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**KLAMATH CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION**

**By**

**MARION PEARSALL**

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# KLAMATH CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION <sup>1</sup>

By

MARION PEARSALL

## INTRODUCTION

The communication of knowledge from one generation to another is a subtle process in any culture, and especially so among primitive groups with no clearly defined and well formulated educational system. Any study of primitive education is, therefore, difficult to demarcate. In its broadest sense, education might be defined as the formation of manners and habits by means of instruction, by both physical and moral discipline. The acquisition of all attitudes, knowledge, and skills can be included in education. A thorough investigation would have to answer the question of where, when, and how the individual acquires each item of his adult personality.

Obviously, no complete picture of education in any primitive group can be drawn after a single season in the field. The present study makes no pretense of being definitive. It is our intent to show the gradual development of the Klamath child from infancy to adulthood as he receives physical, religious, and moral training, as well as instruction in the food gathering techniques and skilled crafts of his culture. Undoubtedly many phases of the culture have been slighted, but we have tried to show in a general way the type of instruction and encouragement given the maturing child. Klamath ethnography has been well known for years through the works of Gatschet (1890), Coville (1898, 1904), Dorsey (1901), Barrett (1910), Spier (1930), Voegelin (1942), and others. For that reason, the details of language, material

culture, social and political organization are not described here except in their effect on education. Wherever particular items are mentioned, we specifically asked our informants for a description, even though they had been described in previous ethnographies. Such accounts may thus be taken as corroborating earlier evidence unless otherwise specified in the text.

The Klamath reside in their old territory in southern Oregon, but the aboriginal way of life has long since disappeared. Today they are farmers and ranchers, but a considerable part of the earlier culture remains alive in the memories of a few oldsters. Our seven informants (4 men and 3 women) were all in their late seventies or eighties and had participated in the last phases of the aboriginal culture as children. It is regrettable that it was necessary to reconstruct childhood training from the reminiscences of elderly individuals. Doubtless much of the material represents the ideal rather than the actual pattern of education. The ideals do, however, give a definite insight into what was considered important in the upbringing of children, whether these standards were always maintained or not. Since there is little or nothing in the early literature on this subject, there is no way of comparing impressions received from old people who are admittedly looking back to "the good old days" with impressions of objective eyewitnesses to the old ways as they were really practiced.

## BIRTH AND INFANCY

Parenthood with its attendant responsibilities is not taken lightly by the average Klamath. One gets married for the express purpose of raising a large family, and the couple with several strong sons and hardworking daughters is highly respected in the community. A childless couple, on the other hand, is looked upon with contempt and pity. Barrenness is sometimes con-

sidered cause for divorce. Since the blame seems to fall most commonly on the woman, her husband's parents may suggest that he send her away and get a wife who can provide him with children. Ordinarily, though, the parents-in-law are more lenient with a barren woman. Most Klamath express a preference for boys. A variety of reasons are offered, the most common being that boys are less bother than girls. "Girls are always getting into trouble, and you just raise them for someone else because they go off to their husbands when they get married." Once the child is born, however, there seems to be no special favoritism shown to boys. One

<sup>1</sup>The present study is based on data collected for the University of California during a two-month stay on the Klamath Indian reservation in southern Oregon in the summer of 1947. Much of the material presented in this paper was gathered by Mrs. Betty T. Dazey, and the research represents our joint efforts.

hopes to have many sons, but the inevitable is accepted philosophically.

The sex of the child is not entirely left to chance, for certain traditional precautions are taken. A man does not cut wood while his wife is pregnant lest she have a girl. He may also hang a tiny bow and arrow in his house to assure the birth of a boy. If a girl is born, the opposite sex may be assured for the next child by turning over the afterbirth.

The arrival of the first child is of special significance. It is said that at this time there will be strong winds and thunder.<sup>2</sup> This is also a propitious time for a man to seek supernatural power in the mountains. In spite of the great importance attached to the birth of the first child there is nothing to indicate that he will be shown any favoritism. On the contrary, he will probably learn adult activities at an earlier age than his younger siblings and will be expected to assume a certain amount of responsibility in caring for younger children in the family.

At delivery, a soft pad is arranged to receive the child.<sup>3</sup> The umbilical cord is tied with the mother's hair and cut with an obsidian knife. The cord is buried when it drops off, or sometimes kept and wrapped in a piece of buckskin to be worn around the child's neck for luck. The navel is anointed with squirrel grease to hasten healing. As a general rule the afterbirth is disposed of at once by burial. Occasionally a woman throws the afterbirth away carelessly because she wishes to prevent future pregnancies.

The newborn baby is sponged off immediately with water, and the face and body are massaged and molded for the first time to conform to Klamath standards of beauty. He is kept beside the mother in the birth lodge during the four or five days of her seclusion. Once each day during this period the child is held over the heated rocks on which the mother lies, to insure his future health.

The infant is put to the breast a few hours after birth. The mother's nipples are squeezed and a hair worked around in them to start the flow of milk. Thereafter the child is nursed whenever he cries. If the mother is unable to nurse her child, a wet nurse is called--generally a relative, but apparently any neighbor woman will do.

In many families presents are brought to the newborn child. A boy receives a tiny bow and arrow or small quiver, a girl a small digging stick or basket. These gifts are later hung from the hood of the child's cradleboard. As the presents are brought, a prayer or blessing is said "to encourage the child." Over a

boy one says, "May this one be a good hunter." For a girl the hope is expressed that "this one will be a good worker and dig many ipos [a root used as food]." These statements are amplified in many ways, according to the sentiments of the individual donor.

The infant is first placed in a willow or tule cradle,<sup>4</sup> usually prepared by the maternal grandmother. Several informants asserted that it would be bad luck to prepare the cradle before the child's birth; others seemed not to share this belief. The child remains on the basketry cradle for a fortnight to a month and is thereafter placed on a rigid cradleboard.

It is generally the father who makes the cradleboard although, once it has been made, it may be handed down from one child to the next or even from one generation to the next. It is destroyed only in the event of the child's death, in which case the board and all other objects prepared for the child are burned with the body. After the father makes the cradleboard, the maternal grandmother fixes it for the child. She shows her daughter how to arrange the bedding on the board and place the infant on it with his legs straight and arms extended at his sides.

