

1. Description

1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Maidu

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

1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): They lived along various streams and tributaries of the Feather River in the area that is now Butte County, California.

1.4 Brief history: First contact with Euro-Americans in the 1830s brought diseases that killed many of our people. The results of the gold rush of 1849 were devastating to the native peoples. The US Congress secreted away the 18 Treaties made with the California Tribes. The miners and settlers coming into the area led to predation on the native's traditional food sources resulting in starvation. The new State of California passed many discriminatory laws which allowed raids by slave traders; legal indenture; a policy of deportation to reservations; and finally, extermination of those that would not be corralled and herded to the Round Valley Reservation, in 1863.

1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: They have created schools and outreach programs for the Maidu

1.6 Ecology:

1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density: The Maidu Indians lived in 74 villages which stretched roughly from the Nevada state line, over the mountains, and down into the low Sacramento Valley foothills, in one place far enough west to include the Marysville Buttes. The County's where the Maidu lived are, Lassen, Butte, Plumas, Yuba, Sutter, Sierra, Nevada, Placer and El Dorado. The Valley Maidu Indians established permanent villages but also moved among the Sierra foothills and the Sacramento Valley to exploit seasonal ripening and the availability of game. They called themselves "Nisenan", a word meaning "the people" in their language. Valley Nisenan built sunken 10-15 foot diameter dome-shaped homes with earth or tule roofs. Larger villages, which could number up to 500 people, included sweatshouses where men talked, sang and sweated away their concerns. Fifty foot diameter ceremonial dance houses and acorn granaries were also common. The villages faced south so that the Maidu could benefit from the constant rays of the warm sun. They always set up their villages near fresh running water, usually by a nearby stream or river.



2. Economy

2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): The list of animals not considered food was small. Foremost was the dog, regarded as virtually poisonous by most northern Californians; then the wolf and coyote. The buzzard is the only bird not eaten. Reptiles and amphibians were also avoided. Invertebrates were freely eaten; worms, the larva of yellow jackets and other insects, grasshoppers, crickets, locusts, and fresh-water mussels were relished. Of fish, the salmon came first, in the region of the larger streams, and next the lamprey eel. In the higher mountains trout were nearly the only fish available. Deer were often hunted by companies of men. They were driven over cliffs, or past hunters hidden near the runways. Drives of this type were undertaken with prayers and magical observances, and strict taboos were in force for the families of the hunters. Rabbits were taken in long nets. Birds were killed by nooses and nets. Quail will often follow even a low fence rather than fly over it, particularly along their runways. A fine noose and bait at occasional gates usually trapped a bird. Although the Maidu were hunters and gatherers and did not farm, like many other California tribes they practiced grooming of their gathering grounds, with fire as a primary tool for this purpose, and tended local groves of oak trees to maximize production of acorns, which was their principal dietary staple. Besides acorns, which provided dietary starch and fat, the Maidu lived in an environment rich in plant and animal life, much of it edible, and they supplemented their acorn diet with edible roots (for which they were nicknamed "Digger Indians" by European immigrants), fish from the many streams and rivers, and other plant and animal species. The seeds from the many flowering plants as well as the corms from many wild flowers provided much of the sustenance to the People of the area. Wildlife of every sort was also utilized within a spiritual reference. Deer, elk, antelope as well as all the multitude of smaller game were utilized on a regular basis. Fish were a prime source of protein starting with the multi run salmon then relying on the local indigenous fishes that supplied food the year round. The staple food of the Nisenan was the nut of the oak tree, the acorn. Valley and Blue oak acorns were favorites and plentiful, but the Black oak acorns were prized and often traded down from the high foothills. Acorns were very nutritious and could be stored. Acorns stored during high yield years were especially helpful during times when the oaks failed to produce.

Before eating the acorns, the bitter tannic acid needed to be removed. One method required removing the shell and grinding the meats between stones. The meal was then put into a leaf lined hole in the ground. Water was poured over the meal several times. The water would drain away taking the tannic acid with it. This process is called leaching. Another method of leaching was to bury the unshelled acorns in mud for several months to one year. The acorns were then shelled and ground into meal. The meal was added to a basket of water. Hot rocks from the fire were added to cook the mixture. It was necessary to stir the rocks to avoid burning the basket. The result was acorn mush. Vegetables could be added for flavor. An alternative to making acorn mush was to mix the acorn meal with water and bake it like a pancake, on a hot rock.

