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## Yuma

Hokan tribe; Tribal population = 2500.

1776 – Colorado shore occupied by Yuman tribes

1830's – Yuma and Mohave tribes banded together, drove out Halchidhoma and allowed the Chemehuevi to replace them.

Colorado river group who engaged in war expeditions to settle old grudges and enjoyed fighting for its own sake. Face and body painting was practiced to a greater extent than elsewhere in California.

Settlements were numerous, generally small and depended on agriculture to provide most of its food. In ancient times as floodwaters subsided, the tribe planted their crops of maize (5 varieties), beans (3 varieties), pumpkins and calabashes. Cultivations of muskmelons and watermelons did not take place until some time before 1700.

### YUMAN LANGUAGE

a large branch of languages which includes the Hokan language family, spoken by peoples from northern California south into Mexico and east into the Great Basin.

*See also* Hokan

### HOKAN LANGUAGE FAMILY

of the Yuman branch of languages; spoken by the Chumash, Karuk, Kumeyaay (Diegueño/Ipai-Tipai), Miwok, Mojave, Pit River, Pomo, Shasta, Washoe, and Yana Indians.

## ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

### Yuman

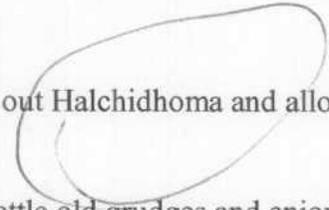
any of various Indian groups who traditionally lived in the lower Colorado River valley and adjacent areas in western Arizona, southern California, northern Baja California, and northwestern Sonora and who spoke related languages (Yuman) of Hokan stock.

Two major divisions of Yuman people are recognized: the river Yumans, who lived along the lower Colorado and middle Gila rivers and whose major groups included, from north to south, the Mojave, Halchidhoma, Yuma, and Cocopa, together with the Maricopa in the middle Gila; and the upland Yumans, who inhabited western Arizona south of the Grand Canyon and whose major groups included the Hualapai (Walapai), Havasupai, and Yavapai.

Two other groups of Yuman-speaking people, the Diegueño and the Kamia (now known as the Tipai and Ipai) lived in southern California and northern Baja California. The Kiliwa and Paipai still live in northern Baja California.

The river Yumans were primarily farmers who benefited from the annual floods of the Colorado and Gila rivers. These floods provided regular enrichment of farmland through the rich burdens of silt that they deposited, and they also made irrigation unnecessary. The Maricopa were somewhat influenced by their neighbours, the Pima, and frequently

W peno



allied with the Pima against other river Yumans such as the Mojave and Yuma.

The upland Yumans in many ways resembled the ancient Desert cultures, which are ancestral to many of the southwestern cultural traditions. Some farming was done, but a major part of subsistence was based on hunting and on gathering wild plant foods. The Havasupai were exceptions, partly because of contacts with the Hopi and partly because of their location in Cataract Canyon, a side canyon of the Grand Canyon. The creek flowing through this canyon made extensive farming possible through irrigation. Unlike other Yumans, the Havasupai were very peaceful. The Yavapai, on the other hand, frequently allied themselves with bands of western Apache for raiding and were sometimes called Yavapai-Apache.

All Yuman peoples resembled one another in their lack of settled villages and their loose political organization. They had a tribal sense, but not the effective organization. Most had a somewhat warlike spirit and an individual desire for renown in battle. They demonstrated craftsmanship in pottery. Artifacts were made to be functional and were rarely repaired. When something broke, it was replaced. Yuman religion is characterized by belief in a supreme creator, faith in dreams, and use of song narratives in ritual and ceremony.

The total number of Yuman peoples remaining in the late 20th century in the United States and Mexico was uncertain. There were a number of large and small reservations in California and Arizona containing such groups as the Yuma, Mojave, Havasupai, Hualapai, Yavapai, Yavapai-Apache, Cocopa, and Maricopa; these reservation Yumans probably numbered well over 4,000. *See also* Diegueño; Mojave.

## **Chemehuevi**

Farmed a bit, but for the most part lived on rabbit, mountain sheep, kangaroo rat, raccoon, porcupine, skunk, lizard, seeds and flowers.