The child remains on the cradleboard for at least the first year of his life. Even after he can walk he is placed there to sleep; for "if you don't use a cradleboard, the child gets humpbacked." When the child no longer requires a cradleboard, he may still be tightly wrapped in a blanket at night to make him lie straight.

For the first few months of his life the child is cared for almost entirely by his mother with the occasional help of the grandmother. The father would be considered unmanly if he helped with the baby very much. The child is never left alone for more than a few minutes at a time, and then only if the mother knows he is sound asleep. At night the cradleboard lies beside the mother where she can reach out and nurse the child if he cries. During the day the board is propped up in the dwelling, or, if the mother is working elsewhere, she carries the cradle with her and sets it up near her work. While working in a canoe, the woman arranges the cradleboard in one end with a willow shade to protect the child from the sun. If she is busy digging roots or gathering berries or seeds, she sets the cradle against a near-by tree. At such times the child's hands may be unbound so that he is free to play with beads or other objects suspended from the hood of the cradle. Often he is given a bit of camas root to chew on.

The infant seldom receives physical demonstrations of affection, nor does the mother carry him in her arms. However, he is watched continually; and the mother or other adults often pause in their work to talk to the child. They tell a boy to be strong and brave and grow

<sup>2</sup>Spier (1930), p. 55. None of our informants mentioned this.

<sup>3</sup>The practices surrounding pregnancy, birth, and the care of the mother are described in detail by Spier, pp. 55 ff., and Voegelin (1942), elements 3007-3262.

<sup>4</sup>Cradling practices are described by Barrett (1910), pp. 257 ff., Spier, pp. 57-59, and Voegelin, elements 3263-3286.

up to be a good hunter, whereas a girl is admonished to be a good worker. Both are advised to do right, to help other people, and never to quarrel. Stereotyped phrases of advice are used, and it is felt that "the baby listens just as if he understood everything."

At least once a day the child is taken off the cradle to be bathed. When the child is first unbound, he is allowed to stretch as much as he wishes. For bathing, the mother holds the child on her knee and sponges him in cold water. The cold water is supposed to make the child fearless and strong. Gatschet mentions the application of insects to the infant's arms for the purpose of making him fearless and unmoved by sudden fright;<sup>5</sup> we found no confirmation of this practice.

After the bath the mother rubs the child with warm ashes and finally powders it with finely ground chalk. Throughout the entire process she talks to the child and expresses her desire that he may grow to be strong and good. At the same time she massages the child's limbs to make them straight and molds his ears, nose, lips, and brows to make him more beautiful. The daily massaging continues till the child is five or six months old. After that it is believed that the bones are too hard to be changed. Frontal flattening by means of a pad tied across the forehead continues as long as the child is on the cradleboard, but not all children undergo this process. According to some informants, the flattening is simply incidental to the manner of cradling. Others claim it is done for beauty. "After all," they say, "a basket hat would never fit a square head."

As the child gets older he is allowed to remain away from the cradleboard for longer and longer periods. He cries to be taken off the board at times, but also to be put back when tired. By the time he is a year old he remains off the board all day, though he may still be placed on it to sleep.

Teething is not considered a difficult process.<sup>6</sup> The gums are massaged if the child becomes fretful. Otherwise he is simply given something to chew on--the inside layer of certain barks or a bit of camas. Later, when the child begins to get his permanent teeth, no special significance is attached to the deciduous set. They are pulled out as they become loose and thrown away or buried.

When a child is five or six months old, he is encouraged to sit up. He is placed on a mat or blanket, and his arms are held on either side of his head as he is taught to rock back and forth while uttering the meaningless sound "aam aam." Parents are proud when the child is able to sit up by himself; and they tell visitors, "See, he can sit up now." The child is allowed to crawl around the dwelling as he pleases. If

he falls, no attempt is made to pick him up unless he cries for some time.

The first experimentation in crawling and walking is largely left to the child. But when he tries to stand, he is helped. One person steadies the toddler, while another stands a few feet away with outstretched hand, coaxing him to "Come to me." The child soon learns such commands as "Walk," "Go to auntie," and so forth. The parents are proud of the child's accomplishment and show off his ability to visitors.

A child continues to nurse until he is two or three years old. Some mothers allow him to nurse as long as he pleases, but ordinarily there is a conscious effort at weaning.<sup>7</sup> The mother rubs her breasts with pitch or charcoal, both to impart a bitter taste and to give a frightening appearance. Some mothers wean their children by staying out of sight for several days while an aunt or other relative takes care of the child. If the mother becomes pregnant again, weaning is hastened. However, it is considered a disgrace to be pregnant while a child is still nursing. No one respects a couple who have children less than two or three years apart. The couple is expected to refrain from intercourse during the nursing period.

There is no set age at which toilet training begins. Some families hasten the process; others are extremely lax. Two years seems to be about the average age at which training is begun. The mother takes the child out to the bushes and shows him where to urinate and defecate. He is told to have some adult accompany him to the bushes when he wishes to relieve himself. Thereafter the child is scolded or whipped when he makes a mistake.

A child begins to say a few words when about a year old. He has probably acquired a few meaningless syllables even before that, such as the "aam" mentioned above. Children repeat these syllables as they rock back and forth. "It keeps them busy and out of trouble."

The first true word that the individual learns is "mother." At about the same time the child acquires an understanding of simple commands like "dirty" (spoken when he puts unclean objects in his mouth) and "don't" (repeated whenever he gets near the fireplace or other dangerous places).

The second word the child learns to articulate is "father." The terms for brother and sister are acquired somewhat later even though older siblings are often assigned to the task of tending the baby. The terms for the paternal grandparents are among the first to be learned, and thereafter the child is told the terms for other relatives with whom he lives. Because of patrilocal residence children normally learn the words for their paternal relatives first. But the teaching of kinship terms is not restricted to those for relatives in the same house group. There is an effort to teach the child the proper

<sup>5</sup>Gatschet (1890), p. 92.

<sup>6</sup>Voegelin, elements 3369-3377.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., elements 3294-3303.

terms for all his relatives, whether he has seen them yet or not. This is considered one of the most important things a child must learn.<sup>8</sup>

With the knowledge of kinship terms the child acquires certain attitudes toward his relatives, although patterns of behavior toward particular kin do not seem to be very clearly defined among the Klamath. Parents are respected and obeyed, as are grandparents though a certain amount of indulgence and teasing is to be expected from the latter. Uncles and aunts are shown considerable respect. Cousins call each other by sibling terms; those of opposite sex play together freely when small but are told that it is not proper to "play rough" with each other. Even small children learn that marriage between cousins is "a very bad thing," and that children from such an incestuous union will never live.

