

Handbook of North American Indians

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General Editor

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Mohave

KENNETH M. STEWART

Northernmost and largest of the Yuman-speaking* tribes of the lower Colorado River in aboriginal times, the Mohave (*mó'hävê*) comprise two divisions—former residents of the Fort Mojave Reservation in Arizona who have lived since the 1930s across the river in the town of Needles, California, and the Mohaves of the Colorado River Reservation, 60 miles downstream (fig. 1). These are approximately the same localities that the Mohave were occupying when the Spaniards first encountered them in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Mohave then constituted a true tribe, with a loose division into bands that did not weaken the tribal unity for purposes of attack or defense, possessing a national consciousness despite a minimal political organization.

The core and most heavily populated part of the Mohave territory in precontact times was the Mohave Valley, where no other tribe has ever been reported. The Mohave, if Schroeder is correct in identifying them with the prehistoric group he calls the Amacava, may have come out of the Mohave Desert to the west to settle along the river in the Mohave Valley as early as A.D. 1150 (Schroeder 1952b:29). Mohave settlements in the valley extended from about 15 miles north of the present Davis Dam down to the peaks known as The Needles, just south of Topock, Arizona. The Mohave apparently considered, too, that they owned the country along the Colorado south to the Bill Williams River, although in the nineteenth century they allowed the Chemehuevi, migratory desert Indians, to infiltrate and farm along the river in what is now known as the Chemehuevi Valley.

Mohaves were also living in the Colorado River Valley, near the present Colorado River Reservation, when they were first seen by Spaniards of the Juan de Oñate expedition in 1604 (K.M. Stewart 1969a). That valley was later in part occupied by a hostile tribe, the Halchid-

*The phonemes of Mohave are: (voiceless unaspirated stops and affricate) *p*, *t* (dental), *ʈ* (back alveolar), *č*, *kʰ*, *k*, *kʰ*, *q*, *qʰ*, *ʔ*; (voiced spirants) *v* ([β]), *δ*; (voiceless spirants) *θ*, *s*, *š*, *h*, *hʰ*; (laterals) *l*, *lʰ*; (nasals) *m*, *n*, *ɲ*, *nʰ*, *ŋ*; (trill) *r*; (semivowels) *w*, *y*; (short vowels) *i*, *e*, *a*, *o*, *u*, *ə*; (long vowels) *iː*, *eː*, *aː*, *oː*, *uː*; (stress) *˘* (primary), *˙* (secondary). Word-final */ə/* is optionally dropped.

Information on Mohave phonology was provided by Pamela Munro (communications to editors 1974, 1976), who furnished the transcriptions of the Mohave words cited in italics in the *Handbook*.

homa, who after protracted warfare were finally expelled from the valley between 1827 and 1829. Some Mohaves then moved into the northern part of the valley to establish possession once again. In 1859 a larger group of Mohaves was induced to move south from the Mohave Valley by Chief Irrateba (*ʔiraté·və*), and others joined them when the Colorado River Reservation was established in 1865. A conservative faction, under a rival chief, *hamosé·kʰaʰot* ('good star'), refused to leave their ancestral homeland in the Mohave Valley, and ever since that time the Mohaves have remained split into two groups, one in the Mohave Valley and the other on the Colorado River Reservation (K.M. Stewart 1969). Despite the differences between the two Mohave communities, there is considerable visiting between them and some intermarriage.

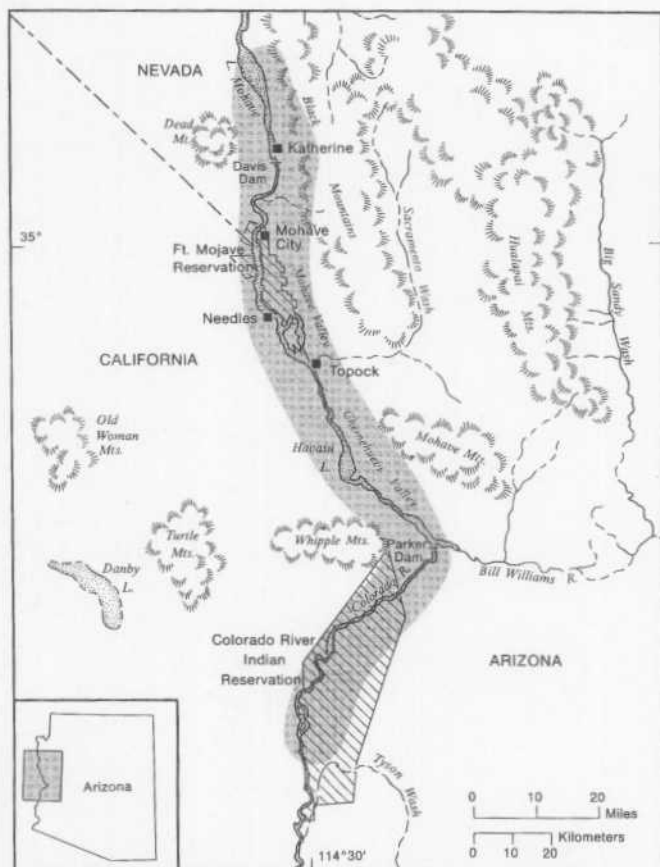


Fig. 1. Tribal territory in the mid-19th century (reservations and hydrography are modern).

External Relations

The Mohave were culturally very much like their Quechan friends and allies and were also similar in culture to the antagonistic Halchidhoma, Maricopa, and Cocopa. The Pima (and to a lesser degree, the Papago) were allies of the Maricopa and thus were considered to be enemies by the Mohave. The Yavapai, on the other hand, were friendly to both the Quechan and Mohave, whom they sometimes joined in expeditions against the Maricopa. Relations between the Mohave and the Walapai were mixed; at times they were friendly enough to permit trade, while fighting between them occurred at other periods.

The Cahuilla, Tipai-Ipai, and other Mission Indians of southern California were regarded by the Mohave as good people. In the deserts to the north and west of Mohave territory were the Southern Paiute, close relatives of the Chemehuevi. Poor and nomadic, the Chemehuevi were allowed to come on the river to farm in the early nineteenth century. But war broke out between Mohave and Chemehuevi between 1865 and 1867, and the Chemehuevi were temporarily driven back into the desert. They were allowed to return when peace was made, and they were later incorporated into the Colorado River Reservation community (K.M. Stewart 1968a).

Environment

The Mohave country is a region of mild winters, oppressively hot summers, and extremely low annual precipitation. Back from the bottomlands along the river, vegetation is prevalently xerophytic. Were it not for the beneficence of the great Colorado River, the land would doubtless have been only thinly populated by hunters and gatherers. But annual flooding made possible relatively dense populations in the lush oases of the river valleys.

The Colorado River, originating high in the Rocky Mountains, is fed by numerous tributaries in a drainage area of a quarter of a million square miles. Emerging from the chasm of the Grand Canyon, it rounds a bend at the present boundary of Arizona and Nevada and turns southward, flowing alternately through constricted canyons and floodplains en route to the Gulf of California.

Once an untamed torrent, the silt-laden Colorado was prone to overflow its banks in the spring of the year, swollen with the melting snows of the Rockies. Ordinarily the floods were not destructive, spreading gently over the bottomlands for distances of as much as a mile or two from the river. In late June the waters began to recede, leaving behind a deposit of rich silt on the floodplains. In these alluvial sediments the Mo-

have planted their crops, which ripened rapidly in the intense summer heat.

