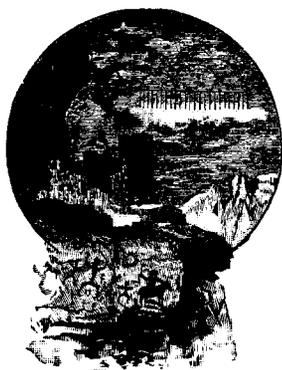


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CHAPTER 23.

THE YANA AND YAHÍ.

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THE YANA.

ORIGIN.

The Yana are a people of fairly extensive territory but rather restricted numbers, concerning whom little general information has been extant, but to whom mystery of some kind has usually been made to attach. They were reputed of a marked physical type; their speech was not only distinctive but abnormally peculiar; in military prowess and cunning they far outshone all their neighbors; they had perhaps come from the far east. As usual, there is a thin sediment of fact to these fancies.

As regards physical type, no measurements are available. Report makes the Yana shorter than their neighbors, and an allusion in one of their myths appears to attribute the same conviction to themselves. But they certainly are not racially anomalous to any notable degree. The few scattered survivors would pass as normal among any group of north central California.

Their warlike reputation may be due partly to the resistance offered to the whites by one or two of their bands. But whether the cause of this was actually a superior energy and courage or an unusual exasperation aided by a rough, still thinly populated, and easily defensible habitat is more doubtful. That they were feared by certain of their neighbors, such as the Maidu, argues them a hungry body of mountaineers rather than a superior stock. The hill dweller has less to lose by fighting than the wealthy lowlander. He is also less exposed, and in time of need has better and more numerous refuges available. All through California the plains peoples were the more peaceably inclined, although the stronger in numbers: the difference is one of situation reflected in culture, not of inborn quality.

The speech of the Yana disposes definitely of all theories of their remote origin. They are members of the great Hokan family. As such, their ultimate source may have been southerly; but no more and no less than that of the Achomawi, the Shasta, the Karok, the Pomo, and others. Their language, so far as its sounds and words are concerned, is perhaps somewhat nearer to the Pomo on the other side of the Sacramento Valley than to the adjacent Achomawi and Atsugewi. It has, however, certainly been long differentiated, since it has entirely lost the prefixes that are found in all other Hokan idioms, and has become a suffixing tongue. It may be added that on the chart (see Pl. 1, inset; and Fig. 17) Yana territory looks like the end of a reflex curling movement of the interior Hokans—Shasta, Achomawi, and Yana—from the northern end of a coastwise distribution that begins in Mexico and ends with the Pomo, Chimariko, and Karok. It is, however, possible that the Yana were once neighbors of the Pomo and became pushed apart from them as the great block of Penutians drifted up or down the Sacramento Valley. Yana tradition is silent on these questions. Like all Californians north of Tehachapi, they believe themselves to have been created in their historic seats.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S SPEECH.

Yana speech shows one extreme peculiarity, which, as an essentially civilizational phenomenon expressed through linguistic medium, must be mentioned: The talk of men and women differed. Men spoke the women's forms when conversing with them; women always spoke female. The differences are not very great, but sufficient to disconcert one not thoroughly familiar with the tongue. Usually a suffix is clipped by women from the full male form. Thus *yana*, "person," becomes *ya* in the mouth or in the hearing of a woman; *awna*, "fire," and *hana*, "water," become *awh* and *hah*. Similarly a mortar, personified and addressed, would be called *keman-'na* if considered male, *keman-yi* if thought of as a woman. Somewhat analogous, though essentially a distinct phenomenon, is the employment of diverse roots to denote an action respectively as it is performed by men or women: *ni*, "a male goes," *ha*, "a female goes." The spring of these remarkable phenomena is unknown.

TERRITORY.