There is some effort to teach the child the names of objects by pointing to them and repeating the word, but he probably acquires more of his vocabulary simply by listening to adult conversation. There is no baby talk or any attempt to simplify words for the children. If the child mispronounces or misuses words, he is laughed at and corrected.

Children acquire their personal names in a casual manner at any time from birth to the age of five or six. There is no ceremony connected with naming, and some individuals receive two or three names which may all be in use at the same time. Names are, for the most part, of the nickname variety and refer to some personal mannerism or peculiarity.<sup>9</sup> In addition, some refer to spirits, birds, or animals. Names are given by the parents or other relatives. One person

coins it, and soon all are using it.

Personal names are freely used at all times, but within the family kinship terms are more commonly applied. There are also age status terms for direct address or in reference to an individual as "newborn baby," "infant," "child," "youth," and so forth.<sup>10</sup>

Throughout infancy the health of the child is a matter of considerable concern. Whenever he cries and cannot be pacified by feeding, the parents fear that he is ill. For certain obvious physical ailments there is a variety of simple home remedies known to most adults. For stomachaches, warm ashes are held over the abdomen, and sagebrush tea may be administered orally. For a fever, sagebrush bark is mashed, mixed with warm water, and rubbed on the child to produce sweating. Deer grease is applied to burns. Pine pitch is rubbed on chapped faces and is also used to heal sore eyes. These and similar remedies serve for both children and adults.<sup>11</sup>

Ailments not so readily diagnosed require the services of a shaman, who then demands a large fee. Shamans are believed to send diseases to individuals, particularly through the medium of bad dreams. A child's nightmares are, therefore, taken as an indication that some shaman is trying to sicken the child. A curing ceremony must then be held either by the suspected shaman or another of equal power. Some women try to prevent children's nightmares by placing a cloth or piece of fur stained with menstrual discharge under the sleeping child. Shamans fear the contamination of a menstruating woman and are unable to use their powers in the presence of one.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD

By the time a child is three he begins to play with other children, parents encouraging group play. Children from all social strata play together. "After all, you can't keep kids apart." Children of chiefs or shamans are no different from the rest. Illegitimate children are looked down upon by the community as a whole, but they are not segregated from their age-mates.

At first the youngsters are apt to start fights with each other, but the parents are usually on hand to stop rough play. A child who fights all the time brings disgrace to his family and especially to himself. He must play by himself for awhile. "Everyone knows he has been bad; no one likes him." He is ashamed and experiences great remorse when he is told he cannot play with other children.

Three- and four-year-olds find a variety of

simple amusements for themselves. They erect piles of dirt, mark in the sand with sticks, or make neat rows of sticks on the ground. Older children are punished if they try to bother the youngsters at play.

Until the age of six or seven, boys and girls play together as much as they wish. When a bit older they will be warned not to be intimate with members of the opposite sex, but young children often play at "man and wife" in imitation of their elders, using the proper status terms for husband and wife and pretending to keep house. The boys go off to hunt, and the girls wait for them to bring meat home to cook. Such play is not discouraged, nor is it apparently encouraged.

Small children also enjoy pretending to be very old people. In this game they hobble around on canes. One old lady of eighty laughed as she recalled playing in this manner:

<sup>8</sup>See Spier, pp. 62-68, for a discussion of the Klamath kinship system.

<sup>9</sup>Naming customs and typical names are given by Spier, pp. 59-61, and Voegelin, elements 3306-3321.

<sup>10</sup>Spier, pp. 61-68.

<sup>11</sup>Therapeutic knowledge and beliefs of the Klamath are mentioned in Voegelin, elements 4469-4511.



My friends all tease me because I always wanted to play I was an old woman. They ask me how I like it now. But we kids all thought it was great to be old. I used to get a cane and limp around. I wanted the others to pretend they were burning [cauterizing] my leg.<sup>12</sup>

Even in early childhood there is great emphasis on competitive sports. Parents brag about a child who is better at any activity than his age-mates. Children soon acquire a keen desire to best their playmates in games and thus gain approval and prestige.

Small children from four to six years old have simple contests of endurance.<sup>13</sup> In one, each player holds his breath and runs as far as he can before having to take another breath. The one who runs the farthest wins. Another race is run on one leg, with the other leg held out in front; the contestants see who can hop the longest without having to put his leg down. Little girls have a contest in which they squat down with their arms wrapped under or around their knees to see who can jump up and down for the longest time. Both boys and girls have hair-pulling contests to see who can keep from crying with pain. All such contests are accompanied by shouting and shrill cries; apparently, the more noise the better. Adults watch the contests when they have time and encourage their favorites.

One of the most important activities in which young girls engage is playing with dolls.<sup>14</sup> Through their use the girl is encouraged in many of her future activities of housekeeping. A few boys like to play with dolls too, but they are teased about this girlish activity and soon cease. It is the girl's mother or grandmother who first shows her how to make dolls and play with them. They are fashioned from any available material; wood, bark, tules, and clay are all utilized. In lieu of anything better they may even be outlined in the sand. Once the technique has been learned, the girls manufacture their own dolls and play with them alone or in groups. They make little shelters of willow for the dolls, pretend to dig up roots for them, and in every way treat them as actual children. Often the dolls are placed on a piece of bark to represent the cradleboard. Apparently much of this play is spontaneous on the part of the girls, but there is also considerable suggestion and encouragement on the part of mother and grandmother.

While little girls are beginning to play in this way, boys of the same age become interested in the use of the bow and arrow. At first they

play with a tiny bow of willow, little more than a toy, which they learn to make from an older boy or from their father. But by the time a boy is six or seven his father presents him with a real bow made from juniper. It is smaller than the large yew war and hunting bows of the men, and the arrows are blunt. The boys practice shooting at targets around the camp. They will not begin to do any hunting for several years, but groups of boys imitate the shooting contests of their elders. These will be described in more detail in a later section since it is older boys who spend the most time in these pursuits.