2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: They ate lots of acorns for their starch and fat.

2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?:

2.4 Food storage: The abundance of acorns made it possible for the Maidu to store large quantities for harder times, and they used their basket-making skills to construct above-ground acorn granaries.

2.5 Sexual division of production:

2.6 Land tenure: Land as such was not really owned. Generally, its use was free and common to all members of the community. Fish holes were sometimes owned and fences for deer drives could be erected in particular areas only by certain families. The individual hunter could search for game and pursue them without restriction in the entire territory of the community in which he was a member.

2.7 Ceramics:

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns:

2.9 Food taboos:

2.10 Canoes/watercraft? The valley Maidu navigated on tule

balsas, log rafts, or flat, square-ended dugout canoes. The use of all three types by one people is remarkable. It is perhaps to be ascribed to the fact that the employment of boats was only sporadic, in the crossing of streams or hunting of birds. In the foothills, streams are too rapid to be navigable. In the high valleys of the northern Sierra a canoe was occasionally serviceable. It was made of a fallen pine or cedar burned to suitable length, and hollowed with ignition pitch, which was checked with handfuls of damp earth. This dugout was rough and blunt ended. It was either poled or paddled.

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?:

4.9 Inheritance patterns:

4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict:

4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:

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?

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

4.26 Incest avoidance rules

4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? Maidu marriage customs exemplify the variations of levels of culture that coincide with habitat in different altitudes in California. In the Sacramento Valley the suitor remained at home and sent a representative with shell money. The price was displayed, discussed by the girl's family, and if considered insufficient, returned. It is said that the girl's consent was usually secured, or that at any rate she was likely to be advised of the offer before it was made.

In the hills, little or no money passed. The young man indirectly declared his suit by repeatedly visiting the girl's home and pointedly engaging in conversation on indifferent topics with her father. Having given due notice in this way, he went hunting or fishing, regularly bringing his catch to the girl's home, without however, uttering a formal declaration. Acceptance of the gifts encouraged him to continue. After he had sufficiently shown his capacity and good will, he visited once more. A separate bed was now provided for him and the bride, apparently without any words having yet been spoken on the matter, and the couple were considered married.

The mountain people dispensed even with this indirect and unspecified prepayment. The suitor merely visited in the evening and remained. If the girl did not want him, she sat up all night, if necessary. Otherwise he joined her. The only thing that resembled payment was that the young man remained with his bride's parents for some months, hunting and working for them.

Among the hill and mountain people, where no real payments had been made, divorce was merely a matter of the wish of either party. In the valley a man could return his wife and claim his purchase price if she were unfaithful or otherwise definitely objectionable.

4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name? Maidu names generally had a meaning, but this was often trivial, sometimes obscene, and usually of obscure reference. The name of a dead relative was generally bestowed on a child by the time it was 2 years old. Often an additional nickname came into vogue. At the time of their initiation, the boys received a new name, which was that of a dead member of the society. In the hills women were said to have received new names, or at least new designations in the family, during adolescence, after the birth of the first child, and as old age began to be reached. Among all the Maidu there seems to have been an inclination to terminate the taboo which lay on the names of the dead, by bestowing these names upon a near member of the family at the first opportunity after a year or so had elapsed.

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:

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

4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size:

5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):

5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): The political organization of the Maidu was such that a group owned certain territory in common, acted largely as a unit, but actually resided in several settlements. The area claimed by each village community was very definitely known and sometimes marked. There is no trace of any system of social or political classification other than the village communities, nor of any fictitious or esoteric kinship groups.

5.4 Post marital residence:

5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense):

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):

5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere?

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

5.12 Trade: The valley Maidu traded considerably with the Wintun. They received beads - that is, money - above all else. The beads were counted by tens, not measured, although handled on strings. From the valley and hills the beads flowed into the high Sierra, together with salmon, some salt, and nuts of the digger pine which grows only at moderate elevations. The return was that of a hunting people: bows and arrows and deerskins, sugar-pine nuts, and perhaps some other local food products. Wild tobacco from the border district of Honey Lake appears to have been traded in all directions.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies?