### **CHEMEHUEVI RESERVATION**

A federal reservation of Chemehuevi Indians in San Bernardino County, on the shores of Lake Havasu. The reservation is in southeastern California on the Arizona border and the Colorado River, with 25 miles of the reservation boundary along the shores of the lake. The total area is 30,653 acres. The population is around 325, with a tribal enrollment of over 500.

## **Diegueño**

Hokan speakers

Tribal Population = 3000

Tideland collectors, whose main bounty came from the ocean shore, consisted of clams, mussels and surf fish. In addition, kelp and dozens of other edibles that the sea produced. On or near the shore there were waterfowl, seeds, acorns and meat from elk, antelope, deer and rabbits.

Marine shells served as ornaments and currency in the form of beads. Bead money brought what one could not produce and it was valued for what it would buy.

#### DIEGUEÑO INDIANS

Named by the Spanish after the Mission San Diego, literally translates as "the little people of Diego." Known as the Kumeyaay in their language, and also called Ipai (for the Northern Diegueño), and Tipai (for the Southern Diegueño and Kamia). *See* Kumeyaay

#### KAMIA INDIANS

The Yuman Indians of Imperial County in southern California who are related linguistically and culturally to the Kumeyaay (Diegueño) of San Diego County. *See also* Kumeyaay (Diegueño).

#### KUMEYAAY

Also called the Diegueño, or Tipai-Ipai, these Indians' traditional lands are now known as San Diego County and northern Baja California. The Kumeyaay land extended from 50 to 75 miles both north and south of the present Mexican border, as well as from the California coast almost to the Colorado River. Theirs is a Hokan language of the Yuman branch. They are divided also by two dialects: Ipai (the northern dialectical form) and Tipai (the southern dialectical form). They depended on a variety of foods, from marine resources along the coast to vegetable foods such as acorns, to dry farming. In the 18th century, there were around 50 bands of Kumeyaay. The Mission San Diego was the first Spanish mission in California, established in San Diego in 1769 to convert the Kumeyaay, among other goals. The Spanish called them Diegueños because they lived near the San Diego river. In the late 18th century there were between 3,000 and 9,000 Tipai-Ipai, or Kumeyaay/Diegueño/Kamia. Before 1870, the southern and interior Kumeyaay largely avoided repression by the Mission San Diego, while the northern and coastal Kumeyaay had early contact with the missions, and fell under Spanish domination. After 1870, American immigrants moved into the area, taking the Kumeyaay land. Until 1910, the Kumeyaay largely starved on inadequate reservations or found menial labor on area ranchers or in local homes. Today, there are around 1,200 Kumeyaay living on their reservations of Barona, Campo, Capitan Grande, Cuyapaipe, Inaja-Cosmit, La Posta, Manzanita, Mesa Grande, San Pasqual, Santa Ysabel, Sycuan, Viejas (Baron Long), and the Jamul Indian Village. Another 2,000 more live off-reservation. Various spellings of Kumeyaay may be found in older documents, such as Kumei, or Cumeyaay.

#### ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

#### Diegueño

also called SAN DIEGUEÑO. a group of Yuman-speaking Indians who originally inhabited

large areas extending on both sides of what is now the U.S.-Mexican border in California and Baja California. They were named after the mission of San Diego.

Diegueño culture reflected similarities with its neighbours the Luiseño to the north and other Yuman nations to the east, such as the Mojave (see Yuman). Diegueño social organization was based upon lineage, each apparently associated with a particular location. The lineage chief led ceremonies. The diet staples of coastal Diegueño were fish and mollusks. Inland, some Diegueño engaged in agriculture. Their houses consisted of poles supporting a roof of brush and earth. They made baskets, pottery, and containers made of string substances.

Although many Diegueño religious practices paralleled those of the Luiseño, the world views of the two differed. Whereas the Luiseño were mystics, the Diegueño were more interested in the solid and visible in life.