In the bottoms are dense thickets of cane and arrowweed, and groves of cottonwood and willows. The terrain away from the river rises gradually to a sandy mesa, where there are stands of mesquite trees, which do not tolerate marshy conditions. Where the root systems can no longer reach the subsurface moisture, abrupt changes in flora occur. Beyond the arid mesa, where the vegetation consists mainly of cacti and creosote bushes, rise jagged and utterly barren mountains.

Few larger game animals were found at the lower elevations, although deer occasionally strayed into the thickets near the river. More common were rabbits and various rodents. In the river were fish such as humpbacks and mullets, which have been supplanted by introduced species.

History

The Spaniards of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, far to the south in Mexico, knew of the Mohaves mainly by hearsay. Too remote from the Spanish centers of ecclesiastical and temporal influence to be very directly affected by the activities of the Spaniards, the Mohave were visited only at protracted intervals.

The first Spaniard known to have contacted Mohaves was Oñate, who in 1604 met them near the junction of the Colorado and Bill Williams rivers and farther south. Father Francisco Garcés was in 1776 the first Spaniard to reach the Mohave Valley. He estimated the Mohave population to be 3,000 (table 1).

No missions or Spanish settlements were ever established in Mohave territory; the Mohave maintained their independence throughout Hispanic times. The rather sparse accounts of the Mohave left by the Spanish explorers reveal a picture of Mohave life similar in its essentials to that later reported by ethnographers. There were few changes in Mohave culture during the Hispanic period. The Mohave obtained wheat at second hand from the Quechan, and they acquired a few horses, some of them obtained in raids upon the Spanish mission communities in California.

After Mexican independence from Spain in 1821, the Mohave for a while continued their traditional way of life without hindrance. But during the 1820s a new breed of aliens, the Anglo-American trappers and fur traders, began to travel through Mohave country. Among them were the parties of Jedediah Smith and James O. Pattie in 1826 and 1827. At this period the Mohave were unpredictable in their reception of strangers, and blood was spilled on several occasions (K.M. Stewart 1966). Some of the parties of Anglo-Americans passing through their territory in subsequent years also had trouble with the Mohave; for example, the Lorenzo Sitgreaves ex-

Table 1. Population

Date	Estimate	Source
1770	3,000	Kroeber 1925:883
1776	3,000	Garcés (Coues 1900, 2:450)
1872	4,000 (828 on the Colorado River Reservation, 700 at Fort Mojave)	ARCIA 1872:58, 323
1910	1,050	Kroeber 1925:883
1965	1,500	Wallace (Spencer and Jennings 1965:273)

pedition, seeking a route for a transcontinental railroad, was attacked in 1851.

Other railroad explorers, including Amiel W. Whipple in 1854, and steamboat captains seeking to determine the navigability of the Colorado, among them Joseph C. Ives in 1858, penetrated Mohave territory at a time when the long period of intertribal warfare among the River Yumans was coming to an end. In 1857 the Quechan-Mohave allies suffered a disastrous defeat at the hands of a combination of Pima and Maricopa warriors.

Still smarting from their defeat, and apprehensive about the increasingly frequent intrusions of Whites into Mohave country, the Mohave warriors in 1858 attacked a wagon train bound for California. As a consequence, a United States military post, later to be named Fort Mohave, was established in the Mohave Valley. However, the Mohave were still defiant, and



Mus. für Völkerkunde, Berlin: IV B12910.

Fig. 2. Mohave appearance in the 1850s. The woman holds an infant on one hip and a basket on her head and wears a double skirt of bark fiber. The designs on her arms and cheeks were painted, while her chin may have been tattooed. The men wear long breechcloths and hair rolls, are painted on legs, chests, and arms, and wear feather head ornaments. Watercolor by Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen on Joseph C. Ives Expedition, 1857–1858.

in 1859 a battle was fought in which the Mohave warriors were mowed down by the rifle fire of the soldiers. This defeat ended the resistance of the Mohaves and paved the way for their subsequent acculturation (K.M. Stewart 1969).

During the period between about 1870 and 1890 the Mohaves, plagued with disease and living in abject poverty, went through a demoralizing interlude. Around the turn of the century things began to improve for them somewhat, although many problems persisted. Recent years have brought increasing prosperity to the Mohave of the Colorado River Reservation in particular, with the development of irrigated farmlands and income from leases of reservation land to Whites.

Culture, 1860–1890

Settlement Pattern

The Mohave had no true villages but lived in sprawling settlements or rural neighborhoods that were scattered throughout the valleys near arable land. The houses were usually situated on low rises above the floodplain. The houses of a particular settlement might be spread out over a distance of a mile or two, with perhaps four or five miles separating them from the next settlement. The settlement constituted a local group, the nucleus of which was an extended family, either patrilocal or bilocal, although because of much shifting around of population, and also because of marital instability, unrelated families might be resident in a settlement (K.M. Stewart 1970–1971).

Structures

During much of the year the Mohaves slept under flat-topped, open-sided ramadas (shades), resorting to their more substantial sand-covered houses only in cold weather. The winter houses (fig. 5) were low and rectangular in floor plan. Four large cottonwood posts supported a sloping roof of poles, which was covered with a thatch of arrowweed. The sides and ends of the house, consisting of vertical poles, were also sloping. A layer of sand and earth or river mud several inches in thickness was piled over the exterior of the house (Kroeber 1925:731–735). Native-style houses have not been built since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Subsistence

The Mohave were basically dependent upon farming in the bottomlands along the river, supplementing their diet by gathering wild plants, by fishing in the river, and by doing some hunting. The principal crop was maize, mainly flour corn of the white variety. Tepary



left, Bancroft Lib., U. of Calif., Berkeley; right, Boston Public Lib., Print Dept.

Fig. 3. Clothing of the 1860s. left, Woman at Ft. Mojave. Her torso and probably her arms and legs bear vertical painted stripes, and she wears a bark skirt overlaid by a decorative cloth. Photograph by R. D'Heureuse, 1863. right, Group at Ft. Mojave. The man standing beside Maj. William Redwood Price (8th Cavalry) wears a rabbitskin robe over one shoulder, while the Indian man at right wears a military coat and hat. The women wear bead necklaces and skirts made of twisted cloth and yarn strips tied with waist bands. Photograph by Alexander Gardner, while on the Kansas Pacific Railroad, early 1868.

beans of several varieties were second in importance, and pumpkins and melons were also raised.

Mohave agricultural methods were relatively simple. The men did most of the work in clearing the land, and in planting and cultivating the crop, often assisted by the women, who did much of the harvesting. The Mohave farmer used a planting stick with a wedge-shaped point, punching holes in the moist soil, four to six inches deep and a pace apart, making no attempt to align the holes in regular rows. A woman usually followed a planter, dropping a half-dozen seeds in each hole, then replacing the soil and pressing it down by hand.