Another favorite activity of all Klamath children is swimming. Very young children are not allowed near the water, but by five or six years of age the child is paddling around in shallow water under the watchful eye of parents or of older children who help the younger ones to learn. The teacher holds the child around the waist and tells him to splash with his arms and legs. In other instances the child learns by himself or by verbal instructions. One informant related the following incident:

I thought I was swimming when I had my feet on the bottom. Someone laughed at me and said that wasn't swimming. He told me to kick my feet, too.

Several games are played in the water. The children race to see who will be the first to get into the water. Then, teams of four or five line up opposite each other and splash until one side gives up. There are also diving contests to see who can go the farthest underwater before coming to the surface.

In addition to the active outdoor play of children, which is possible only in the summer months, there are games and amusements which can be played indoors at any time.<sup>15</sup> Many of these are enjoyed equally by adults and by children.

Individuals of both sexes and all ages enjoy top spinning. Adults show the children how to set the tops in motion by twirling the stem between their palms, but then the children play by themselves. The children also learn from adults or older children how to make their own tops of bark, wood, or pine pitch. The best ones, according to informants, are from hardened pitch.

We used to go out and get pine gum and chew it all up. Then we made it flat and round with our hands and got some boys to fix the hole in the middle for the stick. You have to put the gum in cold water till it gets hard. They lasted pretty good unless we dropped them or left them out in the sun.

During the winter there is little economic activity, and families spend most of the time in

<sup>12</sup>Cautery with sagebrush pellets that are burned over the afflicted part is a common cure for rheumatism from which many elderly Klamath suffer.

<sup>13</sup>Several children's contests are mentioned in Spier, p. 86.

<sup>14</sup>Dolls are described briefly by Spier, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup>Klamath games and amusements are described in detail by Dorsey (1901), pp. 14-27, Spier, pp. 76-86, and Voegelien, elements 2170-2528.

the warmth of the winter dwelling. There are usually two or three related families sharing a single winter house; and evenings are spent in playing games, telling stories, or gossiping, as well as in making baskets and manufacturing fish nets. Small children are not allowed outdoors in the cold, but older ones go out some days to slide on the ice or downhill on pieces of bark.

Cat's cradle is a popular pastime engaged in by both adults and children in the winter. The number of possible figures is great. Coyote, Skunk, Bear, Bullfrog's Tail, Owl's Eyes, Sunrise, Boy Running, and Man Chasing a Rabbit are but a few of the many that most individuals can make. Children learn how to make the figures from adults or from older children. However, if the children play at cat's cradle very often, the string is taken away with the comment, "You'll stretch the months if you do that so much." There is apparently no such restriction on adults.

In one version of string figures an adult fixes a loop in the string. A child is told to put his finger through the loop, which is then pulled tight around the finger; and he must tell his name before he can be released.

Every night throughout the winter months myths are told. They are never told in the summer or daytime lest the narrator age quickly. Most myths serve for amusement, not being regarded as especially sacred. Stories about Creator are taken somewhat more seriously than others. "You have to keep quiet and listen to them." It is from the Creator myths that children first learn about sacred beings.

There are many stories explaining the origin of local geographic features. Most of the myths have personified animal characters. There are a few tales that offer advice to the children. After stories about hunting or gathering, the teller may turn to the children and say, "If you want to be a good man (or woman), do like that."

In contrast to many other tribes there is very little formality connected with the telling of myths among the Klamath. In the evening an old man or woman starts to tell stories, and others gather around. Young adults never tell them because a storyteller begins to age rapidly.

The children lie down to listen; they may request their favorites and are free to complain that the narrator is not telling the story right, if they do not like his particular version. A few old people are recognized as the best raconteurs.

Adults also listen to the stories and make requests. Certain characters are especially liked; and children often ask for tales about Little Weasel, Chipmunk, Coyote, and Skunk. Skunk is funny because he thinks himself very clever, but all his undertakings are fiascos. After a Skunk story, children are warned, "Don't be like that." A few stories, such as those about Owl, are told to frighten children into behaving. As the evening wears on, the children fall asleep one by one. Indeed, one of the main

purposes of telling the stories seems to be to keep the children quiet and put them to sleep.

Concepts of etiquette and what constitutes a well brought up individual are clearly defined among the Klamath. Standards for proper behavior toward one's own family and toward other members of the tribe are taught at an early age. As soon as the child can understand what is said to him, he receives ethical advice from parents and others. Not only relatives but also other adults may give advice. Elderly people are especially apt to counsel children.

Old people start giving advice right away whenever they meet you. They tell you to be kind to everyone, don't brag, don't put yourself before anyone, work hard and you'll live a long time and be respected by everybody.

Either parent may take the responsibility of advising the children, but the father is generally stricter. In the early morning and at night, and "whenever everyone is gathered around and it is quiet" the father exhorts his children to be good and kind and to help others, demanding and receiving the attention of his youngsters for these harangues.

Since a well mannered child brings some prestige to his family, even a very small one is taught how to conduct himself before visitors; and the highest respect is shown to large families whose children are polite and well behaved.<sup>16</sup>

Visiting is a favorite pastime, especially in the fall after the winter house has been prepared. When visitors arrive, they are offered something to eat. At this point, the children are sent out to play; for "food will stick in the visitors' gullets if children stay around." Exemplary children learn to disappear without being told whenever visitors arrive.

Eating involves a few rules of etiquette for the young. Meals are not regular, and all are free to take food when there is any available. Ordinarily the family eats at least two meals a day, in the morning and again in the evening. The whole family eats together, and children are told to wait until the father has said a grace, holding a bit of food or water out toward the mountains, lake, and earth as an offering. If this were not done, the children might become ill.

Immediately afterwards all start eating. There is no particular seating arrangement. Children are required to sit quietly during the meal. "They would choke if they ran around or talked." Children are also told never to walk in front of anyone who is eating--a rule doubly important if the person is a shaman.

An important part of training consists in developing respectful attitudes toward the many sacred places in Klamath territory. Children

<sup>16</sup>See Spier, p. 91, for a few of the Klamath rules of etiquette.

hear about these spots first in stories. Later the parents point out the sacred sites as they pass by them. Many of the places are referred to as "doctor rocks." Children are warned never to run or play near them lest they should fall and become crippled.