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR:

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): The Maidu shaman operated on "pains" or disease objects, but his power rested less on control of these than on his possession of guardian spirits. The spirits are named *kakini* (*kukini*, *gak'ini*), which is the same word as is applied to the ancient spirits or mythical divinities who are impersonated in the Kuksu ceremonials. The *kakini* acquired by the shaman may be animals, but more frequently are mountains, rocks, lakes, or waterfalls; that is to say, the spirits inhabiting such geographical features and known by the names of these. Among the northern Maidu the novice undergoes a period of instruction at the hands of older shamans; who, without being organized into a body, appear to be actuated by a spirit of professional helpfulness. It should be stated, however, that the first communication with spirits is believed to be excessively and often seriously distressing. The novice becomes very ill, and the older shaman's activities may, in the native view, be as much a treatment of sickness as assistance extended to the prospective colleague.

The hill Maidu make less mention of animals as guardians. Their shamans communicate with spirits as such. It would seem that these are sometimes the ghosts of kinsmen, since there is a distinct tendency for shamanism to be hereditary in this division. Female doctors are recognized by the hill Maidu, although their ability is usually less than that of men. There is a period of preparation by means of dancing and singing in the dance house, apparently under the supervision of older shamans. At this time the novice gradually comes to be on terms of greater friendship with his spirits, and many other visitors from the supernatural world are believed to attend. The hill Maidu distinguish between doctors proper, that is, shamans who suck out "pains", called *yomi*, and others who merely dream and are

known as *netdi*. Of course sucking shamans also have dream power. They may therefore be regarded as a class which has attained to higher faculties than the dreamers. This distinction between the clairvoyant and the curing shaman seems to exist among all of the Maidu, as in fact through most of northern California. The pains sucked out are quite various, according to the hill Maidu belief: bits of wood, stone, or manufactured objects, bones or teeth, insects and worms of various kinds, and the like. They are exhibited - if animals, always still alive - and then buried. The hill Maidu doctors held public competitions. They gather in the dance house from long distances. Each doctor, having previously fasted and prepared, dances for himself. The clown is the leader of the dance. Any touching of a competitor; either with the body or a held object, is forbidden. The hands are held against the breast and then thrown forcibly forward as if warding off or sending out mysterious influences. After a time the weaker contestants begin to be taken with seizures and pains, some bleeding from the nose, some rolling on the floor. Others follow, and such as have recovered from the first shock busy themselves sucking out the cause of the later victim's succumbing. As the number of competitors decreases and the survivors are those of the intensest power, the excitement and the imaginative faculties of the audience as well as participants increase. Flames and light are seen about the few who are still contending, and they, to demonstrate their strength, cause lizards or mice to appear and disappear. Finally the contest narrows to a pair, and when one yields the lone survivor is victor of the occasion. It is said that women have been known to win, although as a rule their milder powers cause them to be among the first to be taken ill.

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): As to disposal of the dead; burial seems to have been the rule. The hill people showed the most frequent inclination toward cremation. In the valley, burning is said to have been resorted to only for persons who died away from home, ashes being more easily transported than a corpse. The mountain division always buried. Interment was in a flexed position, the body being roped in a skin, that of a bear if possible. Personal property was broken and buried with the corpse, or burned. The house was usually burned down. This was particularly likely to be done for people of note. Men shortened their hair for the death of a few of the nearest relatives, women for a larger number. A widow cut or burned her hair off close and covered it with pitch, which was never deliberately removed. The hill people, for the death of a husband or wife, put on a mourning necklace which served as a sort of badge of participation in the next five years' anniversaries. The hair cut in mourning is said by the Maidu to have been secreted, not worked into belts or ornaments, as among certain tribes both of northern and southern California. This statement is confirmed by the absence of any article of human hair in museum collections from the Maidu region.

The Maidu practiced a great annual ceremony in honor of the dead. This rite was made among all the tribes of the Sierra Nevada and throughout southern California, the Maidu being the most northerly extension. There appears to be no connection between the mourning anniversary and the Kuksu religion.