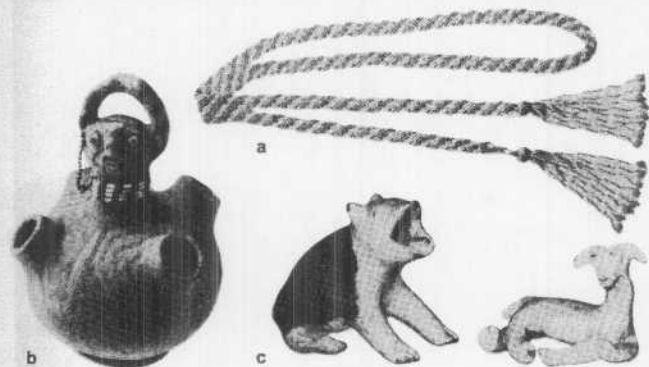
No crop rotation was practiced, and artificial fertilization was superfluous, since the fertility of the fields was maintained by the deposition of silt in the annual overflows. The growing plants received little attention other than that required to clear away weeds with sword-shaped wooden hoes.

Harvesting of the main crop started in late September and continued into October. The corn was husked in the fields by the women, and that portion of the crop that was not roasted and eaten while still green was

thoroughly dried in the sun on the roofs of ramadas. After that it was stored away in huge basketry granaries, woven of arrowweed branches with the leaves still on them, and so coarse in their weave that they have been compared to giant birds' nests.

A man might appropriate any piece of land not already in use, clearing the land by breaking down the shrubby growth and burning it. Once under cultivation, the land was regarded as private property. The shape of the fields varied in accordance with the topography, but the fields were rarely more than an acre or two in size. Boundaries were marked with ridges of dirt, or with arrowweed markers set up along the edges of the field. Disputes over boundaries sometimes occurred, when flooding changed the configuration of the land or obliterated the dividing ridges. A rough pushing match or stick fight between the disputants, each backed by supporters, might then be the way to settle the matter. Each party would attempt to drive the other back across the contested territory, thus definitely establishing claim to the land.

Famines were rare, and in normal years the Mohaves



top, Southwest Mus., Los Angeles: 1376; Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: a, 348,977; b, 278,080; c, U. of Colo. Mus., Boulder: 963.

Fig. 4. Tourist trade. top, Women selling bead necklaces to tourists. Photograph by Warren Dickerson at Needles, Calif., about 1890s. Crafts sold at the Needles, Calif., train station—a scheduled meal stop—included: a, necklace of braided strands of light blue and white seed beads accented with larger light blue beads; b, painted pottery vessel with 4 spouts and handle in shape of a human head with blue and white seed bead earring and necklace added (figurines similar to those of the Quechan were also made); c, whimsical animal figures that may also have been made as toys (Kroeber and Harner 1955:2). Length of a, 94 cm, collected before 1930. Height of b, 15 cm, rest to same scale, b and c collected by J.P. Harrington in 1911.

had enough to eat. But in years of drought the river might fail to rise sufficiently to flood the fields, and then the harvest was lean. At such times the Mohaves were obliged to rely more heavily for their food supply on hunting, gathering, and fishing. These activities were also carried on at other times but became of crucial importance in times of poor harvest (K.M. Stewart 1966b; Kroeber 1925:735–737; Castetter and Bell 1951).

The women collected a variety of wild seeds in the bottomlands after the recession of the floods. They also went out in small parties to collect cactus fruits and other desert plants on the adjacent mesas. The most important wild food plants were the beanlike pods of the mesquite and screwbean (tornillo) (K.M. Stewart 1965; Castetter and Bell 1951).

Fish were the principal source of flesh food in the Mohave diet, although the fish native to the Colorado were rather soft and unpalatable. They were taken in dip nets, with seines or drag nets, in traps or weirs, or with large, canoe-shaped basketry scoops with long handles, both in the river and in muddy sloughs and ponds (fig. 6). The fish were eaten fresh, after broiling on hot coals or boiling with corn in a kind of stew that the Mohaves particularly relished (K.M. Stewart 1957; Wallace 1955).

Hunting was of relatively little significance to Mohave subsistence, since game was scarce along the river, and the Mohave only occasionally went farther afield to hunt. The Mohave had only a feeble development of hunting techniques and devices, making no use of pitfalls or deerhead disguises. The deer hunter either waited in ambush or stalked the animal with a bow and arrow. Deer hunters sometimes made special excursions to the mountains east of the river. The hunter traded the game to other Mohaves for fish and farm products, since it was believed to be bad luck for a hunter to eat his own kill. Rabbits were caught in snares or nets, or shot with bows and arrows, or bowled over with curved throwing sticks, sometimes in communal rabbit drives (K.M. Stewart 1947b).

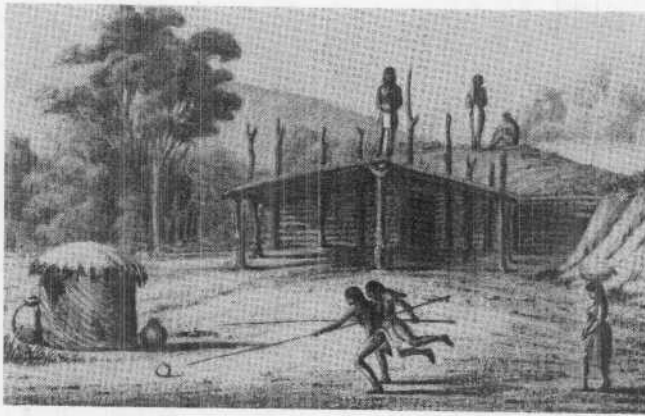
Technology

Artifacts, for the most part unadorned, were fashioned to meet only minimum requirements of utility. Little value was placed upon anything technological, but the Mohave indifference to craftsmanship may be in part attributable to the fact that all the property of an individual was destroyed at his death, and there was thus no inheritance of personal possessions. Mohave basketry was carelessly woven, and pottery (fig. 7) was no better than mediocre. Few artifacts were made of stone or bone, and the craft of woodworking remained rudimentary (Kroeber 1925:737–740).

Clothing and Adornment

Since the weather was hot or warm for the greater part of the year, a minimum of clothing was necessary. Children went naked, and the garments of both men and women were scanty. Men wore breechclouts, woven of strands from the inner bark of willow. Women were clad in knee-length skirts of willow bark.

Both sexes took pride in the glossy appearance of their long hair, which for cleansing purposes was frequently plastered with a mixture of mud and boiled mesquite bark. The hair of the women hung in a loose mass over their shoulders, while men's hair was rolled into some 20 to 30 ropelike strands that hung down the back (Kroeber 1925:729).