The Yana were surrounded by the Achomawi and Atsugewi, the Maidu, and the Wintun. Their holdings stretched from Pit River, on which they are said to have fronted for a distance, to Rock Creek on the south; that is, more probably, to the ridge on one or the other side of Rock Creek. In general, they ranged from the edge of the

upper Sacramento Valley along the eastern tributaries of the Sacramento itself to their headwaters in the watershed beyond which the drainage flows north and south instead of westward. The summit of this divide, and the greatest landmark of the Yana country, was the ancient volcanic peak of Mount Lassen, recently active once more: Yana Wahganupa, literally "little Mount Shasta" (Wahgalu). Here the territory of two of the four Yana divisions met that of the Atsugewi and of the mountain Maidu. The whole of the Sacramento Valley in Yana latitude, east as well as west of the river, was

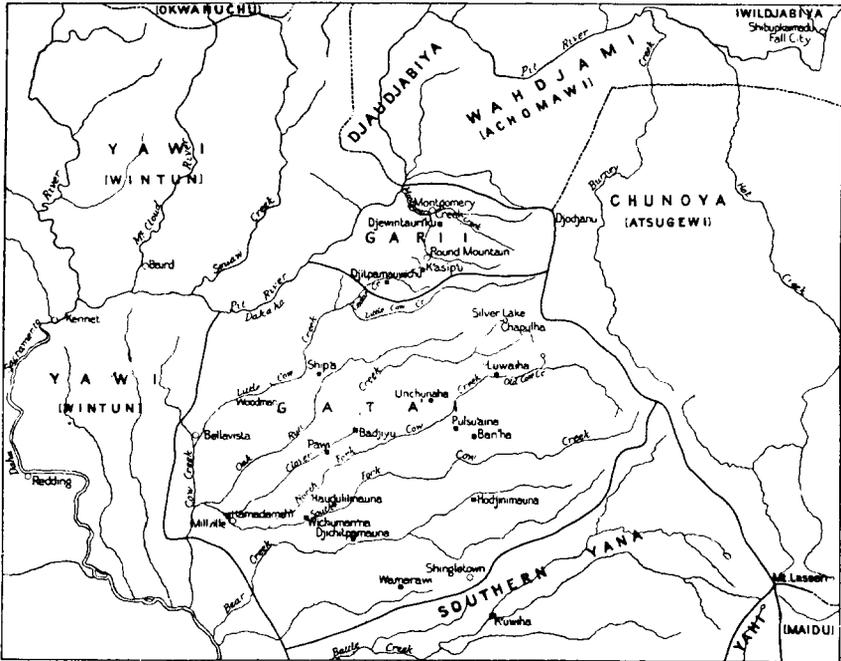


FIG. 30.—Yana territory, northern part. Settlements are shown by squares; alien groups in dotted lines. Unbracketed names are Yana designations.

Wintun. Yana land began with the foothills. In their lowest courses through these hills the streams often flow in narrow canyons; toward their source the beds are deep and rugged. Most of the Yana settlements were therefore in a middle belt. Those that are most accurately known and located are shown in Figure 30. In general, Yana country was a broken and endlessly ridged and furrowed land, timbered in part, mostly covered with brush, rocky, and hard of soil.

DIVISIONS.

The Yana comprised four dialectic divisions, but the speech of the most divergent was largely intelligible. The northern dialect was

called Gari'i, the central one Gata'i. The southern dialect is extinct: it may have been included in Gata'i. Beyond it was another, to which the name "Yahi" may be given, that being the term replacing Yana in the mouths of its speakers. This division is also extinct. Its recent history being a different one from that of the three other divisions, it will be treated separately. It should be admitted that the designations here applied to the four Yana groups are awkward, the "southern" one not being the most southerly. The cause is the late recognition of the Yahi division after the names of the three others had become established in print. A renaming to northeastern, northern, central, and southern would be appropriate, but would inevitably cause future confusions.

The northern group held by far the smallest territory; the drainage of Montgomery Creek into Pit River, and that of Cedar Creek, an affluent of Little Cow Creek. The northern Yana were wedged in between Wintun, Achomawi, and Atsugewi.

The Central Yana held the entire Cow Creek drainage: Cow Creek itself, Little Cow, Oak Run, Clover Creek, and North and South Forks of the Cow. To these must be added Bear Creek. The extreme northwestern corner of the territory shown in Figure 30 between Bellavista, Woodman, and the mouth of Squaw Creek, may have been Wintun instead of Gata'i Yana.

