white girls would lock the door so they couldn't get in. They really had a time going there.

Another effort undertaken to suppress Indian cultures was with the creation of Indian boarding schools. The first boarding schools were set up beginning in the mid-nineteenth century either by the federal government, or more commonly by Christian missionaries. They were specifically designed to eliminate traditional Indian values, languages, and belief

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[45] Collected from: the Blocksburg web site 10/1/2002 [the web site no longer exits]--at the time Wantt was about 94 years old. The interview was conducted by Beverley Windbigler of Blocksburg. See also TCC Vol 4 Appendix 5 MS04 for a short biography. She was named after Susan Hoaglin the Indian wife of Silas Hoaglin of Blocksburg (Powellville) one of the earliest residents to settle in the region (see TCC Vol. B08 for a short biography of the Hoaglin family).

systems--replacing them with mainstream American Christian beliefs and values (Images 6-1 to 6-4). During the late 19th century, some of the Indian children from the Round Valley Reservation were sent to schools as far away as the Sherman Indian High School in Riverside.

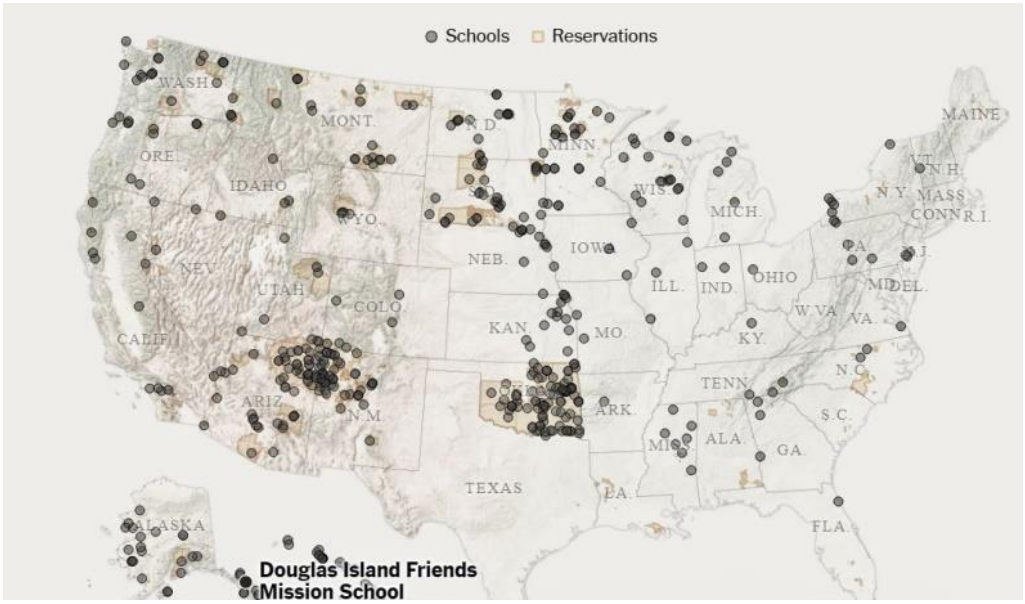

Image 6-1
Indian Boarding Schools
(*NY Times* 08-30-2023)

Image 6-2
Note the young man's transition from "savage" to civilized American citizen
(Dickerson College Archives and Special Collections; *NY Times* 08-30-2023)

Image 6-3
"Patriotic" Indian boys

Image 6-4
Girls sewing class

Albuquerque Indian School
(National Archives: *NY Times* 08-30-2023)

As late as the 1960s it was still not uncommon for Indian children to be sent away against their parents' will (sometimes sizeable distances) to Indian boarding schools. Six Rivers National Forest anthropologists Kathy Heffner McClellan (1988: 14) wrote that:

> By 1879 the government had instituted a policy of separating children totally from their Indian environment and forcing them to adopt white ways. This was accomplished by the widespread boarding school movement that eventually removed thousands of Indian children from their cultural setting and families. Those left on the reservation came under an attack that was designated to erode the power and influence of Indian leaders and traditions. Indian feasts, languages, certain marriage practices, dances, ceremonies, and any practices by medicine or religious leaders were all banned by the BIA and enforced by their police force (U.S. Civil Service Commission 1981: 20).

By the late 1800s as many of these children (some of them were now young adults) managed to return to their native homeland areas they were able to learn about their family connections, native cultures, and language from family members and surviving elders. One consultant interviewed by Goddard, who managed to return to his homeland, told him that: "[T]he old people used to tell Charlie about places and things when they were on the reservation" (Goddard, APS Reel #47, Notebook #4).

As noted earlier, however, with the emphasis on salvage ethnography virtually no interest was expressed by ethnographers in recording any contemporary information from their consultants, (see Keter 2022: 6). Kroeber, in his introduction to Essene's *Cultural Elements Distribution* publication for Round Valley (1941: vi), noted that one of Essene's Yuki consultants: "Eben Tillotson has a habit of injecting personal or ethical considerations which are not germane from the ethnologist's point of view."

In the Introduction to his influential *Handbook,* Kroeber (1925: vi) justifies this lack interest in recording more contemporary cultural data writing:

> After some hesitation I have omitted all the directly historical treatment in the ordinary sense; that is, accounts of the relations of the natives with whites and of the events befalling them after such contact was established. It is not that this subject is unimportant or uninteresting, but I am not in a position to treat it adequately. *It is also a matter that has comparatively slight relation to the aboriginal population.* [Emphasis added.]

As a result, and given their focus on salvage ethnography, the ethnographers working in the area in the early 20th century believed that the elderly people they were interviewing were the only ones with any worthwhile cultural information, and failed to recognize that many of the younger descendants of the people they interviewed, despite the traumatic events that had taken place, had useful information to share. Oral traditions play an important part in Indian culture and many children grew up, despite the intense efforts of the boarding schools and the schools located on Indian reservations to extinguish their language and cultures, learning stories and oral histories of their past from their relatives and elders. Although this lack of interest in interviewing younger people was in line with the belief at that time of the "vanishing Indian," it also suggests that the ethnographers, and later historians, failed to understand the significance of oral traditions to Indian cultures and the fact that during this era of repression, Indians were hesitant to express openly their values and beliefs with the greater white society and quite likely in many cases with ethnographers.

One of the reasons that the issue of ancestral heritage among the people of Indian descent living in this region is so difficult to grasp for the greater American society today is that individuals of Wailaki descent are not a monolithic group. As Heffner-McClellan (1988: 29) notes in her study of contemporary Indian cultures on the north coast:

> Some Indians prefer to hold to strictly to traditional values and customs, others: however, have assimilated to and follow an Anglo lifestyle. The majority of Indians in Northwestern California are philosophically somewhere between these two points. Bushnell (1968: 1114) wrote of the tenacity of which these cultures have clung to certain covert aboriginal features particularly in the realm of belief.
>
> It took not only tenacity but a philosophy; in which in the face of extreme threats, that Indians turned inward to each other to survive. Indian communities and families developed a strong sense of survival by helping each other in spite of social disorder and material deprivation. A survival system built upon traditional and historical relationships. [From the original]

Contemporary Interviews and Information Regarding the Terms Lassik and Sinkyone

Today the descendants of the people who once inhabited this vast region, and whose ancestors survived the genocide, the removal of many of their children to Indian schools, the racial discrimination, and the decades-long efforts to extinguish their culture, still consider themselves collectively to be of Wailaki descent[46] despite the dozens of books and publications written by anthropologists and historians to the contrary.