Klamath religion is very closely associated with shamanism<sup>17</sup> so that most of the religious attitudes acquired are directed toward shamans. Shamans are the most important, powerful, and feared individuals in the tribe. Small children are warned never to bother one, but to run and hide whenever a shaman appears, or he may cause sickness. Children are told, "There's a doctor; don't run in front of him, or he'll trip you. Don't ever look at him when he is smoking." Even the shaman's own children fear him.

Obedience is achieved by parents in a number of ways. They frequently scold erring children, small ones being perhaps most often threatened with some supernatural punishment for misbehavior. Whippings are not rare, but are probably never severe. A child is switched across his hands or the back of his legs with a willow switch, or the child's hair or ears are pulled. Corporal punishment is seldom resorted to unless the child has made the same mistake several times and has not heeded scoldings.

Obedience is also achieved by instilling in the child a fear of ghosts, spirits, and other supernatural beings who kidnap bad children. Owl is the most potent supernatural threat, feared by child and adult alike. When a child cries at night or is naughty, his parents threaten, "Owl will come to pluck out your eyes or carry you off to a cave." If the child fails to heed the warning at first, the parents call, "Owl, come listen to this child." The effectiveness of the threat is increased by the child's knowledge of the story about a baby who was carried off by an owl to a cave near Modoc Point. The baby gradually sprouted feathers and turned into an owl. Bear and Coyote are similarly used to silence a crying child.

In the same way children are warned about ghosts who might snatch them away from the camp unless they are good.<sup>18</sup> Ghosts hover about the camp constantly and are especially dangerous to little ones. For that reason children are never allowed out after sundown unless accompanied by an adult. The child is told to turn his left side and raise his left arm to a ghost if he ever sees one; only in this manner can sickness be avoided.

Since ghosts constitute such a peril, children must never go near the cremation grounds where they might contract a ghost sickness, which can be cured only by a powerful shaman. Children never attend funerals, nor are they allowed to cross the path over which a corpse has been carried.

<sup>17</sup>A thorough discussion of Klamath shamanism appears, *ibid.*, pp. 93-138.

<sup>18</sup>Ghosts are described in Voegelin, elements 4655-4706.

Children have little knowledge of death, but they observe certain mourning taboos on the decease of a parent. The restrictions on children are not as many or as strict as those for adults.<sup>19</sup> Children have their hair cut and pitch put on their faces for a year in observance of mourning. The child is told to play alone for awhile and not laugh or sing. That these regulations are sometimes onerous is indicated by the statement of an informant whose father died when she was about seven.

I had my hair cut short. I used to wear pretty beads and little rattles in my pigtails, but I couldn't when my hair was short. When it grew out a little, I got my girl friend to braid it for me and put a rattle in it. My mother caught me and was awfully angry. I knew I was doing something wrong, but I just wanted to have fun.

Children do not end the mourning period with a purificatory sweatbath such as adults take. In fact, children are not allowed near the three mourners' sweat-lodges which are surrounded with spirits that are dangerous to young people. A child who disobeys and plays near the lodges will lose his wife or first child when he grows up.

Through the period of early childhood the individual gradually acquires a knowledge of objects beyond his immediate home environment. There is an effort on the part of many parents and grandparents to instruct the children, who are sometimes taken out at night to see the moon, stars, and planets. They are told that the Milky Way is a river that divides the sky, the Pleiades are children, and the stars of the Big Dipper are brothers. There are names for, and stories about, many constellations. Mothers take their children out to talk to the moon at each new moon. The mother instructs the children to be quiet and listen as she repeats a prayer which varies in length and content according to individual desires and feelings.

Many natural phenomena are considered dangerous, and young children learn to fear such features as thunder, lightning, and the rainbow. They are warned to run home and hide during an electrical storm and never to point at the rainbow lest the finger drop off.

Toward the end of his early childhood the individual begins to assume real responsibilities within his family. Till the age of six or seven the child is free to run and play much as he pleases, so long as he obeys instructions not to fight and not to wander away from camp. He has taken no part in the work of his elders. But now he begins to help with a few simple chores.

The first tasks a child performs may be little more than occasionally bringing home a few pieces of firewood or getting a bucket of

<sup>19</sup>Adult death and mourning customs are described in Spier, pp. 71-76, and Voegelin, elements 4019-4415.

water. Such duties ordinarily devolve upon the women, but young boys as well as girls help their mothers.

Children accompany their mother as she collects large bundles of wood, which she carries on her back. The youngsters pick up smaller pieces to carry in their arms. The mother may be the one to ask the child to help. As often, however, help seems to be voluntary.

I saw my mother getting a load of wood so I picked some up in my hands. She was proud of me because I was helping.

#### LATE CHILDHOOD

The duties and responsibilities of a child increase greatly as he reaches the age of eight or nine. He still engages in many of the games and amusements of childhood, but he is expected to take on more and more adult activities. Training which has heretofore been largely casual and noncompulsory now takes on more serious aspects. Girls begin to take up feminine pursuits while boys learn masculine occupations.

If there are younger children in the family, the nine- and ten-year-olds may be called on to watch them and, if neglectful, the older ones are reprimanded. On the whole, however, the children accept the responsibility willingly, look after the youngsters around camp, teach them, and occasionally take them along on short jaunts away from the immediate campsite. Parents tell the youngsters to obey their older brothers and sisters.

Physical training is emphasized in late childhood. The strong, fearless warrior is one of the Klamath ideals of manhood. Women, too, are expected to be strong and brave. Training toward this goal actually begins when cold water is sprinkled on infants daily to inure them to hardships. Somewhat larger infants are held in the cold water of the lake or river to harden them to physical discomforts.

The father or grandfather forces older children to rise before sunrise each day, winter and summer, for a plunge into cold water and to run and exercise. The morning swim is more strictly enforced for boys; but girls also rise early, and many of them swim each morning. A few families start training a child in this manner at the age of five. Most start somewhat later, and some families are never strict in the matter, but such households have little standing in the community.

A boy of ten or twelve who whimpers when made to run to the lake in the morning is considered a weakling. If a child pretends to be asleep when called, he is whipped and thrown into the water by his father. The bravest boys never cry and are proud of being able to roll in the snow in the winter without calling out. Parents boast of a brave boy. But if he is lazy, they are ashamed and hope the neighbors will not hear of their disgrace. Only individuals who arise early throughout their lives to

Older children use a carrying strap when they go after wood. The strap is laid on the ground and sticks are piled on it. One boy sits down and fastens the strap across his forehead or chest. A companion then helps him get to his feet with the load.