Like most other California Indians with missions placed in their midst, the Diegueño resisted the Christianizing efforts of the Spanish Franciscans; they even attacked the San Diego mission. Conversions came slowly and were not extensive.

In the late 20th century about 700 Diegueño descendants remained in communities near San Diego. See *also* Mission Indians.

### **Gabrielino**

Tideland collectors, whose main bounty came from the ocean shore, consisted of clams, mussels and surf fish. In addition, kelp and dozens of other edibles that the sea produced. On or near the shore there were waterfowl, seeds, acorns and meat from elk, antelope, deer and rabbits.

Marine shells served as ornaments and currency in the form of beads. Bead money brought what one could not produce and it was valued for what it would buy.

## **ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA**

### **Gabrielino**

also called San Gabrielino, or Gabrieleño, any of two--and possibly three--dialectally and culturally related North American Indian groups who spoke a language of Uto-Aztecan stock and lived in the lowlands, along the seacoast, and on islands in southern California. The Gabrielino proper inhabited what are now southern and eastern Los Angeles County and northern Orange County, as well as the islands of Santa Catalina and San Clemente; they were named after the Franciscan mission San Gabriel Arcángel (and thus have sometimes been called San Gabrielinos). The second group, Fernandino (Fernandefío, or San Fernandinos, named after the mission San Fernando Rey de España), occupied areas in and around the San Fernando Valley and some seacoast. A third apparently related group were the Nicolino (Nicoléfío, or San Nicolinos), who inhabited San Nicolas Island. The Gabrielino groups occupied some of the most fertile and pleasant land in California, and, because they were among the wealthiest and most advanced Indians in the region, they exercised considerable influence on all their neighbours. In religion, for instance, the Gabrielino were the source of the jimsonweed cult, a widely practiced southern California religion that involved various sacred and esoteric rituals and the drinking of toloache, a hallucinogen made from the jimsonweed

*(Datura stramonium).*

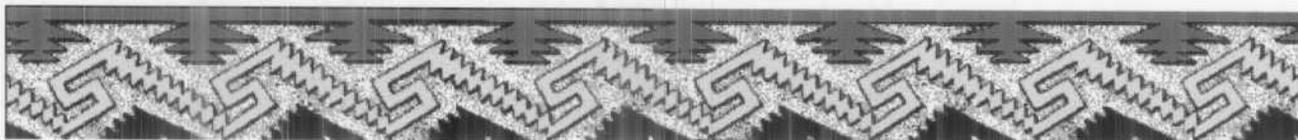
The interior and coastal Gabrielino lived in houses constructed of poles and tule mats and relied on gathering acorns and other plant foods, supplemented by fishing and hunting. Island Gabrielino, especially the Nicolino, often built dwellings of whale ribs covered with sea-lion skins or brush; and for food they relied more on fish, sea mammals and birds, and mollusks. All groups made baskets; and from Santa Catalina Island came soapstone that was made into such items as pots and scoops, ceremonial vessels, artistic carvings, beads, and ornaments. Trade between islanders, coastal people, and interior Indians was extensive, using currency of clamshell beads. Each Gabrielino village had a hereditary chief and shamans.

No identifiable Gabrielino now exist. See also Mission Indians.

*Cabelelio/TONOVA*

## CALIFORNIA INDIANS AND THEIR RESERVATIONS: An Online Dictionary (D - L)

Go to California Indians



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### DEATH VALLEY INDIAN COMMUNITY

See Timbi-Sha Indians

### DIEGUEÑO INDIANS

Named by the Spanish after the Mission San Diego, literally translates as "the little people of Diego." Known as the Kumeyaay in their language, and also called Ipai (for the Northern Diegueño), and Tipai (for the Southern Diegueño and Kamia). See Kumeyaay

### DRY CREEK RANCHERIA

A federal reservation of Pomo Indians in Sonoma County, near the community of Geyserville. Total area is 75 acres, with a population around 135.

### ELK VALLEY RANCHERIA

A federal reservation of Tolowa Indians in Del Norte County, near Crescent City, on the Pacific Coast just south of the Oregon border. The total area of the rancheria is 105 acres, with a population around 128.