It is clear from contemporary interviews with members of the local Wailaki community, as well as having over the last four decades personally met numerous direct descendants of the individuals interviewed by ethnographers, that the conclusions of ethnographers regarding territorial boundaries and the division of the southern Athabascans of the Wailaki dialect into several distinct "tribes" based on minor linguistic differences is problematic. It was the strong bonds shared between villages and communities based on kinship ties, cultural values, and a common language that set the Wailaki apart from the other southern Athabascan groups (Cahto, Mattole, and Bear River) and their Yukian and Penutian speaking neighbors.

Today, this sense of place and a shared history of their collective human experience in facing a lack of economic opportunity and racial discrimination link the people of Indian ancestry throughout this region and provide them with a common sense of community and cultural identity. The first section below presents an overview of the information recorded from more recent interviews with individuals who claim Wailaki heritage--many still living in the Yolla Bolly country or whose ancestors came from this region--and who were classified as Lassik by the ethnographers. The second section provides an overview of contemporary information provided by individuals who claim Wailaki descent and who are still living in southwestern Humboldt and northwestern Mendocino Counties in the region classified by the ethnographers as being within Sinkyone territory.

The Ethnographer's Lassik Tribe

For Kroeber (1936: 771-74.) and other ethnographers working in the region, the designation of a "Lassik tribe" appears to have been a "convenient conceptualization of culture." Kroeber wrote in the Introduction to Essene's (1942) *Culture Element Distributions: XXI Round Valley* that:

> There are indeed old people on the reservation who are listed as Wailaki in agency records and who call themselves Wailaki. Those of them who still had worth-while knowledge to dispense proved however to be Lassik.

[46] A few individuals have also begun to use the term Kenesti, that, as noted earlier, some believe may have been the name of their "nation" during the ethnographic period.

This "convenient conceptualization" of a Lassik tribe (the etic) is in direct conflict with what was learned from individuals of Indian descent living in the Yolla Bolly region today (the emic). During my field research in the 1980s and 1990s (Keter 1995a) I could not find a single individual of Indian descent living in the Yolla Bolly country or at Round Valley who claimed to be all or part Lassik. This includes information provided by the direct descendants of the principal consultants of the ethnographers who worked in this area: Lucy Young, Fred Major, Mary Major, Nancy Doby, Bill Dobbins, James [St.] Claiborne Wilburn Sr, and Good Boy Jack (see the Personal Communications section for the names of the consultants). These individuals all insisted that they have a deep spiritual attachment to the land of their ancestors and that they are of Wailaki heritage. People who were interviewed could often trace their Wailaki ancestry to a considerable time-depth (3 to 4 generations), to specific geographic locations--including in some instances village sites where their families were from, and to local cemeteries where their ancestors are buried.

A brief critique of the ethnographic information that was recorded by ethnographers from Lucy Young illustrates the problem with the term Lassik. As noted in Chapter 2, Merriam may have been the first anthropologist to interview Lucy Young when he visited the Zenia area and interviewed her and an Indian man Jack French also known as Yellowjacket (Images 2-6, 2-7, and 6-1). Merriam noted in his journal for June 29th and 30th, 1922:

> ….Spent both days working with southern “Wylakkes” Kenesta (Athapaskan) Indians whom I made this hard trip to find. The principal one is a fine old (full blood) woman by the (present) name of Mrs. Lucy Young…. [From the original.]

In July of 1938, Kroeber visited Round Valley while Essene was working there and he interviewed Lucy Young on July 12. Kroeber wrote “though listed by the government as a Wailaki, she is what ethnologists call 'Lassik'." Essene's field notes record that he had interviewed "Lucy Young, Wailaki, age 90," however; in his *CED* publication Essene also changed her tribal affiliation from "Wailaki" to "Lassik"--possibly under the influence of Professor Kroeber.

Kroeber in his discussion of the Lassik in his *Handbook* (1925: 144) wrote: "Their own name is not known, if indeed they had one." It appears that Merriam is the only ethnographer who recorded from Lucy Young the actual name of the village she was from. She was born in the Alderpoint area and the people from her village were known as the blue (*Sit-ten*) rock (*Bid-en*) people (*keah*)[47]. Lucy Young never referred to herself as Lassik (Smith 1990: 77), she told ethnographers that her father was a Wailaki from Alderpoint and that her mother was a Wailaki from the village at Soldier Basin (*tha-tah-che*). BIA records clearly indicate that Lucy Young (Enrollment #3618, Office of Indian Affairs) as well as Mary Major another of Essene's consultants, who was born at Soldier Basin, were recorded as being of Wailaki descent.

[47] Merriam's field notes have "blue" crossed out and replaced with "white" in his handwriting on a word list given by Lucy Young on file at the Library of Congress Annex, Washington D. C.

It appears that the *Sittenbiden* villages along the Eel River were closely aligned through marriage and affinal relations with villages directly to the east. This included the winter village at Soldier Basin, and several villages along the Mad River in the vicinity of the old town of Ruth (now under the Ruth Reservoir). This alliance of villages and communities sharing extended family ties and a common subsistence resources base is what ethnographers have classified as the Lassik tribe. I discussed this subject of Wailaki ancestry with a direct descendant of Lucy Young[48]. She told me that in being raised by her mother they never referred to themselves as Lassik and said that: "I knew I was Wailaki before I knew I was Indian" (personal communication TT). I have also discussed this subject with a direct descendant of Mary Major who also insisted that like his grandmother he is Wailaki (personal communication CFD).

An example of one of the problems with the boundaries drawn by ethnographers for the southern Athabascans is the eastern boundary, as discussed in Chapter 3, for the Lassik as shown on Baumhoff's 1958 Map (Map 3-9). Baumhoff rejected Merriam's eastern boundary in the headwaters region of the South Fork Trinity River for the Lassik due to the fact that this information had been provided to him by Lucy Young. Baumhoff, like Goddard, theorized that since she was from a village at Alderpoint she would not have been familiar with a region so far to the east. That, however, is not the case and the following story provides an example of the general problem with ethnographers trying to establish precise tribal boundaries for the southern Athabascans.

Lucy Young's Trip to South Fork Mountain

In the mid-1930s Edith Van Allen Murphey, who worked in Round Valley for the Indian Health Service, became good friends with Lucy Young. Murphey was an avocational botanist. Local Mendocino historian Skee Hamann (n.d. MS), who was provided with Murphey's journals after her death, wrote:

> The more Edith learned of plants, the more she wanted to know of their Indian uses. For years she and Lucy had shared short field journeys in the hills above Covelo. Often the plant they sought no longer survived where cattle grazing had gone on for generations. Lucy would say, "now it grows only on South Fork Mountain. I wish I could show it to you."

Although the exact year is not clear, in the mid-1930s, Edith Murphey, Lucy Young, then in her mid-90s, and her husband Sam Young, in his mid-80s (Image 6-1), took a trip by horseback from Round Valley north to where Lucy Young and her people had once lived in the Yolla Bolly country.

[48] The small child in a well-known Merriam photo of Lucy Young and Yellowjacket taken at Zenia (Image 2-6) when he interviewed them in June of 1922 is her grandmother.

Image 6-1
Sam and Lucy Young with Edith Murphey, Round Valley, c. 1941.
(Mendocino County Historical Society, Ukiah, Bill Lee collection)

On their journey, they got lost several times because the old trails Young had once traveled were now covered with dense brush (see Keter 1987). Hamann writes:

> It was a two week journey...All day as the ninety year old Lucy sat astride her horse, she slowly and clearly recreated her people's past at each stream, meadow and grove. Edith felt the horses were as amazed at their progress through some brush-covered slopes where Lucy's long-ago trails were obliterated.