The southern Yana lived on Battle Creek. They also held Payne and Antelope Creeks and one or two smaller streams.

The Yahi held the course of Mill and Deer Creeks.

DESIGNATIONS AND NUMBERS.

The Yana to-day are generally known to the adjacent Indians and resident whites as Noze or Nozhi, a term of unknown origin although a Wintun source is likely. The Maidu said Kombo, although whether by this word the Yahi and southern Yana alone were meant, or all divisions of the stock, is not certain.

Sukoni-ya was a nonethnic term applied by the Yana to distant easterners: the more remote Achomawi and northeastern Maidu; perhaps also the Northern Paiute.

An average of 300 to 500 souls for each division, or 1,500 for the stock, seems a liberal computation of the pre-American numbers. To-day the two northern groups alone survive and between them can muster less than 40 full and mixed bloods, and these much scattered. The Yana as a whole suffered heavily at the hands of the whites in the first 20 years of contact, both by fighting and in massacres, and have never been even partially sheltered by reservations. None of the adjacent stocks and few of the neighboring ones, except possibly the Shasta and the Okwanuchu, have shrunk in the same ratio.

Near the central Yana village of Wichuman'na, some miles east of Millville, was a saline swamp. The dark-colored mud was taken up and dried for use

as salt. Achomawi, Atsugewi, and Wintun all resorted to this place—a fact that indicates more or less chronic friendliness. This locality originated the Achomawi name for the Yana, Ti'saichi, "Salt people."

CHARACTER OF CUSTOMS.

However commendably hardy the Yana may have been, it is clear that they did not rank high among the natives of the State. They were perhaps on a level with the near-by Atsugewi and Achomawi. The little coruscations that enliven the culture of the Wintun and Maidu, for instance, are entirely lacking. Mythology, symbolism, ritual, social customs, the uses of wealth, are all of the plainest, most straightforward, and simplest character. Although bordering on both the great valley stocks, none of the Yana had any participation in the Kuksu religion that found its focus there. It is not even possible to ascribe to them any partial reflection of the valley civilization: their culture consisted of the primitive basic elements which other groups shared with them but overlaid with more special developments.

The winter house was the earth-covered one of the Modoc, Pomo, Wintun, and Maidu. They called it *igunna* and *mat'adjuwa* or *wat-guruwa*. Although generally referred to as a "sweat house," Yana myths make clear that it was a dwelling.

Their thatched summer homes the Yana called *wawi* or *wowi*, which seems to be the generic word for house.

The Yana were situated in the region where two basketry arts meet; the northern of overlaid twining with *Xerophyllum tenax*, which they called *maha*; and the central one of coiling and twining, but without the overlay technique. The two northern divisions followed the former method chiefly if not exclusively. Their ware is scarcely distinguishable from that of the northern Wintun and the Achomawi. The Yahi coiled much like the Maidu; of what precise type their twining was, is not clear. For the southern Yana all data are lacking, but their situation suggests that the line between the two arts ran up the slope of the Sierra Nevada along their northern or southern boundary. It is possible that one or more of the Yana divisions showed an unblended mixture of the two styles, such as is found among the northeastern Maidu, although west of the Sacramento the cleavage of the arts is sharp.

Dentalia, *bahninu*, as well as clam-shell disks, *mats'ewi*, were prized as money. Again we are at the distributional border, and which form prevailed is not clear.

Brother and sister addressed each other in the plural, the singular being considered improper among them, as is the case between parents-in-law and children-in-law among several other stocks. This

practice must be interpreted as an approach to a taboo on communication. Some parent-in-law taboos seem to have been observed by the Yana. In a tale, Coyote addresses his mother-in-law freely; but his erotic character in Indian tradition, and his actions in this story, do not allow any certain inference as to the actual custom.

A term for bastard, *wahtaurisi*, "sits at the foot of the ladder," indicates that some observance was given to social station. This position, the nearest the entrance in the earth-covered lodge, belonged to people of no moment.

The two northern divisions buried the dead. During heavy snows people were sometimes interred inside the earth lodge, to be exhumed and reburied later. The Yahi cremated.