Women carry water in baskets to the camp. The children sometimes race to see who can get the water first. When the child brings a basket of water to the house, his mother or father throws a few drops into the air, saying, "You'll grow as tall as that."

run and swim will be lucky and successful. Children are constantly exhorted to run and exercise in order to become "smart."

The older boys have a variety of contests to show their strength; these are in imitation of the competitions in which grown men take part.<sup>20</sup> They lift heavy rocks to see who can carry them farthest. They try to bend large saplings to the ground. They wrestle from a starting position in which the opponents face each other with hands on each other's waists. The whole group gathers to watch the contests and cheer the favorites.

Foot races are popular among boys and girls as well as adults. The races are run principally on summer or fall afternoons when large groups are gathered on Klamath Marsh to gather wokus (water-lily seeds). Fast runners gain a great deal of prestige, so that all children aspire to be such. Children are spectators at the adult matches; then they organize their own. The adults are as eager to watch children's races as they are to observe their own. The best runners are cheered, and small bets are often placed.

In addition to contests of strength and foot races, there are fast shinny games which require good runners with endurance.<sup>21</sup> Both the men's game and the double-ball variety played by the women are occasions for much excitement. There is much rivalry between teams, and children are not permitted to participate in the most important contests. They do organize their own shinny games, however, and may play with adults in the more trivial contests.

At this same age boys begin to take part in organized shooting matches with bow and arrow or darts. The boy is taught by his father or grandfather to shoot with a small juniper bow. The boys' games are similar to those played by the men,<sup>22</sup> but boys are not required to shoot so

<sup>20</sup>See Spier, pp. 82 ff., and Voegelin, elements 2509-2516.

<sup>21</sup>Shinny games are described by Dorsey, pp. 19 ff., Spier, pp. 80 ff., and Voegelin, elements 2170-2203.

<sup>22</sup>Arrow and dart games are described in Dorsey, pp. 17 f., Spier, pp. 81 f., and Voegelin, elements 2256-2270, 2278-2304.

far. Some contests utilize a stationary target. In others, arrows and darts are shot at a rolling ring. The rings used by boys are smaller than the men's.

Boys soon learn to make their own willow darts for the games, are proud of them, and often decorate them by wrapping green tules around them in designs. The darts are then blackened in the fire and the tules unwrapped, leaving white markings where the tules had been. Such negative pyrographic patterns are common on canoe poles and paddles. Girls similarly decorate sticks "just for fun"; they do not enter into the dart contests. The boys do not learn to make their own bows and arrows until puberty or after.

Training in the techniques of fishing, gathering, hunting, and various manufactures begins in late childhood. The principal food of the Klamath is fish, but vegetable products and game are also used. The spring, summer, and fall months are spent in travel for the seasonal food supply. Early spring sees a move to fishing grounds along the river. In the summer, families move to the prairies for roots and berries. Some go to the mountains to hunt. In August and September families congregate to gather the wild water-lily seed along the marshes. In the fall there are hunts, and all return to the winter villages where they will remain through the coldest months of the year.<sup>23</sup>

The first sucker run in the spring is of special significance and attended by ritual and taboo.<sup>24</sup> Small children are warned to stay away from the river, lest they get sick. The first catch is divided among all; the entrails are carefully gathered up and thrown back into the river to insure the continued abundance of fish. It is the children who are sent with the entrails to the proper spot on the river. While the men continue fishing, the women clean and dry the fish for winter storage. Girls of eight or nine help their mothers by collecting willow branches and arranging the fish on them to dry.

After the first run, the restrictions are relaxed. Children are then allowed to gather along the banks and watch, so long as they do not bother the men. Boys help by dipping fish out of the water by hand and by scaring fish toward the nets; but they do not work with the nets, which take at least two full-grown men to handle.

Spears are also used for taking fish. Boys of ten or older are taken out by their fathers into shallow water to learn how to watch for the air bubbles that indicate the presence of fish. The father shows the boy how to impale the victim on a many-pointed spear and finally lift it from the water with a single-pointed gaff. For

large fish, there is a harpoon with two detachable heads; the boy learns its use after he has mastered the other spears. Fish are often speared at night by torchlight. Here again it is the father who instructs the boy.

Fish are also taken in a triangular dip net used from the bow of a canoe. This net is large and cumbersome, so that only a strong adult is able to manipulate it when full of fish. Younger fellows of ten or so help by beating their canoe paddles against the side of the boat to scare the fish toward the net. If they are in shallow water near the shore, the paddles are slapped against the tules. Often, a boy paddles the canoe while his father handles the net in the bow.

Line fishing is not of great importance, but this method is sometimes used and is often the first method a boy learns (usually by himself or from older boys); it is also the only one at which women occasionally help. There are at least two varieties of bone hook which are attached to a nettle-fiber line. Boys catch crawfish in their hands to use as bait.

The manufacture of nets is an important winter occupation of the old men and a few old women. Both men and women twist the nettle fiber into twine. Children like to watch the net making because they enjoy listening to the old people gossip or argue about how many months remain before the spring fish run. However, the children never help with this process. A fully grown man learns to manufacture nets from the old men. The manufacture of fish spears and harpoons is also left to mature men.

Before taking part in certain types of fishing, boys must know how to handle the canoes. This same ability is required for girls before they can go after water-lily seeds. Most families have two or more dugout canoes of varying lengths, which can be propelled by either pole or paddle.<sup>25</sup>

Riding in canoes is not a new experience to the child, for infants on cradleboards are taken out in them. Older children often go out with their mother or father and sit or stand in one end of the canoe. The boat is apt to be unstable, and the child is warned not to tip it by moving around.

Parents need not urge children to learn how to handle a canoe, for they are all eager to do so. As one man put it, "Nowadays every kid wants to have a car. It used to be like that with canoes." Indeed, children sometimes "borrowed" canoes when no adults were present.

The women were all out getting wokus so another girl and I took my aunt's extra canoe. I didn't know how to work the pole. I held onto the end of it and kept pushing till I almost fell over the edge of the canoe. Some people came by in another canoe

<sup>23</sup>Spier, pp. 10 f.