Their first camp was at the confluence of Hull's Creek and the North Fork of the Eel River; this is well within what can be termed the "core area" of Baumhoff's Pitch Wailaki territory. Young told Murphey that her people used to gather there (Goddard's site #1 on his map--see Image 5-1), and that they would have a "regular field day" with all kinds of sports and competitions--including foot races and shooting matches[49]. The shooting was done with bows and arrows, and both women and men participated. Pointing to a large rock near the camp Young told Murphey that only two could send arrows over the rock: herself and her cousin North Star (Hamman n.d.: Murphey Travelogue Notebook #3).

[49] This certainly calls into question Kroeber's and Goddard's assertion that the Wailaki and Lassik were not on friendly terms.

From there, they traveled on to the Mad River country (most likely over the old Covelo to Weaverville Trail, TCC: HTNF-11) and spent the night at the Double A Ranch (now the Flying AA Ranch) a few miles north of Three Forks, before climbing to the crest of South Fork Mountain and the Forest Service lookout at Horse Ridge. Hamann (n.d. ms) writes that "South Fork Mountain then was still roadless, untouched by whites, still the Indians sacred mountain, [and] source of their most valued medicinal plants." Young for years had promised Murphey "Shasta Lilies in sheets" (*Lilium washingtonian* var. *minor*), and she managed to relocate them. Murphey writes that she saw the flowers "Sticking their heads through low oak brush on all sides, saturating the aire with sweetness" (From the original. Hamann n.d. ms).

On their return trip home, they passed through the headwaters region of the Middle Fork of the Eel River that is now within the Yolla Bolly- Middle Eel Wilderness Area of the Mendocino National Forest. Again, Young pointed out to Murphey locations where her people used to camp (Murphey Notebooks binder #3). As noted in Chapter 3, she told Murphey that her people used to camp near Hoxie Crossing (T25N, R11W, Section 25, MDM) on the Middle Fork of the Eel River and also at Fishtown.

At the time of Lucy Young's death, in 1944, the Ukiah newspaper (*Republic Press*: 1944: 7) included an article on her passing under the headline: "Rests in the Burial Ground of the Wylac-kie Tribesmen." The paper reported that "Internment was made in Pine Grove Cemetery in the Wylackie City of the Dead." (For a short biography of Sam and Lucy Young see TCC Vol 2, Family Histories: B02)

The Ethnographer's Sinkyone Tribe

As with the Indians of the Yolla Bolly country who insisted to the ethnographers that they were Wailaki, the same holds true for individuals of Indian ancestry still living in the region of southwestern Humboldt and northeastern Mendocino Counties that ethnographers have classified as Sinkyone territory. In 1987, as part of an environmental study for the newly created Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, Jean Ferreira (1987) interviewed several individuals of Indian descent; including 87 year old Dave Chadburn and 80 year old Oliver Mason. Both men told her they were of Wailaki descent. Their grandmother Ellen Sutherland was the full sister of Sally Bell (Image 3-12), who, as noted earlier, was one of the principal consultants of the ethnographers who worked in this region in the first few decades of the 20th century (see also Patterson 1989: 4).

Oliver Mason indicated that in his youth, he had taken fish he caught at Needle Rock to the Bells [Sally and her husband Tom Bell] at Four Corners and listened to Wailaki elder Jack Woodman[50] "tell him history." Mason objected to the term 'Sinkyone' being applied to his

[50] It is worth noting that Jack Woodman's father and grandparents were born near Bridgeville and provides another good example of the distances between villages that had affinal relations.

ancestors, but thought that the terms *Lolangkok* and *To-cho-be keah* sounded to him like words from the traditional language (Ferreira 1987: 5-6, see also Rich 2019: 16).

In 1989 Victoria Patterson published an article on the newly created Sinkyone Wilderness Area "Sinkyone: An Island of Sanity" in *Native News from California.* Patterson looked at contemporary interviews with local individuals of Indian ancestry from west of Garberville to the coast and south into northwestern corner of Mendocino County, she concluded (*Native News from California* 1989: 4 Jan-Feb) that:

> One thing that emerged from the interviews was the close connection between the so-called Sinkyone and the Wailaki, who lived to the east of them. The connection is so close, in fact, that it makes one question whether the Sinkyone were as independent a group as some ethnographers have claimed, or whether they were a coastal branch of the Wailaki.

It is clear that the term Sinkyone was not used by Goddard's primary consultants Sally Bell, Jack Woodman, Briceland Charlie, or George Burt: though George Burt supplied Goddard with the name *Sin-ke-ne* for the people living along the South Fork. It is also clear that the term Wailaki was in common usage among families descended from the indigenous people of the area at the time the ethnographers worked in this area.

Nomland (1940:149) after interviewing both Sally Bell and Jenny Young penned the notation “Information unreliable.” Given the relatively late date of Nomland's visits to the area, her lack of confidence in the reliability of her informant’s statements is probably due to their advanced age. Some of her conclusions are, therefore, problematic. For example, Nomland writes (1940: 151):

> The Sinkyone intermarried freely with all the surrounding tribes (including the Yuki and Wiyot) except the treacherous Wailaki. To these last-named they felt great antipathy and charged then with wanton murder of traders who entered their territory.

It would not be prudent to base any generalizations related to inter-group relations based Nomland’s limited work, since even at the time of Merriam's visits to southern Humboldt County, the Indians living in the area still referred to themselves as Wailaki, and records show that both Sally Bell and Jack Woodman claimed to be members of the "Wylackie tribe" on their 1928 California Indian census applications (David Heller Personal communication, NARA: 1928 RG 75, M1853, 1928). This topic will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 7

A Reawakening

In the spring of 2008, a controversy erupted within the local southern Humboldt community over the renaming of the Bear Gulch Bridge located on the old Redwood Highway just to the north of Garberville. Although in the end Caltrans and the County did not accept the proposed name change to Wailaki Pass[51], this controversy led to the coming together of many individuals of Indian descent living in southern Humboldt, southwestern Trinity, and northwestern Mendocino Counties. This was the first time that many local residents--including the author--became aware of the relatively large number of people of Indian descent still living in the southwestern Humboldt and northwestern Mendocino Counties. Having lived, at the time, in southern Humboldt for about 31 years, and given my line of work, I was surprised to learn that many of the local residents that I interacted with in daily life were of Indian ancestry--including the owners of small businesses in Garberville and Redway and people I knew who worked in local cafes and at the local grocery market.

In fact, many individuals living in southern Humboldt, southwestern Trinity, and northern Mendocino Counties have direct links to the Indians who inhabited the area in the ethnographic period and they have managed to retain to a significant degree connections with their collective cultural history. Given the history of Indian-white relations this lack of knowledge by the larger American society about the existence of people of Indian descent within their midst is in some ways not surprising or unusual, and is a vestige of the past discrimination and mistreatment of Indians by the greater American society.

As noted earlier, during the first few decades of the historic era it was not unusual for white men moving into the region to marry Indian women. As anthropologist Mark Tveskov (2007: 427) writes even the marriage of Indian women to whites:

> ...did not always result in loss of American Indian identity. Many of the cross-cultural families built on these marriages were not fully integrated into the society and economy of their white neighbors. They remained barely visible—literally and figuratively—living in communities on the margins of the dominant society. Staying invisible was a practical measure, as whites were often intolerant of their American Indian neighbors: white husbands were derisively referred to as “squaw men” and their children as “half bloods."

