

1. Description

- 1.1 Name of society, language, and language family: Language of the United States, Algiic, Yurok
- 1.2 ISO code (3 letter code from ethnologue.com): YUR
- 1.3 Location (latitude/longitude): Northwest California Pacific Coast, lower 42 miles of the Klamath River, remaining Yurok today live with Hoopa on reservations in Humboldt and Klamath. Latitude/Longitude of Yurok Reservation 41-22'20"N/123-53'-30"W, Ancestral territory ~41-31'/-125-57'
- 1.4 Brief history: Few archaeological investigations indicate presence in late prehistoric. No known historical contact with Europeans before 1775 by the Spanish. Contact with fur traders in 1827 and gold prospectors 1850-51. There was much violence between the Yurok and Anglo-Europeans when they first settled in 1852. After 1855 the Yurok were protected by the government.
- 1.5 Influence of missionaries/schools/governments/powerful neighbors: Today the Yurok share the Hoopa Valley reservations in Humboldt and Klamath with the Hupa.
- 1.6 Ecology: Water people, close the both the coast and river. Hills back from river used for gathering and hunting but the Klamath River was their principle source of food.
- 1.7 Population size, mean village size, home range size, density 2,500-3,100 pre-contact, 54 villages, approximately 1.24-1.53 people per square mile.

2. Economy

- 2.1 Main carbohydrate staple(s): Acorns, wild grass seeds, bulbs, water lilies, and salt was extracted from seaweed.
- 2.2 Main protein-lipid sources: Salmon (nepu' literally "that which is eaten"), Sea-Lions, Whale, shellfish, eels, Surf fish and smelt but no other ocean fish. Yurok were water people but not sea-faring. Deer hunted with dogs.
- 2.3 Weapons: Bow and arrow, blowguns?: Angled hook spears, throw lines, bow and arrows, harpoons, nets
- 2.4 Food storage: Yurok families often had a ton of dried salmon hanging from the house rafters. They also stored the dried salmon in baskets, separating each layer of fish with aromatic tree leaves; they believed the leaves "kept out the moths" (moth larvae would have eaten the fish), although the leaves may have added flavor to the dried fish.
- 2.5 Sexual division of production: Both men and women could be shamans. Men hunted, fished, and woodworkers. Women gathered shellfish, and plant foods, and collected firewood. Children collected acorns, berries, roots, and potatoes. Wealthy men made ceremonial regalia and some specialized in boat making.
- 2.6 Land tenure: Communal property (acorn groves) and sacred grounds, claimed rights to certain water for whaling and fishing by individuals, groups of men, or by the town as a whole. Some 54 well defined territorial bounded villages claimed by Yurok. Land was inherited within family groups.
- 2.7 Ceramics: Basketry was major craft not ceramics. The Yurok were also skilled workers of Redwood.
- 2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) sharing patterns: Yurok were obsessed with accumulating and holding wealth. They often sued and demanded tribute from fellow Yuroks and neighboring tribes for different infractions.
- 2.9 Food taboos:
- 2.10 Canoes/watercraft? Preferred canoeing over other forms of transportation, river used as major highway rather than the many trails, which is why the Yurok were much better acquainted with the Karok and the Hupa who lived up river rather than the tribes up the coast. Used to gather mussels and hunt sea-lions.

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): age differential at first marriage is 3.5 years
- 4.6 Proportion of marriages ending in divorce: Divorce could be instigated by either party however if the man initiated the divorce the man would have to refund the payment for his wife. If the wife was the instigator her family would compensate the man. If the female wanted the children the father would have to be compensated. The most common reason for divorce was the woman becoming sterile.
- 4.7 Percent marriages polygynous, percent males married polygynously: Polygyny was not found among the Yurok
- 4.8 Bride purchase (price), bride service, dowry?: Bride price and bride service. Bride service found in half marriages. Social status in the community depended on the price paid for the bride.
- 4.9 Inheritance patterns: Two types of marriage: "full-marriage" and "half-marriage". In a full marriage Yurok married couples lived with the husband's family, with their children having primary affiliation with this house. In half marriages men of lower wealth status maintained permanent residence with the wife's family and paid half a bride price and worked for the father-in-law, with the children subsequently linked to that family (matrilineal). A man's property went mostly to his sons and the daughters received some share.
- 4.10 Parent-offspring interactions and conflict: Men taught boys to be good hunters and warriors and the women taught their daughters to be diligent housewives. Children were expected to be always merry and alert.
- 4.11 Homosexual activities, social attitudes towards homosexuals:
- 4.12 Pattern of exogamy (endogamy): Exogamy was necessary in smaller villages while endogamy was maintained in the larger villages. 7.5 percent in home town, 35.6 percent in other towns in home district. 34.9 percent in one of two adjacent districts, 29.4 in all

remaining Yurok districts. 34 Yurok men married alien wives and 22 Yurok women recorded marrying alien men. The majority of these alien marriages were half marriages.

