

By: Alec Fike

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family:

Society name – Karuk/Karok, which means “up-stream” in the Karuk language, is the formal name given to the people because of the upstream locale in comparison to the Yurok. They however, do not have a proper ethnic name for themselves. (2,xx)

Language – Karuk/Karok (1),(2,p.xx)

Language Family – Hokan (3,p.131) (9,p.58)

1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): KYH(1)

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude):

Northwest California from Happy Camp to approximately Orleans (CA.) at the mouth of the Salmon River. (2,p.xx) (9,p.57)

(41°47'25.7"N 123°22'36.4"W,[4]

to 41°22'41.1"N 123°29'34.0"W,[5])

1.4 Brief history:

They live in the middle of the Klamath River with close contact with the Yurok to the north and the Hupa on the Trinity River. These 3 groups shared much of a usual culture for northwestern California at the time. Until 1850 and 1851 the Karuk had limited contact with whites but after the gold miners arrived much devastation followed.(10)

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors:

1.6 Ecology:

Lots of fish, due to the Karuk being located next to river. There were also bears, crows, foxes, and many trees which held acorns. (12)

The climate would range from burning hot in the summer to snow in the winter. (13)

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density

In 1770 the population was around 1,500. In 1851 it is believed to be around 2,700 and in 1910 it was between 750 and 800. The state of California identified 3,781 people of at least partial Karok ancestry in 1972. The mean village size was around 10 - 20 (9,p.58), (12)

2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s):

The major source of carbohydrate is acorns amongst the Karuk. (2,p.xxiii),(6,p.57) The acorns, after being cracked and dried can be made into a dough by mixing flour with water. This could then be used for bread, or boiled to make a mush. (12)

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources:

The main protein sources were eels and salmon which used to supply more than half of the diet of the Karuk people.(6,p.1-2) . Also Grizzly Bears were hunted with bows, sometimes alone by men. (2,p.90)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

Bow and Arrow widely used for hunting large game. (2,p.74,147,10) The bow was made of Yew wood and the arrows of Syringa wood with obsidian arrowheads. When engaged in conflict they would use wooden rods bound together with vines for protection as well.

They would also use noose snares and dogs to capture prey. (12)

2.4 Food storage:

2.5 Sexual division of production:

2.6 Land tenure:

2.7 Ceramics:

While no ceramics were used basket making is a major part of the culture. (11)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft?

The Yurok type of boat was a dugout canoe made from half a redwood log. Boats were sometimes sold to the Karuk and Hupa.(8)

Canoes appear to be commonly used for transportation along the rivers that the Karuk settlements are near. The Yurok boats were constructed of redwood logs and had square prows and round bottoms, which was useful in rushing waters with many rocks. (12)

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean adult height (m and f):

3.2 Mean adult weight (m and f):

4. Life History, mating, marriage

4.1 Age at menarche (f):

4.2 Age at first birth (m and f):

4.3 Completed family size (m and f):

4.4 Inter-birth-interval (f):

4.5 Age first marriage (m and f):

4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce:

4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously:

4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?:

Men would purchase wives, the better her family name the higher price and greater the honor for the man. Then are expected to help their sons to pay equally well for their wives. The men (of important families) would only give daughter to important families and at as high of a price as possible. At the price given it is expected that women be virgins at marriage. (2, XXII)

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

The Karok didn't permit any sexual irregularity as stated by Theodora Kroeber which one could assume would apply to homosexuality. (2,xxviii)

4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy):

4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these "other fathers" recognized?

4.14 What is the belief of the mother's role in procreation exactly? (e.g., "receptacle in which fetus grows")

4.15 Is conception believed to be an incremental process (i.e., semen builds up over time)?

4.16 Occurrence of sexual coercion, rape

4.17 Preferential category for spouse (e.g., cross cousin)

4.18 Do females enjoy sexual freedoms?

Female Karok were not allowed sexual freedom, in fact sexual promiscuity makes a woman seem tainted for marriage. When a woman gets married it is expected that she is a virgin. (2,XXII)

4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring

4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children?

4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females

4.22 Evidence for couvades

4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older)

4.24 Kin avoidance and respect?

4.24 Joking relationships?

4.25 Patterns of descent (e.g., bilateral, matrilineal) for certain rights, names or associations

The names were patrilineal. (10)

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

There are tales of consequences of incest and the actions people who have incest partake in, making them seem immoral. An example of this is a story of a wife who commits incest with her father-in-law and glues her son and daughter's eyes shut so they can't report what she has done. (2,p.xxviii)

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony?

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?

Children once they are "several" years old will be named however it is considered bad manners to speak someone's real name. Instead of speaking someone's given name they are usually called a nickname such as "coyote" or "old man". (12)

4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?)

4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)?

4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare:

4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:

4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing:

The in-group feuds were caused by physical injury or damage to property. While several generations before there was a large war between the Karok and the Tolowa from a Tolowa woman who fancied a Karok boy and went back to his village. This led to one of the Tolowa's tribesmen to come seeking payment for her. The Karok refused because the Tolowa followed on her own accord and wasn't taken against her will however later they did pay them. The Tolowa was then (before returning to his camp) killed for the money. (9,p.59)

4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations):

It is believed that around 1851 the population was app. 2000, and in 1910 it was 750. (9,p.58)

4.18 Cannibalism?

There appears to be no cannibalism from the Karok or any surrounding tribes.