Therefore, Indian women played an important part in the preservation of traditional Wailaki cultural values, and the stories mothers told to their children (oral histories) as

[51] In making its final decision the County relied primarily on input provided by historians and contained in the ethnographic literature that shows the location of the bridge as being within Sinkyone territory.

they were growing up helped to connect them with their Indian past. Tveskov (2007: 438) in discussing the importance of the role that Indian women played in reserving native cultures writes that:

> ...it was American Indian women who successfully resisted complete acculturation by tenaciously keeping a foothold in an ancestral landscape, by putting food on the table, employing centuries-old subsistence practices, and, quietly and often primarily by example, reminding their children that despite their European-style house, their Christian church, their European clothes, and their white father, they were, in fact, Indians.

During much of the 20th century, people of Wailaki ancestry still living within their homeland region were mostly employed in jobs that involved low pay and little opportunity for advancement. Men worked on local ranches, or in the tan bark, timber, and fishing industries. Some Indian women made baskets to sell, while others worked on ranches or as domestic help. Using TEK many Indian families still secured a significant amount of their food supply from hunting, fishing, and the seasonal gathering of plant resources including berries, bulbous plants, grass seeds, and acorns. Basketry materials like hazel and bear grass were also still collected in traditional gathering areas.

Elders passed on to the younger generation the oral histories and stories that had been handed down to them when they were children. Gatherings by extended families of Indian ancestry provided an avenue for the reinforcement and strengthening of traditional cultural values (it was not usual for acorn soup and other traditional foods like salmon to be served). At these gatherings, as they did during the ethnographic period, families socialized with relations from near and far. This continued link between Indian families to their collective past provided the foundation for the revitalization of the Wailaki community beginning in the early 2000s.

Prior to the bridge controversy, a few extended families of Wailaki heritage living in southwestern Humboldt and northwestern Mendocino Counties had already begun to meet in order to organize. This small group of 20 or so individuals was still not visible to the larger Wailaki diaspora. In March of 2006 members of this group, along with a few other individuals from southern Humboldt County who are interested in local history, traveled to the Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley (Image 7-2), where the group met with Malcom Margolin editor of Heyday Books[52]. They were provided access to an extensive collection of books, manuscripts, field notes, and microfilmed records. The group also went to a climate controlled warehouse to see artifacts, including baskets, basket hats and jewelry collected within Southern Athabascan territory.

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[52] Malcolm Margolin is the editor and publisher of Heyday Books, an independent nonprofit publishing company he founded in 1974. He is the author of several books, including *The Ohlone Way: Indian Life in the San Francisco–Monterey Bay Area*. This book was named by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as one of the hundred most important books of the twentieth century by a western writer. He has received dozens of prestigious awards including the Chairman's Commendation from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Image 7-2
Several individuals of Wailaki descent and supporters[53] meeting with Malcom Margolin (holding the magazine) while visiting the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (Photo provided by Rhonda Hardy)

With the increased publicity and public debate as a result of the bridge controversy, the gathering of individuals of Wailaki descent began to expand to include people living throughout the region extending north from Round Valley to Fortuna, and from coastal southern Humboldt County and northwestern Mendocino Counties east all the way to Hettenshaw Valley and the Yolla Bolly country. These meetings were usually held in southern Humboldt County--often in Garberville (for example at the old Veterans Hall) or at someone's home (the author attended many of these meetings).

At the time, Carol Richey wrote the following letter to the editor of the local Garberville newspaper the *Redwood Record* (4/20/2008). The letter illustrates the maternal influences that were so critical for individuals in maintaining strong links to their Indian culture.

> We are Wailaki people, not Sinkyone. My Great-great Aunt, Sally Bell, was Wailaki, as was her sisters My Great-Great Grandmother Ellen Sutherland, great great Aunt Jenny Woodman. My father Oliver Mason spent lots of time with his Aunt Sally and uncle Tom Bell out at their four corners home, taking them fresh surf fish, or abalone or deer meat, she told him much about the killings that took the lives of her family and how she and her sisters survived, she had much dislike for (non- natives) and she would not tell anyone they were sinkyones, when she was so proud of the fact they were Wailaki's and they are

[53] Top standing left to right: Pat Heyda, Perry Lincoln (W), Margret Robinson (W), Rhonda Hardy (W), UCB docent, Jackielee Laizure (W), Kitty Lynch. Front row setting left to right: Coyote (W), Terry Robinson (W), Darby Hardy-Jewett (W), Malcom Margolin, September Gray. W=Wailaki descent

> still here. She called my dad, whose native name is known by many oldtimers as " Nocky ". Full name meaning second son. Dads mother was the late Florence Sutherland, the last of the Sutherland children, she being the youngest of eight, Uncle Enoch Sutherland, the eldest born 1863 and my Grandmother, born 1883. *There are many Wailaki people living in the Garberville, Briceland, and surrounding areas. We are not gone, we exist and are proud of it, and we know who we are.*
>
> When one person can write their thesis, and claim they found a new tribe, and others who are learned believe this. Then I guess we know less? I am so very proud of our cousins, who are working so very hard to allow people to know who we are…" [From the original. Emphasis added.]

As the Wailaki group began to grow and became more active, they contacted and established relationships with the BLM, Forest Service, and CALTRANS regarding the potential effects of land disturbing projects to Wailaki ethnographic and archaeological sites on federal and state lands. In May of 2008, the Garberville Wailaki group signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the North Coast Information Center Tribal Preservation Officer (TPO) regarding the potential effects from land disturbing activities (under CEQA and NEPA) to cultural resources sites in Humboldt County within what they consider to be the general region that encompassed their homeland territory prior to the historic era.

Tom Gates, the Tribal Preservation Officer for the Cultural Resources Clearing House for Humboldt County, and the author worked with a number of Wailaki from throughout southern Humboldt, northern Mendocino, and southwestern Trinity Counties to negotiate the MOU. The MOU provided a consensus opinion of the general region where the Wailaki have concerns regarding the potential effects to cultural sites (both prehistoric sites and contemporary cultural properties) from land disturbing projects. It is important to note that the verbal boundary justification and map (Map 7-1) attached to the MOU were not intended to establish any hard and fast tribal boundaries or make any territorial claims[54] .

As a result of their continuing efforts on February 21, 2009, the largest meeting up to that date, about 65 people of Wailaki descent (along with 20 to 30 spouses, relatives, and friends) from throughout the region met in Garberville (at the old schoolhouse on Sprowl Creek Road) in an effort to reconnect with other members of the Wailaki Community (the author attended this meeting). After the meeting the late Louis Hoaglin wrote a letter to the local newspaper, the *Redwood Times* (March 10, 2009) about Wailaki efforts to reconnect with other surviving member of their community.