- 4.13 What is the belief of the role of males in conception; is paternity partible? Are these “other fathers” recognized? Sex with women is regarded with ambivalence, sex is unclean, men and women sleep separately (usually men in the sweathouse and women in the family house).
- 4.14 What is the belief of the mother’s role in procreation exactly? (e.g., “receptacle in which fetus grows”) sex is a means for procreation only not for pleasure. Women are there to bear the child.
- 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? No sexual freedom
- 4.19 Evidence of giving gifts to extramarital partners or extramarital offspring
- 4.20 If mother dies, whose raises children? If Full marriage the father, if half the mothers family
- 4.21 Adult sex ratio: number of adult males divided by number of (reproductive) females 1.05 105 females for every 100 males including children
- 4.22 Evidence for couvades
- 4.23 Different distinctions for potential fathers (e.g., lesser/younger vs. major/older) Wealthy young vs. poor 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 Depending on the type of marriage. Full marriage went to fathers house and half marriages went to mothers family.
- 4.26 Incest avoidance rules
- 4.27 Is there a formal marriage ceremony? The bride's dress may be woven in symbolic colors: white for the east, blue for the south, yellow (orange) for the west; and black for the north. Turquoise and silver jewelry are worn by both the bride and the groom in addition to a silver concho belt. Jewelry is considered a shield against evils including hunger, poverty and bad luck. Washing of bride and groom, wedding prayers, and celebration.
- 4.28 In what way(s) does one get a name, change their name, and obtain another name?
- 4.29 Is marriage usually (or preferred to be) within community or outside community? (m/f difference?) Marriage is more or less up to the ones being married
- 4.30 Are marriages arranged? Who arranges (e.g., parents, close kin)? Kroeber notes that the Yurok married "whom and where they pleased." Exogamy was necessary in smaller towns but in larger town endogamy was common.
- 4.31 Evidence for conflict of interest over who marries who:

Warfare/homicide

- 4.14 Percent adult (male) deaths due to warfare: High male mortality rate
- 4.15 Outgroup vs ingroup cause of violent death:
- 4.16 Reported causes of in-group and out-group killing: Warfare involved conflict between large family groups in Yurok villages over fishing rights, boundaries of territories, and adultery. Yurok also went on raids to neighboring groups like the Hupa and afterwards there was always a settlement of compensation for damages done for each tribe.
- 4.17 Number, diversity and relationship with neighboring societies (external relations): Hupa, Wiyot, Karok, Tolowa fairly good relations and trade. Kinship lines sometimes even crossed between each tribe. The occasional raid or feud did occur.
- 4.18 Cannibalism?

5. Socio-Political organization and interaction

- 5.1 Mean local residential (village) group size: Though there was no formal village plan, villages, with their typical square houses, were usually tightly clustered. 54 villages in all. 2-30 houses per village. Each woodplank home named for its topographic location, size, ceremonial purpose, or position.
- 5.2 Mobility pattern: (seasonality):
- 5.3 Political system: (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes): “tribelets” consisting of groups of villages that were linked by linguistic or cultural affinities and otherwise pretty independent. No basic political unit or entity. The village ran society. High wealth status individuals.
- 5.4 Post marital residence:
- 5.5 Territoriality? (defined boundaries, active defense): There were distinct boundaries Between the properties held by one village and those of an adjacent Yurok village.
- 5.6 Social interaction divisions ? (age and sex):
- 5.7 Special friendships/joking relationships:
- 5.8 Village and house organization: two distinct dialectic divisions: river people and coast people. River division population twice as large as the coast and about 3 times as many homes. Isolation associated with dialectic variations.
- 5.9 Specialized village structures (mens’ houses): Sweathouses for men
- 5.10 Sleep in hammocks or on ground or elsewhere? Ground
- 5.11 Social organization, clans, moieties, lineages, etc: Socially stratified. Society based upon a dual caste system (either an aristocrat or a commoner). Male head of household was answerable to no one, the aristocrat usually had several other males attached to his household he relied upon for protection. Rich man- pergerk(“man”), wealthy or “real” woman- wentsauks(“woman”), poor person-

wa'asoi, slave- uka'atl, bastard- kamuks("mouse"). Aristocrats trained in the sweat house and made medicine in the high country. These men also travelled to gain knowledge of other Indian people.

5.12 Trade: Material culture practically identical with their neighbors Tolowa, Karok, Hupa, Wiyot, Chilula. River system used for intertribal trading and limited visiting. Extensive economic ties with neighbors but were generally self-sufficient within their territories, except for obsidian and dentalium shell that were obtained through trade.

5.13 Indications of social hierarchies? "aristocrats" wore better clothing, performed religious functions, and a distinct manner of speech. If you were not an aristocrat you were not expected to amount to anything or have the same knowledge or manners. Yurok were obsessed with wealth because it said everything about you as a person in society. There were slaves as well. Slaves became that way usually due to being in debt to another.