The native dog of the Yahi was sharp-nosed, erect-eared, short-haired, of the shape and size of a coyote, but gentle and definitely domesticated since it bred in a variety of colors. It was used in hunting bear and deer, and was more or less fed on meat; but, like most American dogs, died from eating salmon. Its flesh was thought deadly poison to human beings, and was much favored by wizards for evil purposes.

Yana myths are often picturesquely told, but explain little and lack real interest in cosmogony or the origin of human institutions. Attention is concentrated on the incidents of the plot as such. Rabbit, Gray squirrel, and Lizard have been suggested as being to the Yana a creative trinity, somewhat parallel to Earth-Initiate, Father of the Secret Society, and Turtle of the Maidu, with Coyote as antithesis in each instance; but the difference in the spirit of the myths is enormous. The trivial doings of the Yana animals are devoid of all the planning and semigrandiose outlook of the acts of the Maidu gods.

The ghost dance of the early seventies is said to have reached the northern Yana from the Chico Maidu, that is, from the south.

THE YAHÍ.

HISTORY.

The Yahi, the southernmost division of the Yana, once resident on Mill and Deer Creeks, two eastern affluents of the Sacramento, are of a peculiar interest because of their rediscovery in recent years after they had been believed extinct for 40 years.

For some reason that is still obscure, this little group, that can hardly have numbered much more than 200 or 300, became particularly embroiled with the whites and embittered against them in the period of greatest Indian unrest in northern California—the

time, approximately, of the Civil War, a full dozen years after the first contact of the races. The Yahi country lay near American farms and towns, but in the early sixties did not contain permanent settlers; indeed has very few to-day. It is a region of endless long ridges and cliff-walled canyons, of no great elevation but very rough, and covered with scrub rather than timber. The canyons contain patches in which the brush is almost impenetrable, and the faces of the hills are full of caves. There are a hundred hiding places; but there are no minerals, no marketable lumber, no rich bottom lands to draw the American. Cattle, indeed, have long ranged the region, but they drift up and down the more open ridges. Everything, therefore, united to provide the Yahi with a retreat from which they could conveniently raid. Only definite and concerted action could rout them out.



FIG. 31.—Yahi deer decoy, stuffed. (Compare Pl. 8.)

Of course, this action inevitably came. After numerous skirmishes with small parties of Americans, and at least one disastrous fight or slaughter, practically the whole remnant of the group was surrounded and exterminated in an early morning surprise attack by a self-organized body of settlers. This seems to have happened about 1865. If there were known to be

survivors, they were so few and so terrified that they were obviously harmless; and no further attention was paid to them. General opinion reckoned the tribe as extinct. After a time, at intervals of years, a cattleman or hunter would report meeting a wild and naked Indian who fled like a deer. Now and then deserted cabins in the hills were rifled. A few of the local mountaineers were convinced that a handful of Indians still remained at large, but the farmers in the valley and the townspeople were inclined to scoff at their stories. In all but the immediate region the Mill Creek Indians had long been forgotten. The last printed reference to them is that of Stephen Powers, who knew them by their Maidu name of Kombo, and related how the last seen of them, in 1872 or earlier, was when two men, two women, and a child were encountered by a couple of hunters, but soon escaped into the brush. There can be little doubt that these were the only survivors.

REDISCOVERY.

At length, in 1908, a party of surveyors half way up the side of Deer Creek Canyon, a mile or two from the nearest cabin and not more than 15 miles from a trunk railroad, ran their line almost into a hidden camp in which skulked four middle-aged and elderly Indians, who fled. There was no doubt that they were untamed and living the aboriginal existence. Arrows, implements (fig. 31), baskets, the stored food, the huts, were purely native; such American objects and materials as there were, were all stolen. It was clear that for 43 years this household, remnant of what was once a nation, had maintained itself in this or similarly sheltered spots, smothering their camp smoke, crawling under the brush to leave no trail, obliterating their very footsteps, and running like animals at the approach of a human being. It was an extraordinary story: the ingenuity of the Indians was almost as marvelous as the secret of their long concealment.