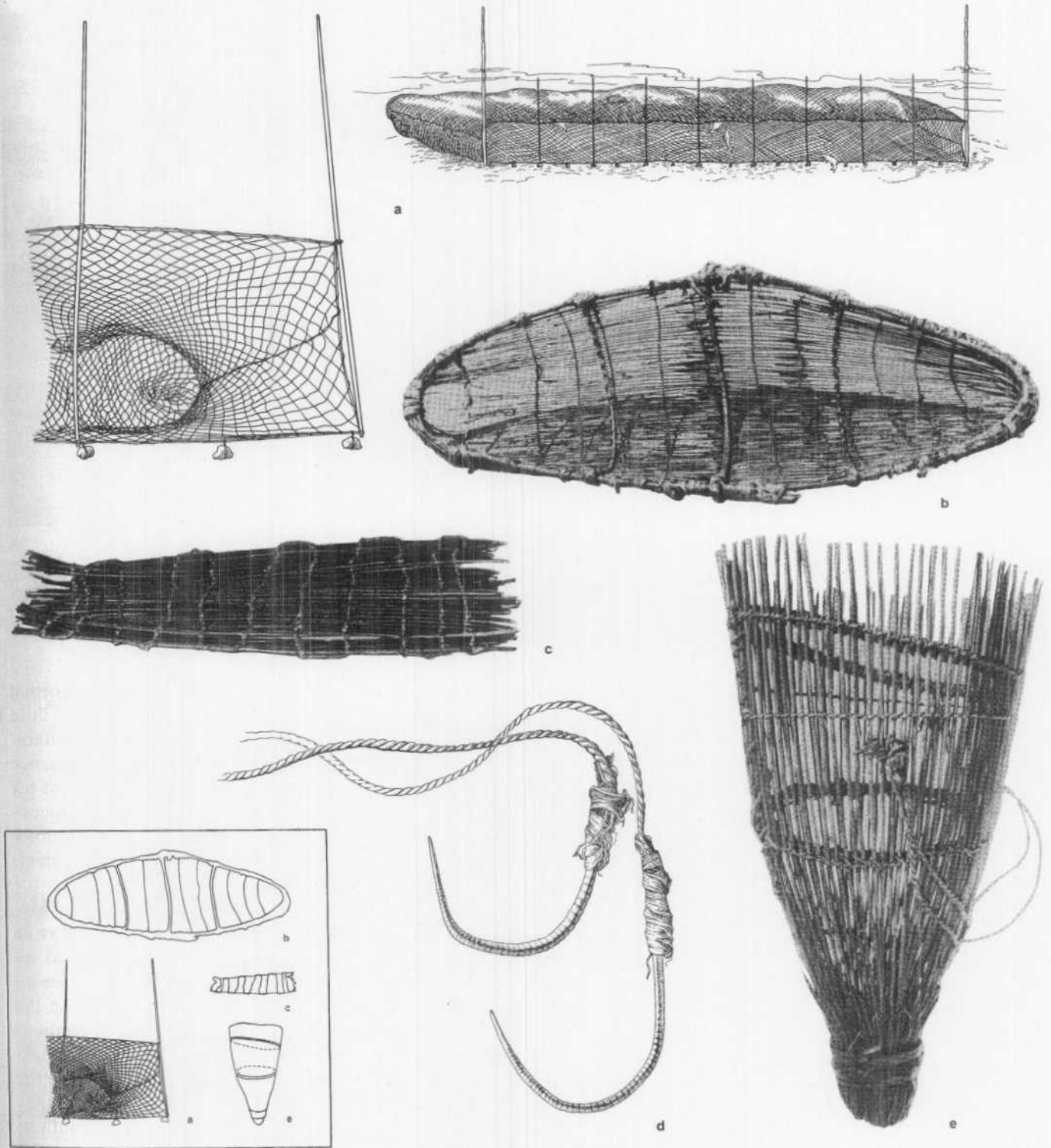
top left, Mus. für Völkerkunde, Berlin; top right and bottom, Mus. of N. Mex., Santa Fe.

Fig. 5. Habitations. top left, Low-roofed winter house made of wattle-and-daub with earth-covered roof and open ramada. At left foreground is a basketry granary with 2 pottery vessels. A hoop-and-pole game is in progress. Watercolor by Heinrich Balduin Möllhausen, on Whipple Expedition, 1854. top right, A low-roofed house inundated by the annual spring flooding of the Colorado River. A basketry granary stands on the platform on left. bottom, Semisubterranean house under construction. The large posts are made from cottonwood trees and the covering is of arrowweed under a layer of sand. Thatch and sand remain to be added on the side walls (cf. Kroeber 1925:731–734). Corn is drying on the house roof as well as on the storage platform to right. The men wear long breechclouts and the traditional hair rolls. In front are pottery vessels of at least 5 shape types including a large shallow parcher for corn and wheat (cf. Kroeber and Harner 1955). top right and bottom, Photographs by Ben Wittick, 1890s.

Transport

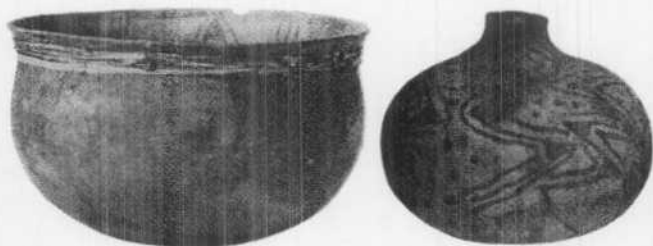
Despite the importance of the river to the subsistence of the Mohave, they had no true boats. They were good swimmers, and often swam across the river, a swimmer sometimes ferrying goods or small children by pushing them ahead of him in a large pottery vessel. A man might straddle a single log to float downstream, and

occasionally log rafts were made when an entire family wanted to travel downriver. On foot, the men could cover great distances across the desert in a single day, sometimes as much as 100 miles, in a steady, jogging trot. Women carried burdens in a rough, netted structure that was supported by a framework of sticks and was attached to a tumpline passed over the woman's forehead (Kroeber 1925:738–739).



Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: a, 277.907, d, 24.181; e, 278.007; b, San Diego Mus. of Man, Calif.: 16.838; c, U. of Colo. Mus., Boulder: 981.

Fig. 6. Fishing equipment. Fish were caught in the Colorado River and in the lagoons and sloughs left by its spring flooding. One of the most common techniques used a seine or drag net (a) with poles attached to each end and sticks spaced vertically across the net with stones serving as weights. The net was worked by 2 men at opposite ends who dragged it through the water. A large basketry scoop (b) of willow lashed with bast would have a long handle attached across the center and was used by one man, although not on the river. Fish were also caught in sieves (c), dip nets, and weirs, and were shot with bow and arrow (Wallace 1955; K.M. Stewart 1957). Angling was not so common, but fishhooks (d) were made from cactus spines that had been moistened, heated, and bent. They were attached with fiber line to willow poles. A conical basket of willow twigs (e), carried on the back, was used to hold fish. d, collected by Edward Palmer in 1871; c, collected by J.P. Harrington and Junius Henderson in 1911; a,b,e collected by J.P. Harrington, b in 1914, rest in 1911. a, length of stick 120 cm; b, length about 183 cm; c, length 66 cm; d, length 5 cm; e, length 68 cm. Key at lower left indicates relative sizes (except for fishhooks).



Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: 278,042. 10,320.

Fig. 7. Painted pottery. left, Bowl, *k'áθki' val'táy* 'big bowl', painted with red geometric pattern on interior, with fiber wound around the rim for strengthening. Water was added to pounded mesquite beans in the bowl and, after stirring, the slightly sweet beverage was drunk. right, Water bottle with red on buff design. left, Diameter 30 cm (other to same scale), collected by J.P. Harrington in 1911; right collected by Edward Palmer in 1871.

Political Organization

The Mohave, regardless of place of residence, thought of themselves as one people, living in a true nation with a well-defined territory. Despite a loose division into bands and local groups, the tribal cohesion was such that the Mohave were able to present a united front in warfare against all enemies. At least three bands within the Mohave tribe have been identified: *mathá'pa' dom*, the northern division; *ható'pa*, the central division; and *kavé'pa' dom*, the southern division. Each band was subdivided into settlements or local groups. To the Mohave, the locality of residence was unimportant in contrast to membership in the tribe, and people moved freely from one locality to another within the tribal territory.