The mourning anniversary is best known from the hill Maidu, who call it *ustu*. It was held in early autumn, about September or October, often on the cemetery site or near it. Since the confusion of the burning offered favorable opportunities for successful attack by foes, a clear rising ground was usually chosen, in which, moreover, the soil was soft enough for interments. On this burning ground was erected an open enclosure up to 50 or 100 feet in diameter and consisting of a brush fence a yard or two high, following the line of a circle of earth that had been heaped up a few inches. There was always an entrance to the west, and often one to the east also. Each community, whether consisting of one or several settlements, appears to have had only one *ustu* ground, which was used by successive generations.

The course of the rites was as follows:

On the first evening the actual mourners visit the burning ground about sunset, cry for a time, and sprinkle meal on the graves.

On the next day the enclosure is repaired and put in order and poles 15, 20, or more feet long are prepared for the offerings that are to be burned. A vast accumulation of valuables of all sorts has long been made for this occasion. A widow, especially on her first burning, is likely to have spent her whole time since her husband's death in the manufacture of baskets that are to be consumed.

Each family prepares its own poles, which in the evening are planted to the north and south of the fire, in sets of about half a dozen. So far as possible each pole is strung from top to near the ground with objects of one kind. Larger articles and quantities of food are piled at the base of the poles. The fire is then lighted by an old man. A period of bargaining often follows, objects that are to be consumed being exchanged or even sold. When this confusion has quieted down, the director delivers an oration of the customary Californian kind, carefully instructing the people in what they perfectly well know what to do. Thereupon wailing, crying, and singing begin, to continue throughout the night. Exclamations of pity for the dead are constantly uttered and bits of food or other small objects are from time to time thrown on the fire. Each group of mourners seems to think of its own dead and to sing its own songs independently of the others. It is the occasion that is joint, and there is nothing in the nature of communal acts.

About the first signs of dawn the poles are lifted down and the objects striped from then and thrown into the fire. The old people sway and wail with redoubled vigor, and intense excitement is shown by all. As it begins to be light, and the last of the goods are being burned, the climax of grief is reached, and old women have to be restrained from throwing themselves into the fire.

The alleged purpose of the ceremony is to supply the dead. The amount of property destroyed must have been immense by aboriginal standards. As late as 1901, 150 poles of baskets, American clothing, and the like, were consumed at a single Maidu burning.

When the fire has finally died down the participants are almost prostrated with fatigue and reaction. After a short rest the director orates again, instructing the people to eat, gamble, and make merry, which they proceed to do for a day or more. Such an aftermath of celebration is a regular part of the ceremony everywhere in California.

The northern valley people called the ceremony *dong-kato* and apart from the restrictions which the girl herself underwent, the ritual consisted only of singing for about five nights. In the hills a dance called *wulu* accompanies the singing. The girl was painted with five vertical lines on each cheek, one of which was erased each morning. With a companion, both having their heads covered, she was stood in a ring of pine needles which was set on fire and the girls were told to escape from it. After this she was washed by women in a sand pit like that used for leaching acorns. The *wulu* dance commenced after dark. Men looked on and women took part. They stood in

a circle holding hands. They wore no ornaments. In the center of the ring were several old women, who swung their arms - in which they held a skin, a string of beads, or something similar - alternately up to the right and left, while the circle of younger women and girls, revolving either way, swung their clasped hands in and out to the same rhythm. After a number of hours the dance might cease, but old women continued singing.