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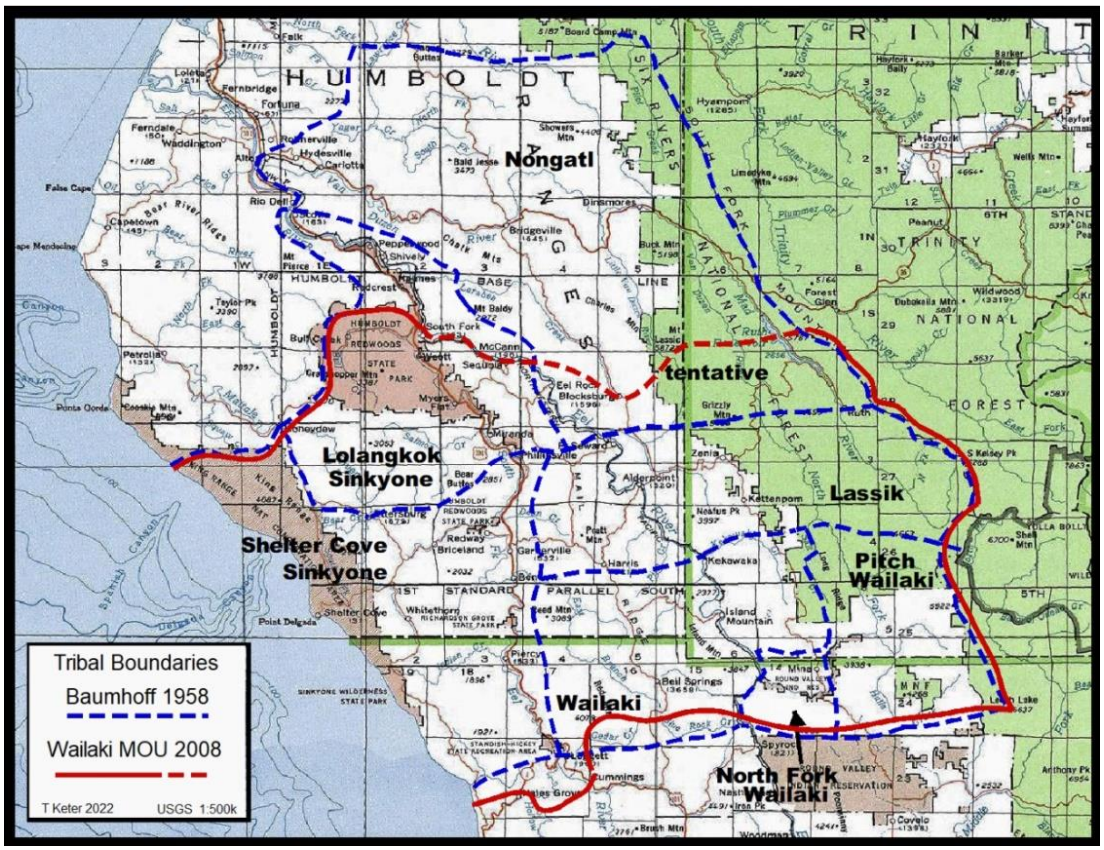
[54] Note the tentative boundary to the north on Map 7-1. This is reflective of the lack of information in both the ethnographic literature and from contemporary interviews-this region of southern Athabascan territory held by the Nongatl remains a black hole in the ethnography and history of the Northwest Coast.

The many people who attended [are] descendants of Sally Bell, Ellen Southern [Sutherland], Lucy Young, Jenny Woodman, Nelie Anderson Reed, Ira Hoaglin, Sara Davis, Fred Majors, Mary Majors, Yellowjacket, Sommerville, Della-Womack-Chadburn, Dart Mason, and the Wilburns--all Wailaki. Thanks also to the community for their support and interest in the true history of the local Wailaki People who have been here for generations. [From the original.]



Map 7-1
MOU with the TPO: general area of concern and interest for the Wailaki
Note the tentative boundary with the Nongatl region to the north
(USGS 500k Map: 2001)

Despite the efforts of the Wailaki to recover and reclaim their cultural history through the recording of oral histories that have been handed down for generations, the documenting of their past through historical and academic research, and their continued efforts to learn more about the Wailaki language, there is still a hesitancy by the greater academic community and historians to accept their claim that they are one people. What is evident is that the Wailaki of today have a shared history, as well as strong and continuing social and familial links, that still connect people from throughout their traditional homeland region at a deeper level than the ethnographically defined "tribal" boundary lines drawn on the ethnographer's maps.

Efforts like those of the Wailaki to reassert their cultural identities are sometimes doubted by historians and anthropologists--who question the authenticity, cultural identity, and legitimacy of these newly created or revitalized tribal organizations. For example, one of the criticisms by anthropologists and historians of the revitalization movement is that indigenous people like the Wailaki are often inventing new traditions sometimes by "misreading anthropological texts" (Tveskov 2007:431).

As Tveskov (2007: 432) writes in his study of contemporary Indian tribes from southern Oregon:

> Although ...many of the superficial trappings of contemporary Native American identity might not bear any specific relationship with their precolonial counterpoints, I argue that this is, in and of itself, largely irrelevant. Instead, the threads of continuity that primed the modern cultural revitalization of the Coquille, Coos, Takelma, Shasta, Tututni, Umpqua, and other Native peoples of southwest Oregon were centuries-old patterns of social relations that recursively emphasized a local American Indian identity at the household level—particularly those roles usually followed by women—as well as the social experience or phenomenology of maintaining residence and subsistence within an ancestral landscape.

What is clear is that like Indian revitalization movements elsewhere, a contemporary Wailaki cultural identity has emerged. The traditional values that the Wailaki share today include their collective historical experiences, cultural beliefs and traditions, oral histories, the importance of place--the reverence for their ancestral homeland where their ancestors are buried, a deep respect for nature and the spirituality of the natural world, the importance of extended family relations, a deep and abiding respect for their elders (holders of their oral histories), and pride in their identity as Wailaki--people who have managed to preserve their core cultural values and identity despite their tragic history.

It is not too late to Rewrite History

It is clear after forty years of working with people of Wailaki descent in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity Counties that some portions of the ethnographic record for this region are problematic. On a more hopeful note, the Wailaki of today have collected important and relevant ethnographic data (including photos, genealogies, and family histories, as well as the oral traditions of elders) concerning both the pre-contact period and the historic era. This information is highly relevant to anthropologists and historians trying to document and understand the region's past. Efforts by the Wailaki to empower themselves and revitalize their cultures should be welcomed and supported. What I have learned from working with the native peoples of this area over the last four decades is that they have a deep and vast reservoir of cultural and traditional ecological knowledge that remains under-appreciated and unrecorded by contemporary historians and the anthropological community.

The Wailaki who still remain on the lands of their ancestors know that much of the history and ethnography of their people has yet to be written, and given the recent efforts by the

Wailaki to reassert their cultural identity, a fitting coda to this paper is an excerpt from a letter submitted by the Wailaki to the TPO in 2009 as part of the application process to secure the MOU.

> Our organization began in 2005 in southern Humboldt County centered on a number of Indian families living in the Harris/Alderpoint/ Briceland/Garberville/Piercy area. Our goal was to reestablish our presence and revitalize our Wailaki culture within the larger southern Humboldt community. This original effort has grown over the years to include a large number of Indian families with extensive kinship associations to individuals with ancestral links to numerous Native American cultural properties throughout the region. This includes members of extended families from Round Valley, southwestern Trinity County, northern Mendocino County, the Hulls Creek region, and eastern Humboldt County in the Alderpoint and Harris areas.
>
> All of these extended families have come together and in our oral family histories our identity has always been as Wailaki. We acknowledge that anthropologists and even some Native Americans from outside this area prefer the names given to our people by ethnographers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries but true to our oral histories, we still consider ourselves Wailaki.
>
> …Immediately after settlers moved into southern Humboldt County there was conflict with the local Native American communities. These "Indian Wars" as they were referred to in the press at that time recognized the *kenesti* of southern Humboldt, Northern Mendocino, and southwestern Trinity Counties as one "tribe" whom they referred to as "Wylackies"….
>
> …It must be remembered that the Round Valley Reservation is in Yuki territory and was not our homeland. We were only one of several tribes of Indians who were taken to the reservation. Therefore the Wailaki on the reservation never had any central unifying tribal organization rather we were simply one group among several tribes of Indians from very different cultures thrown together in what in many ways in the 19th century amounted to little more than a concentration camp. Therefore when the Wailaki tribe began to organize it became obvious that our group was the only organization that directly represented the traditions and culture of the Wailaki (*kenesti*). As word spread and we began to make efforts to revitalize our culture we began to enlarge our circle of members as extended families began reuniting and today our organization has over 65 members.
>
> We challenge those who question our understanding of the past because it does not agree with their preconceived notions to open their minds to the possibility that we the Wailaki people know much about our past through our oral history traditions that is not contained in the articles and field notes of the ethnographers who visited the region.