The Mohave had a head chief for the tribe, although it is uncertain how long the status had existed prior to extensive contact with Whites. The chieftainship may have developed out of the status of local group leader. Although the head chief was supposed to have dreamed his power, which is in full accord with Mohave ideology, the office also became hereditary in the male line, which is un-Mohave-like. It is clear, in any case, that despite the tribal cohesiveness, the governmental machinery of the Mohave was minimal, with relatively slight institutionalization. No one individual or group of persons was in a position of significant authority over other Mohaves. There was no organized tribal council, although the chief might at times ask the prominent men



Calif. Hist. Soc., Los Angeles: Title Insurance Coll., 1908.

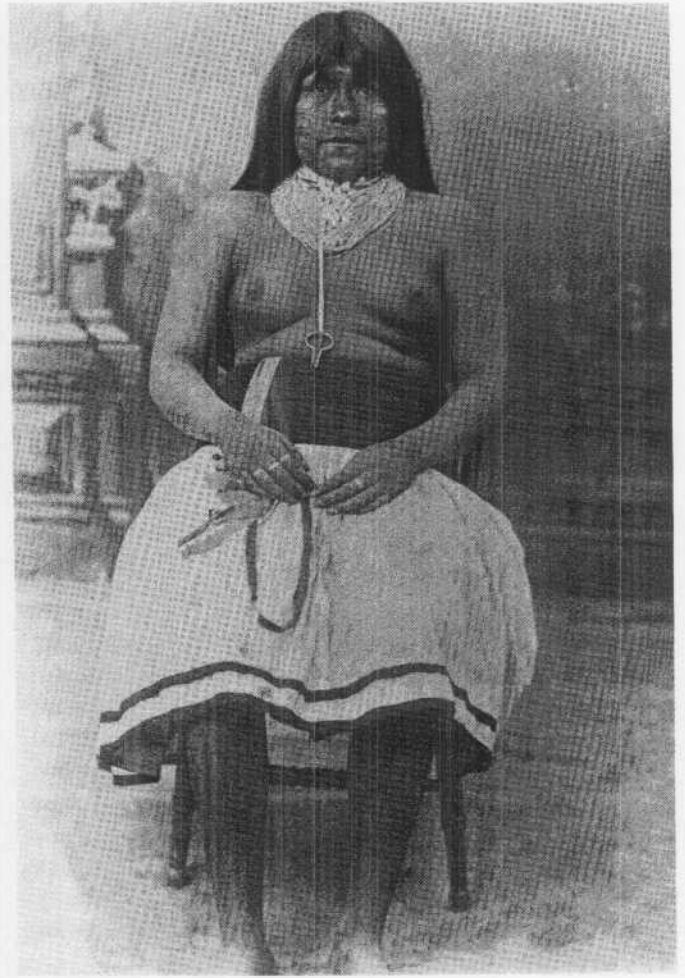
Fig. 8. Nopie wearing strands of rolled hair wound around his head. He also has a bone nose ornament through his nasal septum. A ramada is behind him. Photograph possibly by Charles C. Pierce or George Wharton James, 1890s.

from each settlement to meet with him for informal discussion of matters of importance. The chief had little authority but was expected to look after tribal welfare. He exerted a moral rather than a commanding influence over the people. The chief's importance increased for a brief period around 1859, when Mohave independence was coming to an end, but factionalism subsequently developed, with rival claimants to the chieftainship.

There were subchiefs in the several bands of the Mohave: one in the north, one in the south, and five in the more populous central division, according to informants. In the various settlements also were an indefinite number of local group leaders who, like the chiefs, were believed to have attained their positions by dreaming. They were expected to be skillful speakers, who addressed the people from the rooftops in the morning. People deferred to their wishes because they respected them, not because they had any real authority.

top right and bottom left, Mus. of N. Mex., Santa Fe: School of Amer. Research Coll., 15959, 15956; bottom right, Smithsonian, NAA: 2801-b-6; top left, Douglas Co. Mus., Roseburg, Oreg.

Fig. 9. Adornment. Both men and women customarily had tattooed chins and frequently wore elaborate facial painting in a large variety of designs (see Taylor and Wallace 1947; Kroeber 1925:730, 732-733 for other patterns). top left, Olive Oatman, a White woman who was tattooed by the Mohave while she was a captive among them 1852-1856 (K.M. Stewart 1969:220); photograph by Powelson of Rochester, N.Y., about 1858. top right, Unidentified woman from Needles, Calif.; photograph by Ben Wittick, about 1883. bottom left, Hanje; photograph by Ben Wittick, about 1883. bottom right, Unidentified woman; photograph by Ben Wittick, 1880s. Two of the women wear jew's harps suspended from their multi-strand bead necklaces.



The main religious leaders were the *kohótə* ('the one who is good'), of whom there were several in different parts of Mohave territory. They performed religious functions that were believed to strengthen the integration of the tribe, and they were also festival chiefs, giving feasts and arranging victory celebrations. They, too, were speakers, addressing the people at funerals and on other occasions. They may at one time have been the principal tribal leaders, but their importance declined considerably during the early contact period, as that of the chief increased (Kroeber 1925:725, 745-747; K.M. Stewart 1970-1971; Fathauer 1954).

Warfare

Mohave warfare was carried on primarily by the *kʷənəmí* ('brave, willing'), those men who had experienced "great dreams" conferring power in battle, although in a major expedition men who had not had the proper war dreams might also participate. In Mohave belief, warfare was instituted by the culture hero, *mastamhó*, who decreed that in each generation some men would have dreams giving power in war. Thus the *kʷənəmí* were eager to validate their dreams, so to speak, by demonstrating prowess in battle. A few *kʷənəmí*, those with stronger dreams, were recognized as war leaders.

A raid might be undertaken by 10 or 12 *kʷənəmí* whenever they wished to go out and fight, but more preparation preceded a major campaign. Scouts or spies, who had dreamed specific powers, first reconnoitered the route to be traversed, locating water holes and enemy habitations. Attack on an outlying enemy settlement was at dawn, by surprise, but if the Mohave continued farther into the enemy Maricopa territory they might encounter a battle array of Maricopa and Pima warriors. Challengers from the opposing sides would then meet in single combat before a general melee started. The Quechan usually joined the Mohave for campaigns, and sometimes they invited the Mohave to come downriver to join them in an attack on the Cocopa.

The Mohave had a divided armament in which some warriors bore long bows with untipped arrows of sharpened arrowweed, while others carried hardwood clubs, which did most of the damage in hand-to-hand fighting. Most effective was a mallet-headed club (fig. 10) shaped like an old-fashioned potato masher, which was wielded by the *kʷənəmí*.

On each major expedition a special scalper, who had dreamed his power to scalp, treated warriors who had fallen ill because of contact with the evil power of the enemy. The return of the warriors was celebrated with a victory dance around enemy scalps mounted on poles. Prisoners were almost exclusively girls or young women, who were given to the old men as an insult to the enemy



top, U. of Ariz., Ariz. State Mus., Tucson: E-4971; bottom, Yale U., Peabody Mus.: 19127.

Fig. 10. War equipment. top, Warrior's traveling kit consisting of bow with twine string and arrows with sharpened tips, painted ends with 3 feathers. Attached to bow are items a man would need: cloth cap, hide sandals, wooden club painted black except for red ends, gourd water bottle with wood stopper hung in twine netting, hair ornament of flicker feathers. Missing is a small bag of mesquite beans for food. Made by Romeo Burton. bottom, War standard, made of pointed stick with feathers attached. Quills are bound with red yarn to either end of a short string, which is then tied to the staff by a continuous cord. This example was probably made for use at a mourning ceremony since those used in battle were usually heavier (Spier 1955:12). Each war party had a standard bearer who carried no other weapon and was obliged not to flee (K.M. Stewart 1947:265-266). top, Length of bow 120.0 cm, bottom to same scale, collected in 1962; bottom collected by Leslie Spier in 1932.