### ESSELEN

Also spelled Eslen, Escelen, or Ensen. Both a tribe and a branch of the Hokan linguistic family. The Esselen Indians were one of the least populous groups in California, restricted to a narrow territory along the central coast of California. They became entirely extinct.

### FORT BIDWELL INDIAN COMMUNITY

The Paiute Indians of the Fort Bidwell Reservation.

### FORT BIDWELL RESERVATION

A federal reservation of Paiute Indians in Modoc County in the extreme northwestern corner of California, near the town of Fort Bidwell. The total area of the reservation is 3,335 acres, with a population of about 200.

## Chumash

Spoke 8 Hokan languages ; tribal population = 13,650.

Territory: San Luis Obispo southward to Malibu on the coast. Occupied offshore islands (Santa Barbara regions) of Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, San Miguel. Lived in towns of over a thousand inhabitants.

Most skilled in arts along with the Gabrielino tribe. Their stonework was of the finest quality and ranged from blades to animal effigies. Basketry was of superior quality.

Were the most sea-oriented of the state, a specialization made possible by their seagoing plank canoes. These canoes have been linked to canoes built in Polynesia. Tideland collectors, whose main bounty came from the ocean shore, consisted of clams, mussels and surf fish. In addition, kelp and dozens of other edibles that the sea produced. On or near the shore there were waterfowl, seeds, acorns and meat from elk, antelope, deer and rabbits.

Marine shells served as ornaments and currency in the form of beads. Bead money brought what one could not produce and it was valued for what it would buy.

Suffered near extinction at the point of missionaries.

Known to have taken the hallucinogenic juice of the Datura plant

## CHUMASH INDIANS

These Indian people originally occupied lands in southern California in the area of present-day Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties. The Coastal Chumash were living in their traditional territory by approximately 1000 A.D. Traditionally, they lived in villages along the Pacific coast from San Luis Obispo to Malibu Canyon and inland as far as the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley. The Chumash are sometimes referred to as the Santa Barbara Indians. However, each Chumash regional group has its own name. They are composed of the Barbareno, Ynezeno, Ventureno, Obispeno, Purisimeno, and the Interior Chumash. At the time of first Spanish contact in 1542, the Chumash were one of the largest and most highly developed California tribes. Their traditional language is no longer spoken (the last native speaker of a Chumash language died in 1965), but was one of five closely related Hokan languages. Those along the coast obtained their food mainly from the sea, for which they developed sea-going canoes. They were the only California tribe to depend largely on ocean fishing for subsistence. The Chumash are known for their technological skill in constructing ocean-going canoes. They hunted on and around the Channel Islands as well as along the coast. The Chumash Tribe is also known for its aesthetic contributions in the form of baskets and shell and steatite objects. Five Spanish missions were established in Chumash territory, and soon the Chumash population was decimated, largely due to the introduction of European diseases. Population

estimates of the Chumash before the Spanish arrived was as high as 22,000. In the late 18th century, Chumash population was between roughly 10,000 and 18,000. By 1831, the number of mission-registered Chumash numbered only 2,788. Today, about 213 Chumash people live on the Santa Ynez Indian Reservation, the only Chumash reservation, and others live in cities along the southern California coast.

## ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

### **Chumash**

any of several related Indian groups speaking a Hokan language and originally living in the California coastlands and adjacent inland areas from Malibu northward to Estero Bay. Chumash also occupied the three northern channel islands off Santa Barbara. The major Chumash groups were the Obispeño, Purisimeño, Ynezeño, Barbareño, and Ventureño (named for the Franciscan missions San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, La Purísima Concepción, Santa Ynez, Santa Barbara, and San Buenaventura, respectively), the inland Emigdiano and Cuyama, and the islanders. The Chumash were among the first native Californians to be encountered by the Spanish-sponsored explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo (1542-43).