Personal Communications

I have not published the names of all consultants. I have, however, identified individuals when permission was granted--in some cases using their initials in the text and listing their names below. I want to thank all of the Wailaki who have generously shared their cultural histories, photos, personal family genealogies, and cultural information with me. I also want to thank my wife Hélène Keter and Susan Nolan for doing a great editing job and pointing out all of my grammatical errors. Any misstatement of facts or other errors in this paper are the responsibility of the author.

I have interviewed or communicated with numerous Wailaki elders and other long-time local residents in Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity Counties over the last four decades who personally knew or were directly related to many of the individuals interviewed by Frank Essene, Gladys Nomland, C. Hart Merriam, and Pliny Goddard; including as noted below direct descendants of James[St.] Claiborne Wilburn Sr., Lucy Young, Yellowjacket, Fred Major, Mary Major, Nancy Doby, Bill Dobbins, Good Boy Jack, Sally Bell, Ellen Sutherland, Jenny Woodman Young, and Jack Woodman

Many thanks to the following Indian tribes and organizations who have allowed me to visit with them to learn about their histories

The Tsnungwe Tribal Council
The Round Valley Indian Reservation Tribal Council
The Wailaki Tribe

Southern Humboldt Residents

David Heller (DH)	Historian
Kitty Lynch	Avocational Historian
Ben Schill (BS)	Avocational linguist (see also TCC Appendix 6: ms06)

Southwestern Trinity County Residents

Floyd Barney (FB)	Born near Hulls Creek--coauthor: *Families: A Pictorial History of Round Valley 1864 to 1938*.
Winston Garcelon	He grew up in the Kettenpom area in the 1930s --see TCC Vol 4: ms01.
Max Rowley	Avocational historian. Max grew up in the Yolla Bolly country in the 1930s and 1940s
Lee Stapp (LS)	Lifelong resident of Hettenshaw Valley. Interviewed in early 1980s.

Thanks and my deep appreciation to the following individuals of Indian descent that have been so generous in sharing their knowledge with me over the past 40+ years.

Tsnungwe Descent
Danny Amon
Bob Benson

Wailaki Descent

Kenneth Chadbourne	Also Tracy Chadbourne related to Ellen Sutherland
Dana Christen	Descendant of Jenny Young (sister of Brian Franklin)
Fred Coyote Downey (FCD)	From Hulls Creek --his grandmother was Mary Major
John Elgin	Hettenshaw Valley-direct descendant of James Willburn Sr.
Tracy Elgin	Brother of John Elgin --Irene Willburn Stapp is their Grandmother
Brian Franklin	Descendant of Jenny Young (brother of Dana Christen)
Rhonda Hardy (RH)	Great granddaughter of Ellen Sutherland sister of Sally Bell
Louis Hoaglin	Related to the extended Hoaglin Family including Silas and Susan (Wailaki) Hoaglin. His Grandfather Alex Frazier was born in 1864 (1)
Ken Horn	Great Grandmother Ellen Sutherland
Darby Hardy-Jewett	Descendent of Lyman Jewett and Wailaki Wife Belle Fenton
Kathy Heffner-McClellan	Related to the Crabtree family (2)
Ernie Merrifield	Former member Round Valley Indian Reservation Tribal Council
Arden Stillwell	Employee of Six Rivers National Forest, Mad River Ranger District. Wailaki descent from Kettenpom area.
Tichetsa Thelili (TT)	Direct descendent of Lucy Young
Irene Willburn Stapp	A direct descendant of James Willburn Sr. and his Indian wife Mary (Great Grandfather/Great Grandmother). Indian Jim Willburn Jr. was her grandfather.
Womack, Doyle	Related to the Crabtree family--brothers Fred, Robert, and Thomas D. Crabtree were Wailaki (2)

(1) Hoaglin Family
There are numerous descendants of the Hoaglin family still living in Mendocino, southwestern Trinity, and southern Humboldt Counties. Refer to the *People and Places* section of the TCC for individual entries for Hoaglin family members. It appears that Silas Hoaglin, who settled in Powellville (Blocksburg) well before 1880 (he and his family show up on the 1880 Census), had a brother Charles who settled in Hoaglin Valley at about the same time. Charles does not show up on the 1880 census. A descendent Claude Hoaglen (note the spelling--there are several versions of the spelling of the Hoaglin name in the census records and historical literature--see TCC Vol. 2 B08)) indicated that:

> My grandfather Charles and his brother Silas, the two Hoaglen brothers, came from Ohio in a covered wagon. Silas's wife died on the route out and he had the two kids sent back to the family in Ohio. The two Hoaglens settled in Blocksburg and Hoaglin Valley. Charles moved into Covelo and then he [Silas] married a Wailaki Indian from out at the North Fork on the river, out by Kekawaka. She called herself Susan, but that wasn't her name. They had, I don't know, probably about twelve kids. They were half Indian and half white. My mother originated from Covelo. Her mother was driven into Covelo when the soldiers drove them over the mountain from Sacramento to Covelo.

Charles Hoaglin (or Hoaglen) was not listed on the 1880 census for Long Ridge and no other documentation was found—this is likely due to the fact that he may have spent only a short time in the area before moving to Covelo. This would, however, explain the naming of Hoaglin Valley.

(2) Crabtree Family (Wailaki)

Tom Crabtree filed a homestead claim under the 1862 Homestead Act in 1904--prior to creation of the Trinity Reserve in 1906. It is located in the North Fork Eel River watershed at T3S, R7E, S. 35 HBM. He had two brothers Fred and Robert. Fred Crabtree married Jane Duncan the daughter of Lone Duncan of Hettenshaw Valley. They were not related to the John and Polly (Wailaki) Duncan family living on Long Ridge in the late 19th century (see TCC Vol . 2: B06). Note that Augusts Russ appears to have acquired the Crabtree tract-- see the 1915 Trinity National Forest Map (TCC Appendix 2 Map 9, and the TCC Volume 3 Homestead Entries folder: Homestead File HA07.

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Historical Societies

Mendocino Historical Society (Ukiah)
- Manuscripts and Collections
  - Frank Asbill Ms. The Last of the West
  - Estle Beard Collection (5 Boxes)
  - John Wathen Ms. (Box 4 Estle Beard Collection)
  - Bill Lee collection: Edith Murphey, Sam and Lucy Young MS

Trinity County Historical Society (Weaverville)
- TCC: Trinity County Compendium.
  - Authored by Thomas S. Keter. Primary records, historic maps, documents, and interviews of residents living in southwestern Trinity County. Most documents are posted at solararch.org and all records can be found at the Trinity County Historical Society, Weaverville.

- Southern Trinity County Files documents listed by number.
- Manuscripts in Southern Trinity County Files and TCC: Appendix 5
  - Thomas Duncan Ms.
  - May Burgess Ms.
  - Andrew Davis Ms.
  - John Gray Ms.
  - Jessie Gummer Ms.
  - Andrew Sheubeck Ms.
  - John Thomas Ms.