(K.M. Stewart 1947; Fathauer 1954; Kroeber 1925: 751-753).

Social Organization

Marriage among the Mohave was casual, arranged without formality by the couple themselves, subject to the observance of clan exogamy and the avoidance of marriage between close relatives. Wedding ceremonies were lacking; the couple simply began living together. Most marriages were monogamous, although polygynous unions occurred occasionally. There was no mandatory rule about place of residence after marriage. Where the newlyweds lived seems in practice to have been a matter of preference or convenience. The Mohave had neither in-law avoidances nor prescribed behaviors toward affinal relatives. Marital instability was common, divorce entailing merely a separation at the will of either party (Kroeber 1925:745; K.M. Stewart 1970-1971).

Status differences between families were insignificant. The nuclear family was the essential unit in daily

social and economic life, although the members of an extended family sometimes cooperated in tasks such as farming (K.M. Stewart 1970–1971).

While lacking both phratries and moieties, the Mohave had a rather unusual system of patrilineal, exogamous clans. Whatever functions the clans may have had in the precontact period have been lost, other than the sometimes-ignored exogamic prescriptions. There were no clan leaders, and the clans played no significant part in either religious or secular life.

The Mohave word for a clan is *simulʷ* (also 'clan name'; cf. *imulʷ* 'personal name'). The names of the clans, 22 in number, were believed to have been given by the deity *mataví·lʷə* in the mythical period. All the women of a particular clan were called by the clan name rather than by a personal name, while the men were silent carriers of the name, being known by nicknames. The clan names were of totemic import, pertaining to plants, animals, or natural phenomena, although the words were archaic rather than those in current usage. There were no taboos on killing or eating the totems, nor were the totems venerated. Not all members of a clan lived in the same locality (Kroeber 1925:741–744; Spier 1953; K.M. Stewart 1970–1971).

Religion

Mohave religion featured an unusual conception of dreaming, which was in fact a pivotal concept in their culture as a whole, permeating almost every phase of Mohave thought and endeavor. All special talents and skills, and all noteworthy success in life, whether in warfare, lovemaking, gambling, or as a shaman, were believed to be dependent upon proper dreaming.

Dreams were constantly discussed and meditated upon by the Mohave. This intense preoccupation with dreams was accompanied by an indifference to learning. The Mohave were aware, of course, that skills could be improved by practice and that songs and myths could be assimilated by listening to them. But the acquisition of knowledge in such ways seemed of little value to the Mohave, since information and skills were regarded as ineffectual unless a person had the requisite power-bestowing dreams.

Although the Mohave were interested in dreams of all kinds, they made a clear distinction between ordinary dreams and the "great dreams" that brought power. All dreams were believed to have a meaning, so the ordinary dreams were regarded as "omen dreams," which when properly interpreted might foretell coming events.

The "great dreams," called *sumáč* 'ahót or *su·máč* 'ahót 'good dream', came to relatively few people, but the chosen ones who had them were the leaders in Mohave society—chiefs, braves, shamans, singers, and funeral orators. The dream was thought to occur first while the unborn child was still in the mother's womb.

In Mohave belief the prenatal dream was forgotten by the dreamer but was dreamed over again later in life, usually during adolescence. The youth, conditioned throughout his life by the cultural emphasis upon dream power, longed for and anticipated having a "great dream." Having heard others tell their dreams, again and again, in the stereotyped mythological pattern, the boy might have, or believe that he had, similar dreams. The test of the authenticity of his dreams depended upon whether he was able to validate them in successful undertakings.

Public ceremonies were almost totally lacking among the Mohave, and even dancing occurred only incidentally as an adjunct to the singing of certain song cycles. The Mohave had no masks, almost no ceremonial regalia and paraphernalia, and practically no symbolism or fetishism. There were no rituals intended to bring rain or promote the growth of crops.

Instead, the Mohave emphasized the recitation of dream experiences and the singing of song cycles. The song cycles, numbering about 30 in all, were supposed to have been dreamed by the singer. Each cycle consisted of from 50 to 200 songs, and the singing of a complete cycle required an entire night or more. The singer alternately sang and recited mythological episodes, for some cycles accompanying his singing by shaking a gourd rattle or beating rhythmically with a stick on an overturned basket (Kroeber 1925:754–755; Wallace 1947; K.M. Stewart 1970–1971; Devereux 1956, 1957).

Mythology

Mohave myths were extremely long and detailed, and the narrations were replete with details of name and place and trivial events. In general, they described the journeys of mythical personages and told of their eventual transformation into animals or landmarks.

In the Mohave cosmogony, Sky and Earth were male and female respectively. From them was born the deity *mataví·lʷə* who built a sacred house, the Great Dark House, where Mohave dreamers would later receive power. He offended his daughter, Frog Woman, who bewitched him, causing his death. *mataví·lʷə* was cremated, and the Great Dark House was burned, setting the precedent for future Mohave funerals.

A younger deity and culture hero, *mastamhó*, then assumed leadership and proceeded to put the land into shape, making the Colorado River and heaping up the sacred mountain, *ʔaví·kʷaʔamé*, where he conferred upon the unborn souls the powers of which they would later dream. *mastamhó* taught the people to speak, to get food, to cook in pottery; he also instituted the clan system and separated the various tribes. His work completed, *mastamhó* transformed himself into a fish eagle and flew away. Since *mataví·lʷə* and *mastamhó* no longer

existed as divinities, the Mohave neither worshiped them nor invoked them in prayer. Other supernaturals were not numerous and did not figure prominently in Mohave myths (Kroeber 1925:770-775, 1948, 1972).

Shamanism and Sorcery

Shamans, who were believed to have received their power from *mastamhó* at the time of creation, had perhaps the most elaborate "great dreams" of any Mohaves. The Mohave shaman (*k'áθ ʔidé'*) was typically a specialist, who had dreamed the power to cure only one or several kinds of illness, such as sickness attributed to contact with aliens, to "bad dreaming," to loss of one's soul, to witchcraft, to sickness caused by ghosts, to arrow wounds, or to the bites of rattlesnakes and other poisonous animals. The shaman's power to cure depended upon which portion of the creation myth he had dreamed, and upon which powers *mastamhó* had conferred upon him. When curing, the shaman would brush the patient with his hands, blow a spray of saliva over him, and sing the songs learned in his "great dream." See "Southwestern Ceremonialism," figure 2, this volume, for a shaman's pipe.

A shaman could cause disease as well as cure it. Mohaves were apprehensive that a doctor might become a witch as he grew older, being most apt to bewitch his own relatives, or those of whom he was fond, or to whom he was attracted, in order to segregate them in a special place as his "followers." There, he was believed to be able to visit them in dreams. A shaman was thought to be powerless to bewitch anyone who was "mean," or whom he hated or disliked. The Mohave distinguished between "fast witching," in which the witch shot power into a person, killing him almost instantly, generally at a public gathering such as a funeral, and "slow witching," in which the witch came to the victim in dreams and caused him to gradually waste away and die. Successful treatment of a bewitched person was possible if not too long delayed.