The bulk of the Chumash population was concentrated along the seashores and relied for food largely on fish, mollusks, and sea mammals and birds. Their houses were dome-shaped and large; normally each served several families and had several rooms. Villages formed the basis of Chumash political and social organization. The Chumash were skilled artisans. Using asphalt for caulking, they made wooden-plank canoes. They fashioned vessels of soapstone, made a variety of tools out of wood, whalebone, and other materials, and engaged in basketry. The Chumash were purveyors of clamshell-bead currency for southern California. Fewer than 100 Chumash descendants remained in the late 20th century. The language has been extinct since 1965.

### **Serrano**

Uto-Aztekan tribe – spoke Takic.

Known as mountaineers, tribe with foothill adaption.

### **SERRANO**

The Serrano Indian people traditionally lived in the Mojave Desert and the San Bernardino Mountains, in southern California. Their language belongs to the Takic branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family. They hunted and gathered in the desert areas and relied on acorns and game in the foothills, where their settlements were more permanent. The term "serrano," meaning mountaineer, was initially used by the Spanish to designate "unnamed" Indians in the mountainous regions of southern California. Later the name came to refer only to that band of

Indians whose territory extended roughly from Mount San Antonio in the San Gabriel Mountains to Cottonwood Springs in the Little San Bernardino Mountains. Traditionally, the Serranos were divided into two groups, or moieties, and marriage was only allowed across group lines. Communities were usually villages of 25-100 people. Few people still speak the Serrano language, and few ancestral rituals survive. Some continue to sing traditional Bird Songs on special social occasions. Today around 85 Serrano people live on the San Manuel Reservation. Many of the 1,000 or so residents who live on or near the Morongo Reservation are also of Serrano descent. And, other Serrano people live on or near the Soboba Reservation.

## ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

### **Serrano**

(Spanish: "Mountaineer"), groups of Indians speaking a Uto-Aztecan language and originally inhabiting a mountainous region of southern California (U.S.). One group, the Kitanemuk, lived in the drainage area of the Kern and San Joaquin rivers; another group, the Vanyume, resided along the Mojave River; and a third group, the Serrano proper, held the San Bernardino Mountains and adjacent valleys and a portion of the Mojave Desert.

Little is known of the life of the Kitanemuk; and of the Vanyume of aboriginal times it can be said for certain only that they lived in a desert that offered a meagre existence.

The Serrano proper were somewhat more prosperous, though they too were hunter-gatherers living off the small game, acorns, piñon nuts, and berries of their semiarid environment. The Serrano were organized into clans or village communities, each clan having a hereditary chief and assistant chief.

The Serrano proper built circular, domed dwellings using willow branches covered with tule thatching. Most villages also had a ceremonial house where the chief lived, as well as a heated sweat house for cleansing one's body by sweating.

In the late 20th century there remained fewer than 400 Serrano proper.

### **Luiseno**

Uto-Aztecan tribe – spoke Takic; named by Spanish for their proximity or attachments to the missions of San Luis Rey and San Juan Capistrano.

Known as fishers and collectors, they secured about 30 percent of their livelihood from wild plants, 20 percent from game and marine mammals and 50 percent from fish. Their main bounty consisted of clams, mussels and surf fish. On or near the shore there were waterfowl, seeds, acorns and meat from elk, antelope, deer and rabbits.

Marine shells served as ornaments and currency in the form of beads. Bead money brought what one could not produce and it was valued for what it would buy.

During initiation into adulthood (girls puberty ceremony), the participating girls raced to a rock where relatives awaited them with red paint. The girls would then paint the rocks with diamond shaped designs, representing the rattlesnake, a phallic symbol. This ceremony was a manifestation of the wish for increased fertility in the society.