<sup>24</sup>Varieties of fish caught, fishing techniques, and customs connected with fishing are treated in Barrett (1910), pp. 249-251, Spier, pp. 147-155, and Voegelin, elements 190-300.

<sup>25</sup>See Coville (1897), p. 89; idem (1904), p. 728; Barrett, pp. 247 f.; Spier, pp. 169-171; and Voegelin, elements 858-893.

and saw us. They laughed and laughed and said, "Look, she doesn't know how to use the pole." Then they told me how to push it a little way at a time and lift it up and push again.

Some children start to use paddles by themselves, too. Adults see them trying to do so and tell them how to kneel in the bottom and dip the paddle in and out of the water without splashing. Light cedar paddles are used, and small ones are made for children. Similarly, shorter poles are often made for the children.

The principal vegetable food of the Klamath is the seed of the wild water-lily, known as wokus. Many other seed, root, and berry products are also utilized in varying amounts.<sup>26</sup> It is the women who do the gathering, and there is a strong feeling that a girl cannot learn too soon to contribute to the family food supply by helping her mother gather these products, although youngsters are never forced into work.

Even very small girls receive a tiny digging stick as a toy. With the sticks the girls play around the camp, digging up clumps of grass to be used as "camas" and "ipos" for feeding their dolls. Children often accompany their mothers after berries, seeds, and roots. They are allowed to run about as they please and only help if they wish. When they get tired or hungry, they go back to camp. Both boys and girls help occasionally with berrying. Parents complain that the youngsters eat more than they save, but do not scold them.

Part of the activity during the berrying season is, of course, the drying of the berries for storage. One woman recalls seeing this as a child and wanting to help.

Up in the mountains I saw how they dried huckleberries. They dug a little ditch and put the berries in and made a fire alongside. You have to watch the fire for a day and a night. I remember seeing this when I was about ten. I wanted to dry some berries, too; but my mother didn't want me to use any of her berries. She said I might ruin them so I'd have to get my own. I went and picked some, and she showed me how to dry them.

When a girl is nine or ten, her mother gives her a real digging stick of slightly smaller dimensions than her own. The girl is also given a small carrying basket to wear on her back and a basket to put the roots in before they are transferred to the carrying basket. The mother shows the girl where to go to get the best roots and how to insert the stick to loosen the earth all the way around the root before prying it out. Apparently there is little attempt to force the girl to work hard the first

few times, but many girls are proud of their ability to dig a lot of roots, for which they receive praise at home.

I liked to dig up camas where the dirt was soft. My mother had a long stick, and I had a little one. I had a basket on my back and a little basket in my hand. My, I thought it was smart to be able to dig up those roots. I was sorry when evening came, and we had to go home. We brought the camas home and dumped them on the ground to dry. When I saw my mother fix a pit for baking the camas, I wanted to do the same. My girl friend and I had a hard time getting the bark to put in the pit, but we did it. We had to get grass and a lot of wood, too. You have to make the rocks hot just like for a sweatbath and put them in the pit with wet grass over so the camas will steam. Then the camas is put in with dirt over it and a fire on top. My mother watched me when I made the pit and told me when I got the wrong kind of grass; she said it would make the camas taste bitter. I kept asking my mother how to do it, and she told me.

Several informants stated that the first roots a girl digs are of special importance. They are given to her grandmother, who blesses the girl with a statement to the effect that henceforth the girl will be a good worker. Not all families seem to follow this custom. The first fruits custom is more strictly followed for the first large game a boy kills.<sup>27</sup>

The wokus harvest from mid-August to late September is a time for general gatherings and activities, one of the most pleasantly anticipated times of the year.<sup>28</sup> Women go out in the canoes early in the morning and remain on the marsh all day. Apparently the mother does not really urge or coerce her daughter to start helping with the wokus. As with other products, it may be the girl herself who takes the initiative.

We thought we'd get some wokus. We knew how to do it because we'd seen the people doing it. We took a canoe. First, we fought about which patch to go to. My friend was in one end of the canoe and saw a patch of wokus, but I wanted to go in another direction. We stayed out all day but came home early enough to put the canoe back before the women came. Then we took the wokus out and tried to fix it in a pit with grass and pine needles the way we knew it ought to be done. We made a little place just for our own wokus. Then we decided to get up early the next morning and go out again. We took another canoe. There were

<sup>27</sup>Compare Spier, p. 168, and Voegelin, element 137.

<sup>26</sup>Coville (1897), pp. 87-103, idem (1904), pp. 725-739, and Spier, pp. 166 f.

<sup>28</sup>The most complete account of wokus gathering is found in Coville (1904), pp. 725-739.

always lots of extra poles lying around so we took one. We took some bread and dried fish for lunch. When we got home, we fixed the wokus. We fixed tules to sift it through. Then we put the wokus in a pan and threw it up so the wind would blow the dirt away. My mother saw what we were doing and said, "Yes, that's the best way to do it." I kept asking her how to fix the wokus the different ways, and she told me. I asked her for a little sack to put the wokus in. My mother watched us do all this, and she said that maybe some days she would be tired, and we could use her canoe. We got up every morning, even when it was cold and foggy, for awhile. I got two sacks of wokus. My mother said I could do what I wanted with them so I sold them.

A girl gradually learns to gather all of the wild products which are used, gaining most of the knowledge of where and when to gather the different crops simply by accompanying her mother. The mother tells the girl where to find the best seeds, berries, and roots. She tells her daughter to look for huckleberries near springs and moist places; she shows her how to follow the little trail left by squirrels in storing nuts; in short, she gives her the information that means the difference between being a good and a mediocre provider.

Enough food must be collected from spring to fall to last through the winter, and it is imperative to store it so as to prevent spoilage. Roots are put in caches in the ground. Seeds are stored in sacks between the timbers on the roof of the winter house in such a way that the sacks can be opened from inside the house. Young girls are not trusted with the preparation of the storage pits because an error might ruin the family's entire winter supply. Sometimes girls fix small pits for the roots they have dug by themselves.

I dug up the dirt and put away my sacks of ipos and camas. Then I covered them just the way I saw the old people do.

A girl begins to learn to cook when she is about ten. As with most other skills, some girls acquire this at an earlier age than others. A girl first learns to roast fish, her mother watching and telling her to be sure that it is cooked thoroughly. A woman also teaches her girl to roast ducks, showing her how to turn the bird so that it will not burn.