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6 Time allocation to RCR: Everything has religious connotation, songs and dance are frequently practiced especially while travelling

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine): Shamans could be men or women. songs are sung for medicine making. Medicine men and shamans are present. Anyone can make medicine but medicine men and shamans were called upon for special needs and for guidance. Women have very little role in spiritual life.

6.2 Stimulants:

6.3 Passage rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal): Woman first menstruation are looked at as unclean, turn backs to central fire in home, do not speak and move very little, encouraged not to eat for 4 days. Women practically separated from tribe for 10 days each mother while menstruating. No rituals for boys just a gradual acceptance into the sweathouse fraternities.

6.4 Other rituals: First Salmon Ceremony- Fasting and abstinence of sex before the first salmon of the season is eaten. Medicine man not allowed to touch the fish, holding breath while cutting the fish, asking the fish for permission to eat it and other animals, he eats the whole fish and cannot eat fish again until the fall. If any of this is not done correctly their will be poor fishing all year and will "ruin the world"

6.5 Myths (Creation): All culture was believed to have been inherited from the Wo'gey who occupied the landscape before native Americans came. Songs, prayers are gifts from the Wo'gey. Aristocrats emulate the wo'gey in all things, moving away from wo'gey lifestyle was bad luck. Supreme being, Wohpekumew "widower across the ocean, created all things, gave them language. Mythic narratives involving animals to express cultural values. The world is flat and surrounded by water and bisected by the Klamath river. The earth mass is slowly rising and falling in a rhythm, which explains the hills and valleys, so they are not just surrounded by water but floating on the ocean.

6.6 Cultural material (art, music, games): Dancing: the brush dance to cure the sick and deerskin dance was performed night at the top of the river.

6.7 Sex differences in RCR: only men could dance but women were primary shamans. According to "Indian law", a menstruating woman is highly polluting and will contaminate the family house and food supply if she comes into contact with either. Thus women spend ten days in seclusion during their "moon-time". Women even had to use a scratching implement rather than their own hands for fear of contaminating themselves.

6.8 Missionary effect: Influenced early on by Judeo-Christian thought in the 1870's. Christian monotheism easily mixed in with the ideas of the Indians, they were similar in many ways. Yurok began accommodating modern conditions like sickness. Sickness was still punishment for disobeying spirits but doctored by Shaker Churches. No longer using the sweathouse for cleansing but avoiding alcohol and sex. Loss of song and dance. Loss of traditional hunting practice with respect to pleasing the animal spirits and also hunting techniques(i.e. pickup trucks, passing by prayer spots)

6.9 RCR revival:

6.10 Death and afterlife beliefs: Ghosts of the dead haunt the living. Once dead the body is painted with soot and shells inserted into nasal. Dead were buried in town cemeteries and great lengths were gone to prevent contamination through contact with the corpse. The dead went "below" and had to cross the river. If the boat tipped they were revived on earth and if they went across return was impossible. There were three types of afterlife: if killed by weapons they went to "the willows"; thieves and bad persons went to an "inferior place"; rich, peaceful people went to the sky.

6.11 Taboo of naming dead people?

6.12 Is there teknonymy?

6.13 Briefly describe religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems etc.) Religious ideas for traffic, trails are "like people" treat landscape with respect. Songs and shooting arrows into big trees before a journey lightens the load and prevents fatigue. The boat has high religious regard and spoken to. Corpses and the ocean are feared, sing to the river and ocean to calm them. "Gard" ultimate being and creator. Belief in monsters and creek devils, Uma'a or "devil" that live in the dark and bushy thickets. One who obtains arrows from Uma'a is also called an Indian devil and are accused of practicing black magic. Animals were thought to have been more like humans in the prehuman period. They transformed into animals after killing a giant bird in order to the feathers and fur that they would need when humans arrived. Animals upon which the Yurok depended for sustenance, especially deer and salmon, were regarded with special reverence. Plants and Herbs also thought to have been like humans. Acorns depicted as a group of young ladies. Plants and herbs are sung to while being picked and transformed into medicine.

7. Adornment

7.1 Body paint: slight body paint for dances

7.2 Piercings:

7.3 Haircut:

7.4 Scarification:

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.): **Hair pins, dentalium shell necklaces**

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual adornment: **colorful dresses and dentalium shell**

7.7 Sex differences in adornment:

7.8 Missionary effect:

7.9 Cultural revival in adornment:

8. Kinship systems

8.1 Sibling classification system: **“Salish” type. The Yurok refuse to include collateral relatives of parents-in-law and children-in-law and uncles’ and aunts’ siblings. Brother and sister are distinguished with different terms according as they are a male’s or female’s brother or sister. Sex is ignored but relative age and sex are expressed. In Yurok the younger brother or sister are merged into one. All cousins, cross, or parallel, first, second, or third, are brothers and sisters. Murdock suggested Hawaiian-type kinship systems.**

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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