## LUISEÑO INDIANS

These people traditionally occupied land extending approximately 50 miles along the southern California coastline, including the northern part of San Diego County and lands south of Los Angeles. Historically, the Luiseño occupied the territory south of Mt. San Jacinto extending to the Pacific coast. Their lands extended inland for about 30 miles, north of the Kumeyaay lands. The Spanish named them after the Mission San Luis Rey, and the San Luis Rey River. The Luiseño were associated with the Mission San Juan Capistrano, also, and were often referred to as Juaneno Indians. Both the Luiseño and Juaneno are included among the groups of so-called Mission Indians. The Luiseño and Juaneno languages belong to the Takic branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family. Many people still speak Luiseño. Their foods were marine resources along the coast and vegetables gathered in the foothills of the Coast Range to the east. They lived in semi-permanent villages, with some seasonal movement. The Luiseño were organized into roughly 50 patrilineal clan tribelets, each with an autonomous, semipermanent village led by a hereditary chief. Each village group also had its own food resource area. In the late 18th century, there were approximated 10,000 Luiseños. The 1990 population of Luiseños on their reservations stood at 1,795. Today, Luiseño people live on the La Jolla, Pala, Pechanga, Pauma, Rincon, Soboba, and Twentynine Palms reservations. They are also called the Luiseño Band of Mission Indians.

## ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

### Luiseño

group of Indians who spoke a Uto-Aztecan language and inhabited a large area south and east of Los Angeles and north of San Diego, Calif. They were named after the Spanish mission San Luis Rey de Francia.

Although some Luiseño lived on the coast, where they fished and gathered mollusks, the great majority were hill people who gathered acorns and other seeds, fruits, and roots and hunted various game with bow and arrow or snares. In the warm climate the men wore nothing, and the women wore an apron front and back. They lived in villages of semi-subterranean earth-covered lodges. They were apparently organized in small groups of kinsmen clustered into clans or near clans, which had territorial, political, and economic functions; and there were parallel and closely related religious societies to which everyone belonged and which had both ceremonial and political functions. Several family groupings had chiefs, and in most areas there was apparently a chief of chiefs.

The Luiseño were mystics; and their conception of a great, all-powerful, avenging god was uncommon for aboriginal North America. In deference to this god, Chingichnish, they held a series of initiation ceremonies for boys, some of which involved a drug made from the jimsonweed (*Datura stramonium*) which was drunk to inspire visions or

dreams of the supernatural. Intoxication was central to this jimsonweed cult. Equally important were mourning ceremonies, a series of funerary observances and anniversary commemorations of the dead. Shamans, or medicine men, were important in curing disease. Over 1,000 Luiseño descendants remained in the late 20th century.

## **Cahuillan**

An interior tribes whose lands did not reach westward to the ocean shore. Current records show that they used 60 plants for food, and 28 for narcotics, stimulants and medicines.

Gathered plant food from April through December and stored food for four months.

## **CAHUILLA INDIANS**

These people were traditionally located in the inland areas of southern California, generally south of the San Bernardino Mountains. The Cahuilla refer to themselves as Iviatim. The word Cahuilla is thought to have come from the tribal word Kawiya, meaning "master." They were divided into small groups or tribelets in the foothills, mountain regions, and partly in the desert lands east of the Sierra divide, into two broad groups called the Coyote and the Wildcat. They lived in about 50 villages aboriginally. The Cahuilla population may have numbered as many as 10,000 in the 17th century, with about 5,000 remaining by the late 18th century. Their language is from the Cupan subgroup of the Takic division of the Uto-Aztecan language family, which extends into the Southwest and central Mexico. Today Cahuilla people live on the reservations of Agua Caliente, Augustine, Cabazon, Cahuilla, Los Coyotes, Morongo, Ramona, Santa Rosa, Soboba, and Torres-Martinez. These are all bands of Mission Indians. In 1990, the total Indian population of all reservations on which Cahuilla lived was 1,276.

## **Cahuilla**

group of Indians who spoke a Uto-Aztecan language and lived in southern California in an inland basin of desert plains and rugged canyons south of the San Bernardino and San Jacinto mountains. Acorns and mesquite, the chief staples of many California Indians, were here plentiful only in a few well-watered areas.

The Cahuilla lived in thatched or adobe houses or in sun shelters without walls and were skilled in basketry and pottery. Their social organization was patrilineal and apparently divided into halves, or moieties, which governed such matters as descent and marriage; there were also numerous small bands or clans associated with certain territories.

About 900 Cahuilla descendants remained in the late 20th century. Some have prospered from the sale or use of their lands in such resorts as Palm Springs and such vast irrigated agricultural enterprises as those near Salton Sea.