Preparation of seed and root foods is more difficult, since they must be ground or pounded before use. The mother shows the girl how to use a flat metate and two-horned muller for wokus. Many girls start to grind wokus first for their dolls.

I was just playing the first time I helped another girl grind the wokus. We used a wokus leaf like the mat they put the

seeds on, and then ground them up. We were in a hurry to grind the seeds and run down to the water to wash them. My mother told us we'd just waste the wokus if we did it that way. It was hard to move the grinder right to get the seeds to roll off the stone. My mother told me the stone had to be a little rough to grind the wokus right.

In late childhood girls also begin to learn how to make mats, baskets, and clothing.<sup>29</sup> Of these, mat making is considered the easiest and is the first attempted. Even in early childhood most girls try to weave tule mats. They make small dome-shaped lodges for their dolls and cover them with mats. The mother or grandmother helps the child whenever there is time. When the girl begins to make larger, more utilitarian mats, her mother gives her the materials and shows her how to use them.

In the wintertime girls sit beside their mother or grandmother as the elders make baskets. The girl is given some of the tules to split with her thumbnail and twist on her thigh. If the girl's twists come unraveled, nothing is said because the materials can be used again. The girls usually soon tire of twisting tules, and they are allowed to do as many or as few as they wish.

Small baskets are made for girls, and often the first basket a girl makes by herself is a tiny one for her dolls. The mother or grandmother starts the basket and shows the girl how to weave it. If the girl's baskets keep coming unraveled, she is teased a little and watched till she gets it correctly. Later the girl makes larger baskets with designs in tule root or porcupine quills. Certain designs are known as "beginners' designs" because they are simple to make. Other designs are much more complex, in particular those which adorn the basket hats. Few girls learn to make the large decorated baskets before they reach maturity. A girl often learns basketry from her mother-in-law.

Clothing for the entire family is made by the mother. In pre-white times dress for the wealthy was of the Plains type. Poorer people wore skirts of tule or buckskin and went bare-foot. Capes of tule or shredded sagebrush bark were also worn. Very young children went naked. The mother prepares the tules and other materials for skirts and capes, and she is the one to tan and sew hides for skin clothing.

The making of clothes is one of the last skills a girl acquires before marriage. In fact, some do not learn the art until after that time. Hides are so valuable that the mother does not want to risk having the girl spoil one.

Most boys in late childhood aspire to become good hunters. Game food is far less important in the Klamath diet than fish or wokus, and

<sup>29</sup>For descriptions of these materials and techniques of manufacture, see Coville (1897), pp. 89-95, Barrett, pp. 253-257, Spier, pp. 173-193, 207-217, and Voegelin, elements 1245-1341, 1388-1416, 1451-1476, 1713-1957a.

not all men are good hunters.<sup>30</sup> Hides are valuable, however, and a good hunter gains prestige. Part of the rigid physical training of the boys is directed toward preparing them for hunting. They are told, "Only smart ones who aren't lazy can be good hunters."

As previously mentioned, boys begin to learn the use of bow and arrow when very young. After learning to shoot at targets, groups of boys hunt birds and squirrels near camp. They kill these easily with their small bows and light arrows. Parents are very proud of boys who can get many animals. The boys also go

after ducks in the canoes. A few informants said that boys give away for luck the first duck or squirrel that they kill, just as they will later give away their first deer. The hunting of deer and other large game is done only by grown men, especially those who have sought and received special supernatural power either at the time of puberty or later. The art of warfare is another pursuit reserved for the fully grown although much of the physical training of boys is directed toward building strong and fearless warriors.

#### CONCLUSION

Since the data presented here were collected from elderly individuals and not from direct observations on a living culture, one should perhaps be rather cautious in arriving at any conclusions about Klamath education. Most informants were bitter about the breakdown of culture which they have seen in the present generation of young Indians. They often reiterated their belief that children were much better reared in the old days. There are, however, certain generalizations which may be validly drawn.

There is really no formal education in the sense of organized, planned instruction of the young. Yet most families expect their children to conform to certain ideals, and the parents work for the achievement of these goals.

For the first two or three years of life, the child's every want is supplied by his mother. It is she who feeds him, attends to his needs, and watches him most closely, although the father or older siblings may tend the child for short periods. The infant receives little or no fondling, but he is often the center of attraction for the adults of his house group who pause and talk to him as they pass his cradle.

In about his third year, the child is thrust into active play with his age-mates. He learns that he is expected to be brave, strong, and fearless. He receives praise from parents and other relatives if he is fast and ambitious. If he is lazy or cowardly, he is teased and scolded. Girls as well as boys must learn to be active, energetic, and competitive.

The child learns much through the medium of imitative play in which he plays at being grown-up. A large part of the play is spontaneous, but much is inaugurated and encouraged by parents or older children who show the younger ones how to entertain themselves.

As the child grows older he gradually acquires the skills with which he must be familiar. The greatest part of this knowledge comes from accompanying parents or grandparents in their daily routine of work. Adults often explain how things are done, but they have no well formulated program of education. The youngster is often the one to ask to be allowed to perform certain tasks. He is praised if he starts to help at an early age and is given what instructions he needs to carry out the work in which he has evinced an interest.

There are a few aspects of the culture which the Klamath themselves consider important enough to warrant formalized instruction. These are primarily concerned with demeanor and conduct. Children receive daily lectures on subjects of this nature, and are scolded or whipped when they do not live up to the standards. Physical training, especially for older boys, is also emphasized.

In all aspects of child training, the most important unit is the immediate family. The father in particular exhorts his children to live correctly; but the mother, grandparents, and other relatives also talk to the children.

On the whole, it can be said that Klamath parents do not have a conscious program of instruction for children in the techniques of ordinary daily activity. They do, however, feel a great responsibility to bring up their children well in the fundamentals of Klamath comportment.

<sup>30</sup>For hunting methods and customs, see Barrett, pp. 246 f., Spier, pp. 155-160, and Voegelin, elements 1-189.



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### ABBREVIATIONS

- AA American Anthropologist  
BAE-R Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Reports  
CNAE Contributions to North American Ethnology  
UC University of California Publications  
-AR Anthropological Records  
-PAAE American Archaeology and Ethnology
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