The shaman lived a precarious life, since if he were suspected of witchcraft, or if he lost too many patients, he might be killed. Usually, the braves were the witch-killers. Shamans are said to have met their fate with an accepting stoicism, sometimes even deliberately provoking people and inviting them to kill them. The reason for the shaman's indifference to death was that a special fate was believed to await him in the afterworld, but only if he died in a violent manner. If the death were too long delayed, his retinue of "followers" might be kidnapped by another witch, or if he died a natural death the souls of the bewitched were automatically released to pass on to *sal'aʔáytə*, the land of the dead (K.M. Stewart 1970, 1973, 1974a; Kroeber 1925:775-779).

Life Cycle

Mohave observances in connection with pregnancy and birth were of a simple and nonritualistic nature. But the period of pregnancy was significant to future life, since it was believed to be then that the "great dreams" first occurred, with the soul of the dreamer being impelled backward in time to the "first times." Also, the fetus was believed to have a conscious existence of its own, and it could cause difficulty for the mother if it were unhappy or angry.

The enculturation of the young Mohave was informal and gradual, and the parents were indulgent and permissive throughout the childhood of their offspring. Disciplinary methods were mild, and were mostly of an admonitory nature.

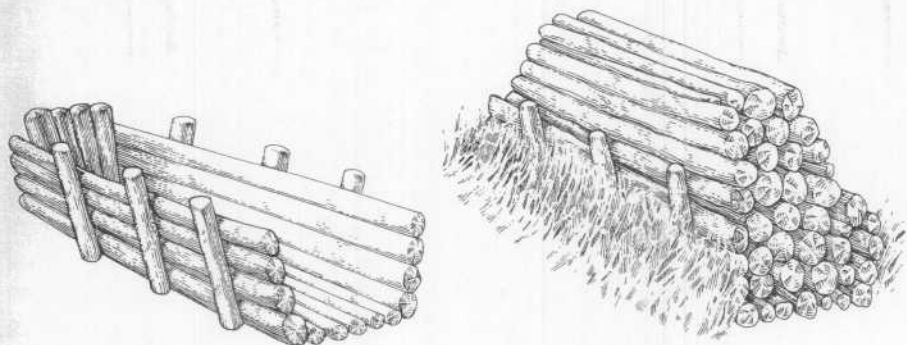
Children spent much of their time in play activities, many of which were in imitation of adult occupations. Education of the child was casual, and little pressure was put upon the children to acquire skills rapidly. Specific instruction was minimal, since in Mohave belief myths and songs were dreamed, and special abilities could be acquired only in dreams.

Puberty rites had only a feeble development among the Mohave. The very minor observances at the time of a girl's first menstruation were considered a private, family affair, and they were not occasions for singing, dancing, or public performances. For four days the girl was secluded in a corner of the house, remaining quiescent and eating only sparingly, while avoiding meat and salt. Each night she lay in a warmed pit. Her dreams at this time were considered significant as omens of the future (Wallace 1947a, 1948; Devereux 1950).

* **DEATH PRACTICES** In a society with few ceremonial occasions and a minimum of ritualism, the most important observances were concerned with death, specifically with the funeral (fig. 11) and the subsequent commemorative mourning ceremony.

When a death was believed to be imminent, friends and relatives would assemble and begin to sing and wail. As soon as possible after death had occurred, the deceased was cremated upon a funeral pyre along with his or her possessions. Funeral orators made speeches extolling the virtues of the departed, and song cycles were sung. The mourners wailed, the tempo increasing when the fire was lighted, and some then cast their own belongings into the flames. It was believed that, by burning, these things would be transmitted to the land of the dead along with the soul. The house and granary of the deceased were burned. There was a stringent taboo on mentioning the name of a dead person, and one of the greatest insults was to mention, one by one, the names of a person's dead relatives (K.M. Stewart 1974; Kroeber 1925:749-751).

The Mohave did not believe in eternal life after death. The ghost was believed to spend four days after the



top left, Calif. Histl. Soc., Los Angeles: Title Insurance Coll.: 1403; bottom left, after Densmore 1932; right, Mus. of the Amer. Ind., Heye Foundation, New York: 24580.

Fig. 11. Cremation. top left, Cremation of a Mohave leader. Wailing, funeral speeches, and songs preceded and accompanied the cremation, at which were also burned the combustible possessions of the dead and mortuary gifts from others (K.M. Stewart 1974). Photograph by Charles C. Pierce & Co., copyright 1902. bottom left, Construction of the funeral pyre, formerly of cottonwood and willow logs, but recently largely mesquite. right, Burial of the ashes in a pit beneath the pyre. Photograph by Edward H. Davis at Parker, Ariz., in 1921.

cremation revisiting the scenes of the events of its life, after which it went to *sal'a'áytə*, the land of the dead, which was believed to be located in sand hills downriver from the Mohave Valley, near the peaks known as The Needles. Deceased relatives greeted the soul there, in a pleasant place where souls were believed to live on much as before death, but with no sickness, pain, or troubles, and always with plenty of watermelons and other good things to eat. Regardless of a person's behavior while alive, the soul went to *sal'a'áytə*, with only a few exceptions, such as the victims of witchcraft, and those who died without having been tattooed, who were believed to pass down a rat hole at death. The soul did not live forever; eventually it died again and was cremated by other ghosts. After passing through a series of metamorphoses, the ghost ceased to exist altogether, ending up as charcoal on the desert (K.M. Stewart 1977).

A commemorative mourning ceremony was held subsequent to the funeral in honor of the death of prominent warriors or chiefs. The ceremony, which lasted for a day and a night, featured a ritual enactment of warfare. For hours 10 men, in war regalia, ran back and forth carrying ceremonial replicas of weapons. A funeral orator told of the death of the god, *matavi'lə* who had provided the first cremation. At dawn a large

shade, which had been specially constructed to house the spectators, was set afire. The weapons were thrown into the flames, and the runners rushed to the river and jumped in, for purification purposes (K.M. Stewart 1947a; Kroeber 1925:750-751).

Sociocultural Situation in 1970

By 1970 little of the traditional Mohave culture remained, and the Mohave had been largely acculturated to the Euro-American way of life. Although pride in identity as Mohaves persisted among the people, many were apprehensive that the identity would be lost in the near future, as intermarriage with other ethnic groups became more common, and as Whites moved into Mohave territory in increasing numbers.

Even the Mohave language was lapsing among the younger people, although their elders still conversed in it frequently. Most of the Mohaves had attended school and were able to read and write in English.

The old mode of subsistence was gone; fishing, hunting, and gathering were no longer of importance. Some farming was still done, but with canal irrigation and the use of modern implements and techniques. Most of the food was purchased in grocery stores.

The old material culture had disappeared almost entirely. Craftwork was of negligible importance. The Mohaves were living in wooden cottages or modern houses of cement-block construction. The White styles of clothing alone were worn.

There had been no successor to the last chief, who died in 1947. Both reservation communities were governed by elected tribal councils with chairmen, under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

The clan system was being rapidly forgotten, and many people disregarded exogamy or did not even know their clan affiliations.

Belief in the Mohave religion persisted among some of the older people, although many Mohaves had been converted to Christianity, affiliating mainly with the Presbyterian, Nazarene, or Assembly of God churches. Some had resisted conversion, and some older Mohaves maintained that they believed in both the Mohave religion and the Christian religion and tried to equate them.