6.4 Other rituals:

6.5 Myths (Creation): The earth was believed to be round and surrounded by water. In fact it floated on this sea, held by ropes that had been stretched by the Creator. A shaking of these ropes made earthquakes. 4 ropes hold the earth for the valley and foothill groups, east, west, north, and south. The mountain Maidu tell of 5 ropes, our cardinal directions and to the northwest, an influence from their northern neighbors.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): The guessing game employed the pair of marked and unmarked bones usual in all of central California. In the valley the game was for 8 counters, in the hills and mountains for either 10 or 16. The marked bone was called *sulu*, the plain one *hinduku*; but in guessing, the exclamations *tep* and *we* were used to refer to them. In general, the unmarked bone is guessed for, but there existed a great variety of cries and gestures indicative of the choice made. A pair of players shuffle the bones and thus offer four possible combinations. A doubly wrong guess loses two counters, a wholly correct one wins the play. If the guess is half correct, one counter is paid and the divined player surrenders his bones. The next guess, on his partner's shuffling, determines whether the two of them resume or whether they lose the play to their opponents. The flute is a straight tube of elder wood with four holes. It was blown for pleasure and in courtship. The musical bow is a device definitely reported from the Maidu and Yokuts, but probably shared by these peoples with a number of others. Among the Maidu it was sometimes an original hunting bow that was tapped or plucked for amusement, one end being held in the mouth. At other times the bow was made for the purpose, and considered a shaman's means of conversation with the spirits.

The Maidu used all three central Californian forms of the rattle. The shaman's instrument was of *Attacus* cocoons containing gravel. The split-stick rattle went with dances, especially of the *Kuksu* organization. The deer-hoof rattle was particularly associated with the girl's adolescence ceremony, as is the case in the greater part of California.

The Maidu were exemplary basket makers, weaving highly detailed and useful baskets in sizes ranging from thimble-sized to huge ones ten or more feet in diameter. The stitches on some of these baskets are so fine that you need a magnifying glass to see them. In addition to closely woven, watertight baskets for cooking, they made large storage baskets, bowls, shallow trays, traps, cradles, hats and seed beaters. To make these baskets they used dozens of different kinds of wild plant stems, barks, roots and leaves. Some of the more common were fern roots, red bark of the redbud, white willow twigs and tule roots, hazel twigs, yucca leaves, brown marsh grass roots and sedge roots. By combining these different kinds of plants, they were able to make geometric designs on their baskets in red, black, white, brown or tan.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR:

6.8 Missionary effect:

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: What we call the soul, the Maidu named heart. The northern valley people believe that a dead person's heart lingers near the body for several days. It then journeys to every spot which the living person had visited, retracing each of his steps and reenacting every deed performed in life. This accomplished, the spirit seeks a mysterious cavern in the Marysville Buttes, where for the first time it eats spirit food and is washed. From the Marysville Buttes the spirit ascends to the sky land, flower land, or spirit land, as it is variously called.

The hill residents tell of the same journey traveled by the dead. But these reach the abounding sky land - "valley above" - by going east along the path of the sun, instead of to the Marysville Buttes. The Milky Way is also pointed out as the road of the spirits.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

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

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint:

7.2 Piercings: Ornaments were worn in the ear chiefly by women, in the nose only by men. Girls had their lobes pierced in the adolescence dance. Where the *Kuksu* society existed, the perforation of the septum occurred more ceremoniously in the initiation of boys. Ear ornaments were pieces of haliotis on thongs; or more characteristically, incised bird bones or polished sticks, with or without feather tufts or shell pendants. The horizontal nose ornament was a feather, a pair of feathers, or a feathered stick.

7.3 Haircut: Hair was most frequently trimmed with a glowing coal, but a flint edge bearing on a stick is also mentioned. Combs of porcupine tails, pine cones, and pine needles were in use. Only hair on the face was pulled out.

7.4 Scarification: The Maidu are on the fringe of the tattooing tribes. In the northern valley the women wore three to seven vertical lines on the chin, plus a diagonal line from each mouth corner toward the outer end of the eye. The process was one of fine close cuts with an obsidian splinter, as among the Shasta, with wild nutmeg charcoal rubbed in. For men there existed no universal fashion: the commonest mark was a narrow stripe upward from the root of the nose. As elsewhere in California, lines and dots were not uncommon on breast, arms, and hands of men and women; but no standardized pattern seems to have evolved except the female face.