Interviews (All interviews on file TCC Appendixes 5, 6, and 9)

I#379 Dave Alby
I#378 Anonymous (96 Year old Wailaki Man interviewed by Kathy Heffner McClellan)
I#445 Floyd Barney
I#390 Zelma Benninghoven
I#372 Leona Miller (100 years old at the time of the interview) and son Ralph Miller
I#444 Max Rowley
I#118 Lee and Irene Willburn Stapp

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Alta California,	San Francisco
Daily Evening Bulletin,	Eureka
Eureka Times Standard	Eureka
Examiner,	San Francisco
Humboldt Times,	Eureka (various issues)

New York Times	08-30-20230	Indian Boarding Schools
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Redwood Times,	Garberville	March 11, 2008
Trinity Journal	Weaverville	

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Humboldt Historian	Eureka: Jan-Feb 1980: 4).
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Biographical Family Histories

See TCC Volume 2: Biographical Family Histories folder for a brief biography, historical census data, homestead records, photos, etc.

B01	Thomas Raglan and Sally Hoaglin	See also Keter 2018b, 2019, 2021
B02	Yellowjacket and Sally Jacket	See also Keter 2018b, 2019, 2021 for more information including photos of their homestead
B03	Sam and Lucy Young	Clark Place Zenia and at Soldier Basin, photos, and census records
B05	Willburn extended Family	Includes several generations of the Willburn family including photos
B06	Duncan Family (Long Ridge)	includes several generations of the Duncan family. Includes some homestead records
B07	Jack Littlefield (White)	Short Biography and photos of his grave site
B08	Hoaglin extended family	Includes Hoaglin extended family from Powellville (Blocksburg) and Long Ridge

Appendix 1

North Fork Eel River Indian Allotments NFER

See TCC Appendix 1 Base Maps Indian Allotments folder containing documentation and maps for each tract of land.

- IA01 Willburn Arron F
- IA02 Fannie Willburn
- IA03 Willburn Maude see HA08
- IA04 Willie Hoaglin allotment
- IA05 C. Willburn
- IA06 S Hale
- IA07 E Willburn
- IA08 J Willburn
- IA09 R. Hoaglin
- IA10 S Willburn
- IA11 M Willburn
- IA12 Robert Hoaglin
- IA13 P Willburn
- IA14 Unidentifed owner
- IA15 Willburn no FN
- IF02 Rose Russ
- IF03 Willburn Emma Lee
- IF04 Hattie Meyers Hoaglin

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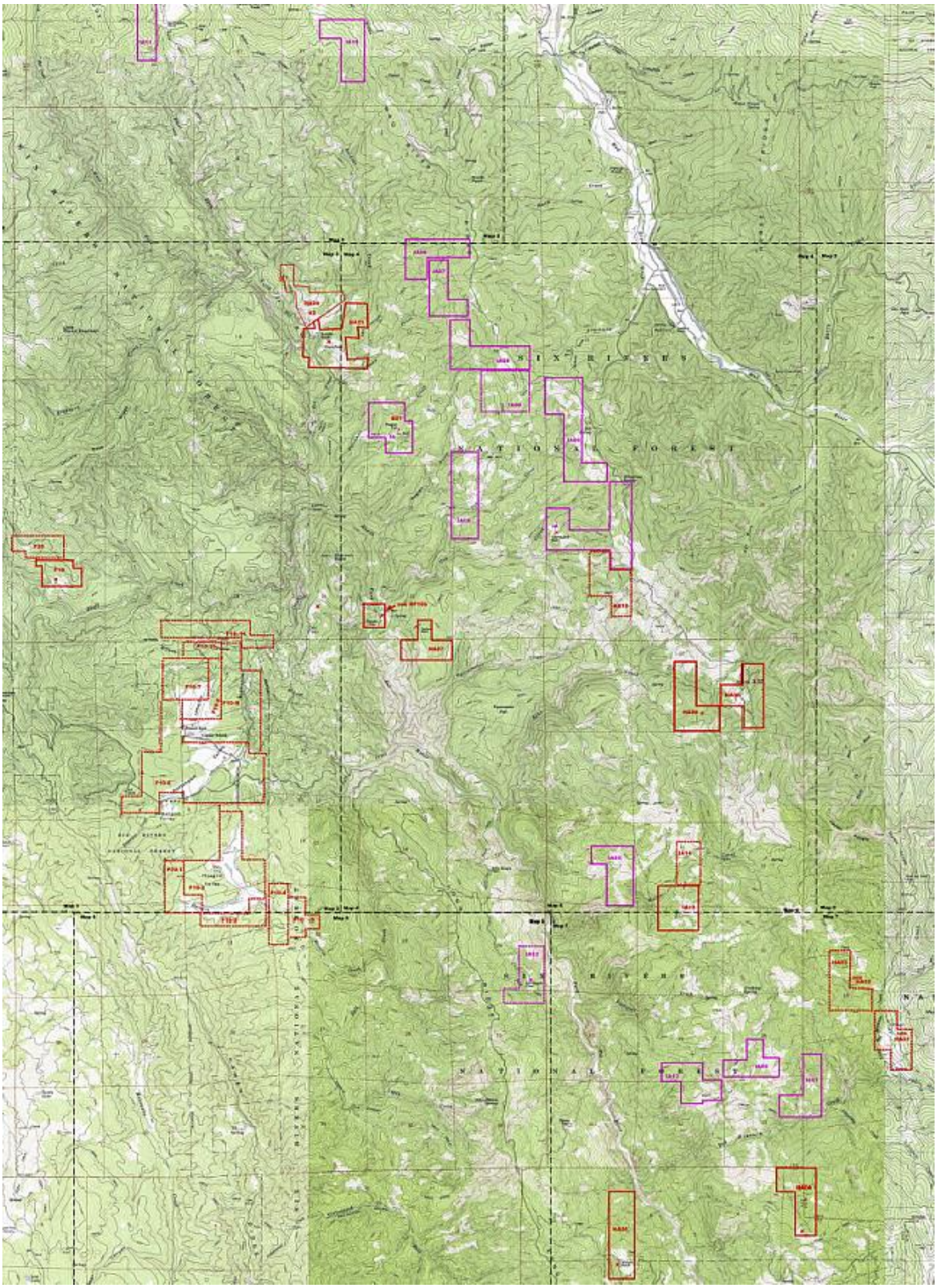


Map showing tracts acquired under the Indian Allotment and
National Forest Indian Homestead Acts, North Fork Eel River watershed.
(TCC Appendix 1)

Appendix 2
Homestead application filed by Augustus Russ in 1908
(TCC Appendix 1)

Form 110

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE

REPORT ON AGRICULTURAL HOMESTEAD APPLICATIONS.

Application No. 79, Trinity National Forest.

Land District Eureka Dec. 26 and 27, 1908.
(Date of examination.)

1. Name and address of applicant Augustus Russ
(The county should always be given.)
Caution, Trinity Co., California.

2. Settlement Applicant is not living on the land.
(Is applicant living on land? Give date of settlement.)

3. Location W 1/2 NE 1/4, and W 1/2 SE 1/4, Sec. 9 T 4 S., R 5 E., H. M.
(Legal subdivision, or by metes and bounds. Relation to highways, rivers, railroads, etc. Proximity and importance of towns, settlements, etc.)
A country settlement, six or seven families reside in three miles distance of this land.

Covelo, Mendocino County is the nearest town of importance being 30 miles distance by trail.

Caution (Post Office) 1-1/4 miles distance.

Nearest wagon road on Mad River miles distance by trail

Nearest railroad point, Carlotta, 73 miles distance

North Fork Eel river is 3 miles distance, the only important stream.