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

Two or Three houses so around 10-20 people on average. (9,p.58)

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

There is no formal political system in either the villages or from the Karok as a whole. However the families that were considered to be rich were regarded as community leaders. (10) Wealth classes where money could buy a better wife which allows a better name that gives many perks. These include fishing spots and hunting rights which along with marriage rights (from money) breeds an informal wealth class system.(2,p.xxii)

5.4 Post marital residence:

In "The North American Indian" it indirectly mentions the later place of residence with this quote "but as a family consisted of parents, unmarried daughters, sons, daughters-in-law" and without a mention of any sons-in-law it is assumed that the women stays with the men and his parents after marriage. (9,p.58)

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

While most of the time there was peace between the tribes in the area, when engaged in conflict they would use vests made of elkhide to protect themselves and wooden rods bound together with vines for more active defense. (12)

5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):

5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:

5.8 Village and house organization:

5.9 Specialized village structures (mens' houses):

The camp includes a menstrual hut and sweathouses. Sweathouses are for men and boys (who are over 3).. (2,p.198)

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

They would sleep on the ground inside of huts. (2,p.223)

5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc:

5.12 Trade:

They used dentalium shells (which are tube-shaped, with hollow middles to be strung together) for money.(2,p.xxii) They called this "ishpuk". Common uses of this was for a boat or a wife.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

The "good" families would have a house in a sunny and central location in the village. They would also possess a very well-known name up and down stream to indicate members of a household. They would also own fishing rights at good spots along streams, hunting rights at certain favorable areas and stands of preferred acorn oaks and timber. (2,p.xxii)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

Karuk are known to hold ceremonial dances that can last for several days. (7)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

Shamans are commonly used for herbs and pain treatment. Anekiavan (doctors) are also noted for being sucking and herb or root doctors. The herb or root doctors being called Anavukiyêhe who specialized in medicine and formula. The other type the Patunukôt specializing sucking. (2,p.100)

6.2 Stimulants:

Tobacco is widely used by the Karuk and is used widely enough to have published works on its complexities in Karuk society[see Tobacco Among The Karuk Indians by John P. Harrington] and stories such as "Bat Smokes". (2,p.23)

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

The girls' puberty ritual is a dance where the girl stands in a line with a singer in the front, dancing. The girl is then put in the middle and the group dances around her clockwise while holding hands. One man then comes into the circle with the girl and takes hold of her from behind, turning her around as they dance. Then they perform the War Dance and the young men stand in a line. The girl then wears bluejay feathers over her forehead and eyes. (2,p98)

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation):

According to a Yurok Indian Robert Spott the creation myths of the Yurok and Karuk are as follows. "At the Karok center of the world, Katimin, and at Weitspus, the Yurok center, and Creator Gods set about and completed the creation of their respective worlds. When the ground was planted with trees and flowering plants, the air and marshes stocked with birds, the streams with fish, the land with animals, they made the people. Upon the emergence of the people into their world, these same Gods taught them the way they were to follow, the rules and the customs and beliefs by which the way should be forever maintained. They taught the people as well the language they were to speak. The way had proved good, the language intrinsic to it." Kroeber (the author) concluded that the Kurok and Yurok arrived at the river around the same time. (2, p.xxiv)

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games):

Music in Karok society is mainly produced via the Flute. Flutes are made out of Alder Wood which they try to make it just long enough to reach from the fingers to the point of the shoulder. They did this because they said when it was that long it would sound good. This was held like a normal flute in today's society. They have songs named after Coyote, Acorn, Lizard, Lamprey Eel, Grizzly Bear, and others. There are stories that men would play the flute in front of a girl's house and whomever was best would marry her. It is also believed that two mountains northeast of Katimin (Karuk Camp) who, were once human and played the flute against each other. (2, p.97) Singing is considered to have magical power when used in association with ceremonial dances, as an interpolation in the recitation of myths and magical formulas. The recitation of myths was of major ritual importance. (10)

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

In Shamans, Males usually used herbs in treatments while Females more commonly "sucked out" the pain. (2,p.100)

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs:

If an old or sick person is neglected by a relative, then after that (old or sick) person dies, the one that neglected him/her is may become ill or fall into a fire. (2,p.267) If this does happen after a person neglects a dead relative then an Eim (Shaman) can't help because it is the dead's soul thinking about being neglected. The only person who can help is an Anekiava (Medicine-Maker/Formulist). (2,p.267-

268) The bodies of dead were buried with observance of taboos such as mourners were forbidden to engage in hunting, gathering, basket making, travel, sex, or gambling. After five days, it was believed that the spirit went to the sky and in the sky there was a special place reserved for rich people and ceremonial leaders. (10)

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

It was believed that naming a dead person was a serious insult, if done the person had to pay the survivors. (10)

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

Women wear 3 tattoo marks on their chins because in mythology of the Crow releasing Coyote from wood he was going to make the Crow beautiful but couldn't make him red because he had already used it all up on the heads of a woodpecker and on women. (2,p174)

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

Haircuts for women were commonly long and is what was considered to be attractive. In the Karuk story of "Anhush" the description of two women Anhush spots are described as "two young women with long hair and handsome".(2,p.18) This shows that to Karuk long hair is considered a good trait for women. Later in the story Anhush returns to find them cutting their hair because of their brothers' deaths. (2,p.20) This means that hair styles were important to honor dead ancestors.

In the story of Patapirihak long hair is used as a symbol of reaching adulthood as seen from this quote "He had grown up, and his hair was very long but he never cared for ("knew") girls. (2,p.29)

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment:

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system:

8.2 Sororate, levirate:

8.3 Other notable kinship typology, especially cross-cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

9. Other interesting cultural features (list them):

Numbered references

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