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): Maidu dress was similarly scant in the summer heat of the valley and the snowy winter of the mountains. A deer or puma skin with the hair side next to the body, a rabbit skin blanket, or a pair of skins sewn together, was worn as a mantle at need; but there was no true garment. The mountaineers are said to have donned grass-stuffed moccasins for travel in the snow. The calf was protected by a deerskin legging, the hair side inward, tied above the knee and wound to the leg with a thong. The moccasin was of the usual California variety: unsoled, single piece, seamed up the front, and coming well above the ankle. The netted cap completed the costume of Maidu men. It was indispensable in ceremony, through allowing headpieces to be skewered into the contained hair; and was convenient in many occupations, although we are uncertain whether it was worn habitually. Women's clothing was constituted essentially of two shredded bark aprons, preferably of maple, the front one smaller and tucked between the legs when the wearer sat down. Grass may also have been used, and old women occasionally went naked. Outdoors in winter, women added moccasins and a skin robe.

The Maidu calendar recognizes of 12 lunations with more or less descriptive epithets. It opens in spring, appears to contain no clear reference to the solstices, and to possess no fixed points. There is no mention of a device for correction, and it may be presumed that the Maidu dispensed with any, leaving a lunation unnamed whenever their moons ran too far ahead of the year as determined by seasonal events.

TABLE 5.—NORTHERN MAIDU CALENDAR.

Month.	Valley reckoning.	Foothill reckoning.	Mountain reckoning.
March.....	Shawi, Sha-kono; flowers.	Kono.....	Bom-tetno ("trail sit along").
April.....	Laila; grass.....	Win-uti ("black oaks tassel").	Kono.
May.....	Kon-moko; seeds, fish, geese; <i>Hesi</i> .	Tem-diyoko; fawns.	Kulokbepine ("old women —?").
June.....	Neng-kaukat ("big summer").	Nem-diyoko ("big month"?).	
July.....	Tumi; smoky.....	Kau-tson ("ground burn").	
August.....	Tem-simi; acorns ripen.	Eslakum ("middle").	
September.....	Kum-menim She-meni; acorns gathered.	Mat-meni ("acorn-bread").	Se-meni ("seed").
October.....	Shahwodo; acorns cached; <i>Hesi</i> .	Bapaboka.....	Tem-tsampauto ("small tree freeze").
November.....	Yapakto; winter divided.	Bo-lye ("trail —?").	Tetem-tsampauta ("large tree freeze").
December.....	Omhincholi; ice lasts all day.	Sap.....	Kanaipino ("under burn").
January.....	Yeponi ("ceremonial initiate") or Bom-pene ("two trails").	Into.....	Bom-hintsuli ("trail squint").
February.....	Kaka-kano; pattering showers.	Omi-hintsuli ("squint rock").	Bo-ekmen ("trail breaks open").

It seems that the mountain people actually counted only nine moons, leaving those of summer nameless. It is clear that the reckoning in valley, hills, and mountains has diverged, names originally descriptive having become crystallized rather arbitrarily as regards season. This appears from the fact that month names containing the same element appear in the three regions not only at diverse times of the year but in variable order. Thus:

	Valley.	Hills.	Mountains.
Kono, kon.....	May.....	March.....	April.
Nem-, neng-, "large".....	June.....	June.....	
Tem-, "small?".....	August.....	May.....	October.
Se-meni, "seed".....	September.....		September.
-hintsuli, "squint".....	December.....	February.....	January.
Bo-, bom-, "trail".....	January.....	November.....	January, February, March.

Four seasons were recognized by the Maidu, counted as commencing with the first appearance of the phenomena referred to. Two lists from the northwestern foothills corroborate each other, and run in the spirit of the month calendar.

Spring: *Yo-meni*, flowers.

Summer: *Kaukati*, earth, dust, or *ihilaki*, dry.

Autumn: *Se-meni*, seeds, or *mat-meni*, acorn bread.

Winter: *Ko-meni*, snow.

In line with this series is a set of four festivals or *weda* mentioned by the hill Maidu: the *Hoktom*, an open-air affair in spring; the *Ilakum* in the dry season, about July; the *Ushu* or *Ushtimo* around September (this is the "burning" or mourning anniversary); and the *Yakai* near Christmas.

The most characteristic Maidu baskets are coiled. The materials are peeled willow and peeled or unpeeled redbud. The foundation always three-rod, the edge finished by mere wrapping. Normally there are only two colors, a brownish red on a white or neutral background which turns soft buff with age. Rather rarely, a black, produced by burying pine root fibers in charcoal and mud, was substituted for the redbud.