4. Area Applied for 160 acres Recommended 160 acres
(Applied for, and recommended.)

5. Topography The land is mountainous, being situated on a south and
(Topography of tract applied for, and relation to surrounding territory. Topography should be considered particularly in its bearing on agricultural possibilities, altitude, slope, aspect, etc.)

west slope of the dividing ridge between Mad River and the North Fork of Eel River at an altitude of from 3500 to 3800 ft. above sea level. In the south and along the West portion of the tract, the slope of the land is gradual, making it possible to cultivate the soil. Along the upper or East portion of the tract, the land is steep rough and broken. Cultivation being impossible.
Looking to the north, south and west an excellent view is obtained.

6. Formation General character of the open area, a deep black soil, a few loose rock out cropping. The timber covered area is a similar
(Nature and extent of soil, rock, etc., paying particular attention to their influence on agricultural possibilities. Presence of water for irrigation and domestic use. Possibilities for developing water.)

soil but shows rock and along the north and east portion of the tract 30 to 35 acres of the land is extremely rocky, cultivation being impossible. I note 3 springs on the tract, which afford plenty of water for domestic use and water sufficient to irrigate a small garden patch No other water available for irrigating purposes.

7. Climate Moderate.
(Precipitation, temperature, occurrence of killing frosts.)

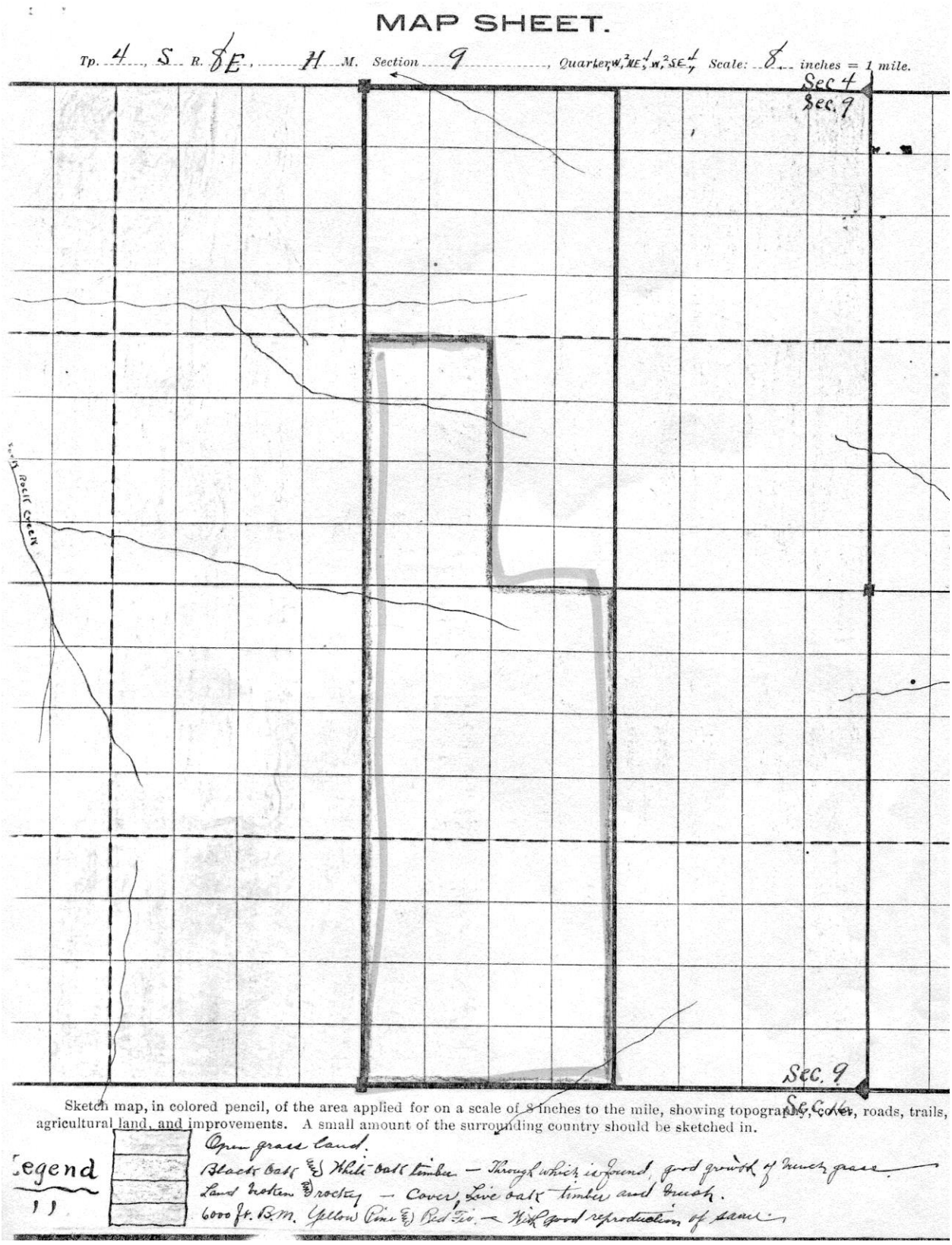
Greatest summer heat 100° F. M.

Killing frosts occur about October 20

Average precipitation 70 inches

8. Cover There is approx. 50 acres of open glad land, 10 acres scrub
(Nature and extent of cover, with estimate of amount and value. Accessibility and distance to market. Is cover needed for protective or seeding purposes?)

live oak timber, 40 acres Black Oak and White Oak timber and brush, through which is fair pasture. 60 acres open stand red fir and yellow pine. Over the greater part of this area a very good reproduction of Fir and Yellow Pine is found. The Oak timber is of little value. Red Fir and Yellow Pine occuring over the entire tract would probably be 360,000 ft B. M. and would be worth $450. No market near No transportation facilities at present. I believe that a portion of this cover is needed for protective purposes.



9. Claims No conflicting claims known to exist. No improvements of
(Conflicting claims to land or existing improvements—by whom and on what grounds. Examiner is not to pass upon claims—merely to furnish all
any kind on the land. No mineral known to exist. Augustus Russ made
available information. Use in the past, and by what means. Existence of mining claims. Give any information available affecting qualifications of applicant to make a
final proof on Homestead Entry No. 4011 at Eureka Land Office May 24, 19
homestead entry. Show what improvements have been made, and their present state of repair.)
1907

10. Economic possibilities For reason of application see attached sheet.
(Reason for application, and opinion as to success of applicants' plans. State fully agricultural possibilities. Value, if any,
Thirty-five to forty acres of the tract recommended can be success-
to Forest Service for Rangers' Quarters or other administrative purposes. If withdrawal of tract for administrative use is desired, submit separate report on Form 271.
fully used for farming. The remaining portion is valuable for graz-
Distance and market price per acre of near-by farms. Transportation facilities.)
ing purposes only. Similar land from 3 to 5 miles of this tract has
sold for from $3.50 to $5.00 per acre. Small market for produce grown
No transportation facilities at present. I believe that a good home
could be built upon this tract. The land is not needed for adminis-
trative purposes.

11. Recommendations I recommend that 100 acres of the tract applied for
(Specific recommendation for or against listing of land, with summary of reasons for recommendation.)
and outlined in blue on the map be listed, As it is more valuable for
agriculture and grazing than for the timber grown.

12. Photographs
(Give numbers of negatives which go with this report. Photographs should be made in each case where unfavorable action is recommended.)

13. Personal
(Has applicant agreed to the findings of the examiner?)

Report submitted Jan 9/09 WHH

J. P. Gray
(Signature of examining officer.)

Deputy Forest Ranger
(Title.)

Approved ....., 190 .

(In charge, Examinations.)

Approved ....., 190 .

Chief, Office of Lands.