THE LAST SURVIVOR.

The discovery broke up the existence into which the little band had settled. They had lost most of their tools; they feared to remain in the vicinity; their food supply became irregular. A year or two later the huts were found still standing, but abandoned. One after another the handful died. In 1911 a single survivor, a man with hair singed short in mourning for his relatives, remained. Solitary, weaponless, pressed by hunger, desperate and yet fearful of every white face, he wandered away from his accustomed haunts, until, in August, he was found half hiding, half approaching a house, near Oroville, 40 miles south. He was clapped into jail, but treated kindly; and, as the last wild Indian in the United States, his case aroused wide interest. There was no question of the genuineness of his aboriginal condition. He was practically naked; in obvious terror; and knew no English and but a few words of Spanish learned from his own people and considered by him part of his native tongue. He practiced all the ancient crafts, and proved an expert flint flaker and bow maker.

After a few days he was brought to San Francisco, where he remained, under the protection of the University of California, until his death in 1916. He was then about 50 or 55 years of age, and passed under the name of Ishi, an anglicization of his word for man. He refused to return to his old home or to settle on any Indian reservation, and in clothing and personal and daily habits speedily assimilated civilized ways. He learned English very slowly and brokenly, but was volubly communicative in his own tongue on all topics except the fate of his kinsmen, where deeply ingrained sentiment imposed

silence. He was industrious, kindly, obliging, invariably even tempered, ready of smile, and thoroughly endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact. With his death the Yahi passed away.

A NATIVE MAP.

A map drawn by Ishi and reproduced as Figure 32 is of interest because it proves the California Indians to have been not totally devoid of faculty in this direction. They usually refuse point-

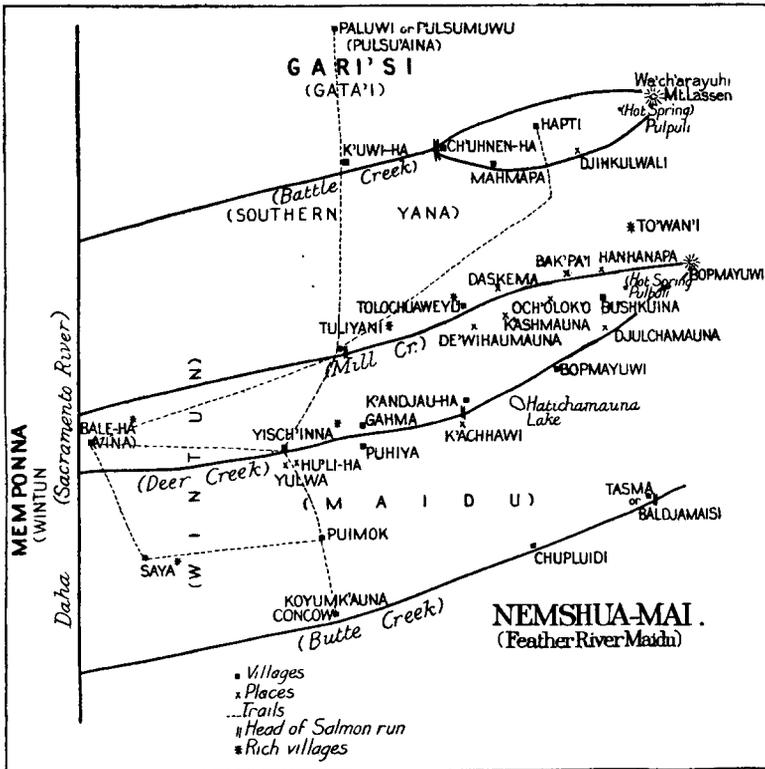


FIG. 32.—Map sketched and explained by Ishi, the last Yahi.

blank to make even an attempt of this kind, alleging utter inability, and it is only in the extreme south of the State that some rudiments of a sense of tracing topography appear. The Mohave readily draw streams and mountains in the sand, and the only native map ever published from California is a sketch of this type. The Diegueño ground paintings also evince some elements of cartographic endeavor, although in ritualized form. Considering the negative attitude of the northern California mind in this direction, Ishi's map is more accurate than might be expected.