Patterns are comparatively simple, and show more feeling for the appearance of the basket as a whole than for intricacy of detail. They are most frequently disposed in diagonals, either parallel or zigzag. Horizontal or circumferential patterns are distinctly less common than in the Pomo- Yuki- Wintun region, and vertical or radiating ones are rare. The Maidu use no feathers or pendants in their

basketry, and know no oval forms or constricted necks. Their ware is self-sufficient and artistically as pleasing as any in California, but in elaborateness falls short of that of the Yukots, and especially that of the Pomo.



Figure 4: Large coiled basket. Source: Bidwell Mansion State Historic Park collection, Catalog No. 330-19-1



Figure 5: Maidu man with rabbit-skin robe. Source: Smithsonian Institution

47



The woven rabbit-skin blanket, most highly prized for bed covering, but also worn on occasion, is common to California, the Great Basin and the Southwest. The skins were cut into strips a half inch or more wide, which were left uncured. As they dried, they curled or twisted on themselves, leaving the soft hair side everywhere exposed. The strips were then knotted into a long furry line. This was wound back and forth between two stakes to form a vertical plane of horizontal warps. Into this the continuous double weft, two lines

of the same material, was twisted alternately up and down, and knitted to the outermost warp on each turn. The completed blanket was thick, soft and warm, while the hide strips gave it great durability.

The Maidu are known to have followed the common California custom of working lumber with horn wedges and fire. Larger trees were utilized only after they had fallen, and were burned into lengths.

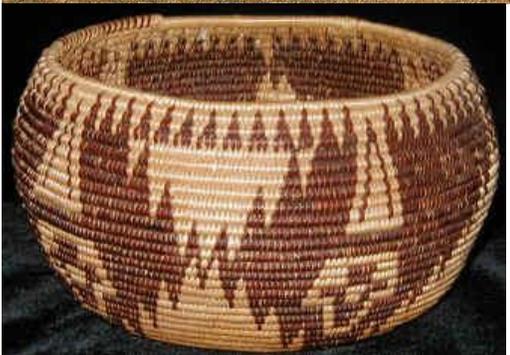
For knives and arrowheads the Maidu used obsidian obtained in trade, apparently from the north, and local flint and basaltlike stones.

The latter material answered for a tolerable knife; a good arrow point was possible only in obsidian or flint. A flint mine in a cave at Table Mountain near Oroville was sacred. Offerings - beads or dried meat are specified - were thrown in; only as much material was carried away at each visit as could be detached at one blow; and the operator crawled out backward.

Large blades of obsidian, single or double pointed, were probably not knives, but shaman's paraphernalia. All the evidence from central California points to this use: the Maidu add that such pieces were worn hung from the neck.

The Maidu pipe was normally of wood - apparently a short tube somewhat tapered to the mouth end - the generic Sierra type, as contrasted with the longer stemmed and bulbous bowled form of the Pomo. The stone pipe was similar, though rarer, and used in religion - by shamans or the ceremonial clown.

The common currency was the Pomo disk bead, transmitted by the Wintun, and perhaps coming from the south also. The beads from the west often were traded unsmoothed, so that the Maidu performed much of their own money polishing, but the clamshells came to them broken and strung, not as wholly raw material. Baked magnesite cylinder beads also came from the west, but completely finished and very precious. Haliotis was another valuable obtained from the Wintun, but went into ear ornament and necklace pendants, scarcely serving as currency. Dentalia, of unrecorded source, reached the Maidu occasionally. They are said to have been valued highly, but appear to have been too rare to be used as standard money.



Numbered references

1. <http://www.maidu.com/index.html>
2. http://www.pennvalleycoc.org/html/the_maidu_indians.html
3. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maidu>
4. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4x85x22w#page-6>
5. <http://thefolios.net/gerould/index.html>

6. <http://www.worldwisdom.com/public/viewpdf/default.aspx?article-title=Maidu.pdf>
7. http://www.roseville.ca.us/parks/parks_n_facilities/facilities/maidu_indian_museum/classes_camps_n_talks.asp