## CALIFORNIA INDIANS

**Go to** California Indians and Their Reservations: An Online Dictionary



In 1990, California had the second-largest Native American population of any state, with approximately 242,000 Native American residents, second only to Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup> Most of these people are native California Indians, while many other Indians have come from other states either through relocation by the United States government or for employment purposes. There are 107 federally-recognized Indian tribes and 95 Federal Indian reservations in the state of California, with about 40 Indian groups seeking to gain federal recognition. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, the native peoples of California lived in all areas of the state. There was no empty land, as long as that land could support human life. No where else in the United States is there such a variety of cultures and a multiplicity of languages spoken. California Indians have dozens of languages and dialects from seven major language families (Hokan, Penutian, Algonkian, Shoshonean, Athabascan, Lutuamian, Yukian).<sup>2</sup> The multiplicity of languages, cultures, and individual tribal histories creates a fascinating tapestry of California Indian history.

California is an amazing and varied region with mountains, valleys, deserts, and the Pacific ocean coast. Native peoples lived in these regions for thousands of years before the Europeans arrived a few hundred years ago. Archaeologists have determined that people were present in some parts of California at least 19,000 years ago.<sup>3</sup> Some evidence shows that human occupation in parts of California goes back 50,000 years. About 9000 B.C.E., California Indians began a transition from hunting to an economy that also depended heavily on seed collecting. By approximately 2000 B.C.E., these peoples had developed subsistence patterns that were quiet varied. Regional and local diversification had advanced sufficiently by about 500 years ago that the basic patterns and customs of many historical peoples had been established. Populations grew and village life became more complex. The tribelet became the predominant form of political organization and the largest autonomous group. It is estimated there were around 300,000 California Indians in the 18th century, and California Indians spoke over 300 different dialects of some 100 languages.<sup>4</sup> With all the diversity in geographic settings and languages, California Indians still tended to share many cultural similarities. They all depended on acorns as a staple food. They also relied on such foods as fish, deer, elk, antelope, chia, buckeye, and epos root. They had shamans who cured by sucking offending objects out of the body. They used datura in religious and rite-of-passage ceremonies. Their primary political organization was the tribelet, with an emphasis on individual wealth and private property. They also made fine baskets. From as early as 1000 B.C.E., many California Indian groups created rock art.<sup>5</sup> Trade between Indian

groups was well developed in California. Organized warfare was rare. Ceremonialism played an important role in the lives of most California Indians. Most groups practiced well-defined rituals, related to puberty, death and subsistence. Marriages generally took place when the couple was very young, just after puberty. Northern California Indians had rather rigid and closed class systems, based on wealth and marriage customs. Some groups kept slaves. Chiefs, shamans, and wealthy men often had more than one wife. There are similarities in aboriginal California cultures of those inhabiting similar climatic and ecological zones. Technologies and materials used to manufacture tools, homes and items are similar in different regions of the state. Hunting, trapping and fishing technologies are shared across tribal lines.<sup>6</sup> And, yet, there are many regions, environments, and variations in California - in its terrain, its aboriginal cultures, its languages, its lifestyles. To learn more about California Indians one must examine the variations among the tribal groups, investigate the unique traits of each Indian group, and discover their regional similarities as well.

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<sup>1</sup>*The Gale Encyclopedia of Native American Tribes*, Vol. IV, California, Pacific Northwest, Pacific Islands. Detroit: Gale, 1998.

<sup>2</sup>Heizer, Robert F., vol. ed. *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. 8, California. Washington, D. C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1978

<sup>3</sup>Klein, Barry T. *Reference Encyclopedia of the American Indian*. 7th ed. West Nyack, NY: Todd Publications, 1995.

<sup>4</sup>Kroeber, A. L. *Handbook of the Indians of California*. New York: Dover, 1976. Rept. of Bulletin 78 of the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1925.

<sup>5</sup>Pritzker, Barry M. "California." In *Native Americans: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Peoples*, 148-219. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.

<sup>6</sup>Tiller, Veronica E. Velarde, ed. *American Indian Reservations and Trust Areas*. Albuquerque: Tiller Research, 1996.

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