YAHÍ GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE.

The sketch is of further interest because Ishi appears never to have visited a considerable part of the area depicted by him, the features shown being known to him only by tradition dating back to the period before 1860.

It must be noted that Ishi applied the term "Gari'si" not to the northern Yana proper, whom he did not recognize as a separate group, but to the central Yana (the Gata'i), and to the southern Yana of Battle Creek. Actually, so far as can be judged, the southern Yana dialect is more similar to Yahi than to central Yana Tuliyani on Mill Creek, and Yischi'inna on Deer Creek, may be names of chiefs that once lived at these villages, rather than true place names. Ishi employed the term Ga'me'si in connection with the region of these settlements. It is perhaps a designation of his dialect contrasting with Gari'si for the three Yana dialects to the north. Tasma or Baldjamaisi, also Yulwa, are possibly in upper Feather River drainage, in the vicinity of Big Meadows, rather than on Butte Creek. The stream shown is, however, not intended for Feather River, of which Ishi knew by report that it had four large branches and which he had seen before his capture at Oroville, but of the ancient inhabitants of which he knew only that they were distant and unfriendly. Battle Creek he called Chuhnen-ha more frequently than by its usual northern name of K'uiwi-ha.

The Memponna on the map may be named after a chief, although he mentioned Pashahi as such. At Baleha, Saik'olohna and a woman Malki were former chiefs; he also knew the group as Malkinena. At Saya, Kinuichi was chief. North of it, where Singer Creek and Bush Creek emerge from the hills, were Mumun'i and Djaki-ha; north of these, K'aiuwi at Stevens Hollow and Bolohuwi on Mountain Branch. These seem to have been Wintun rather than Yana, but their attribution varied. The Wintun and Yahi appear to have been on friendly terms, the former coming up Deer Creek at least as far as Ya'muluk'u, near the mouth of Sulphur Creek, well in the Yahi country, to camp and hunt. Other places in or near the valley, and presumably Wintun, were Ha'wan'na, south of Deer Creek; and to the north, Eltami, on Dry Creek; Gahseha; Mukaudanchiwa; Shunhun'imaldji; Chiwa'imaldji where the Indians of Paswi lived; Dahauyap'ahdi, on Dye Creek, north of Mill Creek; and the Dachapaumi-yahi. Mimlosi is a term used in reference to the vicinity of Red Bluff, and evidently contains the Wintun stem for water, *mcm*. Chupiskoto, Holok'opasna, and Dashtilaumauna are unlocated Wintun places.

Most of the Maidu groups were less known to Ishi, hostility prevailing between them and the Yahi. The Puimok, whose speech Ishi called Homoadidi—the name Puimok is Wintun—once killed two men and a child at Milshna at Six-Bit Ford on Dry Creek, between Deer and Mill Creeks. Evidently warfare between the two groups was on more even terms than the exaggerated American accounts indicate. The Daidepa-yahi seem to have been a Maidu division in the Big Meadows region, with a woman chief Yella.

The Atsugewi of Hat Creek were called Chunoya and were friendly. Three chiefs were remembered: Punegi, Badetopi, and Kanigi, besides a woman Wamaiki. They are said to have called the Yahi and perhaps all the Yana Dip-mawi.

Ishi knew a fair number of Atsugewi, Maidu, and Wintun words, about in the proportion of this order. Since he had never met a soul of any of the three

stocks, this is a fact of interest, evidencing that the California Indians in their native condition took some interest in each other and spent more or less time in the home circle telling one another about strangers and their ways.

The term "Noza" (Nozi) Ishi seems to have applied to the southern Yana, and Wailaka (Wintun: "north language") to the central Yana. Antelope Creek he called Halhala, and Tuscan Buttes Uht'anuwí.

Other group names recorded from Ishi, but only after contact with a central Yana, and therefore not certain as a native possession, are Sasti (Shasta); Marak (Modoc); Paiuti; Sun'sona (Shoshone); Basiwi, perhaps Washo; and Shukoni, in the distant east.