One elderly shaman still occasionally treated people on the Colorado River Reservation, although most people went for treatment to the government hospital. Some of the older people speculated about whether certain youngsters might have had the proper dreams for curing power, but had not yet "shown themselves." Older people, at least, continued to believe in witchcraft, and certain individuals were commonly suspected of being witches.

Marriage and divorce were conducted by legal methods, often through the tribal council, but marital instability was still rather common. Many Mohaves had been married more than once.

Native games were seldom played any longer. Few singers of the ancient song cycles were still living, and only a few older people remembered fragments of myths and folktales. It was doubtful that anyone any longer experienced a "great dream," although the Mohaves were still very much interested in dreams as omens. But the manifest content of the dreams had come to reflect contemporary conditions rather than the traditional Mohave culture.

Most Mohaves were still cremated on funeral pyres, to the accompaniment of wailing. Some of the property of the deceased was still being burned, but houses were



top, Colo. River Tribal Lib.-Mus., Parker, Ariz.: BBB-14-823; center, Smithsonian, Dept. of Anthr.: 210.954.

Fig. 12. Beaded collars and belts. top, Cha-cha Cox (d. 1941), Irrateba's granddaughter, wearing an elaborate netted bead collar of the type that became popular in the late 19th century. center, Beaded collar. Netted openwork body of blue and white seed beads in fret pattern with drawstring neckline and fringe of strands of seed beads ending with large white glass beads. Depth 23.0 cm, collected before 1901. bottom, Flora Sands beading a belt at the home for the elderly on the Colorado River Indian Reservation.

Photographed by Jerry Jacka, Nov. 1977.

no longer put to the torch. The commemorative mourning ceremony was no longer held.

Approximately 1,000 Mohaves were living on the Colorado River Reservation, and some 500 former residents of the Fort Mojave Reservation were living on the outskirts of Needles, California. A higher standard of living had been attained by many Mohaves during the 1960s, when it became possible to lease reservation lands to development corporations and large-scale farming operations. By 1970 most of the Mohave income was in wages and land-lease money, with a lesser income from farming (K.M. Stewart 1970-1971).

Synonymy†

The Mohave have generally been referred to by variants of their name for themselves, *hàmakhá·v*. Many Mohave speakers identify the syllable *ha-* with the word *ʔahá·* (or *há·*) 'water', but linguists have not recorded the apparent form *ʔahàmakhá·v* given as the "true Indian name" by Sherer (1967:2, 28-29, phonemized), though explained as pronounced "so that it sounds as though it begins with an *H*." Some speakers give no literal meaning to this name, others translate it as 'people who live along the water' or relate it to an old word for the traditional grass skirt. The shortened form *makhá·v* is also in use (Pamela Munro, communication to editors 1974).

The translation of the name Mohave as 'three mountains' (Gatschet 1877-1892, 1:378; Hodge 1907-1910, 1:919) is a guess based on knowledge of the Mohave words *hamók* 'three' and *ʔaví·* 'mountain', but these words do not appear in *hàmakhá·v* and would in any case have to be used in the order *ʔaví· hamók* to give the meaning 'three mountains' (Sherer 1967:4; Pamela Munro, communication to editors 1974).

The earliest known recording of *hàmakhá·v* is as *Amacava*, 1605 (Escobar in Bolton 1919:28), later Spanish spellings being *Amacava*, *Amacaba*, *Amacabos* (Sherer 1967:5-6, 29), and the *Jamajab* of Garcés, 1776 (Coues 1900, 2:443), and *Jamajá* of Font, 1776 (Bolton 1930, 4:484). The first recordings by English speakers refer to incidents in the late 1820s: *Ammuchabas* and *Amuchabas*, 1826 (Jedediah Smith), *Mohawa* (J.O. Pattie), *Mahauvies*, *Mohauvies*, and *Mohavies* (G.C. Yount as recorded by O. Clark), and *Mohave* (Christopher Carson as recorded by D.C. Peters; all in Sherer 1967:8-13, 30-32). Later forms are *Mohahve* (obtained by J.C. Frémont in 1843, probably from Carson), and in the 1850s *Mojave*, a Spanish or pseudo-Spanish spelling first used by Whipple (1941), 1853-1854, and found interchangeably with Mohave

since (Sherer 1967:11-18). Other forms are given by Hodge (1907-1910, 1:921) and Sherer (1967). The spelling *Mojave* has been officially adopted by the Fort Mojave and Colorado River tribal councils; Mohave is used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Related or borrowed forms of the name Mohave in other Indian languages include the following: Havasupai *wamkʰáv* (Leanne Hinton, communication to editors 1981); Walapai *wa-mo-ka-ba* (Corbusier 1923-1925) or *wamaka·v* or *wamuka·va* (Kroeber 1935:39); Yavapai *makhava* (Gifford 1932:182, 1936:253); Quechan *xamakxáv* (Abraham M. Halpern, communication to editors 1981); Maricopa *xamākxa·va* (Kroeber 1943:38) and *makxav* (Lynn Gordon, communication to editors 1981); Cocopa *xam·kxā·p* (Kroeber 1943:38); Hopi *ʔamák·ávā* (Harrington 1925-1926). Other names are Pima-Papago *nakşad* or the English loanword *mahá·wi·* (Saxton and Saxton 1969:156), and the historical Spanish *Soyopas*, 1774 (Bolton 1930, 2:365).

Sources

The early Spanish chronicles contain rather meager descriptions of the Mohave. The best account of the Mohave in Hispanic times is that of Garcés (Coues 1900). The writings of the Anglo-American fur trappers in the early nineteenth century contain scant ethnographic information, since the trappers were little given to the observation of cultural details, and their encounters with the Mohave were often hostile (K.M. Stewart 1966).

For the mid-nineteenth century there are accounts of railroad explorers and steamboat captains, as well as Stratton's (1857) sensationalistic and in part inaccurate book on the captivity of the Oatman girls among the Mohave. And, from the Annual Reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs between 1865 and 1892 it is possible to glean a fragmented conception of the culture and conditions of the Mohave during the early reservation period. The nearest approach to an anthropological account of the Mohave during the nineteenth century was Bourke's (1889) article, based on a brief visit in 1886.

The basic and definitive ethnographic work among the Mohave was done by A.L. Kroeber between 1900 and 1911. His chapters on the Mohave (Kroeber 1925) remain the standard and most complete source on this tribe.

No phase of Mohave culture has been neglected by anthropologists, who have generally written articles on particular aspects of Mohave culture rather than comprehensive books or monographs. The few books on the Mohave include Devereux's (1961) work on ethnopsychiatry. Mohave subsistence is explained by Castetter and Bell (1951). The information in print on Mohave culture is actually rather copious, but it is widely scat-

†This synonymy was written by Ives Goddard, incorporating some references supplied by Kenneth M. Stewart.

tered in many journals, some of which are relatively obscure and available only in large libraries with extensive holdings. The most important articles on the Mohave have been written by Kroeber (1925, 1948, 1972), Devereux (1937, 1950, 1951, 1951a, 1956, 1957), Sherer (1965, 1966, 1967), Fathauer (1951, 1951a, 1954), Wallace (1947, 1947a, 1948, 1953, 1955), K.M. Stewart

(1946, 1947, 1947a, 1947b, 1957, 1965, 1966, 1966a, 1966b, 1968, 1969, 1969a, 1969b, 1970, 1970-1971, 1974, 1974a, 1977), and Spier (1953, 1955).

The best museum collections of Mohave artifacts are at the University of California Lowie Museum, Berkeley, and the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington.